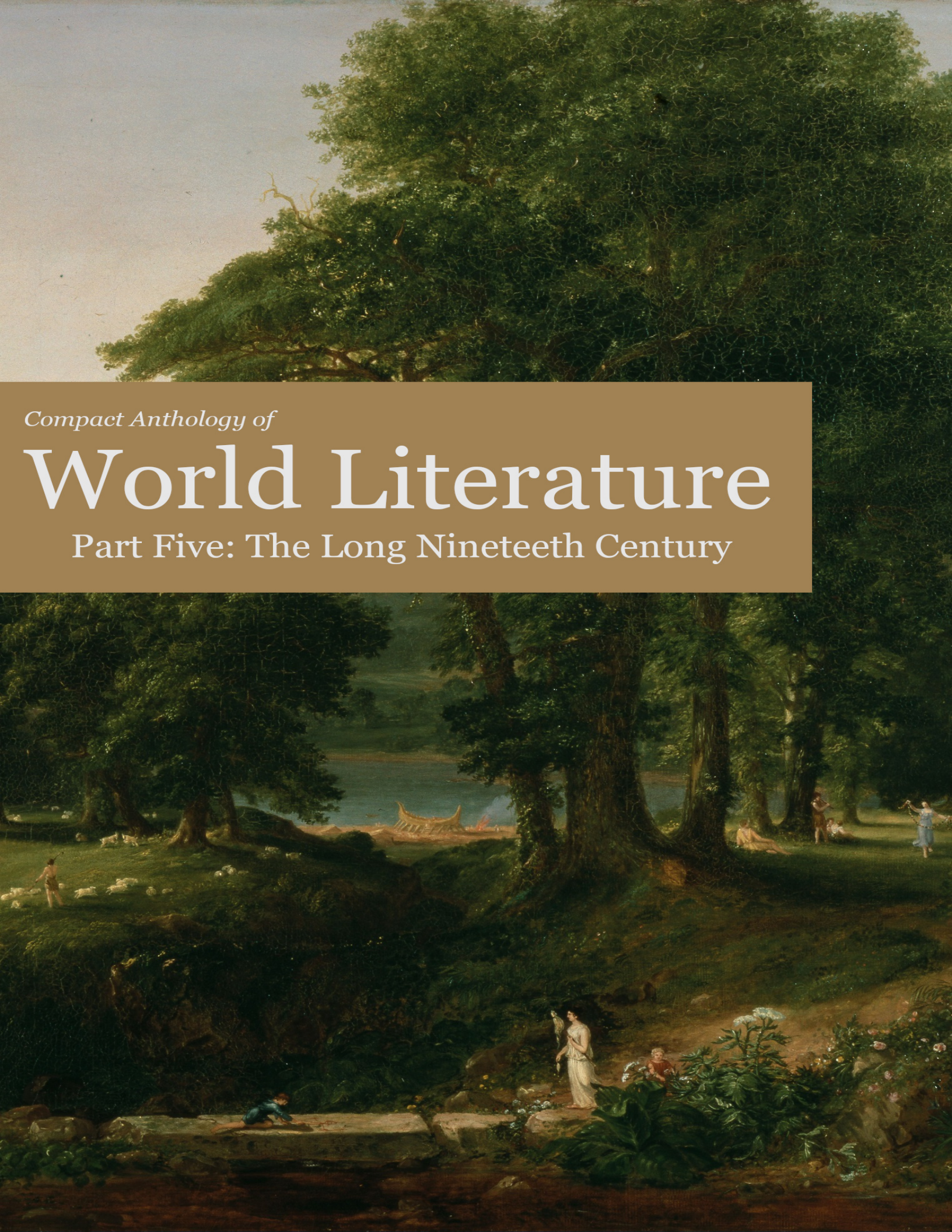


The background of the cover is a detailed Romantic-style landscape painting. It depicts a vast, sun-dappled forest with towering, leafy trees. In the middle ground, a calm lake reflects the sky, with a small boat visible on its surface. Various figures are scattered throughout the scene: a shepherd with a flock of sheep on the left, a woman in a white dress standing near a path in the foreground, and other smaller figures in the distance. The overall atmosphere is one of natural beauty and tranquility.

Compact Anthology of

World Literature

Part Five: The Long Nineteenth Century

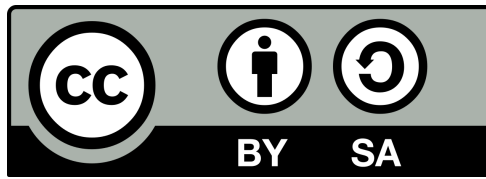
Compact Anthology of
WORLD
L i t e r a t u r e

PART FIVE
The Long Nineteenth Century

Editor-in-Chief:
ANITA TURLINGTON

Publication and Design Editor:
MATTHEW HORTON, PhD

Editors:
KAREN DODSON, PhD
LAURA GETTY, PhD
KYOUNGHYE KWON, PhD
LAURA NG, PhD



Compact Anthology of World Literature: The Long 19th Century is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 (CC BY-SA 4.0) International License.

This license allows you to remix, tweak, and build upon this work, even commercially, as long as you credit this original source for the creation and license the new creation under identical terms.

If you reuse this content elsewhere, in order to comply with the attribution requirements of the license, please attribute the original source to the University System of Georgia.

NOTE: The above copyright license which University System of Georgia uses for their original content does not extend to or include content which was accessed and incorporated, and which is licensed under various other CC Licenses, such as ND licenses. Nor does it extend to or include any Special Permissions which were granted to us by the rightsholders for our use of their content. To determine copyright status of any content, please refer to the bibliographies and appendices for original source information to further research specific copyright licenses.

Image Disclaimer: All images and figures in this book are believed to be (after a reasonable investigation) either public domain or carry a compatible Creative Commons license. If you are the copyright owner of images in this book and you have not authorized the use of your work under these terms, please contact Corey Parson at corey.parson@ung.edu to have the content removed.

Production of this textbook was funded by a grant from Affordable Learning Georgia.

Acknowledgments

The editors of this text would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions, professionalism, and unfailing good humor of Corey Parson, Managing Editor of the University of North Georgia Press. Corey patiently provided advice on all copyright concerns, responded promptly to our questions, verified sources for the texts included here, and managed the peer review process.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Joyce Stavick, Head, UNG English Department, and Dr. Shannon Gilstrap, Associate Head.

Table of Contents

Introduction: How to Use this Textbook

Unit 1: Romanticism

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Confessions

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Faust

William Blake (1757-1827)

Songs of Innocence: The Lamb

Songs of Innocence: The Chimney Sweeper

Songs of Innocence: Holy Thursday

Songs of Experience: Holy Thursday

Songs of Experience: The Chimney Sweeper

Songs of Experience: The Tyger

London

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)

from A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

Olympe De Gouges (1748-1793)

The Rights of Woman

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

from Preface to Lyrical Ballads

Michael, a Pastoral Poem

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

Ode: Intimations of Immortality

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Kubla Khan

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

To Wordsworth
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty
Ozymandias
A Song: "Men of England"
Ode to the West Wind
Mutability
from A Defence of Poetry

John Keats (1795-1821)

When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be
Ode to a Nightingale
Ode on a Grecian Urn

Mary Shelley (1797-1851)

Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus
Mathilda
The Last Man

Unit 2: Realism

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

from Sonnets from the Portuguese
The Cry of the Children
Lord Walter's Wife

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

The Lotos-Eaters
Ulysses

Robert Browning (1812-1889)

Porphyria's Lover
My Last Duchess
"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"

Frederick Douglass (c.1818-1895)

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Song of Myself
Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking
Crossing Brooklyn Ferry
O Captain! My Captain!

Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)

A Simple Soul

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)

Notes from Underground

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)

Correspondences
The Corpse
Spleen
Hymn to Beauty

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

The Death of Ivan Ilych

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)

A Doll's House
An Enemy of the People

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Because I could not stop for Death
A bird came down the walk
The brain is wider than the sky
Hope is the thing with feathers
I died for beauty, but was scarce
I heard a fly buzz when I died
If I can stop one heart from breaking
My life closed twice before its close
The soul selects her own society
Success is counted sweetest

There's a certain slant of light
Wild nights! Wild nights!

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

After Death
Up-Hill
Goblin Market
"No, Thank You, John"

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894)

The Poison Tree

Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)

Boule de Suif
The Diamond Necklace

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920)

The Story of an African Farm

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

The Yellow Wall-Paper

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904)

The Lady with the Dog
The Cherry Orchard
A Doctor's Visit

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

The Lake Isle of Innisfree
When You Are Old
Easter 1916
The Second Coming

H.G. Wells (1866-1946)

The Invisible Man
The Island of Doctor Moreau
The War of the Worlds

Landmarks

Table of Contents

Cover

Introduction: How to Use this Textbook

Students

This textbook is designed to be accessible, easy to read, and available to you at no cost. Like other world literature anthologies, *The Compact Anthology of World Literature*, Parts 4, 5, and 6, has been compiled and edited by expert faculty to ensure that the array of selections included here are representative of many cultures during the time periods covered. These selections comprise works that scholars agree examine themes and universal human experiences that cross cultural boundaries. Additionally, the writers, poets, and dramatists selected here demonstrate mastery of a genre that raises their work to the level of great art. However, each selection also illuminates its particular cultural, historical, and social context.

Here are some suggestions to enhance your reading and your studies:

1. If you are reading this introduction, you have figured out that you must use an epub reader. For those of you reading the text on a laptop or desktop computer, we recommend downloading the Google app called Radium. You might also try Microsoft's ebook reader, Bluefire. If you prefer to read on your Android device (either smartphone or tablet), we recommend an app called Lithium. If you have an Apple device, you can read the text using iBooks.
2. If for some reason you prefer to read the textbook in PDF format, simply search the internet for ways to convert an EPUB to PDF; multiple sites can provide you with that information or even do the conversion for you.
3. Note that the table of contents is organized as a series of links; just click (or tap) on an item to go directly to that selection.
4. Make sure to read the unit introductions; they provide important contextual details to help you understand the selections you are reading more deeply.
5. Also note the discussion questions we have provided in the brief introduction to each author. Use them as a guide while you read and take notes.

Faculty

We have developed an Instructor Guide that you might wish to investigate. The Guide provides sample syllabi, suggested themed units, writing prompts, and a list of helpful sites.

Unit 1: Romanticism

Although the publication of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 is often heralded as the formal start of Romanticism, the roots of the movement began earlier. The Enlightenment, or Age of Reason, had embraced the power of rational thought and the scientific method to advance society in an orderly fashion. Romanticism, however, heralded a more individual approach, often guided by strong emotions and some type of spiritual insight. According to Romantics, deeper understanding of the world was achieved through intuition and emotional connections, rather than reason. In literature, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was one of the early proponents of the Storm and Stress (*Sturm und Drang*) period, which rejected the Enlightenment's focus on reason in favor of strong emotions and the value of the individual. Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) is a classic Storm and Stress novel, with a protagonist driven by his extreme emotions. In politics, the revolutions of the time were driven by certain Enlightenment concepts that would be important to later Romanticism: in particular, the idea of natural rights, which was discussed by politicians, philosophers, and writers alike. John Locke asserted that human beings have the right to life, liberty, and property, and Francis Hutcheson posited the difference between alienable and unalienable rights. Thomas Jefferson used these ideas more or less directly in his writings. Rather than owing loyalty to a monarch, the Declaration of Independence (1776) asserts that human beings have rights from God and the laws of nature that cannot be taken away by an earthly ruler. The French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte (a fan of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* who claimed to have read the novel many times) also challenged established authority.

Romanticism, as practiced by Wordsworth, is a natural outgrowth of those revolutionary ways of thinking. If human rights are derived from "the laws of nature and of nature's God" (Jefferson), then it makes sense that Wordsworth sees God's presence in nature. In his poetry, nature represents truth, purity, and innocence, so the poet praises children and women as closer to God, because he sees them as closer to innocence. Wordsworth also highlights how the "other" revolution—namely, the industrial revolution—had begun to affect society in increasingly negative ways.

Wordsworth contrasts the pollution of urban areas with pristine nature, characterizing modern urban life as a loss of connection to spiritual values.

Wordsworth, however, is only one of many voices in Romanticism. If Wordsworth saw women as childlike in their innocence, other writers disputed whether that was, in fact, accurate (or desirable). Women responded to the debate about the rights of man by discussing the rights of women, leading to works such as *The Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1791), by Olympe de Gouges, and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), by Mary Wollstonecraft. If nature could be a source for inspired reflection in Wordsworth, it could also be dangerous. Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," which touches on the Romantic idea of poet as genius at the end, notes the thin line between genius and madness. Exceptional individuals as protagonists are the norm in Romanticism, in part from the (early) admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte. The admiration for Bonaparte, however, began to fade among many Romantic poets as he became a part of the monarchy and a more traditional figure of authority. One type of exceptional individual, the Romantic hero, has either rejected society or been rejected, and therefore is no longer constrained by society's rules (with the reminder that a Romantic hero is not necessarily romantic, but rather a product of Romanticism). Romantic heroes tend to be self-centered and arrogant, but are capable of compassion and even self-sacrifice, in some cases. A Byronic hero is a subset of Romantic hero, named for the poet Byron, who was described as "mad, bad, and dangerous to know." The distinction between the two types can get murky, since the Byronic hero is in some ways simply a bit more dangerous and alienated than the Romantic hero (in fact, characters such as Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Faust in Goethe's *Faust* have been called both by various literary scholars). Byronic heroes are more likely to have some guilty secret in the past, or some unnamed crime that is never revealed, which drives the characters' actions, and they are more likely to end tragically.

There were critiques of Romanticism even during the movement. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, she questions both Enlightenment views of science and Romanticism's view of the hero. The first narrator, Robert Walton, fails miserably to advance scientific exploration in the Arctic, while risking the lives of others. Similarly, Victor Frankenstein's self-absorbed behavior slowly destroys everyone around him. Victor's passivity and silence become more and more criminal as the novel progresses. Mary

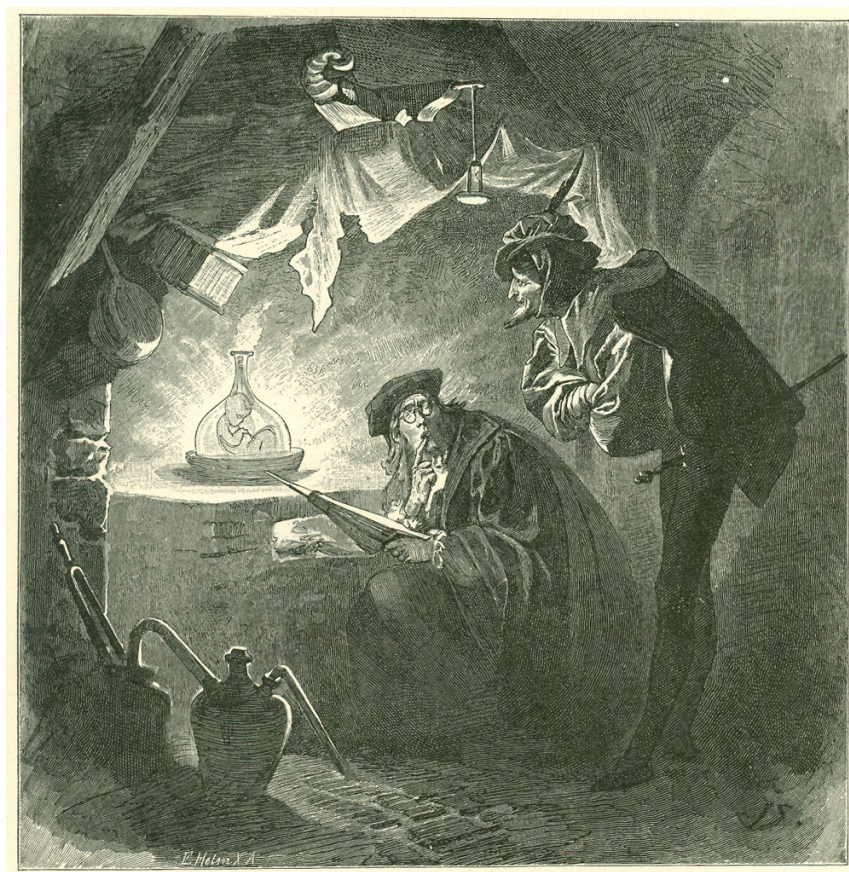
Shelley began the novel while she and her future husband, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, were spending time with Byron, which makes her critical analysis even more intriguing.



Victor Frankenstein becoming disgusted at his creation. Illustration from the frontispiece of the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Steel engraving by Theodore Von Holst. License: Public Domain.

The pinnacle of European Romanticism is Goethe's *Faust* (Part One, 1806; Part Two 1832). Its title character embodies many, if not most, of Romanticism's ideals: love of nature, emotional insights, individuality, and a never-ending search for knowledge and higher truth. Unlike Victor Frankenstein, Faust ultimately is successful in his search, although it comes

at a cost. Romantics did not see a world without pain; they saw emotions, including pain, as a conduit to greater understanding. Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) and *Les Misérables* (1862) address social injustice through the lens of Romanticism. The poetry of Mikhail Lermontov includes Byronic heroes and other outcasts from society, which also describes Aleksandr Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1832).



Homunculus in the phial. Famulus Wagner and Mephistopheles.
Illustration to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*. Part Two, Act II,
Laboratory. Illustrated by Franz Xaver Simm. License: Public Domain.

Literary movements are, of course, fluid and overlapping. Some scholars date the end of Romanticism to the early 1830s, while others extend Romanticism to as late as 1870. In British literature, Victorianism (1837-1901), which coincides with the reign of Queen Victoria, covers the transition from Romanticism to Realism; while poets such as Tennyson and Robert Browning are clearly descendants of Romanticism, their work contains realistic elements that do not technically fit into Romanticism. American Romanticism as a movement spanned roughly 1840-1865, and

while it owed its initial existence to British Romanticism, it developed its own vision of the movement. American Transcendentalism was an early version of Romanticism in America. Influenced by Unitarianism and Hindu texts, Transcendentalism posited that human beings are fundamentally good; as such, they need no authority, but can be trusted to use their intuition and imagination to understand the world around them. In fact, Transcendentalists believed that many aspects of society served only to corrupt human beings, so nature offered an escape from society: both a temporary respite and an alternative way of living. Nature's purity, it was thought, would restore mankind's purity. Over time, American Romanticism took on a character quite different from English Romanticism. With writers like Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, and Herman Melville, American literature started coming into its own, inspired not only by its own revolutionary past, but also by a different version of nature found in the American wilderness. As both Transcendentalism and Romanticism were slowly replaced by Realism, ideas such as rugged individualism continued in the American consciousness. In many ways, Romanticism lives on in popular culture; elements of Romanticism continue into the present day in literature, film, and television.

Written by Laura Getty

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Confessions

French

Romanticism

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the youngest son of a watchmaker, Isaac Rousseau. His mother died shortly after childbirth. It is with his father that he developed a passion for reading. When Rousseau was 10, his father was forced to place with the Lamercier family, to whom he was attached. During his teen years Rousseau attempted to complete an engraving apprenticeship, but ultimately left it. Later on, Rousseau became a record keeper for Madame de Warens. This position gave him time to attempt writing and studying philosophy. One of his most successful early pieces was in 1750. *A Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* or *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, was a treatise on how the modern condition had left behind the virtues and morality of earlier life. He would continue with this theme in such works as 1755's *Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality Among Mankind* (*Discours sur L'origine et les fondements de l'inegalite*) and 1761's *A Treatise on the Social Contract: Or, the Principles of Politic Law* (*Du Contrat social: ou, principes du droit politique*). His ideas often placed him on the opposite side of authority figures and religious institutes. *Confessions by Jean-Jacques Rousseau* is his attempt to catalog his development as an artist and person. The title is a reference to Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. In his attempt to examine his life and what molded him, Rousseau shares many details of his development and personal preferences that were not commonly discussed in polite society, such as his sexuality and education.

Consider while reading:

1. How does Rousseau characterize childhood in relation to becoming a young adult?
2. What Romantic principles do you see at play in his writing?
3. Relationships are at the center of the narrator's life. How do those relationships influence him? What larger points is Rousseau making?

4. Rousseau's narrator enjoys a connection to nature. What does he find liberating about it and why?

Written by Laura Ng

CONFESSIONS

License: Public Domain

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

BOOK I

I have entered upon a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.

I know my heart, and have studied mankind; I am not made like any one I have been acquainted with, perhaps like no one in existence; if not better, I at least claim originality, and whether Nature did wisely in breaking the mould with which she formed me, can only be determined after having read this work.

Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign judge with this book in my hand, and loudly proclaim, thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. With equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced superfluous ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory: I may have supposed that certain, which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted as truth, a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes vile and despicable, at others, virtuous, generous and sublime; even as thou hast read my inmost soul: Power eternal! assemble round thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, I was better than that man.

I was born at Geneva, in 1712, son of Isaac Rousseau and Susannah Bernard, citizens. My father's share of a moderate competency, which was divided among fifteen children, being very trivial, his business of a watchmaker (in which he had the reputation of great ingenuity) was his only dependence. My mother's circumstances were more affluent; she was daughter of a

Mons. Bernard, minister, and possessed a considerable share of modesty and beauty; indeed, my father found some difficulty in obtaining her hand.

The affection they entertained for each other was almost as early as their existence; at eight or nine years old they walked together every evening on the banks of the Treille, and before they were ten, could not support the idea of separation. A natural sympathy of soul confined those sentiments of predilection which habit at first produced; born with minds susceptible of the most exquisite sensibility and tenderness, it was only necessary to encounter similar dispositions; that moment fortunately presented itself, and each surrendered a willing heart.

The obstacles that opposed served only to give a decree of vivacity to their affection, and the young lover, not being able to obtain his mistress, was overwhelmed with sorrow and despair. She advised him to travel—to forget her. He consented—he travelled, but returned more passionate than ever, and had the happiness to find her equally constant, equally tender. After this proof of mutual affection, what could they resolve?—to dedicate their future lives to love! the resolution was ratified with a vow, on which Heaven shed its benediction.

Fortunately, my mother's brother, Gabriel Bernard, fell in love with one of my father's sisters; she had no objection to the match, but made the marriage of his sister with her brother an indispensable preliminary. Love soon removed every obstacle, and the two weddings were celebrated the same day: thus my uncle became the husband of my aunt, and their children were doubly cousins german. Before a year was expired, both had the happiness to become fathers, but were soon after obliged to submit to a separation.

My uncle Bernard, who was an engineer, went to serve in the empire and Hungary, under Prince Eugene, and distinguished himself both at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father, after the birth of my only brother, set off, on recommendation, for Constantinople, and was appointed watchmaker to the Seraglio. During his absence, the beauty, wit, and accomplishments of my mother attracted a number of admirers, among whom Mons. de la

Closure, Resident of France, was the most assiduous in his attentions.

[They were too brilliant for her situation, the minister, her father, having bestowed great pains on her education. She was taught drawing, singing, and to play on the theorbo; had learning, and wrote very agreeable verses. The following is an extempore piece which she composed in the absence of her husband and brother, in a conversation with some person relative to them, while walking with her sister-in-law, and their two children:

*Ces deux messieurs, qui sont absens,
Nous sont chers de bien des manieres;
Ce sont nos amis, nos amans,
Ce sont nos maris et nos freres,
Et les peres de ces enfans.*

These absent ones, who just claim
Our hearts, by every tender name,
To whom each wish extends
Our husbands and our brothers are,
The fathers of this blooming pair,
Our lovers and our friends.]

His passion must have been extremely violent, since after a period of thirty years I have seen him affected at the very mention of her name. My mother had a defence more powerful even than her virtue; she tenderly loved my father, and conjured him to return; his inclination seconding his request, he gave up every prospect of emolument, and hastened to Geneva.

I was the unfortunate fruit of this return, being born ten months after, in a very weakly and infirm state; my birth cost my mother her life, and was the first of my misfortunes. I am ignorant how my father supported her loss at that time, but I know he was ever after inconsolable. In me he still thought he saw her he so tenderly lamented, but could never forget I had been the innocent cause of his misfortune, nor did he ever embrace me, but his sighs, the convulsive pressure of his arms, witnessed that a bitter regret mingled itself with his caresses, though, as may be supposed, they were not on this account less ardent. When he said to me, "Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother," my usual reply

was, "Yes, father, but then, you know, we shall cry," and immediately the tears started from his eyes. "Ah!" exclaimed he, with agitation, "Give me back my wife; at least console me for her loss; fill up, dear boy, the void she has left in my soul. Could I love thee thus wert thou only my son?" Forty years after this loss he expired in the arms of his second wife, but the name of the first still vibrated on his lips, still was her image engraved on his heart.

Such were the authors of my being: of all the gifts it had pleased Heaven to bestow on them, a feeling heart was the only one that descended to me; this had been the source of their felicity, it was the foundation of all my misfortunes.

I came into the world with so few signs of life, that they entertained but little hope of preserving me, with the seeds of a disorder that has gathered strength with years, and from which I am now relieved at intervals, only to suffer a different, though more intolerable evil. I owed my preservation to one of my father's sisters, an amiable and virtuous girl, who took the most tender care of me; she is yet living, nursing, at the age of four-score, a husband younger than herself, but worn out with excessive drinking. Dear aunt! I freely forgive your having preserved my life, and only lament that it is not in my power to bestow on the decline of your days the tender solicitude and care you lavished on the first dawn of mine. My nurse, Jaqueline, is likewise living: and in good health—the hands that opened my eyes to the light of this world may close them at my death. We suffer before we think; it is the common lot of humanity. I experienced more than my proportion of it. I have no knowledge of what passed prior to my fifth or sixth year; I recollect nothing of learning to read, I only remember what effect the first considerable exercise of it produced on my mind; and from that moment I date an uninterrupted knowledge of myself.

Every night, after supper, we read some part of a small collection of romances which had been my mother's. My father's design was only to improve me in reading, and he thought these entertaining works were calculated to give me a fondness for it; but we soon found ourselves so interested in the adventures they contained, that we alternately read whole nights together, and

could not bear to give over until at the conclusion of a volume. Sometimes, in a morning, on hearing the swallows at our window, my father, quite ashamed of this weakness, would cry, "Come, come, let us go to bed; I am more a child than thou art."

I soon acquired, by this dangerous custom, not only an extreme facility in reading and comprehending, but, for my age, a too intimate acquaintance with the passions. An infinity of sensations were familiar to me, without possessing any precise idea of the objects to which they related—I had conceived nothing—I had felt the whole. This confused succession of emotions did not retard the future efforts of my reason, though they added an extravagant, romantic notion of human life, which experience and reflection have never been able to eradicate.

My romance reading concluded with the summer of 1719, the following winter was differently employed. My mother's library being quite exhausted, we had recourse to that part of her father's which had devolved to us; here we happily found some valuable books, which was by no means extraordinary, having been selected by a minister that truly deserved that title, in whom learning (which was the rage of the times) was but a secondary commendation, his taste and good sense being most conspicuous. The history of the Church and Empire by Le Sueur, Bossuett's Discourses on Universal History, Plutarch's Lives, the history of Venice by Nani, Ovid's Metamorphoses, La Bruyere, Fontenelle's World, his Dialogues of the Dead, and a few volumes of Moliere, were soon ranged in my father's closet, where, during the hours he was employed in his business, I daily read them, with an avidity and taste uncommon, perhaps unprecedented at my age.

Plutarch presently became my greatest favorite. The satisfaction I derived from repeated readings I gave this author, extinguished my passion for romances, and I shortly preferred Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides, to Orondates, Artemenes, and Juba. These interesting studies, seconded by the conversations they frequently occasioned with my father, produced that republican spirit and love of liberty, that haughty and invincible turn of mind, which rendered me impatient of restraint or servitude, and became the torment of my life, as I continually

found myself in situations incompatible with these sentiments. Incessantly occupied with Rome and Athens, conversing, if I may so express myself with their illustrious heroes; born the citizen of a republic, of a father whose ruling passion was a love of his country, I was fired with these examples; could fancy myself a Greek or Roman, and readily give into the character of the personage whose life I read; transported by the recital of any extraordinary instance of fortitude or intrepidity, animation flashed from my eyes, and gave my voice additional strength and energy. One day, at table, while relating the fortitude of Scœvola, they were terrified at seeing me start from my seat and hold my hand over a hot chafing—dish, to represent more forcibly the action of that determined Roman.

My brother, who was seven years older than myself, was brought up to my father's profession. The extraordinary affection they lavished on me might be the reason he was too much neglected: this certainly was a fault which cannot be justified. His education and morals suffered by this neglect, and he acquired the habits of a libertine before he arrived at an age to be really one. My father tried what effect placing him with a master would produce, but he still persisted in the same ill conduct. Though I saw him so seldom that it could hardly be said we were acquainted, I loved him tenderly, and believe he had as strong an affection for me as a youth of his dissipated turn of mind could be supposed capable of. One day, I remember, when my father was correcting him severely, I threw myself between them, embracing my brother, whom I covered with my body, receiving the strokes designed for him; I persisted so obstinately in my protection, that either softened by my cries and tears, or fearing to hurt me most, his anger subsided, and he pardoned his fault. In the end, my brother's conduct became so bad that he suddenly disappeared, and we learned some time after that he was in Germany, but he never wrote to us, and from that day we heard no news of him: thus I became an only son.

If this poor lad was neglected, it was quite different with his brother, for the children of a king could not be treated with more attention and tenderness than were bestowed on my infancy,

being the darling of the family; and what is rather uncommon, though treated as a beloved, never a spoiled child; was never permitted, while under paternal inspection, to play in the street with other children; never had any occasion to contradict or indulge those fantastical humors which are usually attributed to nature, but are in reality the effects of an injudicious education. I had the faults common to my age, was talkative, a glutton, and sometimes a liar, made no scruple of stealing sweetmeats, fruits, or, indeed, any kind of eatables; but never took delight in mischievous waste, in accusing others, or tormenting harmless animals. I recollect, indeed, that one day, while Madam Clot, a neighbor of ours, was gone to church, I made water in her kettle: the remembrance even now makes me smile, for Madame Clot (though, if you please, a good sort of creature) was one of the most tedious grumbling old women I ever knew. Thus have I given a brief, but faithful, history of my childish transgressions.

How could I become cruel or vicious, when I had before my eyes only examples of mildness, and was surrounded by some of the best people in the world? My father, my aunt, my nurse, my relations, our friends, our neighbors, all I had any connection with, did not obey me, it is true, but loved me tenderly, and I returned their affection. I found so little to excite my desires, and those I had were so seldom contradicted, that I was hardly sensible of possessing any, and can solemnly aver I was an absolute stranger to caprice until after I had experienced the authority of a master.

Those hours that were not employed in reading or writing with my father, or walking with my governess, Jaqueline, I spent with my aunt; and whether seeing her embroider, or hearing her sing, whether sitting or standing by her side, I was ever happy. Her tenderness and unaffected gayety, the charms of her figure and countenance have left such indelible impressions on my mind, that her manner, look, and attitude are still before my eyes; I recollect a thousand little caressing questions; could describe her clothes, her head-dress, nor have the two curls of fine black hair which hung on her temples, according to the mode of that time, escaped my memory.

Though my taste, or rather passion, for music, did not show itself until a considerable time after, I am fully persuaded it is to her I am indebted for it. She knew a great number of songs, which she sung with great sweetness and melody. The serenity and cheerfulness which were conspicuous in this lovely girl, banished melancholy, and made all round her happy.

The charms of her voice had such an effect on me, that not only several of her songs have ever since remained on my memory, but some I have not thought of from my infancy, as I grow old, return upon my mind with a charm altogether inexpressible. Would any one believe that an old dotard like me, worn out with care and infirmity, should sometime surprise himself weeping like a child, and in a voice querulous, and broken by age, muttering out one of those airs which were the favorites of my infancy? There is one song in particular, whose tune I perfectly recollect, but the words that compose the latter half of it constantly refuse every effort to recall them, though I have a confused idea of the rhymes. The beginning, with what I have been able to recollect of the remainder, is as follows:

*Tircis, je n'ose
Ecouter ton Chalumeau
Sous l'Ormeau;
Car on en cause
Deja dans notre hameau.*

— — — — —
— — — — — un Berger
*s'engager
sans danger,
Et toujours l'épine est sous la rose.*

I have endeavored to account for the invincible charm my heart feels on the recollection of this fragment, but it is altogether inexplicable. I only know, that before I get to the end of it, I always find my voice interrupted by tenderness, and my eyes suffused with tears. I have a hundred times formed the resolution of writing to Paris for the remainder of these words, if any one should chance to know them: but I am almost certain the pleasure

I take in the recollection would be greatly diminished was I assured any one but my poor aunt Susan had sung them.

Such were my affections on entering this life. Thus began to form and demonstrate itself, a heart, at once haughty and tender, a character effeminate, yet invincible; which, fluctuating between weakness and courage, luxury and virtue, has ever set me in contradiction to myself; causing abstinence and enjoyment, pleasure and prudence, equally to shun me.

This course of education was interrupted by an accident, whose consequences influenced the rest of my life. My father had a quarrel with M. G——, who had a captain's commission in France, and was related to several of the Council. This G——, who was an insolent, ungenerous man, happening to bleed at the nose, in order to be revenged, accused my father of having drawn his sword on him in the city, and in consequence of this charge they were about to conduct him to prison. He insisted (according to the law of this republic) that the accuser should be confined at the same time; and not being able to obtain this, preferred a voluntary banishment for the remainder of his life, to giving up a point by which he must sacrifice his honor and liberty.

25

I remained under the tuition of my uncle Bernard, who was at that time employed in the fortifications of Geneva. He had lost his eldest daughter, but had a son about my own age, and we were sent together to Bossey, to board with the Minister Lamercier. Here we were to learn Latin, with all the insignificant trash that has obtained the name of education.

Two years spent in this village softened, in some degree, my Roman fierceness, and again reduced me to a state of childhood. At Geneva, where nothing was exacted, I loved reading, which was, indeed, my principal amusement; but, at Bossey, where application was expected, I was fond of play as a relaxation. The country was so new, so charming in my idea, that it seemed impossible to find satiety in its enjoyments, and I conceived a passion for rural life, which time has not been able to extinguish; nor have I ever ceased to regret the pure and tranquil pleasures I enjoyed at this place in my childhood; the remembrance having

followed me through every age, even to that in which I am hastening again towards it.

M. Lambercier was a worthy, sensible man, who, without neglecting our instruction, never made our acquisitions burthensome, or tasks tedious. What convinces me of the rectitude of his method is, that notwithstanding my extreme aversion to restraint, the recollection of my studies is never attended with disgust; and, if my improvement was trivial, it was obtained with ease, and has never escaped memory.

The simplicity of this rural life was of infinite advantage in opening my heart to the reception of true friendship. The sentiments I had hitherto formed on this subject were extremely elevated, but altogether imaginary. The habit of living in this peaceful manner soon united me tenderly to my cousin Bernard; my affection was more ardent than that I had felt for my brother, nor has time ever been able to efface it. He was a tall, lank, weakly boy, with a mind as mild as his body was feeble, and who did not wrong the good opinion they were disposed to entertain for the son of my guardian. Our studies, amusements, and tasks, were the same; we were alone; each wanted a playmate; to separate would in some measure, have been to annihilate us. Though we had not many opportunities of demonstrating our attachment to each other, it was certainly extreme; and so far from enduring the thought of separation, we could not even form an idea that we should ever be able to submit to it. Each of a disposition to be won by kindness, and complaisant, when not soured by contradiction, we agreed in every particular. If, by the favor of those who governed us he had the ascendant while in their presence, I was sure to acquire it when we were alone, and this preserved the equilibrium so necessary in friendship. If he hesitated in repeating his task, I prompted him; when my exercises were finished, I helped to write his; and, in our amusements, my disposition being most active, ever had the lead. In a word, our characters accorded so well, and the friendship that subsisted between us was so cordial, that during the five years we were at Bossey and Geneva we were inseparable: we often fought, it is true, but there never was any occasion to separate us.

No one of our quarrels lasted more than a quarter of an hour, and never in our lives did we make any complaint of each other. It may be said, these remarks are frivolous; but, perhaps, a similiar example among children can hardly be produced.

The manner in which I passed my time at Bossey was so agreeable to my disposition, that it only required a longer duration absolutely to have fixed my character, which would have had only peaceable, affectionate, benevolent sentiments for its basis. I believe no individual of our kind ever possessed less natural vanity than myself. At intervals, by an extraordinary effort, I arrived at sublime ideas, but presently sunk again into my original languor. To be loved by every one who knew me was my most ardent wish. I was naturally mild, my cousin was equally so, and those who had the care of us were of similiar dispositions. Everything contributed to strengthen those propensities which nature had implanted in my breast, and during the two years I was neither the victim nor witness of any violent emotions.

I knew nothing so delightful as to see every one content, not only with me, but all that concerned them. When repeating our catechism at church, nothing could give me greater vexation, on being obliged to hesitate, than to see Miss Lambercier's countenance express disapprobation and uneasiness. This alone was more afflicting to me than the shame of faltering before so many witnesses, which, notwithstanding, was sufficiently painful; for though not oversolicitous of praise, I was feelingly alive to shame; yet I can truly affirm, the dread of being reprimanded by Miss Lambercier alarmed me less than the thought of making her uneasy.

Neither she nor her brother were deficient in a reasonable severity, but as this was scarce ever exerted without just cause, I was more afflicted at their disapprobation than the punishment. Certainly the method of treating youth would be altered if the distant effects this indiscriminate, and frequently indiscreet method produces, were more conspicuous. I would willingly excuse myself from a further explanation, did not the lesson this example conveys (which points out an evil as frequent as it is pernicious) forbid my silence.

As Miss Lamercier felt a mother's affection, she sometimes exerted a mother's authority, even to inflicting on us when we deserved it, the punishment of infants. She had often threatened it, and this threat of a treatment entirely new, appeared to me extremely dreadful; but I found the reality much less terrible than the idea, and what is still more unaccountable, this punishment increased my affection for the person who had inflicted it. All this affection, aided by my natural mildness, was scarcely sufficient to prevent my seeking, by fresh offences, a return of the same chastisement; for a degree of sensuality had mingled with the smart and shame, which left more desire than fear of a repetition. I was well convinced the same discipline from her brother would have produced a quite contrary effect; but from a man of his disposition this was not probable, and if I abstained from meriting correction it was merely from a fear of offending Miss Lamercier, for benevolence, aided by the passions, has ever maintained an empire over me which has given law to my heart.

This event, which, though desirable, I had not endeavored to accelerate, arrived without my fault; I should say, without my seeking; and I profited by it with a safe conscience; but this second, was also the last time, for Miss Lamercier, who doubtless had some reason to imagine this chastisement did not produce the desired effect, declared it was too fatiguing, and that she renounced it for the future. Till now we had slept in her chamber, and during the winter, even in her bed; but two days after another room was prepared for us, and from that moment I had the honor (which I could very well have dispensed with) of being treated by her as a great boy.

Who would believe this childish discipline, received at eight years old, from the hands of a woman of thirty, should influence my propensities, my desires, my passions, for the rest of my life, and that in quite a contrary sense from what might naturally have been expected? The very incident that inflamed my senses, gave my desires such an extraordinary turn, that, confined to what I had already experienced, I sought no further, and, with blood boiling with sensuality, almost from my birth, preserved my purity beyond the age when the coldest constitutions lose their

insensibility; long tormented, without knowing by what, I gazed on every handsome woman with delight; imagination incessantly brought their charms to my remembrance, only to transform them into so many Miss Lamberciers.

If ever education was perfectly chaste, it was certainly that I received; my three aunts were not only of exemplary prudence, but maintained a degree of modest reserve which women have long since thought unnecessary. My father, it is true, loved pleasure, but his gallantry was rather of the last than the present century, and he never expressed his affection for any woman he regarded in terms a virgin could have blushed at; indeed, it was impossible more attention should be paid to that regard we owe the morals of children than was uniformly observed by every one I had any concern with. An equal degree of reserve in this particular was observed at M. Lambercier's, where a good maid-servant was discharged for having once made use of an expression before us which was thought to contain some degree of indelicacy. I had no precise idea of the ultimate effect of the passions, but the conception I had formed was extremely disgusting; I entertained a particular aversion for courtesans, nor could I look on a rake without a degree of disdain mingled with terror.

These prejudices of education, proper in themselves to retard the first explosions of a combustible constitution, were strengthened, as I have already hinted, by the effect the first moments of sensuality produced in me, for notwithstanding the troublesome ebullition of my blood, I was satisfied with the species of voluptuousness I had already been acquainted with, and sought no further.

Thus I passed the age of puberty, with a constitution extremely ardent, without knowing or even wishing for any other gratification of the passions than what Miss Lambercier had innocently given me an idea of; and when I became a man, that childish taste, instead of vanishing, only associated with the other. This folly, joined to a natural timidity, has always prevented my being very enterprising with women, so that I have passed my

days in languishing in silence for those I most admired, without daring to disclose my wishes.

To fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon, were for me the most exquisite enjoyments, and the more my blood was inflamed by the efforts of a lively imagination the more I acquired the appearance of a whining lover.

It will be readily conceived that this mode of making love is not attended with a rapid progress or imminent danger to the virtue of its object; yet, though I have few favors to boast of, I have not been excluded from enjoyment, however imaginary. Thus the senses, in concurrence with a mind equally timid and romantic, have preserved my moral chaste, and feelings uncorrupted, with precisely the same inclinations, which, seconded with a moderate portion of effrontery, might have plunged me into the most unwarrantable excesses.

40

I have made the first, most difficult step, in the obscure and painful maze of my Confessions. We never feel so great a degree of repugnance in divulging what is really criminal, as what is merely ridiculous. I am now assured of my resolution, for after what I have dared disclose, nothing can have power to deter me. The difficulty attending these acknowledgments will be readily conceived, when I declare, that during the whole of my life, though frequently laboring under the most violent agitation, being hurried away with the impetuosity of a passion which (when in company with those I loved) deprived me of the faculty of sight and hearing, I could never, in the course of the most unbounded familiarity, acquire sufficient resolution to declare my folly, and implore the only favor that remained to bestow.

In thus investigating the first traces of my sensible existence, I find elements, which, though seemingly incompatible, have united to produce a simple and uniform effect; while others, apparently the same, have, by the concurrence of certain circumstances, formed such different combinations, that it would never be imagined they had any affinity; who would believe, for example, that one of the most vigorous springs of my soul was tempered in the identical source from whence luxury and ease

mingled with my constitution and circulated in my veins? Before I quit this subject, I will add a striking instance of the different effects they produced.

One day, while I was studying in a chamber contiguous to the kitchen, the maid set some of Miss Lambercier's combs to dry by the fire, and on coming to fetch them some time after, was surprised to find the teeth of one of them broken off. Who could be suspected of this mischief? No one but myself had entered the room: I was questioned, but denied having any knowledge of it. Mr. and Miss Lambercier consult, exhort, threaten, but all to no purpose; I obstinately persist in the denial; and, though this was the first time I had been detected in a confirmed falsehood, appearances were so strong that they overthrew all my protestations. This affair was thought serious; the mischief, the lie, the obstinacy, were considered equally deserving of punishment, which was not now to be administered by Miss Lambercier. My uncle Bernard was written to; he arrived; and my poor cousin being charged with a crime no less serious, we were conducted to the same execution, which was inflicted with great severity. If finding a remedy in the evil itself, they had sought ever to allay my depraved desires, they could not have chosen a shorter method to accomplish their designs, and, I can assure my readers, I was for a long time freed from the dominion of them.

As this severity could not draw from me the expected acknowledgment, which obstinacy brought on several repetitions, and reduced me to a deplorable situation, yet I was immovable, and resolutely determined to suffer death rather than submit. Force, at length, was obliged to yield to the diabolical infatuation of a child, for no better name was bestowed on my constancy, and I came out of this dreadful trial, torn, it is true, but triumphant. Fifty years have expired since this adventure—the fear of punishment is no more. Well, then, I aver, in the face of Heaven, I was absolutely innocent: and, so far from breaking, or even touching the comb, never came near the fire. It will be asked, how did this mischief happen? I can form no conception of it, I only know my own innocence.

Let any one figure to himself a character whose leading traits were docility and timidity, but haughty, ardent, and invincible, in its passions; a child, hitherto governed by the voice of reason, treated with mildness, equity, and complaisance, who could not even support the idea of injustice, experiencing, for the first time, so violent an instance of it, inflicted by those he most loved and respected. What perversion of ideas! What confusion in the heart, the brain, in all my little being, intelligent and moral!—let any one, I say, if possible, imagine all this, for I am incapable of giving the least idea of what passed in my mind at that period.

My reason was not sufficiently established to enable me to put myself in the place of others, and judge how much appearances condemned me, I only beheld the rigor of a dreadful chastisement, inflicted for a crime I had not committed; yet I can truly affirm, the smart I suffered, though violent, was inconsiderable compared to what I felt from indignation, rage, and despair. My cousin, who was almost in similar circumstances, having been punished for an involuntary fault as guilty of a premeditated crime, became furious by my example. Both in the same bed, we embraced each other with convulsive transport; we were almost suffocated; and when our young hearts found sufficient relief to breathe out our indignation, we sat up in the bed, and with all our force, repeated a hundred times, Carnifex! Carnifex! Carnifex! executioner, tormentor.

Even while I write this I feel my pulse quicken, and should I live a hundred thousand years, the agitation of that moment would still be fresh in my memory. The first instance of violence and oppression is so deeply engraved on my soul, that every relative idea renews my emotion: the sentiment of indignation, which in its origin had reference only to myself, has acquired such strength, and is at present so completely detached from personal motives, that my heart is as much inflamed at the sight or relation of any act of injustice (whatever may be the object, or wheresoever it may be perpetrated) as if I was the immediate sufferer. When I read the history of a merciless tyrant, or the dark and the subtle machination of a knavish designing priest, I could

on the instant set off to stab the miscreants, though I was certain to perish in the attempt.

I have frequently fatigued myself by running after and stoning a cock, a cow, a dog, or any animal I saw tormenting another, only because it was conscious of possessing superior strength. This may be natural to me, and I am inclined to believe it is, though the lively impression of the first injustice I became the victim of was too long and too powerfully remembered not to have added considerable force to it.

This occurrence terminated my infantine serenity; from that moment I ceased to enjoy a pure unadulterated happiness, and on a retrospection of the pleasure of my childhood, I yet feel they ended here. We continue at Bossey some months after this event, but were like our first parents in the Garden of Eden after they had lost their innocence; in appearance our situation was the same, in effect it was totally different.

Affection, respect; intimacy, confidence, no longer attached the pupils to their guides; we beheld them no longer as divinities, who could read the secrets of our hearts; we were less ashamed of committing faults, more afraid of being accused of them: we learned to dissemble, to rebel, to lie: all the vices common to our years began to corrupt our happy innocence, mingle with our sports, and embitter our amusements. The country itself, losing those sweet and simple charms which captivate the heart, appeared a gloomy desert, or covered with a veil that concealed its beauties. We cultivated our little gardens no more: our flowers were neglected. We no longer scratched away the mould, and broke out into exclamations of delight, on discovering that the grain we had sown began to shoot. We were disgusted with our situation; our preceptors were weary of us. In a word, my uncle wrote for our return, and we left Mr. and Miss Lambercier without feeling any regret at the separation.

50

Near thirty years passed away from my leaving Bossey, without once recalling the place to my mind with any degree of satisfaction; but after having passed the prime of life, as I decline into old age (while more recent occurrences are wearing out apace) I feel these remembrances revive and imprint themselves

on my heart, with a force and charm that every day acquires fresh strength; as if, feeling life fleet from me, I endeavored to catch it again by its commencement. The most trifling incident of those happy days delight me, for no other reason than being of those days. I recall every circumstance of time, place, and persons; I see the maid or footman busy in the chamber, a swallow entering the window, a fly settling on my hand while repeating my lessons. I see the whole economy of the apartment; on the right hand Mr. Lamercier's closet, with a print representing all the popes, a barometer, a large almanac, the windows of the house (which stood in a hollow at the bottom of the garden) shaded by raspberry shrubs, whose shoots sometimes found entrance; I am sensible the reader has no occasion to know all this, but I feel a kind of necessity for relating it. Why am I not permitted to recount all the little anecdotes of that thrice happy age, at the recollection of whose joys I ever tremble with delight? Five or six particularly—let us compromise the matter—I will give up five, but then I must have one, and only one, provided I may draw it out to its utmost length, in order to prolong my satisfaction.

If I only sought yours, I should choose that of Miss Lamercier's backside, which by an unlucky fall at the bottom of the meadow, was exposed to the view of the King of Sardinia, who happened to be passing by; but that of the walnut tree on the terrace is more amusing to me, since here I was an actor, whereas, in the abovementioned scene I was only a spectator; and I must confess I see nothing that should occasion risibility in an accident, which, however laughable in itself, alarmed me for a person I loved as a mother, or perhaps something more.

Ye curious readers, whose expectations are already on the stretch for the noble history of the terrace, listen to the tragedy, and abstain from trembling, if you can, at the horrible catastrophe!

At the outside of the courtyard door, on the left hand, was a terrace; here they often sat after dinner; but it was subject to one inconvenience, being too much exposed to the rays of the sun; to obviate this defect, Mr. Lamercier had a walnut tree set there, the planting of which was attended with great solemnity. The two

boarders were godfathers, and while the earth was replacing round the root, each held the tree with one hand, singing songs of triumph. In order to water it with more effect, they formed a kind of luson around its foot: myself and cousin, who were every day ardent spectators of this watering, confirmed each other in the very natural idea that it was nobler to plant trees on the terrace than colors on a breach, and this glory we were resolved to procure without dividing it with any one.

In pursuance of this resolution, we cut a slip off a willow, and planted it on the terrace, at about eight or ten feet distance from the august walnut tree. We did not forget to make a hollow round it, but the difficulty was how to procure a supply of water, which was brought from a considerable distance, and we not permitted to fetch it: but water was absolutely necessary for our willow, and we made use of every stratagem to obtain it.

55

For a few days everything succeeded so well that it began to bud, and throw out small leaves, which we hourly measured convinced (tho' now scarce a foot from the ground) it would soon afford us a refreshing shade. This unfortunate willow, by engrossing our whole time, rendered us incapable of application to any other study, and the cause of our inattention not being known, we were kept closer than before. The fatal moment approached when water must fail, and we were already afflicted with the idea that our tree must perish with drought. At length necessity, the parent of industry, suggested an invention, by which we might save our tree from death, and ourselves from despair; it was to make a furrow underground, which would privately conduct a part of the water from the walnut tree to our willow. This undertaking was executed with ardor, but did not immediately succeed—our descent was not skilfully planned—the water did not run, the earth falling in and stopping up the furrow; yet, though all went contrary, nothing discouraged us, '*omnia vincit labor improbus*'. We made the bason deeper, to give the water a more sensible descent; we cut the bottom of a box into narrow planks; increased the channel from the walnut tree to our willow and laying a row flat at the bottom, set two others inclining towards each other, so as to form a triangular channel;

we formed a kind of grating with small sticks at the end next the walnut tree, to prevent the earth and stones from stopping it up, and having carefully covered our work with well-trodden earth, in a transport of hope and fear attended the hour of watering. After an interval, which seemed an age of expectation, this hour arrived. Mr. Lambercier, as usual, assisted at the operation; we contrived to get between him and our tree, towards which he fortunately turned his back. They no sooner began to pour the first pail of water, than we perceived it running to the willow; this sight was too much for our prudence, and we involuntarily expressed our transport by a shout of joy. The sudden exclamation made Mr. Lambercier turn about, though at that instant he was delighted to observe how greedily the earth, which surrounded the root of his walnut tree, imbibed the water. Surprised at seeing two trenches partake of it, he shouted in his turn, examines, perceives the roguery, and, sending instantly for a pick axe, at one fatal blow makes two or three of our planks fly, crying out meantime with all his strength, an aqueduct! an aqueduct! His strokes redoubled, every one of which made an impression on our hearts; in a moment the planks, the channel, the bason, even our favorite willow, all were ploughed up, nor was one word pronounced during this terrible transaction, except the above mentioned exclamation. An aqueduct! repeated he, while destroying all our hopes, an aqueduct! an aqueduct!

It maybe supposed this adventure had a still more melancholy end for the young architects; this, however, was not the case; the affair ended here. Mr. Lambercier never reproached us on this account, nor was his countenance clouded with a frown; we even heard him mention the circumstance to his sister with loud bursts of laughter. The laugh of Mr. Lambercier might be heard to a considerable distance. But what is still more surprising after the first transport of sorrow had subsided, we did not find ourselves violently afflicted; we planted a tree in another spot, and frequently recollected the catastrophe of the former, repeating with a significant emphasis, an aqueduct! an aqueduct! Till then, at intervals, I had fits of ambition, and could fancy myself Brutus or Aristides, but this was the first visible effect of my vanity. To

have constructed an aqueduct with our own hands, to have set a slip of willow in competition with a flourishing tree, appeared to me a supreme degree of glory! I had a juster conception of it at ten than Caesar entertained at thirty.

The idea of this walnut tree, with the little anecdotes it gave rise to, have so well continued, or returned to my memory, that the design which conveyed the most pleasing sensations, during my journey to Geneva, in the year 1754, was visiting Bossey, and reviewing the monuments of my infantine amusement, above all, the beloved walnut tree, whose age at that time must have been verging on a third of a century, but I was so beset with company that I could not find a moment to accomplish my design. There is little appearance now of the occasion being renewed; but should I ever return to that charming spot, and find my favorite walnut tree still existing, I am convinced I should water it with my tears.

On my return to Geneva, I passed two or three years at my uncle's, expecting the determination of my friends respecting my future establishment. His own son being devoted to genius, was taught drawing, and instructed by his father in the elements of Euclid; I partook of these instructions, but was principally fond of drawing. Meantime, they were irresolute, whether to make me a watchmaker, a lawyer, or a minister. I should have preferred being a minister, as I thought it must be a charming thing to preach, but the trifling income which had been my mother's, and was to be divided between my brother and myself, was too inconsiderable to defray the expense attending the prosecution of my studies. As my age did not render the choice very pressing, I remained with my uncle, passing my time with very little improvement, and paying pretty dear, though not unreasonably, for my board.

My uncle, like my father, was a man of pleasure, but had not learned, like him, to abridge his amusements for the sake of instructing his family, consequently our education was neglected. My aunt was a devotee, who loved singing psalms better than thinking of our improvement, so that we were left entirely to ourselves, which liberty we never abused.

Ever inseparable, we were all the world to each other; and, feeling no inclination to frequent the company of a number of

disorderly lads of our own age, we learned none of those habits of libertinism to which our idle life exposed us. Perhaps I am wrong in charging myself and cousin with idleness at this time, for, in our lives, we were never less so; and what was extremely fortunate, so incessantly occupied with our amusements, that we found no temptation to spend any part of our time in the streets. We made cages, pipes, kites, drums, houses, ships, and bows; spoiled the tools of my good old grandfather by endeavoring to make watches in imitation of him; but our favorite amusement was wasting paper, in drawing, washing, coloring, etc. There came an Italian mountebank to Geneva, called Gamber-Corta, who had an exhibition of puppets, that he made play a kind of comedy. We went once to see them, but could not spare time to go again, being busily employed in making puppets of our own and inventing comedies, which we immediately set about making them perform, mimicking to the best of our abilities the uncouth voice of Punch; and, to complete the business, my good aunt and uncle Bernard had the patience to see and listen to our imitations; but my uncle, having one day read an elaborate discourse to his family, we instantly gave up our comedies, and began composing sermons.

These details, I confess, are not very amusing, but they serve to demonstrate that the former part of our education was well directed, since being, at such an early age, the absolute masters of our time, we found no inclination to abuse it; and so little in want of other companions, that we constantly neglected every occasion of seeking them. When taking our walks together, we observed their diversions without feeling any inclination to partake of them. Friendship so entirely occupied our hearts, that, pleased with each other's company the simplest pastimes were sufficient to delight us.

We were soon remarked for being thus inseparable: and what rendered us more conspicuous, my cousin was very tall, myself extremely short, so that we exhibited a very whimsical contrast. This meagre figure, small, sallow countenance, heavy air, and supine gait, excited the ridicule of the children, who, in the gibberish of the country, nicknamed him 'Barna Bredanna'; and

we no sooner got out of doors than our ears were assailed with a repetition of "Barna Bredanna." He bore this indignity with tolerable patience, but I was instantly for fighting. This was what the young rogues aimed at. I engaged accordingly, and was beat. My poor cousin did all in his power to assist me, but he was weak, and a single stroke brought him to the ground. I then became furious, and received several smart blows, some of which were aimed at 'Barna Bredanna'. This quarrel so far increased the evil, that, to avoid their insults, we could only show ourselves in the streets while they were employed at school.

I had already become a redresser of grievances; there only wanted a lady in the way to be a knight-errant in form. This defect was soon supplied; I presently had two. I frequently went to see my father at Nion, a small city in the Vaudois country, where he was now settled. Being universally respected, the affection entertained for him extended to me: and, during my visits, the question seemed to be, who should show me most kindness. A Madame de Vulson, in particular, loaded me with caresses; and, to complete all, her daughter made me her gallant. I need not explain what kind of gallant a boy of eleven must be to a girl of two and twenty; the artful hussies know how to set these puppets up in front, to conceal more serious engagements. On my part I saw no inequality between myself and Miss Vulson, was flattered by the circumstance, and went into it with my whole heart, or rather my whole head, for this passion certainly reached no further, though it transported me almost to madness, and frequently produced scenes sufficient to make even a cynic expire with laughter.

I have experienced two kinds of love, equally real, which have scarce any affinity, yet each differing materially from tender friendship. My whole life has been divided between these affections, and I have frequently felt the power of both at the same instant. For example, at the very time I so publically and tyrannically claimed Miss Vulson, that I could not suffer any other of my sex to approach her, I had short, but passionate, assignations with a Miss Goton, who thought proper to act the schoolmistress with me. Our meetings, though absolutely

childish, afforded me the height of happiness. I felt the whole charm of mystery, and repaid Miss Vulson in kind, when she least expected it, the use she made of me in concealing her amours. To my great mortification, this secret was soon discovered, and I presently lost my young schoolmistress.

Miss Goton was, in fact, a singular personage. She was not handsome, yet there was a certain something in her figure which could not easily be forgotten, and this for an old fool, I am too often convinced of. Her eyes, in particular, neither corresponded with her age, her height, nor her manner; she had a lofty imposing air, which agreed extremely well with the character she assumed, but the most extraordinary part of her composition was a mixture of forwardness and reserve difficult to be conceived; and while she took the greatest liberties with me, would never permit any to be taken with her in return, treating me precisely like a child. This makes me suppose she had either ceased herself to be one, or was yet sufficiently so to behold as play the danger to which this folly exposed her.

I was so absolutely in the power of both these mistresses, that when in the presence of either, I never thought of her who was absent; in other respects, the effects they produced on me bore no affinity. I could have passed my whole life with Miss Vulson, without forming a wish to quit her; but then, my satisfaction was attended with a pleasing serenity; and, in numerous companies, I was particularly charmed with her. The sprightly sallies of her wit, the arch glance of her eye, even jealousy itself, strengthened my attachment, and I triumphed in the preference she seemed to bestow on me, while addressed by more powerful rivals; applause, encouragement, and smiles, gave animation to my happiness. Surrounded by a throng of observers, I felt the whole force of love—I was passionate, transported; in a tete-a-tete, I should have been constrained, thoughtful, perhaps unhappy. If Miss Vulson was ill, I suffered with her; would willingly have given up my own health to establish hers (and, observe I knew the want of it from experience); if absent, she employed my thoughts, I felt the want of her; when present, her caresses came with warmth and rapture to my heart, though my senses were

unaffected. The familiarities she bestowed on me I could not have supported the idea of her granting to another; I loved her with a brother's affection only, but experienced all the jealousy of a lover.

With Miss Goton this passion might have acquired a degree of fury; I should have been a Turk, a tiger, had I once imagined she bestowed her favors on any but myself. The pleasure I felt on approaching Miss Vulson was sufficiently ardent, though unattended with uneasy sensations; but at sight of Miss Goton, I felt myself bewildered—every sense was absorbed in ecstasy. I believe it would have been impossible to have remained long with her; I must have been suffocated with the violence of my palpitations. I equally dreaded giving either of them displeasure; with one I was more complaisant; with the other, more submissive. I would not have offended Miss Vulson for the world; but if Miss Goton had commanded me to throw myself into the flames, I think I should have instantly obeyed her. Happily, both for her and myself, our amours; or rather rendezvous, were not of long duration: and though my connection with Miss Vulson was less dangerous, after a continuance of some greater length, that likewise had its catastrophe; indeed the termination of a love affair is good for nothing, unless it partakes of the romantic, and can furnish out at least an exclamation.

Though my correspondence with Miss Vulson was less animated, it was perhaps more endearing; we never separated without tears, and it can hardly be conceived what a void I felt in my heart. I could neither think nor speak of anything but her. These romantic sorrows were not affected, though I am inclined to believe they did not absolutely centre in her, for I am persuaded (though I did not perceive it at that time) being deprived of amusement bore a considerable share in them.

To soften the rigor of absence, we agreed to correspond with each other, and the pathetic expressions these letters contained were sufficient to have split a rock. In a word, I had the honor of her not being able to endure the pain of separation. She came to see me at Geneva.

My head was now completely turned; and during the two days she remained here, I was intoxicated with delight. At her departure, I would have thrown myself into the water after her, and absolutely rent the air with my cries. The week following she sent me sweetmeats, gloves, etc. This certainly would have appeared extremely gallant, had I not been informed of her marriage at the same instant, and that the journey I had thought proper to give myself the honor of, was only to buy her wedding suit.

My indignation may easily be conceived; I shall not attempt to describe it. In this heroic fury, I swore never more to see the perfidious girl, supposing it the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on her. This, however, did not occasion her death, for twenty years after, while on a visit to my father, being on the lake, I asked who those ladies were in a boat not far from ours. "What!" said my father smiling, "does not your heart inform you? It is your former flame, it is Madame Christin, or, if you please, Miss Vulson." I started at the almost forgotten name, and instantly ordered the waterman to turn off, not judging it worth while to be perjured, however favorable the opportunity for revenge, in renewing a dispute of twenty years past, with a woman of forty.

Thus, before my future destination was determined, did I fool away the most precious moments of my youth. After deliberating a long time on the bent of my natural inclination, they resolved to dispose of me in a manner the most repugnant to them. I was sent to Mr. Masseron, the City Register, to learn (according to the expression of my uncle Bernard) the thriving occupation of a scraper. This nickname was inconceivably displeasing to me, and I promised myself but little satisfaction in the prospect of heaping up money by a mean employment. The assiduity and subjection required, completed my disgust, and I never set foot in the office without feeling a kind of horror, which every day gained fresh strength.

Mr. Masseron, who was not better pleased with my abilities than I was with the employment, treated me with disdain, incessantly upbraiding me with being a fool and blockhead, not forgetting to repeat, that my uncle had assured him I was a

knowing one, though he could not find that I knew anything. That he had promised to furnish him with a sprightly boy, but had, in truth, sent him an ass. To conclude, I was turned out of the registry, with the additional ignominy of being pronounced a fool by all Mr. Masseron's clerks, and fit only to handle a file.

My vocation thus determined, I was bound apprentice; not, however, to a watchmaker, but to an engraver, and I had been so completely humiliated by the contempt of the register, that I submitted without a murmur. My master, whose name was M. Ducommon, was a young man of a very violent and boorish character, who contrived in a short time to tarnish all the amiable qualities of my childhood, to stupefy a disposition naturally sprightly, and reduce my feelings, as well as my condition, to an absolute state of servitude. I forgot my Latin, history, and antiquities; I could hardly recollect whether such people as Romans ever existed. When I visited my father, he no longer beheld his idol, nor could the ladies recognize the gallant Jean Jacques; nay, I was so well convinced that Mr. and Miss Lambercier would scarce receive me as their pupil, that I endeavored to avoid their company, and from that time have never seen them. The vilest inclinations, the basest actions, succeeded my amiable amusements and even obliterated the very remembrance of them. I must have had, in spite of my good education, a great propensity to degenerate, else the declension could not have followed with such ease and rapidity, for never did so promising a Caesar so quickly become a Laradon.

The art itself did not displease me. I had a lively taste for drawing. There was nothing displeasing in the exercise of the graver; and as it required no very extraordinary abilities to attain perfection as a watchcase engraver, I hoped to arrive at it. Perhaps I should have accomplished my design, if unreasonable restraint, added to the brutality of my master, had not rendered my business disgusting. I wasted his time, and employed myself in engraving medals, which served me and my companions as a kind of insignia for a new invented order of chivalry, and though this differed very little from my usual employ, I considered it as a relaxation. Unfortunately, my master caught me at this contraband

labor, and a severe beating was the consequence. He reproached me at the same time with attempting to make counterfeit money because our medals bore the arms of the Republic, though, I can truly aver, I had no conception of false money, and very little of the true, knowing better how to make a Roman As than one of our threepenny pieces.

My master's tyranny rendered insupportable that labor I should otherwise have loved, and drove me to vices I naturally despised, such as falsehood, idleness, and theft. Nothing ever gave me a clearer demonstration of the difference between filial dependence and abject slavery, than the remembrance of the change produced in me at that period. Hitherto I had enjoyed a reasonable liberty; this I had suddenly lost. I was enterprising at my father's, free at Mr. Lambercier's, discreet at my uncle's; but, with my master, I became fearful, and from that moment my mind was vitiated. Accustomed to live on terms of perfect equality, to be witness of no pleasures I could not command, to see no dish I was not to partake of, or be sensible of a desire I might not express; to be able to bring every wish of my heart to my lips—what a transition!—at my master's I was scarce allowed to speak, was forced to quit the table without tasting what I most longed for, and the room when I had nothing particular to do there; was incessantly confined to my work, while the liberty my master and his journeymen enjoyed, served only to increase the weight of my subjection. When disputes happened to arise, though conscious that I understood the subject better than any of them, I dared not offer my opinion; in a word, everything I saw became an object of desire, for no other reason than because I was not permitted to enjoy anything. Farewell gayety, ease, those happy turns of expressions, which formerly even made my faults escape correction. I recollect, with pleasure, a circumstance that happened at my father's, which even now makes me smile. Being for some fault ordered to bed without my supper, as I was passing through the kitchen, with my poor morsel of bread in my hand, I saw the meat turning on the spit; my father and the rest were round the fire; I must bow to every one as I passed. When I had gone through this ceremony, leering with a wistful eye at the roast

meat, which looked so inviting, and smelt so savory, I could not abstain from making that a bow likewise, adding in a pitiful tone, good bye, roast meal! This unpremeditated pleasantry put them in such good humor, that I was permitted to stay, and partake of it. Perhaps the same thing might have produced a similar effect at my master's, but such a thought could never have occurred to me, or, if it had, I should not have had courage to express it.

Thus I learned to covet, dissemble, lie, and, at length, to steal, a propensity I never felt the least idea of before, though since that time I have never been able entirely to divest myself of it. Desire and inability united naturally led to this vice, which is the reason pilfering is so common among footmen and apprentices, though the latter, as they grow up, and find themselves in a situation where everything is at their command, lose this shameful propensity. As I never experienced the advantage, I never enjoyed the benefit.

Good sentiments, ill-directed, frequently lead children into vice. Notwithstanding my continual wants and temptations, it was more than a year before I could resolve to take even eatables. My first theft was occasioned by complaisance, but it was productive of others which had not so plausible an excuse.

My master had a journeyman named Verrat, whose mother lived in the neighborhood, and had a garden at a considerable distance from the house, which produced excellent asparagus. This Verrat, who had no great plenty of money, took it in his head to rob her of the most early production of her garden, and by the sale of it procure those indulgences he could not otherwise afford himself; but not being very nimble, he did not care to run the hazard of a surprise. After some preliminary flattery, which I did not comprehend the meaning of, he proposed this expedition to me, as an idea which had that moment struck him. At first I would not listen to the proposal; but he persisted in his solicitation, and as I could never resist the attacks of flattery, at length prevailed. In pursuance of this virtuous resolution, I every morning repaired to the garden, gathered the best of the asparagus, and took it to the Holard where some good old women, who guessed how I came by it, wishing to diminish the price, made no secret of their

suspensions; this produced the desired effect, for, being alarmed, I took whatever they offered, which being taken to Mr. Verrat, was presently metamorphosed into a breakfast, and divided with a companion of his; for, though I procured it, I never partook of their good cheer, being fully satisfied with an inconsiderable bribe.

I executed my roguery with the greatest fidelity, seeking only to please my employer; and several days passed before it came into my head, to rob the robber, and tithe Mr. Verrat's harvest. I never considered the hazard I run in these expeditions, not only of a torrent of abuse, but what I should have been still more sensible of, a hearty beating; for the miscreant, who received the whole benefit, would certainly have denied all knowledge of the fact, and I should only have received a double portion of punishment for daring to accuse him, since being only an apprentice, I stood no chance of being believed in opposition to a journeyman. Thus, in every situation, powerful rogues know how to save themselves at the expense of the feeble.

This practice taught me it was not so terrible to thief as I had imagined: I took care to make this discovery turn to some account, helping myself to everything within my reach, that I conceived an inclination for. I was not absolutely ill-fed at my master's, and temperance was only painful to me by comparing it with the luxury he enjoyed. The custom of sending young people from table precisely when those things are served up which seem most tempting, is calculated to increase their longing, and induces them to steal what they conceive to be so delicious. It may be supposed I was not backward in this particular: in general my knavery succeeded pretty well, though quite the reverse when I happened to be detected.

I recollect an attempt to procure some apples, which was attended with circumstances that make me smile and shudder even at this instant. The fruit was standing in the pantry, which by a lattice at a considerable height received light from the kitchen. One day, being alone in the house, I climbed up to see these precious apples, which being out of my reach, made this pantry appear the garden of Hesperides. I fetched the spit—tried if it

would reach them—it was too short—I lengthened it with a small one which was used for game,—my master being very fond of hunting, darted at them several times without success; at length was more fortunate; being transported to find I was bringing up an apple, I drew it gently to the lattice—was going to seize it when (who can express my grief and astonishment!) I found it would not pass through—it was too large. I tried every expedient to accomplish my design, sought supporters to keep the spits in the same position, a knife to divide the apple, and a lath to hold it with; at length, I so far succeeded as to effect the division, and made no doubt of drawing the pieces through; but it was scarcely separated, (compassionate reader, sympathize with my affliction) when both pieces fell into the pantry.

Though I lost time by this experiment, I did not lose courage, but, dreading a surprise, I put off the attempt till next day, when I hoped to be more successful, and returned to my work as if nothing had happened, without once thinking of what the two obvious witnesses I had left in the pantry deposed against me.

The next day (a fine opportunity offering) I renew the trial. I fasten the spits together; get on the stool; take aim; am just going to dart at my prey—unfortunately the dragon did not sleep; the pantry door opens, my master makes his appearance, and, looking up, exclaims, "Bravo!"—The horror of that moment returns—the pen drops from my hand.

A continual repetition of ill treatment rendered me callous; it seemed a kind of composition for my crimes, which authorized me to continue them, and, instead of looking back at the punishment, I looked forward to revenge. Being beat like a slave, I judged I had a right to all the vices of one. I was convinced that to rob and be punished were inseparable, and constituted, if I may so express myself, a kind of traffic, in which, if I perform my part of the bargain, my master would take care not to be deficient in his; that preliminary settled, I applied myself to thieving with great tranquility, and whenever this interrogatory occurred to my mind, "What will be the consequence?" the reply was ready, "I know the worst, I shall be beat; no matter, I was made for it."

I love good eating; am sensual, but not greedy; I have such a variety of inclinations to gratify, that this can never predominate; and unless my heart is unoccupied, which very rarely happens, I pay but little attention to my appetite; to purloining eatables, but extended this propensity to everything I wished to possess, and if I did not become a robber in form, it was only because money never tempted me.

My master had a closet in the workshop, which he kept locked; this I contrived to open and shut as often as I pleased, and laid his best tools, fine drawings, impressions, in a word, everything he wished to keep from me, under contribution.

These thefts were so far innocent, that they were always employed in his service, but I was transported at having the trifles in my possession, and imagined I stole the art with its productions. Besides what I have mentioned, his boxes contained threads of gold and silver, a number of small jewels, valuable medals, and money; yet, though I seldom had five sous in my pocket, I do not recollect ever having cast a wishful look at them; on the contrary, I beheld these valuables rather with terror than with delight.

I am convinced the dread of taking money was, in a great measure, the effect of education. There was mingled with the idea of it the fear of infamy, a prison, punishment, and death: had I even felt the temptation, these objects would have made me tremble; whereas my failings appeared a species of waggery, and, in truth, they were little else; they could but occasion a good trimming, and this I was already prepared for. A sheet of fine drawing paper was a greater temptation than money sufficient to have purchased a ream. This unreasonable caprice is connected with one of the most striking singularities of my character, and has so far influenced my conduct, that it requires a particular explanation.

My passions are extremely violent; while under their influence, nothing can equal my impetuosity; I am an absolute stranger to discretion, respect, fear, or decorum; rude, saucy, violent, and intrepid: no shame can stop, no danger intimidate me. My mind is frequently so engrossed by a single object, that

beyond it the whole world is not worth a thought; this is the enthusiasm of a moment, the next, perhaps, I am plunged in a state of annihilation. Take me in my moments of tranquility, I am indolence and timidity itself; a word to speak, the least trifle to perform, appear an intolerable labor; everything alarms and terrifies me; the very buzzing of a fly will make me shudder; I am so subdued by fear and shame, that I would gladly shield myself from mortal view.

When obliged to exert myself, I am ignorant what to do! when forced to speak, I am at a loss for words; and if any one looks at me, I am instantly out of countenance. If animated with my subject, I express my thoughts with ease, but, in ordinary conversations, I can say nothing—absolutely nothing; and, being obliged to speak, renders them insupportable.

I may add, that none of my predominant inclinations centre in those pleasures which are to be purchased: money empisons my delight; I must have them unadulterated; I love those of the table, for instance, but cannot endure the restraints of good company, or the intemperance of taverns; I can enjoy them only with a friend, for alone it is equally impossible; my imagination is then so occupied with other things, that I find no pleasure in eating. Women who are to be purchased have no charms for me; my beating heart cannot be satisfied without affection; it is the same with every other enjoyment, if not truly disinterested, they are absolutely insipid; in a word, I am fond of those things which are only estimable to minds formed for the peculiar enjoyment of them.

I never thought money so desirable as it is usually imagined; if you would enjoy you must transform it; and this transformation is frequently attended with inconvenience; you must bargain, purchase, pay dear, be badly served, and often duped. I buy an egg, am assured it is new-laid—I find it stale; fruit in its utmost perfection—'tis absolutely green. I love good wine, but where shall I get it? Not at my wine merchant's—he will poison me to a certainty. I wish to be universally respected; how shall I compass my design? I must make friends, send messages, write letters, come, go, wait, and be frequently deceived. Money is the

perpetual source of uneasiness; I fear it more than I love good wine.

A thousand times, both during and since my apprenticeship, have I gone out to purchase some nicety, I approach the pastry-cook's, perceive some women at the counter, and imagine they are laughing at me. I pass a fruit shop, see some fine pears, their appearance tempts me; but then two or three young people are near, or a man I am acquainted with is standing at the door; I take all that pass for persons I have some knowledge of, and my near sight contributes to deceive me. I am everywhere intimidated, restrained by some obstacle, and with money in my pocket return as I went, for want of resolution to purchase what I long for.

I should enter into the most insipid details was I to relate the trouble, shame, repugnance, and inconvenience of all kinds which I have experienced in parting with my money, whether in my own person, or by the agency of others; as I proceed, the reader will get acquainted with my disposition, and perceive all this without my troubling him with the recital.

This once comprehended, one of my apparent contradictions will be easily accounted for, and the most sordid avarice reconciled with the greatest contempt of money. It is a movable which I consider of so little value, that, when destitute of it, I never wish to acquire any; and when I have a sum I keep it by me, for want of knowing how to dispose of it to my satisfaction; but let an agreeable and convenient opportunity present itself, and I empty my purse with the utmost freedom; not that I would have the reader imagine I am extravagant from a motive of ostentation, quite the reverse; it was ever in subservience to my pleasures, and, instead of glorying in expense, I endeavor to conceal it. I so well perceive that money is not made to answer my purposes, that I am almost ashamed to have any, and, still more, to make use of it.

Had I ever possessed a moderate independence, I am convinced I should have had no propensity to become avaricious. I should have required no more, and cheerfully lived up to my income; but my precarious situation has constantly and necessarily kept me in fear. I love liberty, and I loathe constraint,

dependence, and all their kindred annoyances. As long as my purse contains money it secures my independence, and exempts me from the trouble of seeking other money, a trouble of which I have always had a perfect horror; and the dread of seeing the end of my independence, makes me proportionately unwilling to part with my money. The money that we possess is the instrument of liberty, that which we lack and strive to obtain is the instrument of slavery. Thence it is that I hold fast to aught that I have, and yet covet nothing more.

My disinterestedness, then, is in reality only idleness, the pleasure of possessing is not in my estimation worth the trouble of acquiring: and my dissipation is only another form of idleness; when we have an opportunity of disbursing pleasantly we should make the best possible use of it.

I am less tempted by money than by other objects, because between the moment of possessing the money and that of using it to obtain the desired object there is always an interval, however short; whereas to possess the thing is to enjoy it. I see a thing and it tempts me; but if I see not the thing itself but only the means of acquiring it, I am not tempted. Therefore it is that I have been a pilferer, and am so even now, in the way of mere trifles to which I take a fancy, and which I find it easier to take than to ask for; but I never in my life recollect having taken a farthing from any one, except about fifteen years ago, when I stole seven francs and ten sous. The story is worth recounting, as it exhibits a concurrence of ignorance and stupidity I should scarcely credit, did it relate to any but myself.

It was in Paris: I was walking with M. de Franceul at the Palais Royal; he pulled out his watch, he looked at it, and said to me, "Suppose we go to the opera?"—"With all my heart." We go: he takes two box tickets, gives me one, and enters himself with the other; I follow, find the door crowded; and, looking in, see every one standing; judging, therefore, that M. de Franceul might suppose me concealed by the company, I go out, ask for my ticket, and, getting the money returned, leave the house, without considering, that by then I had reached the door every one would

be seated, and M. de Franceul might readily perceive I was not there.

As nothing could be more opposite to my natural inclination than this abominable meanness, I note it, to show there are moments of delirium when men ought not to be judged by their actions: this was not stealing the money, it was only stealing the use of it, and was the more infamous for wanting the excuse of a temptation.

I should never end these accounts, was I to describe all the gradations through which I passed, during my apprenticeship, from the sublimity of a hero to the baseness of a villain. Though I entered into most of the vices of my situation, I had no relish for its pleasures; the amusements of my companions were displeasing, and when too much restraint had made my business wearisome, I had nothing to amuse me. This renewed my taste for reading which had long been neglected. I thus committed a fresh offence, books made me neglect my work, and brought on additional punishment, while inclination, strengthened by constraint, became an unconquerable passion. La Tribu, a well-known librarian, furnished me with all kinds; good or bad, I perused them with avidity, and without discrimination.

It will be said; "at length, then, money became necessary"—true; but this happened at a time when a taste for study had deprived me both of resolution and activity; totally occupied by this new inclination, I only wished to read, I robbed no longer. This is another of my peculiarities; a mere nothing frequently calls me off from what I appear the most attached to; I give in to the new idea; it becomes a passion, and immediately every former desire is forgotten.

Reading was my new hobby; my heart beat with impatience to run over the new book I carried in my pocket; the first moment I was alone, I seized the opportunity to draw it out, and thought no longer of rummaging my master's closet. I was even ashamed to think that I had been guilty of such meanness; and had my amusements been more expensive, I no longer felt an inclination to continue it. La Tribu gave me credit, and when once I had the book in my possession, I thought no more of the trifle I was to

pay for it; as money came it naturally passed to this woman; and when she chanced to be pressing, nothing was so conveniently at hand as my own effects; to steal in advance required foresight, and robbing to pay was no temptation.

The frequent blows I received from my master, with my private and ill-chosen studies, rendered me reserved, unsociable, and almost deranged my reason. Though my taste had not preserved me from silly unmeaning books, by good fortune I was a stranger to licentious or obscene ones; not that La Tribu (who was very accommodating) had any scruple of lending these, on the contrary, to enhance their worth she spoke of them with an air of mystery; this produced an effect she had not foreseen, for both shame and disgust made me constantly refuse them. Chance so well seconded my bashful disposition, that I was past the age of thirty before I saw any of those dangerous compositions.

In less than a year I had exhausted La Tribu's scanty library, and was unhappy for want of further amusement. My reading, though frequently bad, had worn off my childish follies, and brought back my heart to nobler sentiments than my condition had inspired; meantime disgusted with all within my reach, and thinking everything charming that was out of it, my present situation appeared extremely miserable. My passions began to acquire strength, I felt their influence, without knowing whither they would conduct me. I sometimes, indeed, thought of my former follies, but sought no further.

At this time my imagination took a turn which helped to calm my increasing emotions; it was, to contemplate those situations in the books I had read, which produced the most striking effect on my mind; to recall, combine, and apply them to myself in such a manner, as to become one of the personages my recollection presented, and be continually in those fancied circumstances which were most agreeable to my inclinations; in a word, by contriving to place myself in these fictitious situations, the idea of my real one was in a great measure obliterated.

This fondness for imaginary objects, and the facility with which I could gain possession of them, completed my disgust for everything around me, and fixed that inclination for solitude

which has ever since been predominant. We shall have more than once occasion to remark the effects of a disposition, misanthropic and melancholy in appearance, but which proceed, in fact, from a heart too affectionate, too ardent, which, for want of similar dispositions, is constrained to content itself with nonentities, and be satisfied with fiction. It is sufficient, at present, to have traced the origin of a propensity which has modified my passions, set bounds to each, and by giving too much ardor to my wishes, has ever rendered me too indolent to obtain them.

Thus I attained my sixteenth year, uneasy, discontented with myself and everything that surrounded me; displeased with my occupation; without enjoying the pleasures common to my age, weeping without a cause, sighing I knew not why, and fond of my chimerical ideas for want of more valuable realities.

110

Every Sunday, after sermon-time, my companions came to fetch me out, wishing me to partake of their diversions. I would willingly have been excused, but when once engaged in amusement, I was more animated and enterprising than any of them; it was equally difficult to engage or restrain me; indeed, this was ever a leading trait in my character. In our country walks I was ever foremost, and never thought of returning till reminded by some of my companions. I was twice obliged to be from my master's the whole night, the city gates having been shut before I could reach them. The reader may imagine what treatment this procured me the following mornings; but I was promised such a reception for the third, that I made a firm resolution never to expose myself to the danger of it. Notwithstanding my determination, I repeated this dreaded transgression, my vigilance having been rendered useless by a cursed captain, named M. Minutoli, who, when on guard, always shut the gate he had charge of an hour before the usual time. I was returning home with my two companions, and had got within half a league of the city, when I heard them beat the tattoo; I redouble my pace, I run with my utmost speed, I approach the bridge, see the soldiers already at their posts, I call out to them in a suffocated voice—it is too late; I am twenty paces from the guard, the first bridge is already drawn up, and I tremble to see those terrible horns advanced in

the air which announce the fatal and inevitable destiny, which from this moment began to pursue me.

I threw myself on the glaciis in a transport of despair, while my companions, who only laughed at the accident, immediately determined what to do. My resolution, though different from theirs, was equally sudden; on the spot, I swore never to return to my master's, and the next morning, when my companions entered the city, I bade them an eternal adieu, conjuring them at the same time to inform my cousin Bernard of my resolution, and the place where he might see me for the last time.

From the commencement of my apprenticeship I had seldom seen him; at first, indeed, we saw each other on Sundays, but each acquiring different habits, our meetings were less frequent. I am persuaded his mother contributed greatly towards this change; he was to consider himself as a person of consequence, I was a pitiful apprentice; notwithstanding our relationship, equality no longer subsisted between us, and it was degrading himself to frequent my company. As he had a natural good heart his mother's lessons did not take an immediate effect, and for some time he continued to visit me.

Having learned my resolution, he hastened to the spot I had appointed, not, however, to dissuade me from it, but to render my flight agreeable, by some trifling presents, as my own resources would not have carried me far. He gave me among other things, a small sword, which I was very proud of, and took with me as far as Turin, where absolute want constrained me to dispose of it. The more I reflect on his behavior at this critical moment, the more I am persuaded he followed the instructions of his mother, and perhaps his father likewise: for, had he been left to his own feelings, he would have endeavored to retain, or have been tempted to accompany me; on the contrary, he encouraged the design, and when he saw me resolutely determined to pursue it, without seeming much affected, left me to my fate. We never saw or wrote to each other from that time; I cannot but regret this loss, for his heart was essentially good, and we seemed formed for a more lasting friendship.

Before I abandon myself to the fatality of my destiny, let me contemplate for a moment the prospect that awaited me had I fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing could have been more agreeable to my disposition, or more likely to confer happiness, than the peaceful condition of a good artificer, in so respectable a line as engravers are considered at Geneva. I could have obtained an easy subsistence, if not a fortune; this would have bounded my ambition; I should have had means to indulge in moderate pleasures, and should have continued in my natural sphere, without meeting with any temptation to go beyond it. Having an imagination sufficiently fertile to embellish with its chimeras every situation, and powerful enough to transport me from one to another, it was immaterial in which I was fixed: that was best adapted to me, which, requiring the least care or exertion, left the mind most at liberty; and this happiness I should have enjoyed. In my native country, in the bosom of my religion, family and friends, I should have passed a calm and peaceful life, in the uniformity of a pleasing occupation, and among connections dear to my heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good friend, a good man. I should have relished my condition, perhaps have been an honor to it, and after having passed a life of happy obscurity, surrounded by my family, I should have died at peace. Soon it may be forgotten, but while remembered it would have been with tenderness and regret.

Instead of this—what a picture am I about to draw!—Alas! why should I anticipate the miseries I have endured? The reader will have but too much of the melancholy subject.

BOOK II

The moment in which fear had instigated my flight, did not seem more terrible than that wherein I put my design in execution appeared delightful. To leave my relations, my resources, while yet a child, in the midst of my apprenticeship, before I had learned enough of my business to obtain a subsistence; to run on inevitable misery and danger: to expose myself in that age of weakness and innocence to all the temptations of vice and

despair; to set out in search of errors, misfortunes, snares, slavery, and death; to endure more intolerable evils than those I meant to shun, was the picture I should have drawn, the natural consequence of my hazardous enterprise. How different was the idea I entertained of it!—The independence I seemed to possess was the sole object of my contemplation; having obtained my liberty, I thought everything attainable: I entered with confidence on the vast theatre of the world, which my merit was to captivate: at every step I expected to find amusements, treasures, and adventures; friends ready to serve, and mistresses eager to please me; I had but to show myself, and the whole universe would be interested in my concerns; not but I could have been content with something less; a charming society, with sufficient means, might have satisfied me. My moderation was such, that the sphere in which I proposed to shine was rather circumscribed, but then it was to possess the very quintessence of enjoyment, and myself the principal object. A single castle, for instance, might have bounded my ambition; could I have been the favorite of the lord and lady, the daughter's lover, the son's friend, and protector of the neighbors, I might have been tolerably content, and sought no further.

In expectation of this modest fortune, I passed a few days in the environs of the city, with some country people of my acquaintance, who received me with more kindness than I should have met with in town; they welcomed, lodged, and fed me cheerfully; I could be said to live on charity, these favors were not conferred with a sufficient appearance of superiority to furnish out the idea.

I rambled about in this manner till I got to Confignon, in Savoy, at about two leagues distance from Geneva. The vicar was called M. de Pontverre; this name, so famous in the history of the Republic, caught my attention; I was curious to see what appearance the descendants of the gentlemen of the spoon exhibited; I went, therefore, to visit this M. de Pontverre, and was received with great civility.

He spoke of the heresy of Geneva, declaimed on the authority of holy mother church, and then invited me to dinner. I had little

to object to arguments which had so desirable a conclusion, and was inclined to believe that priests, who gave such excellent dinners, might be as good as our ministers. Notwithstanding M. de Pontverre's pedigree, I certainly possessed most learning; but I rather sought to be a good companion than an expert theologian; and his Frangi wine, which I thought delicious, argued so powerfully on his side, that I should have blushed at silencing so kind a host; I, therefore, yielded him the victory, or rather declined the contest. Any one who had observed my precaution, would certainly have pronounced me a dissembler, though, in fact, I was only courteous.

Flattery, or rather condescension, is not always a vice in young people; 'tis oftener a virtue. When treated with kindness, it is natural to feel an attachment for the person who confers the obligation; we do not acquiesce because we wish to deceive, but from dread of giving uneasiness, or because we wish to avoid the ingratitude of rendering evil for good. What interest had M. de Pontverre in entertaining, treating with respect, and endeavoring to convince me? None but mine; my young heart told me this, and I was penetrated with gratitude and respect for the generous priest; I was sensible of my superiority, but scorned to repay his hospitality by taking advantage of it. I had no conception of hypocrisy in this forbearance, or thought of changing my religion, nay, so far was the idea from being familiar to me, that I looked on it with a degree of horror which seemed to exclude the possibility of such an event; I only wished to avoid giving offence to those I was sensible caressed me from that motive; I wished to cultivate their good opinion, and meantime leave them the hope of success by seeming less on my guard than I really was. My conduct in this particular resembled the coquetry of some very honest women, who, to obtain their wishes, without permitting or promising anything, sometimes encourage hopes they never mean to realize.

Reason, piety, and love of order, certainly demanded that instead of being encouraged in my folly, I should have been dissuaded from the ruin I was courting, and sent back to my family; and this conduct any one that was actuated by genuine

virtue would have pursued; but it should be observed that though M. de Pontverre was a religious man, he was not a virtuous one, but a bigot, who knew no virtue except worshipping images and telling his beads, in a word, a kind of missionary, who thought the height of merit consisted in writing libels against the ministers of Geneva. Far from wishing to send me back, he endeavored to favor my escape, and put it out of my power to return even had I been so disposed. It was a thousand to one but he was sending me to perish with hunger, or become a villain; but all this was foreign to his purpose; he saw a soul snatched from heresy, and restored to the bosom of the church: whether I was an honest man or a knave was very immaterial, provided I went to mass.

This ridiculous mode of thinking is not peculiar to Catholics; it is the voice of every dogmatical persuasion where merit consists in belief, and not in virtue.

"You are called by the Almighty," said M. de Pontverre; "go to Annecy, where you will find a good and charitable lady, whom the bounty of the king enables to turn souls from those errors she has happily renounced." He spoke of a Madam de Warens, a new convert, to whom the priests contrived to send those wretches who were disposed to sell their faith, and with these she was in a manner constrained to share a pension of two thousand francs bestowed on her by the King of Sardinia. I felt myself extremely humiliated at being supposed to want the assistance of a good and charitable lady. I had no objection to be accommodated with everything I stood in need of, but did not wish to receive it on the footing of charity and to owe this obligation to a devotee was still worse; notwithstanding my scruples the persuasions of M. de Pontverre, the dread of perishing with hunger, the pleasures I promised myself from the journey, and hope of obtaining some desirable situation, determined me; and I set out though reluctantly, for Annecy. I could easily have reached it in a day, but being in no great haste to arrive there, it took me three. My head was filled with the ideas of adventures, and I approached every country-seat I saw in my way, in expectation of having them realized. I had too much timidity to knock at the doors, or even enter if I saw them open, but I did what I dared—which was to

sing under those windows that I thought had the most favorable appearance; and was very much disconcerted to find I wasted my breath to no purpose, and that neither old nor young ladies were attracted by the melody of my voice, or the wit of my poetry, though some songs my companions had taught me I thought excellent and that I sung them incomparably. At length I arrived at Annecy, and saw Madam de Warens.

As this period of my life, in a great measure, determined my character, I could not resolve to pass it lightly over. I was in the middle of my sixteenth year, and though I could not be called handsome, was well made for my height; I had a good foot, a well turned leg, and animated countenance; a well proportioned mouth, black hair and eyebrows, and my eyes, though small and rather too far in my head, sparkling with vivacity, darted that innate fire which inflamed my blood; unfortunately for me, I knew nothing of all this, never having bestowed a single thought on my person till it was too late to be of any service to me. The timidity common to my age was heightened by a natural benevolence, which made me dread the idea of giving pain. Though my mind had received some cultivation, having seen nothing of the world, I was an absolute stranger to polite address, and my mental acquisitions, so far from supplying this defect, only served to increase my embarrassment, by making me sensible of every deficiency.

Depending little, therefore, on external appearances, I had recourse to other expedients: I wrote a most elaborate letter, where, mingling all the flowers of rhetoric which I had borrowed from books with the phrases of an apprentice, I endeavored to strike the attention, and insure the good will of Madam de Warens. I enclosed M. de Pontverre's letter in my own and waited on the lady with a heart palpitating with fear and expectation. It was Palm Sunday, of the year 1728; I was informed she was that moment gone to church; I hasten after her, overtake, and speak to her.—The place is yet fresh in my memory—how can it be otherwise? often have I moistened it with my tears and covered it with kisses.—Why cannot I enclose with gold the happy spot, and render it the object of universal veneration? Whoever wishes to

honor monuments of human salvation would only approach it on their knees.

It was a passage at the back of the house, bordered on the left hand by a little rivulet, which separated it from the garden, and, on the right, by the court yard wall; at the end was a private door which opened into the church of the Cordeliers. Madam de Warens was just passing this door; but on hearing my voice, instantly turned about. What an effect did the sight of her produce! I expected to see a devout, forbidding old woman; M. de Pontverre's pious and worthy lady could be no other in my conception; instead of which, I see a face beaming with charms, fine blue eyes full of sweetness, a complexion whose whiteness dazzled the sight, the form of an enchanting neck, nothing escaped the eager eye of the young proselyte; for that instant I was hers!—a religion preached by such missionaries must lead to paradise!

My letter was presented with a trembling hand; she took it with a smile—opened it, glanced an eye over M. de Pontverre's and again returned to mine, which she read through and would have read again, had not the footman that instant informed her that service was beginning—"Child," said she, in a tone of voice which made every nerve vibrate, "you are wandering about at an early age—it is really a pity!"—and without waiting for an answer, added—"Go to my house, bid them give you something for breakfast, after mass, I will speak to you."

Louisa-Eleanora de Warens was of the noble and ancient family of La Tour de Pit, of Vevay, a city in the country of the Vaudois. She was married very young to a M. de Warens, of the house of Loys, eldest son of M. de Villardin, of Lausanne; there were no children by this marriage, which was far from being a happy one. Some domestic uneasiness made Madam de Warens take the resolution of crossing the Lake, and throwing herself at the feet of Victor Amadeus, who was then at Evian; thus abandoning her husband, family, and country by a giddiness similar to mine, which precipitation she, too, has found sufficient time and reason to lament.

The king, who was fond of appearing a zealous promoter of the Catholic faith, took her under his protection, and complimented her with a pension of fifteen hundred livres of Piedmont, which was a considerable appointment for a prince who never had the character of being generous; but finding his liberality made some conjecture he had an affection for the lady, he sent her to Annecy escorted by a detachment of his guards, where, under the direction of Michael Gabriel de Bernex, titular bishop of Geneva, she abjured her former religion at the Convent of the Visitation.

I came to Annecy just six years after this event; Madam de Warens was then eight-and-twenty, being born with the century. Her beauty, consisting more in the expressive animation of the countenance, than a set of features, was in its meridian; her manner soothing and tender; an angelic smile played about her mouth, which was small and delicate; she wore her hair (which was of an ash color, and uncommonly beautiful) with an air of negligence that made her appear still more interesting; she was short, and rather thick for her height, though by no means disagreeably so; but there could not be a more lovely face, a finer neck, or hands and arms more exquisitely formed.

Her education had been derived from such a variety of sources, that it formed an extraordinary assemblage. Like me, she had lost her mother at her birth, and had received instruction as it chanced to present itself; she had learned something of her governess, something of her father, a little of her masters, but copiously from her lovers; particularly a M. de Tavel, who, possessing both taste and information, endeavored to adorn with them the mind of her he loved. These various instructions, not being properly arranged, tended to impede each other, and she did not acquire that degree of improvement her natural good sense was capable of receiving; she knew something of philosophy and physic, but not enough to eradicate the fondness she had imbibed from her father for empiricism and alchemy; she made elixirs, tinctures, balsams, pretended to secrets, and prepared magestry; while quacks and pretenders, profiting by her weakness, destroyed her property among furnaces, drugs and minerals, diminishing those charms

and accomplishments which might have been the delight of the most elegant circles. But though these interested wretches took advantage of her ill-applied education to obscure her natural good sense, her excellent heart retained its purity; her amiable mildness, sensibility for the unfortunate, inexhaustible bounty, and open, cheerful frankness, knew no variation; even at the approach of old age, when attacked by various calamities, rendered more cutting by indigence, the serenity of her disposition preserved to the end of her life the pleasing gayety of her happiest days.

Her errors proceeded from an inexhaustible fund of activity, which demanded perpetual employment. She found no satisfaction in the customary intrigues of her sex, but, being formed for vast designs, sought the direction of important enterprises and discoveries. In her place Madam de Longueville would have been a mere trifler, in Madam de Longueville's situation she would have governed the state. Her talents did not accord with her fortune; what would have gained her distinction in a more elevated sphere, became her ruin. In enterprises which suited her disposition, she arranged the plan in her imagination, which was ever carried of its utmost extent, and the means she employed being proportioned rather to her ideas than abilities, she failed by the mismanagement of those upon whom she depended, and was ruined where another would scarce have been a loser. This active disposition, which involved her in so many difficulties, was at least productive of one benefit as it prevented her from passing the remainder of her life in the monastic asylum she had chosen, which she had some thought of. The simple and uniform life of a nun, and the little cabals and gossipings of their parlor, were not adapted to a mind vigorous and active, which, every day forming new systems, had occasions for liberty to attempt their completion.

The good bishop of Bernex, with less wit than Francis of Sales, resembled him in many particulars, and Madam de Warens, whom he loved to call his daughter, and who was like Madam de Chantel in several respects, might have increased the resemblance by retiring like her from the world, had she not been disgusted

with the idle trifling of a convent. It was not want of zeal prevented this amiable woman from giving those proofs of devotion which might have been expected from a new convert, under the immediate direction of a prelate. Whatever might have influenced her to change her religion, she was certainly sincere in that she had embraced; she might find sufficient occasion to repent having abjured her former faith, but no inclination to return to it. She not only died a good Catholic, but truly lived one; nay, I dare affirm (and I think I have had the opportunity to read the secrets of her heart) that it was only her aversion to singularity that prevented her acting the devotee in public; in a word, her piety was too sincere to give way to any affectation of it. But this is not the place to enlarge on her principles: I shall find other occasions to speak of them.

Let those who deny the existence of a sympathy of souls, explain, if they know how, why the first glance, the first word of Madam de Warens inspired me, not only with a lively attachment, but with the most unbounded confidence, which has since known no abatement. Say this was love (which will at least appear doubtful to those who read the sequel of our attachment) how could this passion be attended with sentiments which scarce ever accompany its commencement, such as peace, serenity, security, and confidence. How, when making application to an amiable and polished woman, whose situation in life was so superior to mine, so far above any I had yet approached, on whom, in a great measure, depended my future fortune by the degree of interest she might take in it; how, I say with so many reasons to depress me, did I feel myself as free, as much at my ease, as if I had been perfectly secure of pleasing her! Why did I not experience a moment of embarrassment, timidity or restraint? Naturally bashful, easily confused, having seen nothing of the world, could I, the first time, the first moment I beheld her, adopt caressing language, and a familiar tone, as readily as after ten years' intimacy had rendered these freedoms natural? Is it possible to possess love, I will not say without desires, for I certainly had them, but without inquietude, without jealousy? Can we avoid feeling an anxious wish at least to know whether our affection is

returned? Yet such a question never entered my imagination; I should as soon have inquired, do I love myself; nor did she ever express a greater degree of curiosity; there was, certainly, something extraordinary in my attachment to this charming woman and it will be found in the sequel, that some extravagances, which cannot be foreseen, attended it.

What could be done for me, was the present question, and in order to discuss the point with greater freedom, she made me dine with her. This was the first meal in my life where I had experienced a want of appetite, and her woman, who waited, observed it was the first time she had seen a traveller of my age and appearance deficient in that particular: this remark, which did me no injury in the opinion of her mistress, fell hard on an overgrown clown, who was my fellow guest, and devoured sufficient to have served at least six moderate feeders. For me, I was too much charmed to think of eating; my heart began to imbibe a delicious sensation, which engrossed my whole being, and left no room for other objects.

Madam de Warens wished to hear the particulars of my little history—all the vivacity I had lost during my servitude returned and assisted the recital. In proportion to the interest this excellent woman took in my story, did she lament the fate to which I had exposed myself; compassion was painted on her features, and expressed by every action. She could not exhort me to return to Geneva, being too well aware that her words and actions were strictly scrutinized, and that such advice would be thought high treason against Catholicism, but she spoke so feelingly of the affliction I must give my father, that it was easy to perceive she would have approved my returning to console him. Alas! she little thought how powerfully this pleaded against herself; the more eloquently persuasive she appeared, the less could I resolve to tear myself from her. I knew that returning to Geneva would be putting an insuperable barrier between us, unless I repeated the expedient which had brought me here, and it was certainly better to preserve than expose myself to the danger of a relapse; besides all this, my conduct was predetermined, I was resolved not to return. Madam de Warens, seeing her endeavors would be

fruitless, became less explicit, and only added, with an air of commiseration, "Poor child! thou must go where Providence directs thee, but one day thou wilt think of me."—I believe she had no conception at that time how fatally her prediction would be verified.

The difficulty still remained how I was to gain a subsistence? I have already observed that I knew too little of engraving for that to furnish my resource, and had I been more expert, Savoy was too poor a country to give much encouragement to the arts. The above-mentioned glutton, who ate for us as well as himself, being obliged to pause in order to gain some relaxation from the fatigue of it, imparted a piece of advice, which, according to him, came express from Heaven; though to judge by its effects it appeared to have been dictated from a direct contrary quarter: this was that I should go to Turin, where, in a hospital instituted for the instruction of catechumens, I should find food, both spiritual and temporal, be reconciled to the bosom of the church, and meet with some charitable Christians, who would make it a point to procure me a situation that would turn to my advantage. "In regard to the expenses of the journey," continued our advisor, "his grace, my lord bishop, will not be backward, when once madam has proposed this holy work, to offer his charitable donation, and madam, the baroness, whose charity is so well known," once more addressing himself to the continuation of his meal, "will certainly contribute."

I was by no means pleased with all these charities; I said nothing, but my heart was ready to burst with vexation. Madam de Warens, who did not seem to think so highly of this expedient as the projector pretended to do, contented herself by saying, everyone should endeavor to promote good actions, and that she would mention it to his lordship; but the meddling devil, who had some private interest in this affair, and questioned whether she would urge it to his satisfaction, took care to acquaint the almoners with my story, and so far influenced those good priests, that when Madam de Warens, who disliked the journey on my account, mentioned it to the bishop, she found it so far concluded on, that he immediately put into her hands the money designed

for my little viaticum. She dared not advance anything against it; I was approaching an age when a woman like her could not, with any propriety, appear anxious to retain me.

My departure being thus determined by those who undertook the management of my concerns, I had only to submit; and I did it without much repugnance. Though Turin was at a greater distance from Madam de Warens than Geneva, yet being the capital of the country I was now in, it seemed to have more connection with Annecy than a city under a different government and of a contrary religion; besides, as I undertook this journey in obedience to her, I considered myself as living under her direction, which was more flattering than barely to continue in the neighborhood; to sum up all, the idea of a long journey coincided with my insurmountable passion for rambling, which already began to demonstrate itself. To pass the mountains, to my eye appeared delightful; how charming the reflection of elevating myself above my companions by the whole height of the Alps! To see the world is an almost irresistible temptation to a Genevan, accordingly I gave my consent.

140

He who suggested the journey was to set off in two days with his wife. I was recommended to their care; they were likewise made my purse-bearers, which had been augmented by Madam de Warens, who, not contented with these kindnesses, added secretly a pecuniary reinforcement, attended with the most ample instructions, and we departed on the Wednesday before Easter.

The day following, my father arrived at Annecy, accompanied by his friend, a Mr. Rival, who was likewise a watchmaker; he was a man of sense and letters, who wrote better verses than La Motte, and spoke almost as well; what is still more to his praise, he was a man of the strictest integrity, but whose taste for literature only served to make one of his sons a comedian. Having traced me to the house of Madam de Warens, they contented themselves with lamenting, like her, my fate, instead of overtaking me, which, (as they were on horseback and I on foot) they might have accomplished with the greatest ease.

My uncle Bernard did the same thing, he arrived at Consignon, received information that I was gone to Annecy, and immediately

returned back to Geneva; thus my nearest relations seemed to have conspired with my adverse stars to consign me to misery and ruin. By a similar negligence, my brother was so entirely lost, that it was never known what was become of him.

My father was not only a man of honor but of the strictest probity, and endured with that magnanimity which frequently produces the most shining virtues: I may add, he was a good father, particularly to me whom he tenderly loved; but he likewise loved his pleasures, and since we had been separated other connections had weakened his paternal affections. He had married again at Nion, and though his second wife was too old to expect children, she had relations; my father was united to another family, surrounded by other objects, and a variety of cares prevented my returning to his remembrance. He was in the decline of life and had nothing to support the inconveniences of old age; my mother's property devolved to me and my brother, but, during our absence, the interest of it was enjoyed by my father: I do not mean to infer that this consideration had an immediate effect on his conduct, but it had an imperceptible one, and prevented him making use of that exertion to regain me which he would otherwise have employed; and this, I think, was the reason that having traced me as far as Annecy, he stopped short, without proceeding to Chambéry, where he was almost certain I should be found; and likewise accounts why, on visiting him several times since my flight, he always received me with great kindness, but never made any efforts to retain me.

This conduct in a father, whose affection and virtue I was so well convinced of, has given birth to reflections on the regulation of my own conduct which have greatly contributed to preserve the integrity of my heart. It has taught me this great lesson of morality, perhaps the only one that can have any conspicuous influence on our actions, that we should ever carefully avoid putting our interests in competition with our duty, or promise ourselves felicity from the misfortunes of others; certain that in such circumstances, however sincere our love of virtue may be, sooner or later it will give way and we shall imperceptibly

become unjust and wicked, in fact, however upright in our intentions.

This maxim, strongly imprinted on my mind, and reduced, though rather too late, to practice, has given my conduct an appearance of folly and whimsicality, not only in public, but still more among my acquaintances: it has been said, I affected originality, and sought to act different from other people; the truth is, I neither endeavor to conform or be singular, I desire only to act virtuously and avoid situations, which, by setting my interest in opposition to that of another person's, might inspire me with a secret, though involuntary wish to his disadvantage.

Two years ago, My Lord Marshal would have put my name in his will, which I took every method to prevent, assuring him I would not for the world know myself in the will of any one, much less in his; he gave up the idea; but insisted in return, that I should accept an annuity on his life; this I consented to. It will be said, I find my account in the alteration; perhaps I may; but oh, my benefactor! my father, I am now sensible that, should I have the misfortune to survive thee, I should have everything to lose, nothing to gain.

This, in my idea, in true philosophy, the surest bulwark of human rectitude; every day do I receive fresh conviction of its profound solidity. I have endeavored to recommend it in all my latter writings, but the multitude read too superficially to have made the remark. If I survive my present undertaking, and am able to begin another, I mean, in a continuation of *Emilius*, to give such a lively and marking example of this maxim as cannot fail to strike attention. But I have made reflections enough for a traveller, it is time to continue my journey.

It turned out more agreeable than I expected: my clownish conductor was not so morose as he appeared to be. He was a middle-aged man, wore his black, grizzly hair, in a queue, had a martial air, a strong voice, was tolerably cheerful, and to make up for not having been taught any trade, could turn his hand to every one. Having proposed to establish some kind of manufactory at Annecy, he had consulted Madam de Warens, who immediately gave into the project, and he was now going to Turin to lay the

plan before the minister and get his approbation, for which journey he took care to be well rewarded.

This drole had the art of ingratiating himself with the priests, whom he ever appeared eager to serve; he adopted a certain jargon which he had learned by frequenting their company, and thought himself a notable preacher; he could even repeat one passage from the Bible in Latin, and it answered his purpose as well as if he had known a thousand, for he repeated it a thousand times a day. He was seldom at a loss for money when he knew what purse contained it; yet, was rather artful than knavish, and when dealing out in an affected tone his unmeaning discourses, resembled Peter the Hermit, preaching up the crusade with a sabre at his side.

150

Madam Sabran, his wife, was a tolerable, good sort of woman; more peaceable by day than by night; as I slept in the same chamber I was frequently disturbed by her wakefulness, and should have been more so had I comprehended the cause of it; but I was in the chapter of dullness, which left to nature the whole care of my own instruction.

I went on gayly with my pious guide and his hopeful companion, no sinister accident impeding our journey. I was in the happiest circumstances both of mind and body that I ever recollect having experienced; young, full of health and security, placing unbounded confidence in myself and others; in that short but charming moment of human life, whose expansive energy carries, if I may so express myself, our being to the utmost extent of our sensations, embellishing all nature with an inexpressible charm, flowing from the conscious and rising enjoyment of our existence.

My pleasing inquietudes became less wandering: I had now an object on which imagination could fix. I looked on myself as the work, the pupil, the friend, almost the lover of Madam de Warens; the obliging things she had said, the caresses she had bestowed on me; the tender interest she seemed to take in everything that concerned me; those charming looks, which seemed replete with love, because they so powerfully inspired it, every consideration flattered my ideas during this journey, and furnished the most

delicious reveries, which, no doubt, no fear of my future condition arose to embitter. In sending me to Turin, I thought they engaged to find me an agreeable subsistence there; thus eased of every care I passed lightly on, while young desires, enchanting hopes, and brilliant prospects employed my mind; each object that presented itself seemed to insure my approaching felicity. I imagined that every house was filled with joyous festivity, the meadows resounded with sports and revelry, the rivers offered refreshing baths, delicious fish wantoned in these streams, and how delightful was it to ramble along the flowery banks! The trees were loaded with the choicest fruits, while their shade afforded the most charming and voluptuous retreats to happy lovers; the mountains abounded with milk and cream; peace and leisure, simplicity and joy, mingled with the charm of going I knew not whither, and everything I saw carried to my heart some new cause for rapture. The grandeur, variety, and real beauty of the scene, in some measure rendered the charm reasonable, in which vanity came in for its share; to go so young to Italy, view such an extent of country, and pursue the route of Hannibal over the Alps, appeared a glory beyond my age; add to all this our frequent and agreeable halts, with a good appetite and plenty to satisfy it; for in truth it was not worth while to be sparing; at Mr. Sabran's table what I eat could scarce be missed. In the whole course of my life I cannot recollect an interval more perfectly exempt from care, than the seven or eight days I was passing from Annecy to Turin. As we were obliged to walk Madam Sabran's pace, it rather appeared an agreeable jaunt than a fatiguing journey; there still remains the most pleasing impressions of it on my mind, and the idea of a pedestrian excursion, particularly among the mountains, has from this time seemed delightful.

It was only in my happiest days that I travelled on foot, and ever with the most unbounded satisfaction; afterwards, occupied with business and encumbered with baggage, I was forced to act the gentleman and employ a carriage, where care, embarrassment, and restraint, were sure to be my companions, and instead of being delighted with the journey, I only wished to arrive at the place of destination.

I was a long time at Paris, wishing to meet with two companions of similar dispositions, who would each agree to appropriate fifty guineas of his property and a year of his time to making the tour of Italy on foot, with no other attendance than a young fellow to carry our necessaries; I have met with many who seemed enchanted with the project, but considered it only as a visionary scheme, which served well enough to talk of, without any design of putting it in execution. One day, speaking with enthusiasm of this project to Diderot and Grimm, they gave into the proposal with such warmth that I thought the matter concluded on; but it only turned out a journey on paper, in which Grimm thought nothing so pleasing as making Diderot commit a number of impieties, and shutting me up in the Inquisition for them, instead of him.

My regret at arriving so soon at Turin was compensated by the pleasure of viewing a large city, and the hope of figuring there in a conspicuous character, for my brain already began to be intoxicated with the fumes of ambition; my present situation appeared infinitely above that of an apprentice, and I was far from foreseeing how soon I should be much below it.

Before I proceed, I ought to offer an excuse, or justification to the reader for the great number of unentertaining particulars I am necessitated to repeat. In pursuance of the resolution I have formed to enter on this public exhibition of myself, it is necessary that nothing should bear the appearance of obscurity or concealment. I should be continually under the eye of the reader, he should be enabled to follow me in all the wanderings of my heart, through every intricacy of my adventures; he must find no void or chasm in my relation, nor lose sight of me an instant, lest he should find occasion to say, what was he doing at this time; and suspect me of not having dared to reveal the whole. I give sufficient scope to malignity in what I say; it is unnecessary I should furnish still more by my silence.

My money was all gone, even that I had secretly received from Madam de Warens: I had been so indiscreet as to divulge this secret, and my conductors had taken care to profit by it. Madam Sabran found means to deprive me of everything I had, even to a

ribbon embroidered with silver, with which Madam de Warens had adorned the hilt of my sword; this I regretted more than all the rest; indeed the sword itself would have gone the same way, had I been less obstinately bent on retaining it. They had, it is true, supported me during the journey, but left me nothing at the end of it, and I arrived at Turin, without money, clothes, or linen, being precisely in the situation to owe to my merit alone the whole honor of that fortune I was about to acquire.

I took care in the first place to deliver the letters I was charged with, and was presently conducted to the hospital of the catechumens, to be instructed in that religion, for which, in return, I was to receive subsistence. On entering, I passed an iron-barred gate, which was immediately double-locked on me; this beginning was by no means calculated to give me a favorable opinion of my situation. I was then conducted to a large apartment, whose furniture consisted of a wooden altar at the farther end, on which was a large crucifix, and round it several indifferent chairs, of the same materials. In this hall of audience were assembled four or five ill-looking banditti, my comrades in instruction, who would rather have been taken for trusty servants of the devil than candidates for the kingdom of heaven. Two of these fellows were Sclavonians, but gave out they were African Jews, and (as they assured me) had run through Spain and Italy, embracing the Christian faith, and being baptised wherever they thought it worth their labor.

Soon after they opened another iron gate, which divided a large balcony that overlooked a court yard, and by this avenue entered our sister catechumens, who, like me, were going to be regenerated, not by baptism but a solemn abjuration. A viler set of idle, dirty, abandoned harlots, never disgraced any persuasion; one among them, however, appeared pretty and interesting; she might be about my own age, perhaps a year or two older, and had a pair of roguish eyes, which frequently encountered mine; this was enough to inspire me with the desire of becoming acquainted with her, but she had been so strongly recommended to the care of the old governess of this respectable sisterhood, and was so narrowly watched by the pious missionary, who labored for her

conversion with more zeal than diligence, that during the two months we remained together in this house (where she had already been three) I found it absolutely impossible to exchange a word with her. She must have been extremely stupid, though she had not the appearance of it, for never was a longer course of instruction; the holy man could never bring her to a state of mind fit for abjuration; meantime she became weary of her cloister, declaring that, Christian or not, she would stay there no longer; and they were obliged to take her at her word, lest she should grow refractory, and insist on departing as great a sinner as she came.

This hopeful community were assembled in honor of the new-comer; when our guides made us a short exhortation: I was conjured to be obedient to the grace that Heaven had bestowed on me; the rest were admonished to assist me with their prayers, and give me edification by their good example. Our virgins then retired to another apartment, and I was left to contemplate, at leisure, that wherein I found myself.

The next morning we were again assembled for instruction: I now began to reflect, for the first time, on the step I was about to take, and the circumstances which had led me to it.

I repeat, and shall perhaps repeat again, an assertion I have already advanced, and of whose truth I every day receive fresh conviction, which is, that if ever child received a reasonable and virtuous education, it was myself. Born in a family of unexceptionable morals, every lesson I received was replete with maxims of prudence and virtue. My father (though fond of gallantry) not only possessed distinguished probity, but much religion; in the world he appeared a man of pleasure, in his family he was a Christian, and implanted early in my mind those sentiments he felt the force of. My three aunts were women of virtue and piety; the two eldest were professed devotees, and the third, who united all the graces of wit and good sense, was, perhaps, more truly religious than either, though with less ostentation. From the bosom of this amiable family I was transplanted to M. Lamercier's, a man dedicated to the ministry, who believed the doctrine he taught, and acted up to its precepts.

He and his sister matured by their instructions those principles of judicious piety I had already imbibed, and the means employed by these worthy people were so well adapted to the effect they meant to produce, that so far from being fatigued, I scarce ever listened to their admonitions without finding myself sensibly affected, and forming resolutions to live virtuously, from which, except in moments of forgetfulness, I seldom swerved. At my uncle's, religion was far more tiresome, because they made it an employment; with my master I thought no more of it, though my sentiments continued the same: I had no companions to vitiate my morals: I became idle, careless, and obstinate, but my principles were not impaired.

I possessed as much religion, therefore, as a child could be supposed capable of acquiring. Why should I now disguise my thoughts? I am persuaded I had more. In my childhood, I was not a child; I felt, I thought as a man: as I advanced in years, I mingled with the ordinary class; in my infancy I was distinguished from it. I shall doubtless incur ridicule by thus modestly holding myself up for a prodigy—I am content. Let those who find themselves disposed to it, laugh their fill; afterward, let them find a child that at six years old is delighted, interested, affected with romances, even to the shedding floods of tears; I shall then feel my ridiculous vanity, and acknowledge myself in an error.

Thus when I said we should not converse with children on religion, if we wished them ever to possess any; when I asserted they were incapable of communion with the Supreme Being, even in our confined degree, I drew my conclusions from general observation; I knew they were not applicable to particular instances: find J. J. Rousseau of six years old, converse with them on religious subjects at seven, and I will be answerable that the experiment will be attended with no danger.

It is understood, I believe, that a child, or even a man, is likely to be most sincere while persevering in that religion in whose belief he was born and educated; we frequently detract from, seldom make any additions to it: dogmatical faith is the effect of education. In addition to this general principle which attached me

to the religion of my forefathers, I had that particular aversion our city entertains for Catholicism, which is represented there as the most monstrous idolatry, and whose clergy are painted in the blackest colors. This sentiment was so firmly imprinted on my mind, that I never dared to look into their churches—I could not bear to meet a priest in his surplice, and never did I hear the bells of a procession sound without shuddering with horror; these sensations soon wore off in great cities, but frequently returned in country parishes, which bore more similarity to the spot where I first experienced them; meantime this dislike was singularly contrasted by the remembrance of those caresses which priests in the neighborhood of Geneva are fond of bestowing on the children of that city. If the bells of the viaticum alarmed me, the chiming for mass or vespers called me to a breakfast, a collation, to the pleasure of regaling on fresh butter, fruits, or milk; the good cheer of M. de Pontverre had produced a considerable effect on me; my former abhorrence began to diminish, and looking on popery through the medium of amusement and good living, I easily reconciled myself to the idea of enduring, though I never entertained but a very transient and distant idea of making a solemn profession of it.

At this moment such a transaction appeared in all its horrors; I shuddered at the engagement I had entered into, and its inevitable consequences. The future neophytes with which I was surrounded were not calculated to sustain my courage by their example, and I could not help considering the holy work I was about to perform as the action of a villain. Though young, I was sufficiently convinced, that whatever religion might be the true one, I was about to sell mine; and even should I chance to chose the best, I lied to the Holy Ghost, and merited the disdain of every good man. The more I considered, the more I despised myself, and trembled at the fate which had led me into such a predicament, as if my present situation had not been of my own seeking. There were moments when these compunctions were so strong that had I found the door open but for an instant, I should certainly have made my escape; but this was impossible, nor was the resolution

of any long duration, being combated by too many secret motives to stand any chance of gaining the victory.

My fixed determination not to return to Geneva, the shame that would attend it, the difficulty of repassing the mountains, at a distance from my country, without friends, and without resources, everything concurred to make me consider my remorse of conscience, as a too late repentance. I affected to reproach myself for what I had done, to seek excuses for that I intended to do, and by aggravating the errors of the past, looked on the future as an inevitable consequence. I did not say, nothing is yet done, and you may be innocent if you please; but I said, tremble at the crime thou hast committed, which hath reduced thee to the necessity of filling up the measure of thine iniquities.

It required more resolution than was natural to my age to revoke those expectations which I had given them reason to entertain, break those chains with which I was enthralled, and resolutely declare I would continue in the religion of my forefathers, whatever might be the consequence. The affair was already too far advanced, and spite of all my efforts they would have made a point of bringing it to a conclusion.

The sophism which ruined me has had a similar affect on the greater part of mankind, who lament the want of resolution when the opportunity for exercising it is over. The practice of virtue is only difficult from our own negligence; were we always discreet, we should seldom have occasion for any painful exertion of it; we are captivated by desires we might readily surmount, give into temptations that might easily be resisted, and insensibly get into embarrassing, perilous situations, from which we cannot extricate ourselves but with the utmost difficulty; intimidated by the effort, we fall into the abyss, saying to the Almighty, why hast thou made us such weak creatures? But, notwithstanding our vain pretexts, He replies, by our consciences, I formed ye too weak to get out of the gulf, because I gave ye sufficient strength not to have fallen into it.

I was not absolutely resolved to become a Catholic, but, as it was not necessary to declare my intentions immediately, I gradually accustomed myself to the idea; hoping, meantime, that

some unforeseen event would extricate me from my embarrassment. In order to gain time, I resolved to make the best defence I possibly could in favor of my own opinion; but my vanity soon rendered this resolution unnecessary, for on finding I frequently embarrassed those who had the care of my instruction, I wished to heighten my triumph by giving them a complete overthrow. I zealously pursued my plan, not without the ridiculous hope of being able to convert my convertors; for I was simple enough to believe, that could I convince them of their errors, they would become Protestants; they did not find, therefore, that facility in the work which they had expected, as I differed both in regard to will and knowledge from the opinion they had entertained of me.

Protestants, in general, are better instructed in the principles of their religion than Catholics; the reason is obvious; the doctrine of the former requires discussion, of the latter a blind submission; the Catholic must content himself with the decisions of others, the Protestant must learn to decide for himself; they were not ignorant of this, but neither my age nor appearance promised much difficulty to men so accustomed to disputation. They knew, likewise, that I had not received my first communion, nor the instructions which accompany it; but, on the other hand, they had no idea of the information I received at M. Lambercier's, or that I had learned the history of the church and empire almost by heart at my father's; and though, since that time, nearly forgot, when warmed by the dispute (very unfortunately for these gentlemen), it again returned to my memory.

A little old priest, but tolerably venerable, held the first conference; at which we were all convened. On the part of my comrades, it was rather a catechism than a controversy, and he found more pains in giving them instruction than answering their objections; but when it came to my turn, it was a different matter; I stopped him at every article, and did not spare a single remark that I thought would create a difficulty: this rendered the conference long and extremely tiresome to the assistants. My old priest talked a great deal, was very warm, frequently rambled

from the subject, and extricated himself from difficulties by saying he was not sufficiently versed in the French language.

The next day, lest my indiscreet objections should injure the minds of those who were better disposed, I was led into a separate chamber and put under the care of a younger priest, a fine speaker; that is, one who was fond of long perplexed sentences, and proud of his own abilities, if ever doctor was. I did not, however, suffer myself to be intimidated by his overbearing looks: and being sensible that I could maintain my ground, I combated his assertions, exposed his mistakes, and laid about me in the best manner I was able. He thought to silence me at once with St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest of the fathers, but found, to his ineffable surprise, that I could handle these almost as dexterously as himself; not that I had ever read them, or he either, perhaps, but I retained a number of passages taken from my *Le Sueur*, and when he bore hard on me with one citation, without standing to dispute, I parried it with another, which method embarrassed him extremely. At length, however, he got the better of me for two very potent reasons; in the first place, he was of the strongest side; young as I was, I thought it might be dangerous to drive him to extremities, for I plainly saw the old priest was neither satisfied with me nor my erudition. In the next place, he had studied, I had not; this gave a degree of method to his arguments which I could not follow; and whenever he found himself pressed by an unforeseen objection he put it off to the next conference, pretending I rambled from the question in dispute. Sometimes he even rejected all my quotations, maintaining they were false, and, offering to fetch the book, defied me to find them. He knew he ran very little risk, and that, with all my borrowed learning, I was not sufficiently accustomed to books, and too poor a Latinist to find a passage in a large volume, had I been ever so well assured it was there. I even suspected him of having been guilty of a perfidy with which he accused our ministers, and that he fabricated passages sometimes in order to evade an objection that incommoded him.

Meanwhile the hospital became every day more disagreeable to me, and seeing but one way to get out of it, I endeavored to

hasten my abjuration with as much eagerness as I had hitherto sought to retard it.

The two Africans had been baptised with great ceremony, they were habited in white from head to foot to signify the purity of their regenerated souls. My turn came a month after; for all this time was thought necessary by my directors, that they might have the honor of a difficult conversion, and every dogma of their faith was recapitulated, in order to triumph the more completely over my new docility.

At length, sufficiently instructed and disposed to the will of my masters, I was led in procession to the metropolitan church of St. John, to make a solemn abjuration, and undergo a ceremony made use of on these occasions, which, though not baptism, is very similar, and serves to persuade the people that Protestants are not Christians. I was clothed in a kind of gray robe, decorated with white Brandenburgs. Two men, one behind, the other before me, carried copper basins which they kept striking with a key, and in which those who were charitably disposed put their alms, according as they found themselves influenced by religion or good will for the new convert; in a word, nothing of Catholic pageantry was omitted that could render the solemnity edifying to the populace, or humiliating to me. The white dress might have been serviceable, but as I had not the honor to be either Moor or Jew, they did not think fit to compliment me with it.

The affair did not end here, I must now go to the Inquisition to be absolved from the dreadful sin of heresy, and return to the bosom of the church with the same ceremony to which Henry the Fourth was subjected by his ambassador. The air and manner of the right reverend Father Inquisitor was by no means calculated to dissipate the secret horror that seized my spirits on entering this holy mansion. After several questions relative to my faith, situation, and family, he asked me bluntly if my mother was damned? Terror repressed the first gust of indignation; this gave me time to recollect myself, and I answered, I hope not, for God might have enlightened her last moments. The monk made no reply, but his silence was attended with a look by no means expressive of approbation.

All these ceremonies ended, the very moment I flattered myself I should be plentifully provided for, they exhorted me to continue a good Christian, and live in obedience to the grace I had received; then wishing me good fortune, with rather more than twenty francs of small money in my pocket, the produce of the above-mentioned collection, turned me out, shut the door on me, and I saw no more of them!

Thus, in a moment, all my flattering expectations were at an end; and nothing remained from my interested conversion but the remembrance of having been made both a dupe and an apostate. It is easy to imagine what a sudden revolution was produced in my ideas, when every brilliant expectation of making a fortune terminated by seeing myself plunged in the completest misery. In the morning I was deliberating what palace I should inhabit, before night I was reduced to seek my lodging in the street. It may be supposed that I gave myself up to the most violent transports of despair, rendered more bitter by a consciousness that my own folly had reduced me to these extremities; but the truth is, I experienced none of these disagreeable sensations. I had passed two months in absolute confinement; this was new to me; I was now emancipated, and the sentiment I felt most forcibly, was joy at my recovered liberty. After a slavery which had appeared tedious, I was again master of my time and actions, in a great city, abundant in resources, crowded with people of fortune, to whom my merit and talents could not fail to recommend me. I had sufficient time before me to expect this good fortune, for my twenty livres seemed an inexhaustible treasure, which I might dispose of without rendering an account of to anyone. It was the first time I had found myself so rich, and far from giving way to melancholy reflections, I only adopted other hopes, in which self-love was by no means a loser. Never did I feel so great a degree of confidence and security; I looked on my fortune as already made and was pleased to think I should have no one but myself to thank for the acquisition of it.

The first thing I did was to satisfy my curiosity by rambling all over the city, and I seemed to consider it as a confirmation of my liberty; I went to see the soldiers mount guard, and was delighted

with their military accouterment; I followed processions, and was pleased with the solemn music of the priests; I next went to see the king's palace, which I approached with awe, but seeing others enter, I followed their example, and no one prevented me; perhaps I owed this favor to the small parcel I carried under my arm; be that as it may, I conceived a high opinion of my consequence from this circumstance, and already thought myself an inhabitant there. The weather was hot; I had walked about till I was both fatigued and hungry; wishing for some refreshment, I went into a milk-house; they brought me some cream-cheese curds and whey, and two slices of that excellent Piedmont bread, which I prefer to any other; and for five or six sous I had one of the most delicious meals I ever recollect to have made.

It was time to seek a lodging: as I already knew enough of the Piedmontese language to make myself understood, this was a work of no great difficulty; and I had so much prudence, that I wished to adapt it rather to the state of my purse than the bent of my inclinations. In the course of my inquiries, I was informed that a soldier's wife, in Po-street, furnished lodgings to servants out of place at only one sou a night, and finding one of her poor beds disengaged, I took possession of it. She was young and newly married, though she already had five or six children. Mother, children and lodgers, all slept in the same chamber, and it continued thus while I remained there. She was good-natured, swore like a carman, and wore neither cap nor handkerchief; but she had a gentle heart, was officious; and to me both kind and serviceable.

For several days I gave myself up to the pleasures of independence and curiosity; I continued wandering about the city and its environs, examining every object that seemed curious or new; and, indeed, most things had that appearance to a young novice. I never omitted visiting the court, and assisted regularly every morning at the king's mass. I thought it a great honor to be in the same chapel with this prince and his retinue; but my passion for music, which now began to make its appearance, was a greater incentive than the splendor of the court, which, soon seen and always the same, presently lost its attraction. The King

of Sardinia had at that time the best music in Europe; Somis, Desjardins, and the Bezuzzi shone there alternately; all these were not necessary to fascinate a youth whom the sound of the most simple instrument, provided it was just, transported with joy. Magnificence only produced a stupid admiration, without any violent desire to partake of it, my thoughts were principally employed in observing whether any young princess was present that merited my homage, and whom I could make the heroine of a romance.

Meantime, I was on the point of beginning one; in a less elevated sphere, it is true, but where could I have brought it to a conclusion, I should have found pleasures a thousand times more delicious.

Though I lived with the strictest economy, my purse insensibly grew lighter. This economy was, however, less the effect of prudence than that love of simplicity, which, even to this day, the use of the most expensive tables has not been able to vitiate. Nothing in my idea, either at that time or since, could exceed a rustic repast; give me milk, vegetables, eggs, and brown bread, with tolerable wine and I shall always think myself sumptuously regaled; a good appetite will furnish out the rest, if the maitre d' hotel, with a number of unnecessary footmen, do not satiate me with their important attentions. Five or six sous would then procure me a more agreeable meal than as many livres would have done since; I was abstemious, therefore, for want of a temptation to be otherwise: though I do not know but I am wrong to call this abstinence, for with my pears, new cheese, bread and some glasses of Montferrat wine, which you might have cut with a knife, I was the greatest of epicures. Notwithstanding my expenses were very moderate, it was possible to see the end of twenty livres; I was every day more convinced of this, and, spite of the giddiness of youth, my apprehensions for the future amounted almost to terror. All my castles in the air were vanished, and I became sensible of the necessity of seeking some occupation that would procure me a subsistence.

Even this was a work of difficulty; I thought of my engraving, but knew too little of it to be employed as a journeyman, nor do

masters abound in Turin; I resolved, therefore, till something better presented itself, to go from shop to shop, offering to engrave ciphers, or coats of arms, on pieces of plate, etc., and hoped to get employment by working at a low price; or taking what they chose to give me. Even this expedient did not answer my expectations; almost all my applications were ineffectual, the little I procured being hardly sufficient to produce a few scanty meals.

Walking one morning pretty early in the 'Contra nova', I saw a young tradeswoman behind a counter, whose looks were so charmingly attractive, that, notwithstanding my timidity with the ladies, I entered the shop without hesitation, offered my services as usual: and had the happiness to have it accepted. She made me sit down and recite my little history, pitied my forlorn situation; bade me be cheerful, and endeavored to make me so by an assurance that every good Christian would give me assistance; then (while she had occasion for) she went up stairs and fetched me something for breakfast. This seemed a promising beginning, nor was what followed less flattering: she was satisfied with my work, and, when I had a little recovered myself, still more with my discourse. She was rather elegantly dressed and notwithstanding her gentle looks this appearance of gayety had disconcerted me; but her good-nature, the compassionate tone of her voice, with her gentle and caressing manner, soon set me at ease with myself; I saw my endeavors to please were crowned with success, and this assurance made me succeed the more. Though an Italian, and too pretty to be entirely devoid of coquetry, she had so much modesty, and I so great a share of timidity, that our adventure was not likely to be brought to a very speedy conclusion, nor did they give us time to make any good of it. I cannot recall the few short moments I passed with this lovely woman without being sensible of an inexpressible charm, and can yet say, it was there I tasted in their utmost perfection the most delightful, as well as the purest pleasures of love.

She was a lively pleasing brunette, and the good nature that was painted on her lovely face rendered her vivacity more interesting. She was called Madam Basile: her husband, who was

considerably older than herself, consigned her, during his absence, to the care of a clerk, too disagreeable to be thought dangerous; but who, notwithstanding, had pretensions that he seldom showed any signs of, except of ill-humors, a good share of which he bestowed on me; though I was pleased to hear him play the flute, on which he was a tolerable musician. This second Egistus was sure to grumble whenever he saw me go into his mistress' apartment, treating me with a degree of disdain which she took care to repay him with interest; seeming pleased to caress me in his presence, on purpose to torment him. This kind of revenge, though perfectly to my taste, would have been still more charming in a 'tete a tete', but she did not proceed so far; at least, there was a difference in the expression of her kindness. Whether she thought me too young, that it was my place to make advances, or that she was seriously resolved to be virtuous, she had at such times a kind of reserve, which, though not absolutely discouraging, kept my passion within bounds.

I did not feel the same real and tender respect for her as I did for Madam de Warens: I was embarrassed, agitated, feared to look, and hardly dared to breathe in her presence, yet to have left her would have been worse than death: How fondly did my eyes devour whatever they could gaze on without being perceived! the flowers on her gown, the point of her pretty foot, the interval of a round white arm that appeared between her glove and ruffle, the least part of her neck, each object increased the force of all the rest, and added to the infatuation. Gazing thus on what was to be seen, and even more than was to be seen, my sight became confused, my chest seemed contracted, respiration was every moment more painful. I had the utmost difficulty to hide my agitation, to prevent my sighs from being heard, and this difficulty was increased by the silence in which we were frequently plunged. Happily, Madam Basile, busy at her work, saw nothing of all this, or seemed not to see it: yet I sometimes observed a kind of sympathy, especially at the frequent rising of her handkerchief, and this dangerous sight almost mastered every effort, but when on the point of giving way to my transports, she

spoke a few words to me with an air of tranquility, and in an instant the agitation subsided.

I saw her several times in this manner without a word, a gesture, or even a look, too expressive, making the least intelligence between us. The situation was both my torment and delight, for hardly in the simplicity of my heart, could I imagine the cause of my uneasiness. I should suppose these 'tete a tete' could not be displeasing to her, at least, she sought frequent occasions to renew them; this was a very disinterested labor, certainly, as appeared by the use she made, or ever suffered me to make of them.

Being, one day, wearied with the clerk's discourse, she had retired to her chamber; I made haste to finish what I had to do in the back shop, and followed her; the door was half open, and I entered without being perceived. She was embroidering near a window on the opposite side of the room; she could not see me; and the carts in the streets made too much noise for me to be heard. She was always well dressed, but this day her attire bordered on coquetry. Her attitude was graceful, her head leaning gently forward, discovered a small circle of her neck; her hair, elegantly dressed, was ornamented with flowers; her figure was universally charming, and I had an uninterrupted opportunity to admire it. I was absolutely in a state of ecstasy, and, involuntary, sinking on my knees, I passionately extended my arms towards her, certain she could not hear, and having no conception that she could see me; but there was a chimney glass at the end of the room that betrayed all my proceedings. I am ignorant what effect this transport produced on her; she did not speak; she did not look on me; but, partly turning her head, with the movement of her finger only, she pointed to the mat that was at her feet—To start up, with an articulate cry of joy, and occupy the place she had indicated, was the work of a moment; but it will hardly be believed I dared attempt no more, not even to speak, raise my eyes to hers, or rest an instant on her knees, though in an attitude which seemed to render such a support necessary. I was dumb, immovable, but far enough from a state of tranquility; agitation, joy, gratitude, ardent indefinite wishes, restrained by the fear of

giving displeasure, which my unpractised heart too much dreaded, were sufficiently discernible. She neither appeared more tranquil, nor less intimidated than myself—uneasy at my present situation; confounded at having brought me there, beginning to tremble for the effects of a sign which she had made without reflecting on the consequences, neither giving encouragement, nor expressing disapprobation, with her eyes fixed on her work, she endeavored to appear unconscious of everything that passed; but all my stupidity could not hinder me from concluding that she partook of my embarrassment, perhaps, my transports, and was only hindered by a bashfulness like mine, without even that supposition giving me power to surmount it. Five or six years older than myself, every advance, according to my idea, should have been made by her, and, since she did nothing to encourage mine, I concluded they would offend her. Even at this time, I am inclined to believe I thought right; she certainly had wit enough to perceive that a novice like me had occasion, not only for encouragement but instruction.

I am ignorant how this animated, though dumb scene would have ended, or how long I should have continued immovable in this ridiculous, though delicious, situation, had we not been interrupted—in the height of my agitation, I heard the kitchen door open, which joined Madam Basile's chamber; who, being alarmed, said, with a quick voice and action, "Get up! Here's Rosina!" Rising hastily I seized one of her hands, which she held out to me, and gave it two eager kisses; at the second I felt this charming hand press gently on my lips. Never in my life did I enjoy so sweet a moment; but the occasion I had lost returned no more, this being the conclusion of our amours.

This may be the reason why her image yet remains imprinted on my heart in such charming colors, which have even acquired fresh lustre since I became acquainted with the world and women. Had she been mistress of the least degree of experience, she would have taken other measures to animate so youthful a lover; but if her heart was weak, it was virtuous; and only suffered itself to be borne away by a powerful though involuntary inclination. This was, apparently, her first infidelity, and I should, perhaps,

have found more difficulty in vanquishing her scruples than my own; but, without proceeding so far, I experienced in her company the most inexpressible delights. Never did I taste with any other woman pleasures equal to those two minutes which I passed at the feet of Madam Basile without even daring to touch her gown. I am convinced no satisfaction can be compared to that we feel with a virtuous woman we esteem; all is transport!—A sign with the finger, a hand lightly pressed against my lips, were the only favors I ever received from Madam Basile, yet the bare remembrance of these trifling condescensions continues to transport me.

It was in vain I watched the two following days for another *tete a tete*; it was impossible to find an opportunity; nor could I perceive on her part any desire to forward it; her behavior was not colder, but more distant than usual, and I believe she avoided my looks for fear of not being able sufficiently to govern her own. The cursed clerk was more vexatious than ever; he even became a wit, telling me, with a satirical sneer, that I should unquestionably make my way among the ladies. I trembled lest I should have been guilty of some indiscretion, and looking at myself as already engaged in an intrigue, endeavored to cover with an air of mystery an inclination which hitherto certainly had no great need of it; this made me more circumspect in my choice of opportunities, and by resolving only to seize such as should be absolutely free from the danger of a surprise, I met none.

Another romantic folly, which I could never overcome, and which, joined to my natural timidity, tended directly to contradict the clerk's predictions, is, I always loved too sincerely, too perfectly, I may say, to find happiness easily attainable. Never were passions at the same time more lively and pure than mine; never was love more tender, more true, or more disinterested; freely would I have sacrificed my own happiness to that of the object of my affection; her reputation was dearer than my life, and I could promise myself no happiness for which I would have exposed her peace of mind for a moment. This disposition has ever made me employ so much care, use so many precautions, such secrecy in my adventures, that all of them have failed; in a

word, my want of success with the women has ever proceeded from having loved them too well.

To return to our Egistus, the fluter; it was remarkable that in becoming more insupportable, the traitor put on the appearance of complaisance. From the first day Madam Basile had taken me under her protection, she had endeavored to make me serviceable in the warehouse; and finding I understood arithmetic tolerably well, she proposed his teaching me to keep the books; a proposition that was but indifferently received by this humorist, who might, perhaps, be fearful of being supplanted. As this failed, my whole employ, besides what engraving I had to do, was to transcribe some bills and accounts, to write several books over fair, and translate commercial letters from Italian into French. All at once he thought fit to accept the before rejected proposal, saying, he would teach me bookkeeping by double-entry, and put me in a situation to offer my services to M. Basile on his return; but there was something so false, malicious, and ironical, in his air and manner, that it was by no means calculated to inspire me with confidence. Madam Basile, replied archly, that I was much obliged to him for his kind offer, but she hoped fortune would be more favorable to my merits, for it would be a great misfortune, with so much sense, that I should only be a pitiful clerk.

She often said, she would procure me some acquaintance that might be useful; she doubtless felt the necessity of parting with me, and had prudently resolved on it. Our mute declaration had been made on Thursday, the Sunday following she gave a dinner. A Jacobin of good appearance was among the guests, to whom she did me the honor to present me. The monk treated me very affectionately, congratulated me on my late conversion, mentioned several particulars of my story, which plainly showed he had been made acquainted with it, then, tapping me familiarly on the cheek, bade me be good, to keep up my spirits, and come to see him at his convent, where he should have more opportunity to talk with me. I judged him to be a person of some consequence by the deference that was paid him; and by the paternal tone he assumed with Madam Basile, to be her confessor. I likewise remember that his decent familiarity was attended with an

appearance of esteem, and even respect for his fair penitent, which then made less impression on me than at present. Had I possessed more experience how should I have congratulated myself on having touched the heart of a young woman respected by her confessor!

The table not being large enough to accommodate all the company, a small one was prepared, where I had the satisfaction of dining with our agreeable clerk; but I lost nothing with regard to attention and good cheer, for several plates were sent to the side-table which were certainly not intended for him.

Thus far all went well; the ladies were in good spirits, and the gentlemen very gallant, while Madam Basile did the honors of the table with peculiar grace. In the midst of the dinner we heard a chaise stop at the door, and presently some one coming up stairs—it was M. Basile. Methinks I now see him entering, in his scarlet coat with gold buttons—from that day I have held the color in abhorrence. M. Basile was a tall handsome man, of good address: he entered with a consequential look and an air of taking his family unawares, though none but friends were present. His wife ran to meet him, threw her arms about his neck, and gave him a thousand caresses, which he received with the utmost indifference; and without making any return saluted the company and took his place at table. They were just beginning to speak of his journey, when casting his eye on the small table he asked in a sharp tone, what lad that was? Madam Basile answered ingenuously. He then inquired whether I lodged in the house; and was answered in the negative. "Why not?" replied he, rudely, "since he stays here all day, he might as well remain all night too." The monk now interfered, with a serious and true eulogium on Madam Basile: in a few words he made mine also, adding, that so far from blaming, he ought to further the pious charity of his wife, since it was evident she had not passed the bounds of discretion. The husband answered with an air of petulance, which (restrained by the presence of the monk) he endeavored to stifle; it was, however, sufficient to let me understand he had already received information of me, and that our worthy clerk had rendered me an ill office.

We had hardly risen from table, when the latter came in triumph from his employer, to inform me, I must leave the house that instant, and never more during my life dare to set foot there. He took care to aggravate this commission by everything that could render it cruel and insulting. I departed without a word, my heart overwhelmed with sorrow, less for being obliged to quit this amiable woman, than at the thought of leaving her to the brutality of such a husband. He was certainly right to wish her faithful; but though prudent and wellborn, she was an Italian, that is to say, tender and vindictive; which made me think, he was extremely imprudent in using means the most likely in the world to draw on himself the very evil he so much dreaded.

Such was the success of my first adventure. I walked several times up and down the street, wishing to get a sight of what my heart incessantly regretted; but I could only discover her husband, or the vigilant clerk, who, perceiving me, made a sign with the ell they used in the shop, which was more expressive than alluring: finding, therefore, that I was so completely watched, my courage failed, and I went no more. I wished, at least, to find out the patron she had provided me, but, unfortunately, I did not know his name. I ranged several times round the convent, endeavoring in vain to meet with him. At length, other events banished the delightful remembrance of Madam Basile; and in a short time I so far forgot her, that I remained as simple, as much a novice as ever, nor did my penchant for pretty women even receive any sensible augmentation.

Her liberality had, however, increased my little wardrobe, though she had done this with precaution and prudence, regarding neatness more than decoration, and to make me comfortable rather than brilliant. The coat I had brought from Geneva was yet wearable, she only added a hat and some linen. I had no ruffles, nor would she give me any, not but I felt a great inclination for them. She was satisfied with having put it in my power to keep myself clean, though a charge to do this was unnecessary while I was to appear before her.

A few days after this catastrophe; my hostess, who, as I have already observed, was very friendly, with great satisfaction

informed me she had heard of a situation, and that a lady of rank desired to see me. I immediately thought myself in the road to great adventures; that being the point to which all my ideas tended: this, however, did not prove so brilliant as I had conceived it. I waited on the lady with the servant who had mentioned me: she asked a number of questions, and my answers not displeasing her, I immediately entered into her service not, indeed, in the quality of favorite, but as a footman. I was clothed like the rest of her people, the only difference being, they wore a shoulder-knot, which I had not, and, as there was no lace on her livery, it appeared merely a tradesman's suit. This was the unforeseen conclusion of all my great expectancies!

The Countess of Vercellis, with whom I now lived, was a widow without children; her husband was a Piedmontese, but I always believed her to be a Savoyard, as I could have no conception that a native of Piedmont could speak such good French, and with so pure an accent. She was a middle-aged woman, of a noble appearance and cultivated understanding, being fond of French literature, in which she was well versed. Her letters had the expression, and almost the elegance of Madam de Savigne's; some of them might have been taken for hers. My principal employ, which was by no means displeasing to me, was to write from her dictating; a cancer in the breast, from which she suffered extremely, not permitting her to write herself.

Madam de Vercellis not only possessed a good understanding, but a strong and elevated soul. I was with her during her last illness, and saw her suffer and die, without showing an instant of weakness, or the least effort of constraint; still retaining her feminine manners, without entertaining an idea that such fortitude gave her any claim to philosophy; a word which was not yet in fashion, nor comprehended by her in the sense it is held at present. This strength of disposition sometimes extended almost to apathy, ever appearing to feel as little for others as herself; and when she relieved the unfortunate, it was rather for the sake of acting right, than from a principle of real commiseration. I have frequently experienced this insensibility, in some measure, during the three months I remained with her. It would have been natural

to have had an esteem for a young man of some abilities, who was incessantly under her observation, and that she should think, as she felt her dissolution approaching, that after her death he would have occasion for assistance and support: but whether she judged me unworthy of particular attention, or that those who narrowly watched all her motions, gave her no opportunity to think of any but themselves, she did nothing for me.

I very well recollect that she showed some curiosity to know my story, frequently questioning me, and appearing pleased when I showed her the letters I wrote to Madam de Warens, or explained my sentiments; but as she never discovered her own, she certainly did not take the right means to come at them. My heart, naturally communicative, loved to display its feelings, whenever I encountered a similar disposition; but dry, cold interrogatories, without any sign of blame or approbation on my answers, gave me no confidence. Not being able to determine whether my discourse was agreeable or displeasing, I was ever in fear, and thought less of expressing my ideas, than of being careful not to say anything that might seem to my disadvantage. I have since remarked that this dry method of questioning themselves into people's characters is a common trick among women who pride themselves on superior understanding. These imagine, that by concealing their own sentiments, they shall the more easily penetrate into those of others; being ignorant that this method destroys the confidence so necessary to make us reveal them. A man, on being questioned, is immediately on his guard: and if once he supposes that, without any interest in his concerns, you only wish to set him a-talking, either he entertains you with lies, is silent, or, examining every word before he utters it, rather chooses to pass for a fool, than to be the dupe of your curiosity. In short, it is ever a bad method to attempt to read the hearts of others by endeavoring to conceal our own.

Madam de Vercellis never addressed a word to me which seemed to express affection, pity, or benevolence. She interrogated me coldly, and my answers were uttered with so much timidity, that she doubtless entertained but a mean opinion of my intellects, for latterly she never asked me any questions,

nor said anything but what was absolutely necessary for her service. She drew her judgment less from what I really was, than from what she had made me, and by considering me as a footman prevented my appearing otherwise.

I am inclined to think I suffered at that time by the same interested game of concealed manoeuvre, which has counteracted me throughout my life, and given me a very natural aversion for everything that has the least appearance of it. Madam de Vercellis having no children, her nephew, the Count de la Roque, was her heir, and paid his court assiduously, as did her principal domestics, who, seeing her end approaching, endeavored to take care of themselves; in short, so many were busy about her, that she could hardly have found time to think of me. At the head of her household was a M. Lorenzy, an artful genius, with a still more artful wife; who had so far insinuated herself into the good graces of her mistress, that she was rather on the footing of a friend than a servant. She had introduced a niece of hers as lady's maid: her name was Mademoiselle Pontal; a cunning gypsy, that gave herself all the airs of a waiting-woman, and assisted her aunt so well in besetting the countess, that she only saw with their eyes, and acted through their hands. I had not the happiness to please this worthy triumvirate; I obeyed, but did not wait on them, not conceiving that my duty to our general mistress required me to be a servant to her servants. Besides this, I was a person that gave them some inquietude; they saw I was not in my proper situation, and feared the countess would discover it likewise, and by placing me in it, decrease their portions; for such sort of people, too greedy to be just, look on every legacy given to others as a diminution of their own wealth; they endeavored, therefore, to keep me as much out of her sight as possible. She loved to write letters, in her situation, but they contrived to give her a distaste to it; persuading her, by the aid of the doctor, that it was too fatiguing; and, under pretence that I did not understand how to wait on her, they employed two great lubberly chairmen for that purpose; in a word, they managed the affair so well, that for eight days before she made her will, I had not been permitted to enter the chamber. Afterwards I went in as usual, and was even

more assiduous than any one, being afflicted at the sufferings of the unhappy lady, whom I truly respected and beloved for the calmness and fortitude with which she bore her illness, and often did I shed tears of real sorrow without being perceived by any one.

At length we lost her—I saw her expire. She had lived like a woman of sense and virtue, her death was that of a philosopher. I can truly say, she rendered the Catholic religion amiable to me by the serenity with which she fulfilled its dictates, without any mixture of negligence or affectation. She was naturally serious, but towards the end of her illness she possessed a kind of gayety, too regular to be assumed, which served as a counterpoise to the melancholy of her situation. She only kept her bed two days, continuing to discourse cheerfully with those about her to the very last.

She had bequeathed a year's wages to all the under servants, but, not being on the household list, I had nothing: the Count de la Roque, however, ordered me thirty livres, and the new coat I had on, which M. Lorenzy would certainly have taken from me. He even promised to procure me a place; giving me permission to wait on him as often as I pleased. Accordingly, I went two or three times, without being able to speak to him, and as I was easily repulsed, returned no more; whether I did wrong will be seen hereafter.

210

Would I had finished what I have to say of my living at Madam de Vercellis's. Though my situation apparently remained the same, I did not leave her house as I had entered it: I carried with me the long and painful remembrance of a crime; an insupportable weight of remorse which yet hangs on my conscience, and whose bitter recollection, far from weakening, during a period of forty years, seems to gather strength as I grow old. Who would believe, that a childish fault should be productive of such melancholy consequences? But it is for the more than probable effects that my heart cannot be consoled. I have, perhaps, caused an amiable, honest, estimable girl, who surely merited a better fate than myself, to perish with shame and misery.

Though it is very difficult to break up housekeeping without confusion, and the loss of some property; yet such was the fidelity of the domestics, and the vigilance of M. and Madam Lorenzy, that no article of the inventory was found wanting; in short, nothing was missing but a pink and silver ribbon, which had been worn, and belonged to Mademoiselle Pontal. Though several things of more value were in my reach, this ribbon alone tempted me, and accordingly I stole it. As I took no great pains to conceal the bauble, it was soon discovered; they immediately insisted on knowing from whence I had taken it; this perplexed me—I hesitated, and at length said, with confusion, that Marion gave it me.

Marion was a young Mauriennese, and had been cook to Madam de Vercellis ever since she left off giving entertainments, for being sensible she had more need of good broths than fine ragouts, she had discharged her former one. Marion was not only pretty, but had that freshness of color only to be found among the mountains, and, above all, an air of modesty and sweetness, which made it impossible to see her without affection; she was besides a good girl, virtuous, and of such strict fidelity, that everyone was surprised at hearing her named. They had not less confidence in me, and judged it necessary to certify which of us was the thief. Marion was sent for; a great number of people were present, among whom was the Count de la Roque: she arrives; they show her the ribbon; I accuse her boldly: she remains confused and speechless, casting a look on me that would have disarmed a demon, but which my barbarous heart resisted. At length, she denied it with firmness, but without anger, exhorting me to return to myself, and not injure an innocent girl who had never wronged me. With infernal impudence, I confirmed my accusation, and to her face maintained she had given me the ribbon: on which, the poor girl, bursting into tears, said these words—"Ah, Rousseau! I thought you a good disposition—you render me very unhappy, but I would not be in your situation." She continued to defend herself with as much innocence as firmness, but without uttering the least invective against me. Her moderation, compared to my positive tone, did her an injury; as it

did not appear natural to suppose, on one side such diabolical assurance; on the other, such angelic mildness. The affair could not be absolutely decided, but the presumption was in my favor; and the Count de la Roque, in sending us both away, contented himself with saying, "The conscience of the guilty would revenge the innocent." His prediction was true, and is being daily verified.

I am ignorant what became of the victim of my calumny, but there is little probability of her having been able to place herself agreeably after this, as she labored under an imputation cruel to her character in every respect. The theft was a trifle, yet it was a theft, and, what was worse, employed to seduce a boy; while the lie and obstinacy left nothing to hope from a person in whom so many vices were united. I do not even look on the misery and disgrace in which I plunged her as the greatest evil: who knows, at her age, whither contempt and disregarded innocence might have led her?—Alas! if remorse for having made her unhappy is insupportable, what must I have suffered at the thought of rendering her even worse than myself. The cruel remembrance of this transaction, sometimes so troubles and disorders me, that, in my disturbed slumbers, I imagine I see this poor girl enter and reproach me with my crime, as though I had committed it but yesterday. While in easy tranquil circumstances, I was less miserable on this account, but, during a troubled agitated life, it has robbed me of the sweet consolation of persecuted innocence, and made me wofully experience, what, I think, I have remarked in some of my works, that remorse sleeps in the calm sunshine of prosperity, but wakes amid the storms of adversity. I could never take on me to discharge my heart of this weight in the bosom of a friend; nor could the closest intimacy ever encourage me to it, even with Madam de Warens: all I could do, was to own I had to accuse myself of an atrocious crime, but never said in what it consisted. The weight, therefore, has remained heavy on my conscience to this day; and I can truly own the desire of relieving myself, in some measure, from it, contributed greatly to the resolution of writing my Confessions.

I have proceeded truly in that I have just made, and it will certainly be thought I have not sought to palliate the turpitude of

my offence; but I should not fulfill the purpose of this undertaking, did I not, at the same time, divulge my interior disposition, and excuse myself as far as is conformable with truth.

Never was wickedness further from my thoughts, than in that cruel moment; and when I accused the unhappy girl, it is strange, but strictly true, that my friendship for her was the immediate cause of it. She was present to my thoughts; I formed my excuse from the first object that presented itself: I accused her with doing what I meant to have done, and as I designed to have given her the ribbon, asserted she had given it to me. When she appeared, my heart was agonized, but the presence of so many people was more powerful than my compunction. I did not fear punishment, but I dreaded shame: I dreaded it more than death, more than the crime, more than all the world. I would have buried, hid myself in the centre of the earth: invincible shame bore down every other sentiment; shame alone caused all my impudence, and in proportion as I became criminal, the fear of discovery rendered me intrepid. I felt no dread but that of being detected, of being publicly, and to my face, declared a thief, liar, and calumniator; an unconquerable fear of this overcame every other sensation. Had I been left to myself, I should infallibly have declared the truth. Or if M. de la Roque had taken me aside, and said—"Do not injure this poor girl; if you are guilty own it,"—I am convinced I should instantly have thrown myself at his feet; but they intimidated, instead of encouraging me. I was hardly out of my childhood, or rather, was yet in it. It is also just to make some allowance for my age. In youth, dark, premeditated villainy is more criminal than in a riper age, but weaknesses are much less so; my fault was truly nothing more; and I am less afflicted at the deed itself than for its consequences. It had one good effect, however, in preserving me through the rest of my life from any criminal action, from the terrible impression that has remained from the only one I ever committed; and I think my aversion for lying proceeds in a great measure from regret at having been guilty of so black a one. If it is a crime that can be expiated, as I dare believe, forty years of uprightness and honor on various difficult occasions, with the many misfortunes that have overwhelmed my latter years, may

have completed it. Poor Marion has found so many avengers in this world, that however great my offence towards her, I do not fear to bear the guilt with me. Thus have I disclosed what I had to say on this painful subject; may I be permitted never to mention it again.

BOOK III

Leaving the service of Madam de Vercellis nearly as I had entered it, I returned to my former hostess, and remained there five or six weeks; during which time health, youth, and laziness, frequently rendered my temperament importunate. I was restless, absent, and thoughtful: I wept and sighed for a happiness I had no idea of, though at the same time highly sensible of some deficiency. This situation is indescribable, few men can even form any conception of it, because, in general, they have prevented that plenitude of life, at once tormenting and delicious. My thoughts were incessantly occupied with girls and women, but in a manner peculiar to myself: these ideas kept my senses in a perpetual and disagreeable activity, though, fortunately, they did not point out the means of deliverance. I would have given my life to have met with a Miss Goton, but the time was past in which the play of infancy predominated; increase of years had introduced shame, the inseparable companion of a conscious deviation from rectitude, which so confirmed my natural timidity as to render it invincible; and never, either at that time or since, could I prevail on myself to offer a proposition favorable to my wishes (unless in a manner constrained to it by previous advances) even with those whose scruples I had no cause to dread.

My stay at Madam de Vercellis's had procured me some acquaintance, which I thought might be serviceable to me, and therefore wished to retain. Among others, I sometimes visited a Savoyard abbe, M. Gaime, who was tutor to the Count of Melaredes children. He was young, and not much known, but possessed an excellent cultivated understanding, with great probity, and was, altogether, one of the best men I ever knew. He was incapable of doing me the service I then stood most in need

of, not having sufficient interest to procure me a situation, but from him I reaped advantages far more precious, which have been useful to me through life, lessons of pure morality, and maxims of sound judgment.

In the successive order of my inclinations and ideas, I had ever been too high or too low. Achilles or Thersites; sometimes a hero, at others a villain. M. Gaime took pains to make me properly acquainted with myself, without sparing or giving me too much discouragement. He spoke in advantageous terms of my disposition and talents, adding, that he foresaw obstacles which would prevent my profiting by them; thus, according to him, they were to serve less as steps by which I should mount to fortune, than as resources which might enable me to exist without one. He gave me a true picture of human life, of which, hitherto, I had formed but a very erroneous idea, teaching me, that a man of understanding, though destined to experience adverse fortune, might, by skilful management, arrive at happiness; that there was no true felicity without virtue, which was practicable in every situation. He greatly diminished my admiration of grandeur, by proving that those in a superior situation are neither better nor happier than those they command. One of his maxims has frequently returned to my memory: it was, that if we could truly read the hearts of others we should feel more inclination to descend than rise: this reflection, the truth of which is striking without extravagance, I have found of great utility, in the various exigences of my life, as it tended to make me satisfied with my condition. He gave me the first just conception of relative duties, which my high-flown imagination had ever pictured in extremes, making me sensible that the enthusiasm of sublime virtues is of little use in society; that while endeavoring to rise too high we are in danger of falling; and that a virtuous and uniform discharge of little duties requires as great a degree of fortitude as actions which are called heroic, and would at the same time procure more honor and happiness. That it was infinitely more desirable to possess the lasting esteem of those about us, than at intervals to attract admiration.

In properly arranging the various duties between man and man, it was necessary to ascend to principles; the step I had recently taken, and of which my present situation was the consequence, naturally led us to speak of religion. It will easily be conceived that the honest M. Gaime was, in a great measure, the original of the Savoyard Vicar; prudence only obliging him to deliver his sentiments, on certain points, with more caution and reserve, and explain himself with less freedom; but his sentiments and councils were the same, not even excepting his advice to return to my country; all was precisely as I have since given it to the public. Dwelling no longer, therefore, on conversations which everyone may see the substance of, I shall only add, that these wise instructions (though they did not produce an immediate effect) were as so many seeds of virtue and religion in my heart which were never rooted out, and only required the fostering cares of friendship to bring to maturity.

Though my conversation was not very sincere, I was affected by his discourses, and far from being weary, was pleased with them on account of their clearness and simplicity, but above all because his heart seemed interested in what he said. My disposition is naturally tender, I have ever been less attached to people for the good they have really done me than for that they designed to do, and my feelings in this particular have seldom misled me: thus I truly esteemed M. Gaime. I was in a manner his second disciple, which even at that time was of inestimable service in turning me from a propensity to vice into which my idleness was leading me.

One day, when I least expected it, I was sent for by the Count de la Roque. Having frequently called at his house, without being able to speak with him, I grew weary, and supposing he had either forgot me or retained some unfavorable impression of me, returned no more: but I was mistaken in both these conjectures. He had more than once witnessed the pleasure I took in fulfilling my duty to his aunt: he had even mentioned it to her, and afterwards spoke of it, when I no longer thought of it myself.

He received me graciously, saying that instead of amusing me with useless promises, he had sought to place me to advantage;

that he had succeeded, and would put me in a way to better my situation, but the rest must depend on myself. That the family into which he should introduce me being both powerful and esteemed, I should need no other patrons; and though at first on the footing of a servant, I might be assured, that if my conduct and sentiments were found above that station, I should not long remain in it. The end of this discourse cruelly disappointed the brilliant hopes the beginning had inspired. "What! forever a footman?" said I to myself, with a bitterness which confidence presently effaced, for I felt myself too superior to that situation to fear long remaining there.

He took me to the Count de Gauvon, Master of the Horse to the Queen, and Chief of the illustrious House of Solar. The air of dignity conspicuous in this respectable old man, rendered the affability with which he received me yet more interesting. He questioned me with evident interest, and I replied with sincerity. He then told the Count de la Roque, that my features were agreeable, and promised intellect, which he believed I was not deficient in; but that was not enough, and time must show the rest; after which, turning to me, he said, "Child, almost all situations are attended with difficulties in the beginning; yours, however, shall not have too great a portion of them; be prudent, and endeavor to please everyone, that will be almost your only employment; for the rest fear nothing, you shall be taken care of." Immediately after he went to the Marchioness de Breil, his daughter-in-law, to whom he presented me, and then to the Abbe de Gauvon, his son. I was elated with this beginning, as I knew enough of the world already to conclude, that so much ceremony is not generally used at the reception of a footman. In fact, I was not treated like one. I dined at the steward's table; did not wear a livery; and the Count de Favria (a giddy youth) having commanded me to get behind his coach, his grandfather ordered that I should get behind no coach, nor follow any one out of the house. Meantime, I waited at table, and did, within doors, the business of a footman; but I did it, as it were, of my own free will, without being appointed to any particular service; and except writing some letters, which were dictated to me, and cutting out

some ornaments for the Count de Favria, I was almost the absolute master of my time. This trial of my discretion, which I did not then perceive, was certainly very dangerous, and not very humane; for in this state of idleness I might have contracted vices which I should not otherwise have given into. Fortunately, it did not produce that effect; my memory retained the lessons of M. Gaime, they had made an impression on my heart, and I sometimes escaped from the house of my patron to obtain a repetition of them. I believe those who saw me going out, apparently by stealth, had no conception of my business. Nothing could be more prudent than the advice he gave me respecting my conduct. My beginning was admirable; so much attention, assiduity, and zeal, had charmed everyone. The Abby Gaime advised me to moderate this first ardor, lest I should relax, and that relaxation should be considered as neglect. "Your setting out," said he, "is the rule of what will be expected of you; endeavor gradually to increase your attentions, but be cautious how you diminish them."

As they paid but little attention to my trifling talents, and supposed I possessed no more than nature had given me, there was no appearance (notwithstanding the promises of Count de Gauvon) of my meeting with any particular consideration. Some objects of more consequence had intervened. The Marquis de Breil, son of the Count de Gauvon, was then ambassador at Vienna; some circumstances had occurred at that court which for some weeks kept the family in continual agitation, and left them no time to think of me. Meantime I had relaxed but little in my attentions, though one object in the family did me both good and harm, making me more secure from exterior dissipation, but less attentive to my duty.

Mademoiselle de Breil was about my own age, tolerably handsome, and very fair complexioned, with black hair, which notwithstanding, gave her features that air of softness so natural to the flaxen, and which my heart could never resist. The court dress, so favorable to youth, showed her fine neck and shape to advantage, and the mourning, which was then worn, seemed to add to her beauty. It will be said, a domestic should not take

notice of these things; I was certainly to blame, yet I perceived all this, nor was I the only one; the maitre d' hotel and valet de chambre spoke of her sometimes at table with a vulgarity that pained me extremely. My head, however, was not sufficiently turned to allow of my being entirely in love; I did not forget myself, or my situation. I loved to see Mademoiselle de Breil; to hear her utter anything that marked wit, sense, or good humor: my ambition, confined to a desire of waiting on her, never exceeded its just rights. At table I was ever attentive to make the most of them; if her footman quitted her chair, I instantly supplied his place; in default of this, I stood facing her, seeking in her eyes what she was about to ask for, and watching the moment to change her plate. What would I not have given to hear her command, to have her look at, or speak the smallest word to me! but no, I had the mortification to be beneath her regard; she did not even perceive I was there. Her brother, who frequently spoke to me while at table, having one day said something which I did not consider obliging, I made him so arch and well-turned an answer, that it drew her attention; she cast her eyes upon me, and this glance was sufficient to fill me with transport. The next day, a second occasion presented itself, which I fortunately made use of. A great dinner was given; and I saw, with astonishment, for the first time, the maitre d' hotel waiting at table, with a sword by his side, and hat on his head. By chance, the discourse turned on the motto of the house of Solar, which was, with the arms, worked in the tapestry: 'Tel fier qui ne fue pas'. As the Piedmontese are not in general very perfect in the French language, they found fault with the orthography, saying, that in the word fier there should be no 't'. The old Count de Gauvon was going to reply, when happening to cast his eyes on me, he perceived I smiled without daring to say anything; he immediately ordered me to speak my opinion. I then said, I did not think the 't' superfluous, 'fier' being an old French word, not derived from the noun 'ferus', proud, threatening; but from the verb 'ferit', he strikes, he wounds; the motto, therefore, did not appear to mean, some threat, but, 'Some strike who do not kill'. The whole company fixed their eyes on me, then on each other, without speaking a word; never was a

greater degree of astonishment; but what most flattered me, was an air of satisfaction which I perceived on the countenance of Mademoiselle de Breil. This scornful lady deigned to cast on me a second look at least as valuable as the former, and turning to her grandfather, appeared to wait with impatience for the praise that was due to me, and which he fully bestowed, with such apparent satisfaction, that it was eagerly chorused by the whole table. This interval was short, but delightful in many respects; it was one of those moments so rarely met with, which place things in their natural order, and revenge depressed merit for the injuries of fortune. Some minutes after Mademoiselle de Breil again raised her eyes, desiring me with a voice of timid affability to give her some drink. It will easily be supposed I did not let her wait, but advancing towards her, I was seized with such a trembling, that having filled the glass too full, I spilled some of the water on her plate, and even on herself. Her brother asked me, giddily, why I trembled thus? This question increased my confusion, while the face of Mademoiselle de Breil was suffused with a crimson blush.

Here ended the romance; where it may be remarked (as with Madam Basile, and others in the continuation of my life) that I was not fortunate in the conclusion of my amours. In vain I placed myself in the antechamber of Madam de Breil, I could not obtain one mark of attention from her daughter; she went in and out without looking at me, nor had I the confidence to raise my eyes to her; I was even so foolishly stupid, that one day, on dropping her glove as she passed, instead of seizing and covering it with kisses, as I would gladly have done, I did not dare to quit my place, but suffered it to be taken up by a great booby of a footman, whom I could willingly have knocked down for his officiousness. To complete my timidity, I perceived I had not the good fortune to please Madam de Breil; she not only never ordered, but even rejected, my services; and having twice found me in her antechamber, asked me, dryly, "If I had nothing to do?" I was obliged, therefore, to renounce this dear antechamber; at first it caused me some uneasiness, but other things intervening, I presently thought no more of it.

The disdain of Madam de Breil was fully compensated by the kindness of her father-in-law, who at length began to think of me. The evening after the entertainment, I have already mentioned, he had a conversation with me that lasted half an hour, which appeared to satisfy him, and absolutely enchanted me. This good man had less sense than Madam de Vercellis, but possessed more feeling; I therefore succeeded much better with him. He bade me attach myself to his son, the Abbe Gauvon, who had an esteem for me, which, if I took care to cultivate, might be serviceable in furnishing me with what was necessary to complete their views for my future establishment. The next morning I flew to M. the Abbe, who did not receive me as a servant, but made me sit by his fireside, and questioned me with great affability. He soon found that my education, which had attempted many things, had completed none; but observing that I understood something of Latin, he undertook to teach me more, and appointed me to attend him every morning. Thus, by one of the whimsicalities which have marked the whole course of my life, at once above and below my natural situation, I was pupil and footman in the same house: and though in servitude, had a preceptor whose birth entitled him to supply that place only to the children of kings.

The Abbe de Gauvon was a younger son, and designed by his family for a bishopric, for which reason his studies had been pursued further than is usual with people of quality. He had been sent to the university of Sienna, where he had resided some years, and from whence he had brought a good portion of cruscantism, designing to be that at Turin which the Abbe de Dangeau was formerly at Paris. Being disgusted with theology, he gave in to the belle-lettres, which is very frequent in Italy, with those who have entered the career of prelacy. He had studied the poets, and wrote tolerable Latin and Italian verses; in a word, his taste was calculated to form mine, and give some order to that chaos of insignificant trash with which my brain was encumbered; but whether my prating had misled him, or that he could not support the trouble of teaching the elementary parts of Latin, he put me at first too high; and I had scarcely translated a few fables of Phœdrus before he put me into Virgil, where I could hardly

understand anything. It will be seen hereafter that I was destined frequently to learn Latin, but never to attain it. I labored with assiduity, and the abbe bestowed his attention with a degree of kindness, the remembrance of which, even at this time, both interests and softens me. I passed the greater part of the morning with him as much for my own instruction as his service; not that he ever permitted me to perform any menial office, but to copy, or write from his dictating; and my employment of secretary was more useful than that of scholar, and by this means I not only learned the Italian in its utmost purity, but also acquired a taste for literature, and some discernment of composition, which could not have been at La Tribu's, and which was useful to me when I afterwards wrote alone.

At this period of my life, without being romantic, I might reasonably have indulged the hope of preferment. The abbe, thoroughly pleased with me, expressed his satisfaction to everyone, while his father had such a singular affection for me, that I was assured by the Count de Favria, that he had spoken of me to the king; even Madam de Breil had laid aside her disdainful looks; in short I was a general favorite, which gave great jealousy to the other servants, who seeing me honored by the instructions of their master's son, were persuaded I should not remain their equal.

As far as I could judge by some words dropped at random, and which I reflected on afterwards, it appeared to me, that the House of Solar, wishing to run the career of embassies, and hoping perhaps in time to arrive at the ministry, wished to provide themselves with a person of merit and talents, who depending entirely on them, might obtain their confidence, and be of essential service. This project of the Count de Gauvon was judicious, magnanimous, and truly worthy of a powerful nobleman, equally provident and generous; but besides my not seeing, at that time, its full extent, it was far too rational for my brain, and required too much confinement.

My ridiculous ambition sought for fortune in the midst of brilliant adventures, and not finding one woman in all this scheme, it appeared tedious, painful and melancholy; though I

should rather have thought it more honorable on this account, as the species of merit generally patronized by women is certainly less worthy that I was supposed to possess.

Everything succeeded to my wish: I had obtained, almost forced, the esteem of all; the trial was over, and I was universally considered as a young man with flattering prospects, who was not at present in his proper sphere, but was expected soon to reach it; but my place was not assigned me by man, and I was to reach it by very difficult paths. I now come to one of those characteristic traits, which are so natural to me, and which, indeed, the reader might have observed without this reflection.

There were at Turin several new converts of my own stamp, whom I neither liked nor wish to see; but I had met with some Genevese who were not of this description, and among others a M. Mussard, nicknamed Wryneck, a miniature painter, and a distant relation. This M. Mussard, having learned my situation at the Count de Gauvon's, came to see me, with another Genevese, named Bacle, who had been my comrade during my apprenticeship. This Bacle was a very sprightly, amusing young fellow, full of lively sallies, which at his time of life appeared extremely agreeable. At once, then, behold me delighted with M. Bacle; charmed to such a degree that I found it impossible to quit him. He was shortly to depart for Geneva; what a loss had I to sustain! I felt the whole force of it, and resolving to make the best use of this precious interval, I determined not to leave him, or, rather, he never quitted me, for my head was not yet sufficiently turned to think of quitting the house without leave, but it was soon perceived that he engrossed my whole time, and he was accordingly forbid the house. This so incensed me, that forgetting everything but my friend Bacle, I went neither to the abbe nor the count, and was no longer to be found at home. I paid no attention to repeated reprimands, and at length was threatened with dismissal. This threat was my ruin, as it suggested the idea that it was not absolutely necessary that Bacle should depart alone. From that moment I could think of no other pleasure, no other situation or happiness than taking this journey. To render the felicity still more complete, at the end of it (though at an immense

distance) I pictured to myself Madam de Warens; for as to returning to Geneva, it never entered into my imagination. The hills, fields, brooks and villages, incessantly succeeded each other with new charms, and this delightful jaunt seemed worthy to absorb my whole existence. Memory recalled, with inexpressible pleasure, how charming the country had appeared in coming to Turin; what then must it be, when, to the pleasure of independence, should be added the company of a good-humored comrade of my own age and disposition, without any constraint or obligation, but free to go or stay as we pleased? Would it not be madness to sacrifice the prospect of so much felicity to projects of ambition, slow and difficult in their execution, and uncertain in their event? But even supposing them realized, and in their utmost splendor, they were not worth one quarter of an hour of the sweet pleasure and liberty of youth.

Full of these wise conclusions, I conducted myself so improperly, that (not indeed without some trouble) I got myself dismissed; for on my return one night the maitre de hotel gave me warning on the part of the count. This was exactly what I wanted; for feeling, spite of myself, the extravagance of my conduct, I wished to excuse it by the addition of injustice and ingratitude, by throwing the blame on others, and sheltering myself under the idea of necessity.

235

I was told the Count de Favria wished to speak with me the next morning before my departure; but, being sensible that my head was so far turned as to render it possible for me to disobey the injunction, the maitre de hotel declined paying the money designed me, and which certainly I had very ill earned, till after this visit; for my kind patrons being unwilling to place me in the situation of a footman, I had not any fixed wages.

The Count de Favria, though young and giddy, talked to me on this occasion in the most sensible and serious manner: I might add, if it would not be thought vain, with the utmost tenderness. He reminded me, in the most flattering terms, of the cares of his uncle, and intentions of his grandfather; after having drawn in lively colors what I was sacrificing to ruin, he offered to make my

peace, without stipulating any conditions, but that I should no more see the worthless fellow who had seduced me.

It was so apparent that he did not say all this of himself, that notwithstanding my blind stupidity, I powerfully felt the kindness of my good old master, but the dear journey was too firmly printed on my imagination for any consideration to balance the charm. Bereft of understanding, firm to my purpose, I hardened myself against conviction, and arrogantly answered, that as they had thought fit to give me warning, I had resolved to take it, and conceived it was now too late to retract, since, whatever might happen to me, I was fully resolved not to be driven a second time from the same house. The count, justly irritated, bestowed on me some names which I deserved, and putting me out of his apartment by the shoulders, shut the door on me. I departed triumphant, as if I had gained the greatest victory, and fearful of sustaining a second combat even had the ingratitude to leave the house without thanking the abbe for his kindness.

To form a just conception of my delirium at that moment, the excess to which my heart is subject to be heated by the most trifling incidents, and the ardor with which my imagination seizes on the most attractive objects should be conceived. At these times, plans the most ridiculous, childish, and void of sense, flatter my favorite idea, and persuade me that it is reasonable to sacrifice everything to the possession of it. Would it be believed, that when near nineteen, any one could be so stupid as to build his hopes of future subsistence on an empty phial? For example:

The Abbe de Gauvon had made me a present, some weeks before, of a very pretty heron fountain, with which I was highly delighted. Playing with this toy, and speaking of our departure, the sage Bacle and myself thought it might be of infinite advantage, and enable us to lengthen our journey. What in the world was so curious as a heron fountain? This idea was the foundation on which we built our future fortune: we were to assemble the country people in every village we might pass through, and delight them with the sight of it, when feasting and good cheer would be sure to pour on us abundantly; for we were both firmly persuaded, that provisions could cost nothing to those

who grew and gathered them, and if they did not stuff travellers, it was downright ill-nature.

We pictured in all parts entertainments and weddings, reckoning that without any expense but wind from our lungs, and the water of our fountain, we should be maintained through Piedmont, Savoy, France, and indeed, all the world over. There was no end to our projected travels, and we immediately directed our course northward, rather for the pleasure of crossing the Alps, than from a supposed necessity of being obliged to stop at any place.

Such was the plan on which I set out, abandoning without regret, my preceptors, studies, and hopes, with the almost certain attainment of a fortune, to lead the life of a real vagabond. Farewell to the capital; adieu to the court, ambition, love, the fair, and all the great adventures into which hope had led me during the preceding year! I departed with my fountain and my friend Bacle, a purse lightly furnished, but a heart over-flowing with pleasure, and only thinking how to enjoy the extensive felicity which I supposed my project encircled.

This extravagant journey was performed almost as agreeably as I had expected, though not exactly on the same plan; not but our fountain highly amused the hostess and servants for some minutes at all the ale-houses where we halted, yet we found it equally necessary to pay on our departure; but that gave us no concern, as we never thought of depending on it entirely until our money should be expended. An accident spared us that trouble, our fountain was broken near Bramant, and in good time, for we both felt (though without daring to own it to each other) that we began to be weary of it. This misfortune rendered us gayer than ever; we laughed heartily at our giddiness in having forgotten that our clothes and shoes would wear out, or trusting to renew them by the play of our fountain. We continued our journey as merrily as we had begun it, only drawing faster towards that termination where our drained purses made it necessary for us to arrive.

At Chambery I became pensive; not for the folly I had committed, for never did any one think less of the past, but on account of the reception I should meet with from Madam de

Warens; for I looked on her house as my paternal home. I had written her an account of my reception at the Count de Gauvon's; she knew my expectancies, and, in congratulating me on my good fortune, had added some wise lessons on the return I ought to make for the kindness with which they treated me. She looked on my fortune as already made, if not destroyed by my own negligence; what then would she say on my arrival? for it never entered my mind that she might shut the door against me, but I dreaded the uneasiness I might give her; I dreaded her reproaches, to me more wounding than want; I resolved to bear all in silence, and, if possible to appease her. I now saw nothing but Madam de Warens in the whole universe, and to live in disgrace with her was impossible.

I was most concerned about my companion, whom I did not wish to offend, and feared I should not easily get rid of. I prefaced this separation by an affected coldness during the last day's journey. The drole understood me perfectly; in fact, he was rather giddy than deficient in point of sense—I expected he would have been hurt at my inconstancy, but I was quite mistaken; nothing affected my friend Bacle, for hardly had we set foot in town, on our arrival in Annecy, before he said, "You are now at home,"—embraced—bade me adieu—turned on his heel, and disappeared; nor have I ever heard of him since.

How did my heart beat as I approached the habitation of Madam de Warens! my legs trembled under me, my eyes were clouded with a mist, I neither saw, heard, nor recollected any one, and was obliged frequently to stop that I might draw breath, and recall my bewildered senses. Was it fear of not obtaining that succor I stood in need of, which agitated me to this degree? At the age I then was, does the fear of perishing with hunger give such alarms? No: I declare with as much truth as pride, that it was not in the power of interest or indigence, at any period of my life, to expand or contract my heart. In the course of a painful life, memorable for its vicissitudes, frequently destitute of an asylum, and without bread, I have contemplated, with equal indifference, both opulence and misery. In want I might have begged or stolen, as others have done, but never could feel distress at being reduced

to such necessities. Few men have grieved more than myself, few have shed so many tears; yet never did poverty, or the fear of falling into it, make me heave a sigh or moisten my eyelids. My soul, in despite of fortune, has only been sensible of real good and evil, which did not depend on her; and frequently, when in possession of everything that could make life pleasing, I have been the most miserable of mortals.

The first glance of Madam de Warens banished all my fears—my heart leaped at the sound of her voice; I threw myself at her feet, and in transports of the most lively joy, pressed my lips upon her hand. I am ignorant whether she had received any recent information of me. I discovered but little surprise on her countenance, and no sorrow. "Poor child!" said she, in an affectionate tone, "art thou here again? I knew you were too young for this journey; I am very glad, however, that it did not turn out so bad as I apprehended." She then made me recount my history; it was not long, and I did it faithfully: suppressing only some trifling circumstances, but on the whole neither sparing nor excusing myself.

The question was, where I could lodge: she consulted her maid on this point—I hardly dared to breathe during the deliberation; but when I heard I was to sleep in the house, I could scarce contain my joy; and saw the little bundle I brought with me carried into my destined apartment with much the same sensations as St. Preux saw his chaise put up at Madam de Wolmar's. To complete all, I had the satisfaction to find that this favor was not to be transitory; for at a moment when they thought me attentive to something else, I heard Madam de Warens say, "They may talk as they please, but since Providence has sent him back, I am determined not to abandon him."

Behold me, then, established at her house; not, however, that I date the happiest days of my life from this period, but this served to prepare me for them. Though that sensibility of heart, which enables us truly to enjoy our being, is the work of Nature, and perhaps a mere effect of organization, yet it requires situations to unfold itself, and without a certain concurrence of favorable circumstances, a man born with the most acute sensibility may go

out of the world without ever having been acquainted with his own temperament. This was my case till that time, and such perhaps it might have remained had I never known Madam de Warens, or even having known her, had I not remained with her long enough to contract that pleasing habit of affectionate sentiments with which she inspired me. I dare affirm, that those who only love, do not feel the most charming sensations we are capable of: I am acquainted with another sentiment, less impetuous, but a thousand times more delightful; sometimes joined with love, but frequently separated from it. This feeling is not simply friendship; it is more enchanting, more tender; nor do I imagine it can exist between persons of the same sex; at least I have been truly a friend, if ever a man was, and yet never experienced it in that kind. This distinction is not sufficiently clear, but will become so hereafter: sentiments are only distinguishable by their effects.

Madam de Warens inhabited an old house, but large enough to have a handsome spare apartment, which she made her drawing-room. I now occupied this chamber, which was in the passage I have before mentioned as the place of our first meeting. Beyond the brook and gardens was a prospect of the country, which was by no means uninteresting to the young inhabitant, being the first time, since my residence at Bossey, that I had seen anything before my windows but walls, roofs, or the dirty street. How pleasing then was this novelty! it helped to increase the tenderness of my disposition, for I looked on this charming landscape as the gift of my dear patroness, who I could almost fancy had placed it there on purpose for me. Peaceably seated, my eyes pursued her amidst the flowers and the verdure; her charms seemed to me confounded with those of the spring; my heart, till now contracted, here found means to expand itself, and my sighs exhaled freely in this charming retreat.

The magnificence I had been accustomed to at Turin was not to be found at Madam de Warens', but in lieu of it there was neatness, regularity, and a patriarchal abundance, which is seldom attached to pompous ostentation. She had very little plate, no china, no game in her kitchen, or foreign wines in her cellar, but

both were well furnished, and at every one's service; and her coffee, though served in earthenware cups, was excellent. Whoever came to her house was invited to dine there, and never did laborer, messenger, or traveller, depart without refreshment. Her family consisted of a pretty chambermaid from Fribourg, named Merceret; a valet from her own country called Claude Anet (of whom I shall speak hereafter), a cook, and two hired chairmen when she visited, which seldom happened. This was a great deal to be done out of two thousand livres a year; yet, with good management, it might have been sufficient in a country where land is extremely good, and money very scarce. Unfortunately, economy was never her favorite virtue; she contracted debts—paid them—thus her money passed from hand to hand like a weaver's shuttle, and quickly disappeared.

The arrangement of her housekeeping was exactly what I should have chosen, and I shared it with satisfaction. I was least pleased with the necessity of remaining too long at table. Madam de Warens was so much incommoded with the first smell of soup or meat, as almost to occasion fainting; from this she slowly recovered, talking meantime, and never attempting to eat for the first half hour. I could have dined thrice in the time, and had ever finished my meal long before she began; I then ate again for company; and though by this means I usually dined twice, felt no inconvenience from it. In short, I was perfectly at my ease, and the happier as my situation required no care. Not being at this time instructed in the state of her finances, I supposed her means were adequate to her expense; and though I afterwards found the same abundance, yet when instructed in her real situation, finding her pension ever anticipated, prevented me from enjoying the same tranquility. Foresight with me has always embittered enjoyment; in vain I saw the approach of misfortunes, I was never the more likely to avoid them.

From the first moment of our meeting, the softest familiarity was established between us: and in the same degree it continued during the rest of her life. Child was my name, Mamma was hers, and child and mamma we have ever continued, even after a number of years had almost effaced the apparent difference of age

between us. I think those names convey an exact idea of our behavior, the simplicity of our manners, and above all, the similarity of our dispositions. To me she was the tenderest of mothers, ever preferring my welfare to her own pleasure; and if my own satisfaction found some interest in my attachment to her, it was not to change its nature, but only to render it more exquisite, and infatuate me with the charm of having a mother young and handsome, whom I was delighted to caress: I say literally, to caress, for never did it enter into her imagination to deny me the tenderest maternal kisses and endearments, or into my heart to abuse them. It will be said, at length our connection was of a different kind: I confess it; but have patience, that will come in its turn.

The sudden sight of her, on our first interview, was the only truly passionate moment she ever inspired me with; and even that was principally the work of surprise. With her I had neither transports nor desires, but remained in a ravishing calm, sensible of a happiness I could not define, and thus could I have passed my whole life, or even eternity, without feeling an instant of uneasiness.

She was the only person with whom I never experienced that want of conversation, which to me is so painful to endure. Our *tete-a-tetes* were rather an inexhaustible chat than conversation, which could only conclude from interruption. So far from finding discourse difficult, I rather thought it a hardship to be silent; unless, when contemplating her projects, she sunk into a reverie; when I silently let her meditate, and gazing on her, was the happiest of men. I had another singular fancy, which was that without pretending to the favor of a *tete-a-tete*, I was perpetually seeking occasion to form them, enjoying such opportunities with rapture; and when importunate visitors broke in upon us, no matter whether it was man or woman, I went out murmuring, not being able to remain a secondary object in her company; then, counting the minutes in her antechamber, I used to curse these eternal visitors, thinking it inconceivable how they could find so much to say, because I had still more.

If ever I felt the full force of my attachment, it was when I did not see her. When in her presence, I was only content; when absent, my uneasiness reached almost to melancholy, and a wish to live with her gave me emotions of tenderness even to tears. Never shall I forget one great holiday, while she was at vespers, when I took a walk out of the city, my heart full of her image, and the ardent wish to pass my life with her. I could easily enough see that at present this was impossible; that the happiness I enjoyed would be of short duration, and this idea gave to my contemplations a tincture of melancholy, which, however, was not gloomy, but tempered with a flattering hope. The ringing of bells, which ever particularly affects me, the singing of birds, the fineness of the day, the beauty of the landscape, the scattered country houses, among which in idea I placed our future dwelling, altogether struck me with an impression so lively, tender, melancholy, and powerful, that I saw myself in ecstasy transported into that happy time and abode, where my heart, possessing all the felicity it could desire, might taste it with raptures inexpressible.

I never recollect to have enjoyed the future with such force of illusions as at that time; and what has particularly struck me in the recollection of this reverie, is that when realized, I found my situation exactly as I had imagined it. If ever waking dream had an appearance of a prophetic vision, it was assuredly this; I was only deceived in its imaginary duration, for days, years, and life itself, passed ideally in perfect tranquility, while the reality lasted but a moment. Alas! my most durable happiness was but as a dream, which I had no sooner had a glimpse of, than I instantly awoke.

I know not when I should have done, if I was to enter into a detail of all the follies that affection for my dear Madam de Warens made me commit. When absent from her, how often have I kissed the bed on a supposition that she had slept there; the curtains and all the furniture of my chamber, on recollecting they were hers, and that her charming hands had touched them; nay, the floor itself, when I considered she had walked there. Sometimes even in her presence, extravagancies escaped me,

which only the most violent passions seemed capable of inspiring; in a word, there was but one essential difference to distinguish me from an absolute lover, and that particular renders my situation almost inconceivable.

I had returned from Italy, not absolutely as I went there, but as no one of my age, perhaps, ever did before, being equally unacquainted with women. My ardent constitution had found resources in those means by which youth of my disposition sometimes preserve their purity at the expense of health, vigor, and frequently of life itself. My local situation should likewise be considered—living with a pretty woman, cherishing her image in the bottom of my heart, seeing her during the whole day, at night surrounded with objects that recalled her incessantly to my remembrance, and sleeping in the bed where I knew she had slept. What a situation! Who can read this without supposing me on the brink of the grave? But quite the contrary; that which might have ruined me, acted as a preservative, at least for a time. Intoxicated with the charm of living with her, with the ardent desire of passing my life there, absent or present I saw in her a tender mother, an amiable sister, a respected friend, but nothing more; meantime, her image filled my heart, and left room for no other object. The extreme tenderness with which she inspired me excluded every other woman from my consideration, and preserved me from the whole sex: in a word, I was virtuous, because I loved her. Let these particulars, which I recount but indifferently, be considered, and then let any one judge what kind of attachment I had for her: for my part, all I can say, is, that if it hitherto appears extraordinary, it will appear much more so in the sequel.

My time passed in the most agreeable manner, though occupied in a way which was by no means calculated to please me; such as having projects to digest, bills to write fair, receipts to transcribe, herbs to pick, drugs to pound, or distillations to attend; and in the midst of all this, came crowds of travellers, beggars, and visitors of all denominations. Some times it was necessary to converse at the same time with a soldier, an apothecary, a prebendary, a fine lady, and a lay brother. I grumbled, swore, and

wished all this troublesome medley at the devil, while she seemed to enjoy it, laughing at my chagrin till the tears ran down her cheeks. What excited her mirth still more, was to see that my anger was increased by not being able myself to refrain from laughter. These little intervals, in which I enjoyed the pleasure of grumbling, were charming; and if, during the dispute, another importunate visitor arrived, she would add to her amusement by maliciously prolonging the visit, meantime casting glances at me for which I could almost have beat her; nor could she without difficulty refrain from laughter on seeing my constrained politeness, though every moment glancing at her the look of a fury, while, even in spite of myself, I thought the scene truly diverting.

All this, without being pleasing in itself, contributed to amuse, because it made up a part of a life which I thought delightful. Nothing that was performed around me, nothing that I was obliged to do, suited my taste, but everything suited my heart; and I believe, at length, I should have liked the study of medicine, had not my natural distaste to it perpetually engaged us in whimsical scenes, that prevented my thinking of it in a serious light. It was, perhaps, the first time that this art produced mirth. I pretended to distinguish a physical book by its smell, and what was more diverting, was seldom mistaken. Madam de Warens made me taste the most nauseous drugs; in vain I ran, or endeavored to defend myself; spite of resistance or wry faces, spite of my struggles, or even of my teeth, when I saw her charming fingers approach my lips, I was obliged to give up the contest.

When shut up in an apartment with all her medical apparatus, any one who had heard us running and shouting amidst peals of laughter would rather have imagined we had been acting a farce than preparing opiates or elixirs.

My time, however, was not entirely passed in these fooleries; in the apartment which I occupied I found a few books: there was the Spectator, Puffendorf, St. Everemond, and the Henriade. Though I had not my old passion for books, yet I amused myself with reading a part of them. The Spectator was particularly pleasing and serviceable to me. The Abbe de Gauvon had taught

me to read less eagerly, and with a greater degree of attention, which rendered my studies more serviceable. I accustomed myself to reflect on elocution and the elegance of composition; exercising myself in discerning pure French from my provincial idiom. For example, I corrected an orthographical fault (which I had in common with all Genevese) by these two lines of the *Henriade*:

*Soit qu' un ancien respect pour le sang de leurs maitres,
Parlat encore pour lui dans le coeur de ces traitres*

I was struck with the word 'parlat', and found a 't' was necessary to form the third person of the subjunctive, whereas I had always written and pronounced it parla, as in the present of the indicative.

Sometimes my studies were the subject of conversation with Madam de Warens; sometimes I read to her, in which I found great satisfaction; and as I endeavored to read well, it was extremely serviceable to me. I have already observed that her mind was cultivated; her understanding was at this time in its meridian. Several people of learning having been assiduous to ingratiate themselves, had taught her to distinguish works of merit; but her taste (if I may so express myself) was rather Protestant; ever speaking warmly of Bayle, and highly esteeming St. Evremond, though long since almost forgotten in France: but this did not prevent her having a taste for literature, or expressing her thoughts with elegance. She had been brought up with polite company, and coming young to Savoy, by associating with people of the best fashion, had lost the affected manners of her own country, where the ladies mistake wit for sense, and only speak in epigram.

Though she had seen the court but superficially, that glance was sufficient to give her a competent idea of it; and notwithstanding secret jealousies and the murmurs excited by her conduct and running in debt, she ever preserved friends there, and never lost her pension. She knew the world, and was useful. This was her favorite theme in our conversations, and was directly

opposite to my chimerical ideas, though the kind of instruction I particularly had occasion for. We read Bruyere together; he pleased her more than Rochefoucault, who is a dull, melancholy author, particularly to youth, who are not fond of contemplating man as he really is. In moralizing she sometimes bewildered herself by the length of her discourse; but by kissing her lips or hand from time to time I was easily consoled, and never found them wearisome.

This life was too delightful to be lasting; I felt this, and the uneasiness that thought gave me was the only thing that disturbed my enjoyment. Even in playfulness she studied my disposition, observed and interrogated me, forming projects for my future fortune, which I could readily have dispensed with. Happily it was not sufficient to know my disposition, inclinations and talents; it was likewise necessary to find a situation in which they would be useful, and this was not the work of a day. Even the prejudices this good woman had conceived in favor of my merit put off the time of calling it into action, by rendering her more difficult in the choice of means; thus (thanks to the good opinion she entertained of me), everything answered to my wish; but a change soon happened which put a period to my tranquility.

A relation of Madam de Warens, named M. d'Aubonne, came to see her; a man of great understanding and intrigue, being, like her, fond of projects, though careful not to ruin himself by them. He had offered Cardinal Fleury a very compact plan for a lottery, which, however, had not been approved of, and he was now going to propose it to the court of Turin, where it was accepted and put into execution. He remained some time at Annecy, where he fell in love with the Intendant's lady, who was very amiable, much to my taste and the only person I saw with pleasure at the house of Madam de Warens. M. d'Aubonne saw me, I was strongly recommended by his relation; he promised, therefore, to question and see what I was fit for, and, if he found me capable, to seek me a situation. Madam de Warens sent me to him two or three mornings, under pretense of messages, without acquainting me with her real intention. He spoke to me gayly, on various subjects, without any appearance of observation; his familiarity presently

set me talking, which by his cheerful and jesting manner he encouraged without restraint—I was absolutely charmed with him. The result of his observations was, that notwithstanding the animation of my countenance, and promising exterior, if not absolutely silly, I was a lad of very little sense, and without ideas of learning; in fine, very ignorant in all respects, and if I could arrive at being curate of some village, it was the utmost honor I ought ever to aspire to. Such was the account he gave of me to Madam de Warens. This was not the first time such an opinion had been formed of me, neither was it the last; the judgment of M. Masseron having been repeatedly confirmed.

The cause of these opinions is too much connected with my character not to need a particular explanation; for it will not be supposed that I can in conscience subscribe to them; and with all possible impartiality, whatever M. Masseron, M. d'Aubonne and many others may have said, I cannot help thinking them mistaken.

Two things very opposite, unite in me, and in a manner which I cannot myself conceive. My disposition is extremely ardent, my passions lively and impetuous, yet my ideas are produced slowly, with great embarrassment and after much afterthought. It might be said my heart and understanding do not belong to the same individual. A sentiment takes possession of my soul with the rapidity of lightning, but instead of illuminating, it dazzles and confounds me; I feel all, but see nothing; I am warm, but stupid; to think I must be cool. What is astonishing, my conception is clear and penetrating, if not hurried: I can make excellent *impromptus* at leisure, but on the instant, could never say or do anything worth notice. I could hold a tolerable conversation by the post, as they say the Spaniards play at chess, and when I read that anecdote of a duke of Savoy, who turned himself round, while on a journey, to cry out '*a votre gorge, marchand de Paris!*' I said, "*Here is a trait of my character!*"

This slowness of thought, joined to vivacity of feeling, I am not only sensible of in conversation, but even alone. When I write, my ideas are arranged with the utmost difficulty. They glance on my imagination and ferment till they discompose, heat,

and bring on a palpitation; during this state of agitation, I see nothing properly, cannot write a single word, and must wait till it is over. Insensibly the agitation subsides, the chaos acquires form, and each circumstance takes its proper place. Have you never seen an opera in Italy? where during the change of scene everything is in confusion, the decorations are intermingled, and any one would suppose that all would be overthrown; yet by little and little, everything is arranged, nothing appears wanting, and we feel surprised to see the tumult succeeded by the most delightful spectacle. This is a resemblance of what passes in my brain when I attempt to write; had I always waited till that confusion was past, and then painted, in their natural beauties, the objects that had presented themselves, few authors would have surpassed me.

Thence arises the extreme difficulty I find in writing; my manuscripts, blotted, scratched, and scarcely legible, attest the trouble they cost me; nor is there one of them but I have been obliged to transcribe four or five times before it went to press. Never could I do anything when placed at a table, pen in hand; it must be walking among the rocks, or in the woods; it is at night in my bed, during my wakeful hours, that I compose; it may be judged how slowly, particularly for a man who has not the advantage of verbal memory, and never in his life could retain by heart six verses. Some of my periods I have turned and returned in my head five or six nights before they were fit to be put to paper: thus it is that I succeed better in works that require laborious attention, than those that appear more trivial, such as letters, in which I could never succeed, and being obliged to write one is to me a serious punishment; nor can I express my thoughts on the most trivial subjects without it costing me hours of fatigue. If I write immediately what strikes me, my letter is a long, confused, unconnected string of expressions, which, when read, can hardly be understood.

It is not only painful to me to give language to my ideas but even to receive them. I have studied mankind, and think myself a tolerable observer, yet I know nothing from what I see, but all from what I remember, nor have I understanding except in my

recollections. From all that is said, from all that passes in my presence, I feel nothing, conceive nothing, the exterior sign being all that strikes me; afterwards it returns to my remembrance; I recollect the place, the time, the manner, the look, and gesture, not a circumstance escapes me; it is then, from what has been done or said, that I imagine what has been thought, and I have rarely found myself mistaken.

So little master of my understanding when alone, let any one judge what I must be in conversation, where to speak with any degree of ease you must think of a thousand things at the same time: the bare idea that I should forget something material would be sufficient to intimidate me. Nor can I comprehend how people can have the confidence to converse in large companies, where each word must pass in review before so many, and where it would be requisite to know their several characters and histories to avoid saying what might give offence. In this particular, those who frequent the world would have a great advantage, as they know better where to be silent, and can speak with greater confidence; yet even they sometimes let fall absurdities; in what predicament then must he be who drops as it were from the clouds? It is almost impossible he should speak ten minutes with impunity.

In a *tete-a-tete* there is a still worse inconvenience; that is; the necessity of talking perpetually, at least, the necessity of answering when spoken to, and keeping up the conversation when the other is silent. This insupportable constraint is alone sufficient to disgust me with variety, for I cannot form an idea of a greater torment than being obliged to speak continually without time for recollection. I know not whether it proceeds from my mortal hatred of all constraint; but if I am obliged to speak, I infallibly talk nonsense. What is still worse, instead of learning how to be silent when I have absolutely nothing to say, it is generally at such times that I have a violent inclination: and endeavoring to pay my debt of conversation as speedily as possible, I hastily gabble a number of words without ideas, happy when they only chance to mean nothing; thus endeavoring to conquer or hide my incapacity, I rarely fail to show it.

I think I have said enough to show that, though not a fool, I have frequently passed for one, even among people capable of judging; this was the more vexatious, as my physiognomy and eyes promised otherwise, and expectation being frustrated, my stupidity appeared the more shocking. This detail, which a particular occasion gave birth to, will not be useless in the sequel, being a key to many of my actions which might otherwise appear unaccountable; and have been attributed to a savage humor I do not possess. I love society as much as any man, was I not certain to exhibit myself in it, not only disadvantageously, but totally different from what I really am. The plan I have adopted of writing and retirement, is what exactly suits me. Had I been present, my worth would never have been known, no one would even have suspected it; thus it was with Madam Dupin, a woman of sense, in whose house I lived for several years; indeed, she has often since owned it to me: though on the whole this rule may be subject to some exceptions. I shall now return to my history.

The estimate of my talents thus fixed, the situation I was capable of promised, the question only remained how to render me capable of fulfilling my destined vocation. The principle difficulty was, I did not know Latin enough for a priest. Madam de Warens determined to have me taught for some time at the seminary, and accordingly spoke of it to the Superior, who was a Lazarist, called M. Gras, a good-natured little fellow, half blind, meagre, gray-haired, insensible, and the least pedantic of any Lazarist I ever knew; which, in fact, is saying no great matter.

He frequently visited Madam de Warens, who entertained, caressed, and made much of him, letting him sometimes lace her stays, an office he was willing enough to perform. While thus employed, she would run about the room, this way or that, as occasion happened to call her. Drawn by the lace, Monsieur the Superior followed, grumbling, repeating at every moment, "Pray, madam, do stand still;" the whole forming a scene truly diverting.

M. Gras willingly assented to the project of Madam de Warens, and, for a very moderate pension, charged himself with the care of instructing me. The consent of the bishop was all that remained necessary, who not only granted it, but offered to pay

the pension, permitting me to retain the secular habit till they could judge by a trial what success they might have in my improvement.

What a change! but I was obliged to submit; though I went to the seminary with about the same spirits as if they had been taking me to execution. What a melancholy abode! especially for one who left the house of a pretty woman. I carried one book with me, that I had borrowed of Madam de Warens, and found it a capital resource! it will not be easily conjectured what kind of book this was—it was a music book. Among the talents she had cultivated, music was not forgotten; she had a tolerable good voice, sang agreeably, and played on the harpsichord. She had taken the pains to give me some lessons in singing, though before I was very uninformed in that respect, hardly knowing the music of our psalms. Eight or ten interrupted lessons, far from putting me in a condition to improve myself, did not teach me half the notes; notwithstanding, I had such a passion for the art, that I determined to exercise myself alone. The book I took was not of the most easy kind; it was the cantatas of Clerambault. It may be conceived with what attention and perseverance I studied, when I inform my reader, that without knowing anything of transposition or quantity, I contrived to sing with tolerable correctness, the first recitative and air in the cantata of Alpheus and Arethusa; it is true this air is, so justly set, that it is only necessary to recite the verses in their just measure to catch the music.

There was at the seminary a curst Lazarist, who by undertaking to teach me Latin made me detest it. His hair was coarse, black and greasy, his face like those formed in gingerbread, he had the voice of a buffalo, the countenance of an owl, and the bristles of a boar in lieu of a beard; his smile was sardonic, and his limbs played like those of a puppet moved by wires. I have forgotten his odious name, but the remembrance of his frightful precise countenance remains with me, though hardly can I recollect it without trembling; especially when I call to mind our meeting in the gallery, when he graciously advanced his filthy square cap as a sign for me to enter his apartment, which appeared more dismal in my apprehension than a dungeon. Let

any one judge the contrast between my present master and the elegant Abbe de Gauvon.

Had I remained two months at the mercy of this monster, I am certain my head could not have sustained it; but the good M. Gras, perceiving I was melancholy, grew thin, and did not eat my victuals, guessed the cause of my uneasiness (which indeed was not very difficult) and taking me from the claws of this beast, by another yet more striking contrast, placed me with the gentlest of men, a young Faucigneran abbe, named M. Gatier, who studied at the seminary, and out of complaisance for M. Gras, and humanity to myself, spared some time from the prosecution of his own studies in order to direct mine. Never did I see a more pleasing countenance than that of M. Gatier. He was fair complexioned, his beard rather inclined to red; his behavior like that of the generality of his countrymen (who under a coarseness of countenance conceal much understanding), marked in him a truly sensible and affectionate soul. In his large blue eyes there was a mixture of softness, tenderness, and melancholy, which made it impossible to see him without feeling one's self interested. From the looks and manner of this young abbe he might have been supposed to have foreseen his destiny, and that he was born to be unhappy.

His disposition did not belie his physiognomy: full of patience and complaisance, he rather appeared to study with than to instruct me. So much was not necessary to make me love him, his predecessor having rendered that very easy; yet, notwithstanding all the time he bestowed on me, notwithstanding our mutual good inclinations, and that his plan of teaching was excellent, with much labor, I made little progress. It is very singular, that with a clear conception I could never learn much from masters except my father and M. Lambercier; the little I know besides I have learned alone, as will be seen hereafter. My spirit, impatient of every species of constraint, cannot submit to the law of the moment; even the fear of not learning prevents my being attentive, and a dread of wearying those who teach, makes me feign to understand them; thus they proceed faster than I can comprehend, and the conclusion is I learn nothing. My

understanding must take its own time and cannot submit to that of another.

The time of ordination being arrived, M. Gatier returned to his province as deacon, leaving me with gratitude, attachment, and sorrow for his loss. The vows I made for him were no more answered than those I offered for myself. Some years after, I learned, that being vicar of a parish, a young girl was with child by him, being the only one (though he possessed a very tender heart) with whom he was ever in love. This was a dreadful scandal in a diocese severely governed, where the priests (being under good regulation) ought never to have children—except by married women. Having infringed this politic law, he was put in prison, defamed, and driven from his benefice. I know not whether it was ever after in his power to reestablish his affairs; but the remembrance of his misfortunes, which were deeply engraven on my heart, struck me when I wrote *Emilius*, and uniting M. Gatier with M. Gaime, I formed from these two worthy priests the character of the Savoyard Vicar, and flatter myself the imitation has not dishonored the originals.

While I was at the seminary, M. d'Aubonne was obliged to quit Annecy, Moultau being displeased that he made love to his wife, which was acting like a dog in the manger, for though Madam Moultau was extremely amiable, he lived very ill with her, treating her with such brutality that a separation was talked of. Moultau, by repeated oppressions, at length procured a dismissal from his employment: he was a disagreeable man; a mole could not be blacker, nor an owl more knavish. It is said the provincials revenge themselves on their enemies by songs; M. d'Aubonne revenged himself on his by a comedy, which he sent to Madam de Warens, who showed it to me. I was pleased with it, and immediately conceived the idea of writing one, to try whether I was so silly as the author had pronounced me. This project was not executed till I went to Chambery, where I wrote *'The Lover of Himself'*. Thus when I said in the preface to that piece, "it was written at eighteen," I cut off a few years.

Nearly about this time an event happened, not very important in itself, but whose consequence affected me, and made a noise in

the world when I had forgotten it. Once a week I was permitted to go out; it is not necessary to say what use I made of this liberty. Being one Sunday at Madam de Warens, a building belonging to the Cordeliers, which joined her house, took fire; this building which contained their oven, being full of dry fagots, blazed violently and greatly endangered the house; for the wind happening to drive the flames that way, it was covered with them. The furniture, therefore, was hastily got out and carried into the garden which fronted the windows, on the other side the before-mentioned brook. I was so alarmed that I threw indiscriminately everything that came to hand out of the window, even to a large stone mortar, which at another time I should have found it difficult to remove, and should have thrown a handsome looking-glass after it had not some one prevented me. The good bishop, who that day was visiting Madam de Warens, did not remain idle; he took her into the garden, where they went to prayers with the rest that were assembled there, and where sometime afterwards, I found them on their knees, and presently joined them. While the good man was at his devotions, the wind changed, so suddenly and critically, that the flames which had covered the house and began to enter the windows, were carried to the other side of the court, and the house received no damage. Two years after, Monsieur de Berner being dead, the Antoinettes, his former brethren, began to collect anecdotes which might serve as arguments of his beatification; at the desire of Father Baudet, I joined to these an attestation of what I have just related, in doing which, though I attested no more than the truth, I certainly acted ill, as it tended to make an indifferent occurrence pass for a miracle. I had seen the bishop in prayer, and had likewise seen the wind change during the prayer, and even much to the purpose, all this I could certify truly; but that one of these facts was the cause of the other, I ought not to have attested, because it is what I could not possibly be assured of. Thus much I may say, that as far as I can recollect what my ideas were at that time, I was sincerely, and in good earnest a Catholic. Love of the marvellous is natural to the human heart; my veneration for the virtuous prelate, and secret pride in having, perhaps, contributed to the event in

question, all helped to seduce me; and certainly, if this miracle was the effect of ardent prayer, I had a right to claim a share of the merits.

More than thirty years after, when I published the 'Lettres de la Montagne', M. Feron (I know not by what means) discovered this attestation, and made use of it in his paper. I must confess the discovery was very critically timed, and appeared very diverting, even to me.

I was destined to be the outcast of every condition; for notwithstanding M. Gatier gave the most favorable account he possibly could of my studies, they plainly saw the improvement I received bore no proportion to the pains taken to instruct me, which was no encouragement to continue them: the bishop and superior, therefore, were disheartened, and I was sent back to Madam de Warens, as a subject not even fit to make a priest of; but as they allowed, at the same time, that I was a tolerably good lad, and far from being vicious, this account counterbalanced the former, and determined her not to abandon me.

I carried back in triumph the dear music book, which had been so useful to me, the air of Alpheus and Arethusa being almost all I had learned at the seminary. My predilection for this art started the idea of making a musician of me. A convenient opportunity offered; once a week, at least, she had a concert at her house, and the music-master from the cathedral, who directed this little band, came frequently to see her. This was a Parisian, named M. le Maitre, a good composer, very lively, gay, young, well made, of little understanding, but, upon the whole, a good sort of man. Madam de Warens made us acquainted; I attached myself to him, and he seemed not displeased with me. A pension was talked of, and agreed on; in short, I went home with him, and passed the winter the more agreeably at his chambers, as they were not above twenty paces distant from Madam de Warens', where we frequently supped together. It may easily be supposed that this situation, ever gay, and singing with the musicians and children of the choir, was more pleasing to me than the seminary and fathers of St. Lazarus. This life, though free, was regular; here I learned to prize independence, but never to abuse it. For six whole

months I never once went out except to see Madam de Warens, or to church, nor had I any inclination to it. This interval is one of those in which I enjoyed the greatest satisfaction, and which I have ever recollected with pleasure. Among the various situations I have been placed in, some were marked with such an idea of virtuous satisfaction, that the bare remembrance affects me as if they were yet present. I vividly recollect the time, the place, the persons, and even the temperature of the air, while the lively idea of a certain local impression peculiar to those times, transports me back again to the very spot; for example, all that was repeated at our meetings, all that was sung in the choir, everything that passed there; the beautiful and noble habits of the canons, the chasubles of the priests, the mitres of the singers, the persons of the musicians; an old lame carpenter who played the counter-bass, a little fair abbe who performed on the violin, the ragged cassock which M. le Maitre, after taking off his sword, used to put over his secular habit, and the fine surplice with which he covered the rags of the former, when he went to the choir; the pride with which I held my little flute to my lips, and seated myself in the orchestra, to assist in a recitative which M. le Maitre had composed on purpose for me; the good dinner that afterwards awaited us, and the good appetites we carried to it. This concourse of objects, strongly retraced in my memory, has charmed me a hundred time as much, or perhaps more, than ever the reality had done. I have always preserved an affection for a certain air of the 'Conditor alme Syderum', because one Sunday in Advent I heard that hymn sung on the steps of the cathedral, (according to the custom of that place) as I lay in bed before daybreak. Mademoiselle Merceret, Madam de Warens' chambermaid, knew something of music; I shall never forget a little piece that M. le Maitre made me sing with her, and which her mistress listened to with great satisfaction. In a word, every particular, even down to the servant Perrine, whom the boys of the choir took such delight in teasing. The remembrance of these times of happiness and innocence frequently returning to my mind, both ravish and affect me.

I lived at Annecy during a year without the least reproach, giving universal satisfaction. Since my departure from Turin I had been guilty of no folly, committed none while under the eye of Madam de Warens. She was my conductor, and ever led me right; my attachment for her became my only passion, and what proves it was not a giddy one, my heart and understanding were in unison. It is true that a single sentiment, absorbing all my faculties, put me out of a capacity of learning even music: but this was not my fault, since to the strongest inclination, I added the utmost assiduity. I was attentive and thoughtful; what could I do? Nothing was wanting towards my progress that depended on me; meantime, it only required a subject that might inspire me to occasion the commission of new follies: that subject presented itself, chance arranged it, and (as will be seen hereafter) my inconsiderate head gave in to it.

One evening, in the month of February, when it was very cold, being all sat round the fire, we heard some one knock at the street door. Perrine took a light, went down and opened it: a young man entering, came upstairs, presented himself with an easy air, and making M. Maitre a short, but well-turned compliment, announced himself as a French musician, constrained by the state of his finances to take this liberty. The heart of the good Le Maitre leaped at the name of a French musician, for he passionately loved both his country and profession; he therefore offered the young traveller his service—and use of his apartment, which he appeared to stand much in need of, and which he accepted without much ceremony. I observed him while he was chatting and warming himself before supper; he was short and thick, having some fault in his shape, though without any particular deformity; he had (if I may so express myself) an appearance of being hunchbacked, with flat shoulders, and I think he limped. He wore a black coat, rather worn than old, which hung in tatters, a very fine but dirty shirt, frayed ruffles; a pair of splatterdashes so large that he could have put both legs into either of them, and, to secure himself from the snow, a little hat, only fit to be carried under his arm. With this whimsical equipage, he had, however, something elegant in his manners and conversation; his

countenance was expressive and agreeable, and he spoke with facility if not with modesty; in short, everything about him bore the mark of a young debauchee, who did not crave assistance like a beggar, but as a thoughtless madcap. He told us his name was Venture de Villeneuve, that he came from Paris, had lost his way, and seeming to forget that he had announced himself for a musician, added that he was going to Grenoble to see a relation that was a member of Parliament.

During supper we talked of music, on which subject he spoke well: he knew all the great virtuosi, all the celebrated works, all the actors, actresses, pretty women, and powerful lords; in short nothing was mentioned but what he seemed thoroughly acquainted with. Though no sooner was any topic started, than by some drollery, which set every one a-laughing, he made them forget what had been said. This was on a Saturday; the next day there was to be music at the cathedral: M. le Maitre asked if he would sing there—"Very willingly."—"What part would he chose?"—"The counter-tenor:" and immediately began speaking of other things. Before he went to church they offered him his part to peruse, but he did not even look at it. This Gasconade surprised Le Maitre—"You'll see," said he, whispering to me, "that he does not know a single note."—I replied: "I am very much afraid of him." I followed them into the church; but was extremely uneasy, and when they began, my heart beat violently, so much was I interested in his behalf.

I was presently out of pain: he sung his two recitatives with all imaginable taste and judgment; and what was yet more, with a very agreeable voice. I never enjoyed a more pleasing surprise. After mass, M. Venture received the highest compliments from the canons and musicians, which he answered jokingly, though with great grace. M. le Maitre embraced him heartily; I did the same; he saw I was rejoiced at his success, and appeared pleased at my satisfaction.

It will easily be surmised, that after having been delighted with M. Bacle, who had little to attract my admiration, I should be infatuated with M. Venture, who had education, wit, talents, and a knowledge of the world, and might be called an agreeable rake.

This was exactly what happened, and would, I believe, have happened to any other young man in my place; especially supposing him possessed of better judgment to distinguish merit, and more propensity to be engaged by it; for Venture doubtless possessed a considerable share, and one in particular, very rare at his age, namely, that of never being in haste to display his talents. It is true, he boasted of many things he did not understand, but of those he knew (which were very numerous) he said nothing, patiently waiting some occasion to display them, which he then did with ease, though without forwardness, and thus gave them more effect. As there was ever some intermission between the proofs of his various abilities, it was impossible to conjecture whether he had ever discovered all his talents. Playful, giddy, inexhaustible, seducing in conversation, ever smiling, but never laughing, and repeating the rudest things in the most elegant manner—even the most modest women were astonished at what they endured from him: it was in vain for them to determine to be angry; they could not assume the appearance of it. It was extraordinary that with so many agreeable talents, in a country where they are so well understood, and so much admired, he so long remained only a musician.

My attachment to M. Venture, more reasonable in its cause, was also less extravagant in its effects, though more lively and durable than that I had conceived for M. Bacle. I loved to see him, to hear him, all his actions appeared charming, everything he said was an oracle to me, but the enchantment did not extend far enough to disable me from quitting him. I spoke of him with transport to Madam de Warens, Le Maitre likewise spoke in his praise, and she consented we should bring him to her house. This interview did not succeed; he thought her affected, she found him a libertine, and, alarmed that I had formed such an ill acquaintance, not only forbade me bringing him there again, but likewise painted so strongly the danger I ran with this young man, that I became a little more circumspect in giving in to the attachment; and very happily, both for my manners and wits, we were soon separated.

M. le Maitre, like most of his profession, loved good wine; at table he was moderate, but when busy in his closet he must drink. His maid was so well acquainted with this humor that no sooner had he prepared his paper to compose, and taken his violoncello, than the bottle and glass arrived, and was replenished from time to time: thus, without being ever absolutely intoxicated, he was usually in a state of elevation. This was really unfortunate, for he had a good heart, and was so playful that Madam de Warens used to call him the kitten. Unhappily, he loved his profession, labored much and drank proportionately, which injured his health, and at length soured his temper. Sometimes he was gloomy and easily offended, though incapable of rudeness, or giving offence to any one, for never did he utter a harsh word, even to the boys of the choir: on the other hand, he would not suffer another to offend him, which was but just: the misfortune was, having little understanding, he did not properly discriminate, and was often angry without cause.

The Chapter of Geneva, where so many princes and bishops formerly thought it an honor to be seated, though in exile it lost its ancient splendor, retained (without any diminution) its pride. To be admitted, you must either be a gentleman or Doctor of Sorbonne. If there is a pardonable pride, after that derived from personal merit, it is doubtless that arising from birth, though, in general, priests having laymen in their service treat them with sufficient haughtiness, and thus the canons behaved to poor Le Maitre. The chanter, in particular, who was called the Abbe de Vidonne, in other respects a well-behaved man, but too full of his nobility, did not always show him the attention his talents merited. M. le Maitre could not bear these indignities patiently; and this year, during passion week, they had a more serious dispute than ordinary. At an institution dinner that the bishop gave the canons, and to which M. Maitre was always invited, the abbe failed in some formality, adding, at the same time, some harsh words, which the other could not digest; he instantly formed the resolution to quit them the following night; nor could any consideration make him give up his design, though Madam de Warens (whom he went to take leave of) spared no pains to

appease him. He could not relinquish the pleasure of leaving his tyrants embarrassed for the Easter feast, at which time he knew they stood in greatest need of him. He was most concerned about his music, which he wished to take with him; but this could not easily be accomplished, as it filled a large case, and was very heavy, and could not be carried under the arm.

Madam de Warens did what I should have done in her situation; and indeed, what I should yet do: after many useless efforts to retain him, seeing he was resolved to depart, whatever might be the event, she formed the resolution to give him every possible assistance. I must confess Le Maitre deserved it of her, for he was (if I may use the expression) dedicated to her service, in whatever appertained to either his art or knowledge, and the readiness with which he obliged gave a double value to his complaisance: thus she only paid back, on an essential occasion, the many favors he had been long conferring on her; though I should observe, she possessed a soul that, to fulfill such duties, had no occasion to be reminded of previous obligations. Accordingly she ordered me to follow Le Maitre to Lyons, and to continue with him as long as he might have occasion for my services. She has since avowed, that a desire of detaching me from Venture had a great hand in this arrangement. She consulted Claude Anet about the conveyance of the above-mentioned case. He advised, that instead of hiring a beast at Annecy, which would infallibly discover us, it would be better, at night, to take it to some neighboring village, and there hire an ass to carry it to Seyssel, which being in the French dominions, we should have nothing to fear. This plan was adopted; we departed the same night at seven, and Madam de Warens, under pretense of paying my expenses, increased the purse of poor Le Maitre by an addition that was very acceptable. Claude Anet, the gardiner, and myself, carried the case to the first village, then hired an ass, and the same night reached Seyssel.

I think I have already remarked that there are times in which I am so unlike myself that I might be taken for a man of a direct opposite disposition; I shall now give an example of this. M. Reydelet, curate of Seyssel, was canon of St. Peter's,

consequently known to M. le Maitre, and one of the people from whom he should have taken most pains to conceal himself; my advice, on the contrary, was to present ourselves to him, and, under some pretext, entreat entertainment as if we visited him by consent of the chapter. Le Maitre adopted the idea, which seemed to give his revenge the appearance of satire and waggery; in short, we went boldly to Reydelet, who received us very kindly. Le Maitre told him he was going to Bellay by desire of the bishop, that he might superintend the music during the Easter holidays, and that he proposed returning that way in a few days. To support this tale, I told a hundred others, so naturally that M. Reydelet thought me a very agreeable youth, and treated me with great friendship and civility. We were well regaled and well lodged: M. Reydelet scarcely knew how to make enough of us; and we parted the best friends in the world, with a promise to stop longer on our return. We found it difficult to refrain from laughter, or wait till we were alone to give free vent to our mirth: indeed, even now, the bare recollection of it forces a smile, for never was waggery better or more fortunately maintained. This would have made us merry during the remainder of our journey, if M. le Maitre (who did not cease drinking) had not been two or three times attacked with a complaint that he afterwards became very subject to, and which resembled an epilepsy. These fits threw me into the most fearful embarrassments, from which I resolved to extricate myself with the first opportunity.

According to the information given to M. Reydelet, we passed our Easter holidays at Bellay, and though not expected there, were received by the music-master, and welcomed by every one with great pleasure. M. le Maitre was of considerable note in his profession, and, indeed, merited that distinction. The music-master of Bellay (who was fond of his own works) endeavored to obtain the approbation of so good a judge; for besides being a connoisseur, M. le Maitre was equitable, neither a jealous, ill-natured critic, nor a servile flatterer. He was so superior to the generality of country music-masters and they were so sensible of it, that they treated him rather as their chief than a brother musician.

Having passed four or five days very agreeably at Bellay, we departed, and continuing our journey without meeting with any accidents, except those I have just spoken of, arrived at Lyons, and were lodged at Notre Dame de Pitie. While we waited for the arrival of the before-mentioned case (which by the assistance of another lie, and the care of our good patron, M. Reydelet, we had embarked on the Rhone) M. le Maitre went to visit his acquaintance, and among others Father Cato, a Cordelier, who will be spoken of hereafter, and the Abbe Dortan, Count of Lyons, both of whom received him well, but afterwards betrayed him, as will be seen presently; indeed, his good fortune terminated with M. Reydelet.

Two days after our arrival at Lyons, as we passed a little street not far from our inn, Le Maitre was attacked by one of his fits; but it was now so violent as to give me the utmost alarm. I screamed with terror, called for help, and naming our inn, entreated some one to bear him to it, then (while the people were assembled, and busy round a man that had fallen senseless in the street) he was abandoned by the only friend on whom he could have any reasonable dependence; I seized the instant when no one heeded me, turned the corner of the street and disappeared. Thanks to Heaven, I have made my third painful confession; if many such remained, I should certainly abandon the work I have undertaken.

Of all the incidents I have yet related, a few traces are remaining in the places where I have lived; but what I have to relate in the following book is almost entirely unknown; these are the greatest extravagancies of my life, and it is happy they had not worse conclusions. My head, (if I may use the simile) screwed up to the pitch of an instrument it did not naturally accord with, had lost its diapason; in time it returned to it again, when I discontinued my follies, or at least gave in to those more consonant to my disposition. This epoch of my youth I am least able to recollect, nothing having passed sufficiently interesting to influence my heart, to make me clearly retrace the remembrance. In so many successive changes, it is difficult not to make some transpositions of time or place. I write absolutely from memory,

without notes or materials to help my recollection. Some events are as fresh in my idea as if they had recently happened, but there are certain chasms which I cannot fill up but by the aid of recital, as confused as the remaining traces of those to which they refer. It is possible, therefore, that I may have erred in trifles, and perhaps shall again, but in every matter of importance I can answer that the account is faithfully exact, and with the same veracity the reader may depend I shall be careful to continue it.

My resolution was soon taken after quitting Le Maitre; I set out immediately for Annecy. The cause and mystery of our departure had interested me for the security of our retreat: this interest, which entirely employed my thoughts for some days, had banished every other idea; but no sooner was I secure and in tranquility, than my predominant sentiment regained its place. Nothing flattered, nothing tempted me, I had no wish but to return to Madam de Warens; the tenderness and truth of my attachment to her had rooted from my heart every imaginable project, and all the follies of ambition, I conceived no happiness but living near her, nor could I take a step without feeling that the distance between us was increased. I returned, therefore, as soon as possible, with such speed, and with my spirits in such a state of agitation, that though I recall with pleasure all my other travels, I have not the least recollection of this, only remembering my leaving Lyons and reaching Annecy. Let anyone judge whether this last event can have slipped my memory, when informed that on my arrival I found Madam de Warens was not there, having set out for Paris.

I was never well informed of the motives of this journey. I am certain she would have told me had I asked her, but never was man less curious to learn the secrets of his friend. My heart is ever so entirely filled with the present, or with past pleasures, which become a principal part of my enjoyment, that there is not a chink or corner for curiosity to enter. All that I conceive from what I heard of it, is, that in the revolution caused at Turin by the abdication of the King of Sardinia, she feared being forgotten, and was willing by favor of the intrigues of M. d' Aubonne to seek the same advantage in the court of France, where she has often told

me she should have preferred it, as the multiplicity of business there prevents your conduct from being so closely inspected. If this was her business, it is astonishing that on her return she was not ill received; be that as it will, she continued to enjoy her allowance without any interruption. Many people imagined she was charged with some secret commission, either by the bishop, who then had business at the court of France, where he himself was soon after obliged to go, or some one yet more powerful, who knew how to insure her a gracious reception at her return. If this was the case, it is certain the ambassadress was not ill chosen, since being young and handsome, she had all the necessary qualifications to succeed in a negotiation.

BOOK IV

Let any one judge my surprise and grief at not finding her on my arrival. I now felt regret at having abandoned M. le Maitre, and my uneasiness increased when I learned the misfortunes that had befallen him. His box of music, containing all his fortune, that precious box, preserved with so much care and fatigue, had been seized on at Lyons by means of Count Dortan, who had received information from the Chapter of our having absconded with it. In vain did Le Maitre reclaim his property, his means of existence, the labor of his life; his right to the music in question was at least subject to litigation, but even that liberty was not allowed him, the affair being instantly decided on the principal of superior strength. Thus poor Le Maitre lost the fruit of his talents, the labor of his youth, and principal dependence for the support of old age.

Nothing was wanting to render the news I had received truly afflicting, but I was at an age when even the greatest calamities are to be sustained; accordingly I soon found consolation. I expected shortly to hear news of Madam de Warens, though I was ignorant of the address, and she knew nothing of my return. As to my desertion of Le Maitre (all things considered) I did not find it so very culpable. I had been serviceable to him at his retreat; it was not in my power to give him any further assistance. Had I

remained with him in France it would not have cured his complaint. I could not have saved his music, and should only have doubled his expense: in this point of view I then saw my conduct; I see it otherwise now. It frequently happens that a villainous action does not torment us at the instant we commit it, but on recollection, and sometimes even after a number of years have elapsed, for the remembrance of crimes is not to be extinguished.

The only means I had to obtain news of Madam de Warens was to remain at Annecy. Where should I seek her in Paris? or how bear the expense of such a journey? Sooner or later there was no place where I could be so certain to hear of her as that I was now at; this consideration determined me to remain there, though my conduct was very indifferent. I did not go to the bishop, who had already befriended me, and might continue to do so; my patroness was not present, and I feared his reprimands on the subject of our flight; neither did I go to the seminary, M. Gras was no longer there; in short, I went to none of my acquaintances. I should gladly have visited the intendant's lady, but did not dare; I did worse, I sought out M. Venture, whom (notwithstanding my enthusiasm) I had never thought of since my departure. I found him quite gay, in high spirits, and the universal favorite of the ladies of Annecy.

This success completed my infatuation; I saw nothing but M. Venture; he almost made me forget even Madam de Warens. That I might profit more at ease by his instructions and example, I proposed to share his lodgings, to which he readily consented. It was at a shoemaker's; a pleasant, jovial fellow, who, in his county dialect, called his wife nothing but trollop; an appellation which she certainly merited. Venture took care to augment their differences, though under an appearance of doing the direct contrary, throwing out in a distant manner, and provincial accents, hints that produced the utmost effect, and furnished such scenes as were sufficient to make any one die with laughter. Thus the mornings passed without our thinking of them; at two or three o'clock we took some refreshment. Venture then went to his various engagements, where he supped, while I walked alone,

meditating on his great merit, coveting and admiring his rare talents, and cursing my own unlucky stars, that did not call me to so happy a life. How little did I then know of myself! mine had been a thousand times more delightful, had I not been such a fool, or known better how to enjoy it.

Madam de Warens had taken no one with her but Anet: Merceret, the chambermaid, whom I have before mentioned, still remained in the house. Merceret was something older than myself, not pretty, but tolerably agreeable; good-natured, free from malice, having no fault to my knowledge but being a little refractory with her mistress. I often went to see her; she was an old acquaintance, who recalled to my remembrance one more beloved, and this made her dear to me. She had several friends, and among others one Mademoiselle Giraud, a Genevese, who, for the punishment of my sins, took it in her head to have an inclination for me, always pressing Merceret, when she returned her visits, to bring me with her. As I liked Merceret, I felt no disinclination to accompany her; besides I met there with some young people whose company pleased me. For Mademoiselle Giraud, who offered every kind of enticement, nothing could increase the aversion I had for her. When she drew near me, with her dried black snout, smeared with Spanish snuff, it was with the utmost difficulty that I could refrain from expressing my distaste; but, being pleased with her visitors, I took patience. Among these were two girls who (either to pay their court to Mademoiselle Giraud or myself) paid me every possible attention. I conceived this to be only friendship; but have since thought it depended only on myself to have discovered something more, though I did not even think of it at the time.

There was another reason for my stupidity. Seamstresses, chambermaids, or milliners, never tempted me; I sighed for ladies! Every one has his peculiar taste, this has ever been mine; being in this particular of a different opinion from Horace. Yet it is not vanity of riches or rank that attracts me; it is a well-preserved complexion, fine hands, elegance of ornaments, an air of delicacy and neatness throughout the whole person; more in taste, in the manner of expressing themselves, a finer or better

made gown, a well-turned ankle, small foot, ribbons, lace, and well-dressed hair; I even prefer those who have less natural beauty, provided they are elegantly decorated. I freely confess this preference is very ridiculous; yet my heart gives in to it spite of my understanding. Well, even this advantage presented itself, and it only depended on my own resolution to have seized the opportunity.

How do I love, from time to time, to return to those moments of my youth, which were so charmingly delightful; so short, so scarce, and enjoyed at so cheap a rate!—how fondly do I wish to dwell on them! Even yet the remembrance of these scenes warms my heart with a chaste rapture, which appears necessary to reanimate my drooping courage, and enable me to sustain the weariness of my latter days.

The appearance of Aurora seemed so delightful one morning that, putting on my clothes, I hastened into the country, to see the rising of the sun. I enjoyed that pleasure in its utmost extent; it was one week after midsummer; the earth was covered with verdure and flowers, the nightingales, whose soft warblings were almost concluded, seemed to vie with each other, and in concert with birds of various kinds to bid adieu to spring, and hail the approach of a beautiful summer's day: one of those lovely days that are no longer to be enjoyed at my age, and which have never been seen on the melancholy soil I now inhabit.

I had rambled insensibly, to a considerable distance from the town—the heat augmented—I was walking in the shade along a valley, by the side of a brook, I heard behind me the steps of horses, and the voice of some females who, though they seemed embarrassed, did not laugh the less heartily on that account. I turn round, hear myself called by name, and approaching, find two young people of my acquaintance, Mademoiselle de G—— and Mademoiselle Galley, who, not being very excellent horsewomen, could not make their horses cross the rivulet.

Mademoiselle de G—— was a young lady of Berne, very amiable; who, having been sent from that country for some youthful folly, had imitated Madam de Warens, at whose house I had sometimes seen her; but not having, like her, a pension, she

had been fortunate in this attachment to Mademoiselle Galley, who had prevailed on her mother to engage her young friend as a companion, till she could be otherwise provided for. Mademoiselle Galley was one year younger than her friend, handsomer, more delicate, more ingenious, and to complete all, extremely well made. They loved each other tenderly, and the good disposition of both could not fail to render their union durable, if some lover did not derange it. They informed me they were going to Toune, an old castle belonging to Madam Galley, and implored my assistance to make their horses cross the stream, not being able to compass it themselves. I would have given each a cut or two with the whip, but they feared I might be kicked, and themselves thrown; I therefore had recourse to another expedient, I took hold of Mademoiselle Galley's horse and led him through the brook, the water reaching half-way up my legs. The other followed without any difficulty. This done, I would have paid my compliments to the ladies, and walked off like a great booby as I was, but after whispering each other, Mademoiselle de G—— said, "No, no, you must not think to escape thus; you have got wet in our service, and we ought in conscience to take care and dry you. If you please you must go with us, you are now our prisoner." My heart began to beat—I looked at Mademoiselle Galley—"Yes, yes," added she, laughing at my fearful look; "our prisoner of war; come, get up behind her, we shall give a good account of you."—"But, mademoiselle," continued I, "I have not the honor to be acquainted with your mother; what will she say on my arrival?"—"Her mother," replied Mademoiselle de G—— "is not at Toune, we are alone, we shall return at night, and you shall come back with us."

The stroke of electricity has not a more instantaneous effect than these words produced on me. Leaping behind Mademoiselle de G——, I trembled with joy, and when it became necessary to clasp her in order to hold myself on, my heart beat so violently that she perceived it, and told me hers beat also from a fear of falling. In my present posture, I might naturally have considered this an invitation to satisfy myself of the truth of her assertion, yet I did not dare, and during the whole way my arm served as a

girdle (a very close one, I must confess), without being a moment displaced. Some women that may read this would be for giving me a box on the ear, and, truly, I deserved it.

The gayety of the journey, and the chat of these girls, so enlivened me, that during the whole time we passed together we never ceased talking a moment. They had set me so thoroughly at ease, that my tongue spoke as fast as my eyes, though not exactly the same things. Some minutes, indeed, when I was left alone with either, the conversation became a little embarrassed, but neither of them was absent long enough to allow time for explaining the cause.

Arrived at Toune, and myself well dried, we breakfasted together; after which it was necessary to settle the important business of preparing dinner. The young ladies cooked, kissing from time to time the farmer's children, while the poor scullion looked on grumbling. Provisions had been sent for from town, and there was everything necessary for a good dinner, but unhappily they had forgotten wine; this forgetfulness was by no means astonishing to girls who seldom drank any, but I was sorry for the omission, as I had reckoned on its help, thinking it might add to my confidence. They were sorry likewise, and perhaps from the same motive; though I have no reason to say this, for their lively and charming gayety was innocence itself; besides, there were two of them, what could they expect from me? they went everywhere about the neighborhood to seek for wine, but none could be procured, so pure and sober are the peasants in those parts. As they were expressing their concern, I begged them not to give themselves any uneasiness on my account, for while with them I had no occasion for wine to intoxicate me. This was the only gallantry I ventured at during the whole of the day, and I believe the sly rogues saw well enough that I said nothing but the truth.

We dined in the kitchen; the two friends were seated on the benches, one on each side the long table, and their guest at the end, between them, on a three—legged stool. What a dinner! how charming the remembrance! While we can enjoy, at so small an expense, such pure, such true delights, why should we be

solicitous for others? Never did those 'petite soupes', so celebrated in Paris, equal this; I do not only say for real pleasure and gayety, but even for sensuality.

After dinner, we were economical; instead of drinking the coffee we had reserved at breakfast, we kept it for an afternoon collation, with cream, and some cake they had brought with them. To keep our appetites in play, we went into the orchard, meaning to finish our dessert with cherries. I got into a tree, throwing them down bunches, from which they returned the stones through the branches. One time, Mademoiselle Galley, holding out her apron, and drawing back her head, stood so fair, and I took such good aim, that I dropped a bunch into her bosom. On her laughing, I said to myself, "Why are not my lips cherries? How gladly would I throw them there likewise."

Thus the day passed with the greatest freedom, yet with the utmost decency; not a single equivocal word, not one attempt at double-meaning pleasantry; yet this delicacy was not affected, we only performed the parts our hearts dictated; in short, my modesty, some will say my folly, was such that the greatest familiarity that escaped me was once kissing the hand of Mademoiselle Galley; it is true, the attending circumstances helped to stamp a value on this trifling favor; we were alone, I was embarrassed, her eyes were fixed on the ground, and my lips, instead of uttering words, were pressed on her hand, which she drew gently back after the salute, without any appearance of displeasure. I know not what I should have said to her; but her friend entered, and at that moment I thought her ugly.

At length, they bethought themselves, that they must return to town before night; even now we had but just time to reach it by daylight; and we hastened our departure in the same order we came. Had I pleased myself, I should certainly have reversed this order, for the glance of Mademoiselle Galley had reached my heart, but I dared not mention it, and the proposal could not reasonably come from her. On the way, we expressed our sorrow that the day was over, but far from complaining of the shortness of its duration, we were conscious of having prolonged it by every possible amusement.

I quitted them in nearly the same spot where I had taken them up. With what regret did we part! With what pleasure did we form projects to renew our meeting! Delightful hours, which we passed innocently together, yet were worth ages of familiarity! The sweet remembrance of those days cost those amiable girls nothing; the tender union which reigned among us equalled more lively pleasures, with which it could not have existed. We loved each other without shame or mystery, and wished to continue our reciprocal affection. There is a species of enjoyment connected with innocence of manners which is superior to any other, because it has no interval; for myself, the remembrance of such a day touches me nearer, delights me more, and returns with greater rapture to my heart than any other pleasure I ever tasted. I hardly knew what I wished with those charming girls. I do not say: that had the arrangement been in my power, I should have divided my heart between them; I certainly felt some degree of preference: though I should have been happy to have had Mademoiselle de G —, for a mistress, I think, by choice, I should have liked her better as a confidante; be that as it may, I felt on leaving them as though I could not live without either. Who would have thought that I should never see them more; and that here our ephemeral amours must end?

Those who read this will not fail to laugh at my gallantries, and remark, that after very promising preliminaries, my most forward adventures concluded by a kiss of the hand: yet be not mistaken, reader, in your estimate of my enjoyments; I have, perhaps, tasted more real pleasure in my amours, which concluded by a kiss of the hand, than you will ever have in yours, which, at least, begin there.

Venture, who had gone to bed late the night before, came in soon after me. I did not now see him with my usual satisfaction, and took care not to inform him how I had passed the day. The ladies had spoken of him slightly, and appeared discontented at finding me in such bad hands; this hurt him in my esteem; besides, whatever diverted my ideas from them was at this time disagreeable. However, he soon brought me back to him and myself, by speaking of the situation of my affairs, which was too

critical to last; for, though I spent very little, my slender finances were almost exhausted. I was without resource; no news of Madam de Warens; not knowing what would become of me, and feeling a cruel pang at heart to see the friend of Mademoiselle Galley reduced to beggary.

I now learned from Venture that he had spoken of me to the Judge Major, and would take me next day to dine with him; that he was a man who by means of his friends might render me essential service. In other respects he was a desirable acquaintance, being a man of wit and letters, of agreeable conversation, one who possessed talents and loved them in others. After this discourse (mingling the most serious concerns with the most trifling frivolity) he showed me a pretty couplet, which came from Paris, on an air in one of Mouret's operas, which was then playing. Monsieur Simon (the judge major) was so pleased with this couplet, that he determined to make another in answer to it, on the same air. He had desired Venture to write one, and he wished me to make a third, that, as he expressed it, they might see couplets start up next day like incidents in a comic romance.

In the night (not being able to sleep) I composed a couplet, as my first essay in poetry. It was passable; better, or at least composed with more taste than it would have been the preceding night, the subject being tenderness, to which my heart was now entirely disposed. In the morning I showed my performance to Venture, who, being pleased with the couplet, put it in his pocket, without informing me whether he had made his. We dined with M. Simon, who treated us very politely. The conversation was agreeable; indeed it could not be otherwise between two men of natural good sense, improved by reading. For me, I acted my proper part, which was to listen without attempting to join in the conversation. Neither of them mentioned the couplet nor do I know that it ever passed for mine. M. Simon appeared satisfied with my behavior; indeed, it was almost all he saw of me at this interview. We had often met at Madam de Warens, but he had never paid much attention to me; it is from this dinner, therefore, that I date our acquaintance, which, though of no use in regard to the object I then had in view, was afterwards productive of

advantages which make me recollect it with pleasure. I should be wrong not to give some account of this person, since from his office of magistrate, and the reputation of wit on which he piqued himself, no idea could be formed of it. The judge major, Simon, certainly was not two feet high; his legs spare, straight, and tolerably long, would have added something to his stature had they been vertical, but they stood in the direction of an open pair of compasses. His body was not only short, but thin, being in every respect of most inconceivable smallness—when naked he must have appeared like a grasshopper. His head was of the common size, to which appertained a well-formed face, a noble look, and tolerably fine eyes; in short, it appeared a borrowed head, stuck on a miserable stump. He might very well have dispensed with dress, for his large wig alone covered him from head to foot.

He had two voices, perfectly different, which intermingled perpetually in his conversation, forming at first a diverting, but afterwards a very disagreeable contrast. One grave and sonorous, was, if I may hazard the expression, the voice of his head: the other, clear, sharp, and piercing, the voice of his body. When he paid particular attention, and spoke leisurely, so as to preserve his breath, he could continue his deep tone; but if he was the least animated, or attempted a lively accent, his voice sounded like the whistling of a key, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could return to the bass.

With the figure I have just described, and which is by no means overcharged, M. Simon was gallant, ever entertaining the ladies with soft tales, and carrying the decoration of his person even to foppery. Willing to make use of every advantage he, during the morning, gave audience in bed, for when a handsome head was discovered on the pillow no one could have imagined what belonged to it. This circumstance gave birth to scenes, which I am certain are yet remembered by all Annecy.

One morning, when he expected to give audience in bed, or rather on the bed, having on a handsome night-cap ornamented with rose-colored ribbon, a countryman arriving knocked at the door; the maid happened to be out; the judge, therefore, hearing

the knock repeated, cried "Come in," and, as he spoke rather loud, it was in his shrill tone. The man entered, looked about, endeavoring to discover whence the female voice proceeded and at length seeing a handsome head-dress set off with ribbons, was about to leave the room, making the supposed lady a hundred apologies. M. Simon, in a rage, screamed the more; and the countryman, yet more confirmed in his opinion, conceiving himself to be insulted, began railing in his turn, saying that, "Apparently, she was nothing better than a common streetwalker, and that the judge major should be ashamed of setting such ill examples." The enraged magistrate, having no other weapon than the jordan under his bed, was just going to throw it at the poor fellow's head as his servant returned.

This dwarf, ill-used by nature as to his person, was recompensed by possessing an understanding naturally agreeable, and which he had been careful to cultivate. Though he was esteemed a good lawyer, he did not like his profession, delighting more in the finer parts of literature, which he studied with success: above all, he possessed that superficial brilliancy, the art of pleasing in conversation, even with the ladies. He knew by heart a number of little stories, which he perfectly well knew how to make the most of; relating with an air of secrecy, and as an anecdote of yesterday, what happened sixty years before. He understood music, and could sing agreeably; in short, for a magistrate, he had many pleasing talents. By flattering the ladies of Annecy, he became fashionable among them, appearing continually in their train. He even pretended to favors, at which they were much amused. A Madam D'Epigny used to say "The greatest favor he could aspire to, was to kiss a lady on her knees."

As he was well read, and spoke fluently, his conversation was both amusing and instructive. When I afterwards took a taste for study, I cultivated his acquaintance, and found my account in it: when at Chambery, I frequently went from thence to see him. His praises increased my emulation, to which he added some good advice respecting the prosecution of my studies, which I found useful. Unhappily, this weakly body contained a very feeling soul. Some years after, he was chagrined by I know not what unlucky

affair, but it cost him his life. This was really unfortunate, for he was a good little man, whom at a first acquaintance one laughed at, but afterwards loved. Though our situations in life were very little connected with each other, as I received some useful lessons from him, I thought gratitude demanded that I should dedicate a few sentences to his memory.

As soon as I found myself at liberty, I ran into the street where Mademoiselle Galley lived, flattering myself that I should see someone go in or out, or at least open a window, but I was mistaken, not even a cat appeared, the house remaining as close all the time as if it had been uninhabited. The street was small and lonely, any one loitering about was, consequently, more likely to be noticed; from time to time people passed in and out of the neighborhood; I was much embarrassed, thinking my person might be known, and the cause that brought me there conjectured; this idea tortured me, for I have ever preferred the honor and happiness of those I love to my own pleasures.

At length, weary of playing the Spanish lover, and having no guitar, I determined to write to Mademoiselle de G——. I should have preferred writing to her friend, but did not dare take that liberty, as it appeared more proper to begin with her to whom I owed the acquaintance, and with whom I was most familiar. Having written my letter, I took it to Mademoiselle Giraud, as the young ladies had agreed at parting, they having furnished me with this expedient. Mademoiselle Giraud was a quilter, and sometimes worked at Madam Galley's, which procured her free admission to the house. I must confess, I was not thoroughly satisfied with this messenger, but was cautious of starting difficulties, fearing that if I objected to her no other might be named, and it was impossible to intimate that she had an inclination to me herself. I even felt humiliated that she should think I could imagine her of the same sex as those young ladies: in a word, I accepted her agency rather than none, and availed myself of it at all events.

At the very first word, Giraud discovered me. I must own this was not a difficult matter, for if sending a letter to young girls had not spoken sufficiently plain, my foolish embarrassed air would

have betrayed me. It will easily be supposed that the employment gave her little satisfaction, she undertook it, however, and performed it faithfully. The next morning I ran to her house and found an answer ready for me. How did I hurry away that I might have an opportunity to read and kiss it alone! though this need not been told, but the plan adopted by Mademoiselle Giraud (and in which I found more delicacy and moderation than I had expected) should. She had sense enough to conclude that her thirty-seven years, hare's eyes, daubed nose, shrill voice, and black skin, stood no chance against two elegant young girls, in all the height and bloom of beauty; she resolved, therefore, nether to betray nor assist them, choosing rather to lose me entirely than entertain me for them.

As Merceret had not heard from her mistress for some time, she thought of returning to Fribourg, and the persuasions of Giraud determined her; nay more, she intimated it was proper someone should conduct her to her father's and proposed me. As I happened to be agreeable to little Merceret, she approved the idea, and the same day they mentioned it to me as a fixed point. Finding nothing displeasing in the manner they had disposed of me, I consented, thinking it could not be above a week's journey at most; but Giraud, who had arranged the whole affair, thought otherwise. It was necessary to avow the state of my finances, and the conclusion was, that Merceret should defray my expenses; but to retrench on one hand what was expended on the other, I advised that her little baggage should be sent on before, and that we should proceed by easy journeys on foot.

I am sorry to have so many girls in love with me, but as there is nothing to be very vain of in the success of these amours, I think I may tell the truth without scruple. Merceret, younger and less artful than Giraud, never made me so many advances, but she imitated my manners, my actions, repeated my words, and showed me all those little attentions I ought to have had for her. Being very timorous, she took great care that we should both sleep in the same chamber; a circumstance that usually produces some consequences between a lad of twenty and a girl of twenty-five.

For once, however, it went no further; my simplicity being such, that though Merceret was by no means a disagreeable girl, an idea of gallantry never entered my head, and even if it had, I was too great a novice to have profited by it. I could not imagine how two young persons could bring themselves to sleep together, thinking that such familiarity must require an age of preparation. If poor Merceret paid my expenses in hopes of any return, she was terribly cheated, for we arrived at Fribourg exactly as we had quitted Annecy.

I passed through Geneva without visiting any one. While going over the bridges, I found myself so affected that I could scarcely proceed. Never could I see the walls of that city, never could I enter it, without feeling my heart sink from excess of tenderness, at the same time that the image of liberty elevated my soul. The ideas of equality, union, and gentleness of manners, touched me even to tears, and inspired me with a lively regret at having forfeited all these advantages. What an error was I in! but yet how natural! I imagined I saw all this in my native country, because I bore it in my heart.

It was necessary to pass through Nion: could I do this without seeing my good father? Had I resolved on doing so, I must afterwards have died with regret. I left Merceret at the inn, and ventured to his house. How wrong was I to fear him! On seeing me, his soul gave way to the parental tenderness with which it was filled. What tears were mingled with our embraces! He thought I was returned to him: I related my history, and informed him of my resolution. He opposed it feebly, mentioning the dangers to which I exposed myself, and telling me the shortest follies were best, but did not attempt to keep me by force, in which particular I think he acted right; but it is certain he did not do everything in his power to detain me, even by fair means. Whether after the step I had taken, he thought I ought not to return, or was puzzled at my age to know what to do with me—I have since found that he conceived a very unjust opinion of my travelling companion. My step-mother, a good woman, a little coaxingly put on an appearance of wishing me to stay to supper; I did not, however, comply, but told them I proposed remaining

longer with them on my return; leaving as a deposit my little packet, that had come by water, and would have been an incumbrance, had I taken it with me. I continued my journey the next morning, well satisfied that I had seen my father, and had taken courage to do my duty.

We arrived without any accident at Fribourg. Towards the conclusion of the journey, the politeness of Mademoiselle Merceret rather diminished, and, after our arrival, she treated me even with coldness. Her father, who was not in the best circumstances, did not show me much attention, and I was obliged to lodge at an alehouse. I went to see them the next morning, and received an invitation to dine there, which I accepted. We separated without tears at night; I returned to my paltry lodging, and departed the second day after my arrival, almost without knowing whither to go to.

This was a circumstance of my life in which Providence offered me precisely what was necessary to make my days pass happily. Merceret was a good girl, neither witty, handsome, nor ugly; not very lively, but tolerably rational, except while under the influence of some little humors, which usually evaporated in tears, without any violent outbreak of temper. She had a real inclination for me; I might have married her without difficulty, and followed her father's business. My taste for music would have made me love her; I should have settled at Fribourg, a small town, not pretty, but inhabited by very worthy people—I should certainly have missed great pleasures, but should have lived in peace to my last hour, and I must know best what I should have gained by such a step.

I did not return to Nion, but to Lausanne, wishing to gratify myself with a view of that beautiful lake which is seen there in its utmost extent. The greater part of my secret motives have not been so reasonable. Distant expectation has rarely strength enough to influence my actions; the uncertainty of the future ever making me regard projects whose execution requires a length of time as deceitful lures. I give in to visionary scenes of hope as well as others, provided they cost nothing, but if attended with any trouble, I have done with them. The smallest, the most trifling

pleasure that is conveniently within my reach, tempts me more than all the joys of paradise. I must except, however, those pleasures which are necessarily followed by pain; I only love those enjoyments which are unadulterated, which can never be the case where we are conscious they must be followed by repentance.

It was necessary I should arrive at some place, and the nearest was best; for having lost my way on the road, I found myself in the evening at Moudon, where I spent all that remained of my little stock except ten creuzers, which served to purchase my next day's dinner. Arriving in the evening at Lausanne, I went into an ale-house, without a penny in my pocket to pay for my lodging, or knowing what would become of me. I found myself extremely hungry—setting, therefore, a good face on the matter, I ordered supper, made my meal, went to bed without thought and slept with great composure. In the morning, having breakfasted and reckoned with my host, I offered to leave my waistcoat in pledge for seven batz, which was the amount of my expenses. The honest man refused this, saying, thank Heaven, he had never stripped any one, and would not now begin for seven batz, adding I should keep my waistcoat and pay him when I could. I was affected with this unexpected kindness, but felt it less than I ought to have done, or have since experienced on the remembrance of it. I did not fail sending him his money, with thanks, by one I could depend on. Fifteen years after, passing Lausanne, on my return from Italy, I felt a sensible regret at having forgotten the name of the landlord and house. I wished to see him, and should have felt real pleasure in recalling to his memory that worthy action. Services which doubtless have been much more important, but rendered with ostentation, have not appeared to me so worthy of gratitude as the simple unaffected humanity of this honest man.

As I approached Lausanne, I thought of my distress, and the means of extricating myself, without appearing in want to my step-mother. I compared myself, in this walking pilgrimage, to my friend Venture, on his arrival at Annecy, and was so warmed with the idea, that without recollecting that I had neither his gentility nor his talents, I determined to act the part of little

Venture at Lausanne, to teach music, which I did not understand, and say I came from Paris, where I had never been.

In consequence of this noble project (as there was no company where I could introduce myself without expense, and not choosing to venture among professional people), I inquired for some little inn, where I could lodge cheap, and was directed to one named Perrotet, who took in boarders. This Perrotet, who was one of the best men in the world, received me very kindly, and after having heard my feigned story and profession, promised to speak of me, and endeavored to procure me scholars, saying he should not expect any money till I had earned it. His price for board, though moderate in itself, was a great deal to me; he advised me, therefore, to begin with half board, which consisted of good soup only for dinner, but a plentiful supper at night. I closed with this proposition, and the poor Perrotet trusted me with great cheerfulness, sparing, meantime, no trouble to be useful to me.

Having found so many good people in my youth, why do I find so few in my age? Is their race extinct? No; but I do not seek them in the same situation I did formerly, among the commonality, where violent passions predominate only at intervals, and where nature speaks her genuine sentiments. In more elevated stations they are entirely smothered, and under the mask of sentiment, only interest or vanity is heard.

Having written to my father from Lausanne, he sent my packet and some excellent advice, of which I should have profited better. I have already observed that I have moments of inconceivable delirium, in which I am entirely out of myself. The adventure I am about to relate is an instance of this: to comprehend how completely my brain was turned, and to what degree I had 'Venturised' (if I may be allowed the expression), the many extravagances I ran into at the same time should be considered. Behold me, then, a singing master, without knowing how to note a common song; for if the five or six months passed with Le Maitre had improved me, they could not be supposed sufficient to qualify me for such an undertaking; besides, being taught by a master was enough (as I have before observed) to make me learn

ill. Being a Parisian from Geneva, and a Catholic in a Protestant country, I thought I should change my name with my religion and country, still approaching as near as possible to the great model I had in view. He called himself Venture de Villeneuve. I changed, by anagram, the name Rousseau into that of Vaussore, calling myself Monsieur Vaussore de Villeneuve. Venture was a good composer, though he had not said so; without knowing anything of the art, I boasted of my skill to every one. This was not all: being presented to Monsieur de Freytorens, professor of law, who loved music, and who gave concerts at his house, nothing would do but I must give him a proof of my talents, and accordingly I set about composing a piece for his concerts, as boldly as if I had really understood the science. I had the constancy to labor a fortnight at this curious business, to copy it fair, write out the different parts, and distribute them with as much assurance as if they had been masterpieces of harmony; in short (what will hardly be believed, though strictly true), I tacked a very pretty minuet to the end of it, that was commonly played about the streets, and which many may remember from these words, so well known at that time:

*Quel caprice!
Quelle injustice!
Quoi! ta Clarice
Trahirait tes feux! &c.*

Venture had taught me this air with the bass, set to other words, by the help of which I had retained it: thus at the end of my composition, I put this minuet and bass, suppressing the words, and uttering it for my own as confidently as if I had been speaking to the inhabitants of the moon. They assembled to perform my piece; I explain to each the movement, taste of execution, and references to his part—I was fully occupied. They were five or six minutes preparing, which were for me so many ages: at length, everything is adjusted, myself in a conspicuous situation, a fine roll of paper in my hand, gravely preparing to beat time. I gave four or five strokes with my paper, attending with "take care!" they begin—No, never since French operas

existed was there such a confused discord! The minuet, however, presently put all the company in good humor; hardly was it begun, before I heard bursts of laughter from all parts, every one congratulated me on my pretty taste for music, declaring this minuet would make me spoken of, and that I merited the loudest praise. It is not necessary to describe my uneasiness, or to own how much I deserved it.

Next day, one of the musicians, named Lutold, came to see me and was kind enough to congratulate me on my success. The profound conviction of my folly, shame, regret, and the state of despair to which I was reduced, with the impossibility of concealing the cruel agitation of my heart, made me open it to him; giving, therefore, a loose to my tears, not content with owning my ignorance, I told all, conjuring him to secrecy; he kept his word, as every one will suppose. The same evening, all Lausanne knew who I was, but what is remarkable, no one seemed to know, not even the good Perrotet, who (notwithstanding what had happened) continued to lodge and board me.

350

I led a melancholy life here; the consequences of such an essay had not rendered Lausanne a very agreeable residence. Scholars did not present themselves in crowds, not a single female, and not a person of the city. I had only two or three great dunces, as stupid as I was ignorant, who fatigued me to death, and in my hands were not likely to edify much.

At length, I was sent for to a house, where a little serpent of a girl amused herself by showing me a parcel of music that I could not read a note of, and which she had the malice to sing before her master, to teach him how it should be executed; for I was so unable to read an air at first sight, that in the charming concert I have just described, I could not possibly follow the execution a moment, or know whether they played truly what lay before them, and I myself had composed.

In the midst of so many humiliating circumstances, I had the pleasing consolation, from time to time, of receiving letters from my two charming friends. I have ever found the utmost consolatory virtue in the fair; when in disgrace, nothing softens

my affliction more than to be sensible that an amiable woman is interested for me. This correspondence ceased soon after, and was never renewed: indeed it was my own fault, for in changing situations I neglected sending my address, and forced by necessity to think perpetually of myself, I soon forgot them.

It is a long time since I mentioned Madam de Warens, but it should not be supposed I had forgotten her; never was she a moment absent from my thoughts. I anxiously wished to find her, not merely because she was necessary to my subsistence, but because she was infinitely more necessary to my heart. My attachment to her (though lively and tender, as it really was) did not prevent my loving others, but then it was not in the same manner. All equally claimed my tenderness for their charms, but it was those charms alone I loved, my passion would not have survived them, while Madam de Warens might have become old or ugly without my loving her the less tenderly. My heart had entirely transmitted to herself the homage it first paid to her beauty, and whatever change she might experience, while she remained herself, my sentiments could not change. I was sensible how much gratitude I owed to her, but in truth, I never thought of it, and whether she served me or not, it would ever have been the same thing. I loved her neither from duty, interest, nor convenience; I loved her because I was born to love her. During my attachment to another, I own this affection was in some measure deranged; I did not think so frequently of her, but still with the same pleasure, and never, in love or otherwise, did I think of her without feeling that I could expect no true happiness in life while in a state of separation.

Though in so long a time I had received no news from Madam de Warens, I never imagined I had entirely lost her, or that she could have forgotten me. I said to myself, she will know sooner or later that I am wandering about, and will find some means to inform me of her situation: I am certain I shall find her. In the meantime, it was a pleasure to live in her native country, to walk in the streets where she had walked, and before the houses that she had lived in; yet all this was the work of conjecture, for one of my foolish peculiarities was, not daring to inquire after her, or

even pronounce her name without the most absolute necessity. It seemed in speaking of her that I declared all I felt, that my lips revealed the secrets of my heart, and in some degree injured the object of my affection. I believe fear was likewise mingled with this idea; I dreaded to hear ill of her. Her management had been much spoken of, and some little of her conduct in other respects; fearing, therefore, that something might be said which I did not wish to hear, I preferred being silent on the subject.

As my scholars did not take up much of my time, and the town where she was born was not above four leagues from Lausanne, I made it a walk of three or four days; during which time a most pleasant emotion never left me. A view of the lake of Geneva and its admirable banks, had ever, in my idea, a particular attraction which I cannot describe; not arising merely from the beauty of the prospect, but something else, I know not why, more interesting, which affects and softens me. Every time I have approached the Vaudois country I have experienced an impression composed of the remembrance of Madam de Warens, who was born there; of my father, who lived there; of Miss Vulson, who had been my first love, and of several pleasant journeys I had made there in my childhood, mingled with some nameless charm, more powerfully attractive than all the rest. When that ardent desire for a life of happiness and tranquility (which ever follows me, and for which I was born) inflames my mind, 'tis ever to the country of Vaud, near the lake, in those charming plains, that imagination leads me. An orchard on the banks of that lake, and no other, is absolutely necessary; a firm friend, an amiable woman, a cow, and a little boat; nor could I enjoy perfect happiness on earth without these concomitants. I laugh at the simplicity with which I have several times gone into that country for the sole purpose of seeking this imaginary happiness when I was ever surprised to find the inhabitants, particularly the women, of a quite different disposition to what I sought. How strange did this appear to me! The country and people who inhabit it, were never, in my idea, formed for each other.

Walking along these beautiful banks, on my way to Vevay, I gave myself up to the soft melancholy; my heart rushed with

ardor into a thousand innocent felicities; melting to tenderness, I sighed and wept like a child. How often, stopping to weep more at my ease, and seated on a large stone, did I amuse myself with seeing my tears drop into the water.

On my arrival at Vevay, I lodged at the Key, and during the two days I remained there, without any acquaintance, conceived a love for that city, which has followed me through all my travels, and was finally the cause that I fixed on this spot, in the novel I afterwards wrote, for the residence of my hero and heroines. I would say to any one who has taste and feeling, go to Vevay, visit the surrounding country, examine the prospects, go on the lake and then say, whether nature has not designed this country for a Julia, a Clara, and a St. Preux; but do not seek them there. I now return to my story.

Giving myself out for a Catholic, I followed without mystery or scruple the religion I had embraced. On a Sunday, if the weather was fine, I went to hear mass at Assans, a place two leagues distant from Lausanne, and generally in company with other Catholics, particularly a Parisian embroiderer, whose name I have forgotten. Not such a Parisian as myself, but a real native of Paris, an arch-Parisian from his maker, yet honest as a peasant. He loved his country so well, that he would not doubt my being his countryman, for fear he should not have so much occasion to speak of it. The lieutenant-governor, M. de Crouzas, had a gardener, who was likewise from Paris, but not so complaisant; he thought the glory of his country concerned, when any one claimed that honor who was not really entitled to it; he put questions to me, therefore, with an air and tone, as if certain to detect me in a falsehood, and once, smiling malignantly, asked what was remarkable in the 'Marcheneuf'? It may be supposed I asked the question; but I have since passed twenty years at Paris, and certainly know that city, yet was the same question repeated at this day, I should be equally embarrassed to answer it, and from this embarrassment it might be concluded I had never been there: thus, even when we meet with truths, we are subject to build our opinions on circumstances, which may easily deceive us.

I formed no ideas, while at Lausanne, that were worth recollecting, nor can I say exactly how long I remained there; I only know that not finding sufficient to subsist on, I went from thence to Neuchatel, where I passed the winter. Here I succeeded better, I got some scholars, and saved enough to pay my good friend Perrotet, who had faithfully sent my baggage, though at that time I was considerably in his debt.

By continuing to teach music, I insensibly gained some knowledge of it. The life I led was sufficiently agreeable, and any reasonable man might have been satisfied, but my unsettled heart demanded something more. On Sundays, or whenever I had leisure, I wandered, sighing and thoughtful, about the adjoining woods, and when once out of the city never returned before night. One day, being at Boudry, I went to dine at a public-house, where I saw a man with a long beard, dressed in a violet-colored Grecian habit, with a fur cap, and whose air and manner were rather noble. This person found some difficulty in making himself understood, speaking only an unintelligible jargon, which bore more resemblance to Italian than any other language. I understood almost all he said, and I was the only person present who could do so, for he was obliged to make his request known to the landlord and others about him by signs. On my speaking a few words in Italian, which he perfectly understood, he got up and embraced me with rapture; a connection was soon formed, and from that moment, I became his interpreter. His dinner was excellent, mine rather worse than indifferent, he gave me an invitation to dine with him, which I accepted without much ceremony. Drinking and chatting soon rendered us familiar, and by the end of the repast we had all the disposition in the world to become inseparable companions. He informed me he was a Greek prelate, and 'Archimandrite' of Jerusalem; that he had undertaken to make a gathering in Europe for the reestablishment of the Holy Sepulchre, and showed me some very fine patents from the czarina, the emperor, and several other sovereigns. He was tolerably content with what he had collected hitherto, though he had experienced inconceivable difficulties in Germany; for not understanding a word of German, Latin, or French, he had been

obliged to have recourse to his Greek, Turkish *Lingua Franca*, which did not procure him much in the country he was travelling through; his proposal, therefore, to me was, that I should accompany him in the quality of secretary and interpreter. In spite of my violet-colored coat, which accorded well enough with the proposed employment, he guessed from my meagre appearance, that I should easily be gained; and he was not mistaken. The bargain was soon made, I demanded nothing, and he promised liberally; thus, without any security or knowledge of the person I was about to serve, I gave myself up entirely to his conduct, and the next day behold me on an expedition to Jerusalem.

We began our expedition unsuccessfully by the canton of Fribourg. Episcopal dignity would not suffer him to play the beggar, or solicit help from private individuals; but we presented his commission to the Senate, who gave him a trifling sum. From thence we went to Berne, where we lodged at the Falcon, then a good inn, and frequented by respectable company; the public table being well supplied and numerously attended. I had fared indifferently so long, that I was glad to make myself amends, therefore took care to profit by the present occasion. My lord, the Archimandrite, was himself an excellent companion, loved good cheer, was gay, spoke well for those who understood him, and knew perfectly well how to make the most of his Grecian erudition. One day, at dessert while cracking nuts, he cut his finger pretty deeply, and as it bled freely showed it to the company, saying with a laugh, "*Mirate, signori; questo a sangue Pelasgo.*"

At Berne, I was not useless to him, nor was my performance so bad as I had feared: I certainly spoke better and with more confidence than I could have done for myself. Matters were not conducted here with the same simplicity as at Fribourg; long and frequent conferences were necessary with the Premiers of the State, and the examination of his titles was not the work of a day; at length, everything being adjusted, he was admitted to an audience by the Senate; I entered with him as interpreter, and was ordered to speak. I expected nothing less, for it never entered my mind, that after such long and frequent conferences with the

members, it was necessary to address the assembly collectively, as if nothing had been said. Judge my embarrassment!—a man so bashful to speak, not only in public, but before the whole of the Senate of Berne! to speak impromptu, without a single moment for recollection; it was enough to annihilate me—I was not even intimidated. I described distinctly and clearly the commission of the Archimandrite; extolled the piety of those princes who had contributed, and to heighten that of their excellencies by emulation, added that less could not be expected from their well-known munificence; then, endeavoring to prove that this good work was equally interesting to all Christians, without distinction of sect; and concluded by promising the benediction of Heaven to all those who took part in it. I will not say that my discourse was the cause of our success, but it was certainly well received; and on our quitting the Archimandrite was gratified by a very genteel present, to which some very handsome compliments were added on the understanding of his secretary; these I had the agreeable office of interpreting; but could not take courage to render them literally.

This was the only time in my life that I spoke in public, and before a sovereign; and the only time, perhaps, that I spoke boldly and well. What difference in the disposition of the same person. Three years ago, having been to see my old friend, M. Roguin, at Yverdon, I received a deputation to thank me for some books I had presented to the library of that city; the Swiss are great speakers; these gentlemen, accordingly, made me a long harangue, which I thought myself obliged in honor to answer, but so embarrassed myself in the attempt, that my head became confused, I stopped short, and was laughed at. Though naturally timid, I have sometimes acted with confidence in my youth, but never in my advanced age: the more I have seen of the world the less I have been able to adapt its manners.

On leaving Berne, we went to Soleurre: the Archimandrite designing to re-enter Germany, and return through Hungary or Poland to his own country. This would have been a prodigious tour; but as the contents of his purse rather increased than diminished during his journey, he was in no haste to return. For

me, who was almost as much pleased on horseback as on foot, I would have desired no better than to have travelled thus during my whole life; but it was pre-ordained that my journey should soon end.

The first thing we did after our arrival at Soleurre, was to pay our respects to the French ambassador there. Unfortunately for my bishop, this chanced to be the Marquis de Bonac, who had been ambassador at the Porte, and was acquainted with every particular relative to the Holy Sepulchre. The Archimandrite had an audience that lasted about a quarter of an hour, to which I was not admitted, as the ambassador spoke French and Italian at least as well as myself. On my Grecian's retiring, I was prepared to follow him, but was detained: it was now my turn. Having called myself a Parisian, as such, I was under the jurisdiction of his excellency: he therefore asked me who I was? exhorting me to tell the truth; this I promised to do, but entreated a private audience, which was immediately granted. The ambassador took me to his closet, and shut the door; there, throwing myself at his feet, I kept my word, nor should I have said less, had I promised nothing, for a continual wish to unbosom myself, puts my heart perpetually upon my lips. After having disclosed myself without reserve to the musician Lutold, there was no occasion to attempt acting the mysterious with the Marquis de Bonac, who was so well pleased with my little history, and the ingenuousness with which I had related it, that he led me to the ambassadress, and presented me, with an abridgment of my recital. Madam de Bonac received me kindly, saying, I must not be suffered to follow that Greek monk. It was accordingly resolved that I should remain at their hotel till something better could be done for me. I wished to bid adieu to my poor Archimandrite, for whom I had conceived an attachment, but was not permitted; they sent him word that I was to be detained there, and in quarter of an hour after, I saw my little bundle arrive. M. de la Martiniere, secretary of the embassy, had in a manner the care of me; while following him to the chamber appropriated to my use, he said, "This apartment was occupied under the Count de Luc, by a celebrated man of the same name as yourself; it is in your power to succeed him in every respect, and

cause it to be said hereafter, Rousseau the First, Rousseau the Second." This similarity which I did not then expect, would have been less flattering to my wishes could I have foreseen at what price I should one day purchase the distinction.

What M. de la Martiniere had said excited my curiosity; I read the works of the person whose chamber I occupied, and on the strength of the compliment that had been paid me (imagining I had a taste for poetry) made my first essay in a cantata in praise of Madam de Bonac. This inclination was not permanent, though from time to time I have composed tolerable verses. I think it is a good exercise to teach elegant turns of expression, and to write well in prose, but could never find attractions enough in French poetry to give entirely in to it.

M. de la Martiniere wished to see my style, and asked me to write the detail I had before made the ambassador; accordingly I wrote him a long letter, which I have since been informed was preserved by M. de Marianne, who had long been attached to the Marquis de Bonac, and has since succeeded M. de Martiniere as secretary to the embassy of M. de Courtellies.

The experience I began to acquire tended to moderate my romantic projects; for example, I did not fall in love with Madam de Bonac, but also felt I did not stand much chance of succeeding in the service of her husband. M. de la Martiniere was already in the only place that could have satisfied my ambition, and M. de Marianne in expectancy: thus my utmost hopes could only aspire to the office of under secretary, which did not infinitely tempt me: this was the reason that when consulted on the situation I should like to be placed in, I expressed a great desire to go to Paris. The ambassador readily gave in to the idea, which at least tended to disembarass him of me. M. de Merveilleux, interpreting secretary to the embassy, said, that his friend, M. Godard, a Swiss colonel, in the service of France, wanted a person to be with his nephew, who had entered very young into the service, and made no doubt that I should suit him. On this idea, so lightly formed, my departure was determined; and I, who saw a long journey to perform with Paris at the end of it, was enraptured with the project. They gave me several letters, a hundred livres to defray

the expenses of my journey, accompanied with some good advice, and thus equipped I departed.

I was a fortnight making the journey, which I may reckon among the happiest days of my life. I was young, in perfect health, with plenty of money, and the most brilliant hopes, add to this, I was on foot, and alone. It may appear strange, I should mention the latter circumstance as advantageous, if my peculiarity of temper is not already familiar to the reader. I was continually occupied with a variety of pleasing chimeras, and never did the warmth of my imagination produce more magnificent ones. When offered an empty place in a carriage, or any person accosted me on the road, how vexed was I to see that fortune overthrown, whose edifice, while walking, I had taken such pains to rear.

For once my ideas were all martial: I was going to live with a military man; nay, to become one, for it was concluded I should begin with being a cadet. I already fancied myself in regimentals, with a fine white feather nodding on my hat, and my heart was inflamed by the noble idea. I had some smattering of geometry and fortification; my uncle was an engineer; I was in a manner a soldier by inheritance. My short sight, indeed, presented some little obstacle, but did not by any means discourage me, as I reckoned to supply that defect by coolness and intrepidity. I had read, too, that Marshal Schomberg was remarkably shortsighted, and why might not Marshal Rousseau be the same? My imagination was so warm by these follies, that it presented nothing but troops, ramparts, gabions, batteries, and myself in the midst of fire and smoke, an eyeglass in hand, commanding with the utmost tranquility. Notwithstanding, when the country presented a delightful prospect, when I saw charming groves and rivulets, the pleasing sight made me sigh with regret, and feel, in the midst of all this glory, that my heart was not formed for such havoc; and soon without knowing how, I found my thoughts wandering among my dear sheep-folds, renouncing forever the labor of Mars.

How much did Paris disappoint the idea I had formed of it! The exterior decorations I had seen at Turin, the beauty of the streets, the symmetry and regularity of the houses, contributed to

this disappointment, since I concluded that Paris must be infinitely superior. I had figured to myself a splendid city, beautiful as large, of the most commanding aspect, whose streets were ranges of magnificent palaces, composed of marble and gold. On entering the faubourg St. Marceau, I saw nothing but dirty stinking streets, filthy black houses, an air of slovenliness and poverty, beggars, carters, butchers, cries of tisane and old hats. This struck me so forcibly, that all I have since seen of real magnificence in Paris could never erase this first impression, which has ever given me a particular disgust to residing in that capital; and I may say, the whole time I remained there afterwards, was employed in seeking resources which might enable me to live at a distance from it. This is the consequence of too lively imagination, which exaggerates even beyond the voice of fame, and ever expects more than is told. I have heard Paris so flatteringly described, that I pictured it like the ancient Babylon, which, perhaps, had I seen, I might have found equally faulty, and unlike that idea the account had conveyed. The same thing happened at the Opera-house, to which I hastened the day after my arrival! I was sensible of the same deficiency at Versailles! and some time after on viewing the sea. I am convinced this would ever be the consequence of a too flattering description of any object; for it is impossible for man, and difficult even for nature herself, to surpass the riches of my imagination.

By the reception I met with from all those to whom my letters were addressed, I thought my fortune was certainly made. The person who received me the least kindly was M. de Surbeck, to whom I had the warmest recommendation. He had retired from the service, and lived philosophically at Bagneux, where I waited on him several times without his offering me even a glass of water. I was better received by Madam de Merveilleux, sister-in-law to the interpreter, and by his nephew, who was an officer in the guards. The mother and son not only received me kindly, but offered me the use of their table, which favor I frequently accepted during my stay at Paris.

Madam de Merveilleux appeared to have been handsome; her hair was of a fine black, which, according to the old mode, she

wore curled on the temples. She still retained (what do not perish with a set of features) the beauties of an amiable mind. She appeared satisfied with mine, and did all she could to render me service; but no one seconded her endeavors, and I was presently undeceived in the great interest they had seemed to take in my affairs. I must, however, do the French nation the justice to say, they do not so exhaust themselves with protestations, as some have represented, and that those they make are usually sincere; but they have a manner of appearing interested in your affairs, which is more deceiving than words. The gross compliments of the Swiss can only impose upon fools; the manners of the French are more seducing, and at the same time so simple, that you are persuaded they do not express all they mean to do for you, in order that you may be the more agreeably surprised. I will say more; they are not false in their protestations, being naturally zealous to oblige, humane, benevolent, and even (whatever may be said to the contrary) more sincere than any other nation; but they are too flighty: in effect they feel the sentiments they profess for you, but that sentiment flies off as instantaneously as it was formed. In speaking to you, their whole attention is employed on you alone, when absent you are forgotten. Nothing is permanent in their hearts, all is the work of the moment.

Thus I was greatly flattered, but received little service. Colonel Godard, for whose nephew I was recommended, proved to be an avaricious old wretch, who, on seeing my distress (though he was immensely rich), wished to have my services for nothing, meaning to place me with his nephew, rather as a valet without wages than a tutor. He represented that as I was to be continually engaged with him, I should be excused from duty, and might live on my cadet's allowance; that is to say, on the pay of a soldier: hardly would he consent to give me a uniform, thinking the clothing of the army might serve. Madam de Merveilleux, provoked at his proposals, persuaded me not to accept them; her son was of the same opinion; something else was to be thought on, but no situation was procured. Meantime, I began to be necessitated; for the hundred livres with which I had commenced my journey could not last much longer; happily, I received a

small remittance from the ambassador, which was very serviceable, nor do I think he would have abandoned me had I possessed more patience; but languishing, waiting, soliciting, are to me impossible: I was disheartened, displeased, and thus all my brilliant expectations came once more to nothing. I had not all this time forgotten my dear Madam de Warens, but how was I to find her? Where should I seek her? Madam de Merveilleux, who knew my story, assisted me in the search, but for a long time unavailingly; at length, she informed me that Madam de Warens had set out from Paris about two months before, but it was not known whether for Savoy or Turin, and that some conjectured she was gone to Switzerland. Nothing further was necessary to fix my determination to follow her, certain that wherever she might be, I stood more chance of finding her at those places than I could possibly do at Paris.

Before my departure, I exercised my new poetical talent in an epistle to Colonel Godard, whom I ridiculed to the utmost of my abilities. I showed this scribble to Madam de Merveilleux, who, instead of discouraging me, as she ought to have done, laughed heartily at my sarcasms, as well as her son, who, I believe, did not like M. Godard; indeed, it must be confessed, he was a man not calculated to obtain affection. I was tempted to send him my verses, and they encouraged me in it; accordingly I made them up in a parcel directed to him, and there being no post then at Paris by which I could conveniently send this, I put it in my pocket, and sent it to him from Auxerre, as I passed through that place. I laugh, even yet, sometimes, at the grimaces I fancy he made on reading this panegyric, where he was certainly drawn to the life; it began thus:

*Tu croyois, vieux Penard, qu' une folle manie D' elever ton neveu m'inspireroit
l'envie.*

This little piece, which, it is true, was but indifferently written; did not want for salt, and announced a turn for satire; it is, notwithstanding, the only satirical writing that ever came from my pen. I have too little hatred in my heart to take advantage of

such a talent; but I believe it may be judged from those controversies, in which from time to time I have been engaged in my own defence, that had I been of a vindictive disposition, my adversaries would rarely have had the laughter on their side.

What I most regret, is not having kept a journal of my travels, being conscious that a number of interesting details have slipped my memory; for never did I exist so completely, never live so thoroughly, never was so much myself, if I dare use the expression, as in those journeys made on foot. Walking animates and enlivens my spirits; I can hardly think when in a state of inactivity; my body must be exercised to make my judgment active. The view of a fine country, a succession of agreeable prospects, a free air, a good appetite, and the health I gained by walking; the freedom of inns, and the distance from everything that can make me recollect the dependence of my situation, conspire to free my soul, and give boldness to my thoughts, throwing me, in a manner, into the immensity of beings, where I combine, choose and appropriate them to my fancy, without constraint or fear. I dispose of all nature as I please; my heart wandering from object to object, approximates and unites with those that please it, is surrounded by charming images, and becomes intoxicated with delicious sensations. If, attempting to render these permanent, I am amused in describing to myself, what glow of coloring, what energy of expression, do I give them!—It has been said, that all these are to be found in my works, though written in the decline of life. Oh! had those of my early youth been seen, those made during my travels, composed, but never written!—Why did I not write them? will be asked; and why should I have written them? I may answer. Why deprive myself of the actual charm of my enjoyments to inform others what I enjoyed? What to me were readers, the public, or all the world, while I was mounting the empyrean. Besides, did I carry pens, paper and ink with me? Had I recollected all these, not a thought would have occurred worth preserving. I do not foresee when I shall have ideas; they come when they please, and not when I call for them; either they avoid me altogether, or rushing in crowds, overwhelm me with their force and number. Ten

volumes a day would not suffice barely to enumerate my thoughts; how then should I find time to write them? In stopping, I thought of nothing but a hearty dinner; on departing, of nothing but a charming walk; I felt that a new paradise awaited me at the door, and eagerly leaped forward to enjoy it.

Never did I experience this so feelingly as in the perambulation I am now describing. On coming to Paris, I had confined myself to ideas which related to the situation I expected to occupy there. I had rushed into the career I was about to run, and should have completed it with tolerable eclat, but it was not that my heart adhered to. Some real beings obscured my imagined ones—Colonel Godard and his nephew could not keep pace with a hero of my disposition. Thank Heaven, I was soon delivered from all these obstacles, and could enter at pleasure into the wilderness of chimeras, for that alone remained before me, and I wandered in it so completely that I several times lost my way; but this was no misfortune, I would not have shortened it, for, feeling with regret, as I approached Lyons, that I must again return to the material world, I should have been glad never to have arrived there.

One day, among others, having purposely gone out of my way to take a nearer view of a spot that appeared delightful, I was so charmed with it, and wandered round it so often, that at length I completely lost myself, and after several hours' useless walking, weary, fainting with hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's hut, which had not indeed a very promising appearance, but was the only one I could discover near me. I thought it was here, as at Geneva, or in Switzerland, where the inhabitants, living at ease, have it in their power to exercise hospitality. I entreated the countryman to give me some dinner, offering to pay for it: on which he presented me with some skimmed milk and coarse barley-bread, saying it was all he had. I drank the milk with pleasure, and ate the bread, chaff and all; but it was not very restorative to a man sinking with fatigue. The countryman, who watched me narrowly, judged the truth of my story by my appetite, and presently (after having said that he plainly saw I was an honest, good-natured young man, and did not come to betray

him) opened a little trap door by the side of his kitchen, went down, and returned a moment after with a good brown loaf of pure wheat, the remains of a well-flavored ham, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest: he then prepared a good thick omelet, and I made such a dinner as none but a walking traveller ever enjoyed.

When I again offered to pay, his inquietude and fears returned; he not only would have no money, but refused it with the most evident emotion; and what made this scene more amusing, I could not imagine the motive of his fear. At length, he pronounced tremblingly those terrible words, "Commissioners," and "Cellar-rats," which he explained by giving me to understand that he concealed his wine because of the excise, and his bread on account of the tax imposed on it; adding, he should be an undone man, if it was suspected he was not almost perishing with want. What he said to me on this subject (of which I had not the smallest idea) made an impression on my mind that can never be effaced, sowing seeds of that inextinguishable hatred which has since grown up in my heart against the vexations these unhappy people suffer, and against their oppressors. This man, though in easy circumstances, dare not eat the bread gained by the sweat of his brow, and could only escape destruction by exhibiting an outward appearance of misery!—I left his cottage with as much indignation as concern, deploring the fate of those beautiful countries, where nature has been prodigal of her gifts, only that they may become the prey of barbarous exactors.

The incident which I have just related, is the only one I have a distinct remembrance of during this journey: I recollect, indeed, that on approaching Lyons, I wished to prolong it by going to see the banks of the Lignon; for among the romances I had read with my father, *Astrea* was not forgotten and returned more frequently to my thoughts than any other. Stopping for some refreshment (while chatting with my hostess), I inquired the way to Forez, and was informed that country was an excellent place for mechanics, as there were many forges, and much iron work done there. This eulogium instantly calmed my romantic curiosity, for I felt no inclination to seek *Dianas* and *Sylvanders* among a generation of

blacksmiths. The good woman who encouraged me with this piece of information certainly thought I was a journeyman locksmith.

I had some view in going to Lyons: on my arrival, I went to the Chasattes, to see Mademoiselle du Chatelet, a friend of Madam de Warens, for whom I had brought a letter when I came there with M. le Maitre, so that it was an acquaintance already formed. Mademoiselle du Chatelet informed me her friend had passed through Lyons, but could not tell whether she had gone on to Piedmont, being uncertain at her departure whether it would not be necessary to stop in Savoy; but if I choose, she would immediately write for information, and thought my best plan would be to remain at Lyons till she received it. I accepted this offer; but did not tell Mademoiselle du Chatelet how much I was pressed for an answer, and that my exhausted purse would not permit me to wait long. It was not an appearance of coolness that withheld me, on the contrary, I was very kindly received, treated on the footing of equality, and this took from me the resolution of explaining my circumstances, for I could not bear to descend from a companion to a miserable beggar.

I seem to have retained a very connecting remembrance of that part of my life contained in this book; yet I think I remember, about the same period, another journey to Lyons, (the particulars of which I cannot recollect) where I found myself much straitened, and a confused remembrance of the extremities to which I was reduced does not contribute to recall the idea agreeably. Had I been like many others, had I possessed the talent of borrowing and running in debt at every ale-house I came to, I might have fared better; but in that my incapacity equalled my repugnance, and to demonstrate the prevalence of both, it will be sufficient to say, that though I have passed almost my whole life in indifferent circumstances, and frequently have been near wanting bread, I was never once asked for money by a creditor without having it in my power to pay it instantly; I could never bear to contract clamorous debts, and have ever preferred suffering to owing.

Being reduced to pass my nights in the streets, may certainly be called suffering, and this was several times the case at Lyons, having preferred buying bread with the few pence I had remaining, to bestowing them on a lodging; as I was convinced there was less danger of dying for want of sleep than of hunger. What is astonishing, while in this unhappy situation, I took no care for the future, was neither uneasy nor melancholy, but patiently waited an answer to Mademoiselle du Chatelet's letter, and lying in the open air, stretched on the earth, or on a bench, slept as soundly as if reposing on a bed of roses. I remember, particularly, to have passed a most delightful night at some distance from the city, in a road which had the Rhone, or Soane, I cannot recollect which, on the one side, and a range of raised gardens, with terraces, on the other. It had been a very hot day, the evening was delightful, the dew moistened the fading grass, no wind was stirring, the air was fresh without chillness, the setting sun had tinged the clouds with a beautiful crimson, which was again reflected by the water, and the trees that bordered the terrace were filled with nightingales who were continually answering each other's songs. I walked along in a kind of ecstasy, giving up my heart and senses to the enjoyment of so many delights, and sighing only from a regret of enjoying them alone. Absorbed in this pleasing reverie, I lengthened my walk till it grew very late, without perceiving I was tired; at length, however, I discovered it, and threw myself on the step of a kind of niche, or false door, in the terrace wall. How charming was the couch! the trees formed a stately canopy, a nightingale sat directly over me, and with his soft notes lulled me to rest: how pleasing my repose; my awaking more so. It was broad day; on opening my eyes I saw the water, the verdure, and the admirable landscape before me. I arose, shook off the remains of drowsiness, and finding I was hungry, retook the way to the city, resolving, with inexpressible gayety, to spend the two pieces of six francs I had yet remaining in a good breakfast. I found myself so cheerful that I went all the way singing; I even remember I sang a cantata of Batistin's called the Baths of Thomery, which I knew by heart. May a blessing light on the good Batistin and his good cantata, which procured

me a better breakfast than I had expected, and a still better dinner which I did not expect at all! In the midst of my singing, I heard some one behind me, and turning round perceived an Antonine, who followed after and seemed to listen with pleasure to my song. At length accosting me, he asked, If I understood music. I answered, "A little," but in a manner to have it understood I knew a great deal, and as he continued questioning of me, related a part of my story. He asked me, If I had ever copied music? I replied, "Often," which was true: I had learned most by copying. "Well," continued he, "come with me, I can employ you for a few days, during which time you shall want for nothing; provided you consent not to quit my room." I acquiesced very willingly, and followed him.

This Antonine was called M. Rotichon; he loved music, understood it, and sang in some little concerts with his friends; thus far all was innocent and right, but apparently this taste had become a furor, part of which he was obliged to conceal. He conducted me into a chamber, where I found a great quantity of music: he gave me some to copy, particularly the cantata he had heard me singing, and which he was shortly to sing himself.

I remained here three or four days, copying all the time I did not eat, for never in my life was I so hungry, or better fed. M. Rolichon brought my provisions himself from the kitchen, and it appeared that these good priests lived well, at least if every one fared as I did. In my life, I never took such pleasure in eating, and it must be owned this good cheer came very opportunely, for I was almost exhausted. I worked as heartily as I ate, which is saying a great deal; 'tis true I was not as correct as diligent, for some days after, meeting M. Rolichon in the street, he informed me there were so many omissions, repetitions, and transpositions, in the parts I had copied, that they could not be performed. It must be owned, that in choosing the profession of music, I hit on that I was least calculated for; yet my voice was good and I copied neatly; but the fatigue of long works bewilders me so much, that I spend more time in altering and scratching out than in pricking down, and if I do not employ the strictest attention in comparing the several parts, they are sure to fail in the execution. Thus,

through endeavoring to do well, my performance was very faulty; for aiming at expedition, I did all amiss. This did not prevent M. Rolichon from treating me well to the last, and giving me half-a-crown at my departure, which I certainly did not deserve, and which completely set me up, for a few days after I received news from Madam de Warens, who was at Chambery, with money to defray the expenses of my journey to her, which I performed with rapture. Since then my finances have frequently been very low, but never at such an ebb as to reduce me to fasting, and I mark this period with a heart fully alive to the bounty of Providence, as the last of my life in which I sustained poverty and hunger.

I remained at Lyons seven or eight days to wait for some little commissions with which Madam de Warens had charged Mademoiselle du Chatelet, who during this interval I visited more assiduously than before, having the pleasure of talking with her of her friend, and being no longer disturbed by the cruel remembrance of my situation, or painful endeavors to conceal it. Mademoiselle du Chatelet was neither young nor handsome, but did not want for elegance; she was easy and obliging while her understanding gave price to her familiarity. She had a taste for that kind of moral observation which leads to the knowledge of mankind, and from her originated that study in myself. She was fond of the works of Le Sage, particularly *Gil Blas*, which she lent me, and recommended to my perusal. I read this performance with pleasure, but my judgment was not yet ripe enough to relish that sort of reading. I liked romances which abounded with high-flown sentiments.

Thus did I pass my time at the grate of Mademoiselle du Chatelet, with as much profit as pleasure. It is certain that the interesting and sensible conversation of a deserving woman is more proper to form the understanding of a young man than all the pedantic philosophy of books. I got acquainted at the Chasattes with some other boarders and their friends, and among the rest, with a young person of fourteen, called Mademoiselle Serre, whom I did not much notice at that time, though I was in love with her eight or nine years afterwards, and with great reason, for she was a most charming girl.

I was fully occupied with the idea of seeing Madam de Warens, and this gave some respite to my chimeras, for finding happiness in real objects I was the less inclined to seek it in nonentities. I had not only found her, but also by her means, and near her, an agreeable situation, having sent me word that she had procured one that would suit me, and by which I should not be obliged to quit her. I exhausted all my conjectures in guessing what this occupation could be, but I must have possessed the art of divination to have hit it on the right. I had money sufficient to make my journey agreeable: Mademoiselle du Chatelet persuaded me to hire a horse, but this I could not consent to, and I was certainly right, for by so doing I should have lost the pleasure of the last pedestrian expedition I ever made; for I cannot give that name to those excursions I have frequently taken about my own neighborhood, while I lived at Motiers.

It is very singular that my imagination never rises so high as when my situation is least agreeable or cheerful. When everything smiles around me, I am least amused; my heart cannot confine itself to realities, cannot embellish, but must create. Real objects strike me as they really are, my imagination can only decorate ideal ones. If I would paint the spring, it must be in winter; if describe a beautiful landscape, it must be while surrounded with walls; and I have said a hundred times, that were I confined in the Bastille, I could draw the most enchanting picture of liberty. On my departure from Lyons, I saw nothing but an agreeable future, the content I now with reason enjoyed was as great as my discontent had been at leaving Paris, notwithstanding, I had not during this journey any of those delightful reveries I then enjoyed. My mind was serene, and that was all; I drew near the excellent friend I was going to see, my heart overflowing with tenderness, enjoying in advance, but without intoxication, the pleasure of living near her; I had always expected this, and it was as if nothing new had happened. Meantime, I was anxious about the employment Madam de Warens had procured me, as if that alone had been material. My ideas were calm and peaceable, not ravishing and celestial; every object struck my sight in its natural form; I observed the surrounding landscape, remarked the trees,

the houses, the springs, deliberated on the cross-roads, was fearful of losing myself, yet did not do so; in a word, I was no longer in the empyrean, but precisely where I found myself, or sometimes perhaps at the end of my journey, never farther.

I am in recounting my travels, as I was in making them, loath to arrive at the conclusion. My heart beat with joy as I approached my dear Madam de Warens, but I went no faster on that account. I love to walk at my ease, and stop at leisure; a strolling life is necessary to me: travelling on foot, in a fine country, with fine weather and having an agreeable object to terminate my journey, is the manner of living of all others most suited to my taste.

It is already understood what I mean by a fine country; never can a flat one, though ever so beautiful, appear such in my eyes: I must have torrents, fir trees, black woods, mountains to climb or descend, and rugged roads with precipices on either side to alarm me. I experienced this pleasure in its utmost extent as I approached Chambery, not far from a mountain which is called Pas de l'Echelle. Above the main road, which is hewn through the rock, a small river runs and rushes into fearful chasms, which it appears to have been millions of ages in forming. The road has been hedged by a parapet to prevent accidents, which enabled me to contemplate the whole descent, and gain vertigoes at pleasure; for a great part of my amusement in these steep rocks, is, they cause a giddiness and swimming in my head, which I am particularly fond of, provided I am in safety; leaning, therefore, over the parapet, I remained whole hours, catching, from time to time, a glance of the froth and blue water, whose rushing caught my ear, mingled with the cries of ravens, and other birds of prey that flew from rock to rock, and bush to bush, at six hundred feet below me. In places where the slope was tolerably regular, and clear enough from bushes to let stones roll freely, I went a considerable way to gather them, bringing those I could but just carry, which I piled on the parapet, and then threw down one after the other, being transported at seeing them roll, rebound, and fly into a thousand pieces, before they reached the bottom of the precipice.

Near Chambery I enjoyed an equal pleasing spectacle, though of a different kind; the road passing near the foot of the most charming cascade I ever saw. The water, which is very rapid, shoots from the top of an excessively steep mountain, falling at such a distance from its base that you may walk between the cascade and the rock without any inconvenience; but if not particularly careful it is easy to be deceived as I was, for the water, falling from such an immense height, separates, and descends in a rain as fine as dust, and on approaching too near this cloud, without perceiving it, you may be wet through in an instant.

At length I arrived at Madam de Warens; she was not alone, the intendant-general was with her. Without speaking a word to me, she caught my hand, and presenting me to him with that natural grace which charmed all hearts, said: "This, sir, is the poor young man I mentioned; deign to protect him as long as he deserves it, and I shall feel no concern for the remainder of his life." Then added, addressing herself to me, "Child, you now belong to the king, thank Monsieur the Intendant, who furnishes you with the means of existence." I stared without answering, without knowing what to think of all this; rising ambition almost turned my head; I was already prepared to act the intendant myself. My fortune, however, was not so brilliant as I had imagined, but it was sufficient to maintain me, which, as I was situated, was a capital acquisition. I shall now explain the nature of my employment.

King Victor Amadeus, judging by the event of preceding wars, and the situation of the ancient patrimony of his fathers, that he should not long be able to maintain it, wished to drain it beforehand. Resolving, therefore, to tax the nobility, he ordered a general survey of the whole country, in order that it might be rendered more equal and productive. This scheme, which was begun under the father, was completed by the son: two or three hundred men, part surveyors, who were called geometricians, and part writers, who were called secretaries, were employed in this work: among those of the latter description Madam de Warens had got me appointed. This post, without being very lucrative,

furnished the means of living eligibly in that country; the misfortune was, this employment could not be of any great duration, but it put me in train to procure something better, as by this means she hoped to insure the particular protection of the intendant, who might find me some more settled occupation before this was concluded.

I entered on my new employment a few days after my arrival, and as there was no great difficulty in the business, soon understood it; thus, after four or five years of unsettled life, folly, and suffering, since my departure from Geneva, I began, for the first time, to gain my bread with credit.

These long details of my early youth must have appeared trifling, and I am sorry for it: though born a man, in a variety of instances, I was long a child, and am so yet in many particulars. I did not promise the public a great personage: I promised to describe myself as I am, and to know me in my advanced age it was necessary to have known me in my youth. As, in general, objects that are present make less impression on me than the bare remembrance of them (my ideas being all from recollection), the first traits which were engraven on my mind have distinctly remained: those which have since been imprinted there, have rather combined with the former than effaced them. There is a certain, yet varied succession of affections and ideas, which continue to regulate those that follow them, and this progression must be known in order to judge rightly of those they have influenced. I have studied to develop the first causes, the better to show the concatenation of effects. I would be able by some means to render my soul transparent to the eyes of the reader, and for this purpose endeavor to show it in every possible point of view, to give him every insight, and act in such a manner, that not a motion should escape him, as by this means he may form a judgment of the principles that produce them.

Did I take upon myself to decide, and say to the reader, "Such is my character," he might think that if I did not endeavor to deceive him, I at least deceived myself; but in recounting simply all that has happened to me, all my actions, thoughts, and feelings, I cannot lead him into an error, unless I do it wilfully,

which by this means I could not easily effect, since it is his province to compare the elements, and judge of the being they compose: thus the result must be his work, and if he is then deceived the error will be his own. It is not sufficient for this purpose that my recitals should be merely faithful, they must also be minute; it is not for me to judge of the importance of facts, I ought to declare them simply as they are, and leave the estimate that is to be formed of them to him. I have adhered to this principle hitherto, with the most scrupulous exactitude, and shall not depart from it in the continuation; but the impressions of age are less lively than those of youth; I began by delineating the latter: should I recollect the rest with the same precision, the reader, may, perhaps, become weary and impatient, but I shall not be dissatisfied with my labor. I have but one thing to apprehend in this undertaking: I do not dread saying too much, or advancing falsities, but I am fearful of not saying enough, or concealing truths.

BOOK V

It was, I believe, in 1732, that I arrived at Chambéry, as already related, and began my employment of registering land for the king. I was almost twenty-one, my mind well enough formed for my age, with respect to sense, but very deficient in point of judgment, and needing every instruction from those into whose hands I fell, to make me conduct myself with propriety; for a few years' experience had not been able to cure me radically of my romantic ideas; and notwithstanding the ills I had sustained, I knew as little of the world, or mankind, as if I had never purchased instruction. I slept at home, that is, at the house of Madam de Warens; but it was not as at Annecy: here were no gardens, no brook, no landscape; the house was dark and dismal, and my apartment the most gloomy of the whole. The prospect a dead wall, an alley instead of a street, confined air, bad light, small rooms, iron bars, rats, and a rotten floor; an assemblage of circumstances that do not constitute a very agreeable habitation; but I was in the same house with my best friend, incessantly near

her, at my desk, or in chamber, so that I could not perceive the gloominess of my own, or have time to think of it. It may appear whimsical that she should reside at Chambéry on purpose to live in this disagreeable house; but it was a trait of contrivance which I ought not to pass over in silence. She had no great inclination for a journey to Turin, fearing that after the recent revolutions, and the agitation in which the court yet was, she should not be very favorably received there; but her affairs seemed to demand her presence, as she feared being forgotten or ill-treated, particularly as the Count de Saint-Laurent, Intendent-general of the Finances, was not in her interest. He had an old house in Chambéry, ill-built, and standing in so disagreeable a situation that it was always untenanted; she hired, and settled in this house, a plan that succeeded much better than a journey to Turin would have done, for her pension was not suppressed, and the Count de Saint-Laurent was ever after one of her best friends.

Her household was much on the old footing; her faithful Claude Anet still remained with her. He was, as I have before mentioned, a peasant of Moutru, who in his childhood had gathered herbs in Jura for the purpose of making Swiss tea; she had taken him into her service for his knowledge of drugs, finding it convenient to have a herbalist among her domestics. Passionately fond of the study of plants, he became a real botanist, and had he not died young, might have acquired as much fame in that science as he deserved for being an honest man. Serious even to gravity, and older than myself, he was to me a kind of tutor, commanding respect, and preserving me from a number of follies, for I dared not forget myself before him. He commanded it likewise from his mistress, who knew his understanding, uprightness, and inviolable attachment to herself, and returned it. Claude Anet was of an uncommon temper. I never encountered a similar disposition: he was slow, deliberate, and circumspect in his conduct; cold in his manner; laconic and sententious in his discourse; yet of an impetuosity in his passions, which (though careful to conceal) preyed upon him inwardly, and urged him to the only folly he ever committed; that folly, indeed, was terrible, it was poisoning himself. This tragic scene passed

soon after my arrival, and opened my eyes to the intimacy that subsisted between Claude Anet and his mistress, for had not the information come from her, I should never have suspected it; yet, surely, if attachment, fidelity, and zeal, could merit such a recompense, it was due to him, and what further proves him worthy such a distinction, he never once abused her confidence. They seldom disputed, and their disagreements ever ended amicably; one, indeed, was not so fortunate; his mistress, in a passion, said something affronting, which not being able to digest, he consulted only with despair, and finding a bottle of laudanum at hand, drank it off; then went peaceably to bed, expecting to awake no more. Madam de Warens herself was uneasy, agitated, wandering about the house and happily—finding the phial empty—guessed the rest. Her screams, while flying to his assistance, alarmed me; she confessed all, implored my help, and was fortunate enough, after repeated efforts, to make him throw up the laudanum. Witness of this scene, I could not but wonder at my stupidity in never having suspected the connection; but Claude Anet was so discreet, that a more penetrating observer might have been deceived. Their reconciliation affected me, and added respect to the esteem I before felt for him. From this time I became, in some measure, his pupil, nor did I find myself the worse for his instruction.

I could not learn, without pain, that she lived in greater intimacy with another than with myself: it was a situation I had not even thought of, but (which was very natural) it hurt me to see another in possession of it. Nevertheless, instead of feeling any aversion to the person who had this advantage over me, I found the attachment I felt for her actually extend to him. I desired her happiness above all things, and since he was concerned in her plan of felicity, I was content he should be happy likewise. Meantime he perfectly entered into the views of his mistress; conceived a sincere friendship for me, and without affecting the authority his situation might have entitled him to, he naturally possessed that which his superior judgment gave him over mine. I dared do nothing he disapproved of, but he was sure to disapprove only what merited disapprobation: thus we lived in an union

which rendered us mutually happy, and which death alone could dissolve.

One proof of the excellence of this amiable woman's character, is, that all those who loved her, loved each other; even jealousy and rivalry submitting to the more powerful sentiment with which she inspired them, and I never saw any of those who surrounded her entertain the least ill will among themselves. Let the reader pause a moment on this encomium, and if he can recollect any other woman who deserves it, let him attach himself to her, if he would obtain happiness.

From my arrival at Chambéry to my departure for Paris, 1741, included an interval of eight or nine years, during which time I have few adventures to relate; my life being as simple as it was agreeable. This uniformity was precisely what was most wanting to complete the formation of my character, which continual troubles had prevented from acquiring any degree of stability. It was during this pleasing interval, that my unconnected, unfinished education, gained consistence, and made me what I have unalterably remained amid the storms with which I have since been surrounded.

The progress was slow, almost imperceptible, and attended by few memorable circumstances; yet it deserves to be followed and investigated.

405

At first, I was wholly occupied with my business, the constraint of a desk left little opportunity for other thoughts, the small portion of time I was at liberty was passed with my dear Madam de Warens, and not having leisure to read, I felt no inclination for it; but when my business (by daily repetition) became familiar, and my mind was less occupied, study again became necessary, and (as my desires were ever irritated by any difficulty that opposed the indulgence of them) might once more have become a passion, as at my master's, had not other inclinations interposed and diverted it.

Though our occupation did not demand a very profound skill in arithmetic, it sometimes required enough to puzzle me. To conquer this difficulty, I purchased books which treated on that science, and learned well, for I now studied alone. Practical

arithmetic extends further than is usually supposed if you would attain exact precision. There are operations of extreme length in which I have sometimes seen good geometricians lose themselves. Reflection, assisted by practice, gives clear ideas, and enables you to devise shorter methods, these inventions flatter our self-complacency, while their exactitude satisfies our understanding, and renders a study pleasant, which is, of itself, heavy and unentertaining. At length I became so expert as not to be puzzled by any question that was solvable by arithmetical calculation; and even now, while everything I formerly knew fades daily on my memory, this acquirement, in a great measure remains, through an interval of thirty years. A few days ago, in a journey I made to Davenport, being with my host at an arithmetical lesson given his children, I did (with pleasure, and without errors) a most complicated work. While setting down my figures, methought I was still at Chambery, still in my days of happiness—how far had I to look back for them!

The colored plans of our geometricians had given me a taste for drawing: accordingly I bought colors, and began by attempting flowers and landscapes. It was unfortunate that I had not talents for this art, for my inclination was much disposed to it, and while surrounded with crayons, pencils, and colors, I could have passed whole months without wishing to leave them. This amusement engaged me so much that they were obliged to force me from it; and thus it is with every inclination I give into, it continues to augment, till at length it becomes so powerful, that I lose sight of everything except the favorite amusement. Years have not been able to cure me of that fault, nay, have not even diminished it; for while I am writing this, behold me, like an old dotard, infatuated with another, to me useless study, which I do not understand, and which even those who have devoted their youthful days to the acquisition of, are constrained to abandon, at the age I am beginning with it.

At that time, the study I am now speaking of would have been well placed, the opportunity was good, and I had some temptation to profit by it; for the satisfaction I saw in the eyes of Anet, when he came home loaded with new discovered plants, set me two or

three times on the point of going to herbalize with him, and I am almost certain that had I gone once, I should have been caught, and perhaps at this day might have been an excellent botanist, for I know no study more congenial to my natural inclination, than that of plants; the life I have led for these ten years past, in the country, being little more than a continual herbalizing, though I must confess, without object, and without improvement; but at the time I am now speaking of I had no inclination for botany, nay, I even despised, and was disgusted at the idea, considering it only as a fit study for an apothecary. Madam de Warens was fond of it merely for this purpose, seeking none but common plants to use in her medical preparations; thus botany, chemistry, and anatomy were confounded in my idea under the general denomination of medicine, and served to furnish me with pleasant sarcasms the whole day, which procured me, from time to time, a box on the ear, applied by Madam de Warens. Besides this, a very contrary taste grew up with me, and by degrees absorbed all others; this was music. I was certainly born for that science, I loved it from my infancy, and it was the only inclination I have constantly adhered to; but it is astonishing that what nature seemed to have designed me for should have cost so much pains to learn, and that I should acquire it so slowly, that after a whole life spent in the practice of this art, I could never attain to sing with any certainty at sight. What rendered the study of music more agreeable to me at that time, was, being able to practise it with Madam de Warens. In other respects our tastes were widely different: this was a point of coincidence, which I loved to avail myself of. She had no more objection to this than myself. I knew at that time almost as much of it as she did, and after two or three efforts, we could make shift to decipher an air. Sometimes, when I saw her busy at her furnace, I have said, "Here now is a charming duet, which seems made for the very purpose of spoiling your drugs;" her answer would be, "If you make me burn them, I'll make you eat them:" thus disputing, I drew her to the harpsichord; the furnace was presently forgotten, the extract of juniper or wormwood calcined (which I cannot recollect without transport), and these scenes usually ended by her smearing my face with the remains of them.

It may easily be conjectured that I had plenty of employment to fill up my leisure hours; one amusement, however, found room, that was well worth all the rest.

We lived in such a confined dungeon, that it was necessary sometimes to breathe the open air; Anet, therefore, engaged Madam de Warens to hire a garden in the suburbs, both for this purpose and the convenience of rearing plants, etc.; to this garden was added a summer-house, which was furnished in the customary manner; we sometimes dined, and I frequently slept, there. Insensibly I became attached to this little retreat, decorated it with books and prints, spending part of my time in ornamenting it during the absence of Madam de Warens, that I might surprise her the more agreeably on her return. Sometimes I quitted this dear friend, that I might enjoy the uninterrupted pleasure of thinking on her; this was a caprice I can neither excuse nor fully explain, I only know this really was the case, and therefore I avow it. I remember Madam de Luxembourg told me one day in raillery, of a man who used to leave his mistress that he might enjoy the satisfaction of writing to her; I answered, I could have been this man; I might have added, That I had done the very same.

I did not, however, find it necessary to leave Madam de Warens that I might love her the more ardently, for I was ever as perfectly free with her as when alone; an advantage I never enjoyed with any other person, man or woman, however I might be attached to them; but she was so often surrounded by company who were far from pleasing me, that spite and weariness drove me to this asylum, where I could indulge the idea, without danger of being interrupted by impertinence. Thus, my time being divided between business, pleasure, and instruction, my life passed in the most absolute serenity. Europe was not equally tranquil: France and the emperor had mutually declared war, the King of Sardinia had entered into the quarrel, and a French army had filed off into Piedmont to awe the Milanese. Our division passed through Chambery, and, among others, the regiment of Champagne, whose colonel was the Duke de la Trimouille, to whom I was presented. He promised many things, but doubtless

never more thought of me. Our little garden was exactly at the end of the suburb by which the troops entered, so that I could fully satisfy my curiosity in seeing them pass, and I became as anxious for the success of the war as if it had nearly concerned me. Till now I had never troubled myself about politics, for the first time I began reading the gazettes, but with so much partiality on the side of France, that my heart beat with rapture on its most trifling advantages, and I was as much afflicted on a reverse of fortune, as if I had been particularly concerned.

Had this folly been transient, I should not, perhaps, have mentioned it, but it took such root in my heart (without any reasonable cause) that when I afterwards acted the anti-despot and proud republican at Paris, in spite of myself, I felt a secret predilection for the nation I declared servile, and for that government I affected to oppose. The pleasantest of all was that, ashamed of an inclination so contrary to my professed maxims, I dared not own it to any one, but rallied the French on their defeats, while my heart was more wounded than their own. I am certainly the first man, that, living with a people who treated him well, and whom he almost adored, put on, even in their own country, a borrowed air of despising them; yet my original inclination is so powerful, constant, disinterested, and invincible, that even since my quitting that kingdom, since its government, magistrates, and authors, have outvied each other in rancor against me, since it has become fashionable to load me with injustice and abuse, I have not been able to get rid of this folly, but notwithstanding their ill-treatment, love them in spite of myself.

I long sought the cause of this partiality, but was never able to find any, except in the occasion that gave it birth. A rising taste for literature attached me to French books, to their authors, and their country: at the very moment the French troops were passing Chambery, I was reading Brantome's 'Celebrated Captains'; my head was full of the Clissons, Bayards, Lautrecs, Colignys, Montmorenceys, and Trimouille, and I loved their descendants as the heirs of their merit and courage. In each regiment that passed by methought I saw those famous black bands who had formerly

done so many noble exploits in Piedmont; in fine, I applied to these all the ideas I had gathered from books; my reading continued, which, still drawn from the same nation, nourished my affection for that country, till, at length, it became a blind passion, which nothing could overcome. I have had occasion to remark several times in the course of my travels, that this impression was not peculiar to me for France, but was more or less active in every country, for that part of the nation who were fond of literature, and cultivated learning; and it was this consideration that balanced in my mind the general hatred which the conceited air of the French is so apt to inspire. Their romances, more than their men, attract the women of all countries, and the celebrated dramatic pieces of France create a fondness in youth for their theaters; the reputation which that of Paris in particular has acquired, draws to it crowds of strangers, who return enthusiasts to their own country: in short, the excellence of their literature captivates the senses, and in the unfortunate war just ended, I have seen their authors and philosophers maintain the glory of France, so tarnished by its warriors.

I was, therefore, an ardent Frenchman; this rendered me a politician, and I attended in the public square, amid a throng of news-mongers, the arrival of the post, and, sillier than the ass in the fable, was very uneasy to know whose packsaddle I should next have the honor to carry, for it was then supposed we should belong to France, and that Savoy would be exchanged for Milan. I must confess, however, that I experienced some uneasiness, for had this war terminated unfortunately for the allies, the pension of Madam de Warens would have been in a dangerous situation; nevertheless, I had great confidence in my good friends, the French, and for once (in spite of the surprise of M. de Broglio) my confidence was not ill-founded—thanks to the King of Sardinia, whom I had never thought of.

While we were fighting in Italy, they were singing in France: the operas of Rameau began to make a noise there, and once more raise the credit of his theoretic works, which, from their obscurity, were within the compass of very few understandings. By chance I heard of his 'Treatise on Harmony', and had no rest till I

purchased it. By another chance I fell sick; my illness was inflammatory, short and violent, but my convalescence was tedious, for I was unable to go abroad for a whole month. During this time I eagerly ran over my Treatise on Harmony, but it was so long, so diffuse, and so badly disposed, that I found it would require a considerable time to unravel it: accordingly I suspended my inclination, and recreated my sight with music.

The cantatas of Bernier were what I principally exercised myself with. These were never out of my mind; I learned four or five by heart, and among the rest, 'The Sleeping Cupids', which I have never seen since that time, though I still retain it almost entirely; as well as 'Cupid Stung by a Bee', a very pretty cantata by Clerambault, which I learned about the same time.

To complete me, there arrived a young organist from Valdoste, called the Abbe Palais, a good musician and an agreeable companion, who performed very well on the harpsichord; I got acquainted with him, and we soon became inseparable. He had been brought up by an Italian monk, who was a capital organist. He explained to me his principles of music, which I compared with Rameau; my head was filled with accompaniments, concords and harmony, but as it was necessary to accustom the ear to all this, I proposed to Madam de Warens having a little concert once a month, to which she consented.

Behold me then so full of this concert, that night or day I could think of nothing else, and it actually employed a great part of my time to select the music, assemble the musicians, look to the instruments, and write out the several parts. Madam de Warens sang; Father Cato (whom I have before mentioned, and shall have occasion to speak of again) sang likewise; a dancing-master named Roche, and his son, played on the violin; Canavas, a Piedmontese musician (who was employed like myself in the survey, and has since married at Paris), played on the violoncello; the Abbe Palais performed on the harpsichord, and I had the honor to conduct the whole. It may be supposed all this was charming; I cannot say it equalled my concert at Monsieur de Tretoren's, but certainly it was not far behind it.

This little concert, given by Madam de Warens, the new convert, who lived (it was expressed) on the king's charity, made the whole tribe of devotees murmur, but was a very agreeable amusement to several worthy people, at the head of whom it would not be easily surmised that I should place a monk; yet, though a monk, a man of considerable merit, and even of a very amiable disposition, whose subsequent misfortunes gave me the most lively concern, and whose idea, attached to that of my happy days, is yet dear to my memory. I speak of Father Cato, a Cordelier, who, in conjunction with the Count d'Ortan, had caused the music of poor Le Maitre to be seized at Lyons; which action was far from being the brightest trait in his history. He was a Bachelor of Sorbonne, had lived long in Paris among the great world, and was particularly caressed by the Marquis d'Antremont, then Ambassador from Sardinia. He was tall and well made; full faced, with very fine eyes, and black hair, which formed natural curls on each side of his forehead. His manner was at once noble, open, and modest; he presented himself with ease and good manners, having neither the hypocritical nor impudent behavior of a monk, or the forward assurance of a fashionable coxcomb, but the manners of a well-bred man, who, without blushing for his habit, set a value on himself, and ever felt in his proper situation when in good company. Though Father Cato was not deeply studied for a doctor, he was much so for a man of the world, and not being compelled to show his talents, he brought them forward so advantageously that they appeared greater than they really were. Having lived much in the world, he had rather attached himself to agreeable acquirements than to solid learning; had sense, made verses, spoke well, sang better, and aided his good voice by playing on the organ and harpsichord. So many pleasing qualities were not necessary to make his company sought after, and, accordingly, it was very much so, but this did not make him neglect the duties of his function: he was chosen (in spite of his jealous competitors) Definitor of his Province, or, according to them, one of the greatest pillars of their order.

Father Cato became acquainted with Madam de Warens at the Marquis of Antremont's; he had heard of her concerts, wished to

assist at them, and by his company rendered our meetings truly agreeable. We were soon attached to each other by our mutual taste for music, which in both was a most lively passion, with this difference, that he was really a musician, and myself a bungler. Sometimes assisted by Canavas and the Abbe Palais, we had music in his apartment; or on holidays at his organ, and frequently dined with him; for, what was very astonishing in a monk, he was generous, profuse, and loved good cheer, without the least tincture of greediness. After our concerts, he always used to stay to supper, and these evenings passed with the greatest gayety and good-humor; we conversed with the utmost freedom, and sang duets; I was perfectly at my ease, had sallies of wit and merriment; Father Cato was charming, Madam de Warens adorable, and the Abbe Palais, with his rough voice, was the butt of the company. Pleasing moments of sportive youth, how long since have ye fled!

As I shall have no more occasion to speak of poor Father Cato, I will here conclude in a few words his melancholy history. His brother monks, jealous, or rather exasperated to discover in him a merit and elegance of manners which favored nothing of monastic stupidity, conceived the most violent hatred to him, because he was not as despicable as themselves; the chiefs, therefore, combined against this worthy man, and set on the envious rabble of monks, who otherwise would not have dared to hazard the attack. He received a thousand indignities; they degraded him from his office, took away the apartment which he had furnished with elegant simplicity, and, at length, banished him, I know not whither: in short, these wretches overwhelmed him with so many evils, that his honest and proud soul sank under the pressure, and, after having been the delight of the most amiable societies, he died of grief, on a wretched bed, hid in some cell or dungeon, lamented by all worthy people of his acquaintance, who could find no fault in him, except his being a monk.

Accustomed to this manner of life for some time, I became so entirely attached to music that I could think of nothing else. I went to my business with disgust, the necessary confinement and assiduity appeared an insupportable punishment, which I at length

wished to relinquish, that I might give myself up without reserve to my favorite amusement. It will be readily believed that this folly met with some opposition; to give up a creditable employment and fixed salary to run after uncertain scholars was too giddy a plan to be approved of by Madam de Warens, and even supposing my future success should prove as great as I flattered myself, it was fixing very humble limits to my ambition to think of reducing myself for life to the condition of a music-master. She, who formed for me the brightest projects, and no longer trusted implicitly to the judgment of M. d'Aubonne, seeing with concern that I was so seriously occupied with a talent which she thought frivolous, frequently repeated to me that provincial proverb, which does not hold quite so good in Paris,

*'Qui biens chante et biens dance,
fait un metier qui peu avance.'*
[He who can sweetly sing and featly dance,
His interests right little shall advance.]

On the other hand, she saw me hurried away by this irresistible passion, my taste for music having become a furor, and it was much to be feared that my employment, suffering by my distraction, might draw on me a discharge, which would be worse than a voluntary resignation. I represented to her; that this employment could not last long, that it was necessary I should have some permanent means of subsistence, and that it would be much better to complete by practice the acquisition of that art to which my inclination led me than to make fresh essays, which possibly might not succeed, since by this means, having passed the age most proper for improvement, I might be left without a single resource for gaining a livelihood: in short, I extorted her consent more by importunity and caresses than by any satisfactory reasons. Proud of my success, I immediately ran to thank M. Coccelli, Director-General of the Survey, as though I had performed the most heroic action, and quitted my employment without cause, reason, or pretext, with as much pleasure as I had accepted it two years before.

This step, ridiculous as it may appear, procured me a kind of consideration, which I found extremely useful. Some supposed I had resources which I did not possess; others, seeing me totally given up to music, judged of my abilities by the sacrifice I had made, and concluded that with such a passion for the art, I must possess it in a superior degree. In a nation of blind men, those with one eye are kings. I passed here for an excellent master, because all the rest were very bad ones. Possessing taste in singing, and being favored by my age and figure, I soon procured more scholars than were sufficient to compensate for the losses of my secretary's pay. It is certain, that had it been reasonable to consider the pleasure of my situation only, it was impossible to pass more speedily from one extreme to the other. At our measuring, I was confined eight hours in the day to the most unentertaining employment, with yet more disagreeable company. Shut up in a melancholy counting-house, poisoned by the smell and respiration of a number of clowns, the major part of whom were ill-combed and very dirty, what with attention, bad air, constraint and weariness, I was sometimes so far overcome as to occasion a vertigo. Instead of this, behold me admitted into the fashionable world, sought after in the first houses, and everywhere received with an air of satisfaction; amiable and gay young ladies awaiting my arrival, and welcoming me with pleasure; I see nothing but charming objects, smell nothing but roses and orange flowers; singing, chatting, laughter, and amusements, perpetually succeed each other. It must be allowed, that reckoning all these advantages, no hesitation was necessary in the choice; in fact, I was so content with mine, that I never once repented it; nor do I even now, when, free from the irrational motives that influenced me at that time, I weigh in the scale of reason every action of my life.

This is, perhaps, the only time that, listening to inclination, I was not deceived in my expectations. The easy access, obliging temper, and free humor of this country, rendered a commerce with the world agreeable, and the inclination I then felt for it, proves to me, that if I have a dislike for society, it is more their fault than mine. It is a pity the Savoyards are not rich: though, perhaps, it

would be a still greater pity if they were so, for altogether they are the best, the most sociable people that I know, and if there is a little city in the world where the pleasures of life are experienced in an agreeable and friendly commerce, it is at Chambery. The gentry of the province who assemble there have only sufficient wealth to live and not enough to spoil them; they cannot give way to ambition, but follow, through necessity, the counsel of Cyneas, devoting their youth to a military employment, and returning home to grow old in peace; an arrangement over which honor and reason equally preside. The women are handsome, yet do not stand in need of beauty, since they possess all those qualifications which enhance its value and even supply the want of it. It is remarkable, that being obliged by my profession to see a number of young girls, I do not recollect one at Chambery but what was charming: it will be said I was disposed to find them so, and perhaps there may be some truth in the surmise. I cannot remember my young scholars without pleasure. Why, in naming the most amiable, cannot I recall them and myself also to that happy age in which our moments, pleasing as innocent, were passed with such happiness together? The first was Mademoiselle de Mallarede, my neighbor, and sister to a pupil of Monsieur Gaime. She was a fine clear brunette, lively and graceful, without giddiness; thin as girls of that age usually are; but her bright eyes, fine shape, and easy air, rendered her sufficiently pleasing with that degree of plumpness which would have given a heightening to her charms. I went there of mornings, when she was usually in her dishabille, her hair carelessly turned up, and, on my arrival, ornamented with a flower, which was taken off at my departure for her hair to be dressed. There is nothing I fear so much as a pretty woman in an elegant dishabille; I should dread them a hundred times less in full dress. Mademoiselle de Menthon, whom I attended in the afternoon, was ever so. She made an equally pleasing, but quite different impression on me. Her hair was flaxen, her person delicate, she was very timid and extremely fair, had a clear voice, capable of just modulation, but which she had not courage to employ to its full extent. She had the mark of a scald on her bosom, which a scanty piece of blue chenille did not

entirely cover, this scar sometimes drew my attention, though not absolutely on its own account. Mademoiselle des Challes, another of my neighbors, was a woman grown, tall, well-formed, jolly, very pleasing though not a beauty, and might be quoted for her gracefulness, equal temper, and good humor. Her sister, Madam de Charly, the handsomest woman of Chambery, did not learn music, but I taught her daughter, who was yet young, but whose growing beauty promised to equal her mother's, if she had not unfortunately been a little red-haired. I had likewise among my scholars a little French lady, whose name I have forgotten, but who merits a place in my list of preferences. She had adopted the slow drawling tone of the nuns, in which voice she would utter some very keen things, which did not in the least appear to correspond with her manner; but she was indolent, and could not generally take pains to show her wit, that being a favor she did not grant to every one. After a month or two of negligent attendance, this was an expedient she devised to make me more assiduous, for I could not easily persuade myself to be so. When with my scholars, I was fond enough of teaching, but could not bear the idea of being obliged to attend at a particular hour; constraint and subjection in every shape are to me insupportable, and alone sufficient to make me hate even pleasure itself.

I had some scholars likewise among the tradespeople, and, among others, one who was the indirect cause of a change of relationship, which (as I have promised to declare all) I must relate in its place. She was the daughter of a grocer, and was called Mademoiselle de Larnage, a perfect model for a Grecian statue, and whom I should quote for the handsomest girl I have ever seen, if true beauty could exist without life or soul. Her indolence, reserve, and insensibility were inconceivable; it was equally impossible to please or make her angry, and I am convinced that had any one formed a design upon her virtue, he might have succeeded, not through her inclination, but from her stupidity. Her mother, who would run no risk of this, did not leave her a single moment. In having her taught to sing and providing a young master, she had hoped to enliven her, but it all proved ineffectual. While the master was admiring the daughter, the

mother was admiring the master, but this was equally lost labor. Madam de Larnage added to her natural vivacity that portion of sprightliness which should have belonged to the daughter. She was a little, ugly, lively trollop, with small twinkling ferret eyes, and marked with smallpox. On my arrival in the morning, I always found my coffee and cream ready, and the mother never failed to welcome me with a kiss on the lips, which I would willingly have returned the daughter, to see how she would have received it. All this was done with such an air of carelessness and simplicity, that even when M. de Larnage was present, her kisses and caresses were not omitted. He was a good quiet fellow, the true original of his daughter; nor did his wife endeavor to deceive him, because there was absolutely no occasion for it.

I received all these caresses with my usual stupidity, taking them only for marks of pure friendship, though they were sometimes troublesome; for the lively Madam Lard was displeased, if, during the day, I passed the shop without calling; it became necessary, therefore (when I had no time to spare), to go out of my way through another street, well knowing it was not so easy to quit her house as to enter it.

Madam Lard thought so much of me, that I could not avoid thinking something of her. Her attentions affected me greatly; and I spoke of them to Madam de Warens, without supposing any mystery in the matter, but had there been one I should equally have divulged it, for to have kept a secret of any kind from her would have been impossible. My heart lay as open to Madam de Warens as to Heaven. She did not understand the matter quite so simply as I had done, but saw advances where I only discovered friendship. She concluded that Madam Lard would make a point of not leaving me as great a fool as she found me, and, some way or other, contrive to make herself understood; but exclusive of the consideration that it was not just, that another should undertake the instruction of her pupil, she had motives more worthy of her, wishing to guard me against the snares to which my youth and inexperience exposed me. Meantime, a more dangerous temptation offered which I likewise escaped, but which proved to

her that such a succession of dangers required every preservative she could possibly apply.

The Countess of Menthon, mother to one of my scholars, was a woman of great wit, and reckoned to possess, at least, an equal share of mischief, having (as was reported) caused a number of quarrels, and, among others, one that terminated fatally for the house of D'Antremont. Madam de Warens had seen enough of her to know her character: for having (very innocently) pleased some person to whom Madam de Menthon had pretensions, she found her guilty of the crime of this preference, though Madam de Warens had neither sought after nor accepted it, and from that moment endeavored to play her rival a number of ill turns, none of which succeeded. I shall relate one of the most whimsical, by way of specimen.

They were together in the country, with several gentlemen of the neighborhood, and among the rest the lover in question. Madam de Menthon took an opportunity to say to one of these gentlemen, that Madam de Warens was a prudish, that she dressed ill, and particularly that she covered her neck like a tradeswoman. "O, for that matter," replied the person she was speaking to (who was fond of a joke), "she has good reason, for I know she is marked with a great ugly rat on her bosom, so naturally, that it even appears to be running." Hatred, as well as love, renders its votaries credulous. Madam de Menthon resolved to make use of this discovery, and one day, while Madam de Warens was at cards with this lady's ungrateful favorite, she contrived, in passing behind her rival, almost to upset the chair she sat on, and at the same instant, very dexterously displaced her handkerchief; but instead of this hideous rat, the gentleman beheld a far different object, which it was not more easy to forget than to obtain a sight of, and which by no means answered the intentions of the lady.

I was not calculated to engross the attention of Madam de Menthon, who loved to be surrounded by brilliant company; notwithstanding she bestowed some attention on me, not for the sake of my person, which she certainly did not regard, but for the reputation of wit which I had acquired, and which might have rendered me convenient to her predominant inclination. She had a

very lively passion for ridicule, and loved to write songs and lampoons on those who displeased her: had she found me possessed of sufficient talents to aid the fabrication of her verses, and complaisance enough to do so, we should presently have turned Chambery upside down; these libels would have been traced to their source, Madam de Menthon would have saved herself by sacrificing me, and I should have been cooped up in prison, perhaps, for the rest of my life, as a recompense for having figured away as the Apollo of the ladies. Fortunately, nothing of this kind happened; Madam de Menthon made me stay for dinner two or three days, to chat with me, and soon found I was too dull for her purpose. I felt this myself, and was humiliated at the discovery, envying the talents of my friend Venture; though I should rather have been obliged to my stupidity for keeping me out of the reach of danger. I remained, therefore, Madam de Menthon's daughter's singing-master, and nothing more! but I lived happily, and was ever well received at Chambery, which was a thousand times more desirable than passing for a wit with her, and for a serpent with everybody else.

However this might be, Madam de Warens conceived it necessary to guard me from the perils of youth by treating me as a man: this she immediately set about, but in the most extraordinary manner that any woman, in similar circumstances, ever devised. I all at once observed that her manner was graver, and her discourse more moral than usual. To the playful gayety with which she used to intermingle her instructions suddenly succeeded an uniformity of manner, neither familiar nor severe, but which seemed to prepare me for some explanation. After having vainly racked my brain for the reason of this change, I mentioned it to her; this she had expected and immediately proposed a walk to our garden the next day. Accordingly we went there the next morning; she had contrived that we should remain alone the whole day, which she employed in preparing me for those favors she meant to bestow; not as another woman would have done, by toying and folly, but by discourses full of sentiment and reason, rather tending to instruct than seduce, and which spoke more to my heart than to my senses. Meantime, however

excellent and to the purpose these discourses might be, and though far enough from coldness or melancholy, I did not listen to them with all the attention they merited, nor fix them in my memory as I should have done at any other time. That air of preparation which she had adopted gave me a degree of inquietude; while she spoke (in spite of myself) I was thoughtful and absent, attending less to what she said than curious to know what she aimed at; and no sooner had I comprehended her design (which I could not easily do) than the novelty of the idea, which, during all the years I had passed with her, had never once entered my imagination, took such entire possession of me that I was no longer capable of minding what she said! I only thought of her; I heard her no longer.

Thinking to render young minds attentive to reason by proposing some highly interesting object as the result of it, is an error instructors frequently run into, and one which I have not avoided in my *Umilius*. The young pupil, struck with the object presented to him, is occupied only with that, and leaping lightly over your preliminary discourses, lights at once on the point, to which, in his idea, you lead him too tediously. To render him attentive, he must be prevented from seeing the whole of your design; and, in this particular, Madam de Warens did not act with sufficient precaution.

By a singularity which adhered to her systematic disposition, she took the vain precaution of proposing conditions; but the moment I knew the purchase, I no longer even heard them, but immediately consented to everything; and I doubt whether there is a man on the whole earth who would have been sincere or courageous enough to dispute terms, or one single woman who would have pardoned such a dispute. By a continuation of the same whimsicality, she attached a number of the gravest formalities to the acquisition of her favors, and gave me eight days to think of them, which I assured her I had no need of, though that assurance was far from a truth: for to complete this assemblage of singularities, I was very glad to have this intermission; so much had the novelty of these ideas struck me,

and such disorder did I feel in mine, that it required time to arrange them.

It will be supposed, that these eight days appeared to me as many ages; on the contrary, I should have been very glad had the time been lengthened. I find it difficult to describe the state I found myself in; it was a strange chaos of fear and impatience, dreading what I desired, and studying some civil pretext to evade my happiness.

Let the warmth of my constitution be remembered, my age, and my heart intoxicated with love; let my tender attachment to her be supposed, which, far from having diminished, had daily gained additional strength; let it be considered that I was only happy when with her, that my heart was full, not only of her bounty, of her amiable disposition, but of her shape, of her person, of herself; in a word, conceive me united to her by every affinity that could possibly render her dear; nor let it be supposed, that, being ten or twelve years older than myself, she began to grow an old woman, or was so in my opinion. From the time the first sight of her had made such an impression on me, she had really altered very little, and, in my mind, not at all. To me she was ever charming, and was still thought so by everyone. She had got something jollier, but had the same fine eyes, the same clear complexion, the same features, the same beautiful light hair, the sane gayety, and even the same voice, whose youthful and silvery sound made so lively an impression on my heart, that, even to this day, I cannot hear a young woman's voice, that is at all harmonious, without emotion. It will be seen, that in a more advanced age, the bare idea of some trifling favors I had to expect from the person I loved, inflamed me so far, that I could not support, with any degree of patience, the time necessary to traverse the short space that separated us; how then, by what miracle, when in the flower of my youth, had I so little impatience for a happiness I had never tasted but in idea? How could I see the moment advancing with more pain than pleasure? Why, instead of transports that should have intoxicated me with their deliciousness, did I experience only fears and repugnance? I have no doubt that if I could have avoided this happiness with any

degree of decency, I should have relinquished it with all my heart. I have promised a number of extravagancies in the history of my attachment to her; this certainly is one that no idea could be formed of.

The reader (already disgusted) supposes, that being in the situation I have before described with Claude Anet, she was already degraded in my opinion by this participation of her favors, and that a sentiment of disesteem weakened those she had before inspired me with; but he is mistaken. 'Tis true that this participation gave me a cruel uneasiness, as well from a very natural sentiment of delicacy, as because it appeared unworthy both of her and myself; but as to my sentiments for her, they were still the same, and I can solemnly aver, that I never loved her more tenderly than when I felt so little propensity to avail myself of her condescension. I was too well acquainted with the chastity of her heart and the iciness of her constitution, to suppose a moment that the gratification of the senses had any influence over her; I was well convinced that her only motive was to guard me from dangers, which appeared otherwise inevitable, by this extraordinary favor, which she did not consider in the same light that women usually do; as will presently be explained.

The habit of living a long time innocently together, far from weakening the first sentiments I felt for her, had contributed to strengthen them, giving a more lively, a more tender, but at the same time a less sensual, turn to my affection. Having ever accustomed myself to call her Mama (as formerly observed) and enjoying the familiarity of a son, it became natural to consider myself as such, and I am inclined to think this was the true reason of that insensibility with a person I so tenderly loved; for I can perfectly recollect that my emotions on first seeing her, though not more lively, were more voluptuous: At Annecy I was intoxicated, at Chambéry I possessed my reason. I always loved her as passionately as possible, but I now loved her more for herself and less on my own account; or, at least, I rather sought for happiness than pleasure in her company. She was more to me than a sister, a mother, a friend, or even than a mistress, and for

this very reason she was not a mistress; in a word, I loved her too much to desire her.

This day, more dreaded than hoped for, at length arrived. I have before observed, that I promised everything that was required of me, and I kept my word: my heart confirmed my engagements without desiring the fruits, though at length I obtained them. Was I happy? No: I felt I know not what invincible sadness which empoisoned my happiness, it seemed that I had committed an incest, and two or three times, pressing her eagerly in my arms, I deluged her bosom with my tears. On her part, as she had never sought pleasure, she had not the stings of remorse.

440

I repeat it, all her failings were the effect of her errors, never of her passions. She was well born, her heart was pure, her manners noble, her desires regular and virtuous, her taste delicate; she seemed formed for that elegant purity of manners which she ever loved, but never practised, because instead of listening to the dictates of her heart, she followed those of her reason, which led her astray: for when once corrupted by false principles it will ever run counter to its natural sentiments. Unhappily, she piqued herself on philosophy, and the morals she drew from thence clouded the genuine purity of her heart.

M. Tavel, her first lover, was also her instructor in this philosophy, and the principles he instilled into her mind were such as tended to seduce her. Finding her cold and impregnable on the side of her passions, and firmly attached to her husband and her duty, he attacked her by sophisms, endeavoring to prove that the list of duties she thought so sacred, was but a sort of catechism, fit only for children. That the kind of infidelity she thought so terrible, was, in itself, absolutely indifferent; that all the morality of conjugal faith consisted in opinion, the contentment of husbands being the only reasonable rule of duty in wives; consequently that concealed infidelities, doing no injury, could be no crime; in a word, he persuaded her that the sin consisted only in the scandal, that woman being really virtuous who took care to appear so. Thus the deceiver obtained his end in the subverting the reason of a girl; whose heart he found it

impossible to corrupt, and received his punishment in a devouring jealousy, being persuaded she would treat him as he had prevailed on her to treat her husband.

I don't know whether he was mistaken in this respect: the Minister Perret passed for his successor; all I know, is, that the coldness of temperament which it might have been supposed would have kept her from embracing this system, in the end prevented her from renouncing it. She could not conceive how so much importance should be given to what seemed to have none for her; nor could she honor with the name of virtue, an abstinence which would have cost her little.

She did not, therefore, give in to this false principle on her own account, but for the sake of others; and that from another maxim almost as false as the former, but more consonant to the generosity of her disposition.

She was persuaded that nothing could attach a man so truly to any woman as an unbounded freedom, and though she was only susceptible of friendship, this friendship was so tender, that she made use of every means which depended on her to secure the objects of it, and, which is very extraordinary, almost always succeeded: for she was so truly amiable, that an increase of intimacy was sure to discover additional reasons to love and respect her. Another thing worthy of remark is, that after her first folly, she only favored the unfortunate. Lovers in a more brilliant station lost their labor with her, but the man who at first attracted her pity, must have possessed very few good qualities if in the end he did not obtain her affection. Even when she made an unworthy choice, far from proceeding from base inclinations (which were strangers to her noble heart) it was the effect of a disposition too generous, humane, compassionate, and sensible, which she did not always govern with sufficient discernment.

If some false principles misled her, how many admirable ones did she not possess, which never forsook her! By how many virtues did she atone for her failings! if we can call by that name errors in which the senses had so little share. The man who in one particular deceived her so completely, had given her excellent instructions in a thousand others; and her passions, being far from

turbulent, permitted her to follow the dictates. She ever acted wisely when her sophisms did not intervene, and her designs were laudable even in her failings. False principles might lead her to do ill, but she never did anything which she conceived to be wrong. She abhorred lying and duplicity, was just, equitable, humane, disinterested, true to her word, her friends, and those duties which she conceived to be such; incapable of hatred or revenge, and not even conceiving there was a merit in pardoning; in fine (to return to those qualities which were less excusable), though she did not properly value, she never made a vile commerce of her favors; she lavished, but never sold them, though continually reduced to expedients for a subsistence: and I dare assert, that if Socrates could esteem Aspasia, he would have respected Madam de Warens.

I am well aware that ascribing sensibility of heart with coldness of temperament to the same person, I shall generally, and with great appearance of reason, be accused of a contradiction. Perhaps Nature sported or blundered, and this combination ought not to have existed; I only know it did exist. All those who know Madam de Warens (a great number of whom are yet living) have had opportunities of knowing this was a fact; I dare even aver she had but one pleasure in the world, which was serving those she loved. Let every one argue on the point as he pleases, and gravely prove that this cannot be; my business is to declare the truth, and not to enforce a belief of it.

I became acquainted with the particulars I have just related, in those conversations which succeeded our union, and alone rendered it delicious. She was right when she concluded her complaisance would be useful to me; I derived great advantages from it in point of useful instruction. Hitherto she had used me as a child, she now began to treat me as a man, and entertain me with accounts of herself. Everything she said was so interesting, and I was so sensibly touched with it, that, reasoning with myself, I applied these confidential relations to my own improvement and received more instruction from them than from her teaching. When we truly feel that the heart speaks, our own opens to receive its instructions, nor can all the pompous morality of a

pedagogue have half the effect that is produced by the tender, affectionate, and artless conversation of a sensible woman on him who loves her.

The intimacy in which I lived with Madam de Warens, having placed me more advantageously in her opinion than formerly, she began to think (notwithstanding my awkward manner) that I deserved cultivation for the polite world, and that if I could one day show myself there in an eligible situation, I should soon be able to make my way. In consequence of this idea, she set about forming not only my judgment, but my address, endeavoring to render me amiable, as well as estimable; and if it is true that success in this world is consistent with strict virtue (which, for my part, I do not believe), I am certain there is no other road than that she had taken, and wished to point out to me. For Madam de Warens knew mankind, and understood exquisitely well the art of treating all ranks, without falsehood, and without imprudence, neither deceiving nor provoking them; but this art was rather in her disposition than her precepts, she knew better how to practise than explain it, and I was of all the world the least calculated to become master of such an attainment; accordingly, the means employed for this purpose were nearly lost labor, as well as the pains she took to procure me a fencing and a dancing master.

Though very well made, I could never learn to dance a minuet; for being plagued with corns, I had acquired a habit of walking on my heels, which Roche, the dancing master, could never break me of. It was still worse at the fencing-school, where, after three months' practice, I made but very little progress, and could never attempt fencing with any but my master. My wrist was not supple enough, nor my arm sufficiently firm to retain the foil, whenever he chose to make it fly out of my hand. Add to this, I had a mortal aversion both to the art itself and to the person who undertook to teach it to me, nor should I ever have imagined, that anyone could have been so proud of the science of sending men out of the world. To bring this vast genius within the compass of my comprehension, he explained himself by comparisons drawn from music, which he understood nothing of. He found striking analogies between a hit in 'quarte' or 'tierce' with the intervals of

music which bears those names: when he made a feint he cried out, "take care of this 'diesis'," because anciently they called the 'diesis' a feint: and when he had made the foil fly from my hand, he would add, with a sneer, that this was a pause: in a word, I never in my life saw a more insupportable pedant.

I made, therefore, but little progress in my exercises, which I presently quitted from pure disgust; but I succeeded better in an art of a thousand times more value, namely, that of being content with my situation, and not desiring one more brilliant, for which I began to be persuaded that Nature had not designed me. Given up to the endeavor of rendering Madam de Warens happy, I was ever best pleased when in her company, and, notwithstanding my fondness for music, began to grudge the time I employed in giving lessons to my scholars.

I am ignorant whether Anet perceived the full extent of our union; but I am inclined to think he was no stranger to it. He was a young man of great penetration, and still greater discretion; who never belied his sentiments, but did not always speak them: without giving me the least hint that he was acquainted with our intimacy, he appeared by his conduct to be so; nor did this moderation proceed from baseness of soul, but, having entered entirely into the principles of his mistress, he could not reasonably disapprove of the natural consequences of them. Though as young as herself, he was so grave and thoughtful, that he looked on us as two children who required indulgence, and we regarded him as a respectable man, whose esteem we had to preserve. It was not until after she was unfaithful to Anet, that I learned the strength of her attachment to him. She was fully sensible that I only thought, felt, or lived for her; she let me see, therefore, how much she loved Anet, that I might love him likewise, and dwell less on her friendship, than on her esteem, for him, because this was the sentiment that I could most fully partake of. How often has she affected our hearts and made us embrace with tears, by assuring us that we were both necessary to her happiness! Let not women read this with an ill-natured smile; with the temperament she possessed, this necessity was not equivocal, it was only that of the heart.

Thus there was established, among us three, a union without example, perhaps, on the face of the earth. All our wishes, our cares, our very hearts, were for each other, and absolutely confined to this little circle. The habit of living together, and living exclusively from the rest of the world, became so strong, that if at our repasts one of the three was wanting, or a fourth person came in, everything seemed deranged; and, notwithstanding our particular attachments, even our tete-a-tete were less agreeable than our reunion. What banished every species of constraint from our little community, was a lively reciprocal confidence, and dulness or insipidity could find no place among us, because we were always fully employed. Madam de Warens always projecting, always busy, left us no time for idleness, though, indeed, we had each sufficient employment on our own account. It is my maxim, that idleness is as much the pest of society as of solitude. Nothing more contracts the mind, or engenders more tales, mischief, gossiping, and lies, than for people to be eternally shut up in the same apartment together, and reduced, from the want of employment, to the necessity of an incessant chat. When every one is busy (unless you have really something to say), you may continue silent; but if you have nothing to do, you must absolutely speak continually, and this, in my mind, is the most burdensome and the most dangerous constraint. I will go further, and maintain, that to render company harmless, as well as agreeable, it is necessary, not only that they should have something to do, but something that requires a degree of attention.

Knitting, for instance, is absolutely as bad as doing nothing; you must take as much pains to amuse a woman whose fingers are thus employed, as if she sat with her arms crossed; but let her embroider, and it is a different matter; she is then so far busied, that a few intervals of silence may be borne with. What is most disgusting and ridiculous, during these intermissions of conversation, is to see, perhaps, a dozen over-grown fellows, get up, sit down again, walk backwards and forwards, turn on their heels, play with the chimney ornaments, and rack their brains to maintain an inexhaustible chain of words: what a charming

occupation! Such people, wherever they go, must be troublesome both to others and themselves. When I was at Motiers, I used to employ myself in making laces with my neighbors, and were I again to mix with the world, I would always carry a cup-and-ball in my pocket; I should sometimes play with it the whole day, that I might not be constrained to speak when I had nothing to discourse about; and I am persuaded, that if every one would do the same, mankind would be less mischievous, their company would become more rational, and, in my opinion, a vast deal more agreeable; in a word, let wits laugh if they please, but I maintain, that the only practical lesson of morality within the reach of the present age, is that of the cup-and-ball.

At Chambery they did not give us the trouble of studying expedients to avoid weariness, when by ourselves, for a troop of important visitors gave us too much by their company, to feel any when alone. The annoyance they formerly gave me had not diminished; all the difference was, that I now found less opportunity to abandon myself to my dissatisfaction. Poor Madam de Warens had not lost her old predilection for schemes and systems; on the contrary, the more she felt the pressure of her domestic necessities, the more she endeavored to extricate herself from them by visionary projects; and, in proportion to the decrease of her present resources, she contrived to enlarge, in idea, those of the future. Increase of years only strengthened this folly: as she lost her relish for the pleasures of the world and youth, she replaced it by an additional fondness for secrets and projects; her house was never clear of quacks, contrivers of new manufactures, alchemists, projects of all kinds and of all descriptions, whose discourses began by a distribution of millions and concluded by giving you to understand that they were in want of a crown-piece. No one went from her empty-handed; and what astonished me most was, how she could so long support such profusion, without exhausting the source or wearying her creditors.

Her principal project at the time I am now speaking of was that of establishing a Royal Physical Garden at Chambery, with a Demonstrator attached to it; it will be unnecessary to add for

whom this office was designed. The situation of this city, in the midst of the Alps, was extremely favorable to botany, and as Madam de Warens was always for helping out one project with another, a College of Pharmacy was to be added, which really would have been a very useful foundation in so poor a country, where apothecaries are almost the only medical practitioners. The retreat of the chief physician, Grossi, to Chambery, on the demise of King Victor, seemed to favor this idea, or perhaps, first suggest it; however this may be, by flattery and attention she set about managing Grossi, who, in fact, was not very manageable, being the most caustic and brutal, for a man who had any pretensions to the quality of a gentleman, that ever I knew. The reader may judge for himself by two or three traits of character, which I shall add by way of specimen.

He assisted one day at a consultation with some other doctors, and among the rest, a young gentleman from Annecy, who was physician in ordinary to the sick person. This young man, being but indifferently taught for a doctor, was bold enough to differ in opinion from M. Grossi, who only answered him by asking him when he should return, which way he meant to take, and what conveyance he should make use of? The other, having satisfied Grossi in these particulars, asked him if there was anything he could serve him in? "Nothing, nothing," answered he, "only I shall place myself at a window in your way, that I may have the pleasure of seeing an ass ride on horseback." His avarice equalled his riches and want of feeling. One of his friends wanted to borrow some money of him, on good security. "My friend," answered he, shaking him by the arm, and grinding his teeth, "Should St. Peter descend from heaven to borrow ten pistoles of me, and offer the Trinity as securities, I would not lend them." One day, being invited to dinner with Count Picon, Governor of Savoy, who was very religious, he arrived before it was ready, and found his excellency busy with his devotions, who proposed to him the same employment; not knowing how to refuse, he knelt down with a frightful grimace, but had hardly recited two Ave-Marias, when, not being able to contain himself any longer, he rose hastily, snatched his hat and cane, and without speaking a

word, was making toward the door; Count Picon ran after him, crying, "Monsieur Grossi! Monsieur Grossi! stop, there's a most excellent ortolan on the spit for you." "Monsieur le Count," replied the other, turning his head, "though you should give me a roasted angel, I would not stay." Such was M. Grossi, whom Madam de Warens undertook and succeeded in civilizing. Though his time was very much occupied, he accustomed himself to come frequently to her house, conceived a friendship for Anet, seemed to think him intelligent, spoke of him with esteem, and, what would not have been expected of such a brute, affected to treat him with respect, wishing to efface the impressions of the past; for though Anet was no longer on the footing of a domestic, it was known that he had been one, and nothing less than the countenance and example of the chief physician was necessary to set an example of respect which would not otherwise have been paid him. Thus Claude Anet, with a black coat, a well-dressed wig, a grave, decent behavior, a circumspect conduct, and a tolerable knowledge in medical and botanical matters, might reasonably have hoped to fill, with universal satisfaction, the place of public demonstrator, had the proposed establishment taken place. Grossi highly approved the plan, and only waited an opportunity to propose it to the administration, whenever a return of peace should permit them to think of useful institutions, and enable them to spare the necessary pecuniary supplies.

But this project, whose execution would probably have plunged me into botanical studies, for which I am inclined to think Nature designed me, failed through one of those unexpected strokes which frequently overthrow the best concerted plans. I was destined to become an example of human misery; and it might be said that Providence, who called me by degrees to these extraordinary trials, disconcerted every opportunity that could prevent my encountering them.

In an excursion which Anet made to the top of the mountain to seek for genipi, a scarce plant that grows only on the Alps, and which Monsieur Grossi had occasion for, unfortunately he heated himself so much, that he was seized with a pleurisy, which the genipi could not relieve, though said to be specific in that

disorder; and, notwithstanding all the art of Grossi (who certainly was very skillful), and all the care of his good mistress and myself, he died the fifth day of his disorder, in the most cruel agonies. During his illness he had no exhortations but mine, bestowed with such transports of grief and zeal, that had he been in a state to understand them, they must have been some consolation to him. Thus I lost the firmest friend I ever had; a man estimable and extraordinary; in whom Nature supplied the defects of education, and who (though in a state of servitude) possessed all the virtues necessary to form a great man, which, perhaps, he would have shown himself, and been acknowledged, had he lived to fill the situation he seemed so perfectly adapted to.

The next day I spoke of him to Madam de Warens with the most sincere and lively affection; when, suddenly, in the midst of our conversation, the vile, ungrateful thought occurred, that I should inherit his wardrobe, and particularly a handsome black coat, which I thought very becoming. As I thought this, I consequently uttered it; for when with her, to think and to speak was the same thing. Nothing could have made her feel more forcibly the loss she had sustained, than this unworthy and odious observation; disinterestedness and greatness of soul being qualities that poor Anet had eminently possessed. The generous Madam de Warens turned from me, and (without any reply) burst into tears. Dear and precious tears! your reprehension was fully felt; ye ran into my very heart, washing from thence even the smallest traces of such despicable and unworthy sentiments, never to return.

This loss caused Madam de Warens as much inconvenience as sorrow, since from this moment her affairs were still more deranged. Anet was extremely exact, and kept everything in order; his vigilance was universally feared, and this set some bounds to that profusion they were too apt to run into; even Madam de Warens, to avoid his censure, kept her dissipation within bounds; his attachment was not sufficient, she wished to preserve his esteem, and avoid the just remonstrances he sometimes took the liberty to make her, by representing that she squandered the property of others as well as her own. I thought as

he did, nay, I even sometimes expressed myself to the same effect, but had not an equal ascendancy over her, and my advice did not make the same impression. On his decease, I was obliged to occupy his place, for which I had as little inclination as abilities, and therefore filled it ill. I was not sufficiently careful, and so very timid, that though I frequently found fault to myself, I saw ill-management without taking courage to oppose it; besides, though I acquired an equal share of respect, I had not the same authority. I saw the disorder that prevailed, trembled at it, sometimes complained, but was never attended to. I was too young and lively to have any pretensions to the exercise of reason, and when I would have acted the reformer, Madam de Warens calling me her little Mentor, with two or three playful slaps on the cheek, reduced me to my natural thoughtlessness. Notwithstanding, an idea of the certain distress in which her ill-regulated expenses, sooner or later, must necessarily plunge her, made a stronger impression on me since I had become the inspector of her household, and had a better opportunity of calculating the inequality that subsisted between her income and her expenses. I even date from this period the beginning of that inclination to avarice which I have ever since been sensible of. I was never foolishly prodigal, except by intervals; but till then I was never concerned whether I had much or little money. I now began to pay more attention to this circumstance, taking care of my purse, and becoming mean from a laudable motive; for I only sought to insure Madam de Warens some resources against that catastrophe which I dreaded the approach of. I feared her creditors would seize her pension or that it might be discontinued and she reduced to want, when I foolishly imagined that the trifle I could save might be of essential service to her; but to accomplish this, it was necessary I should conceal what I meant to make a reserve of; for it would have been an awkward circumstance, while she was perpetually driven to expedients, to have her know that I hoarded money. Accordingly, I sought out some hiding-place, where I laid up a few louis, resolving to augment this stock from time to time, till a convenient opportunity to lay it at her feet; but I was so incautious in the

choice of my repositories, that she always discovered them, and, to convince me that she did so, changed the louis I had concealed for a larger sum in different pieces of coin. Ashamed of these discoveries, I brought back to the common purse my little treasure, which she never failed to lay out in clothes, or other things for my use, such as a silver hilted sword, watch, etc. Being convinced that I should never succeed in accumulating money, and that what I could save would furnish but a very slender resource against the misfortune I dreaded, made me wish to place myself in such a situation that I might be enabled to provide for her, whenever she might chance to be reduced to want. Unhappily, seeking these resources on the side of my inclinations, I foolishly determined to consider music as my principal dependence; and ideas of harmony rising in my brain, I imagined, that if placed in a proper situation to profit by them, I should acquire celebrity, and presently become a modern Orpheus, whose mystic sounds would attract all the riches of Peru.

As I began to read music tolerably well, the question was, how I should learn composition? The difficulty lay in meeting with a good master, for, with the assistance of my Rameau alone, I despaired of ever being able to accomplish it; and, since the departure of M. le Maitre, there was nobody in Savoy who understood anything of the principles of harmony.

I am now about to relate another of those inconsequences, which my life is full of, and which have so frequently carried me directly from my designs, even when I thought myself immediately within reach of them. Venture had spoken to me in very high terms of the Abbe Blanchard, who had taught him composition; a deserving man, possessed of great talents, who was music-master to the cathedral at Besancon, and is now in that capacity at the Chapel of Versailles. I therefore determined to go to Besancon, and take some lessons from the Abbe Blanchard, and the idea appeared so rational to me, that I soon made Madam de Warens of the same opinion, who immediately set about the preparations for my journey, in the same style of profusion with which all her plans were executed. Thus this project for preventing a bankruptcy, and repairing in future the waste of

dissipation, began by causing her to expend eight hundred livres; her ruin being accelerated that I might be put in a condition to prevent it. Foolish as this conduct may appear, the illusion was complete on my part, and even on hers, for I was persuaded I should labor for her emolument, and she thought she was highly promoting mine.

I expected to find Venture still at Annecy, and promised myself to obtain a recommendatory letter from him to the Abbe Blanchard; but he had left that place, and I was obliged to content myself in the room of it, with a mass in four parts of his composition, which he had left with me. With this slender recommendation I set out for Besancon by the way of Geneva, where I saw my relations; and through Nion, where I saw my father, who received me in his usual manner, and promised to forward my portmanteau, which, as I travelled on horseback, came after me. I arrived at Besancon, and was kindly received by the Abbe Blanchard, who promised me his instruction, and offered his services in any other particular. We had just set about our music, when I received a letter from my father, informing me that my portmanteau had been seized and confiscated at Rousses, a French barrier on the side of Switzerland. Alarmed at the news, I employed the acquaintance I had formed at Besancon, to learn the motive of this confiscation. Being certain there was nothing contraband among my baggage, I could not conceive on what pretext it could have been seized on; at length, however, I learned the rights of the story, which (as it is a very curious one) must not be omitted.

I became acquainted at Chambery with a very worthy old man, from Lyons, named Monsieur Duvivier, who had been employed at the Visa, under the regency, and for want of other business, now assisted at the Survey. He had lived in the polite world, possessed talents, was good-humored, and understood music. As we both wrote in the same chamber, we preferred each other's acquaintance to that of the unlicked cubs that surrounded us. He had some correspondents at Paris, who furnished him with those little nothings, those daily novelties, which circulate one knows not why, and die one cares not when, without any one thinking of

them longer than they are heard. As I sometimes took him to dine with Madam de Warens, he in some measure treated me with respect, and (wishing to render himself agreeable) endeavored to make me fond of these trifles, for which I naturally had such a distaste, that I never in my life read any of them. Unhappily one of these cursed papers happened to be in the waistcoat pocket of a new suit, which I had only worn two or three times to prevent its being seized by the commissioners of the customs. This paper contained an insipid Jansenist parody on that beautiful scene in Racine's *Mithridates*: I had not read ten lines of it, but by forgetfulness left it in my pocket, and this caused all my necessities to be confiscated. The commissioners at the head of the inventory of my portmanteau, set a most pompous verbal process, in which it was taken for granted that this most terrible writing came from Geneva for the sole purpose of being printed and distributed in France, and then ran into holy invectives against the enemies of God and the Church, and praised the pious vigilance of those who had prevented the execution of these most infernal machinations. They doubtless found also that my spirits smelt of heresy, for on the strength of this dreadful paper, they were all seized, and from that time I never received any account of my unfortunate portmanteau. The revenue officers whom I applied to for this purpose required so many instructions, informations, certificates, memorials, etc., etc., that, lost a thousand times in the perplexing labyrinth, I was glad to abandon them entirely. I feel a real regret for not having preserved this verbal process from the office of Rousses, for it was a piece calculated to hold a distinguished rank in the collection which is to accompany this Work.

The loss of my necessities immediately brought me back to Chambery, without having learned anything of the Abbe Blanchard. Reasoning with myself on the events of this journey, and seeing that misfortunes attended all my enterprises, I resolved to attach myself entirely to Madam de Warens, to share her fortune, and distress myself no longer about future events, which I could not regulate. She received me as if I had brought back treasures, replaced by degrees my little wardrobe, and though this

misfortune fell heavy enough on us both, it was forgotten almost as suddenly as it arrived.

Though this mischance had rather dampened my musical ardor, I did not leave off studying my Rameau, and, by repeated efforts, was at length able to understand it, and to make some little attempts at composition, the success of which encouraged me to proceed. The Count de Bellegarde, son of the Marquis of Antremont, had returned from Dresden after the death of King Augustus. Having long resided at Paris, he was fond of music, and particularly that of Rameau. His brother, the Count of Nangis, played on the violin; the Countess la Tour, their sister, sung tolerably: this rendered music the fashion at Chambéry, and a kind of public concert was established there, the direction of which was at first designed for me, but they soon discovered I was not competent to the undertaking, and it was otherwise arranged. Notwithstanding this, I continued writing a number of little pieces, in my own way, and, among others, a cantata, which gained great approbation; it could not, indeed, be called a finished piece, but the airs were written in a style of novelty, and produced a good effect, which was not expected from me. These gentlemen could not believe that, reading music so indifferently, it was possible I should compose any that was passable, and made no doubt that I had taken to myself the credit of some other person's labors. Monsieur de Nangis, wishing to be assured of this, called on me one morning with a cantata of Clerambault's which he had transposed as he said, to suit his voice, and to which another bass was necessary, the transposition having rendered that of Clerambault impracticable. I answered, it required considerable labor, and could not be done on the spot. Being convinced I only sought an excuse, he pressed me to write at least the bass to a recitative: I did so, not well, doubtless, because to attempt anything with success I must have both time and freedom, but I did it at least according to rule, and he being present, could not doubt but I understood the elements of composition. I did not, therefore, lose my scholars, though it hurt my pride that there should be a concert at Chambéry in which I was not necessary.

About this time, peace being concluded, the French army repassed the Alps. Several officers came to visit Madam de Warens, and among others the Count de Lautrec, Colonel of the regiment of Orleans, since Plenipotentiary of Geneva, and afterwards Marshal of France, to whom she presented me. On her recommendation, he appeared to interest himself greatly in my behalf, promising a great deal, which he never remembered till the last year of his life, when I no longer stood in need of his assistance. The young Marquis of Sennecterre, whose father was then ambassador at Turin, passed through Chambery at the same time, and dined one day at M. de Menthon's, when I happened to be among the guests. After dinner; the discourse turned on music, which the marquis understood extremely well. The opera of 'Jephtha' was then new; he mentioned this piece, it was brought him, and he made me tremble by proposing to execute it between us. He opened the book at that celebrated double chorus,

*La Terra, l'Enfer, le Ciel meme,
Tout tremble devant le Seigneur!*
[The Earth, and Hell, and Heaven itself,
tremble before the Lord!]

He said, "How many parts will you take? I will do these six." I had not yet been accustomed to this trait of French vivacity, and though acquainted with divisions, could not comprehend how one man could undertake to perform six, or even two parts at the same time. Nothing has cost me more trouble in music than to skip lightly from one part to another, and have the eye at once on a whole division. By the manner in which I evaded this trial, he must have been inclined to believe I did not understand music, and perhaps it was to satisfy himself in this particular that he proposed my noting a song for Mademoiselle de Menthon, in such a manner that I could not avoid it. He sang this song, and I wrote from his voice, without giving him much trouble to repeat it. When finished he read my performance, and said (which was very true) that it was very correctly noted. He had observed my embarrassment, and now seemed to enhance the merit of this little success. In reality, I then understood music very well, and only

wanted that quickness at first sight which I possess in no one particular, and which is only to be acquired in this art by long and constant practice. Be that as it may, I was fully sensible of his kindness in endeavoring to efface from the minds of others, and even from my own, the embarrassment I had experienced on this occasion. Twelve or fifteen years afterwards, meeting this gentleman at several houses in Paris, I was tempted to make him recollect this anecdote, and show him I still remembered it; but he had lost his sight since that time; I feared to give him pain by recalling to his memory how useful it formerly had been to him, and was therefore silent on that subject.

I now touch on the moment that binds my past existence to the present, some friendships of that period, prolonged to the present time, being very dear to me, have frequently made me regret that happy obscurity, when those who called themselves my friends were really so; loved me for myself, through pure good will, and not from the vanity of being acquainted with a conspicuous character, perhaps for the secret purpose of finding more occasions to injure him.

470

From this time I date my first acquaintance with my old friend Gauffecourt, who, notwithstanding every effort to disunite us, has still remained so.—Still remained so!—No, alas! I have just lost him!—but his affection terminated only with his life—death alone could put a period to our friendship. Monsieur de Gauffecourt was one of the most amiable men that ever existed; it was impossible to see him without affection, or to live with him without feeling a sincere attachment. In my life I never saw features more expressive of goodness and serenity, or that marked more feeling, more understanding, or inspired greater confidence. However reserved one might be, it was impossible even at first sight to avoid being as free with him as if he had been an acquaintance of twenty years; for myself, who find so much difficulty to be at ease among new faces, I was familiar with him in a moment. His manner, accent, and conversation, perfectly suited his features: the sound of his voice was clear, full and musical; it was an agreeable and expressive bass, which satisfied the ear, and sounded full upon the heart. It was impossible to

possess a more equal and pleasing vivacity, or more real and unaffected gracefulness, more natural talents, or cultivated with greater taste; join to all these good qualities an affectionate heart, but loving rather too diffusively, and bestowing his favors with too little caution; serving his friends with zeal, or rather making himself the friend of every one he could serve, yet contriving very dexterously to manage his own affairs, while warmly pursuing the interests of others.

Gauffecourt was the son of a clock-maker, and would have been a clock-maker himself had not his person and desert called him to a superior situation. He became acquainted with M. de la Closure, the French Resident at Geneva, who conceived a friendship for him, and procured him some connections at Paris, which were useful, and through whose influence he obtained the privilege of furnishing the salts of Valais, which was worth twenty thousand livres a year. This very amply satisfied his wishes with respect to fortune, but with regard to women he was more difficult; he had to provide for his own happiness, and did what he supposed most conducive to it. What renders his character most remarkable, and does him the greatest honor, is, that though connected with all conditions, he was universally esteemed and sought after without being envied or hated by any one, and I really believe he passed through life without a single enemy.—Happy man!

He went every year to the baths of Aix, where the best company from the neighboring countries resorted, and being on terms of friendship with all the nobility of Savoy, came from Aix to Chambery to see the young Count de Bellegarde and his father the Marquis of Antremont. It was here Madam de Warens introduced me to him, and this acquaintance, which appeared at that time to end in nothing, after many years had elapsed, was renewed on an occasion which I should relate, when it became a real friendship. I apprehend I am sufficiently authorized in speaking of a man to whom I was so firmly attached, but I had no personal interest in what concerned him; he was so truly amiable, and born with so many natural good qualities that, for the honor of human nature, I should think it necessary to preserve his

memory. This man, estimable as he certainly was, had, like other mortals, some failings, as will be seen hereafter; perhaps had it not been so, he would have been less amiable, since, to render him as interesting as possible, it was necessary he should sometimes act in such a manner as to require a small portion of indulgence.

Another connection of the same time, that is not yet extinguished, and continues to flatter me with the idea of temporal happiness, which it is so difficult to obliterate from the human heart, is Monsieur de Conzie, a Savoyard gentleman, then young and amiable, who had a fancy to learn music, or rather to be acquainted with the person who taught it. With great understanding and taste for polite acquirements, M. de Conzie possessed a mildness of disposition which rendered him extremely attractive, and my temper being somewhat similar, when it found a counterpart, our friendship was soon formed. The seeds of literature and philosophy, which began to ferment in my brain, and only waited for culture and emulation to spring up, found in him exactly what was wanting to render them prolific. M. de Conzie had no great inclination to music, and even this was useful to me, for the hours destined for lessons were passed anyhow rather than musically; we breakfasted, chatted, and read new publications, but not a word of music.

The correspondence between Voltaire and the Prince Royal of Prussia, then made a noise in the world, and these celebrated men were frequently the subject of our conversation, one of whom recently seated on a throne, already indicated what he would prove himself hereafter, while the other, as much disgraced as he is now admired, made us sincerely lament the misfortunes that seemed to pursue him, and which are so frequently the appendage of superior talents. The Prince of Prussia had not been happy in his youth, and it appeared that Voltaire was formed never to be so. The interest we took in both parties extended to all that concerned them, and nothing that Voltaire wrote escaped us. The inclination I felt for these performances inspired me with a desire to write elegantly, and caused me to endeavor to imitate the colorings of that author, with whom I was so much enchanted. Some time

after, his philosophical letters (though certainly not his best work) greatly augmented my fondness for study; it was a rising inclination, which, from that time, has never been extinguished.

But the moment was not yet arrived when I should give into it entirely; my rambling disposition (rather contracted than eradicated) being kept alive by our manner of living at Madam de Warens, which was too unsettled for one of my solitary temper. The crowd of strangers who daily swarmed about her from all parts, and the certainty I was in that these people sought only to dupe her, each in his particular mode, rendered home disagreeable. Since I had succeeded Anet in the confidence of his mistress, I had strictly examined her circumstances, and saw their evil tendency with horror. I had remonstrated a hundred times, prayed, argued, conjured, but all to no purpose. I had thrown myself at her feet, and strongly represented the catastrophe that threatened her, had earnestly entreated that she would reform her expenses, and begin with myself, representing that it was better to suffer something while she was yet young, than by multiplying her debts and creditors, expose her old age to vexation and misery.

Sensible of the sincerity of my zeal, she was frequently affected, and would then make the finest promises in the world: but only let an artful schemer arrive, and in an instant all her good resolutions were forgotten. After a thousand proofs of the inefficacy of my remonstrances, what remained but to turn away my eyes from the ruin I could not prevent; and fly myself from the door I could not guard! I made therefore little journeys to Geneva and Lyons, which diverted my mind in some measure from this secret uneasiness, though it increased the cause by these additional expenses. I can truly aver that I should have acquiesced with pleasure in every retrenchment, had Madam de Warens really profited by it, but being persuaded that what I might refuse myself would be distributed among a set of interested villains, I took advantage of her easiness to partake with them, and, like the dog returning from the shambles, carried off a portion of that morsel which I could not protect.

Pretences were not wanting for all these journeys; even Madam de Warens would alone have supplied me with more than were necessary, having plenty of connections, negotiations, affairs, and commissions, which she wished to have executed by some trusty hand. In these cases she usually applied to me; I was always willing to go, and consequently found occasions enough to furnish out a rambling kind of life. These excursions procured me some good connections, which have since been agreeable or useful to me. Among others, I met at Lyons, with M. Perrichon, whose friendship I accuse myself with not having sufficiently cultivated, considering the kindness he had for me; and that of the good Parisot, which I shall speak of in its place, at Grenoble, that of Madam Deybens and Madam la Presidente de Bardouanche, a woman of great understanding, and who would have entertained a friendship for me had it been in my power to have seen her oftener; at Geneva, that of M. de Closure, the French Resident, who often spoke to me of my mother, the remembrance of whom neither death nor time had erased from his heart; likewise those of the two Barillots, the father, who was very amiable, a good companion, and one of the most worthy men I ever met, calling me his grandson. During the troubles of the republic, these two citizens took contrary sides, the son siding with the people, the father with the magistrates. When they took up arms in 1737, I was at Geneva, and saw the father and son quit the same house armed, the one going to the townhouse, the other to his quarters, almost certain to meet face to face in the course of two hours, and prepared to give or receive death from each other. This unnatural sight made so lively an impression on me, that I solemnly vowed never to interfere in any civil war, nor assist in deciding our internal dispute by arms, either personally or by my influence, should I ever enter into my rights as a citizen. I can bring proofs of having kept this oath on a very delicate occasion, and it will be confessed (at least I should suppose so) that this moderation was of some worth.

But I had not yet arrived at that fermentation of patriotism which the first sight of Geneva in arms has since excited in my heart, as may be conjectured by a very grave fact that will not tell

to my advantage, which I forgot to put in its proper place, but which ought not to be omitted.

My uncle Bernard died at Carolina, where he had been employed some years in the building of Charles Town, which he had formed the plan of. My poor cousin, too, died in the Prussian service; thus my aunt lost, nearly at the same period, her son and husband. These losses reanimated in some measure her affection for the nearest relative she had remaining, which was myself. When I went to Geneva, I reckoned her house my home, and amused myself with rummaging and turning over the books and papers my uncle had left. Among them I found some curious ones, and some letters which they certainly little thought of. My aunt, who set no store by these dusty papers, would willingly have given the whole to me, but I contented myself with two or three books, with notes written by the Minister Bernard, my grandfather, and among the rest, the posthumous works of Rohault in quarto, the margins of which were full of excellent commentaries, which gave me an inclination to the mathematics. This book remained among those of Madam de Warens, and I have since lamented that I did not preserve it. To these I added five or six memorials in manuscript, and a printed one, composed by the famous Micheli Ducret, a man of considerable talents, being both learned and enlightened, but too much, perhaps, inclined to sedition, for which he was cruelly treated by the magistrates of Geneva, and lately died in the fortress of Arberg, where he had been confined many years, for being, as it was said, concerned in the conspiracy of Berne.

This memorial was a judicious critique on the extensive but ridiculous plan of fortification, which had been adopted at Geneva, though censured by every person of judgment in the art, who was unacquainted with the secret motives of the council, in the execution of this magnificent enterprise. Monsieur de Micheli, who had been excluded from the committee of fortification for having condemned this plan, thought that, as a citizen, and a member of the two hundred, he might give his advice, at large, and therefore, did so in this memorial, which he was imprudent enough to have printed, though he never published it, having only

those copies struck off which were meant for the two hundred, and which were all intercepted at the post-house by order of the Senate.

[The grand council of Geneva in December, 1728, pronounced this paper highly disrespectful to the councils, and injurious to the committee of fortification.]

I found this memorial among my uncle's papers, with the answer he had been ordered to make to it, and took both. This was soon after I had left my place at the survey, and I yet remained on good terms with the Counsellor de Cocco, who had the management of it. Some time after, the director of the custom-house entreated me to stand godfather to his child, with Madam Cocco, who was to be godmother: proud of being placed on such terms of equality with the counsellor, I wished to assume importance, and show myself worthy of that honor.

Full of this idea, I thought I could do nothing better than show him Micheli's memorial, which was really a scarce piece, and would prove I was connected with people of consequence in Geneva, who were intrusted with the secrets of the state, yet by a kind of reserve which I should find it difficult to account for, I did not show him my uncle's answer, perhaps, because it was manuscript, and nothing less than print was worthy to approach the counsellor. He understood, however, so well the importance of this paper, which I had the folly to put into his hands, that I could never after get it into my possession, and being convinced that every effort for that purpose would be ineffectual, I made a merit of my forbearance, transforming the theft into a present. I made no doubt that this writing (more curious, however, than useful) answered his purpose at the court of Turin, where probably he took care to be reimbursed in some way or other for the expense which the acquisition of it might be supposed to have cost him. Happily, of all future contingencies, the least probable, is, that ever the King of Sardina should besiege Geneva, but as that event is not absolutely impossible, I shall ever reproach my foolish vanity with having been the means of pointing out the greatest defects of that city to its most ancient enemy.

I passed two or three years in this manner, between music, study, projects, and journeys, floating incessantly from one object to another, and wishing to fix though I knew not on what, but insensibly inclining towards study. I was acquainted with men of letters, I had heard them speak of literature, and sometimes mingled in the conversation, yet rather adopted the jargon of books, than the knowledge they contained. In my excursions to Geneva, I frequently called on my good old friend Monsieur Simon, who greatly promoted my rising emulation by fresh news from the republic of letters, extracted from Baillet or Colomies. I frequently saw too, at Chambéry, a Dominican professor of physic, a good kind of friar, whose name I have forgotten, who often made little chemical experiments which greatly amused me. In imitation of him, I attempted to make some sympathetic ink, and having for that purpose more than half filled a bottle with quicklime, orpiment, and water, the effervescence immediately became extremely violent; I ran to unstop the bottle, but had not time to effect it, for, during the attempt, it burst in my face like a bomb, and I swallowed so much of the orpiment and lime, that it nearly cost me my life. I remained blind for six weeks, and by the event of this experiment learned to meddle no more with experimental Chemistry while the elements were unknown to me.

This adventure happened very unluckily for my health, which, for some time past, had been visibly on the decline. This was rather extraordinary, as I was guilty of no kind of excess; nor could it have been expected from my make, for my chest, being well formed and rather capacious, seemed to give my lungs full liberty to play; yet I was short breathed, felt a very sensible oppression, sighed involuntarily, had palpitations of the heart, and spitting of blood, accompanied with a lingering fever, which I have never since entirely overcome. How is it possible to fall into such a state in the flower of one's age, without any inward decay, or without having done anything to destroy health?

It is sometimes said, "the sword wears the scabbard," this was truly the case with me: the violence of my passions both kept me alive and hastened my dissolution. What passions? will be asked: mere nothings: the most trivial objects in nature, but which

affected me as forcibly as if the acquisition of a Helen, or the throne of the universe were at stake. My senses, for instance, were at ease with one woman, but my heart never was, and the necessities of love consumed me in the very bosom of happiness. I had a tender, respected and lovely friend, but I sighed for a mistress; my prolific fancy painted her as such, and gave her a thousand forms, for had I conceived that my endearments had been lavished on Madam de Warens, they would not have been less tender, though infinitely more tranquil. But is it possible for man to taste, in their utmost extent, the delights of love? I cannot tell, but I am persuaded my frail existence would have sunk under the weight of them.

I was, therefore, dying for love without an object, and this state, perhaps, is, of all others, the most dangerous. I was likewise uneasy, tormented at the bad state of poor Madam de Warens' circumstances, and the imprudence of her conduct, which could not fail to bring them, in a short time, to total ruin. My tortured imagination (which ever paints misfortunes in the extremity) continually beheld this in its utmost excess, and in all the horror of its consequences. I already saw myself forced by want to quit her—to whom I had consecrated my future life, and without whom I could not hope for happiness: thus was my soul continually agitated, and hopes and fears devoured me alternately.

Music was a passion less turbulent, but not less consuming, from the ardor with which I attached myself to it, by the obstinate study of the obscure books of Rameau; by an invincible resolution to charge my memory with rules it could not contain; by continual application, and by long and immense compilations which I frequently passed whole nights in copying: but why dwell on these particularly, while every folly that took possession of my wandering brain, the most transient ideas of a single day, a journey, a concert, a supper, a walk, a novel to read, a play to see, things in the world the least premeditated in my pleasures or occupation became for me the most violent passions, which by their ridiculous impetuosity conveyed the most serious torments; even the imaginary misfortunes of Cleveland, read with avidity

and frequent interruption, have, I am persuaded, disordered me more than my own.

There was a Genevese, named Bagueret, who had been employed under Peter the Great, of the court of Russia, one of the most worthless, senseless fellows I ever met with; full of projects as foolish as himself, which were to rain down millions on those who took part in them. This man, having come to Chambéry on account of some suit depending before the senate, immediately got acquainted with Madam de Warens, and with great reason on his side, since for those imaginary treasures that cost him nothing, and which he bestowed with the utmost prodigality, he gained, in exchange, the unfortunate crown pieces one by one out of her pocket. I did not like him, and he plainly perceived this, for with me it is not a very difficult discovery, nor did he spare any sort of meanness to gain my good will, and among other things proposed teaching me to play at chess, which game he understood something of. I made an attempt, though almost against my inclination, and after several efforts, having learned the moves, my progress was so rapid, that before the end of the first sitting I gave him the rook, which in the beginning he had given me. Nothing more was necessary; behold me fascinated with chess! I buy a board, with the rest of the apparatus, and shutting myself up in my chamber, pass whole days and nights in studying all the varieties of the game, being determined by playing alone, without end or relaxation, to drive them into my head, right or wrong. After incredible efforts, during two or three months passed in this curious employment, I go to the coffee-house, thin, sallow, and almost stupid; I seat myself, and again attack M. Bagueret: he beats me, once, twice, twenty times; so many combinations were fermenting in my head, and my imagination was so stupefied, that all appeared confusion. I tried to exercise myself with Philidor's or Stamina's book of instructions, but I was still equally perplexed, and, after having exhausted myself with fatigue, was further to seek than ever, and whether I abandoned my chess for a time, or resolved to surmount every difficulty by unremitted practice, it was the same thing. I could never advance one step beyond the improvement of the first sitting, nay, I am convinced

that had I studied it a thousand ages, I should have ended by being able to give Bagueret the rook and nothing more.

It will be said my time was well employed, and not a little of it passed in this occupation, nor did I quit my first essay till unable to persist in it, for on leaving my apartment I had the appearance of a corpse, and had I continued this course much longer I should certainly have been one.

Any one will allow that it would have been extraordinary, especially in the ardor of youth, that such a head should suffer the body to enjoy continued health; the alteration of mine had an effect on my temper, moderating the ardor of my chimerical fancies, for as I grew weaker they became more tranquil, and I even lost, in some measure, my rage for travelling. I was not seized with heaviness, but melancholy; vapors succeeded passions, languor became sorrow: I wept and sighed without cause, and felt my life ebbing away before I had enjoyed it. I only trembled to think of the situation in which I should leave my dear Madam de Warens; and I can truly say, that quitting her, and leaving her in these melancholy circumstances, was my only concern. At length I fell quite ill, and was nursed by her as never mother nursed a child. The care she took of me was of real utility to her affairs, since it diverted her mind from schemes, and kept projectors at a distance. How pleasing would death have been at that time, when, if I had not tasted many of the pleasures of life, I had felt but few of its misfortunes. My tranquil soul would have taken her flight, without having experienced those cruel ideas of the injustice of mankind which embitters both life and death. I should have enjoyed the sweet consolation that I still survived in the dearer part of myself: in the situation I then was, it could hardly be called death; and had I been divested of my uneasiness on her account, it would have appeared but a gentle sleep; yet even these disquietudes had such an affectionate and tender turn, that their bitterness was tempered by a pleasing sensibility. I said to her, "You are the depository of my whole being, act so that I may be happy." Two or three times, when my disorder was most violent, I crept to her apartment to give her my advice respecting her future conduct; and I dare affirm these admonitions were both

wise and equitable, in which the interest I took in her future concerns was strongly marked. As if tears had been both nourishment and medicine, I found myself the better for those I shed with her, while seated on her bed-side, and holding her hands between mine. The hours crept insensibly away in these nocturnal discourses; I returned to my chamber better than I had quitted it, being content and calmed by the promises she made, and the hopes with which she had inspired me: I slept on them with my heart at peace, and fully resigned to the dispensations of Providence. God grant, that after having had so many reasons to hate life, after being agitated with so many storms, after it has even become a burden, that death, which must terminate all, may be no more terrible than it would have been at that moment!

By inconceivable care and vigilance, she saved my life; and I am convinced she alone could have done this. I have little faith in the skill of physicians, but depend greatly on the assistance of real friends, and am persuaded that being easy in those particulars on which our happiness depends, is more salutary than any other application. If there is a sensation in life peculiarly delightful, we experienced it in being restored to each other; our mutual attachment did not increase, for that was impossible, but it became, I know not how, more exquisitely tender, fresh softness being added to its former simplicity. I became in a manner her work; we got into the habit, though without design, of being continually with each other, and enjoying, in some measure, our whole existence together, feeling reciprocally that we were not only necessary, but entirely sufficient for each other's happiness. Accustomed to think of no subject foreign to ourselves, our happiness and all our desires were confined to that pleasing and singular union, which, perhaps, had no equal, which is not, as I have before observed, love, but a sentiment inexpressibly more intimate, neither depending on the senses, age, nor figure, but an assemblage of every endearing sensation that composes our rational existence and which can cease only with our being.

How was it that this delightful crisis did not secure our mutual felicity for the remainder of her life and mine? I have the consoling conviction that it was not my fault; nay, I am

persuaded, she did not wilfully destroy it; the invincible peculiarity of my disposition was doomed soon to regain its empire; but this fatal return was not suddenly accomplished, there was, thank Heaven, a short but precious interval, that did not conclude by my fault, and which I cannot reproach myself with having employed amiss.

Though recovered from my dangerous illness, I did not regain my strength; my stomach was weak, some remains of the fever kept me in a languishing condition, and the only inclination I was sensible of, was to end my days near one so truly dear to me; to confirm her in those good resolutions she had formed; to convince her in what consisted the real charms of a happy life, and, as far as depended on me, to render hers so; but I foresaw that in a gloomy, melancholy house, the continual solitude of our *tete-a-tetes* would at length become too dull and monotonous: a remedy presented itself: Madam de Warens had prescribed milk for me, and insisted that I should take it in the country; I consented, provided she would accompany me; nothing more was necessary to gain her compliance, and whither we should go was all that remained to be determined on. Our garden (which I have before mentioned) was not properly in the country, being surrounded by houses and other gardens, and possessing none of those attractions so desirable in a rural retreat; besides, after the death of Anet, we had given up this place from economical principles, feeling no longer a desire to rear plants, and other views making us not regret the loss of that little retreat. Improving the distaste I found she began to imbibe for the town, I proposed to abandon it entirely, and settle ourselves in an agreeable solitude, in some small house, distant enough from the city to avoid the perpetual intrusion of her hangers-on. She followed my advice, and this plan, which her good angel and mine suggested, might fully have secured our happiness and tranquility till death had divided us—but this was not the state we were appointed to; Madam de Warens was destined to endure all the sorrows of indigence and poverty, after having passed the former part of her life in abundance, that she might learn to quit it with the less regret; and myself, by an assemblage of misfortunes

of all kinds, was to become a striking example to those who, inspired with a love of justice and the public good, and trusting too implicitly to their own innocence, shall openly dare to assert truth to mankind, unsupported by cabals, or without having previously formed parties to protect them.

An unhappy fear furnished some objections to our plan: she did not dare to quit her ill-contrived house, for fear of displeasing the proprietor. "Your proposed retirement is charming," said she, "and much to my taste, but we are necessitated to remain here, for, on quitting this dungeon, I hazard losing the very means of life, and when these fail us in the woods, we must again return to seek them in the city. That we may have the least possible cause for being reduced to this necessity, let us not leave this house entirely, but pay a small pension to the Count of Saint-Laurent, that he may continue mine. Let us seek some little habitation, far enough from the town to be at peace, yet near enough to return when it may appear convenient."

495

This mode was finally adopted; and after some small search, we fixed at Charmettes, on an estate belonging to M. de Conzie, at a very small distance from Chambery; but as retired and solitary as if it had been a hundred leagues off. The spot we had concluded on was a valley between two tolerably high hills, which ran north and south; at the bottom, among the trees and pebbles, ran a rivulet, and above the declivity, on either side, were scattered a number of houses, forming altogether a beautiful retreat for those who love a peaceful romantic asylum. After having examined two or three of these houses, we chose that which we thought the most pleasing, which was the property of a gentleman of the army, called M. Noiret. This house was in good condition, before it a garden, forming a terrace; below that on the declivity an orchard, and on the ascent, behind the house, a vineyard: a little wood of chestnut trees opposite; a fountain just by, and higher up the hill, meadows for the cattle; in short, all that could be thought necessary for the country retirement we proposed to establish. To the best of my remembrance, we took possession of it toward the latter end of the summer of 1736. I was delighted on going to sleep there—"Oh!" said I, to this dear

friend, embracing her with tears of tenderness and delight, "this is the abode of happiness and innocence; if we do not find them here together it will be in vain to seek them elsewhere."

BOOK VI

*Hoc erat in votis: Modus agri non ita magnus
Hortus ubi, et tecto vicinus aqua fons;
Et paulum sylvae super his foret.*

I cannot add, 'auctius acque di melius fecere'; but no matter, the former is enough for my purpose; I had no occasion to have any property there, it was sufficient that I enjoyed it; for I have long since both said and felt, that the proprietor and possessor are two very different people, even leaving husbands and lovers out of the question.

At this moment began the short happiness of my life, those peaceful and rapid moments, which have given me a right to say, I have lived. Precious and ever-regretted moments! Ah! recommence your delightful course; pass more slowly through my memory, if possible, than you actually did in your fugitive succession. How shall I prolong, according to my inclination, this recital at once so pleasing and simple? How shall I continue to relate the same occurrences, without wearying my readers with the repetition, any more than I was satiated with the enjoyment? Again, if all this consisted of facts, actions, or words, I could somehow or other convey an idea of it; but how shall I describe what was neither said nor done, nor even thought, but enjoyed, felt, without being able to particularize any other object of my happiness than the bare idea? I rose with the sun, and was happy; I walked, and was happy; I saw Madam de Warens, and was happy; I quitted her, and still was happy!—Whether I rambled through the woods, over the hills, or strolled along the valley; read, was idle, worked in the garden, or gathered fruits, happiness continually accompanied me; it was fixed on no particular object, it was within me, nor could I depart from it a single moment.

Nothing that passed during that charming epocha, nothing that I did, said, or thought, has escaped my memory. The time that preceded or followed it, I only recollect by intervals, unequally and confused; but here I remember all as distinctly as if it existed at this moment. Imagination, which in my youth was perpetually anticipating the future, but now takes a retrograde course, makes some amends by these charming recollections for the deprivation of hope, which I have lost forever. I no longer see anything in the future that can tempt my wishes, it is a recollection of the past alone that can flatter me, and the remembrance of the period I am now describing is so true and lively, that it sometimes makes me happy, even in spite of my misfortunes.

Of these recollections I shall relate one example, which may give some idea of their force and precision. The first day we went to sleep at Charmettes, the way being up-hill, and Madam de Warens rather heavy, she was carried in a chair, while I followed on foot. Fearing the chairmen would be fatigued, she got out about half-way, designing to walk the rest of it. As we passed along, she saw something blue in the hedge, and said, "There's some periwinkle in flower yet!" I had never seen any before, nor did I stop to examine this: my sight is too short to distinguish plants on the ground, and I only cast a look at this as I passed: an interval of near thirty years had elapsed before I saw any more periwinkle, at least before I observed it, when being at Cressier in 1764, with my friend, M. du Peyrou, we went up a small mountain, on the summit of which there is a level spot, called, with reason, 'Belle-vue', I was then beginning to herbalize;—walking and looking among the bushes, I exclaimed with rapture, "Ah, there's some periwinkle!" Du Peyrou, who perceived my transport, was ignorant of the cause, but will some day be informed: I hope, on reading this. The reader may judge by this impression, made by so small an incident, what an effect must have been produced by every occurrence of that time.

Meantime, the air of the country did not restore my health; I was languishing and became more so; I could not endure milk, and was obliged to discontinue the use of it. Water was at this time the fashionable remedy for every complaint; accordingly I

entered on a course of it, and so indiscreetly, that it almost released me, not only from my illness but also from my life. The water I drank was rather hard and difficult to pass, as water from mountains generally is; in short, I managed so well, that in the course of two months I totally ruined my stomach, which until that time had been very good, and no longer digesting anything properly, had no reason to expect a cure. At this time an accident happened, as singular in itself as in its subsequent consequences, which can only terminate with my existence.

One morning, being no worse than usual, while putting up the leaf of a small table, I felt a sudden and almost inconceivable revolution throughout my whole frame. I know not how to describe it better than as a kind of tempest, which suddenly rose in my blood, and spread in a moment over every part of my body. My arteries began beating so violently that I not only felt their motion, but even heard it, particularly that of the carotids, attended by a loud noise in my ears, which was of three, or rather four, distinct kinds. For instance, first a grave hollow buzzing; then a more distinct murmur, like the running of water; then an extremely sharp hissing, attended by the beating I before mentioned, and whose throbs I could easily count, without feeling my pulse, or putting a hand to any part of my body. This internal tumult was so violent that it has injured my auricular organs, and rendered me, from that time, not entirely deaf, but hard of hearing.

My surprise and fear may easily be conceived; imagining it was the stroke of death, I went to bed, and the physician being sent for, trembling with apprehension, I related my case; judging it past all cure. I believe the doctor was of the same opinion; however he performed his office, running over a long string of causes and effects beyond my comprehension, after which, in consequence of this sublime theory, he set about, '*in anima vili*', the experimental part of his art, but the means he was pleased to adopt in order to effect a cure were so troublesome, disgusting, and followed by so little effect, that I soon discontinued it, and after some weeks, finding I was neither better nor worse, left my bed, and returned to my usual method of living; but the beating of

my arteries and the buzzing in my ears has never quitted me a moment during the thirty years' time which has elapsed since that time.

Till now, I had been a great sleeper, but a total privation of repose, with other alarming symptoms which have accompanied it, even to this time, persuaded me I had but a short time to live. This idea tranquillized me for a time: I became less anxious about a cure, and being persuaded I could not prolong life, determined to employ the remainder of it as usefully as possible. This was practicable by a particular indulgence of Nature, which, in this melancholy state, exempted me from sufferings which it might have been supposed I should have experienced. I was incommoded by the noise, but felt no pain, nor was it accompanied by any habitual inconvenience, except nocturnal wakefulness, and at all times a shortness of breath, which is not violent enough to be called an asthma, but was troublesome when I attempted to run, or use any degree of exertion.

This accident, which seemed to threaten the dissolution of my body, only killed my passions, and I have reason to thank Heaven for the happy effect produced by it on my soul. I can truly say, I only began to live when I considered myself as entering the grave; for, estimating at their real value those things I was quitting; I began to employ myself on nobler objects, namely by anticipating those I hoped shortly to have the contemplation of, and which I had hitherto too much neglected. I had often made light of religion, but was never totally devoid of it; consequently, it cost me less pain to employ my thoughts on that subject, which is generally thought melancholy, though highly pleasing to those who make it an object of hope and consolation; Madam de Warens, therefore, was more useful to me on this occasion than all the theologians in the world would have been.

She, who brought everything into a system, had not failed to do as much by religion; and this system was composed of ideas that bore no affinity to each other. Some were extremely good, and others very ridiculous, being made up of sentiments proceeding from her disposition, and prejudices derived from education. Men, in general, make God like themselves; the

virtuous make Him good, and the profligate make Him wicked; ill-tempered and bilious devotees see nothing but hell, because they would willingly damn all mankind; while loving and gentle souls disbelieve it altogether; and one of the astonishments I could never overcome, is to see the good Fenelon speak of it in his *Telemachus* as if he really gave credit to it; but I hope he lied in that particular, for however strict he might be in regard to truth, a bishop absolutely must lie sometimes. Madam de Warens spoke truth with me, and that soul, made up without gall, who could not imagine a revengeful and ever angry God, saw only clemency and forgiveness, where devotees bestowed inflexible justice, and eternal punishment.

She frequently said there would be no justice in the Supreme Being should He be strictly just to us; because, not having bestowed what was necessary to render us essentially good, it would be requiring more than he had given. The most whimsical idea was, that not believing in hell, she was firmly persuaded of the reality of purgatory. This arose from her not knowing what to do with the wicked, being loathed to damn them utterly, nor yet caring to place them with the good till they had become so; and we must really allow, that both in this world and the next, the wicked are very troublesome company.

It is clearly seen that the doctrine of original sin and the redemption of mankind is destroyed by this system; consequently that the basis of the Christian dispensation, as generally received, is shaken, and that the Catholic faith cannot subsist with these principles; Madam de Warens, notwithstanding, was a good Catholic, or at least pretended to be one, and certainly desired to become such, but it appeared to her that the Scriptures were too literally and harshly explained, supposing that all we read of everlasting torments were figurative threatenings, and the death of Jesus Christ an example of charity, truly divine, which should teach mankind to love God and each other; in a word, faithful to the religion she had embraced, she acquiesced in all its professions of faith, but on a discussion of each particular article, it was plain she thought diametrically opposite to that church whose doctrines she professed to believe. In these cases she

exhibited simplicity of art, a frankness more eloquent than sophistry, which frequently embarrassed her confessor; for she disguised nothing from him. "I am a good Catholic," she would say, "and will ever remain so; I adopt with all the powers of my soul the decisions of our holy Mother Church; I am not mistress of my faith, but I am of my will, which I submit to you without reserve; I will endeavor to believe all,—what can you require more?"

Had there been no Christian morality established, I am persuaded she would have lived as if regulated by its principles, so perfectly did they seem to accord with her disposition. She did everything that was required; and she would have done the same had there been no such requisition: but all this morality was subordinate to the principles of M. Tavel, or rather she pretended to see nothing in religion that contradicted them; thus she would have favored twenty lovers in a day, without any idea of a crime, her conscience being no more moved in that particular than her passions. I know that a number of devotees are not more scrupulous, but the difference is, they are seduced by constitution, she was blinded by her sophisms. In the midst of conversations the most affecting, I might say the most edifying, she would touch on this subject, without any change of air or manner, and without being sensible of any contradiction in her opinions; so much was she persuaded that our restrictions on that head are merely political, and that any person of sense might interpret, apply, or make exceptions to them, without any danger of offending the Almighty.

Though I was far enough from being of the same opinion in this particular, I confess I dared not combat hers; indeed, as I was situated, it would have been putting myself in rather awkward circumstances, since I could only have sought to establish my opinion for others, myself being an exception. Besides, I entertained but little hopes of making her alter hers, which never had any great influence on her conduct, and at the time I am speaking of none; but I have promised faithfully to describe her principles, and I will perform my engagement—I now return to myself.

Finding in her all those ideas I had occasion for to secure me from the fears of death and its future consequences, I drew confidence and security from this source; my attachment became warmer than ever, and I would willingly have transmitted to her my whole existence, which seemed ready to abandon me. From this redoubled attachment, a persuasion that I had but a short time to live, and profound security on my future state, arose an habitual and even pleasing serenity, which, calming every passion that extends our hopes and fears, made me enjoy without inquietude or concern the few days which I imagined remained for me. What contributed to render them still more agreeable was an endeavor to encourage her rising taste for the country, by every amusement I could possibly devise, wishing to attach her to her garden, poultry, pigeons, and cows: I amused myself with them and these little occupations, which employed my time without injuring my tranquillity, were more serviceable than a milk diet, or all the remedies bestowed on my poor shattered machine, even to effecting the utmost possible reestablishment of it.

The vintage and gathering in our fruit employed the remainder of the year; we became more and more attached to a rustic life, and the society of our honest neighbors. We saw the approach of winter with regret, and returned to the city as if going into exile. To me this return was particularly gloomy, who never expected to see the return of spring, and thought I took an everlasting leave of Charmettes. I did not quit it without kissing the very earth and trees, casting back many a wishful look as I went towards Chambery.

Having left my scholars for so long a time, and lost my relish for the amusements of the town, I seldom went out, conversing only with Madam de Warens and a Monsieur Salomon, who had lately become our physician. He was an honest man, of good understanding, a great Cartesian, spoke tolerably well on the system of the world, and his agreeable and instructive conversations were more serviceable than his prescriptions. I could never bear that foolish trivial mode of conversation which is so generally adopted; but useful instructive discourse has always given me great pleasure, nor was I ever backward to join

in it. I was much pleased with that of M. Salomon; it appeared to me, that when in his company, I anticipated the acquisition of that sublime knowledge which my soul would enjoy when freed from its mortal fetters. The inclination I had for him extended to the subjects which he treated on, and I began to look after books which might better enable me to understand his discourse. Those which mingled devotion with science were most agreeable to me, particularly Port Royal's Oratory, and I began to read or rather to devour them. One fell into my hands written by Father Lami, called 'Entretiens sur les Sciences', which was a kind of introduction to the knowledge of those books it treated of. I read it over a hundred times, and resolved to make this my guide; in short, I found (notwithstanding my ill state of health) that I was irresistibly drawn towards study, and though looking on each day as the last of my life, read with as much avidity as if certain I was to live forever.

I was assured that reading would injure me; but on the contrary, I am rather inclined to think it was serviceable, not only to my soul, but also to my body; for this application, which soon became delightful, diverted my thoughts from my disorders, and I soon found myself much less affected by them. It is certain, however, that nothing gave me absolute ease, but having no longer any acute pain, I became accustomed to languishment and wakefulness; to thinking instead of acting; in short, I looked on the gradual and slow decay of my body as inevitably progressive and only to be terminated by death.

This opinion not only detached me from all the vain cares of life, but delivered me from the importunity of medicine, to which hitherto, I had been forced to submit, though contrary to my inclination. Salomon, convinced that his drugs were unavailing, spared me the disagreeable task of taking them, and contented himself with amusing the grief of my poor Madam de Warens by some of those harmless preparations, which serve to flatter the hopes of the patient and keep up the credit of the doctor. I discontinued the strict regimen I had latterly observed, resumed the use of wine, and lived in every respect like a man in perfect health, as far as my strength would permit, only being careful to

run into no excess; I even began to go out and visit my acquaintance, particularly M. de Conzie, whose conversation was extremely pleasing to me. Whether it struck me as heroic to study to my last hour, or that some hopes of life yet lingered in the bottom of my heart, I cannot tell, but the apparent certainty of death, far from relaxing my inclination for improvement, seemed to animate it, and I hastened to acquire knowledge for the other world, as if convinced I should only possess that portion I could carry with me. I took a liking to the shop of a bookseller, whose name was Bouchard, which was frequented by some men of letters, and as the spring (whose return I had never expected to see again) was approaching, furnished myself with some books for Charmettes, in case I should have the happiness to return there.

I had that happiness, and enjoyed it to the utmost extent. The rapture with which I saw the trees put out their first bud, is inexpressible! The return of spring seemed to me like rising from the grave into paradise. The snow was hardly off the ground when we left our dungeon and returned to Charmettes, to enjoy the first warblings of the nightingale. I now thought no more of dying, and it is really singular, that from this time I never experienced any dangerous illness in the country. I have suffered greatly, but never kept my bed, and have often said to those about me, on finding myself worse than ordinary, "Should you see me at the point of death, carry me under the shade of an oak, and I promise you I shall recover."

Though weak, I resumed my country occupations, as far as my strength would permit, and conceived a real grief at not being able to manage our garden without help; for I could not take five or six strokes with the spade without being out of breath and overcome with perspiration; when I stooped the beating redoubled, and the blood flew with such violence to my head, that I was instantly obliged to stand upright. Being therefore confined to less fatiguing employments, I busied myself about the dove-house, and was so pleased with it that I sometimes passed several hours there without feeling a moment's weariness. The pigeon is very timid and difficult to tame, yet I inspired mine with so much

confidence that they followed me everywhere, letting me catch them at pleasure, nor could I appear in the garden without having two or three on my arms or head in an instant, and notwithstanding the pleasure I took in them, their company became so troublesome that I was obliged to lessen the familiarity. I have ever taken great pleasure in taming animals, particularly those that are wild and fearful. It appeared delightful to me, to inspire them with a confidence which I took care never to abuse, wishing them to love me freely.

I have already mentioned that I purchased some books: I did not forget to read them, but in a manner more proper to fatigue than instruct me. I imagined that to read a book profitably, it was necessary to be acquainted with every branch of knowledge it even mentioned; far from thinking that the author did not do this himself, but drew assistance from other books, as he might see occasion. Full of this silly idea, I was stopped every moment, obliged to run from one book to another, and sometimes, before I could reach the tenth page of what I was studying, found it necessary to turn over a whole library. I was so attached to this ridiculous method, that I lost a prodigious deal of time and had bewildered my head to such a degree, that I was hardly capable of doing, seeing or comprehending anything. I fortunately perceived, at length, that I was in the wrong road, which would entangle me in an inextricable labyrinth, and quitted it before I was irrevocably lost.

When a person has any real taste for the sciences, the first thing he perceives in the pursuit of them is that connection by which they mutually attract, assist, and enlighten each other, and that it is impossible to attain one without the assistance of the rest. Though the human understanding cannot grasp all, and one must ever be regarded as the principal object, yet if the rest are totally neglected, the favorite study is generally obscure; I was convinced that my resolution to improve was good and useful in itself, but that it was necessary I should change my method; I, therefore, had recourse to the encyclopaedia. I began by a distribution of the general mass of human knowledge into its various branches, but soon discovered that I must pursue a

contrary course, that I must take each separately, and trace it to that point where it united with the rest: thus I returned to the general synthetical method, but returned thither with a conviction that I was going right. Meditation supplied the want of knowledge, and a very natural reflection gave strength to my resolutions, which was, that whether I lived or died, I had no time to lose; for having learned but little before the age of five-and-twenty, and then resolving to learn everything, was engaging to employ the future time profitably. I was ignorant at what point accident or death might put a period to my endeavors, and resolved at all events to acquire with the utmost expedition some idea of every species of knowledge, as well to try my natural disposition, as to judge for myself what most deserved cultivation.

In the execution of my plan, I experienced another advantage which I had never thought of; this was, spending a great deal of time profitably. Nature certainly never meant me for study, since attentive application fatigues me so much, that I find it impossible to employ myself half an hour together intently on any one subject; particularly while following another person's ideas, for it has frequently happened that I have pursued my own for a much longer period with success. After reading a few pages of an author with close application, my understanding is bewildered, and should I obstinately continue, I tire myself to no purpose, a stupefaction seizes me, and I am no longer conscious of what I read; but in a succession of various subjects, one relieves me from the fatigue of the other, and without finding respite necessary, I can follow them with pleasure.

I took advantage of this observation in the plan of my studies, taking care to intermingle them in such a manner that I was never weary: it is true that domestic and rural concerns furnished many pleasing relaxations; but as my eagerness for improvement increased, I contrived to find opportunities for my studies, frequently employing myself about two things at the same time, without reflecting that both were consequently neglected.

In relating so many trifling details, which delight me, but frequently tire my reader, I make use of the caution to suppress a

great number, though, perhaps, he would have no idea of this, if I did not take care to inform him of it: for example, I recollect with pleasure all the different methods I adopted for the distribution of my time, in such a manner as to produce the utmost profit and pleasure. I may say, that the portion of my life which I passed in this retirement, though in continual ill-health, was that in which I was least idle and least wearied. Two or three months were thus employed in discovering the bent of my genius; meantime, I enjoyed, in the finest season of the year, and in a spot it rendered delightful, the charms of a life whose worth I was so highly sensible of, in such a society, as free as it was charming; if a union so perfect, and the extensive knowledge I purposed to acquire, can be called society. It seemed to me as if I already possessed the improvements I was only in pursuit of: or rather better, since the pleasure of learning constituted a great part of my happiness.

I must pass over these particulars, which were to me the height of enjoyment, but are too trivial to bear repeating: indeed, true happiness is indescribable, it is only to be felt, and this consciousness of felicity is proportionately more, the less able we are to describe it; because it does not absolutely result from a concurrence of favorable incidents, but is an affection of the mind itself. I am frequently guilty of repetitions, but should be infinitely more so, did I repeat the same thing as often as it recurs with pleasure to my mind. When at length my variable mode of life was reduced to a more uniform course, the following was nearly the distribution of time which I adopted: I rose every morning before the sun, and passed through a neighboring orchard into a pleasant path, which, running by a vineyard, led towards Chambery. While walking, I offered up my prayers, not by a vain motion of the lips, but a sincere elevation of my heart, to the Great Author of delightful nature, whose beauties were so charmingly spread out before me! I never love to pray in a chamber; it seems to me that the walls and all the little workmanship of man interposed between God and myself: I love to contemplate Him in his works, which elevate my soul, and raise my thoughts to Him. My prayers were pure, I can affirm it,

and therefore worthy to be heard:—I asked for myself and her from whom my thoughts were never divided, only an innocent and quiet life, exempt from vice, sorrow and want; I prayed that we might die the death of the just, and partake of their lot hereafter: for the rest, it was rather admiration and contemplation than request, being satisfied that the best means to obtain what is necessary from the Giver of every perfect good, is rather to deserve than to solicit. Returning from my walk, I lengthened the way by taking a roundabout path, still contemplating with earnestness and delight the beautiful scenes with which I was surrounded, those only objects that never fatigue either the eye or the heart. As I approached our habitation, I looked forward to see if Madam de Warens was stirring, and when I perceived her shutters open, I even ran with joy towards the house: if they were yet shut I went into the garden to wait their opening, amusing myself, meantime, by a retrospection of what I had read the preceding evening, or in gardening. The moment the shutter drew back I hastened to embrace her, frequently half asleep; and this salute, pure as it was affectionate, even from its innocence, possessed a charm which the senses can never bestow. We usually breakfasted on milk-coffee; this was the time of day when we had most leisure, and when we chatted with the greatest freedom. These sittings, which were usually pretty long, have given me a fondness for breakfasts, and I infinitely prefer those of England, or Switzerland, which are considered as a meal, at which all the family assemble, than those of France, where they breakfast alone in their several apartments, or more frequently have none at all. After an hour or two passed in discourse, I went to my study till dinner; beginning with some philosophical work, such as the logic of Port-Royal, Locke's Essays, Mallebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, etc. I soon found that these authors perpetually contradict each other, and formed the chimerical project of reconciling them, which cost me much labor and loss of time, bewildering my head without any profit. At length (renouncing this idea) I adopted one infinitely more profitable, to which I attribute all the progress I have since made, notwithstanding the defects of my capacity; for 'tis certain I had very little for study.

On reading each author, I acquired a habit of following all his ideas, without suffering my own or those of any other writer to interfere with them, or entering into any dispute on their utility. I said to myself, "I will begin by laying up a stock of ideas, true or false, but clearly conceived, till my understanding shall be sufficiently furnished to enable me to compare and make choice of those that are most estimable." I am sensible this method is not without its inconveniences, but it succeeded in furnishing me with a fund of instruction. Having passed some years in thinking after others, without reflection, and almost without reasoning, I found myself possessed of sufficient materials to set about thinking on my own account, and when journeys of business deprived me of the opportunities of consulting books, I amused myself with recollecting and comparing what I had read, weighing every opinion on the balance of reason, and frequently judging my masters. Though it was late before I began to exercise my judicial faculties, I have not discovered that they had lost their vigor, and on publishing my own ideas, have never been accused of being a servile disciple or of swearing '*in verba magistri*'.

From these studies I passed to the elements of geometry, for I never went further, forcing my weak memory to retain them by going the same ground a hundred and a hundred times over. I did not admire Euclid, who rather seeks a chain of demonstration than a connection of ideas: I preferred the geometry of Father Lama, who from that time became one of my favorite authors, and whose works I yet read with pleasure. Algebra followed, and Father Lama was still my guide: when I made some progress, I perused Father Reynaud's Science of Calculation, and then his Analysis Demonstrated; but I never went far enough thoroughly to understand the application of algebra to geometry. I was not pleased with this method of performing operations by rule without knowing what I was about: resolving geometrical problems by the help of equations seemed like playing a tune by turning round a handle. The first time I found by calculation that the square of a binocular figure was composed of the square of each of its parts, and double the product of one by the other; though convinced that my multiplication was right, I could not be

satisfied till I had made and examined the figure: not but I admire algebra when applied to abstract quantities, but when used to demonstrate dimensions, I wished to see the operation, and unless explained by lines, could not rightly comprehend it.

After this came Latin: it was my most painful study, and in which I never made great progress. I began by Port-Royal's Rudiments, but without success; I lost myself in a crowd of rules; and in studying the last forgot all that preceded it. A study of words is not calculated for a man without memory, and it was principally an endeavor to make my memory more retentive, that urged me obstinately to persist in this study, which at length I was obliged to relinquish. As I understood enough to read an easy author by the aid of a dictionary, I followed that method, and found it succeed tolerably well. I likewise applied myself to translation, not by writing, but mentally, and by exercise and perseverance attained to read Latin authors easily, but have never been able to speak or write that language, which has frequently embarrassed me when I have found myself (I know not by what means) enrolled among men of letters.

Another inconvenience that arose from this manner of learning is, that I never understood prosody, much less the rules of versification; yet, anxious to understand the harmony of the language, both in prose and verse, I have made many efforts to obtain it, but am convinced, that without a master it is almost impossible. Having learned the composition of the hexameter, which is the easiest of all verses, I had the patience to measure out the greater part of Virgil into feet and quantity, and whenever I was dubious whether a syllable was long or short, immediately consulted my Virgil. It may easily be conceived that I ran into many errors in consequence of those licenses permitted by the rules of versification; and it is certain, that if there is an advantage in studying alone, there are also great inconveniences and inconceivable labor, as I have experienced more than any one.

At twelve I quitted my books, and if dinner was not ready, paid my friends, the pigeons, a visit, or worked in the garden till it was, and when I heard myself called, ran very willingly, and with a good appetite to partake of it, for it is very remarkable, that let

me be ever so indisposed my appetite never fails. We dined very agreeably, chatting till Madam de Warens could eat. Two or three times a week, when it was fine, we drank our coffee in a cool shady arbor behind the house, that I had decorated with hops, and which was very refreshing during the heat; we usually passed an hour in viewing our flowers and vegetables, or in conversation relative to our manner of life, which greatly increased the pleasure of it. I had another little family at the end of the garden; these were several hives of bees, which I never failed to visit once a day, and was frequently accompanied by Madam de Warens. I was greatly interested in their labor, and amused myself seeing them return to the hives, their little thighs so loaded with the precious store that they could hardly walk. At first, curiosity made me indiscreet, and they stung me several times, but afterwards, we were so well acquainted, that let me approach as near as I would, they never molested me, though the hives were full and the bees ready to swarm. At these times I have been surrounded, having them on my hands and face without apprehending any danger. All animals are distrustful of man, and with reason, but when once assured he does not mean to injure them, their confidence becomes so great that he must be worse than a barbarian who abuses it.

After this I returned to my books; but my afternoon employment ought rather to bear the name of recreation and amusement, than labor or study. I have never been able to bear application after dinner, and in general any kind of attention is painful to me during the heat of the day. I employed myself, 'tis true, but without restraint or rule, and read without studying. What I most attended to at these times, was history and geography, and as these did not require intense application, made as much progress in them as my weak memory would permit. I had an inclination to study Father Petau, and launched into the gloom of chronology, but was disgusted at the critical part, which I found had neither bottom nor banks; this made me prefer the more exact measurement of time by the course of the celestial bodies. I should even have contracted a fondness for astronomy, had I been in possession of instruments, but was obliged to

content myself with some of the elements of that art, learned from books, and a few rude observations made with a telescope, sufficient only to give me a general idea of the situation of the heavenly bodies; for my short sight is insufficient to distinguish the stars without the help of a glass.

I recollect an adventure on this subject, the remembrance of which has often diverted me. I had bought a celestial planisphere to study the constellations by, and, having fixed it on a frame, when the nights were fine and the sky clear, I went into the garden; and fixing the frame on four sticks, something higher than myself, which I drove into the ground, turned the planisphere downwards, and contrived to light it by means of a candle (which I put in a pail to prevent the wind from blowing it out) and then placed in the centre of the above-mentioned four supporters; this done, I examined the stars with my glass, and from time to time referring to my planisphere, endeavored to distinguish the various constellations. I think I have before observed that our garden was on a terrace, and lay open to the road. One night, some country people passing very late, saw me in a most grotesque habit, busily employed in these observations: the light, which struck directly on the planisphere, proceeding from a cause they could not divine (the candle being concealed by the sides of the pail), the four stakes supporting a large paper, marked over with various uncouth figures, with the motion of the telescope, which they saw turning backwards and forwards, gave the whole an air of conjuration that struck them with horror and amazement. My figure was by no means calculated to dispel their fears; a flapped hat put on over my nightcap, and a short cloak about my shoulder (which Madam de Warens had obliged me to put on) presented in their idea the image of a real sorcerer. Being near midnight, they made no doubt but this was the beginning of some diabolical assembly, and having no curiosity to pry further into these mysteries, they fled with all possible speed, awakened their neighbors, and described this most dreadful vision. The story spread so fast that the next day the whole neighborhood was informed that a nocturnal assembly of witches was held in the garden that belonged to Monsieur Noiret, and I am ignorant what

might have been the consequence of this rumor if one of the countrymen who had been witness to my conjurations had not the same day carried his complaint to two Jesuits, who frequently came to visit us, and who, without knowing the foundation of the story, undeceived and satisfied them. These Jesuits told us the whole affair, and I acquainted them with the cause of it, which altogether furnished us with a hearty laugh. However, I resolved for the future to make my observations without light, and consult my planisphere in the house. Those who have read Venetian magic, in the 'Letters from the Mountain', may find that I long since had the reputation of being a conjurer.

Such was the life I led at Charmettes when I had no rural employments, for they ever had the preference, and in those that did not exceed my strength, I worked like a peasant; but my extreme weakness left me little except the will; besides, as I have before observed, I wished to do two things at once, and therefore did neither well. I obstinately persisted in forcing my memory to retain a great deal by heart, and for that purpose, I always carried some book with me, which, while at work, I studied with inconceivable labor. I was continually repeating something, and am really amazed that the fatigue of these vain and continual efforts did not render me entirely stupid. I must have learned and relearned the Eclogues of Virgil twenty times over, though at this time I cannot recollect a single line of them. I have lost or spoiled a great number of books by a custom I had of carrying them with me into the dove-house, the garden, orchard or vineyard, when, being busy about something else, I laid my book at the foot of a tree, on the hedge, or the first place that came to hand, and frequently left them there, finding them a fortnight after, perhaps, rotted to pieces, or eaten by the ants or snails; and this ardor for learning became so far a madness that it rendered me almost stupid, and I was perpetually muttering some passage or other to myself.

The writings of Port-Royal, and those of the Oratory, being what I most read, had made me half a Jansenist, and, notwithstanding all my confidence, their harsh theology sometimes alarmed me. A dread of hell, which till then I had

never much apprehended, by little and little disturbed my security, and had not Madam de Warens tranquillized my soul, would at length have been too much for me. My confessor, who was hers likewise, contributed all in his power to keep up my hopes. This was a Jesuit, named Father Hemet; a good and wise old man, whose memory I shall ever hold in veneration. Though a Jesuit, he had the simplicity of a child, and his manners, less relaxed than gentle, were precisely what was necessary to balance the melancholy impressions made on me by Jansenism. This good man and his companion, Father Coppier, came frequently to visit us at Charmette, though the road was very rough and tedious for men of their age. These visits were very comfortable to me, which may the Almighty return to their souls, for they were so old that I cannot suppose them yet living. I sometimes went to see them at Chambery, became acquainted at their convent, and had free access to the library. The remembrance of that happy time is so connected with the idea of those Jesuits, that I love one on account of the other, and though I have ever thought their doctrines dangerous, could never find myself in a disposition to hate them cordially.

I should like to know whether there ever passed such childish notions in the hearts of other men as sometimes do in mine. In the midst of my studies, and of a life as innocent as man could lead, notwithstanding every persuasion to the contrary, the dread of hell frequently tormented me. I asked myself, "What state am I in? Should I die at this instant, must I be damned?" According to my Jansenists the matter was indubitable, but according to my conscience it appeared quite the contrary: terrified and floating in this cruel uncertainty, I had recourse to the most laughable expedient to resolve my doubts, for which I would willingly shut up any man as a lunatic should I see him practise the same folly. One day, meditating on this melancholy subject, I exercised myself in throwing stones at the trunks of trees, with my usual dexterity, that is to say, without hitting any of them. In the height of this charming exercise, it entered my mind to make a kind of prognostic, that might calm my inquietude; I said, "I will throw this stone at the tree facing me; if I hit my mark, I will consider it

as a sign of salvation; if I miss, as a token of damnation." While I said this, I threw the stone with a trembling hand and beating breast but so happily that it struck the body of the tree, which truly was not a difficult matter, for I had taken care to choose one that was very large and very near me. From that moment I never doubted my salvation: I know not on recollecting this trait, whether I ought to laugh or shudder at myself. Ye great geniuses, who surely laugh at my folly, congratulate yourselves on your superior wisdom, but insult not my unhappiness, for I swear to you that I feel it most sensibly.

These troubles, these alarms, inseparable, perhaps, from devotion, were only at intervals; in general, I was tranquil, and the impression made on my soul by the idea of approaching death, was less that of melancholy than a peaceful languor, which even had its pleasures. I have found among my old papers a kind of congratulation and exhortation which I made to myself on dying at an age when I had the courage to meet death with serenity, without having experienced any great evils, either of body or mind. How much justice was there in the thought! A preconception of what I had to suffer made me fear to live, and it seemed that I dreaded the fate which must attend my future days. I have never been so near wisdom as during this period, when I felt no great remorse for the past, nor tormenting fear for the future; the reigning sentiment of my soul being the enjoyment of the present. Serious people usually possess a lively sensuality, which makes them highly enjoy those innocent pleasures that are allowed them. Worldlings (I know not why) impute this to them as a crime: or rather, I well know the cause of this imputation, it is because they envy others the enjoyment of those simple and pure delights which they have lost the relish of. I had these inclinations, and found it charming to gratify them in security of conscience. My yet inexperienced heart gave in to all with the calm happiness of a child, or rather (if I dare use the expression) with the raptures of an angel; for in reality these pure delights are as serene as those of paradise. Dinners on the grass at Montagnole, suppers in our arbor, gathering in the fruits, the vintage, a social meeting with our neighbors; all these were so

many holidays, in which Madam de Warens took as much pleasure as myself. Solitary walks afforded yet purer pleasure, because in them our hearts expanded with greater freedom: one particularly remains in my memory; it was on a St. Louis' day, whose name Madam de Warens bore: we set out together early and unattended, after having heard a mass at break of day in a chapel adjoining our house, from a Carmelite, who attended for that purpose. As I proposed walking over the hills opposite our dwelling, which we had not yet visited, we sent our provisions on before; the excursion being to last the whole day. Madam de Warens, though rather corpulent, did not walk ill, and we rambled from hill to hill and wood to wood, sometimes in the sun, but oftener in the shade, resting from time to time, and regardless how the hours stole away; speaking of ourselves, of our union, of the gentleness of our fate, and offering up prayers for its duration, which were never heard. Everything conspired to augment our happiness: it had rained for several days previous to this, there was no dust, the brooks were full and rapid, a gentle breeze agitated the leaves, the air was pure, the horizon free from clouds, serenity reigned in the sky as in our hearts. Our dinner was prepared at a peasant's house, and shared with him and his family, whose benedictions we received. These poor Savoyards are the worthiest of people! After dinner we regained the shade, and while I was picking up bits of dried sticks, to boil our coffee, Madam de Warens amused herself with herbalizing among the bushes, and with the flowers I had gathered for her in my way. She made me remark in their construction a thousand natural beauties, which greatly amused me, and which ought to have given me a taste for botany; but the time was not yet come, and my attention was arrested by too many other studies. Besides this, an idea struck me, which diverted my thoughts from flowers and plants: the situation of my mind at that moment, all that we had said or done that day, every object that had struck me, brought to my remembrance the kind of waking dream I had at Annecy seven or eight years before, and which I have given an account of in its place. The similarity was so striking that it affected me even to tears: in a transport of tenderness I embraced Madam de

Warens. "My dearest friend," said I, "this day has long since been promised me: I can see nothing beyond it: my happiness, by your means, is at its height; may it never decrease; may it continue as long as I am sensible of its value—then it can only finish with my life."

Thus happily passed my days, and the more happily as I perceived nothing that could disturb or bring them to a conclusion; not that the cause of my former uneasiness had absolutely ceased, but I saw it take another course, which I directed with my utmost care to useful objects, that the remedy might accompany the evil. Madam de Warens naturally loved the country, and this taste did not cool while with me. By little and little she contracted a fondness for rustic employments, wished to make the most of her land, and had in that particular a knowledge which she practised with pleasure.

Not satisfied with what belonged to the house, she hired first a field, then a meadow, transferring her enterprising humor to the objects of agriculture, and instead of remaining unemployed in the house, was in the way of becoming a complete farmer. I was not greatly pleased to see this passion increase, and endeavored all I could to oppose it; for I was certain she would be deceived, and that her liberal extravagant disposition would infallibly carry her expenses beyond her profits; however, I consoled myself by thinking the produce could not be useless, and would at least help her to live. Of all the projects she could form, this appeared the least ruinous: without regarding it, therefore, in the light she did, as a profitable scheme, I considered it as a perpetual employment, which would keep her from more ruinous enterprises, and out of the reach of impostors. With this idea, I ardently wished to recover my health and strength, that I might superintend her affairs, overlook her laborers, or, rather, be the principal one myself. The exercise this naturally obliged me to take, with the relaxation it procured me from books and study, was serviceable to my health.

The winter following, Barillot returning from Italy, brought me some books; and among others, the 'Bontempi' and 'la Cartella per Musica', of Father Banchieri; these gave me a taste for the history

of music and for the theoretical researches of that pleasing art. Barillot remained some time with us, and as I had been of age some months, I determined to go to Geneva the following spring, and demand my mother's inheritance, or at least that part which belonged to me, till it could be ascertained what had become of my brother. This plan was executed as it had been resolved: I went to Geneva; my father met me there, for he had occasionally visited Geneva a long time since, without its being particularly noticed, though the decree that had been pronounced against him had never been reversed; but being esteemed for his courage, and respected for his probity, the situation of his affairs was pretended to be forgotten; or perhaps, the magistrates, employed with the great project that broke out some little time after, were not willing to alarm the citizens by recalling to their memory, at an improper time, this instance of their former partiality.

I apprehended that I should meet with difficulties, on account of having changed my religion, but none occurred; the laws of Geneva being less harsh in that particular than those of Berne, where, whoever changes his religion, not only loses his freedom, but his property. My rights, however, were not disputed: but I found my patrimony, I know not how, reduced to very little, and though it was known almost to a certainty that my brother was dead, yet, as there was no legal proof, I could not lay claim to his share, which I left without regret to my father, who enjoyed it as long as he lived. No sooner were the necessary formalities adjusted, and I had received my money, some of which I expended in books, than I flew with the remainder to Madam de Warens; my heart beat with joy during the journey, and the moment in which I gave the money into her hands, was to me a thousand times more delightful than that which gave it into mine. She received this with a simplicity common to great souls, who, doing similar actions without effort, see them without admiration; indeed it was almost all expended for my use, for it would have been employed in the same manner had it come from any other quarter.

My health was not yet re-established; I decayed visibly, was pale as death, and reduced to an absolute skeleton; the beating of

my arteries was extreme, my palpitations were frequent: I was sensible of a continual oppression, and my weakness became at length so great, that I could scarcely move or step without danger of suffocation, stoop without vertigoes, or lift even the smallest weight, which reduced me to the most tormenting inaction for a man so naturally stirring as myself. It is certain my disorder was in a great measure hypochondriacal. The vapors is a malady common to people in fortunate situations: the tears I frequently shed, without reason; the lively alarms I felt on the falling of a leaf, or the fluttering of a bird; inequality of humor in the calm of a most pleasing life; lassitude which made me weary even of happiness, and carried sensibility to extravagance, were an instance of this. We are so little formed for felicity, that when the soul and body do not suffer together, they must necessarily endure separate inconveniences, the good state of the one being almost always injurious to the happiness of the other. Had all the pleasure of life courted me, my weakened frame would not have permitted the enjoyment of them, without my being able to particularize the real seat of my complaint; yet in the decline of life; after having encountered very serious and real evils, my body seemed to regain its strength, as if on purpose to encounter additional misfortunes; and, at the moment I write this, though infirm, near sixty, and overwhelmed with every kind of sorrow, I feel more ability to suffer than I ever possessed for enjoyment when in the very flower of my age, and in the bosom of real happiness.

To complete me, I had mingled a little physiology among my other readings: I set about studying anatomy, and considering the multitude, movement, and wonderful construction of the various parts that composed the human machine; my apprehensions were instantly increased, I expected to feel mine deranged twenty times a day, and far from being surprised to find myself dying, was astonished that I yet existed! I could not read the description of any malady without thinking it mine, and, had I not been already indisposed, I am certain I should have become so from this study. Finding in every disease symptoms similar to mine, I fancied I had them all, and, at length, gained one more troublesome than

any I yet suffered, which I had thought myself delivered from; this was, a violent inclination to seek a cure; which it is very difficult to suppress, when once a person begins reading physical books. By searching, reflecting, and comparing, I became persuaded that the foundation of my complaint was a polypus at the heart, and Doctor Salomon appeared to coincide with the idea. Reasonably this opinion should have confirmed my former resolution of considering myself past cure; this, however, was not the case; on the contrary; I exerted every power of my understanding in search of a remedy for a polypus, resolving to undertake this marvellous cure.

In a journey which Anet had made to Montpellier, to see the physical garden there, and visit Monsieur Sauvages, the demonstrator, he had been informed that Monsieur Fizes had cured a polypus similar to that I fancied myself afflicted with: Madam de Warens, recollecting this circumstance, mentioned it to me, and nothing more was necessary to inspire me with a desire to consult Monsieur Fizes. The hope of recovery gave me courage and strength to undertake the journey; the money from Geneva furnished the means; Madam de Warens, far from dissuading, entreated me to go: behold me, therefore, without further ceremony, set out for Montpellier!—but it was not necessary to go so far to find the cure I was in search of.

Finding the motion of the horse too fatiguing, I had hired a chaise at Grenoble, and on entering Moirans, five or six other chaises arrived in a rank after mine. The greater part of these were in the train of a new married lady called Madam du Colombier; with her was a Madam de Larnage, not so young or handsome as the former, yet not less amiable. The bride was to stop at Romans, but the other lady was to pursue her route as far as Saint-Andiol, near the bridge du St. Esprit. With my natural timidity it will not be conjectured that I was very ready at forming an acquaintance with these fine ladies, and the company that attended them; but travelling the same road, lodging at the same inns, and being obliged to eat at the same table, the acquaintance seemed unavoidable, as any backwardness on my part would have got me the character of a very unsociable being: it was formed then, and

even sooner than I desired, for all this bustle was by no means convenient to a person in ill health, particularly to one of my humor. Curiosity renders these vixens extremely insinuating; they accomplish their design of becoming acquainted with a man by endeavoring to turn his brain, and this was precisely what happened to me. Madam du Colombier was too much surrounded by her young gallants to have any opportunity of paying much attention to me; besides, it was not worthwhile, as we were to separate in so short a time; but Madam de Larnage (less attended to than her young friend) had to provide herself for the remainder of the journey; behold me, then, attacked by Madam de Larnage, and adieu to poor Jean Jacques, or rather farewell to fever, vapors, and polypus; all completely vanished when in her presence. The ill state of my health was the first subject of our conversation; they saw I was indisposed, knew I was going to Montpellier, but my air and manner certainly did not exhibit the appearance of a libertine, since it was clear by what followed they did not suspect I was going there for a reason that carries many that road.

In the morning they sent to inquire after my health and invite me to take chocolate with them, and when I made my appearance asked how I had passed the night. Once, according to my praiseworthy custom of speaking without thought, I replied, "I did not know," which answer naturally made them conclude I was a fool: but, on questioning me further; the examination turned out so far to my advantage, that I rather rose in their opinion, and I once heard Madam du Colombier say to her friend, "He is amiable, but not sufficiently acquainted with the world." These words were a great encouragement, and assisted me in rendering myself agreeable.

As we became more familiar, it was natural to give each other some little account of whence we came and who we were: this embarrassed me greatly, for I was sensible that in good company and among women of spirit, the very name of a new convert would utterly undo me. I know not by what whimsicality I resolved to pass for an Englishman; however, in consequence of that determination I gave myself out for a Jacobite, and was readily believed. They called me Monsieur Dudding, which was

the name I assumed with my new character, and a cursed Marquis Torignan, who was one of the company, an invalid like myself, and both old and ill-tempered, took it in his head to begin a long conversation with me. He spoke of King James, of the Pretender, and the old court of St. Germain's; I sat on thorns the whole time, for I was totally unacquainted with all these except what little I had picked up in the account of Earl Hamilton, and from the gazettes; however, I made such fortunate use of the little I did know as to extricate myself from this dilemma, happy in not being questioned on the English language, which I did not know a single word of.

The company were all very agreeable; we looked forward to the moment of separation with regret, and therefore made snails' journeys. We arrived one Sunday at St. Marcelein's; Madam de Larnage would go to mass; I accompanied her, and had nearly ruined all my affairs, for by my modest reserved countenance during the service, she concluded me a bigot, and conceived a very indifferent opinion of me, as I learned from her own account two days after. It required a great deal of gallantry on my part to efface this ill impression, or rather Madam de Larnage (who was not easily disheartened) determined to risk the first advances, and see how I should behave. She made several, but far from being presuming on my figure, I thought she was making sport of me: full of this ridiculous idea there was no folly I was not guilty of.

Madam de Larnage persisted in such caressing behavior, that a much wiser man than myself could hardly have taken it seriously. The more obvious her advances were, the more I was confirmed in my mistake, and what increased my torment, I found I was really in love with her. I frequently said to myself, and sometimes to her, sighing, "Ah! why is not all this real? then should I be the most fortunate of men." I am inclined to think my stupidity did but increase her resolution, and make her determined to get the better of it.

We left Madam du Colombier at Romans; after which Madam de Larnage, the Marquis de Torignan, and myself continued our route slowly, and in the most agreeable manner. The marquis, though indisposed, and rather ill-humored, was an agreeable

companion, but was not best pleased at seeing the lady bestow all her attentions on me, while he passed unregarded; for Madam de Larnage took so little care to conceal her inclination, that he perceived it sooner than I did, and his sarcasms must have given me that confidence I could not presume to take from the kindness of the lady, if by a surmise, which no one but myself could have blundered on, I had not imagined they perfectly understood each other, and were agreed to turn my passion into ridicule. This foolish idea completed my stupidity, making me act the most ridiculous part, while, had I listened to the feelings of my heart, I might have been performing one far more brilliant. I am astonished that Madam de Larnage was not disgusted at my folly, and did not discard me with disdain; but she plainly perceived there was more bashfulness than indifference in my composition.

We arrived at Valence to dinner, and according to our usual custom passed the remainder of the day there. We lodged out of the city, at the St. James, an inn I shall never forget. After dinner, Madam de Larnage proposed a walk; she knew the marquis was no walker, consequently, this was an excellent plan for a *tete-a-tete*, which she was predetermined to make the most of. While we were walking round the city by the side of the moats, I entered on a long history of my complaint, to which she answered in so tender an accent, frequently pressing my arm, which she held to her heart, that it required all my stupidity not to be convinced of the sincerity of her attachment. I have already observed that she was amiable; love rendered her charming, adding all the loveliness of youth: and she managed her advances with so much art, that they were sufficient to have seduced the most insensible: I was, therefore, in very uneasy circumstances, and frequently on the point of making a declaration; but the dread of offending her, and the still greater of being laughed at, ridiculed, made table-talk, and complimented on my enterprise by the satirical marquis, had such unconquerable power over me, that, though ashamed of my ridiculous bashfulness, I could not take courage to surmount it. I had ended the history of my complaints, which I felt the ridiculousness of at this time; and not knowing how to look, or what to say, continued silent, giving the finest opportunity in the

world for that ridicule I so much dreaded. Happily, Madam de Larnage took a more favorable resolution, and suddenly interrupted this silence by throwing her arms round my neck, while, at the same instant, her lips spoke too plainly on mine to be any longer misunderstood. This was reposing that confidence in me the want of which has almost always prevented me from appearing myself: for once I was at ease, my heart, eyes and tongue, spoke freely what I felt; never did I make better reparation for my mistakes, and if this little conquest had cost Madam de Larnage some difficulties, I have reason to believe she did not regret them.

Was I to live a hundred years, I should never forget this charming woman. I say charming, for though neither young nor beautiful, she was neither old nor ugly, having nothing in her appearance that could prevent her wit and accomplishments from producing all their effects. It was possible to see her without falling in love, but those she favored could not fail to adore her; which proves, in my opinion, that she was not generally so prodigal of her favors. It is true, her inclination for me was so sudden and lively, that it scarce appears excusable; though from the short, but charming interval I passed with her, I have reason to think her heart was more influenced than her passions.

Our good intelligence did not escape the penetration of the marquis; not that he discontinued his usual raillery; on the contrary, he treated me as a sighing, hopeless swain, languishing under the rigors of his mistress; not a word, smile, or look escaped him by which I could imagine he suspected my happiness; and I should have thought him completely deceived, had not Madam de Larnage, who was more clear-sighted than myself, assured me of the contrary; but he was a well-bred man, and it was impossible to behave with more attention or greater civility, than he constantly paid me (notwithstanding his satirical sallies), especially after my success, which, as he was unacquainted with my stupidity, he perhaps gave me the honor of achieving. It has already been seen that he was mistaken in this particular; but no matter, I profited by his error, for being conscious that the laugh was on my side, I took all his sallies in

good part, and sometimes parried them with tolerable success; for, proud of the reputation of wit which Madam de Larnage had thought fit to discover in me, I no longer appeared the same man.

We were both in a country and season of plenty, and had everywhere excellent cheer, thanks to the good cares of the marquis; though I would willingly have relinquished this advantage to have been more satisfied with the situation of our chambers; but he always sent his footman on to provide them; and whether of his own accord, or by the order of his master, the rogue always took care that the marquis' chamber should be close by Madam de Larnage's, while mine was at the further end of the house: but that made no great difference, or perhaps it rendered our rendezvous the more charming; this happiness lasted four or five days, during which time I was intoxicated with delight, which I tasted pure and serene without any alloy; an advantage I could never boast before; and, I may add, it is owing to Madam de Larnage that I did not go out of the world without having tasted real pleasure.

If the sentiment I felt for her was not precisely love, it was at least a very tender return of what she testified for me; our meetings were so delightful, that they possessed all the sweets of love; without that kind of delirium which affects the brain, and even tends to diminish our happiness. I never experienced true love but once in my life, and that was not with Madam de Larnage, neither did I feel that affection for her which I had been sensible of, and yet continued to possess, for Madam de Warens; but for this very reason, our *tete-a-tetes* were a hundred times more delightful. When with Madam de Warens, my felicity was always disturbed by a secret sadness, a compunction of heart, which I found it impossible to surmount. Instead of being delighted at the acquisition of so much happiness, I could not help reproaching myself for contributing to render her I loved unworthy: on the contrary, with Madam de Larnage, I was proud of my happiness, and gave in to it without repugnance, while my triumph redoubled every other charm.

I do not recollect exactly where we quitted the marquis, who resided in this country, but I know we were alone on our arrival at

Montelimar, where Madam de Larnage made her chambermaid get into my chaise, and accommodate me with a seat in hers. It will easily be believed, that travelling in this manner was by no means displeasing to me, and that I should be very much puzzled to give any account of the country we passed through. She had some business at Montelimar, which detained her there two or three days; during this time she quitted me but one quarter of an hour, for a visit she could not avoid, which embarrassed her with a number of invitations she had no inclination to accept, and therefore excused herself by pleading some indisposition; though she took care this should not prevent our walking together every day, in the most charming country, and under the finest sky imaginable. Oh! these three days! what reason have I to regret them! Never did such happiness return again.

The amours of a journey cannot be very durable: it was necessary we should part, and I must confess it was almost time; not that I was weary of my happiness, but I might as well have been. We endeavored to comfort each other for the pain of parting, by forming plans for our reunion; and it was concluded, that after staying five or six weeks at Montpellier (which would give Madam de Larnage time to prepare for my reception in such a manner as to prevent scandal) I should return to Saint-Andiol, and spend the winter under her direction. She gave me ample instruction on what it was necessary I should know, on what it would be proper to say; and how I should conduct myself. She spoke much and earnestly on the care of my health, conjured me to consult skilful physicians, and be attentive and exact in following their prescriptions whatever they might happen to be. I believe her concern was sincere, for she loved me, and gave proofs of her affection less equivocal than the prodigality of her favors; for judging by my mode of travelling, that I was not in very affluent circumstances (though not rich herself), on our parting, she would have had me share the contents of her purse, which she had brought pretty well furnished from Grenoble, and it was with great difficulty I could make her put up with a denial. In a word, we parted; my heart full of her idea, and leaving in hers (if I am not mistaken) a firm attachment to me.

While pursuing the remainder of my journey, remembrance ran over everything that had passed from the commencement of it, and I was well satisfied at finding myself alone in a comfortable chaise, where I could ruminate at ease on the pleasures I had enjoyed, and those which awaited my return. I only thought of Saint-Andiol; of the life I was to lead there; I saw nothing but Madam de Larnage, or what related to her; the whole universe besides was nothing to me—even Madam de Warens was forgotten!—I set about combining all the details by which Madam de Larnage had endeavored to give me in advance an idea of her house, of the neighborhood, of her connections, and manner of life, finding everything charming.

She had a daughter, whom she had often described in the warmest terms of maternal affection: this daughter was fifteen, lively, charming, and of an amiable disposition. Madam de Larnage promised me her friendship; I had not forgotten that promise, and was curious to know how Mademoiselle de Larnage would treat her mother's 'bon ami'. These were the subjects of my reveries from the bridge of St. Esprit to Remoulin: I had been advised to visit the Pont-du-Gard; hitherto I had seen none of the remaining monuments of Roman magnificence, and I expected to find this worthy the hands by which it was constructed; for once, the reality surpassed my expectation; this was the only time in my life it ever did so, and the Romans alone could have produced that effect. The view of this noble and sublime work, struck me the more forcibly, from being in the midst of a desert, where silence and solitude render the majestic edifice more striking, and admiration more lively, for though called a bridge it is nothing more than an aqueduct. One cannot help exclaiming, what strength could have transported these enormous stones so far from any quarry? And what motive could have united the labors of so many millions of men, in a place that no one inhabited? I remained here whole hours, in the most ravishing contemplation, and returned pensive and thoughtful to my inn. This reverie was by no means favorable to Madam de Larnage; she had taken care to forewarn me against the girls of Montpellier, but not against the Pont-du-Gard—it is impossible to provide for every contingency.

On my arrival at Nismes, I went to see the amphitheatre, which is a far more magnificent work than even the Pont-du-Gard, yet it made a much less impression on me, perhaps, because my admiration had been already exhausted on the former object; or that the situation of the latter, in the midst of a city, was less proper to excite it. This vast and superb circus is surrounded by small dirty houses, while yet smaller and dirtier fill up the area, in such a manner that the whole produces an unequal and confused effect, in which regret and indignation stifle pleasure and surprise. The amphitheatre at Verona is a vast deal smaller, and less beautiful than that at Nismes, but preserved with all possible care and neatness, by which means alone it made a much stronger and more agreeable impression on me. The French pay no regard to these things, respect no monument of antiquity; ever eager to undertake, they never finish, nor preserve anything that is already finished to their hands.

I was so much better, and had gained such an appetite by exercise, that I stopped a whole day at Pont-du-Lunel, for the sake of good entertainment and company, this being deservedly esteemed at that time the best inn in Europe; for those who kept it, knowing how to make its fortunate situation turn to advantage, took care to provide both abundance and variety. It was really curious to find in a lonely country-house, a table every day furnished with sea and fresh-water fish, excellent game, and choice wines, served up with all the attention and care, which are only to be expected among the great or opulent, and all this for thirty five sous each person: but the Pont-du-Lunel did not long remain on this footing, for the proprietor, presuming too much on its reputation, at length lost it entirely.

During this journey, I really forgot my complaints, but recollected them again on my arrival at Montpellier. My vapors were absolutely gone, but every other complaint remained, and though custom had rendered them less troublesome, they were still sufficient to make any one who had been suddenly seized with them, suppose himself attacked by some mortal disease. In effect they were rather alarming than painful, and made the mind suffer more than the body, though it apparently threatened the

latter with destruction. While my attention was called off by the vivacity of my passions, I paid no attention to my health; but as my complaints were not altogether imaginary, I thought of them seriously when the tumult had subsided. Recollecting the salutary advice of Madam de Larnage, and the cause of my journey, I consulted the most famous practitioners, particularly Monsieur Fizes; and through superabundance of precaution boarded at a doctor's who was an Irishman, and named Fitz-Morris.

This person boarded a number of young gentlemen who were studying physic; and what rendered his house very commodious for an invalid, he contented himself with a moderate pension for provisions, lodging, etc., and took nothing of his boarders for attendance as a physician. He even undertook to execute the orders of M. Fizes, and endeavored to re-establish my health. He certainly acquitted himself very well in this employment; as to regimen, indigestions were not to be gained at his table; and though I am not much hurt at privations of that kind, the objects of comparison were so near, that I could not help thinking with myself sometimes, that M. de Torignan was a much better provider than M. Fitz-Morris; notwithstanding, as there was no danger of dying with hunger, and all the youths were gay and good-humored, I believe this manner of living was really serviceable, and prevented my falling into those languors I had latterly been so subject to. I passed the morning in taking medicines, particularly, I know not what kind of waters, but believe they were those of Vals, and in writing to Madam de Larnage: for the correspondence was regularly kept up, and Rousseau kindly undertook to receive these letters for his good friend Dudding. At noon I took a walk to the Canourgue, with some of our young boarders, who were all very good lads; after this we assembled for dinner; when this was over, an affair of importance employed the greater part of us till night; this was going a little way out of town to take our afternoon's collation, and make up two or three parties at mall, or mallet. As I had neither strength nor skill, I did not play myself but I betted on the game, and, interested for the success of my wager, followed the players and their balls over rough and stony roads, procuring by

this means both an agreeable and salutary exercise. We took our afternoon's refreshment at an inn out of the city. I need not observe that these meetings were extremely merry, but should not omit that they were equally innocent, though the girls of the house were very pretty. M. Fitz-Morris (who was a great mall player himself) was our president; and I must observe, notwithstanding the imputation of wildness that is generally bestowed on students, that I found more virtuous dispositions among these youths than could easily be found among an equal number of men: they were rather noisy than fond of wine, and more merry than libertine.

I accustomed myself so much to this mode of life, and it accorded so entirely with my humor, that I should have been very well content with a continuance of it. Several of my fellow-boarders were Irish, from whom I endeavored to learn some English words, as a precaution for Saint-Andiol. The time now drew near for my departure; every letter Madam de Larnage wrote, she entreated me not to delay it, and at length I prepared to obey her.

560

I was convinced that the physicians (who understood nothing of my disorder) looked on my complaint as imaginary, and treated me accordingly, with their waters and whey. In this respect physicians and philosophers differ widely from theologians; admitting the truth only of what they can explain, and making their knowledge the measure of possibilities. These gentlemen understood nothing of my illness, therefore concluded I could not be ill; and who would presume to doubt the profound skill of a physician? I plainly saw they only meant to amuse, and make me swallow my money; and judging their substitute at Saint-Andiol would do me quite as much service, and be infinitely more agreeable, I resolved to give her the preference; full, therefore, of this wise resolution, I quitted Montpelier.

I set off towards the end of November, after a stay of six weeks or two months in that city, where I left a dozen louis, without either my health or understanding being the better for it, except from a short course of anatomy begun under M. Fitz-Morris,

which I was soon obliged to abandon, from the horrid stench of the bodies he dissected, which I found it impossible to endure.

Not thoroughly satisfied in my own mind on the rectitude of this expedition, as I advanced towards the Bridge of St. Esprit (which was equally the road to Saint-Andiol and to Chambery) I began to reflect on Madam de Warens, the remembrance of whose letters, though less frequent than those from Madam de Larnage, awakened in my heart a remorse that passion had stifled in the first part of my journey, but which became so lively on my return, that, setting just estimate on the love of pleasure, I found myself in such a situation of mind that I could listen wholly to the voice of reason. Besides, in continuing to act the part of an adventurer, I might be less fortunate than I had been in the beginning; for it was only necessary that in all Saint-Andiol there should be one person who had been in England, or who knew the English or anything of their language, to prove me an impostor. The family of Madam de Larnage might not be pleased with me, and would, perhaps, treat me unpolitely; her daughter too made me uneasy, for, spite of myself, I thought more of her than was necessary. I trembled lest I should fall in love with this girl, and that very fear had already half done the business. Was I going, in return for the mother's kindness, to seek the ruin of the daughter? To sow dissension, dishonor, scandal, and hell itself, in her family? The very idea struck me with horror, and I took the firmest resolution to combat and vanquish this unhappy attachment, should I be so unfortunate as to experience it. But why expose myself to this danger? How miserable must the situation be to live with the mother, whom I should be weary of, and sigh for the daughter, without daring to make known my affection! What necessity was there to seek this situation, and expose myself to misfortunes, affronts and remorse, for the sake of pleasures whose greatest charm was already exhausted? For I was sensible this attachment had lost its first vivacity. With these thoughts were mingled reflections relative to my situation and duty to that good and generous friend, who already loaded with debts, would become more so from the foolish expenses I was running into, and whom I was deceiving so unworthily. This reproach at length became so

keen that it triumphed over every temptation, and on approaching the bridge of St. Esprit I formed the resolution to burn my whole magazine of letters from Saint-Andiol, and continue my journey right forward to Chambery.

I executed this resolution courageously, with some sighs I confess, but with the heart-felt satisfaction, which I enjoyed for the first time in my life, of saying, "I merit my own esteem, and know how to prefer duty to pleasure." This was the first real obligation I owed my books, since these had taught me to reflect and compare. After the virtuous principles I had so lately adopted, after all the rules of wisdom and honor I had proposed to myself, and felt so proud to follow, the shame of possessing so little stability, and contradicting so egregiously my own maxims, triumphed over the allurements of pleasure. Perhaps, after all, pride had as much share in my resolution as virtue; but if this pride is not virtue itself, its effects are so similar that we are pardonable in deceiving ourselves.

One advantage resulting from good actions is that they elevate the soul to a disposition of attempting still better; for such is human weakness, that we must place among our good deeds an abstinence from those crimes we are tempted to commit. No sooner was my resolution confirmed than I became another man, or rather, I became what I was before I had erred, and saw in its true colors what the intoxication of the moment had either concealed or disguised. Full of worthy sentiments and wise resolutions, I continued my journey, intending to regulate my future conduct by the laws of virtue, and dedicate myself without reserve to that best of friends, to whom I vowed as much fidelity in future as I felt real attachment. The sincerity of this return to virtue appeared to promise a better destiny; but mine, alas! was fixed, and already begun: even at the very moment when my heart, full of good and virtuous sentiments, was contemplating only innocence and happiness through life, I touched on the fatal period that was to draw after it the long chain of my misfortunes!

My impatience to arrive at Chambery had made me use more diligence than I meant to do. I had sent a letter from Valence, mentioning the day and hour I should arrive, but I had gained half

a day on this calculation, which time I passed at Chaparillan, that I might arrive exactly at the time I mentioned. I wished to enjoy to its full extent the pleasure of seeing her, and preferred deferring this happiness a little, that expectancy might increase the value of it. This precaution had always succeeded; hitherto my arrival had caused a little holiday; I expected no less this time, and these preparations, so dear to me, would have been well worth the trouble of contriving them.

I arrived then exactly at the hour, and while at a considerable distance, looked forward with an expectancy of seeing her on the road to meet me. The beating of my heart increased as I drew near the house; at length I arrived, quite out of breath; for I had left my chaise in the town. I see no one in the garden, at the door, or at the windows; I am seized with terror, fearful that some accident has happened. I enter; all is quiet; the laborers are eating their luncheon in the kitchen, and far from observing any preparation, the servants seem surprised to see me, not knowing I was expected. I go up-stairs, at length see her!—that dear friend! so tenderly, truly, and entirely beloved. I instantly ran towards her, and threw myself at her feet. "Ah! child!" said she, "art thou returned then!" embracing me at the same time. "Have you had a good journey? How do you do?" This reception amused me for some moments. I then asked, whether she had received my letter? she answered "Yes."—"I should have thought not," replied I; and the information concluded there. A young man was with her at this time. I recollected having seen him in the house before my departure, but at present he seemed established there; in short, he was so; I found my place already supplied!

This young man came from the country of Vaud; his father, named Vintzenried, was keeper of the prison, or, as he expressed himself, Captain of the Castle of Chillon. This son of the captain was a journeyman peruke-maker, and gained his living in that capacity when he first presented himself to Madam de Warens, who received him kindly, as she did all comers, particularly those from her own country. He was a tall, fair, silly youth; well enough made, with an unmeaning face, and a mind of the same description, speaking always like the beau in a comedy, and

mingling the manners and customs of his former situation with a long history of his gallantry and success; naming, according to his account, not above half the marchionesses who had favored him and pretending never to have dressed the head of a pretty woman, without having likewise decorated her husband's; vain, foolish, ignorant and insolent; such was the worthy substitute taken in my absence, and the companion offered me on my return!

O! if souls disengaged from their terrestrial bonds, yet view from the bosom of eternal light what passes here below, pardon, dear and respectable shade, that I show no more favor to your failings than my own, but equally unveil both. I ought and will be just to you as to myself; but how much less will you lose by this resolution than I shall! How much do your amiable and gentle disposition, your inexhaustible goodness of heart, your frankness and other amiable virtues, compensate for your foibles, if a subversion of reason alone can be called such. You had errors, but not vices; your conduct was reprehensible, but your heart was ever pure.

The new-comer had shown himself zealous and exact in all her little commissions, which were ever numerous, and he diligently overlooked the laborers. As noisy and insolent as I was quiet and forbearing, he was seen or rather heard at the plough, in the hay-loft, wood-house, stable, farm-yard, at the same instant. He neglected the gardening, this labor being too peaceful and moderate; his chief pleasure was to load or drive the cart, to saw or cleave wood; he was never seen without a hatchet or pick-axe in his hand, running, knocking and hallooing with all his might. I know not how many men's labor he performed, but he certainly made noise enough for ten or a dozen at least. All this bustle imposed on poor Madam de Warens; she thought this young man a treasure, and, willing to attach him to herself, employed the means she imagined necessary for that purpose, not forgetting what she most depended on, the surrender of her person.

Those who have thus far read this work should be able to form some judgment of my heart; its sentiments were the most constant and sincere, particularly those which had brought me back to Chambery; what a sudden and complete overthrow was this to my

whole being! but to judge fully of this, the reader must place himself for a moment in my situation. I saw all the future felicity I had promised myself vanish in a moment; all the charming ideas I had indulged so affectionately, disappear entirely; and I, who even from childhood had not been able to consider my existence for a moment as separate from hers, for the first time saw myself utterly alone. This moment was dreadful, and those that succeeded it were ever gloomy. I was yet young, but the pleasing sentiments of enjoyment and hope, which enliven youth, were extinguished. From that hour my existence seemed half annihilated. I contemplated in advance the melancholy remains of an insipid life, and if at any time an image of happiness glanced through my mind, it was not that which appeared natural to me, and I felt that even should I obtain it I must still be wretched.

I was so dull of apprehension, and my confidence in her was so great, that, notwithstanding the familiar tone of the new-comer, which I looked on as an effect of the easy disposition of Madam de Warens, which rendered her free with everyone, I never should have suspected his real situation had not she herself informed me of it; but she hastened to make this avowal with a freedom calculated to inflame me with resentment, could my heart have turned to that point. Speaking of this connection as quite immaterial with respect to herself, she reproached me with negligence in the care of the family, and mentioned my frequent absence, as though she had been in haste to supply my place. "Ah!" said I, my heart bursting with the most poignant grief, "what do you dare to inform me of? Is this the reward of an attachment like mine? Have you so many times preserved my life, for the sole purpose of taking from me all that could render it desirable? Your infidelity will bring me to the grave, but you will regret my loss!" She answered with a tranquillity sufficient to distract me, that I talked like a child; that people did not die from such slight causes; that our friendship need be no less sincere, nor we any less intimate, for that her tender attachment to me could neither diminish nor end but with herself; in a word she gave me to understand that my happiness need not suffer any decrease from the good fortune of this new favorite.

Never did the purity, truth and force of my attachment to her appear more evident; never did I feel the sincerity and honesty of my soul more forcibly, than at that moment. I threw myself at her feet, embracing her knees with torrents of tears. "No, madam," replied I, with the most violent agitation, "I love you too much to disgrace you thus far, and too truly to share you; the regret that accompanied the first acquisition of your favors has continued to increase with my affection. I cannot preserve them by so violent an augmentation of it. You shall ever have my adoration: be worthy of it; to me that is more necessary than all you can bestow. It is to you, O my dearest friend! that I resign my rights; it is to the union of our hearts that I sacrifice my pleasure; rather would I perish a thousand times than thus degrade her I love."

I preserved this resolution with a constancy worthy, I may say, of the sentiment that gave it birth. From this moment I saw this beloved woman but with the eyes of a real son. It should be remarked here, that this resolve did not meet her private approbation, as I too well perceived; yet she never employed the least art to make me renounce it either by insinuating proposals, caresses, or any of those means which women so well know how to employ without exposing themselves to violent censure, and which seldom fail to succeed. Reduced to seek a fate independent of hers, and not able to devise one, I passed to the other extreme, placing my happiness so absolutely in her, that I became almost regardless of myself. The ardent desire to see her happy, at any rate, absorbed all my affections; it was in vain she endeavored to separate her felicity from mine, I felt I had a part in it, spite of every impediment.

Thus those virtues whose seeds in my heart begun to spring up with my misfortunes: they had been cultivated by study, and only waited the fermentation of adversity to become prolific. The first-fruit of this disinterested disposition was to put from my heart every sentiment of hatred and envy against him who had supplanted me. I even sincerely wished to attach myself to this young man; to form and educate him; to make him sensible of his happiness, and, if possible, render him worthy of it; in a word, to do for him what Anet had formerly done for me. But the

similarity of dispositions was wanting. More insinuating and enlightened than Anet, I possessed neither his coolness, fortitude, nor commanding strength of character, which I must have had in order to succeed. Neither did the young man possess those qualities which Anet found in me; such as gentleness, gratitude, and above all, the knowledge of a want of his instructions, and an ardent desire to render them useful. All these were wanting; the person I wished to improve, saw in me nothing but an importunate, chattering pedant: while on the contrary he admired his own importance in the house, measuring the services he thought he rendered by the noise he made, and looking on his saws, hatchets, and pick-axes, as infinitely more useful than all my old books: and, perhaps, in this particular, he might not be altogether blamable; but he gave himself a number of airs sufficient to make anyone die with laughter. With the peasants he assumed the airs of a country gentleman; presently he did as much with me, and at length with Madam de Warens herself. His name, Vintzenried, did not appear noble enough, he therefore changed it to that of Monsieur de Courtilles, and by the latter appellation he was known at Chambéry, and in Maurienne, where he married.

At length this illustrious personage gave himself such airs of consequence, that he was everything in the house, and myself nothing. When I had the misfortune to displease him, he scolded Madam de Warens, and a fear of exposing her to his brutality rendered me subservient to all his whims, so that every time he cleaved wood (an office which he performed with singular pride) it was necessary I should be an idle spectator and admirer of his prowess. This lad was not, however, of a bad disposition; he loved Madam de Warens, indeed it was impossible to do otherwise; nor had he any aversion even to me, and when he happened to be out of his airs would listen to our admonitions, and frankly own he was a fool; yet notwithstanding these acknowledgements his follies continued in the same proportion. His knowledge was so contracted, and his inclinations so mean, that it was useless to reason, and almost impossible to be pleased with him. Not content with a most charming woman, he amused

himself with an old red-haired, toothless waiting-maid, whose unwelcome service Madam de Warens had the patience to endure, though it was absolutely disgusting. I soon perceived this new inclination, and was exasperated at it; but I saw something else, which affected me yet more, and made a deeper impression on me than anything had hitherto done; this was a visible coldness in the behavior of Madam de Warens towards me.

The privation I had imposed on myself, and which she affected to approve, is one of those affronts which women scarcely ever forgive. Take the most sensible, the most philosophic female, one the least attached to pleasure, and slighting her favors, if within your reach, will be found the most unpardonable crime, even though she may care nothing for the man. This rule is certainly without exception; since a sympathy so natural and ardent was impaired in her, by an abstinence founded only on virtue, attachment and esteem, I no longer found with her that union of hearts which constituted all the happiness of mine; she seldom sought me but when we had occasion to complain of this new-comer, for when they were agreed, I enjoyed but little of her confidence, and, at length, was scarcely ever consulted in her affairs. She seemed pleased, indeed, with my company, but had I passed whole days without seeing her she would hardly have missed me.

Insensibly, I found myself desolate and alone in that house where I had formerly been the very soul; where, if I may so express myself, I had enjoyed a double life, and by degrees, I accustomed myself to disregard everything that passed, and even those who dwelt there. To avoid continual mortifications, I shut myself up with my books, or else wept and sighed unnoticed in the woods. This life soon became insupportable; I felt that the presence of a woman so dear to me, while estranged from her heart, increased my unhappiness, and was persuaded, that, ceasing to see her, I should feel myself less cruelly separated.

I resolved, therefore, to quit the house, mentioned it to her, and she, far from opposing my resolution, approved it. She had an acquaintance at Grenoble, called Madam de Deybens, whose husband was on terms of friendship with Monsieur Malby, chief

Provost of Lyons. M. Deybens proposed my educating M. Malby's children; I accepted this offer, and departed for Lyons without causing, and almost without feeling, the least regret at a separation, the bare idea of which, a few months before, would have given us both the most excruciating torments.

I had almost as much knowledge as was necessary for a tutor, and flattered myself that my method would be unexceptionable; but the year I passed at M. Malby's was sufficient to undeceive me in that particular. The natural gentleness of my disposition seemed calculated for the employment, if hastiness had not been mingled with it. While things went favorably, and I saw the pains (which I did not spare) succeed, I was an angel; but a devil when they went contrary. If my pupils did not understand me, I was hasty, and when they showed any symptoms of an untoward disposition, I was so provoked that I could have killed them; which behavior was not likely to render them either good or wise. I had two under my care, and they were of very different tempers. St. Marie, who was between eight and nine years old, had a good person and quick apprehension, was giddy, lively, playful and mischievous; but his mischief was ever good-humored. The younger one, named Condillac, appeared stupid and fretful, was headstrong as a mule, and seemed incapable of instruction. It may be supposed that between both I did not want employment, yet with patience and temper I might have succeeded; but wanting both, I did nothing worth mentioning, and my pupils profited very little. I could only make use of three means, which are very weak, and often pernicious with children; namely, sentiment, reasoning, passion. I sometimes exerted myself so much with St. Marie, that I could not refrain from tears, and wished to excite similar sensations in him; as if it was reasonable to suppose a child could be susceptible to such emotions. Sometimes I exhausted myself in reasoning, as if persuaded he could comprehend me; and as he frequently formed very subtle arguments, concluded he must be reasonable, because he bid fair to be so good a logician.

The little Condillac was still more embarrassing; for he neither understood, answered, nor was concerned at anything; he was of an obstinacy beyond belief, and was never happier than when he

had succeeded in putting me in a rage; then, indeed, he was the philosopher, and I the child. I was conscious of all my faults, studied the tempers of my pupils, and became acquainted with them; but where was the use of seeing the evil, without being able to apply a remedy? My penetration was unavailing, since it never prevented any mischief; and everything I undertook failed, because all I did to effect my designs was precisely what I ought not to have done.

I was not more fortunate in what had only reference to myself, than in what concerned my pupils. Madam Deybens, in recommending me to her friend Madam de Malby, had requested her to form my manners, and endeavor to give me an air of the world. She took some pains on this account, wishing to teach me how to do the honors of the house; but I was so awkward, bashful, and stupid, that she found it necessary to stop there. This, however, did not prevent me from falling in love with her, according to my usual custom; I even behaved in such a manner, that she could not avoid observing it; but I never durst declare my passion; and as the lady never seemed in a humor to make advances, I soon became weary of my sighs and ogling, being convinced they answered no manner of purpose.

I had quite lost my inclination for little thieveries while with Madam de Warens; indeed, as everything belonged to me, there was nothing to steal; besides, the elevated notions I had imbibed ought to have rendered me in future above such meanness, and generally speaking they certainly did so; but this rather proceeded from my having learned to conquer temptations, than having succeeded in rooting out the propensity, and I should even now greatly dread stealing, as in my infancy, were I yet subject to the same inclinations. I had a proof of this at M. Malby's, when, though surrounded by a number of little things that I could easily have pilfered, and which appeared no temptation, I took it into my head to covert some white Arbois wine, some glasses of which I had drank at table, and thought delicious. It happened to be rather thick, and as I fancied myself an excellent finer of wine, I mentioned my skill, and this was accordingly trusted to my care, but in attempting to mend, I spoiled it, though to the sight only,

for it remained equally agreeable to the taste. Profiting by this opportunity, I furnished myself from time to time with a few bottles to drink in my own apartment; but unluckily, I could never drink without eating; the difficulty lay therefore, in procuring bread. It was impossible to make a reserve of this article, and to have it brought by the footman was discovering myself, and insulting the master of the house; I could not bear to purchase it myself; how could a fine gentleman, with a sword at his side, enter a baker's shop to buy a small loaf of bread? it was utterly impossible. At length I recollected the thoughtless saying of a great princess, who, on being informed that the country people had no bread, replied, "Then let them eat pastry!" Yet even this resource was attended with a difficulty. I sometimes went out alone for this very purpose, running over the whole city, and passing thirty pastry cook's shops, without daring to enter any one of them. In the first place, it was necessary there should be only one person in the shop, and that person's physiognomy must be so encouraging as to give me confidence to pass the threshold; but when once the dear little cake was procured, and I shut up in my chamber with that and a bottle of wine, taken cautiously from the bottom of a cupboard, how much did I enjoy drinking my wine, and reading a few pages of a novel; for when I have no company I always wish to read while eating; it seems a substitute for society, and I dispatch alternately a page and a morsel; 'tis indeed, as if my book dined with me.

I was neither dissolute nor sottish, never in my whole life having been intoxicated with liquor; my little thefts were not very indiscreet, yet they were discovered; the bottles betrayed me, and though no notice was taken of it, I had no longer the management of the cellar. In all this Monsieur Malby conducted himself with prudence and politeness, being really a very deserving man, who, under a manner as harsh as his employment, concealed a real gentleness of disposition and uncommon goodness of heart: he was judicious, equitable, and (what would not be expected from an officer of the Marechaussee) very humane.

Sensible of his indulgence, I became greatly attached to him, which made my stay at Lyons longer than it would otherwise have

been; but at length, disgusted with an employment which I was not calculated for, and a situation of great confinement, consequently disagreeable to me, after a year's trial, during which time I spared no pains to fulfill my engagement, I determined to quit my pupils; being convinced I should never succeed in educating them properly. Monsieur Malby saw this as clearly as myself, though I am inclined to think he would never have dismissed me had I not spared him the trouble, which was an excess of condescension in this particular, that I certainly cannot justify.

What rendered my situation yet more insupportable was the comparison I was continually drawing between the life I now led and that which I had quitted; the remembrance of my dear Charmettes, my garden, trees, fountain and orchard, but, above all, the company of her who was born to give life and soul to every other enjoyment. On calling to mind our pleasures and innocent life, I was seized with such oppressions and heaviness of heart, as deprived me of the power of performing anything as it should be. A hundred times was I tempted instantly to set off on foot to my dear Madam de Warens, being persuaded that could I once more see her, I should be content to die that moment: in fine, I could no longer resist the tender emotions which recalled me back to her, whatever it might cost me. I accused myself of not having been sufficiently patient, complaisant and kind; concluding I might yet live happily with her on the terms of tender friendship, and by showing more for her than I had hitherto done. I formed the finest projects in the world, burned to execute them, left all, renounced everything, departed, fled, and arriving in all the transports of my early youth, found myself once more at her feet. Alas! I should have died there with joy, had I found in her reception, in her embrace, or in her heart, one-quarter of what I had formerly found there, and which I yet found the undiminished warmth of.

Fearful illusions of transitory things, how often dost thou torment us in vain! She received me with that excellence of heart which could only die with her; but I sought the influence there which could never be recalled, and had hardly been half an hour

with her before I was once more convinced that my former happiness had vanished forever, and that I was in the same melancholy situation which I had been obliged to fly from; yet without being able to accuse any person with my unhappiness, for Courtilles really was not to blame, appearing to see my return with more pleasure than dissatisfaction. But how could I bear to be a secondary person with her to whom I had been everything, and who could never cease being such to me? How could I live an alien in that house where I had been the child? The sight of every object that had been witness to my former happiness, rendered the comparison yet more distressing; I should have suffered less in any other habitation, for this incessantly recalled such pleasing remembrances, that it was irritating the recollection of my loss.

Consumed with vain regrets, given up to the most gloomy melancholy, I resumed the custom of remaining alone, except at meals; shut up with my books, I sought to give some useful diversion to my ideas, and feeling the imminent danger of want, which I had so long dreaded, I sought means to prepare for and receive it, when Madam de Warens should have no other resource. I had placed her household on a footing not to become worse; but since my departure everything had been altered. He who now managed her affairs was a spendthrift, and wished to make a great appearance; such as keeping a good horse with elegant trappings; loved to appear gay in the eyes of the neighbors, and was perpetually undertaking something he did not understand. Her pension was taken up in advance, her rent was in arrears, debts of every kind continued to accumulate; I could plainly foresee that her pension would be seized, and perhaps suppressed; in short, I expected nothing but ruin and misfortune, and the moment appeared to approach so rapidly that I already felt all its horrors.

My closet was my only amusement, and after a tedious search for remedies for the sufferings of my mind, I determined to seek some against the evil of distressing circumstances, which I daily expected would fall upon us, and returning to my old chimeras, behold me once more building castles in the air to relieve this dear friend from the cruel extremities into which I saw her ready

to fall. I did not believe myself wise enough to shine in the republic of letters, or to stand any chance of making a fortune by that means; a new idea, therefore, inspired me with that confidence, which the mediocrity of my talents could not impart.

In ceasing to teach music I had not abandoned the thoughts of it; on the contrary, I had studied the theory sufficiently to consider myself well informed on the subject. When reflecting on the trouble it had cost me to read music, and the great difficulty I yet experienced in singing at sight, I began to think the fault might as well arise from the manner of noting as from my own dulness, being sensible it was an art which most people find difficult to understand. By examining the formation of the signs, I was convinced they were frequently very ill devised. I had before thought of marking the gamut by figures, to prevent the trouble of having lines to draw, on noting the plainest air; but had been stopped by the difficulty of the octaves, and by the distinction of measure and quantity: this idea returned again to my mind, and on a careful revision of it, I found the difficulties by no means insurmountable. I pursued it successfully, and was at length able to note any music whatever by figures, with the greatest exactitude and simplicity. From this moment I supposed my fortune made, and in the ardor of sharing it with her to whom I owed everything, thought only of going to Paris, not doubting that on presenting my project to the Academy, it would be adopted with rapture. I had brought some money from Lyons; I augmented this stock by the sale of my books, and in the course of a fortnight my resolution was both formed and executed: in short, full of the magnificent ideas it had inspired, and which were common to me on every occasion, I departed from Savoy with my new system of music, as I had formerly done from Turin with my heron-fountain.

Such have been the errors and faults of my youth; I have related the history of them with a fidelity which my heart approves; if my riper years were dignified with some virtues, I should have related them with the same frankness; it was my intention to have done this, but I must forego this pleasing task and stop here. Time, which renders justice to the characters of

most men, may withdraw the veil; and should my memory reach posterity, they may one day discover what I had to say—they will then understand why I am now silent.

BOOK VII

After two years' silence and patience, and notwithstanding my resolutions, I again take up my pen: Reader, suspend your judgment as to the reasons which force me to such a step: of these you can be no judge until you shall have read my book.

My peaceful youth has been seen to pass away calmly and agreeably without any great disappointments or remarkable prosperity. This mediocrity was mostly owing to my ardent yet feeble nature, less prompt in undertaking than easy to discourage; quitting repose for violent agitations, but returning to it from lassitude and inclinations, and which, placing me in an idle and tranquil state for which alone I felt I was born, at a distance from the paths of great virtues and still further from those of great vices, never permitted me to arrive at anything great, either good or bad. What a different account will I soon have to give of myself! Fate, which for thirty years forced my inclinations, for thirty others has seemed to oppose them; and this continued opposition, between my situation and inclinations, will appear to have been the source of enormous faults, unheard of misfortunes, and every virtue except that fortitude which alone can do honor to adversity.

The history of the first part of my life was written from memory, and is consequently full of errors. As I am obliged to write the second part from memory also, the errors in it will probably be still more numerous. The agreeable remembrance of the finest portion of my years, passed with so much tranquillity and innocence, has left in my heart a thousand charming impressions which I love incessantly to call to my recollection. It will soon appear how different from these those of the rest of my life have been. To recall them to my mind would be to renew their bitterness. Far from increasing that of my situation by these sorrowful reflections, I repel them as much as possible, and in this

endeavor often succeed so well as to be unable to find them at will. This facility of forgetting my misfortunes is a consolation which Heaven has reserved to me in the midst of those which fate has one day to accumulate upon my head. My memory, which presents to me no objects but such as are agreeable, is the happy counterpoise of my terrified imagination, by which I foresee nothing but a cruel futurity.

All the papers I had collected to aid my recollection, and guide me in this undertaking, are no longer in my possession, nor can I ever again hope to regain them.

595

I have but one faithful guide on which I can depend: this is the chain of the sentiments by which the succession of my existence has been marked, and by these the events which have been either the cause or the effect of the manner of it. I easily forget my misfortunes, but I cannot forget my faults, and still less my virtuous sentiments. The remembrance of these is too dear to me ever to suffer them to be effaced from my mind. I may omit facts, transpose events, and fall into some errors of dates; but I cannot be deceived in what I have felt, nor in that which from sentiment I have done; and to relate this is the chief end of my present work. The real object of my confessions is to communicate an exact knowledge of what I interiorly am and have been in every situation of my life. I have promised the history of my mind, and to write it faithfully I have no need of other memoirs: to enter into my own heart, as I have hitherto done, will alone be sufficient.

There is, however, and very happily, an interval of six or seven years, relative to which I have exact references, in a collection of letters copied from the originals, in the hands of M. du Peyrou. This collection, which concludes in 1760, comprehends the whole time of my residence at the hermitage, and my great quarrel with those who called themselves my friends; that memorable epocha of my life, and the source of all my other misfortunes. With respect to more recent original letters which may remain in my possession, and are but few in number, instead of transcribing them at the end of this collection, too voluminous to enable me to deceive the vigilance of my Arguses, I will copy them into the work whenever they appear to furnish any explanation, be this

either for or against myself; for I am not under the least apprehension lest the reader should forget I make my confession, and be induced to believe I make my apology; but he cannot expect I shall conceal the truth when it testifies in my favor.

The second part, it is likewise to be remembered, contains nothing in common with the first, except truth; nor has any other advantage over it, but the importance of the facts; in everything else, it is inferior to the former. I wrote the first with pleasure, with satisfaction, and at my ease, at Wootton, or in the castle Trie: everything I had to recollect was a new enjoyment. I returned to my closet with an increased pleasure, and, without constraint, gave that turn to my descriptions which most flattered my imagination.

At present my head and memory are become so weak as to render me almost incapable of every kind of application: my present undertaking is the result of constraint, and a heart full of sorrow. I have nothing to treat of but misfortunes, treacheries, perfidies, and circumstances equally afflicting. I would give the world, could I bury in the obscurity of time every thing I have to say, and which, in spite of myself, I am obliged to relate. I am, at the same time, under the necessity of being mysterious and subtle, of endeavoring to impose and of descending to things the most foreign to my nature. The ceiling under which I write has eyes; the walls of my chamber have ears. Surrounded by spies and by vigilant and malevolent inspectors, disturbed, and my attention diverted, I hastily commit to paper a few broken sentences, which I have scarcely time to read, and still less to correct. I know that, notwithstanding the barriers which are multiplied around me, my enemies are afraid truth should escape by some little opening. What means can I take to introduce it to the world? This, however, I attempt with but few hopes of success. The reader will judge whether or not such a situation furnishes the means of agreeable descriptions, or of giving them a seductive coloring! I therefore inform such as may undertake to read this work, that nothing can secure them from weariness in the prosecution of their task, unless it be the desire of becoming more fully

acquainted with a man whom they already know, and a sincere love of justice and truth.

In my first part I brought down my narrative to my departure with infinite regret for Paris, leaving my heart at Charmettes, and, there building my last castle in the air, intending some day to return to the feet of mamma, restored to herself, with the treasures I should have acquired, and depending upon my system of music as upon a certain fortune.

I made some stay at Lyons to visit my acquaintance, procure letters of recommendation to Paris, and to sell my books of geometry which I had brought with me. I was well received by all whom I knew. M. and Madam de Malby seemed pleased to see me again, and several times invited me to dinner. At their house I became acquainted with the Abbe de Malby, as I had already done with the Abbe de Condillac, both of whom were on a visit to their brother. The Abbe de Malby gave me letters to Paris; among others, one to M. de Pontenelle, and another to the Comte de Caylus. These were very agreeable acquaintances, especially the first, to whose friendship for me his death only put a period, and from whom, in our private conversations, I received advice which I ought to have more exactly followed.

I likewise saw M. Bordes, with whom I had been long acquainted, and who had frequently obliged me with the greatest cordiality and the most real pleasure. He it was who enabled me to sell my books; and he also gave me from himself good recommendations to Paris. I again saw the intendant for whose acquaintance I was indebted to M. Bordes, and who introduced me to the Duke de Richelieu, who was then passing through Lyons. M. Pallu presented me. The Duke received me well, and invited me to come and see him at Paris; I did so several times; although this great acquaintance, of which I shall frequently have occasion to speak, was never of the most trifling utility to me.

I visited the musician David, who, in one of my former journeys, and in my distress, had rendered me service. He had either lent or given me a cap and a pair of stockings, which I have never returned, nor has he ever asked me for them, although we have since that time frequently seen each other. I, however, made

him a present, something like an equivalent. I would say more upon this subject, were what I have owned in question; but I have to speak of what I have done, which, unfortunately, is far from being the same thing.

I also saw the noble and generous Perrichon, and not without feeling the effects of his accustomed munificence; for he made me the same present he had previously done to the elegant Bernard, by paying for my place in the diligence. I visited the surgeon Parisot, the best and most benevolent of men; as also his beloved Godefroi, who had lived with him ten years, and whose merit chiefly consisted in her gentle manners and goodness of heart. It was impossible to see this woman without pleasure, or to leave her without regret. Nothing better shows the inclinations of a man, than the nature of his attachments.

[Unless he be deceived in his choice, or that she, to whom he attaches himself, changes her character by an extraordinary concurrence of causes, which is not absolutely impossible. Were this consequence to be admitted without modification, Socrates must be judged of by his wife Xantippe, and Dion by his friend Calippus, which would be the most false and iniquitous judgment ever made. However, let no injurious application be here made to my wife. She is weak and more easily deceived than I at first imagined, but by her pure and excellent character she is worthy of all my esteem.]

Those who had once seen the gentle Godefroi, immediately knew the good and amiable Parisot.

605

I was much obliged to all these good people, but I afterwards neglected them all; not from ingratitude, but from that invincible indolence which so often assumes its appearance. The remembrance of their services has never been effaced from my mind, nor the impression they made from my heart; but I could more easily have proved my gratitude, than assiduously have shown them the exterior of that sentiment. Exactitude in correspondence is what I never could observe; the moment I began to relax, the shame and embarrassment of repairing my fault made me aggravate it, and I entirely desist from writing; I have, therefore, been silent, and appeared to forget them. Parisot and Perrichon took not the least notice of my negligence, and I ever found them the same. But, twenty years afterwards it will be

seen, in M. Bordes, to what a degree the self-love of a wit can make him carry his vengeance when he feels himself neglected.

Before I leave Lyons, I must not forget an amiable person, whom I again saw with more pleasure than ever, and who left in my heart the most tender remembrance. This was Mademoiselle Serre, of whom I have spoken in my first part; I renewed my acquaintance with her whilst I was at M. de Malby's.

Being this time more at leisure, I saw her more frequently, and she made the most sensible impressions on my heart. I had some reason to believe her own was not unfavorable to my pretensions; but she honored me with her confidence so far as to remove from me all temptation to allure her partiality.

She had no fortune, and in this respect exactly resembled myself; our situations were too similar to permit us to become united; and with the views I then had, I was far from thinking of marriage. She gave me to understand that a young merchant, one M. Geneve, seemed to wish to obtain her hand. I saw him once or twice at her lodgings; he appeared to me to be an honest man, and this was his general character. Persuaded she would be happy with him, I was desirous he should marry her, which he afterwards did; and that I might not disturb their innocent love, I hastened my departure; offering up, for the happiness of that charming woman, prayers, which, here below were not long heard. Alas! her time was very short, for I afterwards heard she died in the second or third year after her marriage. My mind, during the journey, was wholly absorbed in tender regret. I felt, and since that time, when these circumstances have been present to my recollection, have frequently done the same; that although the sacrifices made to virtue and our duty may sometimes be painful, we are well rewarded by the agreeable remembrance they leave deeply engraven in our hearts.

I this time saw Paris in as favorable a point of view as it had appeared to me in an unfavorable one at my first journey; not that my ideas of its brilliancy arose from the splendor of my lodgings; for in consequence of an address given me by M. Bordes, I resided at the Hotel St. Quentin, Rue des Cordiers, near the Sorbonne; a vile street, a miserable hotel, and a wretched

apartment: but nevertheless a house in which several men of merit, such as Gresset, Bordes, Abbe Malby, Condillac, and several others, of whom unfortunately I found not one, had taken up their quarters; but I there met with M. Bonnefond, a man unacquainted with the world, lame, litigious, and who affected to be a purist. To him I owe the acquaintance of M. Roguin, at present the oldest friend I have and by whose means I became acquainted with Diderot, of whom I shall soon have occasion to say a good deal.

I arrived at Paris in the autumn of 1741, with fifteen louis in my purse, and with my comedy of Narcissus and my musical project in my pocket. These composed my whole stock; consequently I had not much time to lose before I attempted to turn the latter to some advantage. I therefore immediately thought of making use of my recommendations.

A young man who arrives at Paris, with a tolerable figure, and announces himself by his talents, is sure to be well received. This was my good fortune, which procured me some pleasure without leading to anything solid. Of all the persons to whom I was recommended, three only were useful to me. M. Damesin, a gentleman of Savoy, at that time equerry, and I believe favorite, of the Princess of Carignan; M. de Boze, Secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions, and keeper of the medals of the king's cabinet; and Father Castel, a Jesuit, author of the 'Clavecin oculaire'.—[ocular harpsichord.]

All these recommendations, except that to M. Damesin, were given me by the Abbe de Malby.

M. Damesin provided me with that which was most needful, by means of two persons with whom he brought me acquainted. One was M. Gase, 'president a mortier' of the parliament of Bordeaux, and who played very well upon the violin; the other, the Abbe de Leon, who then lodged in the Sorbonne, a young nobleman; extremely amiable, who died in the flower of his age, after having, for a few moments, made a figure in the world under the name of the Chevalier de Rohan. Both these gentlemen had an inclination to learn composition. In this I gave them lessons for a few months, by which means my decreasing purse received some

little aid. The Abbe Leon conceived a friendship for me, and wished me to become his secretary; but he was far from being rich, and all the salary he could offer me was eight hundred livres, which, with infinite regret, I refused; since it was insufficient to defray the expenses of my lodging, food, and clothing.

I was well received by M. de Boze. He had a thirst for knowledge, of which he possessed not a little, but was somewhat pedantic. Madam de Boze much resembled him; she was lively and affected. I sometimes dined with them, and it is impossible to be more awkward than I was in her presence. Her easy manner intimidated me, and rendered mine more remarkable. When she presented me a plate, I modestly put forward my fork to take one of the least bits of what she offered me, which made her give the plate to her servant, turning her head aside that I might not see her laugh. She had not the least suspicion that in the head of the rustic with whom she was so diverted there was some small portion of wit. M. de Boze presented me to M. de Reaumur, his friend, who came to dine with him every Friday, the day on which the Academy of Sciences met. He mentioned to him my project, and the desire I had of having it examined by the academy. M. de Reaumur consented to make the proposal, and his offer was accepted. On the day appointed I was introduced and presented by M. de Reaumur, and on the same day, August 22d, 1742, I had the honor to read to the academy the memoir I had prepared for that purpose. Although this illustrious assembly might certainly well be expected to inspire me with awe, I was less intimidated on this occasion than I had been in the presence of Madam de Boze, and I got tolerably well through my reading and the answers I was obliged to give. The memoir was well received, and acquired me some compliments by which I was equally surprised and flattered, imagining that before such an assembly, whoever was not a member of it could not have commonsense. The persons appointed to examine my system were M. Mairan, M. Hellot, and M. de Fouchy, all three men of merit, but not one of them understood music, at least not enough of composition to enable them to judge of my project.

During my conference with these gentlemen, I was convinced with no less certainty than surprise, that if men of learning have sometimes fewer prejudices than others, they more tenaciously retain those they have. However weak or false most of their objections were, and although I answered them with great timidity, and I confess, in bad terms, yet with decisive reasons, I never once made myself understood, or gave them any explanation in the least satisfactory. I was constantly surprised at the facility with which, by the aid of a few sonorous phrases, they refuted, without having comprehended me. They had learned, I know not where, that a monk of the name of Souhaitti had formerly invented a mode of noting the gamut by ciphers: a sufficient proof that my system was not new. This might, perhaps, be the case; for although I had never heard of Father Souhaitti, and notwithstanding his manner of writing the seven notes without attending to the octaves was not, under any point of view, worthy of entering into competition with my simple and commodious invention for easily noting by ciphers every possible kind of music, keys, rests, octaves, measure, time, and length of note; things on which Souhaitti had never thought: it was nevertheless true, that with respect to the elementary expression of the seven notes, he was the first inventor.

But besides their giving to this primitive invention more importance than was due to it, they went still further, and, whenever they spoke of the fundamental principles of the system, talked nonsense. The greatest advantage of my scheme was to supersede transpositions and keys, so that the same piece of music was noted and transposed at will by means of the change of a single initial letter at the head of the air. These gentlemen had heard from the music-masters of Paris that the method of executing by transposition was a bad one; and on this authority converted the most evident advantage of my system into an invincible objection against it, and affirmed that my mode of notation was good for vocal music, but bad for instrumental; instead of concluding as they ought to have done, that it was good for vocal, and still better for instrumental. On their report the academy granted me a certificate full of fine compliments, amidst

which it appeared that in reality it judged my system to be neither new nor useful. I did not think proper to ornament with such a paper the work entitled 'Dissertation sur la musique moderne', by which I appealed to the public.

I had reason to remark on this occasion that, even with a narrow understanding, the sole but profound knowledge of a thing is preferable for the purpose of judging of it, to all the lights resulting from a cultivation of the sciences, when to these a particular study of that in question has not been joined. The only solid objection to my system was made by Rameau. I had scarcely explained it to him before he discovered its weak part. "Your signs," said he, "are very good inasmuch as they clearly and simply determine the length of notes, exactly represent intervals, and show the simple in the double note, which the common notation does not do; but they are objectionable on account of their requiring an operation of the mind, which cannot always accompany the rapidity of execution. The position of our notes," continued he, "is described to the eye without the concurrence of this operation. If two notes, one very high and the other very low, be joined by a series of intermediate ones, I see at the first glance the progress from one to the other by conjoined degrees; but in your system, to perceive this series, I must necessarily run over your ciphers one after the other; the glance of the eye is here useless." The objection appeared to me insurmountable, and I instantly assented to it. Although it be simple and striking, nothing can suggest it but great knowledge and practice of the art, and it is by no means astonishing that not one of the academicians should have thought of it. But what creates much surprise is, that these men of great learning, and who are supposed to possess so much knowledge, should so little know that each ought to confine his judgment to that which relates to the study with which he has been conversant.

My frequent visits to the literati appointed to examine my system and the other academicians gave me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the most distinguished men of letters in Paris, and by this means the acquaintance that would have been the consequence of my sudden admission amongst them, which

afterwards came to pass, was already established. With respect to the present moment, absorbed in my new system of music, I obstinately adhered to my intention of effecting a revolution in the art, and by that means of acquiring a celebrity which, in the fine arts, is in Paris mostly accompanied by fortune. I shut myself in my chamber and labored three or four months with inexpressible ardor, in forming into a work for the public eye, the memoir I had read before the academy. The difficulty was to find a bookseller to take my manuscript; and this on account of the necessary expenses for new characters, and because booksellers give not their money by handfuls to young authors; although to me it seemed but just my work should render me the bread I had eaten while employed in its composition.

Bonnefond introduced me to Quillau the father, with whom I agreed to divide the profits, without reckoning the privilege, of which I paid the whole expense. Such were the future proceedings of this Quillau that I lost the expenses of my privilege, never having received a farthing from that edition; which, probably, had but very middling success, although the Abbe des Fontaines promised to give it celebrity, and, notwithstanding the other journalists, had spoken of it very favorably.

The greatest obstacle to making the experiment of my system was the fear, in case of its not being received, of losing the time necessary to learn it. To this I answered, that my notes rendered the ideas so clear, that to learn music by means of the ordinary characters, time would be gained by beginning with mine. To prove this by experience, I taught music gratis to a young American lady, Mademoiselle des Roulins, with whom M. Roguin had brought me acquainted. In three months she read every kind of music, by means of my notation, and sung at sight better than I did myself, any piece that was not too difficult. This success was convincing, but not known; any other person would have filled the journals with the detail, but with some talents for discovering useful things, I never have possessed that of setting them off to advantage.

Thus was my airy castle again overthrown; but this time I was thirty years of age, and in Paris, where it is impossible to live for

a trifle. The resolution I took upon this occasion will astonish none but those by whom the first part of these memoirs has not been read with attention. I had just made great and fruitless efforts, and was in need of relaxation. Instead of sinking with despair I gave myself up quietly to my indolence and to the care of Providence; and the better to wait for its assistance with patience, I lay down a frugal plan for the slow expenditure of a few louis, which still remained in my possession, regulating the expense of my supine pleasures without retrenching it; going to the coffee-house but every other day, and to the theatre but twice a week. With respect to the expenses of girls of easy virtue, I had no retrenchment to make; never having in the whole course of my life applied so much as a farthing to that use except once, of which I shall soon have occasion to speak. The security, voluptuousness, and confidence with which I gave myself up to this indolent and solitary life, which I had not the means of continuing for three months, is one of the singularities of my life, and the oddities of my disposition. The extreme desire I had the public should think of me was precisely what discouraged me from showing myself; and the necessity of paying visits rendered them to such a degree insupportable, that I ceased visiting the academicians and other men of letters, with whom I had cultivated an acquaintance. Marivaux, the Abbe Malby, and Fontenelle, were almost the only persons whom I sometimes went to see. To the first I showed my comedy of Narcissus. He was pleased with it, and had the goodness to make in it some improvements. Diderot, younger than these, was much about my own age. He was fond of music, and knew it theoretically; we conversed together, and he communicated to me some of his literary projects. This soon formed betwixt us a more intimate connection, which lasted fifteen years, and which probably would still exist were not I, unfortunately, and by his own fault, of the same profession with himself.

It would be impossible to imagine in what manner I employed this short and precious interval which still remained to me, before circumstances forced me to beg my bread:—in learning by memory passages from the poets which I had learned and

forgotten a hundred times. Every morning at ten o'clock, I went to walk in the Luxembourg with a Virgil and a Rousseau in my pocket, and there, until the hour of dinner, I passed away the time in restoring to my memory a sacred ode or a bucolic, without being discouraged by forgetting, by the study of the morning, what I had learned the evening before. I recollected that after the defeat of Nicias at Syracuse the captive Athenians obtained a livelihood by reciting the poems of Homer. The use I made of this erudition to ward off misery was to exercise my happy memory by learning all the poets by rote.

I had another expedient, not less solid, in the game of chess, to which I regularly dedicated, at Maugis, the evenings on which I did not go to the theatre. I became acquainted with M. de Legal, M. Husson, Philidor, and all the great chess players of the day, without making the least improvement in the game. However, I had no doubt but, in the end, I should become superior to them all, and this, in my own opinion, was a sufficient resource. The same manner of reasoning served me in every folly to which I felt myself inclined. I said to myself: whoever excels in anything is sure to acquire a distinguished reception in society. Let us therefore excel, no matter in what, I shall certainly be sought after; opportunities will present themselves, and my own merit will do the rest. This childishness was not the sophism of my reason; it was that of my indolence. Dismayed at the great and rapid efforts which would have been necessary to call forth my endeavors, I strove to flatter my idleness, and by arguments suitable to the purpose, veiled from my own eyes the shame of such a state.

I thus calmly waited for the moment when I was to be without money; and had not Father Castel, whom I sometimes went to see in my way to the coffee-house, roused me from my lethargy, I believe I should have seen myself reduced to my last farthing without the least emotion. Father Castel was a madman, but a good man upon the whole; he was sorry to see me thus impoverish myself to no purpose. "Since musicians and the learned," said he, "do not sing by your scale, change the string, and apply to the women. You will perhaps succeed better with

them. I have spoken of you to Madam de Beuzenval; go to her from me; she is a good woman who will be glad to see the countryman of her son and husband. You will find at her house Madam de Broglie, her daughter, who is a woman of wit. Madam Dupin is another to whom I also have mentioned you; carry her your work; she is desirous of seeing you, and will receive you well. No thing is done in Paris without the women. They are the curves, of which the wise are the asymptotes; they incessantly approach each other, but never touch."

After having from day to day delayed these very disagreeable steps, I at length took courage, and called upon Madam de Beuzenval. She received me with kindness; and Madam de Broglie entering the chamber, she said to her: "Daughter, this is M. Rousseau, of whom Father Castel has spoken to us." Madam de Broglie complimented me upon my work, and going to her harpsichord proved to me she had already given it some attention. Perceiving it to be about one o'clock, I prepared to take my leave. Madam de Beuzenval said to me: "You are at a great distance from the quarter of the town in which you reside; stay and dine here." I did not want asking a second time. A quarter of an hour afterwards, I understood, by a word, that the dinner to which she had invited me was that of her servants' hall. Madam de Beuzenval was a very good kind of woman, but of a confined understanding, and too full of her illustrious Polish nobility: she had no idea of the respect due to talents. On this occasion, likewise, she judged me by my manner rather than by my dress, which, although very plain, was very neat, and by no means announced a man to dine with servants. I had too long forgotten the way to the place where they eat to be inclined to take it again. Without suffering my anger to appear, I told Madam de Beuzenval that I had an affair of a trifling nature which I had just recollected obliged me to return home, and I immediately prepared to depart. Madam de Broglie approached her mother, and whispered in her ear a few words which had their effect. Madam de Beuzenval rose to prevent me from going, and said, "I expect that you will do us the honor to dine with us." In this case I thought to show pride would be a mark of folly, and I determined

to stay. The goodness of Madam de Broglie had besides made an impression upon me, and rendered her interesting in my eyes. I was very glad to dine with her, and hoped, that when she knew me better, she would not regret having procured me that honor. The President de Lamoignon, very intimate in the family, dined there also. He, as well as Madam de Broglie, was a master of all the modish and fashionable small talk jargon of Paris. Poor Jean Jacques was unable to make a figure in this way. I had sense enough not to pretend to it, and was silent. Happy would it have been for me, had I always possessed the same wisdom; I should not be in the abyss into which I am now fallen. I was vexed at my own stupidity, and at being unable to justify to Madam de Broglie what she had done in my favor.

After dinner I thought of my ordinary resource. I had in my pocket an epistle in verse, written to Parisot during my residence at Lyons. This fragment was not without some fire, which I increased by my manner of reading, and made them all three shed tears. Whether it was vanity, or really the truth, I thought the eyes of Madam de Broglie seemed to say to her mother: "Well, mamma, was I wrong in telling you this man was fitter to dine with us than with your women?" Until then my heart had been rather burdened, but after this revenge I felt myself satisfied. Madam de Broglie, carrying her favorable opinion of me rather too far, thought I should immediately acquire fame in Paris, and become a favorite with fine ladies. To guide my inexperience she gave me the confessions of the Count de ——-. "This book," said she, "is a Mentor, of which you will stand in need in the great world. You will do well by sometimes consulting it." I kept the book upwards of twenty years with a sentiment of gratitude to her from whose hand I had received it, although I frequently laughed at the opinion the lady seemed to have of my merit in gallantry. From the moment I had read the work, I was desirous of acquiring the friendship of the author. My inclination led me right; he is the only real friend I ever possessed amongst men of letters.

[I have so long been of the same opinion, and so perfectly convinced of its being well founded, that since my return to Paris I confided to him the manuscript of my confessions. The suspicious J. J. never suspected perfidy and falsehood until he had been their victim.]

From this time I thought I might depend on the services of Madam the Baroness of Beuzenval, and the Marchioness of Broglie, and that they would not long leave me without resource. In this I was not deceived. But I must now speak of my first visit to Madam Dupin, which produced more lasting consequences.

Madam Dupin was, as every one in Paris knows, the daughter of Samuel Bernard and Madam Fontaine. There were three sisters, who might be called the three graces. Madam de la Touche who played a little prank, and went to England with the Duke of Kingston. Madam Darby, the eldest of the three; the friend, the only sincere friend of the Prince of Conti; an adorable woman, as well by her sweetness and the goodness of her charming character, as by her agreeable wit and incessant cheerfulness. Lastly, Madam Dupin, more beautiful than either of her sisters, and the only one who has not been reproached with some levity of conduct.

She was the reward of the hospitality of M. Dupin, to whom her mother gave her in marriage with the place of farmer general and an immense fortune, in return for the good reception he had given her in his province. When I saw her for the first time, she was still one of the finest women in Paris. She received me at her toilette, her arms were uncovered, her hair dishevelled, and her combing-cloth ill-arranged. This scene was new to me; it was too powerful for my poor head, I became confused, my senses wandered; in short, I was violently smitten by Madam Dupin.

My confusion was not prejudicial to me; she did not perceive it. She kindly received the book and the author; spoke with information of my plan, sung, accompanied herself on the harpsichord, kept me to dinner, and placed me at table by her side. Less than this would have turned my brain; I became mad. She permitted me to visit her, and I abused the permission. I went to see her almost every day, and dined with her twice or thrice a

week. I burned with inclination to speak, but never dared attempt it. Several circumstances increased my natural timidity. Permission to visit in an opulent family was a door open to fortune, and in my situation I was unwilling to run the risk of shutting it against myself.

Madam Dupin, amiable as she was, was serious and unanimated; I found nothing in her manners sufficiently alluring to embolden me. Her house, at that time, as brilliant as any other in Paris, was frequented by societies the less numerous, as the persons by whom they were composed were chosen on account of some distinguished merit. She was fond of seeing every one who had claims to a marked superiority; the great men of letters, and fine women. No person was seen in her circle but dukes, ambassadors, and blue ribbons. The Princess of Rohan, the Countess of Forcalquier, Madam de Mirepoix, Madam de Brignole, and Lady Hervey, passed for her intimate friends. The Abbes de Fontenelle, de Saint Pierre, and Saltier, M. de Fourmont, M. de Berms, M. de Buffon, and M. de Voltaire, were of her circle and her dinners. If her reserved manner did not attract many young people, her society inspired the greater awe, as it was composed of graver persons, and the poor Jean-Jacques had no reason to flatter himself he should be able to take a distinguished part in the midst of such superior talents. I therefore had not courage to speak; but no longer able to contain myself, I took a resolution to write. For the first two days she said not a word to me upon the subject. On the third day, she returned me my letter, accompanying it with a few exhortations which froze my blood. I attempted to speak, but my words expired upon my lips; my sudden passion was extinguished with my hopes, and after a declaration in form I continued to live with her upon the same terms as before, without so much as speaking to her even by the language of the eyes.

I thought my folly was forgotten, but I was deceived. M. de Francueil, son to M. Dupin, and son-in-law to Madam Dupin, was much the same with herself and me. He had wit, a good person, and might have pretensions. This was said to be the case, and probably proceeded from his mother-in-law's having given him an

ugly wife of a mild disposition, with whom, as well as with her husband, she lived upon the best of terms. M. de Francueil was fond of talents in others, and cultivated those he possessed. Music, which he understood very well, was a means of producing a connection between us. I frequently saw him, and he soon gained my friendship. He, however, suddenly gave me to understand that Madam Dupin thought my visits too frequent, and begged me to discontinue them. Such a compliment would have been proper when she returned my letter; but eight or ten days afterwards, and without any new cause, it appeared to me ill-timed. This rendered my situation the more singular, as M. and Madam de Francueil still continued to give me the same good reception as before.

I however made the intervals between my visits longer, and I should entirely have ceased calling on them, had not Madam Dupin, by another unexpected caprice, sent to desire I would for a few days take care of her son, who changing his preceptor, remained alone during that interval. I passed eight days in such torments as nothing but the pleasure of obeying Madam Dupin could render supportable: I would not have undertaken to pass eight other days like them had Madam Dupin given me herself for the recompense.

M. de Francueil conceived a friendship for me, and I studied with him. We began together a course of chemistry at Rouelles. That I might be nearer at hand, I left my hotel at Quentin, and went to lodge at the Tennis Court, Rue Verdelet, which leads into the Rue Platiere, where M. Dupin lived. There, in consequence of a cold neglected, I contracted an inflammation of the lungs that had liked to have carried me off. In my younger days I frequently suffered from inflammatory disorders, pleurisies, and especially quinsies, to which I was very subject, and which frequently brought me near enough to death to familiarize me to its image.

During my convalescence I had leisure to reflect upon my situation, and to lament my timidity, weakness and indolence; these, notwithstanding the fire with which I found myself inflamed, left me to languish in an inactivity of mind, continually on the verge of misery. The evening preceding the day on which I

was taken ill, I went to an opera by Royer; the name I have forgotten. Notwithstanding my prejudice in favor of the talents of others, which has ever made me distrustful of my own, I still thought the music feeble, and devoid of animation and invention. I sometimes had the vanity to flatter myself: I think I could do better than that. But the terrible idea I had formed of the composition of an opera, and the importance I heard men of the profession affix to such an undertaking, instantly discouraged me, and made me blush at having so much as thought of it. Besides, where was I to find a person to write the words, and one who would give himself the trouble of turning the poetry to my liking? These ideas of music and the opera had possession of my mind during my illness, and in the delirium of my fever I composed songs, duets, and choruses. I am certain I composed two or three little pieces, 'di prima infenzione', perhaps worthy of the admiration of masters, could they have heard them executed. Oh, could an account be taken of the dreams of a man in a fever, what great and sublime things would sometimes proceed from his delirium!

These subjects of music and opera still engaged my attention during my convalescence, but my ideas were less energetic. Long and frequent meditations, and which were often involuntary, and made such an impression upon my mind that I resolved to attempt both words and music. This was not the first time I had undertaken so difficult a task. Whilst I was at Chambéry I had composed an opera entitled 'Iphis and Anaxarete', which I had the good sense to throw into the fire. At Lyons I had composed another, entitled 'La Decouverte du Nouveau Monde', which, after having read it to M. Bordes, the Abbes Malby, Trublet, and others, had met the same fate, notwithstanding I had set the prologue and the first act to music, and although David, after examining the composition, had told me there were passages in it worthy of Buononcini.

Before I began the work I took time to consider of my plan. In a heroic ballet I proposed three different subjects, in three acts, detached from each other, set to music of a different character, taking for each subject the amours of a poet. I entitled this opera

Les Muses Galantes. My first act, in music strongly characterized, was Tasso; the second in tender harmony, Ovid; and the third, entitled Anacreon, was to partake of the gayety of the dithyrambus. I tried my skill on the first act, and applied to it with an ardor which, for the first time, made me feel the delightful sensation produced by the creative power of composition. One evening, as I entered the opera, feeling myself strongly incited and overpowered by my ideas, I put my money again into my pocket, returned to my apartment, locked the door, and, having close drawn all the curtains, that every ray of light might be excluded, I went to bed, abandoning myself entirely to this musical and poetical 'oestrum', and in seven or eight hours rapidly composed the greatest part of an act. I can truly say my love for the Princess of Ferrara (for I was Tasso for the moment) and my noble and lofty sentiment with respect to her unjust brother, procured me a night a hundred times more delicious than one passed in the arms of the princess would have been. In the morning but a very little of what I had done remained in my head, but this little, almost effaced by sleep and lassitude, still sufficiently evinced the energy of the pieces of which it was the scattered remains.

I this time did, not proceed far with my undertaking, being interrupted by other affairs. Whilst I attached myself to the family of Dupin, Madam de Beuzenval and Madam de Broglie, whom I continued to visit, had not forgotten me. The Count de Montaigu, captain in the guards, had just been appointed ambassador to Venice. He was an ambassador made by Barjac, to whom he assiduously paid his court. His brother, the Chevalier de Montaigu, 'gentilhomme de la manche' to the dauphin, was acquainted with these ladies, and with the Abbe Alary of the French academy, whom I sometimes visited. Madam de Broglie having heard the ambassador was seeking a secretary, proposed me to him. A conference was opened between us. I asked a salary of fifty guineas, a trifle for an employment which required me to make some appearance. The ambassador was unwilling to give more than a thousand livres, leaving me to make the journey at my own expense. The proposal was ridiculous. We could not

agree, and M. de Francueil, who used all his efforts to prevent my departure, prevailed.

I stayed, and M. de Montaigne set out on his journey, taking with him another secretary, one M. Follau, who had been recommended to him by the office of foreign affairs. They no sooner arrived at Venice than they quarrelled. Follau perceiving he had to do with a madman, left him there, and M. de Montaigne having nobody with him, except a young abbe of the name of Binis, who wrote under the secretary, and was unfit to succeed him, had recourse to me. The chevalier, his brother, a man of wit, by giving me to understand there were advantages annexed to the place of secretary, prevailed upon me to accept the thousand livres. I was paid twenty louis in advance for my journey, and immediately departed.

640

At Lyons I would most willingly have taken the road to Mount Cenis, to see my poor mamma. But I went down the Rhone, and embarked at Toulon, as well on account of the war, and from a motive of economy, as to obtain a passport from M. de Mirepoix, who then commanded in Provence, and to whom I was recommended. M. de Montaigne not being able to do without me, wrote letter after letter, desiring I would hasten my journey; this, however, an accident considerably prolonged.

It was at the time of the plague at Messina, and the English fleet had anchored there, and visited the Felucca, on board of which I was, and this circumstance subjected us, on our arrival, after a long and difficult voyage, to a quarantine of one-and-twenty days.

The passengers had the choice of performing it on board or in the Lazaretto, which we were told was not yet furnished. They all chose the Felucca. The insupportable heat, the closeness of the vessel, the impossibility of walking in it, and the vermin with which it swarmed, made me at all risks prefer the Lazaretto. I was therefore conducted to a large building of two stories, quite empty, in which I found neither window, bed, table, nor chair, not so much as even a joint-stool or bundle of straw. My night sack and my two trunks being brought me, I was shut in by great doors with huge locks, and remained at full liberty to walk at my ease

from chamber to chamber and story to story, everywhere finding the same solitude and nakedness.

This, however, did not induce me to repent that I had preferred the Lazaretto to the Felucca; and, like another Robinson Crusoe, I began to arrange myself for my one-and twenty days, just as I should have done for my whole life. In the first place, I had the amusement of destroying the vermin I had caught in the Felucca. As soon as I had got clear of these, by means of changing my clothes and linen, I proceeded to furnish the chamber I had chosen. I made a good mattress with my waistcoats and shirts; my napkins I converted, by sewing them together, into sheets; my robe de chambre into a counterpane; and my cloak into a pillow. I made myself a seat with one of my trunks laid flat, and a table with the other. I took out some writing paper and an inkstand, and distributed, in the manner of a library, a dozen books which I had with me. In a word, I so well arranged my few movables, that except curtains and windows, I was almost as commodiously lodged in this Lazeretto, absolutely empty as it was, as I had been at the Tennis Court in the Rue Verdelet. My dinners were served with no small degree of pomp; they were escorted by two grenadiers with bayonets fixed; the staircase was my dining-room, the landing-place my table, and the steps served me for a seat; and as soon as my dinner was served up a little bell was rung to inform me I might sit down to table.

Between my repasts, when I did not either read or write or work at the furnishing of my apartment, I went to walk in the burying-ground of the Protestants, which served me as a courtyard. From this place I ascended to a lanthorn which looked into the harbor, and from which I could see the ships come in and go out. In this manner I passed fourteen days, and should have thus passed the whole time of the quarantine without the least weariness had not M. Joinville, envoy from France, to whom I found means to send a letter, vinegared, perfumed, and half burnt, procured eight days of the time to be taken off: these I went and spent at his house, where I confess I found myself better lodged than in the Lazaretto. He was extremely civil to me. Dupont, his secretary, was a good creature: he introduced me, as well at

Genoa as in the country, to several families, the company of which I found very entertaining and agreeable; and I formed with him an acquaintance and a correspondence which we kept up for a considerable length of time. I continued my journey, very agreeably, through Lombardy. I saw Milan, Verona, Brescie, and Padua, and at length arrived at Venice, where I was impatiently expected by the ambassador.

I found there piles of despatches, from the court and from other ambassadors, the ciphered part of which he had not been able to read, although he had all the ciphers necessary for that purpose, never having been employed in any office, nor even seen the cipher of a minister. I was at first apprehensive of meeting with some embarrassment; but I found nothing could be more easy, and in less than a week I had deciphered the whole, which certainly was not worth the trouble; for not to mention the little activity required in the embassy of Venice, it was not to such a man as M. de Montaigu that government would confide a negotiation of even the most trifling importance. Until my arrival he had been much embarrassed, neither knowing how to dictate nor to write legibly. I was very useful to him, of which he was sensible; and he treated me well. To this he was also induced by another motive. Since the time of M. de Froulay, his predecessor, whose head became deranged, the consul from France, M. le Blond, had been charged with the affairs of the embassy, and after the arrival of M. de Montaigu, continued to manage them until he had put him into the track. M. de Montaigu, hurt at this discharge of his duty by another, although he himself was incapable of it, became disgusted with the consul, and as soon as I arrived deprived him of the functions of secretary to the embassy to give them to me. They were inseparable from the title, and he told me to take it. As long as I remained with him he never sent any person except myself under this title to the senate, or to conference, and upon the whole it was natural enough he should prefer having for secretary to the embassy a man attached to him, to a consul or a clerk of office named by the court.

This rendered my situation very agreeable, and prevented his gentlemen, who were Italians, as well as his pages, and most of

his suite from disputing precedence with me in his house. I made an advantageous use of the authority annexed to the title he had conferred upon me, by maintaining his right of protection, that is, the freedom of his neighborhood, against the attempts several times made to infringe it; a privilege which his Venetian officers took no care to defend. But I never permitted banditti to take refuge there, although this would have produced me advantages of which his excellency would not have disdained to partake. He thought proper, however, to claim a part of those of the secretaryship, which is called the chancery. It was in time of war, and there were many passports issued. For each of these passports a sequin was paid to the secretary who made it out and countersigned it. All my predecessors had been paid this sequin by Frenchmen and others without distinction. I thought this unjust, and although I was not a Frenchman, I abolished it in favor of the French; but I so rigorously demanded my right from persons of every other nation, that the Marquis de Scotti, brother to the favorite of the Queen of Spain, having asked for a passport without taking notice of the sequin: I sent to demand it; a boldness which the vindictive Italian did not forget. As soon as the new regulation I had made, relative to passports, was known, none but pretended Frenchmen, who in a gibberish the most mispronounced, called themselves Provencals, Picards, or Burgundians, came to demand them. My ear being very fine, I was not thus made a dupe, and I am almost persuaded that not a single Italian ever cheated me of my sequin, and that not one Frenchman ever paid it. I was foolish enough to tell M. de Montaigu, who was ignorant of everything that passed, what I had done. The word sequin made him open his ears, and without giving me his opinion of the abolition of that tax upon the French, he pretended I ought to account with him for the others, promising me at the same time equivalent advantages. More filled with indignation at this meanness, than concern for my own interest, I rejected his proposal. He insisted, and I grew warm. "No, sir," said I, with some heat, "your excellency may keep what belongs to you, but do not take from me that which is mine; I will not suffer you to touch a penny of the perquisites arising from

passports." Perceiving he could gain nothing by these means he had recourse to others, and blushed not to tell me that since I had appropriated to myself the profits of the chancery, it was but just I should pay the expenses. I was unwilling to dispute upon this subject, and from that time I furnished at my own expense, ink, paper, wax, wax-candle, tape, and even a new seal, for which he never reimbursed me to the amount of a farthing. This, however, did not prevent my giving a small part of the produce of the passports to the Abbe de Binis, a good creature, and who was far from pretending to have the least right to any such thing. If he was obliging to me my politeness to him was an equivalent, and we always lived together on the best of terms.

On the first trial I made of his talents in my official functions, I found him less troublesome than I expected he would have been, considering he was a man without experience, in the service of an ambassador who possessed no more than himself, and whose ignorance and obstinacy constantly counteracted everything with which common-sense and some information inspired me for his service and that of the king. The next thing the ambassador did was to connect himself with the Marquis Mari, ambassador from Spain, an ingenious and artful man, who, had he wished so to do, might have led him by the nose, yet on account of the union of the interests of the two crowns he generally gave him good advice, which might have been of essential service, had not the other, by joining his own opinion, counteracted it in the execution. The only business they had to conduct in concert with each other was to engage the Venetians to maintain their neutrality. These did not neglect to give the strongest assurances of their fidelity to their engagement at the same time that they publicly furnished ammunition to the Austrian troops, and even recruits under pretense of desertion. M. de Montaigu, who I believe wished to render himself agreeable to the republic, failed not on his part, notwithstanding my representation to make me assure the government in all my despatches, that the Venetians would never violate an article of the neutrality. The obstinacy and stupidity of this poor wretch made me write and act extravagantly: I was obliged to be the agent of his folly, because he would have it so,

but he sometimes rendered my employment insupportable and the functions of it almost impracticable. For example, he insisted on the greatest part of his despatches to the king, and of those to the minister, being written in cipher, although neither of them contained anything that required that precaution. I represented to him that between the Friday, the day the despatches from the court arrived, and Saturday, on which ours were sent off, there was not sufficient time to write so much in cipher, and carry on the considerable correspondence with which I was charged for the same courier. He found an admirable expedient, which was to prepare on Thursday the answer to the despatches we were expected to receive on the next day. This appeared to him so happily imagined, that notwithstanding all I could say on the impossibility of the thing, and the absurdity of attempting its execution, I was obliged to comply during the whole time I afterwards remained with him, after having made notes of the few loose words he spoke to me in the course of the week, and of some trivial circumstances which I collected by hurrying from place to place. Provided with these materials I never once failed carrying to him on the Thursday morning a rough draft of the despatches which were to be sent off on Saturday, excepting the few additions and corrections I hastily made in answer to the letters which arrived on the Friday, and to which ours served for answer. He had another custom, diverting enough and which made his correspondence ridiculous beyond imagination. He sent back all information to its respective source, instead of making it follow its course. To M. Amelot he transmitted the news of the court; to M. Maurepas, that of Paris; to M. d' Havrincourt, the news from Sweden; to M. de Chetardie, that from Petersbourg; and sometimes to each of those the news they had respectively sent to him, and which I was employed to dress up in terms different from those in which it was conveyed to us. As he read nothing of what I laid before him, except the despatches for the court, and signed those to other ambassadors without reading them, this left me more at liberty to give what turn I thought proper to the latter, and in these therefore I made the articles of information cross each other. But it was impossible for me to do

the same by despatches of importance; and I thought myself happy when M. de Montaigu did not take it into his head to cram into them an impromptu of a few lines after his manner. This obliged me to return, and hastily transcribe the whole despatch decorated with his new nonsense, and honor it with the cipher, without which he would have refused his signature. I was frequently almost tempted, for the sake of his reputation, to cipher something different from what he had written, but feeling that nothing could authorize such a deception, I left him to answer for his own folly, satisfying myself with having spoken to him with freedom, and discharged at my own peril the duties of my station. This is what I always did with an uprightness, a zeal and courage, which merited on his part a very different recompense from that which in the end I received from him. It was time I should once be what Heaven, which had endowed me with a happy disposition, what the education that had been given me by the best of women, and that I had given myself, had prepared me for, and I became so. Left to my own reflections, without a friend or advice, without experience, and in a foreign country, in the service of a foreign nation, surrounded by a crowd of knaves, who, for their own interest, and to avoid the scandal of good example, endeavored to prevail upon me to imitate them; far from yielding to their solicitations, I served France well, to which I owed nothing, and the ambassador still better, as it was right and just I should do to the utmost of my power. Irreproachable in a post, sufficiently exposed to censure, I merited and obtained the esteem of the republic, that of all the ambassadors with whom we were in correspondence, and the affection of the French who resided at Venice, not even excepting the consul, whom with regret I supplanted in the functions which I knew belonged to him, and which occasioned me more embarrassment than they afforded me satisfaction.

M. de Montaigu, confiding without reserve to the Marquis Mari, who did not thoroughly understand his duty, neglected it to such a degree that without me the French who were at Venice would not have perceived that an ambassador from their nation resided there. Always put off without being heard when they

stood in need of his protection, they became disgusted and no longer appeared in his company or at his table, to which indeed he never invited them. I frequently did from myself what it was his duty to have done; I rendered to the French, who applied to me, all the services in my power. In any other country I should have done more, but, on account of my employment, not being able to see persons in place, I was often obliged to apply to the consul, and the consul, who was settled in the country with his family, had many persons to oblige, which prevented him from acting as he otherwise would have done. However, perceiving him unwilling and afraid to speak, I ventured hazardous measures, which sometimes succeeded. I recollect one which still makes me laugh. No person would suspect it was to me the lovers of the theatre at Paris, owe Coralline and her sister Camille, nothing however, can be more true. Veronese, their father, had engaged himself with his children in the Italian company, and after having received two thousand livres for the expenses of his journey, instead of setting out for France, quietly continued at Venice, and accepted an engagement in the theatre of Saint Luke, to which Coralline, a child as she still was, drew great numbers of people. The Duke de Greves, as first gentleman of the chamber, wrote to the ambassador to claim the father and the daughter. M. de Montaigu when he gave me the letter, confined his instructions to saying, 'voyez cela', examine and pay attention to this. I went to M. Blond to beg he would speak to the patrician, to whom the theatre belonged, and who, I believe, was named Zustinian, that he might discharge Veronese, who had engaged in the name of the king. Le Blond, to whom the commission was not very agreeable, executed it badly.

Zustinian answered vaguely, and Veronese was not discharged. I was piqued at this. It was during the carnival, and having taken the bahute and a mask, I set out for the palace Zustinian. Those who saw my gondola arrive with the livery of the ambassador, were lost in astonishment. Venice had never seen such a thing. I entered, and caused myself to be announced by the name of 'Una Siora Maschera'. As soon as I was introduced I took off my mask and told my name. The senator turned pale and appeared

stupefied with surprise. "Sir;" said I to him in Venetian, "it is with much regret I importune your excellency with this visit; but you have in your theatre of Saint Luke, a man of the name of Veronese, who is engaged in the service of the king, and whom you have been requested, but in vain, to give up: I come to claim him in the name of his majesty." My short harangue was effectual. I had no sooner left the palace than Zustinian ran to communicate the adventure to the state inquisitors, by whom he was severely reprehended. Veronese was discharged the same day. I sent him word that if he did not set off within a week I would have him arrested. He did not wait for my giving him this intimation a second time.

On another occasion I relieved from difficulty solely by my own means, and almost without the assistance of any other person, the captain of a merchant-ship. This was one Captain Olivet, from Marseilles; the name of the vessel I have forgotten. His men had quarreled with the Sclavonians in the service of the republic, some violence had been committed, and the vessel was under so severe an embargo that nobody except the master was suffered to go on board or leave it without permission. He applied to the ambassador, who would hear nothing he had to say. He afterwards went to the consul, who told him it was not an affair of commerce, and that he could not interfere in it. Not knowing what further steps to take he applied to me. I told M. de Montaigne he ought to permit me to lay before the senate a memoir on the subject. I do not recollect whether or not he consented, or that I presented the memoir; but I perfectly remember that if I did it was ineffectual, and the embargo still continuing, I took another method, which succeeded. I inserted a relation of the affairs in one of our letters to M. de Maurepas, though I had difficulty in prevailing upon M. de Montaigne to suffer the article to pass.

I knew that our despatches, although their contents were insignificant, were opened at Venice. Of this I had a proof by finding the articles they contained, verbatim in the gazette, a treachery of which I had in vain attempted to prevail upon the ambassador to complain. My object in speaking of the affair in the letter was to turn the curiosity of the ministers of the republic

to advantage, to inspire them with some apprehensions, and to induce the state to release the vessel: for had it been necessary to this effect to wait for an answer from the court, the captain would have been ruined before it could have arrived. I did still more, I went alongside the vessel to make inquiries of the ship's company. I took with me the Abbe Patizel, chancellor of the consulship, who would rather have been excused, so much were these poor creatures afraid of displeasing the Senate. As I could not go on board, on account of the order from the states, I remained in my gondola, and there took the depositions successively, interrogating each of the mariners, and directing my questions in such a manner as to produce answers which might be to their advantage. I wished to prevail upon Patizel to put the questions and take depositions himself, which in fact was more his business than mine; but to this he would not consent; he never once opened his mouth and refused to sign the depositions after me. This step, somewhat bold, was however, successful, and the vessel was released long before an answer came from the minister. The captain wished to make me a present; but without being angry with him on that account, I tapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Captain Olivet, can you imagine that he who does not receive from the French his perquisite for passports, which he found his established right, is a man likely to sell them the king's protection?" He, however, insisted on giving me a dinner on board his vessel, which I accepted, and took with me the secretary to the Spanish embassy, M. Carrio, a man of wit and amiable manners, to partake of it: he has since been secretary to the Spanish embassy at Paris and charge des affaires. I had formed an intimate connection with him after the example of our ambassadors.

Happy should I have been, if, when in the most disinterested manner I did all the service I could, I had known how to introduce sufficient order into all these little details, that I might not have served others at my own expense. But in employments similar to that I held, in which the most trifling faults are of consequence, my whole attention was engaged in avoiding all such mistakes as might be detrimental to my service. I conducted, till the last

moment, everything relative to my immediate duty, with the greatest order and exactness. Excepting a few errors which a forced precipitation made me commit in ciphering, and of which the clerks of M. Amelot once complained, neither the ambassador nor any other person had ever the least reason to reproach me with negligence in any one of my functions. This is remarkable in a man so negligent as I am. But my memory sometimes failed me, and I was not sufficiently careful in the private affairs with which I was charged; however, a love of justice always made me take the loss on myself, and this voluntarily, before anybody thought of complaining. I will mention but one circumstance of this nature; it relates to my departure from Venice, and I afterwards felt the effects of it in Paris.

Our cook, whose name was Rousselot, had brought from France an old note for two hundred livres, which a hairdresser, a friend of his, had received from a noble Venetian of the name of Zanetto Nani, who had had wigs of him to that amount. Rousselot brought me the note, begging I would endeavor to obtain payment of some part of it, by way of accommodation. I knew, and he knew it also, that the constant custom of noble Venetians was, when once returned to their country, never to pay the debts they had contracted abroad. When means are taken to force them to payment, the wretched creditor finds so many delays, and incurs such enormous expenses, that he becomes disgusted and concludes by giving up his debtor accepting the most trifling composition. I begged M. le Blond to speak to Zanetto. The Venetian acknowledged the note, but did not agree to payment. After a long dispute he at length promised three sequins; but when Le Blond carried him the note even these were not ready, and it was necessary to wait. In this interval happened my quarrel with the ambassador and I quitted his service. I had left the papers of the embassy in the greatest order, but the note of Rousselot was not to be found. M. le Blond assured me he had given it me back. I knew him to be too honest a man to have the least doubt of the matter; but it was impossible for me to recollect what I had done with it. As Zanetto had acknowledged the debt, I desired M. le Blond to endeavor to obtain from him the three sequins on giving

him a receipt for the amount, or to prevail upon him to renew the note by way of duplicate. Zanetto, knowing the note to be lost, would not agree to either. I offered Rousselot the three sequins from my own purse, as a discharge of the debt. He refused them, and said I might settle the matter with the creditor at Paris, of whom he gave me the address. The hair-dresser, having been informed of what had passed, would either have his note or the whole sum for which it was given. What, in my indignation, would I have given to have found this vexatious paper! I paid the two hundred livres, and that in my greatest distress. In this manner the loss of the note produced to the creditor the payment of the whole sum, whereas had it, unfortunately for him, been found, he would have had some difficulty in recovering even the ten crowns, which his excellency, Zanetto Nani, had promised to pay.

The talents I thought I felt in myself for my employment made me discharge the functions of it with satisfaction, and except the society of my friend de Carrio, that of the virtuous Altuna, of whom I shall soon have an occasion to speak, the innocent recreations of the place Saint Mark, of the theatre, and of a few visits which we, for the most part, made together, my only pleasure was in the duties of my station. Although these were not considerable, especially with the aid of the Abbe de Binis, yet as the correspondence was very extensive and there was a war, I was a good deal employed. I applied to business the greatest part of every morning, and on the days previous to the departure of the courier, in the evenings, and sometimes till midnight. The rest of my time I gave to the study of the political professions I had entered upon, and in which I hoped, from my successful beginning, to be advantageously employed. In fact I was in favor with every one; the ambassador himself spoke highly of my services, and never complained of anything I did for him; his dissatisfaction proceeded from my having insisted on quitting him, in consequence of the useless complaints I had frequently made on several occasions. The ambassadors and ministers of the king with whom we were in correspondence complimented him on the merit of his secretary, in a manner by which he ought to

have been flattered, but which in his poor head produced quite a contrary effect. He received one in particular relative to an affair of importance, for which he never pardoned me.

He was so incapable of bearing the least constraint, that on the Saturday, the day of the despatches for most of the courts, he could not contain himself, and wait till the business was done before he went out, and incessantly pressing me to hasten the despatches to the king and ministers, he signed them with precipitation, and immediately went I know not where, leaving most of the other letters without signing; this obliged me, when these contained nothing but news, to convert them into journals; but when affairs which related to the king were in question it was necessary somebody should sign, and I did it. This once happened relative to some important advice we had just received from M. Vincent, charge des affaires from the king, at Vienna. The Prince Lobkowitz was then marching to Naples, and Count Gages had just made the most memorable retreat, the finest military manoeuvre of the whole century, of which Europe has not sufficiently spoken. The despatch informed us that a man, whose person M. Vincent described, had set out from Vienna, and was to pass by Venice, in his way into Abruzzo, where he was secretly to stir up the people at the approach of the Austrians.

In the absence of M. le Comte de Montaigu, who did not give himself the least concern about anything, I forwarded this advice to the Marquis de l'Hopital, so apropos, that it is perhaps to the poor Jean Jacques, so abused and laughed at, that the house of Bourbon owes the preservation of the kingdom of Naples.

The Marquis de l'Hopital, when he thanked his colleague, as it was proper he should do, spoke to him of his secretary, and mentioned the service he had just rendered to the common cause. The Comte de Montaigu, who in that affair had to reproach himself with negligence, thought he perceived in the compliment paid him by M. de l'Hopital, something like a reproach, and spoke of it to me with signs of ill-humor. I found it necessary to act in the same manner with the Count de Castellane, ambassador at Constantinople, as I had done with the Marquis de l'Hopital, although in things of less importance. As there was no other

conveyance to Constantinople than by couriers, sent from time to time by the senate to its Bailli, advice of their departure was given to the ambassador of France, that he might write by them to his colleague, if he thought proper so to do. This advice was commonly sent a day or two beforehand; but M. de Montaigne was held in so little respect, that merely for the sake of form he was sent to, a couple of hours before the couriers set off. This frequently obliged me to write the despatch in his absence. M. de Castellane, in his answer made honorable mention of me; M. de Jonville, at Genoa, did the same, and these instances of their regard and esteem became new grievances.

I acknowledge I did not neglect any opportunity of making myself known; but I never sought one improperly, and in serving well I thought I had a right to aspire to the natural return for essential services; the esteem of those capable of judging of, and rewarding them. I will not say whether or not my exactness in discharging the duties of my employment was a just subject of complaint from the ambassador; but I cannot refrain from declaring that it was the sole grievance he ever mentioned previous to our separation.

His house, which he had never put on a good footing, was constantly filled with rabble; the French were ill-treated in it, and the ascendancy was given to the Italians; of these even, the more honest part, they who had long been in the service of the embassy, were indecently discharged, his first gentleman in particular, whom he had taken from the Comte de Froulay, and who, if I remember right, was called Comte de Peati, or something very like that name. The second gentleman, chosen by M. de Montaigne, was an outlaw highwayman from Mantua, called Dominic Vitali, to whom the ambassador intrusted the care of his house, and who had by means of flattery and sordid economy, obtained his confidence, and became his favorite to the great prejudice of the few honest people he still had about him, and of the secretary who was at their head. The countenance of an upright man always gives inquietude to knaves. Nothing more was necessary to make Vitali conceive a hatred against me: but for this sentiment there was still another cause which rendered it

more cruel. Of this I must give an account, that I may be condemned if I am found in the wrong.

The ambassador had, according to custom, a box at each of the theaters. Every day at dinner he named the theater to which it was his intention to go: I chose after him, and the gentlemen disposed of the other boxes. When I went out I took the key of the box I had chosen. One day, Vitali not being in the way, I ordered the footman who attended on me, to bring me the key to a house which I named to him. Vitali, instead of sending the key, said he had disposed of it. I was the more enraged at this as the footman delivered his message in public. In the evening Vitali wished to make me some apology, to which however I would not listen. "To-morrow, sir," said I to him, "you will come at such an hour and apologize to me in the house where I received the affront, and in the presence of the persons who were witnesses to it; or after to-morrow, whatever may be the consequences, either you or I will leave the house." This firmness intimidated him. He came to the house at the hour appointed, and made me a public apology, with a meanness worthy of himself. But he afterwards took his measures at leisure, and at the same time that he cringed to me in public, he secretly acted in so vile a manner, that although unable to prevail on the ambassador to give me my dismissal, he laid me under the necessity of resolving to leave him.

A wretch like him, certainly, could not know me, but he knew enough of my character to make it serviceable to his purposes. He knew I was mild to an excess, and patient in bearing involuntary wrongs; but haughty and impatient when insulted with premeditated offences; loving decency and dignity in things in which these were requisite, and not more exact in requiring the respect due to myself, than attentive in rendering that which I owed to others. In this he undertook to disgust me, and in this he succeeded. He turned the house upside down, and destroyed the order and subordination I had endeavored to establish in it. A house without a woman stands in need of rather a severe discipline to preserve that modesty which is inseparable from dignity. He soon converted ours into a place of filthy debauch and scandalous licentiousness, the haunt of knaves and debauchees.

He procured for second gentleman to his excellency, in the place of him whom he got discharged, another pimp like himself, who kept a house of ill-fame, at the Cross of Malta; and the indecency of these two rascals was equalled by nothing but their insolence. Except the bed-chamber of the ambassador, which, however, was not in very good order, there was not a corner in the whole house supportable to an modest man.

As his excellency did not sup, the gentleman and myself had a private table, at which the Abbe Binis and the pages also ate. In the most paltry ale-house people are served with more cleanliness and decency, have cleaner linen, and a table better supplied. We had but one little and very filthy candle, pewter plates, and iron forks.

I could have overlooked what passed in secret, but I was deprived of my gondola. I was the only secretary to an ambassador, who was obliged to hire one or go on foot, and the livery of his excellency no longer accompanied me, except when I went to the senate. Besides, everything which passed in the house was known in the city. All those who were in the service of the other ambassadors loudly exclaimed; Dominic, the only cause of all, exclaimed louder than anybody, well knowing the indecency with which we were treated was more affecting to me than to any other person. Though I was the only one in the house who said nothing of the matter abroad, I complained loudly of it to the ambassador, as well as of himself, who, secretly excited by the wretch, entirely devoted to his will, daily made me suffer some new affront. Obligated to spend a good deal to keep up a footing with those in the same situation with myself, and to make are appearance proper to my employment, I could not touch a farthing of my salary, and when I asked him for money, he spoke of his esteem for me, and his confidence, as if either of these could have filled my purse, and provided for everything.

These two banditti at length quite turned the head of their master, who naturally had not a good one, and ruined him by a continual traffic, and by bargains, of which he was the dupe, whilst they persuaded him they were greatly in his favor. They persuaded him to take upon the Brenta, a Palazzo, at twice the

rent it was worth, and divided the surplus with the proprietor. The apartments were inlaid with mosaic, and ornamented with columns and pilasters, in the taste of the country. M. de Montaigne, had all these superbly masked by fir wainscoting, for no other reason than because at Paris apartments were thus fitted up. It was for a similar reason that he only, of all the ambassadors who were at Venice, took from his pages their swords, and from his footmen their canes. Such was the man, who, perhaps from the same motive took a dislike to me on account of my serving him faithfully.

I patiently endured his disdain, his brutality, and ill-treatment, as long as, perceiving them accompanied by ill-humor, I thought they had in them no portion of hatred; but the moment I saw the design formed of depriving me of the honor I merited by my faithful services, I resolved to resign my employment. The first mark I received of his ill will was relative to a dinner he was to give to the Duke of Modena and his family, who were at Venice, and at which he signified to me I should not be present. I answered, piqued, but not angry, that having the honor daily to dine at his table, if the Duke of Modena, when he came, required I should not appear at it, my duty as well as the dignity of his excellency would not suffer me to consent to such a request. "How;" said he passionately, "my secretary, who is not a gentleman, pretends to dine with a sovereign when my gentlemen do not!" "Yes, sir," replied I, "the post with which your excellency has honored me, as long as I discharge the functions of it, so far ennobles me that my rank is superior to that of your gentlemen or of the persons calling themselves such; and I am admitted where they cannot appear. You cannot but know that on the day on which you shall make your public entry, I am called to the ceremony by etiquette; and by an immemorial custom, to follow you in a dress of ceremony, and afterwards to dine with you at the palace of St. Mark; and I know not why a man who has a right and is to eat in public with the doge and the senate of Venice should not eat in private with the Duke of Modena." Though this argument was unanswerable, it did not convince the ambassador;

but we had no occasion to renew the dispute, as the Duke of Modena did not come to dine with him.

From that moment he did everything in his power to make things disagreeable to me; and endeavored unjustly to deprive me of my rights, by taking from me the pecuniary advantages annexed to my employment, to give them to his dear Vitali; and I am convinced that had he dared to send him to the senate, in my place, he would have done it. He commonly employed the Abbe Binis in his closet, to write his private letters: he made use of him to write to M. de Maurepas an account of the affair of Captain Olivet, in which, far from taking the least notice of me, the only person who gave himself any concern about the matter, he deprived me of the honor of the depositions, of which he sent him a duplicate, for the purpose of attributing them to Patizel, who had not opened his mouth. He wished to mortify me, and please his favorite; but had no desire to dismiss me his service. He perceived it would be more difficult to find me a successor, than M. Follau, who had already made him known to the world. An Italian secretary was absolutely necessary to him, on account of the answers from the senate; one who could write all his despatches, and conduct his affairs, without his giving himself the least trouble about anything; a person who, to the merit of serving him well, could join the baseness of being the toad-eater of his gentlemen, without honor, merit, or principles. He wished to retain, and humble me, by keeping me far from my country, and his own, without money to return to either, and in which he would, perhaps, had succeeded, had he began with more moderation: but Vitali, who had other views, and wished to force me to extremities, carried his point. The moment I perceived, I lost all my trouble, that the ambassador imputed to me my services as so many crimes, instead of being satisfied with them; that with him I had nothing to expect, but things disagreeable at home, and injustice abroad; and that, in the general disesteem into which he was fallen, his ill offices might be prejudicial to me, without the possibility of my being served by his good ones; I took my resolution, and asked him for my dismissal, leaving him sufficient time to provide himself with another secretary.

Without answering yes or no, he continued to treat me in the same manner, as if nothing had been said. Perceiving things to remain in the same state, and that he took no measures to procure himself a new secretary, I wrote to his brother, and, explaining to him my motives, begged he would obtain my dismissal from his excellency, adding that whether I received it or not, I could not possibly remain with him. I waited a long time without any answer, and began to be embarrassed: but at length the ambassador received a letter from his brother, which must have remonstrated with him in very plain terms; for although he was extremely subject to ferocious rage, I never saw him so violent as on this occasion. After torrents of unsufferable reproaches, not knowing what more to say, he accused me of having sold his ciphers. I burst into a loud laughter, and asked him, in a sneering manner, if he thought there was in Venice a man who would be fool enough to give half a crown for them all. He threatened to call his servants to throw me out of the window. Until then I had been very composed; but on this threat, anger and indignation seized me in my turn. I sprang to the door, and after having turned a button which fastened it within: "No, count," said I, returning to him with a grave step, "Your servants shall have nothing to do with this affair; please to let it be settled between ourselves." My action and manner instantly made him calm; fear and surprise were marked in his countenance. The moment I saw his fury abated, I bid him adieu in a very few words, and without waiting for his answer, went to the door, opened it, and passed slowly across the antechamber, through the midst of his people, who rose according to custom, and who, I am of opinion, would rather have lent their assistance against him than me. Without going back to my apartment, I descended the stairs, and immediately went out of the palace never more to enter it.

I hastened immediately to M. le Blond and related to him what had happened. Knowing the man, he was but little surprised. He kept me to dinner. This dinner, although without preparation, was splendid. All the French of consequence who were at Venice, partook of it. The ambassador had not a single person. The consul related my case to the company. The cry was general, and by no

means in favor of his excellency. He had not settled my account, nor paid me a farthing, and being reduced to the few louis I had in my pocket, I was extremely embarrassed about my return to France. Every purse was opened to me. I took twenty sequins from that of M. le Blond, and as many from that of M. St. Cyr, with whom, next to M. le Blond, I was the most intimately connected. I returned thanks to the rest; and, till my departure, went to lodge at the house of the chancellor of the consulship, to prove to the public, the nation was not an accomplice in the injustice of the ambassador.

His excellency, furious at seeing me taken notice of in my misfortune, at the same time that, notwithstanding his being an ambassador, nobody went near his house, quite lost his senses and behaved like a madman. He forgot himself so far as to present a memoir to the senate to get me arrested. On being informed of this by the Abbe de Binis, I resolved to remain a fortnight longer, instead of setting off the next day as I had intended. My conduct had been known and approved of by everybody; I was universally esteemed. The senate did not deign to return an answer to the extravagant memoir of the ambassador, but sent me word I might remain in Venice as long as I thought proper, without making myself uneasy about the attempts of a madman. I continued to see my friends: I went to take leave of the ambassador from Spain, who received me well, and of the Comte de Finochietti, minister from Naples, whom I did not find at home. I wrote him a letter and received from his excellency the most polite and obliging answer. At length I took my departure, leaving behind me, notwithstanding my embarrassment, no other debts than the two sums I had borrowed, and of which I have just spoken; and an account of fifty crowns with a shopkeeper, of the name of Morandi, which Carrio promised to pay, and which I have never reimbursed him, although we have frequently met since that time; but with respect to the two sums of money, I returned them very exactly the moment I had it in my power.

I cannot take leave of Venice without saying something of the celebrated amusements of that city, or at least of the little part of them of which I partook during my residence there. It has been

seen how little in my youth I ran after the pleasures of that age, or those that are so called. My inclinations did not change at Venice, but my occupations, which moreover would have prevented this, rendered more agreeable to me the simple recreations I permitted myself. The first and most pleasing of all was the society of men of merit. M. le Blond, de St. Cyr, Carrio Altuna, and a Forlinian gentleman, whose name I am very sorry to have forgotten, and whom I never call to my recollection without emotion: he was the man of all I ever knew whose heart most resembled my own. We were connected with two or three Englishmen of great wit and information, and, like ourselves, passionately fond of music. All these gentlemen had their wives, female friends, or mistresses: the latter were most of them women of talents, at whose apartments there were balls and concerts. There was but little play; a lively turn, talents, and the theatres rendered this amusement incipid. Play is the resource of none but men whose time hangs heavy on their hands. I had brought with me from Paris the prejudice of that city against Italian music; but I had also received from nature a sensibility and niceness of distinction which prejudice cannot withstand. I soon contracted that passion for Italian music with which it inspires all those who are capable of feeling its excellence. In listening to barcaroles, I found I had not yet known what singing was, and I soon became so fond of the opera that, tired of babbling, eating, and playing in the boxes when I wished to listen, I frequently withdrew from the company to another part of the theater. There, quite alone, shut up in my box, I abandoned myself, notwithstanding the length of the representation, to the pleasure of enjoying it at ease unto the conclusion. One evening at the theatre of Saint Chrysostom, I fell into a more profound sleep than I should have done in my bed. The loud and brilliant airs did not disturb my repose. But who can explain the delicious sensations given me by the soft harmony of the angelic music, by which I was charmed from sleep; what an awaking! what ravishment! what ecstasy, when at the same instant I opened my ears and eyes! My first idea was to believe I was in paradise. The ravishing air, which I still recollect and shall never forget, began with these words:

*Conservami la bella,
Che si m'accende il cor.*

I was desirous of having it; I had and kept it for a time; but it was not the same thing upon paper as in my head. The notes were the same but the thing was different. This divine composition can never be executed but in my mind, in the same manner as it was the evening on which it woke me from sleep.

A kind of music far superior, in my opinion, to that of operas, and which in all Italy has not its equal, nor perhaps in the whole world, is that of the 'scuole'. The 'scuole' are houses of charity, established for the education of young girls without fortune, to whom the republic afterwards gives a portion either in marriage or for the cloister. Amongst talents cultivated in these young girls, music is in the first rank. Every Sunday at the church of each of the four 'scuole', during vespers, motettos or anthems with full choruses, accompanied by a great orchestra, and composed and directed by the best masters in Italy, are sung in the galleries by girls only; not one of whom is more than twenty years of age. I have not an idea of anything so voluptuous and affecting as this music; the richness of the art, the exquisite taste of the vocal part, the excellence of the voices, the justness of the execution, everything in these delightful concerts concurs to produce an impression which certainly is not the mode, but from which I am of opinion no heart is secure. Carrio and I never failed being present at these vespers of the 'Mendicanti', and we were not alone. The church was always full of the lovers of the art, and even the actors of the opera came there to form their tastes after these excellent models. What vexed me was the iron grate, which suffered nothing to escape but sounds, and concealed from me the angels of which they were worthy. I talked of nothing else. One day I spoke of it at Le Blond's; "If you are so desirous," said he, "to see those little girls, it will be an easy matter to satisfy your wishes. I am one of the administrators of the house, I will give you a collation with them." I did not let him rest until he had fulfilled his promise. In entering the saloon, which contained

these beauties I so much sighed to see, I felt a trembling of love which I had never before experienced. M. le Blond presented to me one after the other, these celebrated female singers, of whom the names and voices were all with which I was acquainted. Come, Sophia,—she was horrid. Come, Cattina,—she had but one eye. Come, Bettina,—the small-pox had entirely disfigured her. Scarcely one of them was without some striking defect.

Le Blond laughed at my surprise; however, two or three of them appeared tolerable; these never sung but in the choruses; I was almost in despair. During the collation we endeavored to excite them, and they soon became enlivened; ugliness does not exclude the graces, and I found they possessed them. I said to myself, they cannot sing in this manner without intelligence and sensibility, they must have both; in fine, my manner of seeing them changed to such a degree that I left the house almost in love with each of these ugly faces. I had scarcely courage enough to return to vespers. But after having seen the girls, the danger was lessened. I still found their singing delightful; and their voices so much embellished their persons that, in spite of my eyes, I obstinately continued to think them beautiful.

Music in Italy is accompanied with so trifling an expense, that it is not worth while for such as have a taste for it to deny themselves the pleasure it affords. I hired a harpsichord, and, for half a crown, I had at my apartment four or five symphonists, with whom I practised once a week in executing such airs, etc., as had given me most pleasure at the opera. I also had some symphonies performed from my 'Muses Galantes'. Whether these pleased the performers, or the ballet-master of St. John Chrysostom wished to flatter me, he desired to have two of them; and I had afterwards the pleasure of hearing these executed by that admirable orchestra. They were danced to by a little Bettina, pretty and amiable, and kept by a Spaniard, M. Fagoaga, a friend of ours with whom we often went to spend the evening. But apropos of girls of easy virtue: it is not in Venice that a man abstains from them. Have you nothing to confess, somebody will ask me, upon this subject? Yes: I have something to say upon it,

and I will proceed to the confession with the same ingenuousness with which I have made my former ones.

I always had a disinclination to girls of pleasure, but at Venice those were all I had within my reach; most of the houses being shut against me on account of my place. The daughters of M. le Blond were very amiable, but difficult of access; and I had too much respect for the father and mother ever once to have the least desire for them.

I should have had a much stronger inclination to a young lady named Mademoiselle de Cataneo, daughter to the agent from the King of Prussia, but Carrio was in love with her: there was even between them some question of marriage. He was in easy circumstances, and I had no fortune: his salary was a hundred louis (guineas) a year, and mine amounted to no more than a thousand livres (about forty pounds sterling) and, besides my being unwilling to oppose a friend, I knew that in all places, and especially at Venice, with a purse so ill furnished as mine was, gallantry was out of the question. I had not lost the pernicious custom of deceiving my wants. Too busily employed forcibly to feel those proceeding from the climate, I lived upwards of a year in that city as chastely as I had done in Paris, and at the end of eighteen months I quitted it without having approached the sex, except twice by means of the singular opportunities of which I am going to speak.

The first was procured me by that honest gentleman, Vitali, some time after the formal apology I obliged him to make me. The conversation at the table turned on the amusements of Venice. These gentlemen reproached me with my indifference with regard to the most delightful of them all; at the same time extolling the gracefulness and elegant manners of the women of easy virtue of Venice; and adding that they were superior to all others of the same description in any other part of the world. Dominic said I must make the acquaintance of the most amiable of them all; and he offered to take me to her apartments, and assured me I should be pleased with her. I laughed at this obliging offer: and Count Piati, a man in years and venerable, observed to me, with more candor than I should have expected from an

Italian, that he thought me too prudent to suffer myself to be taken to such a place by my enemy. In fact I had no inclination to do it: but notwithstanding this, by an incoherence I cannot myself comprehend, I at length was prevailed upon to go, contrary to my inclination, the sentiment of my heart, my reason, and even my will; solely from weakness, and being ashamed to show an appearance to the least mistrust; and besides, as the expression of the country is, 'per non parer troppo cogliono'—[Not to appear too great a blockhead.]—The 'Padoana' whom we went to visit was pretty, she was even handsome, but her beauty was not of that kind that pleased me. Dominic left me with her, I sent for Sorbetti, and asked her to sing. In about half an hour I wished to take my leave, after having put a ducat on the table, but this by a singular scruple she refused until she had deserved it, and I from as singular a folly consented to remove her doubts. I returned to the palace so fully persuaded that I should feel the consequences of this step, that the first thing I did was to send for the king's surgeon to ask him for ptisans. Nothing can equal the uneasiness of mind I suffered for three weeks, without its being justified by any real inconvenience or apparent sign. I could not believe it was possible to withdraw with impunity from the arms of the 'padoana'. The surgeon himself had the greatest difficulty in removing my apprehensions; nor could he do this by any other means than by persuading me I was formed in such a manner as not to be easily infected: and although in the experiment I exposed myself less than any other man would have done, my health in that respect never having suffered the least inconvenience, in my opinion a proof the surgeon was right. However, this has never made me imprudent, and if in fact I have received such an advantage from nature I can safely assert I have never abused it.

My second adventure, although likewise with a common girl, was of a nature very different, as well in its origin as in its effects; I have already said that Captain Olivet gave me a dinner on board his vessel, and that I took with me the secretary of the Spanish embassy. I expected a salute of cannon.

The ship's company was drawn up to receive us, but not so much as a priming was burnt, at which I was mortified, on account of Carrio, whom I perceived to be rather piqued at the neglect. A salute of cannon was given on board merchant-ships to people of less consequence than we were; I besides thought I deserved some distinguished mark of respect from the captain. I could not conceal my thoughts, because this at all times was impossible to me, and although the dinner was a very good one, and Olivet did the honors of it perfectly well, I began it in an ill humor, eating but little, and speaking still less. At the first health, at least, I expected a volley; nothing. Carrio, who read what passed within, me, laughed at hearing me grumble like a child. Before dinner was half over I saw a gondola approach the vessel. "Bless me, sir," said the captain, "take care of yourself, the enemy approaches." I asked him what he meant, and he answered jocosely. The gondola made the ship's side, and I observed a gay young damsel come on board very lightly, and coquettishly dressed, and who at three steps was in the cabin, seated by my side, before I had time to perceive a cover was laid for her. She was equally charming and lively, a brunette, not more than twenty years of age. She spoke nothing but Italian, and her accent alone was sufficient to turn my head. As she ate and chattered she cast her eyes upon me; steadfastly looked at me for a moment, and then exclaimed, "Good Virgin! Ah, my dear Bremond, what an age it is since I saw thee!" Then she threw herself into my arms, sealed her lips to mine, and pressed me almost to strangling. Her large black eyes, like those of the beauties of the East, darted fiery shafts into my heart, and although the surprise at first stupefied my senses, voluptuousness made a rapid progress within, and this to such a degree that the beautiful seducer herself was, notwithstanding the spectators, obliged to restrain my ardor, for I was intoxicated, or rather become furious. When she perceived she had made the impression she desired, she became more moderate in her caresses, but not in her vivacity, and when she thought proper to explain to us the real or false cause of all her petulance, she said I resembled M. de Bremond, director of the customs of Tuscany, to such a degree as to be mistaken for him;

that she had turned this M. de Bremond's head, and would do it again; that she had quitted him because he was a fool; that she took me in his place; that she would love me because it pleased her so to do, for which reason I must love her as long as it was agreeable to her, and when she thought proper to send me about my business, I must be patient as her dear Bremond had been. What was said was done. She took possession of me as of a man that belonged to her, gave me her gloves to keep, her fan, her 'cinda', and her coif, and ordered me to go here or there, to do this or that, and I instantly obeyed her. She told me to go and send away her gondola, because she chose to make use of mine, and I immediately sent it away; she bid me to move from my place, and pray Carrio to sit down in it, because she had something to say to him; and I did as she desired. They chatted a good while together, but spoke low, and I did not interrupt them. She called me, and I approached her. "Hark thee, Zanetto," said she to me, "I will not be loved in the French manner; this indeed will not be well. In the first moment of lassitude, get thee gone: but stay not by the way, I caution thee." After dinner we went to see the glass manufactory at Murano. She bought a great number of little curiosities; for which she left me to pay without the least ceremony. But she everywhere gave away little trinkets to a much greater amount than of the things we had purchased. By the indifference with which she threw away her money, I perceived she annexed to it but little value. When she insisted upon a payment, I am of opinion it was more from a motive of vanity than avarice. She was flattered by the price her admirers set upon her favors.

In the evening we conducted her to her apartments. As we conversed together, I perceived a couple of pistols upon her toilette. "Ah! Ah!" said I, taking one of them up, "this is a patchbox of a new construction: may I ask what is its use? I know you have other arms which give more fire than those upon your table." After a few pleasantries of the same kind, she said to us, with an ingenuousness which rendered her still more charming, "When I am complaisant to persons whom I do not love, I make them pay for the weariness they cause me; nothing can be more

just; but if I suffer their caresses, I will not bear their insults; nor miss the first who shall be wanting to me in respect."

At taking leave of her, I made another appointment for the next day. I did not make her wait. I found her in 'vestito di confidenza', in an undress more than wanton, unknown to northern countries, and which I will not amuse myself in describing, although I recollect it perfectly well. I shall only remark that her ruffles and collar were edged with silk network ornamented with rose-colored pompons. This, in my eyes, much enlivened a beautiful complexion. I afterwards found it to be the mode at Venice, and the effect is so charming that I am surprised it has never been introduced in France. I had no idea of the transports which awaited me. I have spoken of Madam de Larnage with the transport which the remembrance of her still sometimes gives me; but how old, ugly and cold she appeared, compared with my Zulietta! Do not attempt to form to yourself an idea of the charms and graces of this enchanting girl, you will be far too short of truth. Young virgins in cloisters are not so fresh: the beauties of the seraglio are less animated: the houris of paradise less engaging. Never was so sweet an enjoyment offered to the heart and senses of a mortal. Ah! had I at least been capable of fully tasting of it for a single moment! I had tasted of it, but without a charm. I enfeebled all its delights: I destroyed them as at will. No; Nature has not made me capable of enjoyment. She has infused into my wretched head the poison of that ineffable happiness, the desire of which she first placed in my heart.

If there be a circumstance in my life, which describes my nature, it is that which I am going to relate. The forcible manner in which I at this moment recollect the object of my book, will here make me hold in contempt the false delicacy which would prevent me from fulfilling it. Whoever you may be who are desirous of knowing a man, have the courage to read the two or three following pages, and you will become fully acquainted with J. J. Rousseau.

I entered the chamber of a woman of easy virtue, as the sanctuary of love and beauty: and in her person, I thought I saw the divinity. I should have been inclined to think that without

respect and esteem it was impossible to feel anything like that which she made me experience. Scarcely had I, in her first familiarities, discovered the force of her charms and caresses, before I wished, for fear of losing the fruit of them, to gather it beforehand. Suddenly, instead of the flame which consumed me, I felt a mortal cold run through all my veins; my legs failed me; and ready to faint away, I sat down and wept like a child.

Who would guess the cause of my tears, and what, at this moment, passed within me? I said to myself: the object in my power is the masterpiece of love; her wit and person equally approach perfection; she is as good and generous as she is amiable and beautiful. Yet she is a miserable prostitute, abandoned to the public. The captain of a merchantship disposed of her at will; she has thrown herself into my arms, although she knows I have nothing; and my merit with which she cannot be acquainted, can be to her no inducement. In this there is something inconceivable. Either my heart deceives me, fascinates my senses, and makes me the dupe of an unworthy slut, or some secret defect, of which I am ignorant, destroys the effect of her charms, and renders her odious in the eyes of those by whom her charms would otherwise be disputed. I endeavored, by an extraordinary effort of mind, to discover this defect, but it did not so much as strike me that even the consequences to be apprehended, might possibly have some influence. The clearness of her skin, the brilliancy of her complexion, her white teeth, sweet breath, and the appearance of neatness about her person, so far removed from me this idea, that, still in doubt relative to my situation after the affair of the 'padoana', I rather apprehended I was not sufficiently in health for her: and I am firmly persuaded I was not deceived in my opinion. These reflections, so apropos, agitated me to such a degree as to make me shed tears. Zuliette, to whom the scene was quite novel, was struck speechless for a moment. But having made a turn in her chamber, and passing before her glass, she comprehended, and my eyes confirmed her opinion, that disgust had no part in what had happened. It was not difficult for her to recover me and dispel this shamefacedness.

But, at the moment in which I was ready to faint upon a bosom, which for the first time seemed to suffer the impression of the hand and lips of a man, I perceived she had a withered 'teton'. I struck my forehead: I examined, and thought I perceived this teton was not formed like the other. I immediately began to consider how it was possible to have such a defect, and persuaded of its proceeding from some great natural vice, I was clearly convinced, that, instead of the most charming person of whom I could form to myself an idea, I had in my arms a species of a monster, the refuse of nature, of men and of love. I carried my stupidity so far as to speak to her of the discovery I had made. She, at first, took what I said jocosely; and in her frolicsome humor, did and said things which made me die of love. But perceiving an inquietude I could not conceal, she at length reddened, adjusted her dress, raised herself up, and without saying a word, went and placed herself at a window. I attempted to place myself by her side: she withdrew to a sofa, rose from it the next moment, and fanning herself as she walked about the chamber, said to me in a reserved and disdainful tone of voice, "Zanetto, *'lascia le donne, a studia la matematica.*"—[Leave women and study mathematics.]

Before I took leave I requested her to appoint another rendezvous for the next day, which she postponed for three days, adding, with a satirical smile, that I must needs be in want of repose. I was very ill at ease during the interval; my heart was full of her charms and graces; I felt my extravagance, and reproached myself with it, regretting the loss of the moments I had so ill employed, and which, had I chosen, I might have rendered more agreeable than any in my whole life; waiting with the most burning impatience for the moment in which I might repair the loss, and yet, notwithstanding all my reasoning upon what I had discovered, anxious to reconcile the perfections of this adorable girl with the indignity of her situation. I ran, I flew to her apartment at the hour appointed. I know not whether or not her ardor would have been more satisfied with this visit, her pride at least would have been flattered by it, and I already rejoiced at the idea of my convincing her, in every respect, that I knew how to

repair the wrongs I had done. She spared me this justification. The gondolier whom I had sent to her apartment brought me for answer that she had set off, the evening before, for Florence. If I had not felt all the love I had for her person when this was in my possession, I felt it in the most cruel manner on losing her. Amiable and charming as she was in my eyes, I could not console myself for the loss of her; but this I have never been able to do relative to the contemptuous idea which at her departure she must have had of me.

These are my two narratives. The eighteen months I passed at Venice furnished me with no other of the same kind, except a simple prospect at most. Carrio was a gallant. Tired of visiting girls engaged to others, he took a fancy to have one to himself, and, as we were inseparable, he proposed to me an arrangement common enough at Venice, which was to keep one girl for us both. To this I consented. The question was, to find one who was safe. He was so industrious in his researches that he found out a little girl from eleven to twelve years of age, whom her infamous mother was endeavoring to sell, and I went with Carrio to see her. The sight of the child moved me to the most lively compassion. She was fair and as gentle as a lamb. Nobody would have taken her for an Italian. Living is very cheap in Venice; we gave a little money to the mother, and provided for the subsistence of her daughter. She had a voice, and to procure her some resource we gave her a spinnet, and a singing-master. All these expenses did not cost each of us more than two sequins a month, and we contrived to save a much greater sum in other matters; but as we were obliged to wait until she became of a riper age, this was sowing a long time before we could possibly reap. However, satisfied with passing our evenings, chatting and innocently playing with the child, we perhaps enjoyed greater pleasure than if we had received the last favors. So true is it that men are more attached to women by a certain pleasure they have in living with them, than by any kind of libertinism. My heart became insensibly attached to the little Anzoletta, but my attachment was paternal, in which the senses had so little share, that in proportion as the former increased, to have connected it with the latter would

have been less possible; and I felt I should have experienced, at approaching this little creature when become nubile, the same horror with which the abominable crime of incest would have inspired me. I perceived the sentiments of Carrio take, unobserved by himself, exactly the same turn. We thus prepared for ourselves, without intending it, pleasure not less delicious, but very different from that of which we first had an idea; and I am fully persuaded that however beautiful the poor child might have become, far from being the corrupters of her innocence we should have been the protectors of it. The circumstance which shortly afterwards befell me deprived me of the happiness of taking a part in this good work, and my only merit in the affair was the inclination of my heart.

I will now return to my journey.

My first intentions after leaving M. de Montaigu, was to retire to Geneva, until time and more favorable circumstances should have removed the obstacles which prevented my union with my poor mamma; but the quarrel between me and M. de Montaigu being become public, and he having had the folly to write about it to the court, I resolved to go there to give an account of my conduct and complain of that of a madman. I communicated my intention, from Venice, to M. du Theil, charged per interim with foreign affairs after the death of M. Amelot. I set off as soon as my letter, and took my route through Bergamo, Como, and Domo D'Oscela, and crossing Saint Plomb. At Sion, M. de Chaignon, charge des affaires from France, showed me great civility; at Geneva M. de la Closure treated me with the same polite attention. I there renewed my acquaintance with M. de Gauffecourt, from whom I had some money to receive. I had passed through Nion without going to see my father: not that this was a matter of indifference to me, but because I was unwilling to appear before my mother-in-law, after the disaster which had befallen me, certain of being condemned by her without being heard. The bookseller, Du Villard, an old friend of my father's, reproached me severely with this neglect. I gave him my reasons for it, and to repair my fault, without exposing myself to meet my mother-in-law, I took a chaise and we went together to Nion and

stopped at a public house. Du Villard went to fetch my father, who came running to embrace me. We supped together, and, after passing an evening very agreeable to the wishes of my heart, I returned the next morning to Geneva with Du Villard, for whom I have ever since retained a sentiment of gratitude in return for the service he did me on this occasion.

Lyons was a little out of my direct road, but I was determined to pass through that city in order to convince myself of a knavish trick played me by M. de Montaigu. I had sent me from Paris a little box containing a waistcoat, embroidered with gold, a few pairs of ruffles, and six pairs of white silk stockings; nothing more. Upon a proposition made me by M. de Montaigu, I ordered this box to be added to his baggage. In the apothecary's bill he offered me in payment of my salary, and which he wrote out himself, he stated the weight of this box, which he called a bale, at eleven hundred pounds, and charged me with the carriage of it at an enormous rate. By the cares of M. Boy de la Tour, to whom I was recommended by M. Roquin, his uncle, it was proved from the registers of the customs of Lyons and Marseilles, that the said bale weighed no more than forty-five pounds, and had paid carriage according to that weight. I joined this authentic extract to the memoir of M. de Montaigu, and provided with these papers and others containing stronger facts, I returned to Paris, very impatient to make use of them. During the whole of this long journey I had little adventures; at Como, in Valais, and elsewhere. I there saw many curious things, amongst others the Boroma islands, which are worthy of being described. But I am pressed by time, and surrounded by spies. I am obliged to write in haste, and very imperfectly, a work which requires the leisure and tranquility I do not enjoy. If ever providence in its goodness grants me days more calm, I shall destine them to new modelling this work, should I be able to do it, or at least to giving a supplement, of which I perceive it stands in the greatest need.—[I have given up this project.]

The news of my quarrel had reached Paris before me and on my arrival I found the people in all the offices, and the public in general, scandalized at the follies of the ambassador.

Notwithstanding this, the public talk at Venice, and the unanswerable proof I exhibited, I could not obtain even the shadow of justice. Far from obtaining satisfaction or reparation, I was left at the discretion of the ambassador for my salary, and this for no other reason than because, not being a Frenchman, I had no right to national protection, and that it was a private affair between him and myself. Everybody agreed I was insulted, injured, and unfortunate; that the ambassador was mad, cruel, and iniquitous, and that the whole of the affair dishonored him forever. But what of this! He was the ambassador, and I was nothing more than the secretary.

Order, or that which is so called, was in opposition to my obtaining justice, and of this the least shadow was not granted me. I supposed that, by loudly complaining, and by publicly treating this madman in the manner he deserved, I should at length be told to hold my tongue; this was what I wished for, and I was fully determined not to obey until I had obtained redress. But at that time there was no minister for foreign affairs. I was suffered to exclaim, nay, even encouraged to do it, and joined with; but the affair still remained in the same state, until, tired of being in the right without obtaining justice, my courage at length failed me, and let the whole drop.

The only person by whom I was ill received, and from whom I should have least expected such an injustice, was Madam de Beuzenval. Full of the prerogatives of rank and nobility, she could not conceive it was possible an ambassador could ever be in the wrong with respect to his secretary. The reception she gave me was conformable to this prejudice. I was so piqued at it that, immediately after leaving her, I wrote her perhaps one of the strongest and most violent letters that ever came from my pen, and since that time I never once returned to her house. I was better received by Father Castel; but, in the midst of his Jesuitical wheedling I perceived him faithfully to follow one of the great maxims of his society, which is to sacrifice the weak to the powerful. The strong conviction I felt of the justice of my cause, and my natural greatness of mind did not suffer me patiently to endure this partiality. I ceased visiting Father Castel, and on that

account, going to the college of the Jesuits, where I knew nobody but himself. Besides the intriguing and tyrannical spirit of his brethren, so different from the cordiality of the good Father Hemet, gave me such a disgust for their conversation that I have never since been acquainted with, nor seen anyone of them except Father Berthier, whom I saw twice or thrice at M. Dupin's, in conjunction with whom he labored with all his might at the refutation of Montesquieu.

That I may not return to the subject, I will conclude what I have to say of M. de Montaigu. I had told him in our quarrels that a secretary was not what he wanted, but an attorney's clerk. He took the hint, and the person whom he procured to succeed me was a real attorney, who in less than a year robbed him of twenty or thirty thousand livres. He discharged him, and sent him to prison, dismissed his gentleman with disgrace, and, in wretchedness, got himself everywhere into quarrels, received affronts which a footman would not have put up with, and, after numerous follies, was recalled, and sent from the capital. It is very probable that among the reprimands he received at court, his affair with me was not forgotten. At least, a little time after his return he sent his maitre d' hotel, to settle my account, and give me some money. I was in want of it at that moment; my debts at Venice, debts of honor, if ever there were any, lay heavy upon my mind. I made use of the means which offered to discharge them, as well as the note of Zanetto Nani. I received what was offered me, paid all my debts, and remained as before, without a farthing in my pocket, but relieved from a weight which had become insupportable. From that time I never heard speak of M. de Montaigu until his death, with which I became acquainted by means of the Gazette. The peace of God be with that poor man! He was as fit for the functions of an ambassador as in my infancy I had been for those of Grapignan.—However, it was in his power to have honorably supported himself by my services, and rapidly to have advanced me in a career to which the Comte de Gauvon had destined me in my youth, and of the functions of which I had in a more advanced age rendered myself capable.

The justice and inutility of my complaints, left in my mind seeds of indignation against our foolish civil institutions, by which the welfare of the public and real justice are always sacrificed to I know not what appearance of order, and which does nothing more than add the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak, and the iniquity of the powerful. Two things prevented these seeds from putting forth at that time as they afterwards did: one was, myself being in question in the affair, and private interest, whence nothing great or noble ever proceeded, could not draw from my heart the divine soarings, which the most pure love, only of that which is just and sublime, can produce. The other was the charm of friendship which tempered and calmed my wrath by the ascendancy of a more pleasing sentiment. I had become acquainted at Venice with a Biscayan, a friend of my friend Carrio's, and worthy of being that of every honest man. This amiable young man, born with every talent and virtue, had just made the tour of Italy to gain a taste for the fine arts, and, imagining he had nothing more to acquire, intended to return by the most direct road to his own country. I told him the arts were nothing more than a relaxation to a genius like his, fit to cultivate the sciences; and to give him a taste for these, I advised him to make a journey to Paris and reside there for six months. He took my advice, and went to Paris. He was there and expected me when I arrived. His lodging was too considerable for him, and he offered me the half of it, which I instantly accepted. I found him absorbed in the study of the sublimest sciences. Nothing was above his reach. He digested everything with a prodigious rapidity. How cordially did he thank me for having procured him this food for his mind, which was tormented by a thirst after knowledge, without his being aware of it! What a treasure of light and virtue I found in the vigorous mind of this young man! I felt he was the friend I wanted. We soon became intimate. Our tastes were not the same, and we constantly disputed. Both opinionated, we never could agree about anything. Nevertheless we could not separate; and, notwithstanding our reciprocal and incessant contradiction, we neither of us wished the other to be different from what he was.

Ignacio Emanuel de Altuna was one of those rare beings whom only Spain produces, and of whom she produces too few for her glory. He had not the violent national passions common in his own country. The idea of vengeance could no more enter his head, than the desire of it could proceed from his heart. His mind was too great to be vindictive, and I have frequently heard him say, with the greatest coolness, that no mortal could offend him. He was gallant, without being tender. He played with women as with so many pretty children. He amused himself with the mistresses of his friends, but I never knew him to have one of his own, nor the least desire for it. The emanations from the virtue with which his heart was stored, never permitted the fire of the passions to excite sensual desires.

After his travels he married, died young, and left children; and, I am as convinced as of my existence, that his wife was the first and only woman with whom he ever tasted of the pleasures of love.

Externally he was devout, like a Spaniard, but in his heart he had the piety of an angel. Except myself, he is the only man I ever saw whose principles were not intolerant. He never in his life asked any person his opinion in matters of religion. It was not of the least consequence to him whether his friend was a Jew, a Protestant, a Turk, a Bigot, or an Atheist, provided he was an honest man. Obstinate and headstrong in matters of indifference, but the moment religion was in question, even the moral part, he collected himself, was silent, or simply said: "I am charged with the care of myself, only." It is astonishing so much elevation of mind should be compatible with a spirit of detail carried to minuteness. He previously divided the employment of the day by hours, quarters and minutes; and so scrupulously adhered to this distribution, that had the clock struck while he was reading a phrase, he would have shut his book without finishing it. His portions of time thus laid out, were some of them set apart to studies of one kind, and others to those of another: he had some for reflection, conversation, divine service, the reading of Locke, for his rosary, for visits, music and painting; and neither pleasure, temptation, nor complaisance, could interrupt this order: a duty he

might have had to discharge was the only thing that could have done it. When he gave me a list of his distribution, that I might conform myself thereto, I first laughed, and then shed tears of admiration. He never constrained anybody nor suffered constraint: he was rather rough with people, who from politeness, attempted to put it upon him. He was passionate without being sullen. I have often seen him warm, but never saw him really angry with any person. Nothing could be more cheerful than his temper: he knew how to pass and receive a joke; raillery was one of his distinguished talents, and with which he possessed that of pointed wit and repartee. When he was animated, he was noisy and heard at a great distance; but whilst he loudly inveighed, a smile was spread over his countenance, and in the midst of his warmth he used some diverting expression which made all his hearers break out into a loud laugh. He had no more of the Spanish complexion than of the phlegm of that country. His skin was white, his cheeks finely colored, and his hair of a light chestnut. He was tall and well made; his body was well formed for the residence of his mind.

This wise-hearted as well as wise-headed man, knew mankind, and was my friend; this was my only answer to such as are not so. We were so intimately united, that our intention was to pass our days together. In a few years I was to go to Ascoytia to live with him at his estate; every part of the project was arranged the eve of his departure; nothing was left undetermined, except that which depends not upon men in the best concerted plans, posterior events. My disasters, his marriage, and finally, his death, separated us forever. Some men would be tempted to say, that nothing succeeds except the dark conspiracies of the wicked, and that the innocent intentions of the good are seldom or never accomplished. I had felt the inconvenience of dependence, and took a resolution never again to expose myself to it; having seen the projects of ambition, which circumstances had induced me to form, overturned in their birth. Discouraged in the career I had so well begun, from which, however, I had just been expelled, I resolved never more to attach myself to any person, but to remain in an independent state, turning my talents to the best advantage:

of these I at length began to feel the extent, and that I had hitherto had too modest an opinion of them. I again took up my opera, which I had laid aside to go to Venice; and that I might be less interrupted after the departure of Altuna, I returned to my old hotel St. Quentin; which, in a solitary part of the town, and not far from the Luxembourg, was more proper for my purpose than noisy Rue St. Honor.

There the only consolation which Heaven suffered me to taste in my misery, and the only one which rendered it supportable, awaited me. This was not a transient acquaintance; I must enter into some detail relative to the manner in which it was made.

We had a new landlady from Orleans; she took for a needlewoman a girl from her own country, of between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age, and who, as well as the hostess, ate at our table. This girl, named Theresa le Vasseur, was of a good family; her father was an officer in the mint of Orleans, and her mother a shopkeeper; they had many children. The function of the mint of Orleans being suppressed, the father found himself without employment; and the mother having suffered losses, was reduced to narrow circumstances. She quitted her business and came to Paris with her husband and daughter, who, by her industry, maintained all the three.

The first time I saw this girl at table, I was struck with her modesty; and still more so with her lively yet charming look, which, with respect to the impression it made upon me, was never equalled. Beside M. de Bonnefond, the company was composed of several Irish priests, Gascons and others of much the same description. Our hostess herself had not made the best possible use of her time, and I was the only person at the table who spoke and behaved with decency. Allurements were thrown out to the young girl. I took her part, and the joke was then turned against me. Had I had no natural inclination to the poor girl, compassion and contradiction would have produced it in me: I was always a great friend to decency in manners and conversation, especially in the fair sex. I openly declared myself her champion, and perceived she was not insensible of my attention; her looks,

animated by the gratitude she dared not express by words, were for this reason still more penetrating.

She was very timid, and I was as much so as herself. The connection which this disposition common to both seemed to remove to a distance, was however rapidly formed. Our landlady perceiving its progress, became furious, and her brutality forwarded my affair with the young girl, who, having no person in the house except myself to give her the least support, was sorry to see me go from home, and sighed for the return of her protector. The affinity our hearts bore to each other, and the similarity of our dispositions, had soon their ordinary effect. She thought she saw in me an honest man, and in this she was not deceived. I thought I perceived in her a woman of great sensibility, simple in her manners, and devoid of all coquetry:—I was no more deceived in her than she in me. I began by declaring to her that I would never either abandon or marry her. Love, esteem, artless sincerity were the ministers of my triumph, and it was because her heart was tender and virtuous, that I was happy without being presuming.

The apprehensions she was under of my not finding in her that for which I sought, retarded my happiness more than every other circumstance. I perceived her disconcerted and confused before she yielded her consent, wishing to be understood and not daring to explain herself. Far from suspecting the real cause of her embarrassment, I falsely imagined it to proceed from another motive, a supposition highly insulting to her morals, and thinking she gave me to understand my health might be exposed to danger, I fell into so perplexed a state that, although it was no restraint upon me, it poisoned my happiness during several days. As we did not understand each other, our conversations upon this subject were so many enigmas more than ridiculous. She was upon the point of believing I was absolutely mad; and I on my part was as near not knowing what else to think of her. At last we came to an explanation; she confessed to me with tears the only fault of the kind of her whole life, immediately after she became nubile; the fruit of her ignorance and the address of her seducer. The moment I comprehended what she meant, I gave a shout of joy. "A

Hymen!" exclaimed I; "sought for at Paris, and at twenty years of age! Ah my Theresa! I am happy in possessing thee, virtuous and healthy as thou art, and in not finding that for which I never sought."

At first amusement was my only object; I perceived I had gone further and had given myself a companion. A little intimate connection with this excellent girl, and a few reflections upon my situation, made me discover that, while thinking of nothing more than my pleasures, I had done a great deal towards my happiness. In the place of extinguished ambition, a life of sentiment, which had entire possession of my heart, was necessary to me. In a word, I wanted a successor to mamma: since I was never again to live with her, it was necessary some person should live with her pupil, and a person, too, in whom I might find that simplicity and docility of mind and heart which she had found in me. It was, moreover, necessary that the happiness of domestic life should indemnify me for the splendid career I had just renounced. When I was quite alone there was a void in my heart, which wanted nothing more than another heart to fill it up. Fate had deprived me of this, or at least in part alienated me from that for which by nature I was formed. From that moment I was alone, for there never was for me the least thing intermediate between everything and nothing. I found in Theresa the supplement of which I stood in need; by means of her I lived as happily as I possibly could do, according to the course of events.

I at first attempted to improve her mind. In this my pains were useless. Her mind is as nature formed it: it was not susceptible of cultivation. I do not blush in acknowledging she never knew how to read well, although she writes tolerably. When I went to lodge in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, opposite to my windows at the Hotel de Ponchartrain, there was a sun-dial, on which for a whole month I used all my efforts to teach her to know the hours; yet, she scarcely knows them at present. She never could enumerate the twelve months of the year in order, and cannot distinguish one numeral from another, notwithstanding all the trouble I took endeavoring to teach them to her. She neither knows how to count money, nor to reckon the price of anything.

The word which when she speaks, presents itself to her mind, is frequently opposite to that of which she means to make use. I formerly made a dictionary of her phrases, to amuse M. de Luxembourg, and her 'qui pro quos' often became celebrated among those with whom I was most intimate. But this person, so confined in her intellects, and, if the world pleases, so stupid, can give excellent advice in cases of difficulty. In Switzerland, in England and in France, she frequently saw what I had not myself perceived; she has often given me the best advice I could possibly follow; she has rescued me from dangers into which I had blindly precipitated myself, and in the presence of princes and the great, her sentiments, good sense, answers, and conduct have acquired her universal esteem, and myself the most sincere congratulations on her merit. With persons whom we love, sentiment fortifies the mind as well as the heart; and they who are thus attached, have little need of searching for ideas elsewhere.

I lived with my Theresa as agreeably as with the finest genius in the world. Her mother, proud of having been brought up under the Marchioness of Monpipeau, attempted to be witty, wished to direct the judgment of her daughter, and by her knavish cunning destroyed the simplicity of our intercourse.

The fatigue of this opportunity made me in some degree surmount the foolish shame which prevented me from appearing with Theresa in public; and we took short country walks, *tete-a-tete*, and partook of little collations, which, to me, were delicious. I perceived she loved me sincerely, and this increased my tenderness. This charming intimacy left me nothing to wish; futurity no longer gave me the least concern, or at most appeared only as the present moment prolonged: I had no other desire than that of insuring its duration.

This attachment rendered all other dissipation superfluous and insipid to me. As I only went out for the purpose of going to the apartment of Theresa, her place of residence almost became my own. My retirement was so favorable to the work I had undertaken, that, in less than three months, my opera was entirely finished, both words and music, except a few accompaniments, and fillings up which still remained to be added. This

maneuvering business was very fatiguing to me. I proposed it to Philidor, offering him at the same time a part of the profits. He came twice, and did something to the middle parts in the act of Ovid; but he could not confine himself to an assiduous application by the allurements of advantages which were distant and uncertain. He did not come a third time, and I finished the work myself.

My opera completed, the next thing was to make something of it: this was by much the more difficult task of the two. A man living in solitude in Paris will never succeed in anything. I was on the point of making my way by means of M. de la Popliniere, to whom Gauffecourt, at my return to Geneva, had introduced me. M. de la Popliniere was the Mecaenas of Rameau; Madam de la Popliniere his very humble scholar. Rameau was said to govern in that house. Judging that he would with pleasure protect the work of one of his disciples, I wished to show him what I had done. He refused to examine it; saying he could not read score, it was too fatiguing to him. M. de la Popliniere, to obviate this difficulty, said he might hear it; and offered me to send for musicians to execute certain detached pieces. I wished for nothing better. Rameau consented with an ill grace, incessantly repeating that the composition of a man not regularly bred to the science, and who had learned music without a master, must certainly be very fine! I hastened to copy into parts five or six select passages. Ten symphonies were procured, and Albert, Berard, and Mademoiselle Bourbonnais undertook the vocal part. Rameau, the moment he heard the overture, was purposely extravagant in his eulogium, by which he intended it should be understood it could not be my composition. He showed signs of impatience at every passage: but after a counter tenor song, the air of which was noble and harmonious, with a brilliant accompaniment, he could no longer contain himself; he apostrophised me with a brutality at which everybody was shocked, maintaining that a part of what he had heard was by a man experienced in the art, and the rest by some ignorant person who did not so much as understand music. It is true my composition, unequal and without rule, was sometimes sublime, and at others insipid, as that of a person who

forms himself in an art by the soarings of his own genius, unsupported by science, must necessarily be. Rameau pretended to see nothing in me but a contemptible pilferer, without talents or taste. The rest of the company, among whom I must distinguish the master of the house, were of a different opinion. M. de Richelieu, who at that time frequently visited M. and Madam de la Popliniere, heard them speak of my work, and wished to hear the whole of it, with an intention, if it pleased him, to have it performed at court. The opera was executed with full choruses, and by a great orchestra, at the expense of the king, at M. de Bonneval's intendant of the Menus; Francoeur directed the band. The effect was surprising: the duke never ceased to exclaim and applaud; and, at the end of one of the choruses, in the act of Tasso, he arose and came to me, and, pressing my hand, said: "M. Rousseau, this is transporting harmony. I never heard anything finer. I will get this performed at Versailles."

Madam de la Poliniere, who was present, said not a word. Rameau, although invited, refused to come. The next day, Madam de la Popliniere received me at her toilette very ungraciously, affected to undervalue my piece, and told me, that although a little false glitter had at first dazzled M. de Richelieu, he had recovered from his error, and she advised me not to place the least dependence upon my opera. The duke arrived soon after, and spoke to me in quite a different language. He said very flattering things of my talents, and seemed as much disposed as ever to have my composition performed before the king. "There is nothing," said he, "but the act of Tasso which cannot pass at court: you must write another." Upon this single word I shut myself up in my apartment; and in three weeks produced, in the place of Tasso, another act, the subject of which was Hesiod inspired by the muses. In this I found the secret of introducing a part of the history of my talents, and of the jealousy with which Rameau had been pleased to honor me. There was in the new act an elevation less gigantic and better supported than in the act of Tasso. The music was as noble and the composition better; and had the other two acts been equal to this, the whole piece would have supported a representation to advantage. But whilst I was

endeavoring to give it the last finishing, another undertaking suspended the completion of that I had in my hand. In the winter which succeeded the battle of Fontenoi, there were many galas at Versailles, and several operas performed at the theater of the little stables. Among the number of the latter was the dramatic piece of Voltaire, entitled 'La Princesse de Navarre', the music by Rameau, the name of which has just been changed to that of 'Fetes de Ramire'. This new subject required several changes to be made in the divertissements, as well in the poetry as in the music.

A person capable of both was now sought after. Voltaire was in Lorraine, and Rameau also; both of whom were employed on the opera of the Temple of Glory, and could not give their attention to this. M. de Richelieu thought of me, and sent to desire I would undertake the alterations; and, that I might the better examine what there was to do, he gave me separately the poem and the music. In the first place, I would not touch the words without the consent of the author, to whom I wrote upon the subject a very polite and respectful letter, such a one as was proper; and received from him the following answer:

SIR: In you two talents, which hitherto have always been separated, are united. These are two good reasons for me to esteem and to endeavor to love you. I am sorry, on your account, you should employ these talents in a work which is so little worthy of them. A few months ago the Duke de Richelieu commanded me to make, absolutely in the twinkling of an eye, a little and bad sketch of a few insipid and imperfect scenes to be adapted to divertissements which are not of a nature to be joined with them. I obeyed with the greatest exactness. I wrote very fast, and very ill. I sent this wretched production to M. de Richelieu, imagining he would make no use of it, or that I should have it again to make the necessary corrections. Happily it is in your hands, and you are at full liberty to do with it whatever you please: I have entirely lost sight of the thing. I doubt not but you will have corrected all the faults which cannot but abound in so hasty a composition of such a very simple sketch, and am persuaded you will have supplied whatever was wanting.

I remember that, among other stupid inattentions, no account is given in the scenes which connect the divertissements of the manner in which the Princess Grenadine immediately passes from a prison to a garden or palace. As it is not a magician but a Spanish nobleman who gives her the gala, I am of opinion nothing should be effected by enchantment.

I beg, sir, you will examine this part, of which I have but a confused idea.

You will likewise consider, whether or not it be necessary the prison should be opened, and the princess conveyed from it to a fine palace, gilt and varnished, and prepared for her. I know all this is wretched, and that it is beneath a thinking being to make a serious affair of such trifles; but, since we must displease as little as possible, it is necessary we should conform to reason, even in a bad divertissement of an opera.

I depend wholly upon you and M. Ballot, and soon expect to have the honor of returning you my thanks, and assuring you how much I am, etc.

There is nothing surprising in the great politeness of this letter, compared with the almost crude ones which he has since written to me. He thought I was in great favor with Madam Richelieu; and the courtly suppleness, which everyone knows to be the character of this author, obliged him to be extremely polite to a new comer, until he become better acquainted with the measure of the favor and patronage he enjoyed.

Authorized by M. de Voltaire, and not under the necessity of giving myself the least concern about M. Rameau, who endeavored to injure me, I set to work, and in two months my undertaking was finished. With respect to the poetry, it was confined to a mere trifle; I aimed at nothing more than to prevent

the difference of style from being perceived, and had the vanity to think I had succeeded. The musical part was longer and more laborious. Besides my having to compose several preparatory pieces, and, amongst others, the overture, all the recitative, with which I was charged, was extremely difficult on account of the necessity there was of connecting, in a few verses, and by very rapid modulations, symphonies and choruses, in keys very different from each other; for I was determined neither to change nor transpose any of the airs, that Rameau might not accuse me of having disfigured them. I succeeded in the recitative; it was well accented, full of energy and excellent modulation. The idea of two men of superior talents, with whom I was associated, had elevated my genius, and I can assert, that in this barren and inglorious task, of which the public could have no knowledge, I was for the most part equal to my models.

The piece, in the state to which I had brought it, was rehearsed in the great theatre of the opera. Of the three authors who had contributed to the production, I was the only one present. Voltaire was not in Paris, and Rameau either did not come, or concealed himself. The words of the first monologue were very mournful; they began with:

O Mort! viens terminer les malheurs de ma vie.

[O Death! hasten to terminate the misfortunes of my life.]

To these, suitable music was necessary. It was, however, upon this that Madam de la Popliniere founded her censure; accusing me, with much bitterness, of having composed a funeral anthem. M. de Richelieu very judiciously began by informing himself who was the author of the poetry of this monologue; I presented him the manuscript he had sent me, which proved it was by Voltaire. "In that case," said the duke, "Voltaire alone is to blame." During the rehearsal, everything I had done was disapproved by Madam de la Popliniere, and approved of by M. de Richelieu; but I had afterwards to do with too powerful an adversary. It was signified to me that several parts of my composition wanted revising, and that on this it was necessary I should consult M. Rameau; my

heart was wounded by such a conclusion, instead of the eulogium I expected, and which certainly I merited, and I returned to my apartment overwhelmed with grief, exhausted with fatigue, and consumed by chagrin. I was immediately taken ill, and confined to my chamber for upwards of six weeks.

Rameau, who was charged with the alterations indicated by Madam de la Popliniere, sent to ask me for the overture of my great opera, to substitute it to that I had just composed. Happily I perceived the trick he intended to play me, and refused him the overture. As the performance was to be in five or six days, he had not time to make one, and was obliged to leave that I had prepared. It was in the Italian taste, and in a style at that time quite new in France. It gave satisfaction, and I learned from M. de Valmalette, maitre d'hotel to the king, and son-in-law to M. Mussard, my relation and friend, that the connoisseurs were highly satisfied with my work, and that the public had not distinguished it from that of Rameau. However, he and Madam de la Popliniere took measures to prevent any person from knowing I had any concern in the matter. In the books distributed to the audience, and in which the authors are always named, Voltaire was the only person mentioned, and Rameau preferred the suppression of his own name to seeing it associated with mine.

As soon as I was in a situation to leave my room, I wished to wait upon M. de Richelieu, but it was too late; he had just set off for Dunkirk, where he was to command the expedition destined to Scotland. At his return, said I to myself, to authorize my idleness, it will be too late for my purpose, not having seen him since that time. I lost the honor of my work and the emoluments it should have produced me, besides considering my time, trouble, grief, and vexation, my illness, and the money this cost me, without ever receiving the least benefit, or rather, recompense. However, I always thought M. de Richelieu was disposed to serve me, and that he had a favorable opinion of my talents; but my misfortune, and Madam de la Popliniere, prevented the effect of his good wishes.

I could not divine the reason of the aversion this lady had to me. I had always endeavored to make myself agreeable to her,

and regularly paid her my court. Gauffecourt explained to me the causes of her dislike: "The first," said he, "is her friendship for Rameau, of whom she is the declared panegyrist, and who will not suffer a competitor; the next is an original sin, which ruins you in her estimation, and which she will never forgive; you are a Genevese." Upon this he told me the Abbe Hubert, who was from the same city, and the sincere friend of M. de la Popliniere, had used all his efforts to prevent him from marrying this lady, with whose character and temper he was very well acquainted; and that after the marriage she had vowed him an implacable hatred, as well as all the Genevese. "Although La Popliniere has a friendship for you, do not," said he, "depend upon his protection: he is still in love with his wife: she hates you, and is vindictive and artful; you will never do anything in that house." All this I took for granted.

The same Gauffecourt rendered me much about this time, a service of which I stood in the greatest need. I had just lost my virtuous father, who was about sixty years of age. I felt this loss less severely than I should have done at any other time, when the embarrassments of my situation had less engaged my attention. During his life-time I had never claimed what remained of the property of my mother, and of which he received the little interest. His death removed all my scruples upon this subject. But the want of a legal proof of the death of my brother created a difficulty which Gauffecourt undertook to remove, and this he effected by means of the good offices of the advocate De Lolme. As I stood in need of the little resource, and the event being doubtful, I waited for a definitive account with the greatest anxiety.

One evening on entering my apartment I found a letter, which I knew to contain the information I wanted, and I took it up with an impatient trembling, of which I was inwardly ashamed. What? said I to myself, with disdain, shall Jean Jacques thus suffer himself to be subdued by interest and curiosity? I immediately laid the letter again upon the chimney-piece. I undressed myself, went to bed with great composure, slept better than ordinary, and rose in the morning at a late hour, without thinking more of my

letter. As I dressed myself, it caught my eye; I broke the seal very leisurely, and found under the envelope a bill of exchange. I felt a variety of pleasing sensations at the same time: but I can assert, upon my honor, that the most lively of them all was that proceeding from having known how to be master of myself.

I could mention twenty such circumstances in my life, but I am too much pressed for time to say everything. I sent a small part of this money to my poor mamma; regretting, with my eyes suffused with tears, the happy time when I should have laid it all at her feet. All her letters contained evident marks of her distress. She sent me piles of recipes, and numerous secrets, with which she pretended I might make my fortune and her own. The idea of her wretchedness already affected her heart and contracted her mind. The little I sent her fell a prey to the knaves by whom she was surrounded; she received not the least advantage from anything. The idea of dividing what was necessary to my own subsistence with these wretches disgusted me, especially after the vain attempt I had made to deliver her from them, and of which I shall have occasion to speak. Time slipped away, and with it the little money I had; we were two, or indeed, four persons; or, to speak still more correctly, seven or eight. Although Theresa was disinterested to a degree of which there are but few examples, her mother was not so. She was no sooner a little relieved from her necessities by my cares, than she sent for her whole family to partake of the fruits of them. Her sisters, sons, daughters, all except her eldest daughter, married to the director of the coaches of Augers, came to Paris. Everything I did for Theresa, her mother diverted from its original destination in favor of these people who were starving. I had not to do with an avaricious person; and, not being under the influence of an unruly passion, I was not guilty of follies. Satisfied with genteelly supporting Theresa without luxury, and unexposed to pressing wants, I readily consented to let all the earnings of her industry go to the profit of her mother; and to this even I did not confine myself; but, by a fatality by which I was pursued, whilst mamma was a prey to the rascals about her Theresa was the same to her family; and I could not do anything on either side for the benefit of her to

whom the succor I gave was destined. It was odd enough the youngest child of M. de la Vasseur, the only one who had not received a marriage portion from her parents, should provide for their subsistence; and that, after having a long time been beaten by her brothers, sisters, and even her nieces, the poor girl should be plundered by them all, without being more able to defend herself from their thefts than from their blows. One of her nieces, named Gorton le Duc, was of a mild and amiable character; although spoiled by the lessons and examples of the others. As I frequently saw them together, I gave them names, which they afterwards gave to each other; I called the niece my niece, and the aunt my aunt; they both called me uncle. Hence the name of aunt, by which I continued to call Theresa, and which my friends sometimes jocosely repeated. It will be judged that in such a situation I had not a moment to lose, before I attempted to extricate myself. Imagining M. de Richelieu had forgotten me, and having no more hopes from the court, I made some attempts to get my opera brought out at Paris; but I met with difficulties which could not immediately be removed, and my situation became daily more painful. I presented my little comedy of Narcisse to the Italians; it was received, and I had the freedom of the theatre, which gave much pleasure. But this was all; I could never get my piece performed, and, tired of paying my court to players, I gave myself no more trouble about them. At length I had recourse to the last expedient which remained to me, and the only one of which I ought to have made use. While frequenting the house of M. de la Popliniere, I had neglected the family of Dupin. The two ladies, although related, were not on good terms, and never saw each other. There was not the least intercourse between the two families, and Thieriot was the only person who visited both. He was desired to endeavor to bring me again to M. Dupin's. M. de Francueil was then studying natural history and chemistry, and collecting a cabinet. I believe he aspired to become a member of the Academy of Sciences; to this effect he intended to write a book, and judged I might be of use to him in the undertaking. Madam de Dupin, who, on her part, had another work in contemplation, had much the same views in respect to

me. They wished to have me in common as a kind of secretary, and this was the reason of the invitations of Thieriot.

I required that M. de Francueil should previously employ his interest with that of Jelyote to get my work rehearsed at the opera-house; to this he consented. The *Muses Galantes* were several times rehearsed, first at the Magazine, and afterwards in the great theatre. The audience was very numerous at the great rehearsal, and several parts of the composition were highly applauded. However, during this rehearsal, very ill-conducted by Rebel, I felt the piece would not be received; and that, before it could appear, great alterations were necessary. I therefore withdrew it without saying a word, or exposing myself to a refusal; but I plainly perceived, by several indications, that the work, had it been perfect, could not have succeeded. M. de Francueil had promised me to get it rehearsed, but not that it should be received. He exactly kept his word. I thought I perceived on this occasion, as well as many others, that neither Madam Dupin nor himself were willing I should acquire a certain reputation in the world, lest, after the publication of their books, it should be supposed they had grafted their talents upon mine. Yet as Madam Dupin always supposed those I had to be very moderate, and never employed me except it was to write what she dictated, or in researches of pure erudition, the reproach, with respect to her, would have been unjust.

This last failure of success completed my discouragement. I abandoned every prospect of fame and advancement; and, without further troubling my head about real or imaginary talents, with which I had so little success, I dedicated my whole time and cares to procure myself and Theresa a subsistence in the manner most pleasing to those to whom it should be agreeable to provide for it. I therefore entirely attached myself to Madam Dupin and M. de Francueil. This did not place me in a very opulent situation; for with eight or nine hundred livres, which I had the first two years, I had scarcely enough to provide for my primary wants; being obliged to live in their neighborhood, a dear part of the town, in a furnished lodging, and having to pay for another lodging at the extremity of Paris, at the very top of the Rue Saint Jacques, to

which, let the weather be as it would, I went almost every evening to supper. I soon got into the track of my new occupations, and conceived a taste for them. I attached myself to the study of chemistry, and attended several courses of it with M. de Francueil at M. Rouelle's, and we began to scribble over paper upon that science, of which we scarcely possessed the elements. In 1717, we went to pass the autumn in Tourraine, at the castle of Chenonceaux, a royal mansion upon the Cher, built by Henry the II, for Diana of Poitiers, of whom the ciphers are still seen, and which is now in the possession of M. Dupin, a farmer general. We amused ourselves very agreeably in this beautiful place, and lived very well: I became as fat there as a monk. Music was a favorite relaxation. I composed several trios full of harmony, and of which I may perhaps speak in my supplement if ever I should write one. Theatrical performances were another resource. I wrote a comedy in fifteen days, entitled 'l'Engagement Temeraire',—[The Rash Engagement]—which will be found amongst my papers; it has no other merit than that of being lively. I composed several other little things: amongst others a poem entitled, 'l'Aliee de Sylvie', from the name of an alley in the park upon the bank of the Cher; and this without discontinuing my chemical studies, or interrupting what I had to do for Madam Dupin.

Whilst I was increasing my corpulency at Chenonceaux, that of my poor Theresa was augmented at Paris in another manner, and at my return I found the work I had put upon the frame in greater forwardness than I had expected. This, on account of my situation, would have thrown me into the greatest embarrassment, had not one of my messmates furnished me with the only resource which could relieve me from it. This is one of those essential narratives which I cannot give with too much simplicity; because, in making an improper use of their names, I should either excuse or inculcate myself, both of which in this place are entirely out of the question.

During the residence of Altuna at Paris, instead of going to eat at a 'Traiteurs', he and I commonly ate in the neighborhood, almost opposite the cul de sac of the opera, at the house of a Madam la Selle, the wife of a tailor, who gave but very ordinary

dinners, but whose table was much frequented on account of the safe company which generally resorted to it; no person was received without being introduced by one of those who used the house. The commander, De Graville, an old debauchee, with much wit and politeness, but obscene in conversation, lodged at the house, and brought to it a set of riotous and extravagant young men; officers in the guards and mousquetaires. The Commander de Nonant, chevalier to all the girls of the opera, was the daily oracle, who conveyed to us the news of this motley crew. M. du Plessis, a lieutenant-colonel, retired from the service, an old man of great goodness and wisdom; and M. Ancelet, an officer in the mousquetaires, kept the young people in a certain kind of order.

[It was to this M. Ancelet I gave a little comedy, after my own manner entitled 'les Prisouniers de Guerre', which I wrote after the disasters of the French in Bavaria and Bohemia: I dared not either avow this comedy or show it, and this for the singular reason that neither the King of France nor the French were ever better spoken of nor praised with more sincerity of heart than in my piece though written by a professed republican, I dared not declare myself the panegyrist of a nation, whose maxims were exactly the reverse of my own. More grieved at the misfortunes of France than the French themselves I was afraid the public would construe into flattery and mean complaisance the marks of a sincere attachment, of which in my first part I have mentioned the date and the cause, and which I was ashamed to show.]

This table was also frequented by commercial people, financiers and contractors, but extremely polite, and such as were distinguished amongst those of the same profession. M. de Besse, M. de Forcade, and others whose names I have forgotten, in short, well-dressed people of every description were seen there; except abbés and men of the long robe, not one of whom I ever met in the house, and it was agreed not to introduce men of either of these professions. This table, sufficiently resorted to, was very cheerful without being noisy, and many of the guests were waggish, without descending to vulgarity. The old commander with all his smutty stories, with respect to the substance, never lost sight of the politeness of the old court; nor did any indecent expression, which even women would not have pardoned him, escape his lips. His manner served as a rule to every person at table; all the young men related their adventures of gallantry with

equal grace and freedom, and these narratives were the more complete, as the seraglio was at the door; the entry which led to it was the same; for there was a communication between this and the shop of Le Duchapt, a celebrated milliner, who at that time had several very pretty girls, with whom our young people went to chat before or after dinner. I should thus have amused myself as well as the rest, had I been less modest: I had only to go in as they did, but this I never had courage enough to do. With respect to Madam de Selle, I often went to eat at her house after the departure of Altuna. I learned a great number of amusing anecdotes, and by degrees I adopted, thank God, not the morals, but the maxims I found to be established there. Honest men injured, husbands deceived, women seduced, were the most ordinary topics, and he who had best filled the foundling hospital was always the most applauded. I caught the manners I daily had before my eyes: I formed my manner of thinking upon that I observed to be the reigning one amongst amiable, and upon the whole, very honest people. I said to myself, since it is the custom of the country, they who live here may adopt it; this is the expedient for which I sought. I cheerfully determined upon it without the least scruple, and the only one I had to overcome was that of Theresa, whom, with the greatest imaginable difficulty, I persuaded to adopt this only means of saving her honor. Her mother, who was moreover apprehensive of a new embarrassment by an increase of family, came to my aid, and she at length suffered herself to be prevailed upon. We made choice of a midwife, a safe and prudent woman, Mademoiselle Gouin, who lived at the Point Saint Eustache, and when the time came, Theresa was conducted to her house by her mother.

I went thither several times to see her, and gave her a cipher which I had made double upon two cards; one of them was put into the linen of the child, and by the midwife deposited with the infant in the office of the foundling hospital according to the customary form. The year following, a similar inconvenience was remedied by the same expedient, excepting the cipher, which was forgotten: no more reflection on my part, nor approbation on that of the mother; she obeyed with trembling. All the vicissitudes

which this fatal conduct has produced in my manner of thinking, as well as in my destiny, will be successively seen. For the present, we will confine ourselves to this first period; its cruel and unforeseen consequences will but too frequently oblige me to refer to it.

I here mark that of my first acquaintance with Madam D'Epinay, whose name will frequently appear in these memoirs. She was a Mademoiselle D' Esclavelles, and had lately been married to M. D'Epinay, son of M. de Lalive de Bellegarde, a farmer general. She understood music, and a passion for the art produced between these three persons the greatest intimacy. Madam Francueil introduced me to Madam D'Epinay, and we sometimes supped together at her house. She was amiable, had wit and talent, and was certainly a desirable acquaintance; but she had a female friend, a Mademoiselle d'Ette, who was said to have much malignancy in her disposition; she lived with the Chevalier de Valory, whose temper was far from being one of the best. I am of opinion, an acquaintance with these two persons was prejudicial to Madam D'Epinay, to whom, with a disposition which required the greatest attention from those about her, nature had given very excellent qualities to regulate or counterbalance her extravagant pretensions. M. de Francueil inspired her with a part of the friendship he had conceived for me, and told me of the connection between them, of which, for that reason, I would not now speak, were it not become so public as not to be concealed from M. D'Epinay himself.

M. de Francueil confided to me secrets of a very singular nature relative to this lady, of which she herself never spoke to me, nor so much as suspected my having a knowledge; for I never opened my lips to her upon the subject, nor will I ever do it to any person. The confidence all parties had in my prudence rendered my situation very embarrassing, especially with Madam de Francueil, whose knowledge of me was sufficient to remove from her all suspicion on my account, although I was connected with her rival. I did everything I could to console this poor woman, whose husband certainly did not return the affection she had for him. I listened to these three persons separately; I kept all their

secrets so faithfully that not one of the three ever drew from me those of the two others, and this, without concealing from either of the women my attachment to each of them. Madam de Francueil, who frequently wished to make me an agent, received refusals in form, and Madam D'Epinay, once desiring me to charge myself with a letter to M. de Francueil received the same mortification, accompanied by a very express declaration, that if ever she wished to drive me forever from the house, she had only a second time to make me a like proposition.

In justice to Madam D'Epinay, I must say, that far from being offended with me she spoke of my conduct to M. de Francueil in terms of the highest approbation, and continued to receive me as well, and as politely as ever. It was thus, amidst the heart-burnings of three persons to whom I was obliged to behave with the greatest circumspection, on whom I in some measure depended, and for whom I had conceived an attachment, that by conducting myself with mildness and complaisance, although accompanied with the greatest firmness, I preserved unto the last not only their friendship, but their esteem and confidence. Notwithstanding my absurdities and awkwardness, Madam D'Epinay would have me make one of the party to the Chevette, a country-house, near Saint Denis, belonging to M. de Bellegarde. There was a theatre, in which performances were not unfrequent. I had a part given me, which I studied for six months without intermission, and in which, on the evening of the representation, I was obliged to be prompted from the beginning to the end. After this experiment no second proposal of the kind was ever made to me.

My acquaintance with M. D'Epinay procured me that of her sister-in-law, Mademoiselle de Bellegarde, who soon afterwards became Countess of Houdetot. The first time I saw her she was upon the point of marriage; when she conversed with me a long time, with that charming familiarity which was natural to her. I thought her very amiable, but I was far from perceiving that this young person would lead me, although innocently, into the abyss in which I still remain.

Although I have not spoken of Diderot since my return from Venice, no more than of my friend M. Roguin, I did not neglect either of them, especially the former, with whom I daily became more intimate. He had a Nannette, as well as I a Theresa; this was between us another conformity of circumstances. But my Theresa, as fine a woman as his Nannette, was of a mild and amiable character, which might gain and fix the affections of a worthy man; whereas Nannette was a vixen, a troublesome prater, and had no qualities in the eyes of others which in any measure compensated for her want of education. However he married her, which was well done of him, if he had given a promise to that effect. I, for my part, not having entered into any such engagement, was not in the least haste to imitate him.

I was also connected with the Abbe de Condillac, who had acquired no more literary fame than myself, but in whom there was every appearance of his becoming what he now is. I was perhaps the first who discovered the extent of his abilities, and esteemed them as they deserved. He on his part seemed satisfied with me, and, whilst shut up in my chamber in the Rue Jean Saint Denis, near the opera-house, I composed my act of Hesiod, he sometimes came to dine with me *tete-a-tete*. We sent for our dinner, and paid share and share alike. He was at that time employed on his Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge, which was his first work. When this was finished, the difficulty was to find a bookseller who would take it. The booksellers of Paris are shy of every author at his beginning, and metaphysics, not much then in vogue, were no very inviting subject. I spoke to Diderot of Condillac and his work, and I afterwards brought them acquainted with each other. They were worthy of each other's esteem, and were presently on the most friendly terms. Diderot persuaded the bookseller, Durand, to take the manuscript from the abbe, and this great metaphysician received for his first work, and almost as a favor, a hundred crowns, which perhaps he would not have obtained without my assistance. As we lived in a quarter of the town very distant from each other, we all assembled once a week at the Palais Royal, and went to dine at the Hotel du Panier Fleuri. These little weekly dinners must have been extremely

pleasing to Diderot; for he who failed in almost all his appointments never missed one of these. At our little meeting I formed the plan of a periodical paper, entitled 'le Persifleur'—[The Jeerer]—which Diderot and I were alternately to write. I sketched out the first sheet, and this brought me acquainted with D'Alembert, to whom Diderot had mentioned it. Unforeseen events frustrated our intention, and the project was carried no further.

These two authors had just undertaken the 'Dictionnaire Encyclopedique', which at first was intended to be nothing more than a kind of translation of Chambers, something like that of the Medical Dictionary of James, which Diderot had just finished. Diderot was desirous I should do something in this second undertaking, and proposed to me the musical part, which I accepted. This I executed in great haste, and consequently very ill, in the three months he had given me, as well as all the authors who were engaged in the work. But I was the only person in readiness at the time prescribed. I gave him my manuscript, which I had copied by a lackey, belonging to M. de Francueil, of the name of Dupont, who wrote very well. I paid him ten crowns out of my own pocket, and these have never been reimbursed me. Diderot had promised me a retribution on the part of the booksellers, of which he has never since spoken to me nor I to him.

This undertaking of the 'Encyclopedie' was interrupted by his imprisonment. The 'Pensees Philosophiques' drew upon him some temporary inconvenience which had no disagreeable consequences. He did not come off so easily on account of the 'Lettre sur les Aveugles', in which there was nothing reprehensible, but some personal attacks with which Madam du Pre St. Maur, and M. de Raumur were displeased: for this he was confined in the dungeon of Vincennes. Nothing can describe the anguish I felt on account of the misfortunes of my friend. My wretched imagination, which always sees everything in the worst light, was terrified. I imagined him to be confined for the remainder of his life. I was almost distracted with the thought. I wrote to Madam de Pompadour, beseeching her to release him or

obtain an order to shut me up in the same dungeon. I received no answer to my letter: this was too reasonable to be efficacious, and I do not flatter myself that it contributed to the alleviation which, some time afterwards, was granted to the severities of the confinement of poor Diderot. Had this continued for any length of time with the same rigor, I verily believe I should have died in despair at the foot of the hated dungeon. However, if my letter produced but little effect, I did not on account of it attribute to myself much merit, for I mentioned it but to very few people, and never to Diderot himself.

BOOK VIII

At the end of the preceding book a pause was necessary. With this begins the long chain of my misfortunes deduced from their origin.

Having lived in the two most splendid houses in Paris, I had, notwithstanding my candor and modesty, made some acquaintance. Among others at Dupin's, that of the young hereditary prince of Saxe-Gotha, and of the Baron de Thun, his governor; at the house of M. de la Popliniere, that of M. Seguy, friend to the Baron de Thun, and known in the literary world by his beautiful edition of Rousseau. The baron invited M. Seguy and myself to go and pass a day or two at Fontenai sous bois, where the prince had a house. As I passed Vincennes, at the sight of the dungeon, my feelings were acute; the effect of which the baron perceived on my countenance. At supper the prince mentioned the confinement of Diderot. The baron, to hear what I had to say, accused the prisoner of imprudence; and I showed not a little of the same in the impetuous manner in which I defended him. This excess of zeal, inspired by the misfortune which had befallen my friend, was pardoned, and the conversation immediately changed. There were present two Germans in the service of the prince. M. Klupssel, a man of great wit, his chaplain, and who afterwards, having supplanted the baron, became his governor. The other was a young man named M. Grimm, who served him as a reader until he could obtain some

place, and whose indifferent appearance sufficiently proved the pressing necessity he was under of immediately finding one. From this very evening Klupssel and I began an acquaintance which soon led to friendship. That with the Sieur Grimm did not make quite so rapid a progress; he made but few advances, and was far from having that haughty presumption which prosperity afterwards gave him. The next day at dinner, the conversation turned upon music; he spoke well on the subject. I was transported with joy when I learned from him he could play an accompaniment on the harpsichord. After dinner was over music was introduced, and we amused ourselves the rest of the afternoon on the harpsichord of the prince. Thus began that friendship which, at first, was so agreeable to me, afterwards so fatal, and of which I shall hereafter have so much to say.

At my return to Paris, I learned the agreeable news that Diderot was released from the dungeon, and that he had on his parole the castle and park of Vincennes for a prison, with permission to see his friends. How painful was it to me not to be able instantly to fly to him! But I was detained two or three days at Madam Dupin's by indispensable business. After ages of impatience, I flew to the arms of my friend. He was not alone: D' Alembert and the treasurer of the Sainte Chapelle were with him. As I entered I saw nobody but himself, I made but one step, one cry; I riveted my face to his: I pressed him in my arms, without speaking to him, except by tears and sighs: I stifled him with my affection and joy. The first thing he did, after quitting my arms, was to turn himself towards the ecclesiastic, and say: "You see, sir, how much I am beloved by my friends." My emotion was so great, that it was then impossible for me to reflect upon this manner of turning it to advantage; but I have since thought that, had I been in the place of Diderot, the idea he manifested would not have been the first that would have occurred to me.

I found him much affected by his imprisonment. The dungeon had made a terrible impression upon his mind, and, although he was very agreeably situated in the castle, and at liberty to walk where he pleased in the park, which was not inclosed even by a wall, he wanted the society of his friends to prevent him from

yielding to melancholy. As I was the person most concerned for his sufferings, I imagined I should also be the friend, the sight of whom would give him consolation; on which account, notwithstanding very pressing occupations, I went every two days at farthest, either alone, or accompanied by his wife, to pass the afternoon with him.

The heat of the summer was this year (1749) excessive. Vincennes is two leagues from Paris. The state of my finances not permitting me to pay for hackney coaches, at two o'clock in the afternoon, I went on foot, when alone, and walked as fast as possible, that I might arrive the sooner. The trees by the side of the road, always lopped, according to the custom of the country, afforded but little shade, and exhausted by fatigue, I frequently threw myself on the ground, being unable to proceed any further. I thought a book in my hand might make me moderate my pace. One day I took the *Mercure de France*, and as I walked and read, I came to the following question proposed by the academy of Dijon, for the premium of the ensuing year, 'Has the progress of sciences and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals?'

The moment I had read this, I seemed to behold another world, and became a different man. Although I have a lively remembrance of the impression it made upon me, the detail has escaped my mind, since I communicated it to M. de Malesherbes in one of my four letters to him. This is one of the singularities of my memory which merits to be remarked. It serves me in proportion to my dependence upon it; the moment I have committed to paper that with which it was charged, it forsakes me, and I have no sooner written a thing than I had forgotten it entirely. This singularity is the same with respect to music. Before I learned the use of notes I knew a great number of songs; the moment I had made a sufficient progress to sing an air set to music, I could not recollect any one of them; and, at present, I much doubt whether I should be able entirely to go through one of those of which I was the most fond. All I distinctly recollect upon this occasion is, that on my arrival at Vincennes, I was in an agitation which approached a delirium. Diderot perceived it; I told him the cause, and read to him the *prosopopoeia* of Fabricius,

written with a pencil under a tree. He encouraged me to pursue my ideas, and to become a competitor for the premium. I did so, and from that moment I was ruined.

All the rest of my misfortunes during my life were the inevitable effect of this moment of error.

My sentiments became elevated with the most inconceivable rapidity to the level of my ideas. All my little passions were stifled by the enthusiasm of truth, liberty, and virtue; and, what is most astonishing, this effervescence continued in my mind upwards of five years, to as great a degree perhaps as it has ever done in that of any other man. I composed the discourse in a very singular manner, and in that style which I have always followed in my other works. I dedicated to it the hours of the night in which sleep deserted me, I meditated in my bed with my eyes closed, and in my mind turned over and over again my periods with incredible labor and care; the moment they were finished to my satisfaction, I deposited them in my memory, until I had an opportunity of committing them to paper; but the time of rising and putting on my clothes made me lose everything, and when I took up my pen I recollected but little of what I had composed. I made Madam le Vasseur my secretary; I had lodged her with her daughter, and husband, nearer to myself; and she, to save me the expense of a servant, came every morning to make my fire, and to do such other little things as were necessary. As soon as she arrived I dictated to her while in bed what I had composed in the night, and this method, which for a long time I observed, preserved me many things I should otherwise have forgotten.

As soon as the discourse was finished, I showed it to Diderot. He was satisfied with the production, and pointed out some corrections he thought necessary to be made.

However, this composition, full of force and fire, absolutely wants logic and order; of all the works I ever wrote, this is the weakest in reasoning, and the most devoid of number and harmony. With whatever talent a man may be born, the art of writing is not easily learned.

I sent off this piece without mentioning it to anybody, except, I think, to Grimm, with whom, after his going to live with the

Comte de Vriese, I began to be upon the most intimate footing. His harpsichord served as a rendezvous, and I passed with him at it all the moments I had to spare, in singing Italian airs, and barcaroles; sometimes without intermission, from morning till night, or rather from night until morning; and when I was not to be found at Madam Dupin's, everybody concluded I was with Grimm at his apartment, the public walk, or theatre. I left off going to the Comedie Italienne, of which I was free, to go with him, and pay, to the Comedie Francoise, of which he was passionately fond. In short, so powerful an attraction connected me with this young man, and I became so inseparable from him, that the poor aunt herself was rather neglected, that is, I saw her less frequently; for in no moment of my life has my attachment to her been diminished.

This impossibility of dividing, in favor of my inclinations, the little time I had to myself, renewed more strongly than ever the desire I had long entertained of having but one home for Theresa and myself; but the embarrassment of her numerous family, and especially the want of money to purchase furniture, had hitherto withheld me from accomplishing it. An opportunity to endeavor at it presented itself, and of this I took advantage. M. de Francueil and Madam Dupin, clearly perceiving that eight or nine hundred livres a year were unequal to my wants, increased, of their own accord, my salary to fifty guineas; and Madam Dupin, having heard I wished to furnish myself lodgings, assisted me with some articles for that purpose. With this furniture and that Theresa already had, we made one common stock, and, having an apartment in the Hotel de Languedoc, Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honore, kept by very honest people, we arranged ourselves in the best manner we could, and lived there peaceably and agreeably during seven years, at the end of which I removed to go and live at the Hermitage.

Theresa's father was a good old man, very mild in his disposition, and much afraid of his wife; for this reason he had given her the surname of Lieutenant Criminal, which Grimm, jocosely, afterwards transferred to the daughter. Madam le Vasseur did not want sense, that is address; and pretended to the

politeness and airs of the first circles; but she had a mysterious wheedling, which to me was insupportable, gave bad advice to her daughter, endeavored to make her dissemble with me, and separately, cajoled my friends at my expense, and that of each other; excepting these circumstances, she was a tolerably good mother, because she found her account in being so, and concealed the faults of her daughter to turn them to her own advantage. This woman, who had so much of my care and attention, to whom I made so many little presents, and by whom I had it extremely at heart to make myself beloved, was, from the impossibility of my succeeding in this wish, the only cause of the uneasiness I suffered in my little establishment. Except the effects of this cause I enjoyed, during these six or seven years, the most perfect domestic happiness of which human weakness is capable. The heart of my Theresa was that of an angel; our attachment increased with our intimacy, and we were more and more daily convinced how much we were made for each other. Could our pleasures be described, their simplicity would cause laughter. Our walks, *tete-a-tete*, on the outside of the city, where I magnificently spent eight or ten sous in each *guinguette*.—[Ale-house]—Our little suppers at my window, seated opposite to each other upon two little chairs, placed upon a trunk, which filled up the spare of the embrasure. In this situation the window served us as a table, we respired the fresh air, enjoyed the prospect of the environs and the people who passed; and, although upon the fourth story, looked down into the street as we ate.

Who can describe, and how few can feel, the charms of these repasts, consisting of a quartern loaf, a few cherries, a morsel of cheese, and half-a-pint of wine which we drank between us? Friendship, confidence, intimacy, sweetness of disposition, how delicious are your reasonings! We sometimes remained in this situation until midnight, and never thought of the hour, unless informed of it by the old lady. But let us quit these details, which are either insipid or laughable; I have always said and felt that real enjoyment was not to be described.

Much about the same time I indulged in one not so delicate, and the last of the kind with which I have to reproach myself. I

have observed that the minister Klupssel was an amiable man; my connections with him were almost as intimate as those I had with Grimm, and in the end became as familiar; Grimm and he sometimes ate at my apartment. These repasts, a little more than simple, were enlivened by the witty and extravagant wantonness of expression of Klupssel, and the diverting Germanicisms of Grimm, who was not yet become a purist.

Sensuality did not preside at our little orgies, but joy, which was preferable, reigned in them all, and we enjoyed ourselves so well together that we knew not how to separate. Klupssel had furnished a lodging for a little girl, who, notwithstanding this, was at the service of anybody, because he could not support her entirely himself. One evening as we were going into the coffee-house, we met him coming out to go and sup with her. We rallied him; he revenged himself gallantly, by inviting us to the same supper, and there rallying us in our turn. The poor young creature appeared to be of a good disposition, mild and little fitted to the way of life to which an old hag she had with her, prepared her in the best manner she could. Wine and conversation enlivened us to such a degree that we forgot ourselves. The amiable Klupssel was unwilling to do the honors of his table by halves, and we all three successively took a view of the next chamber, in company with his little friend, who knew not whether she should laugh or cry. Grimm has always maintained that he never touched her; it was therefore to amuse himself with our impatience, that he remained so long in the other chamber, and if he abstained, there is not much probability of his having done so from scruple, because previous to his going to live with the Comte de Friese, he lodged with girls of the town in the same quarter of St. Roch.

I left the Rue des Moineaux, where this girl lodged, as much ashamed as Saint Preux left the house in which he had become intoxicated, and when I wrote his story I well remembered my own. Theresa perceived by some sign, and especially by my confusion, I had something with which I reproached myself; I relieved my mind by my free and immediate confession. I did well, for the next day Grimm came in triumph to relate to her my crime with aggravation, and since that time he has never failed

maliciously to recall it to her recollection; in this he was the more culpable, since I had freely and voluntarily given him my confidence, and had a right to expect he would not make me repent of it. I never had a more convincing proof than on this occasion, of the goodness of my Theresa's heart; she was more shocked at the behavior of Grimm than at my infidelity, and I received nothing from her but tender reproaches, in which there was not the least appearance of anger.

The simplicity of mind of this excellent girl was equal to her goodness of heart; and this is saying everything: but one instance of it, which is present to my recollection, is worthy of being related. I had told her Klupssel was a minister, and chaplain to the prince of Saxe-Gotha. A minister was to her so singular a man, that oddly confounding the most dissimilar ideas, she took it into her head to take Klupssel for the pope; I thought her mad the first time she told me when I came in, that the pope had called to see me. I made her explain herself and lost not a moment in going to relate the story to Grimm and Klupssel, who amongst ourselves never lost the name of pope. We gave to the girl in the Rue des Moineaux the name of Pope Joan. Our laughter was incessant; it almost stifled us. They, who in a letter which it hath pleased them to attribute to me, have made me say I never laughed but twice in my life, did not know me at this period, nor in my younger days; for if they had, the idea could never have entered into their heads.

The year following (1750), not thinking more of my discourse; I learned it had gained the premium at Dijon. This news awakened all the ideas which had dictated it to me, gave them new animation, and completed the fermentation of my heart of that first leaven of heroism and virtue which my father, my country, and Plutarch had inspired in my infancy. Nothing now appeared great in my eyes but to be free and virtuous, superior to fortune and opinion, and independent of all exterior circumstances; although a false shame, and the fear of disapprobation at first prevented me from conducting myself according to these principles, and from suddenly quarreling with the maxims of the age in which I lived, I from that moment took a decided resolution to do it.—[And of this I purposely delayed the

execution, that irritated by contradiction, it might be rendered triumphant.]

While I was philosophizing upon the duties of man, an event happened which made me better reflect upon my own. Theresa became pregnant for the third time. Too sincere with myself, too haughty in my mind to contradict my principles by my actions, I began to examine the destination of my children, and my connections with the mother, according to the laws of nature, justice, and reason, and those of that religion, pure, holy, and eternal, like its author, which men have polluted while they pretended to purify it, and which by their formularies they have reduced to a religion of words, since the difficulty of prescribing impossibilities is but trifling to those by whom they are not practised.

If I deceived myself in my conclusions, nothing can be more astonishing than the security with which I depended upon them. Were I one of those men unfortunately born deaf to the voice of nature, in whom no sentiment of justice or humanity ever took the least root, this obduracy would be natural. But that warmth of heart, strong sensibility, and facility of forming attachments; the force with which they subdue me; my cruel sufferings when obliged to break them; the innate benevolence I cherished towards my fellow-creatures; the ardent love I bear to great virtues, to truth and justice, the horror in which I hold evil of every kind; the impossibility of hating, of injuring or wishing to injure anyone; the soft and lively emotion I feel at the sight of whatever is virtuous, generous and amiable; can these meet in the same mind with the depravity which without scruple treads under foot the most pleasing of all our duties? No, I feel, and openly declare this to be impossible. Never in his whole life could J. J. be a man without sentiment or an unnatural father. I may have been deceived, but it is impossible I should have lost the least of my feelings. Were I to give my reasons, I should say too much; since they have seduced me, they would seduce many others. I will not therefore expose those young persons by whom I may be read to the same danger. I will satisfy myself by observing that my error was such, that in abandoning my children to public education for

want of the means of bringing them up myself; in destining them to become workmen and peasants, rather than adventurers and fortune-hunters, I thought I acted like an honest citizen, and a good father, and considered myself as a member of the republic of Plato. Since that time the regrets of my heart have more than once told me I was deceived; but my reason was so far from giving me the same intimation, that I have frequently returned thanks to Heaven for having by this means preserved them from the fate of their father, and that by which they were threatened the moment I should have been under the necessity of leaving them. Had I left them to Madam d'Upinay, or Madam de Luxembourg, who, from friendship, generosity, or some other motive, offered to take care of them in due time, would they have been more happy, better brought up, or honester men? To this I cannot answer; but I am certain they would have been taught to hate and perhaps betray their parents: it is much better that they have never known them.

My third child was therefore carried to the foundling hospital as well as the two former, and the next two were disposed of in the same manner; for I have had five children in all. This arrangement seemed to me to be so good, reasonable and lawful, that if I did not publicly boast of it, the motive by which I was withheld was merely my regard for their mother: but I mentioned it to all those to whom I had declared our connection, to Diderot, to Grimm, afterwards to M. d'Epinaÿ, and after another interval to Madam de Luxembourg; and this freely and voluntarily, without being under the least necessity of doing it, having it in my power to conceal the step from all the world; for La Gouin was an honest woman, very discreet, and a person on whom I had the greatest reliance. The only one of my friends to whom it was in some measure my interest to open myself, was Thierry the physician, who had the care of my poor aunt in one of her lyings in, in which she was very ill. In a word, there was no mystery in my conduct, not only on account of my never having concealed anything from my friends, but because I never found any harm in it. Everything considered, I chose the best destination for my children, or that which I thought to be such. I could have wished, and still should be glad, had I been brought up as they have been.

Whilst I was thus communicating what I had done, Madam le Vasseur did the same thing amongst her acquaintance, but with less disinterested views. I introduced her and her daughter to Madam Dupin, who, from friendship to me, showed them the greatest kindness. The mother confided to her the secret of the daughter. Madam Dupin, who is generous and kind, and to whom she never told how attentive I was to her, notwithstanding my moderate resources, in providing for everything, provided on her part for what was necessary, with a liberality which, by order of her mother, the daughter concealed from me during my residence in Paris, nor ever mentioned it until we were at the Hermitage, when she informed me of it, after having disclosed to me several other secrets of her heart. I did not know Madam Dupin, who never took the least notice to me of the matter, was so well informed: I know not yet whether Madam de Chenonceaux, her daughter-in-law, was as much in the secret: but Madam de Brancueil knew the whole and could not refrain from prattling. She spoke of it to me the following year, after I had left her house. This induced me to write her a letter upon the subject, which will be found in my collections, and wherein I gave such of my reasons as I could make public, without exposing Madam le Vasseur and her family; the most determinative of them came from that quarter, and these I kept profoundly secret.

I can rely upon the discretion of Madam Dupin, and the friendship of Madam de Chenonceaux; I had the same dependence upon that of Madam de Brancueil, who, however, was long dead before my secret made its way into the world. This it could never have done except by means of the persons to whom I intrusted it, nor did it until after my rupture with them. By this single fact they are judged; without exculpating myself from the blame I deserve, I prefer it to that resulting from their malignity. My fault is great, but it was an error. I have neglected my duty, but the desire of doing an injury never entered my heart; and the feelings of a father were never more eloquent in favor of children whom he never saw. But: betraying the confidence of friendship, violating the most sacred of all engagements, publishing secrets confided to us, and wantonly dishonoring the friend we have

deceived, and who in detaching himself from our society still respects us, are not faults, but baseness of mind, and the last degree of heinousness.

I have promised my confession and not my justification; on which account I shall stop here. It is my duty faithfully to relate the truth, that of the reader to be just; more than this I never shall require of him.

The marriage of M. de Chenonceaux rendered his mother's house still more agreeable to me, by the wit and merit of the new bride, a very amiable young person, who seemed to distinguish me amongst the scribes of M. Dupin. She was the only daughter of the Viscountess de Rochechouart, a great friend of the Comte de Friese, and consequently of Grimm's, who was very attentive to her. However, it was I who introduced him to her daughter; but their characters not suiting each other, this connection was not of long duration; and Grimm, who from that time aimed at what was solid, preferred the mother, a woman of the world, to the daughter who wished for steady friends, such as were agreeable to her, without troubling her head about the least intrigue, or making any interest amongst the great. Madam Dupin no longer finding in Madam de Chenonceaux all the docility she expected, made her house very disagreeable to her, and Madam de Chenonceaux, having a great opinion of her own merit, and, perhaps, of her birth, chose rather to give up the pleasures of society, and remain almost alone in her apartment, than to submit to a yoke she was not disposed to bear. This species of exile increased my attachment to her, by that natural inclination which excites me to approach the wretched, I found her mind metaphysical and reflective, although at times a little sophistical; her conversation, which was by no means that of a young woman coming from a convent, had for me the greatest attractions; yet she was not twenty years of age. Her complexion was seducingly fair; her figure would have been majestic had she held herself more upright. Her hair, which was fair, bordering upon ash color, and uncommonly beautiful, called to my recollection that of my poor mamma in the flower of her age, and strongly agitated my heart. But the severe principles I had just laid down for myself, by

which at all events I was determined to be guided, secured me from the danger of her and her charms. During the whole summer I passed three or four hours a day in a *tete-a-tete* conversation with her, teaching her arithmetic, and fatiguing her with my innumerable ciphers, without uttering a single word of gallantry, or even once glancing my eyes upon her. Five or six years later I should not have had so much wisdom or folly; but it was decreed I was never to love but once in my life, and that another person was to have the first and last sighs of my heart.

Since I had lived in the house of Madam Dupin, I had always been satisfied with my situation, without showing the least sign of a desire to improve it. The addition which, in conjunction with M. de Francueil, she had made to my salary, was entirely of their own accord. This year M. de Francueil, whose friendship for me daily increased, had it in his thoughts to place me more at ease, and in a less precarious situation. He was receiver-general of finance. M. Dudoyer, his cash-keeper, was old and rich, and wished to retire. M. de Francueil offered me his place, and to prepare myself for it, I went during a few weeks, to Dudoyer, to take the necessary instructions. But whether my talents were ill-suited to the employment, or that M. Dudoyer, who I thought wished to procure his place for another, was not in earnest in the instructions he gave me, I acquired by slow degrees, and very imperfectly, the knowledge I was in want of, and could never understand the nature of accounts, rendered intricate, perhaps designedly. However, without having possessed myself of the whole scope of the business, I learned enough of the method to pursue it without the least difficulty; I even entered on my new office; I kept the cashbook and the cash; I paid and received money, took and gave receipts; and although this business was so ill suited to my inclinations as to my abilities, maturity of years beginning to render me sedate, I was determined to conquer my disgust, and entirely devote myself to my new employment.

Unfortunately for me, I had no sooner begun to proceed without difficulty, than M. de Francueil took a little journey, during which I remained intrusted with the cash, which, at that time, did not amount to more than twenty-five to thirty thousand

livres. The anxiety of mind this sum of money occasioned me, made me perceive I was very unfit to be a cash-keeper, and I have no doubt but my uneasy situation, during his absence, contributed to the illness with which I was seized after his return.

I have observed in my first part that I was born in a dying state. A defect in the bladder caused me, during my early years, to suffer an almost continual retention of urine, and my Aunt Susan, to whose care I was intrusted, had inconceivable difficulty in preserving me. However, she succeeded, and my robust constitution at length got the better of all my weakness, and my health became so well established that except the illness from languor, of which I have given an account, and frequent heats in the bladder which the least heating of the blood rendered troublesome, I arrived at the age of thirty almost without feeling my original infirmity. The first time this happened was upon my arrival at Venice. The fatigue of the voyage, and the extreme heat I had suffered, renewed the burnings, and gave me a pain in the loins, which continued until the beginning of winter. After having seen padoana, I thought myself near the end of my career, but I suffered not the least inconvenience. After exhausting my imagination more than my body for my Zulietta, I enjoyed better health than ever. It was not until after the imprisonment of Diderot that the heat of blood, brought on by my journeys to Vincennes during the terrible heat of that summer, gave me a violent nephritic colic, since which I have never recovered my primitive good state of health.

At the time of which I speak, having perhaps fatigued myself too much in the filthy work of the cursed receiver-general's office, I fell into a worse state than ever, and remained five or six weeks in my bed in the most melancholy state imaginable. Madam Dupin sent me the celebrated Morand who, notwithstanding his address and the delicacy of his touch, made me suffer the greatest torments. He advised me to have recourse to Daran, who, in fact gave me some relief: but Morand, when he gave Madam Dupin an account of the state I was in, declared to her I should not be alive in six months. This afterwards came to my ear, and made me reflect seriously on my situation and the folly of sacrificing the

repose of the few days I had to live to the slavery of an employment for which I felt nothing but disgust. Besides, how was it possible to reconcile the severe principles I had just adopted to a situation with which they had so little relation? Should not I, the cash-keeper of a receiver-general of finances, have preached poverty and disinterestedness with a very ill grace? These ideas fermented so powerfully in my mind with the fever, and were so strongly impressed, that from that time nothing could remove them; and, during my convalescence, I confirmed myself with the greatest coolness in the resolutions I had taken during my delirium. I forever abandoned all projects of fortune and advancement, resolved to pass in independence and poverty the little time I had to exist. I made every effort of which my mind was capable to break the fetters of prejudice, and courageously to do everything that was right without giving myself the least concern about the judgment of others. The obstacles I had to combat, and the efforts I made to triumph over them, are inconceivable. I succeeded as much as it was possible I should, and to a greater degree than I myself had hoped for. Had I at the same time shaken off the yoke of friendship as well as that of prejudice, my design would have been accomplished, perhaps the greatest, at least the most useful one to virtue, that mortal ever conceived; but whilst I despised the foolish judgments of the vulgar tribe called great and wise, I suffered myself to be influenced and led by persons who called themselves my friends. These, hurt at seeing me walk alone in a new path, while I seemed to take measures for my happiness, used all their endeavors to render me ridiculous, and that they might afterwards defame me, first strove to make me contemptible. It was less my literary fame than my personal reformation, of which I here state the period, that drew upon me their jealousy; they perhaps might have pardoned me for having distinguished myself in the art of writing; but they could never forgive my setting them, by my conduct, an example, which, in their eyes, seemed to reflect on themselves. I was born for friendship; my mind and easy disposition nourished it without difficulty. As long as I lived unknown to the public I was beloved by all my private acquaintance, and I had not a

single enemy. But the moment I acquired literary fame, I had no longer a friend. This, was a great misfortune; but a still greater was that of being surrounded by people who called themselves my friends, and used the rights attached to that sacred name to lead me on to destruction. The succeeding part of these memoirs will explain this odious conspiracy. I here speak of its origin, and the manner of the first intrigue will shortly appear.

In the independence in which I lived, it was, however, necessary to subsist. To this effect I thought of very simple means: which were copying music at so much a page. If any employment more solid would have fulfilled the same end I would have taken it up; but this occupation being to my taste, and the only one which, without personal attendance, could procure me daily bread, I adopted it. Thinking I had no longer need of foresight, and, stifling the vanity of cash-keeper to a financier, I made myself a copyist of music. I thought I had made an advantageous choice, and of this I so little repented, that I never quitted my new profession until I was forced to do it, after taking a fixed resolution to return to it as soon as possible.

The success of my first discourse rendered the execution of this resolution more easy. As soon as it had gained the premium, Diderot undertook to get it printed. Whilst I was in my bed, he wrote me a note informing me of the publication and effect: "It takes," said he, "beyond all imagination; never was there an instance of a like success."

This favor of the public, by no means solicited, and to an unknown author, gave me the first real assurance of my talents, of which, notwithstanding an internal sentiment, I had always had my doubts. I conceived the great advantage to be drawn from it in favor of the way of life I had determined to pursue; and was of opinion, that a copyist of some celebrity in the republic of letters was not likely to want employment.

The moment my resolution was confirmed, I wrote a note to M. de Francueil, communicating to him my intentions, thanking him and Madam Dupin for all goodness, and offering them my services in the way of my new profession. Francueil did not understand my note, and, thinking I was still in the delirium of

fever, hastened to my apartment; but he found me so determined, that all he could say to me was without the least effect. He went to Madam Dupin, and told her and everybody he met, that I had become insane. I let him say what he pleased, and pursued the plan I had conceived. I began the change in my dress; I quitted laced clothes and white stockings; I put on a round wig, laid aside my sword, and sold my watch; saying to myself, with inexpressible pleasure: "Thank Heaven! I shall no longer want to know the hour!" M. de Francueil had the goodness to wait a considerable time before he disposed of my place. At length perceiving me inflexibly resolved, he gave it to M. d'Alibard, formerly tutor to the young Chenonceaux, and known as a botanist by his *Flora Parisiensis*.

[I doubt not but these circumstances are now differently related by M. Francueil and his consorts: but I appeal to what he said of them at the time and long afterwards, to everybody he knew, until the forming of the conspiracy, and of which men of common sense and honor, must have preserved a remembrance.]

However austere my sumptuary reform might be, I did not at first extend it to my linen, which was fine and in great quantity, the remainder of my stock when at Venice, and to which I was particularly attached. I had made it so much an object of cleanliness, that it became one of luxury, which was rather expensive. Some persons, however, did me the favor to deliver me from this servitude. On Christmas Eve, whilst the governesses were at vespers, and I was at the spiritual concert, the door of a garret, in which all our linen was hung up after being washed, was broken open. Everything was stolen; and amongst other things, forty-two of my shirts, of very fine linen, and which were the principal part of my stock. By the manner in which the neighbors described a man whom they had seen come out of the hotel with several parcels whilst we were all absent, Theresa and myself suspected her brother, whom we knew to be a worthless man. The mother strongly endeavored to remove this suspicion, but so many circumstances concurred to prove it to be well founded, that, notwithstanding all she could say, our opinions remained still the same: I dared not make a strict search for fear

of finding more than I wished to do. The brother never returned to the place where I lived, and, at length, was no more heard of by any of us. I was much grieved Theresa and myself should be connected with such a family, and I exhorted her more than ever to shake off so dangerous a yoke. This adventure cured me of my inclination for fine linen, and since that time all I have had has been very common, and more suitable to the rest of my dress.

Having thus completed the change of that which related to my person, all my cares tendered to render it solid and lasting, by striving to root out from my heart everything susceptible of receiving an impression from the judgment of men, or which, from the fear of blame, might turn me aside from anything good and reasonable in itself. In consequence of the success of my work, my resolution made some noise in the world also, and procured me employment; so that I began my new profession with great appearance of success. However, several causes prevented me from succeeding in it to the same degree I should under any other circumstances have done. In the first place my ill state of health. The attack I had just had, brought on consequences which prevented my ever being so well as I was before; and I am of opinion, the physicians, to whose care I intrusted myself, did me as much harm as my illness. I was successively under the hands of Morand, Daran, Helvetius, Malouin, and Thyerri: men able in their profession, and all of them my friends, who treated me each according to his own manner, without giving me the least relief, and weakened me considerably. The more I submitted to their direction, the yellower, thinner, and weaker I became. My imagination, which they terrified, judging of my situation by the effect of their drugs, presented to me, on this side of the tomb, nothing but continued sufferings from the gravel, stone, and retention of urine. Everything which gave relief to others, ptisans, baths, and bleeding, increased my tortures. Perceiving the bougees of Daran, the only ones that had any favorable effect, and without which I thought I could no longer exist, to give me a momentary relief, I procured a prodigious number of them, that, in case of Daran's death, I might never be at a loss. During the eight or ten years in

which I made such frequent use of these, they must, with what I had left, have cost me fifty louis.

It will easily be judged, that such expensive and painful means did not permit me to work without interruption; and that a dying man is not ardently industrious in the business by which he gains his daily bread.

Literary occupations caused another interruption not less prejudicial to my daily employment. My discourse had no sooner appeared than the defenders of letters fell upon me as if they had agreed with each to do it. My indignation was so raised at seeing so many blockheads, who did not understand the question, attempt to decide upon it imperiously, that in my answer I gave some of them the worst of it. One M. Gautier, of Nancy, the first who fell under the lash of my pen, was very roughly treated in a letter to M. Grimm. The second was King Stanislaus, himself, who did not disdain to enter the lists with me. The honor he did me, obliged me to change my manner in combating his opinions; I made use of a graver style, but not less nervous; and without failing in respect to the author, I completely refuted his work. I knew a Jesuit, Father de Menou, had been concerned in it. I depended on my judgment to distinguish what was written by the prince, from the production of the monk, and falling without mercy upon all the jesuitical phrases, I remarked, as I went along, an anachronism which I thought could come from nobody but the priest. This composition, which, for what reason I knew not, has been less spoken of than any of my other writings, is the only one of its kind. I seized the opportunity which offered of showing to the public in what manner an individual may defend the cause of truth even against a sovereign. It is difficult to adopt a more dignified and respectful manner than that in which I answered him. I had the happiness to have to do with an adversary to whom, without adulation, I could show every mark of the esteem of which my heart was full; and this I did with success and a proper dignity. My friends, concerned for my safety, imagined they already saw me in the Bastile. This apprehension never once entered my head, and I was right in not being afraid. The good prince, after reading my answer, said: "I have enough of at; I will

not return to the charge." I have, since that time received from him different marks of esteem and benevolence, some of which I shall have occasion to speak of; and what I had written was read in France, and throughout Europe, without meeting the least censure.

In a little time I had another adversary whom I had not expected; this was the same M. Bordes, of Lyons, who ten years before had shown me much friendship, and from whom I had received several services. I had not forgotten him, but had neglected him from idleness, and had not sent him my writings for want of an opportunity, without seeking for it, to get them conveyed to his hands. I was therefore in the wrong, and he attacked me; this, however, he did politely, and I answered in the same manner. He replied more decidedly. This produced my last answer; after which I heard no more from him upon the subject; but he became my most violent enemy, took the advantage of the time of my misfortunes, to publish against me the most indecent libels, and made a journey to London on purpose to do me an injury.

All this controversy employed me a good deal, and caused me a great loss of my time in my copying, without much contributing to the progress of truth, or the good of my purse. Pissot, at that time my bookseller, gave me but little for my pamphlets, frequently nothing at all, and I never received a farthing for my first discourse. Diderot gave it him. I was obliged to wait a long time for the little he gave me, and to take it from him in the most trifling sums. Notwithstanding this, my copying went on but slowly. I had two things together upon my hands, which was the most likely means of doing them both ill.

They were very opposite to each other in their effects by the different manners of living to which they rendered me subject. The success of my first writings had given me celebrity. My new situation excited curiosity. Everybody wished to know that whimsical man who sought not the acquaintance of any one, and whose only desire was to live free and happy in the manner he had chosen; this was sufficient to make the thing impossible to me. My apartment was continually full of people, who, under

different pretences, came to take up my time. The women employed a thousand artifices to engage me to dinner. The more unpolite I was with people, the more obstinate they became. I could not refuse everybody. While I made myself a thousand enemies by my refusals, I was incessantly a slave to my complaisance, and, in whatever manner I made my engagements, I had not an hour in a day to myself.

I then perceived it was not so easy to be poor and independent, as I had imagined. I wished to live by my profession: the public would not suffer me to do it. A thousand means were thought of to indemnify me for the time I lost. The next thing would have been showing myself like Punch, at so much each person. I knew no dependence more cruel and degrading than this. I saw no other method of putting an end to it than refusing all kinds of presents, great and small, let them come from whom they would. This had no other effect than to increase the number of givers, who wished to have the honor of overcoming my resistance, and to force me, in spite of myself, to be under an obligation to them.

Many, who would not have given me half-a-crown had I asked it from them, incessantly importuned me with their offers, and, in revenge for my refusal, taxed me with arrogance and ostentation.

It will naturally be conceived that the resolutions I had taken, and the system I wished to follow, were not agreeable to Madam le Vasseur. All the disinterestedness of the daughter did not prevent her from following the directions of her mother; and the governesses, as Gauffecourt called them, were not always so steady in their refusals as I was. Although many things were concealed from me, I perceived so many as were necessary to enable me to judge that I did not see all, and this tormented me less by the accusation of connivance, which it was so easy for me to foresee, than by the cruel idea of never being master in my own apartments, nor even of my own person. I prayed, conjured, and became angry, all to no purpose; the mother made me pass for an eternal grumbler, and a man who was peevish and ungovernable. She held perpetual whisperings with my friends; everything in my little family was mysterious and a secret to me; and, that I might not incessantly expose myself to noisy quarrelling, I no longer

dared to take notice of what passed in it. A firmness of which I was not capable, would have been necessary to withdraw me from this domestic strife. I knew how to complain, but not how to act: they suffered me to say what I pleased, and continued to act as they thought proper.

This constant teasing, and the daily importunities to which I was subject, rendered the house, and my residence at Paris, disagreeable to me. When my indisposition permitted me to go out, and I did not suffer myself to be led by my acquaintance first to one place and then to another, I took a walk, alone, and reflected on my grand system, something of which I committed to paper, bound up between two covers, which, with a pencil, I always had in my pocket. In this manner, the unforeseen disagreeableness of a situation I had chosen entirely led me back to literature, to which unsuspectedly I had recourse as a means of relieving my mind, and thus, in the first works I wrote, I introduced the peevishness and ill-humor which were the cause of my undertaking them. There was another circumstance which contributed not a little to this; thrown into the world despite of myself, without having the manners of it, or being in a situation to adopt and conform myself to them, I took it into my head to adopt others of my own, to enable me to dispense with those of society. My foolish timidity, which I could not conquer, having for principle the fear of being wanting in the common forms, I took, by way of encouraging myself, a resolution to tread them under foot. I became sour and cynic from shame, and affected to despise the politeness which I knew not how to practice. This austerity, conformable to my new principles, I must confess, seemed to ennoble itself in my mind; it assumed in my eyes the form of the intrepidity of virtue, and I dare assert it to be upon this noble basis, that it supported itself longer and better than could have been expected from anything so contrary to my nature. Yet, notwithstanding, I had the name of a misanthrope, which my exterior appearance and some happy expressions had given me in the world: it is certain I did not support the character well in private, that my friends and acquaintance led this untractable bear about like a lamb, and that, confining my sarcasms to severe but general

truths, I was never capable of saying an uncivil thing to any person whatsoever.

The 'Devin du Village' brought me completely into vogue, and presently after there was not a man in Paris whose company was more sought after than mine. The history of this piece, which is a kind of era in my life, is joined with that of the connections I had at that time. I must enter a little into particulars to make what is to follow the better understood.

I had a numerous acquaintance, yet no more than two friends: Diderot and Grimm. By an effect of the desire I have ever felt to unite everything that is dear to me, I was too much a friend to both not to make them shortly become so to each other. I connected them: they agreed well together, and shortly become more intimate with each other than with me. Diderot had a numerous acquaintance, but Grimm, a stranger and a new-comer, had his to procure, and with the greatest pleasure I procured him all I could. I had already given him Diderot. I afterwards brought him acquainted with Gauffecourt. I introduced him to Madam Chenonceaux, Madam D'Epinay, and the Baron d'Holbach; with whom I had become connected almost in spite of myself. All my friends became his: this was natural: but not one of his ever became mine; which was inclining to the contrary. Whilst he yet lodged at the house of the Comte de Friese, he frequently gave us dinners in his apartment, but I never received the least mark of friendship from the Comte de Friese, Comte de Schomberg, his relation, very familiar with Grimm, nor from any other person, man or woman, with whom Grimm, by their means, had any connection. I except the Abbe Raynal, who, although his friend, gave proofs of his being mine; and in cases of need, offered me his purse with a generosity not very common. But I knew the Abbe Raynal long before Grimm had any acquaintance with him, and had entertained a great regard for him on account of his delicate and honorable behavior to me upon a slight occasion, which I shall never forget.

The Abbe Raynal is certainly a warm friend; of this I saw a proof, much about the time of which I speak, with respect to Grimm himself, with whom he was very intimate. Grimm, after

having been sometime on a footing of friendship with Mademoiselle Fel, fell violently in love with her, and wished to supplant Cahusac. The young lady, piquing herself on her constancy, refused her new admirer. He took this so much to heart, that the appearance of his affliction became tragical. He suddenly fell into the strangest state imaginable. He passed days and nights in a continued lethargy. He lay with his eyes open; and although his pulse continued to beat regularly, without speaking, eating, or stirring, yet sometimes seeming to hear what was said to him, but never answering, not even by a sign, and remaining almost as immovable as if he had been dead, yet without agitation, pain, or fever. The Abbe Raynal and myself watched over him; the abbe, more robust, and in better health than I was, by night, and I by day, without ever both being absent at one time. The Comte de Friese was alarmed, and brought to him Senac, who, after having examined the state in which he was, said there was nothing to apprehend, and took his leave without giving a prescription. My fears for my friend made me carefully observe the countenance of the physician, and I perceived him smile as he went away. However, the patient remained several days almost motionless, without taking anything except a few preserved cherries, which from time to time I put upon his tongue, and which he swallowed without difficulty. At length he, one morning, rose, dressed himself, and returned to his usual way of life, without either at that time or afterwards speaking to me or the Abbe Raynal, at least that I know of, or to any other person, of this singular lethargy, or the care we had taken of him during the time it lasted.

The affair made a noise, and it would really have been a wonderful circumstance had the cruelty of an opera girl made a man die of despair. This strong passion brought Grimm into vogue; he was soon considered as a prodigy in love, friendship, and attachments of every kind. Such an opinion made his company sought after, and procured him a good reception in the first circles; by which means he separated from me, with whom he was never inclined to associate when he could do it with anybody else. I perceived him to be on the point of breaking with

me entirely; for the lively and ardent sentiments, of which he made a parade, were those which with less noise and pretensions, I had really conceived for him. I was glad he succeeded in the world; but I did not wish him to do this by forgetting his friend. I one day said to him: "Grimm, you neglect me, and I forgive you for it. When the first intoxication of your success is over, and you begin to perceive a void in your enjoyments, I hope you will return to your friend, whom you will always find in the same sentiments; at present do not constrain yourself, I leave you at liberty to act as you please, and wait your leisure." He said I was right, made his arrangements in consequence, and shook off all restraint, so that I saw no more of him except in company with our common friends.

Our chief rendezvous, before he was connected with Madam d'Epinay as he afterwards became, was at the house of Baron d'Holbach. This said baron was the son of a man who had raised himself from obscurity. His fortune was considerable, and he used it nobly, receiving at his house men of letters and merit: and, by the knowledge he himself had acquired, was very worthy of holding a place amongst them. Having been long attached to Diderot, he endeavored to become acquainted with me by his means, even before my name was known to the world. A natural repugnancy prevented me a long time from answering his advances. One day, when he asked me the reason of my unwillingness, I told him he was too rich. He was, however, resolved to carry his point, and at length succeeded. My greatest misfortune proceeded from my being unable to resist the force of marked attention. I have ever had reason to repent of having yielded to it.

Another acquaintance which, as soon as I had any pretensions to it, was converted into friendship, was that of M. Duclos. I had several years before seen him, for the first time, at the Chevrette, at the house of Madam d'Epinay, with whom he was upon very good terms. On that day we only dined together, and he returned to town in the afternoon. But we had a conversation of a few moments after dinner. Madam d'Epinay had mentioned me to him, and my opera of the 'Muses Gallantes'. Duclos, endowed with too

great talents not to be a friend to those in whom the like were found, was prepossessed in my favor, and invited me to go and see him. Notwithstanding my former wish, increased by an acquaintance, I was withheld by my timidity and indolence, as long as I had no other passport to him than his complaisance. But encouraged by my first success, and by his eulogiums, which reached my ears, I went to see him; he returned my visit, and thus began the connection between us, which will ever render him dear to me. By him, as well as from the testimony of my own heart, I learned that uprightness and probity may sometimes be connected with the cultivation of letters.

Many other connections less solid, and which I shall not here particularize, were the effects of my first success, and lasted until curiosity was satisfied. I was a man so easily known, that on the next day nothing new was to be discovered in me. However, a woman, who at that time was desirous of my acquaintance, became much more solidly attached to me than any of those whose curiosity I had excited: this was the Marchioness of Crequi, niece to M. le Bailli de Froulay, ambassador from Malta, whose brother had preceded M. de Montaigu in the embassy to Venice, and whom I had gone to see on my return from that city. Madam de Crequi wrote to me: I visited her: she received me into her friendship. I sometimes dined with her. I met at her table several men of letters, amongst others M. Saurin, the author of *Spartacus*, *Barnevelt*, etc., since become my implacable enemy; for no other reason, at least that I can imagine, than my bearing the name of a man whom his father has cruelly persecuted.

It will appear that for a copyist, who ought to be employed in his business from morning till night, I had many interruptions, which rendered my days not very lucrative, and prevented me from being sufficiently attentive to what I did to do it well; for which reason, half the time I had to myself was lost in erasing errors or beginning my sheet anew. This daily importunity rendered Paris more unsupportable, and made me ardently wish to be in the country. I several times went to pass a few days at Mercoussis, the vicar of which was known to Madam le Vasseur, and with whom we all arranged ourselves in such a manner as not

to make things disagreeable to him. Grimm once went thither with us.

[Since I have neglected to relate here a trifling, but memorable adventure I had with the said Grimm one day, on which we were to dine at the fountain of St. Vandrille, I will let it pass: but when I thought of it afterwards, I concluded that he was brooding in his heart the conspiracy he has, with so much success, since carried into execution.]

The vicar had a tolerable voice, sung well, and, although he did not read music, learned his part with great facility and precision. We passed our time in singing the trios I had composed at Chenonceaux. To these I added two or three new ones, to the words Grimm and the vicar wrote, well or ill. I cannot refrain from regretting these trios composed and sung in moments of pure joy, and which I left at Wootton, with all my music. Mademoiselle Davenport has perhaps curled her hair with them; but they are worthy of being preserved, and are, for the most part, of very good counterpoint. It was after one of these little excursions in which I had the pleasure of seeing the aunt at her ease and very cheerful, and in which my spirits were much enlivened, that I wrote to the vicar very rapidly and very ill, an epistle in verse which will be found amongst my papers.

I had nearer to Paris another station much to my liking with M. Mussard, my countryman, relation and friend, who at Passy had made himself a charming retreat, where I have passed some very peaceful moments. M. Mussard was a jeweller, a man of good sense, who, after having acquired a genteel fortune, had given his only daughter in marriage to M. de Valmalette, the son of an exchange broker, and maitre d'hotel to the king, took the wise resolution to quit business in his declining years, and to place an interval of repose and enjoyment between the hurry and the end of life. The good man Mussard, a real philosopher in practice, lived without care, in a very pleasant house which he himself had built in a very pretty garden, laid out with his own hands. In digging the terraces of this garden he found fossil shells, and in such great quantities that his lively imagination saw nothing but shells in nature. He really thought the universe was composed of

shells and the remains of shells, and that the whole earth was only the sand of these in different stratae. His attention thus constantly engaged with his singular discoveries, his imagination became so heated with the ideas they gave him, that, in his head, they would soon have been converted into a system, that is into folly, if, happily for his reason, but unfortunately for his friends, to whom he was dear, and to whom his house was an agreeable asylum, a most cruel and extraordinary disease had not put an end to his existence. A constantly increasing tumor in his stomach prevented him from eating, long before the cause of it was discovered, and, after several years of suffering, absolutely occasioned him to die of hunger. I can never, without the greatest affliction of mind, call to my recollection the last moments of this worthy man, who still received with so much pleasure Leneips and myself, the only friends whom the sight of his sufferings did not separate from him until his last hour, when he was reduced to devouring with his eyes the repasts he had placed before us, scarcely having the power of swallowing a few drops of weak tea, which came up again a moment afterwards. But before these days of sorrow, how many have I passed at his house, with the chosen friends he had made himself! At the head of the list I place the Abbe Prevot, a very amiable man, and very sincere, whose heart vivified his writings, worthy of immortality, and who, neither in his disposition nor in society, had the least of the melancholy coloring he gave to his works. Procope, the physician, a little Esop, a favorite with the ladies; Boulanger, the celebrated posthumous author of 'Despotisme Oriental', and who, I am of opinion, extended the systems of Mussard on the duration of the world. The female part of his friends consisted of Madam Denis, niece to Voltaire, who, at that time, was nothing more than a good kind of woman, and pretended not to wit: Madam Vanloo, certainly not handsome, but charming, and who sang like an angel: Madam de Valmalette, herself, who sang also, and who, although very thin, would have been very amiable had she had fewer pretensions. Such, or very nearly such, was the society of M. Mussard, with which I should have been much pleased, had not his conchyliomania more engaged my attention; and I can say,

with great truth, that, for upwards of six months, I worked with him in his cabinet with as much pleasure as he felt himself.

He had long insisted upon the virtue of the waters of Passy, that they were proper in my case, and recommended me to come to his house to drink them. To withdraw myself from the tumult of the city, I at length consented, and went to pass eight or ten days at Passy, which, on account of my being in the country, were of more service to me than the waters I drank during my stay there. Mussard played the violincello, and was passionately fond of Italian music. This was the subject of a long conversation we had one evening after supper, particularly the 'opera-buffe' we had both seen in Italy, and with which we were highly delighted. My sleep having forsaken me in the night, I considered in what manner it would be possible to give in France an idea of this kind of drama. The 'Amours de Ragonde' did not in the least resemble it. In the morning, whilst I took my walk and drank the waters, I hastily threw together a few couplets to which I adapted such airs as occurred to me at the moments. I scribbled over what I had composed, in a kind of vaulted saloon at the end of the garden, and at tea. I could not refrain from showing the airs to Mussard and to Mademoiselle du Vernois, his 'gouvernante', who was a very good and amiable girl. Three pieces of composition I had sketched out were the first monologue: 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur;'—the air of the Devin; 'L'amour croit s'il s'inquiete;' and the last duo: 'A jamais, Colin, je t'engage, etc.' I was so far from thinking it worth while to continue what I had begun, that, had it not been for the applause and encouragement I received from both Mussard and Mademoiselle, I should have thrown my papers into the fire and thought no more of their contents, as I had frequently done by things of much the same merit; but I was so animated by the encomiums I received, that in six days, my drama, excepting a few couplets, was written. The music also was so far sketched out, that all I had further to do to it after my return from Paris, was to compose a little of the recitative, and to add the middle parts, the whole of which I finished with so much rapidity, that in three weeks my work was ready for representation. The

only thing now wanting, was the *divertissement*, which was not composed until a long time afterwards.

My imagination was so warmed by the composition of this work that I had the strongest desire to hear it performed, and would have given anything to have seen and heard the whole in the manner I should have chosen, which would have been that of Lully, who is said to have had '*Armide*' performed for himself only. As it was not possible I should hear the performance unaccompanied by the public, I could not see the effect of my piece without getting it received at the opera. Unfortunately it was quite a new species of composition, to which the ears of the public were not accustomed; and besides the ill success of the '*Muses Gallantes*' gave too much reason to fear for the *Devin*, if I presented it in my own name. Duclos relieved me from this difficulty, and engaged to get the piece rehearsed without mentioning the author. That I might not discover myself, I did not go to the rehearsal, and the '*Petits violons*', by whom it was directed, knew not who the author was until after a general plaudit had borne the testimony of the work.

[Rebel and Frauteur, who, when they were very young, went together from house to house playing on the violin, were so called.]

Everybody present was so delighted with it, that, on the next day, nothing else was spoken of in the different companies. M. de Cury, Intendant des Menus, who was present at the rehearsal, demanded the piece to have it performed at court. Duclos, who knew my intentions, and thought I should be less master of my work at the court than at Paris, refused to give it. Cury claimed it authoratively. Duclos persisted in his refusal, and the dispute between them was carried to such a length, that one day they would have gone out from the opera-house together had they not been separated. M. de Cury applied to me, and I referred him to Duclos. This made it necessary to return to the latter. The Duke d'Aumont interfered; and at length Duclos thought proper to yield to authority, and the piece was given to be played at Fontainebleau.

The part to which I had been most attentive, and in which I had kept at the greatest distance from the common track, was the recitative. Mine was accented in a manner entirely new, and accompanied the utterance of the word. The directors dared not suffer this horrid innovation to pass, lest it should shock the ears of persons who never judge for themselves. Another recitative was proposed by Francueil and Jelyotte, to which I consented; but refused at the same time to have anything to do with it myself.

When everything was ready and the day of performance fixed, a proposition was made me to go to Fontainebleau, that I might at least be at the last rehearsal. I went with Mademoiselle Fel, Grimm, and I think the Abbe Raynal, in one of the stages to the court. The rehearsal was tolerable: I was more satisfied with it than I expected to have been. The orchestra was numerous, composed of the orchestras of the opera and the king's band. Jelyotte played Colin, Mademoiselle Fel, Colette, Cuvillier the Devin: the choruses were those of the opera. I said but little; Jelyotte had prepared everything; I was unwilling either to approve of or censure what he had done; and notwithstanding I had assumed the air of an old Roman, I was, in the midst of so many people, as bashful as a schoolboy.

The next morning, the day of performance, I went to breakfast at the coffee-house 'du grand commun', where I found a great number of people. The rehearsal of the preceding evening, and the difficulty of getting into the theatre, were the subjects of conversation. An officer present said he entered with the greatest ease, gave a long account of what had passed, described the author, and related what he had said and done; but what astonished me most in this long narrative, given with as much assurance as simplicity, was that it did not contain a syllable of truth. It was clear to me that he who spoke so positively of the rehearsal had not been at it, because, without knowing him, he had before his eyes that author whom he said he had seen and examined so minutely. However, what was more singular still in this scene, was its effect upon me. The officer was a man rather in years, he had nothing of the appearance of a coxcomb; his features appeared to announce a man of merit; and his cross of

Saint Louis, an officer of long standing. He interested me: notwithstanding his impudence. Whilst he uttered his lies, I blushed, looked down, and was upon thorns; I, for some time, endeavored within myself to find the means of believing him to be in an involuntary error. At length, trembling lest some person should know me, and by this means confound him, I hastily drank my chocolate, without saying a word, and, holding down my head, I passed before him, got out of the coffee-house as soon as possible, whilst the company were making their remarks upon the relation that had been given. I was no sooner in the street than I was in a perspiration, and had anybody known and named me before I left the room, I am certain all the shame and embarrassment of a guilty person would have appeared in my countenance, proceeding from what I felt the poor man would have had to have suffered had his lie been discovered.

I come to one of the critical moments of my life, in which it is difficult to do anything more than to relate, because it is almost impossible that even narrative should not carry with it the marks of censure or apology. I will, however, endeavor to relate how and upon what motives I acted, with out adding either approbation or censure.

I was on that day in the same careless undress as usual, with a long beard and wig badly combed. Considering this want of decency as an act of courage, I entered the theatre wherein the king, queen, the royal family, and the whole court were to enter immediately after. I was conducted to a box by M. de Cury, and which belonged to him. It was very spacious, upon the stage and opposite to a lesser, but more elevated one, in which the king sat with Madam de Pompadour.

As I was surrounded by women, and the only man in front of the box, I had no doubt of my having been placed there purposely to be exposed to view. As soon as the theatre was lighted up, finding I was in the midst of people all extremely well dressed, I began to be less at my ease, and asked myself if I was in my place? whether or not I was properly dressed? After a few minutes of inquietude: "Yes," replied I, with an intrepidity which perhaps proceeded more from the impossibility of retracting than

the force of all my reasoning, "I am in my place, because I am going to see my own piece performed, to which I have been invited, for which reason only I am come here; and after all, no person has a greater right than I have to reap the fruit of my labor and talents; I am dressed as usual, neither better nor worse; and if I once begin to subject myself to public opinion, I shall shortly become a slave to it in everything. To be always consistent with myself, I ought not to blush, in any place whatever, at being dressed in a manner suitable to the state I have chosen. My exterior appearance is simple, but neither dirty nor slovenly; nor is a beard either of these in itself, because it is given us by nature, and according to time, place and custom, is sometimes an ornament. People think I am ridiculous, nay, even absurd; but what signifies this to me? I ought to know how to bear censure and ridicule, provided I do not deserve them." After this little soliloquy I became so firm that, had it been necessary, I could have been intrepid. But whether it was the effect of the presence of his majesty, or the natural disposition of those about me, I perceived nothing but what was civil and obliging in the curiosity of which I was the object. This so much affected me that I began to be uneasy for myself, and the fate of my piece; fearing I should efface the favorable prejudices which seemed to lead to nothing but applause. I was armed against raillery; but, so far overcome, by the flattering and obliging treatment I had not expected, that I trembled like a child when the performance was begun.

I had soon sufficient reason to be encouraged. The piece was very ill played with respect to the actors, but the musical part was well sung and executed. During the first scene, which was really of a delightful simplicity, I heard in the boxes a murmur of surprise and applause, which, relative to pieces of the same kind, had never yet happened. The fermentation was soon increased to such a degree as to be perceptible through the whole audience, and of which, to speak—after the manner of Montesquieu—the effect was augmented by itself. In the scene between the two good little folks, this effect was complete. There is no clapping of hands before the king; therefore everything was heard, which was advantageous to the author and the piece. I heard about me a

whispering of women, who appeared as beautiful as angels. They said to each other in a low voice: "This is charming: That is ravishing: There is not a sound which does not go to the heart." The pleasure of giving this emotion to so many amiable persons moved me to tears; and these I could not contain in the first duo, when I remarked that I was not the only person who wept. I collected myself for a moment, on recollecting the concert of M. de Treitorens. This reminiscence had the effect of the slave who held the crown over the head of the general who triumphed, but my reflection was short, and I soon abandoned myself without interruption to the pleasure of enjoying my success. However, I am certain the voluptuousness of the sex was more predominant than the vanity of the author, and had none but men been present, I certainly should not have had the incessant desire I felt of catching on my lips the delicious tears I had caused to flow. I have known pieces excite more lively admiration, but I never saw so complete, delightful, and affecting an intoxication of the senses reign, during a whole representation, especially at court, and at a first performance. They who saw this must recollect it, for it has never yet been equalled.

The same evening the Duke d' Aumont sent to desire me to be at the palace the next day at eleven o'clock, when he would present me to the king. M. de Cury, who delivered me the message, added that he thought a pension was intended, and that his majesty wished to announce it to me himself. Will it be believed that the night of so brilliant a day was for me a night of anguish and perplexity? My first idea, after that of being presented, was that of my frequently wanting to retire; this had made me suffer very considerably at the theatre, and might torment me the next day when I should be in the gallery, or in the king's apartment, amongst all the great, waiting for the passing of his majesty. My infirmity was the principal cause which prevented me from mixing in polite companies, and enjoying the conversation of the fair. The idea alone of the situation in which this want might place me, was sufficient to produce it to such a degree as to make me faint away, or to recur to means to which, in my opinion, death was much preferable. None but persons who

are acquainted with this situation can judge of the horror which being exposed to the risk of it inspires.

I then supposed myself before the king, presented to his majesty, who deigned to stop and speak to me. In this situation, justness of expression and presence of mind were peculiarly necessary in answering. Would my timidity which disconcerts me in presence of any stranger whatever, have been shaken off in presence of the King of France; or would it have suffered me instantly to make choice of proper expressions? I wished, without laying aside the austere manner I had adopted, to show myself sensible of the honor done me by so great a monarch, and in a handsome and merited eulogium to convey some great and useful truth. I could not prepare a suitable answer without exactly knowing what his majesty was to say to me; and had this been the case, I was certain that, in his presence, I should not recollect a word of what I had previously meditated. "What," said I, "will become of me in this moment, and before the whole court, if, in my confusion, any of my stupid expressions should escape me?" This danger alarmed and terrified me. I trembled to such a degree that at all events I was determined not to expose myself to it.

I lost, it is true, the pension which in some measure was offered me; but I at the same time exempted myself from the yoke it would have imposed. Adieu, truth, liberty, and courage! How should I afterwards have dared to speak of disinterestedness and independence? Had I received the pension I must either have become a flatterer or remained silent; and, moreover, who would have insured to me the payment of it! What steps should I have been under the necessity of taking! How many people must I have solicited! I should have had more trouble and anxious cares in preserving than in doing without it. Therefore, I thought I acted according to my principles by refusing, and sacrificing appearances to reality. I communicated my resolution to Grimm, who said nothing against it. To others I alleged my ill state of health, and left the court in the morning.

My departure made some noise, and was generally condemned. My reasons could not be known to everybody, it was therefore easy to accuse me of foolish pride, and thus not irritate

the jealousy of such as felt they would not have acted as I had done. The next day Jelyotte wrote me a note, in which he stated the success of my piece, and the pleasure it had afforded the king. "All day long," said he, "his majesty sings, with the worst voice in his kingdom: 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur: J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur.'" He likewise added, that in a fortnight the Devin was to be performed a second time; which confirmed in the eyes of the public the complete success of the first.

Two days afterwards, about nine o'clock in the evening, as I was going to sup with Madam D'Epinay, I perceived a hackney-coach pass by the door. Somebody within made a sign to me to approach. I did so, and got into it, and found the person to be Diderot. He spoke of the pension with more warmth than, upon such a subject, I should have expected from a philosopher. He did not blame me for having been unwilling to be presented to the king, but severely reproached me with my indifference about the pension. He observed that although on my own account I might be disinterested, I ought not to be so on that of Madam Vasseur and her daughter; that it was my duty to seize every means of providing for their subsistence; and that as, after all, it could not be said I had refused the pension, he maintained I ought, since the king seemed disposed to grant it to me, to solicit and obtain it by one means or another. Although I was obliged to him for his good wishes, I could not relish his maxims, which produced a warm dispute, the first I ever had with him. All our disputes were of this kind, he prescribing to me what he pretended I ought to do, and I defending myself because I was of a different opinion.

It was late when we parted. I would have taken him to supper at Madam d' Epinay's, but he refused to go; and, notwithstanding all the efforts which at different times the desire of uniting those I love induced me to make, to prevail upon him to see her, even that of conducting her to his door which he kept shut against us, he constantly refused to do it, and never spoke of her but with the utmost contempt. It was not until after I had quarrelled with both that they became acquainted and that he began to speak honorably of her.

From this time Diderot and Grimm seemed to have undertaken to alienate from me the governesses, by giving them to understand that if they were not in easy circumstances the fault was my own, and that they never would be so with me. They endeavored to prevail on them to leave me, promising them the privilege for retailing salt, a snuff shop, and I know not what other advantages by means of the influence of Madam d' Epinay. They likewise wished to gain over Duclos and d'Holbach, but the former constantly refused their proposals. I had at the time some intimation of what was going forward, but I was not fully acquainted with the whole until long afterwards; and I frequently had reason to lament the effects of the blind and indiscreet zeal of my friends, who, in my ill state of health, striving to reduce me to the most melancholy solitude, endeavored, as they imagined, to render me happy by the means which, of all others, were the most proper to make me miserable.

In the carnival following the conclusion of the year 1753, the Devin was performed at Paris, and in this interval I had sufficient time to compose the overture and divertissement. This divertissement, such as it stands engraved, was to be in action from the beginning to the end, and in a continued subject, which in my opinion, afforded very agreeable representations. But when I proposed this idea at the opera-house, nobody would so much as hearken to me, and I was obliged to tack together music and dances in the usual manner: on this account the divertissement, although full of charming ideas which do not diminish the beauty of scenes, succeeded but very middlingly. I suppressed the recitative of Jelyotte, and substituted my own, such as I had first composed it, and as it is now engraved; and this recitative a little after the French manner, I confess, drawled out, instead of pronounced by the actors, far from shocking the ears of any person, equally succeeded with the airs, and seemed in the judgment of the public to possess as much musical merit. I dedicated my piece to Duclos, who had given it his protection, and declared it should be my only dedication. I have, however, with his consent, written a second; but he must have thought

himself more honored by the exception, than if I had not written a dedication to any person.

I could relate many anecdotes concerning this piece, but things of greater importance prevent me from entering into a detail of them at present. I shall perhaps resume the subject in a supplement. There is however one which I cannot omit, as it relates to the greater part of what is to follow. I one day examined the music of D'Holbach, in his closet. After having looked over many different kinds, he said, showing me a collection of pieces for the harpsichord: "These were composed for me; they are full of taste and harmony, and unknown to everybody but myself. You ought to make a selection from them for your divertissement." Having in my head more subjects of airs and symphonies than I could make use of, I was not the least anxious to have any of his. However, he pressed me so much, that, from a motive of complaisance, I chose a Pastoral, which I abridged and converted into a trio, for the entry of the companions of Colette. Some months afterwards, and whilst the Devin still continued to be performed, going into Grimms I found several people about his harpsichord, whence he hastily rose on my arrival. As I accidentally looked toward his music stand, I there saw the same collection of the Baron d'Holbach, opened precisely at the piece he had prevailed upon me to take, assuring me at the same time that it should never go out of his hands. Some time afterwards, I again saw the collection open on the harpischord of M. d'Papinay, one day when he gave a little concert. Neither Grimm, nor anybody else, ever spoke to me of the air, and my reason for mentioning it here is that some time afterwards, a rumor was spread that I was not the author of Devin. As I never made a great progress in the practical part, I am persuaded that had it not been for my dictionary of music, it would in the end have been said I did not understand composition.

Sometime before the 'Devin du Village' was performed, a company of Italian Bouffons had arrived at Paris, and were ordered to perform at the opera-house, without the effect they would produce there being foreseen. Although they were detestable, and the orchestra, at that time very ignorant, mutilated

at will the pieces they gave, they did the French opera an injury that will never be repaired. The comparison of these two kinds of music, heard the same evening in the same theatre, opened the ears of the French; nobody could endure their languid music after the marked and lively accents of Italian composition; and the moment the Bouffons had done, everybody went away. The managers were obliged to change the order of representation, and let the performance of the Bouffons be the last. 'Egle Pigmalion' and 'le Sylphe' were successively given: nothing could bear the comparison. The 'Devin du Village' was the only piece that did it, and this was still relished after 'la Serva Padrona'. When I composed my interlude, my head was filled with these pieces, and they gave me the first idea of it: I was, however, far from imagining they would one day be passed in review by the side of my composition. Had I been a plagiarist, how many pilferings would have been manifest, and what care would have been taken to point them out to the public! But I had done nothing of the kind. All attempts to discover any such thing were fruitless: nothing was found in my music which led to the recollection of that of any other person; and my whole composition compared with the pretended original, was found to be as new as the musical characters I had invented. Had Mondonville or Rameau undergone the same ordeal, they would have lost much of their substance.

The Bouffons acquired for Italian music very warm partisans. All Paris was divided into two parties, the violence of which was greater than if an affair of state or religion had been in question. One of them, the most powerful and numerous, composed of the great, of men of fortune, and the ladies, supported French music; the other, more lively and haughty, and fuller of enthusiasm, was composed of real connoisseurs, and men of talents, and genius. This little group assembled at the opera-house, under the box belonging to the queen. The other party filled up the rest of the pit and the theatre; but the heads were mostly assembled under the box of his majesty. Hence the party names of *Coin du Roi*, *Coin de la Reine*,—[King's corner,—Queen's corner.]—then in great celebrity. The dispute, as it became more animated, produced

several pamphlets. The king's corner aimed at pleasantry; it was laughed at by the 'Petit Prophete'. It attempted to reason; the 'Lettre sur la Musique Francoise' refuted its reasoning. These two little productions, the former of which was by Grimm, the latter by myself, are the only ones which have outlived the quarrel; all the rest are long since forgotten.

But the Petit Prophete, which, notwithstanding all I could say, was for a long time attributed to me, was considered as a pleasantry, and did not produce the least inconvenience to the author: whereas the letter on music was taken seriously, and incensed against me the whole nation, which thought itself offended by this attack on its music. The description of the incredible effect of this pamphlet would be worthy of the pen of Tacitus. The great quarrel between the parliament and the clergy was then at its height. The parliament had just been exiled; the fermentation was general; everything announced an approaching insurrection. The pamphlet appeared: from that moment every other quarrel was forgotten; the perilous state of French music was the only thing by which the attention of the public was engaged, and the only insurrection was against myself. This was so general that it has never since been totally calmed. At court, the bastille or banishment was absolutely determined on, and a 'lettre de cachet' would have been issued had not M. de Voyer set forth in the most forcible manner that such a step would be ridiculous. Were I to say this pamphlet probably prevented a revolution, the reader would imagine I was in a dream. It is, however, a fact, the truth of which all Paris can attest, it being no more than fifteen years since the date of this singular fact. Although no attempts were made on my liberty, I suffered numerous insults; and even my life was in danger. The musicians of the opera orchestra humanely resolved to murder me as I went out of the theatre. Of this I received information; but the only effect it produced on me was to make me more assiduously attend the opera; and I did not learn, until a considerable time afterwards, that M. Ancelot, officer in the mousquetaires, and who had a friendship for me, had prevented the effect of this conspiracy by giving me an escort, which, unknown to myself,

accompanied me until I was out of danger. The direction of the opera-house had just been given to the hotel de ville. The first exploit performed by the Prevot des Marchands, was to take from me my freedom of the theatre, and this in the most uncivil manner possible. Admission was publicly refused me on my presenting myself, so that I was obliged to take a ticket that I might not that evening have the mortification to return as I had come. This injustice was the more shameful, as the only price I had set on my piece when I gave it to the managers was a perpetual freedom of the house; for although this was a right, common to every author, and which I enjoyed under a double title, I expressly stipulated for it in presence of M. Duclos. It is true, the treasurer brought me fifty louis, for which I had not asked; but, besides the smallness of the sum, compared with that which, according to the rule, established in such cases, was due to me, this payment had nothing in common with the right of entry formerly granted, and which was entirely independent of it. There was in this behavior such a complication of iniquity and brutality, that the public, notwithstanding its animosity against me, which was then at its highest, was universally shocked at it, and many persons who insulted me the preceding evening, the next day exclaimed in the open theatre, that it was shameful thus to deprive an author of his right of entry; and particularly one who had so well deserved it, and was entitled to claim it for himself and another person. So true is the Italian proverb: *Ogn'un ama la giustizia in cosa d'altrui*. —[Every one loves justice in the affairs of another.]

In this situation the only thing I had to do was to demand my work, since the price I had agreed to receive for it was refused me. For this purpose I wrote to M. d'Argenson, who had the department of the opera. I likewise enclosed to him a memoir which was unanswerable; but this, as well as my letter, was ineffectual, and I received no answer to either. The silence of that unjust man hurt me extremely, and did not contribute to increase the very moderate good opinion I always had of his character and abilities. It was in this manner the managers kept my piece while they deprived me of that for which I had given it them. From the weak to the strong, such an act would be a theft: from the strong

to the weak, it is nothing more than an appropriation of property, without a right.

With respect to the pecuniary advantages of the work, although it did not produce me a fourth part of the sum it would have done to any other person, they were considerable enough to enable me to subsist several years, and to make amends for the ill success of copying, which went on but very slowly. I received a hundred louis from the king; fifty from Madam de Pompadour, for the performance at Bellevue, where she herself played the part of Colin; fifty from the opera; and five hundred livres from Pissot, for the engraving; so that this interlude, which cost me no more than five or six weeks' application, produced, notwithstanding the ill treatment I received from the managers and my stupidity at court, almost as much money as my 'Emilius', which had cost me twenty years' meditation, and three years' labor. But I paid dearly for the pecuniary ease I received from the piece, by the infinite vexations it brought upon me. It was the germ of the secret jealousies which did not appear until a long time afterwards. After its success I did not remark, either in Grimm, Diderot, or any of the men of letters, with whom I was acquainted, the same cordiality and frankness, nor that pleasure in seeing me, I had previously experienced. The moment I appeared at the baron's, the conversation was no longer general; the company divided into small parties; whispered into each other's ears; and I remained alone, without knowing to whom to address myself. I endured for a long time this mortifying neglect; and, perceiving that Madam d'Holbach, who was mild and amiable, still received me well, I bore with the vulgarity of her husband as long as it was possible. But he one day attacked me without reason or pretence, and with such brutality, in presence of Diderot, who said not a word, and Margency, who since that time has often told me how much he admired the moderation and mildness of my answers, that, at length driven from his house, by this unworthy treatment, I took leave with a resolution never to enter it again. This did not, however, prevent me from speaking honorably of him and his house, whilst he continually expressed himself relative to me in the most insulting terms, calling me that 'petit cuistre': the little

college pedant, or servitor in a college, without, however, being able to charge me with having done either to himself or any person to whom he was attached the most trifling injury. In this manner he verified my fears and predictions. I am of opinion my pretended friends would have pardoned me for having written books, and even excellent ones, because this merit was not foreign to themselves; but that they could not forgive my writing an opera, nor the brilliant success it had; because there was not one amongst them capable of the same, nor in a situation to aspire to like honors. Duclos, the only person superior to jealousy, seemed to become more attached to me: he introduced me to Mademoiselle Quinault, in whose house I received polite attention, and civility to as great an extreme, as I had found a want of it in that of M. d'Holbach.

Whilst the performance of the 'Devin du Village' was continued at the opera-house, the author of it had an advantageous negotiation with the managers of the French comedy. Not having, during seven or eight years, been able to get my 'Narcissus' performed at the Italian theatre, I had, by the bad performance in French of the actors, become disgusted with it, and should rather have had my piece received at the French theatre than by them. I mentioned this to La Noye, the comedian, with whom I had become acquainted, and who, as everybody knows, was a man of merit and an author. He was pleased with the piece, and promised to get it performed without suffering the name of the author to be known; and in the meantime procured me the freedom of the theatre, which was extremely agreeable to me, for I always preferred it to the two others. The piece was favorably received, and without the author's name being mentioned; but I have reason to believe it was known to the actors and actresses, and many other persons. Mademoiselles Gauffin and Grandval played the amorous parts; and although the whole performance was, in my opinion, injudicious, the piece could not be said to be absolutely ill played. The indulgence of the public, for which I felt gratitude, surprised me; the audience had the patience to listen to it from the beginning to the end, and to permit a second representation without showing the least sign of disapprobation. For my part, I

was so wearied with the first, that I could not hold out to the end; and the moment I left the theatre, I went into the Cafe de Procope, where I found Boissi, and others of my acquaintance, who had probably been as much fatigued as myself. I there humbly or haughtily avowed myself the author of the piece, judging it as everybody else had done. This public avowal of an author of a piece which had not succeeded, was much admired, and was by no means painful to myself. My self-love was flattered by the courage with which I made it: and I am of opinion, that, on this occasion, there was more pride in speaking, than there would have been foolish shame in being silent. However, as it was certain the piece, although insipid in the performance would bear to be read, I had it printed: and in the preface, which is one of the best things I ever wrote, I began to make my principles more public than I had before done.

I soon had an opportunity to explain them entirely in a work of the greatest importance: for it was, I think, this year, 1753, that the programme of the Academy of Dijon upon the 'Origin of the Inequality of Mankind' made its appearance. Struck with this great question, I was surprised the academy had dared to propose it: but since it had shown sufficient courage to do it, I thought I might venture to treat it, and immediately undertook the discussion.

That I might consider this grand subject more at my ease, I went to St. Germain for seven or eight days with Theresa, our hostess, who was a good kind of woman, and one of her friends. I consider this walk as one of the most agreeable ones I ever took. The weather was very fine. These good women took upon themselves all the care and expense. Theresa amused herself with them; and I, free from all domestic concerns, diverted myself, without restraint, at the hours of dinner and supper. All the rest of the day wandering in the forest, I sought for and found there the image of the primitive ages of which I boldly traced the history. I confounded the pitiful lies of men; I dared to unveil their nature; to follow the progress of time, and the things by which it has been disfigured; and comparing the man of art with the natural man, to show them, in their pretended improvement, the real source of all

their misery. My mind, elevated by these contemplations, ascended to the Divinity, and thence, seeing my fellow creatures follow in the blind track of their prejudices that of their errors and misfortunes, I cried out to them, in a feeble voice, which they could not hear: "Madmen! know that all your evils proceed from yourselves!"

From these meditations resulted the discourse on Inequality, a work more to the taste of Diderot than any of my other writings, and in which his advice was of the greatest service to me.

820

[At the time I wrote this, I had not the least suspicion of the grand conspiracy of Diderot and Grimm. Otherwise I should easily have discovered how much the former abused my confidence, by giving to my writings that severity and melancholy which were not to be found in them from the moments he ceased to direct me. The passage of the philosopher, who argues with himself, and stops his ears against the complaints of a man in distress, is after his manner: and he gave me others still more extraordinary; which I could never resolve to make use of. But, attributing, this melancholy to that he had acquired in the dungeon of Vincennes, and of which there is a very sufficient dose in his Clairault, I never once suspected the least unfriendly dealing.]

It was, however, understood but by few readers, and not one of these would ever speak of it. I had written it to become a competitor for the premium, and sent it away fully persuaded it would not obtain it; well convinced it was not for productions of this nature that academies were founded.

This excursion and this occupation enlivened my spirits and was of service to my health. Several years before, tormented by my disorder, I had entirely given myself up to the care of physicians, who, without alleviating my sufferings, exhausted my strength and destroyed my constitution. At my return from St. Germain, I found myself stronger and perceived my health to be improved. I followed this indication, and determined to cure myself or die without the aid of physicians and medicine. I bade them forever adieu, and lived from day to day, keeping close when I found myself indisposed, and going abroad the moment I had sufficient strength to do it. The manner of living in Paris amidst people of pretensions was so little to my liking; the cabals of men of letters, their little candor in their writings, and the air of importance they gave themselves in the world, were so odious to

me; I found so little mildness, openness of heart and frankness in the intercourse even of my friends; that, disgusted with this life of tumult, I began ardently to wish to reside in the country, and not perceiving that my occupation permitted me to do it, I went to pass there all the time I had to spare. For several months I went after dinner to walk alone in the Bois de Boulogne, meditating on subjects for future works, and not returning until evening.

Gauffecourt, with whom I was at that time extremely intimate, being on account of his employment obliged to go to Geneva, proposed to me the journey, to which I consented. The state of my health was such as to require the care of the governess; it was therefore decided she should accompany us, and that her mother should remain in the house. After thus having made our arrangements, we set off on the first of June, 1754.

This was the period when at the age of forty-two, I for the first time in my life felt a diminution of my natural confidence to which I had abandoned myself without reserve or inconvenience. We had a private carriage, in which with the same horses we travelled very slowly. I frequently got out and walked. We had scarcely performed half our journey when Theresa showed the greatest uneasiness at being left in the carriage with Gauffecourt, and when, notwithstanding her remonstrances, I would get out as usual, she insisted upon doing the same, and walking with me. I chid her for this caprice, and so strongly opposed it, that at length she found herself obliged to declare to me the cause whence it proceeded. I thought I was in a dream; my astonishment was beyond expression, when I learned that my friend M. de Gauffecourt, upwards of sixty years of age, crippled by the gout, impotent and exhausted by pleasures, had, since our departure, incessantly endeavored to corrupt a person who belonged to his friend, and was no longer young nor handsome, by the most base and shameful means, such as presenting to her a purse, attempting to inflame her imagination by the reading of an abominable book, and by the sight of infamous figures, with which it was filled. Theresa, full of indignation, once threw his scandalous book out of the carriage; and I learned that on the first evening of our journey, a violent headache having obliged me to retire to bed

before supper, he had employed the whole time of this tete-a-tete in actions more worthy of a satyr than a man of worth and honor, to whom I thought I had intrusted my companion and myself. What astonishment and grief of heart for me! I, who until then had believed friendship to be inseparable from every amiable and noble sentiment which constitutes all its charm, for the first time in my life found myself under the necessity of connecting it with disdain, and of withdrawing my confidence from a man for whom I had an affection, and by whom I imagined myself beloved! The wretch concealed from me his turpitude; and that I might not expose Theresa, I was obliged to conceal from him my contempt, and secretly to harbor in my heart such sentiments as were foreign to its nature. Sweet and sacred illusion of friendship! Gauffecourt first took the veil from before my eyes. What cruel hands have since that time prevented it from again being drawn over them!

At Lyons I quitted Gauffecourt to take the road to Savoy, being unable to be so near to mamma without seeing her. I saw her—Good God, in what a situation! How contemptible! What remained to her of primitive virtue? Was it the same Madam de Warens, formerly so gay and lively, to whom the vicar of Pontverre had given me recommendations? How my heart was wounded! The only resource I saw for her was to quit the country. I earnestly but vainly repeated the invitation I had several times given her in my letters to come and live peacefully with me, assuring her I would dedicate the rest of my life, and that of Theresa, to render her happy. Attached to her pension, from which, although it was regularly paid, she had not for a long time received the least advantage, my offers were lost upon her. I again gave her a trifling part of the contents of my purse, much less than I ought to have done, and considerably less than I should have offered her had not I been certain of its not being of the least service to herself. During my residence at Geneva, she made a journey into Chablais, and came to see me at Grange-canal. She was in want of money to continue her journey: what I had in my pocket was insufficient to this purpose, but an hour afterwards I sent it her by Theresa. Poor mamma! I must relate this proof of the goodness of her heart. A little diamond ring was the last jewel

she had left. She took it from her finger, to put it upon that of Theresa, who instantly replaced it upon that whence it had been taken, kissing the generous hand which she bathed with her tears. Ah! this was the proper moment to discharge my debt! I should have abandoned everything to follow her, and share her fate: let it be what it would. I did nothing of the kind. My attention was engaged by another attachment, and I perceived the attachment I had to her was abated by the slender hopes there were of rendering it useful to either of us. I sighed after her, my heart was grieved at her situation, but I did not follow her. Of all the remorse I felt this was the strongest and most lasting. I merited the terrible chastisement with which I have since that time incessantly been overwhelmed: may this have expiated my ingratitude! Of this I appear guilty in my conduct, but my heart has been too much distressed by what I did ever to have been that of an ungrateful man.

Before my departure from Paris I had sketched out the dedication of my discourse on the 'Inequality of Mankind'. I finished it at Chambery, and dated it from that place, thinking that, to avoid all chicane, it was better not to date it either from France or Geneva. The moment I arrived in that city I abandoned myself to the republican enthusiasm which had brought me to it. This was augmented by the reception I there met with. Kindly treated by persons of every description, I entirely gave myself up to a patriotic zeal, and mortified at being excluded from the rights of a citizen by the possession of a religion different from that of my forefathers, I resolved openly to return to the latter. I thought the gospel being the same for every Christian, and the only difference in religious opinions the result of the explanations given by men to that which they did not understand, it was the exclusive right of the sovereign power in every country to fix the mode of worship, and these unintelligible opinions; and that consequently it was the duty of a citizen to admit the one, and conform to the other in the manner prescribed by the law. The conversation of the encyclopaedists, far from staggering my faith, gave it new strength by my natural aversion to disputes and party. The study of man and the universe had everywhere shown me the

final causes and the wisdom by which they were directed. The reading of the Bible, and especially that of the New Testament, to which I had for several years past applied myself, had given me a sovereign contempt for the base and stupid interpretations given to the words of Jesus Christ by persons the least worthy of understanding his divine doctrine. In a word, philosophy, while it attached me to the essential part of religion, had detached me from the trash of the little formularies with which men had rendered it obscure. Judging that for a reasonable man there were not two ways of being a Christian, I was also of opinion that in each country everything relative to form and discipline was within the jurisdiction of the laws. From this principle, so social and pacific, and which has brought upon me such cruel persecutions, it followed that, if I wished to be a citizen of Geneva, I must become a Protestant, and conform to the mode of worship established in my country. This I resolved upon; I moreover put myself under the instructions of the pastor of the parish in which I lived, and which was without the city. All I desired was not to appear at the consistory. However, the ecclesiastical edict was expressly to that effect; but it was agreed upon to dispense with it in my favor, and a commission of five or six members was named to receive my profession of faith. Unfortunately, the minister Perdriau, a mild and an amiable man, took it into his head to tell me the members were rejoiced at the thoughts of hearing me speak in the little assembly. This expectation alarmed me to such a degree that having night and day during three weeks studied a little discourse I had prepared, I was so confused when I ought to have pronounced it that I could not utter a single word, and during the conference I had the appearance of the most stupid schoolboy. The persons deputed spoke for me, and I answered yes and no, like a blockhead; I was afterwards admitted to the communion, and reinstated in my rights as a citizen. I was enrolled as such in the lists of guards, paid by none but citizens and burgesses, and I attended at a council-general extraordinary to receive the oath from the syndic Mussard. I was so impressed with the kindness shown me on this occasion by the council and the consistory, and by the great

civility and obliging behavior of the magistrates, ministers and citizens, that, pressed by the worthy De Luc, who was incessant in his persuasions, and still more so by my own inclination, I did not think of going back to Paris for any other purpose than to break up housekeeping, find a situation for M. and Madam le Vasseur, or provide for their subsistence, and then return with Theresa to Geneva, there to settle for the rest of my days.

After taking this resolution I suspended all serious affairs the better to enjoy the company of my friends until the time of my departure. Of all the amusements of which I partook, that with which I was most pleased, was sailing round the lake in a boat, with De Luc, the father, his daughter-in-law, his two sons, and my Theresa. We gave seven days to this excursion in the finest weather possible. I preserved a lively remembrance of the situation which struck me at the other extremity of the lake, and of which I, some years afterwards, gave a description in my *New Eloisa*.

The principal connections I made at Geneva, besides the De Lucs, of which I have spoken, were the young Vernes, with whom I had already been acquainted at Paris, and of whom I then formed a better opinion than I afterwards had of him. M. Perdriau, then a country pastor, now professor of Belles Lettres, whose mild and agreeable society will ever make me regret the loss of it, although he has since thought proper to detach himself from me; M. Jalabert, at that time professor of natural philosophy, since become counsellor and syndic, to whom I read my discourse upon Inequality (but not the dedication), with which he seemed to be delighted; the Professor Lullin, with whom I maintained a correspondence until his death, and who gave me a commission to purchase books for the library; the Professor Vernet, who, like most other people, turned his back upon me after I had given him proofs of attachment and confidence of which he ought to have been sensible, if a theologian can be affected by anything; Chappins, clerk and successor to Gauffecourt, whom he wished to supplant, and who, soon afterwards, was himself supplanted; Marcet de Mezieres, an old friend of my father's, and who had also shown himself to be mine: after having well deserved of his

country, he became a dramatic author, and, pretending to be of the council of two hundred, changed his principles, and, before he died, became ridiculous. But he from whom I expected most was M. Moulton, a very promising young man by his talents and his brilliant imagination, whom I have always loved, although his conduct with respect to me was frequently equivocal, and, notwithstanding his being connected with my most cruel enemies, whom I cannot but look upon as destined to become the defender of my memory and the avenger of his friend.

In the midst of these dissipations, I neither lost the taste for my solitary excursions, nor the habit of them; I frequently made long ones upon the banks of the lake, during which my mind, accustomed to reflection, did not remain idle; I digested the plan already formed of my political institutions, of which I shall shortly have to speak; I meditated a history of the Valais; the plan of a tragedy in prose, the subject of which, nothing less than Lucretia, did not deprive me of the hope of succeeding, although I had dared again to exhibit that unfortunate heroine, when she could no longer be suffered upon any French stage. I at that time tried my abilities with Tacitus, and translated the first books of his history, which will be found amongst my papers.

After a residence of four months at Geneva, I returned in the month of October to Paris; and avoided passing through Lyons that I might not again have to travel with Gauffecourt. As the arrangement I had made did not require my being at Geneva until the spring following, I returned, during the winter, to my habits and occupations; the principal of the latter was examining the proof sheets of my discourse on the Inequality of Mankind, which I had procured to be printed in Holland, by the bookseller Rey, with whom I had just become acquainted at Geneva. This work was dedicated to the republic; but as the publication might be displeasing to the council, I wished to wait until it had taken its effect at Geneva before I returned thither. This effect was not favorable to me; and the dedication, which the most pure patriotism had dictated, created me enemies in the council, and inspired even many of the burgesses with jealousy. M. Chouet, at that time first syndic, wrote me a polite but very cold letter, which

will be found amongst my papers. I received from private persons, amongst others from Du Luc and De Jalabert, a few compliments, and these were all. I did not perceive that a single Genevese was pleased with the hearty zeal found in the work. This indifference shocked all those by whom it was remarked. I remember that dining one day at Clichy, at Madam Dupin's, with Crommelin, resident from the republic, and M. de Mairan, the latter openly declared the council owed me a present and public honors for the work, and that it would dishonor itself if it failed in either. Crommelin, who was a black and mischievous little man, dared not reply in my presence, but he made a frightful grimace, which however forced a smile from Madam Dupin. The only advantage this work procured me, besides that resulting from the satisfaction of my own heart, was the title of citizen given me by my friends, afterwards by the public after their example, and which I afterwards lost by having too well merited.

This ill success would not, however, have prevented my retiring to Geneva, had not more powerful motives tended to the same effect. M. D'Epinay, wishing to add a wing which was wanting to the chateau of the Chevrette, was at an immense expense in completing it. Going one day with Madam D'Epinay to see the building, we continued our walk a quarter of a league further to the reservoir of the waters of the park which joined the forest of Montmorency, and where there was a handsome kitchen garden, with a little lodge, much out of repair, called the Hermitage. This solitary and very agreeable place had struck me when I saw it for the first time before my journey to Geneva. I had exclaimed in my transport: "Ah, madam, what a delightful habitation! This asylum was purposely prepared for me." Madam D'Epinay did not pay much attention to what I said; but at this second journey I was quite surprised to find, instead of the old decayed building, a little house almost entirely new, well laid out, and very habitable for a little family of three persons. Madam D'Epinay had caused this to be done in silence, and at a very small expense, by detaching a few materials and some of the work men from the castle. She now said to me, on remarking my surprise: "My dear, here behold your asylum; it is you who have

chosen it; friendship offers it to you. I hope this will remove from you the cruel idea of separating from me." I do not think I was ever in my life more strongly or more deliciously affected. I bathed with tears the beneficent hand of my friend; and if I were not conquered from that very instant even, I was extremely staggered. Madam D'Epinay, who would not be denied, became so pressing, employed so many means, so many people to circumvent me, proceeding even so far as to gain over Madam le Vasseur and her daughter, that at length she triumphed over all my resolutions. Renouncing the idea of residing in my own country, I resolved, I promised, to inhabit the Hermitage; and, whilst the building was drying, Madam D'Epinay took care to prepare furniture, so that everything was ready the following spring.

One thing which greatly aided me in determining, was the residence Voltaire had chosen near Geneva; I easily comprehended this man would cause a revolution there, and that I should find in my country the manners, which drove me from Paris; that I should be under the necessity of incessantly struggling hard, and have no other alternative than that of being an unsupportable pedant, a poltroon, or a bad citizen. The letter Voltaire wrote me on my last work, induced me to insinuate my fears in my answer; and the effect this produced confirmed them. From that moment I considered Geneva as lost, and I was not deceived. I perhaps ought to have met the storm, had I thought myself capable of resisting it. But what could I have done alone, timid, and speaking badly, against a man, arrogant, opulent, supported by the credit of the great, eloquent, and already the idol of the women and young men? I was afraid of uselessly exposing myself to danger to no purpose. I listened to nothing but my peaceful disposition, to my love of repose, which, if it then deceived me, still continues to deceive me on the same subject. By retiring to Geneva, I should have avoided great misfortunes; but I have my doubts whether, with all my ardent and patriotic zeal, I should have been able to effect anything great and useful for my country.

Tronchin, who about the same time went to reside at Geneva, came afterwards to Paris and brought with him treasures. At his

arrival he came to see me, with the Chevalier Jaucourt. Madam D'Epinay had a strong desire to consult him in private, but this it was not easy to do. She addressed herself to me, and I engaged Tronchin to go and see her. Thus under my auspices they began a connection, which was afterwards increased at my expense. Such has ever been my destiny: the moment I had united two friends who were separately mine, they never failed to combine against me. Although, in the conspiracy then formed by the Tronchins, they must all have borne me a mortal hatred. He still continued friendly to me: he even wrote me a letter after his return to Geneva, to propose to me the place of honorary librarian. But I had taken my resolution, and the offer did not tempt me to depart from it.

About this time I again visited M. d'Holbach. My visit was occasioned by the death of his wife, which, as well as that of Madam Francueil, happened whilst I was at Geneva. Diderot, when he communicated to me these melancholy events, spoke of the deep affliction of the husband. His grief affected my heart. I myself was grieved for the loss of that excellent woman, and wrote to M. d'Holbach a letter of condolence. I forgot all the wrongs he had done me, and at my return from Geneva, and after he had made the tour of France with Grimm and other friends to alleviate his affliction, I went to see him, and continued my visits until my departure for the Hermitage. As soon as it was known in his circle that Madam D'Epinay was preparing me a habitation there, innumerable sarcasms, founded upon the want I must feel of the flattery and amusement of the city, and the supposition of my not being able to support the solitude for a fortnight, were uttered against me. Feeling within myself how I stood affected, I left him and his friends to say what they pleased, and pursued my intention. M. d'Holbach rendered me some services in finding a place for the old Le Vasseur, who was eighty years of age and a burden to his wife, from which she begged me to relieve her.

[This is an instance of the treachery of my memory. A long time after I had written what I have stated above, I learned, in conversing with my wife, that it was not M. d'Holbach, but M. de Chenonceaux, then one of the administrators of the Hotel Dieu, who procured this place for her father. I had so totally forgotten the circumstance, and the idea of M. d'Holbach's having done it was so strong in my mind that I would have sworn it had been him.]

He was put into a house of charity, where, almost as soon as he arrived there, age and the grief of finding himself removed from his family sent him to the grave. His wife and all his children, except Theresa, did not much regret his loss. But she, who loved him tenderly, has ever since been inconsolable, and never forgiven herself for having suffered him, at so advanced an age, to end his days in any other house than her own.

Much about the same time I received a visit I little expected, although it was from a very old acquaintance. My friend Venture, accompanied by another man, came upon me one morning by surprise. What a change did I discover in his person! Instead of his former gracefulness, he appeared sottish and vulgar, which made me extremely reserved with him. My eyes deceived me, or either debauchery had stupefied his mind, or all his first splendor was the effect of his youth, which was past. I saw him almost with indifference, and we parted rather coolly. But when he was gone, the remembrance of our former connection so strongly called to my recollection that of my younger days, so charmingly, so prudently dedicated to that angelic woman (Madam de Warens) who was not much less changed than himself; the little anecdotes of that happy time, the romantic day of Toune passed with so much innocence and enjoyment between those two charming girls, from whom a kiss of the hand was the only favor, and which, notwithstanding its being so trifling, had left me such lively, affecting and lasting regrets; and the ravishing delirium of a young heart, which I had just felt in all its force, and of which I thought the season forever past for me. The tender remembrance of these delightful circumstances made me shed tears over my faded youth and its transports for ever lost to me. Ah! how many

tears should I have shed over their tardy and fatal return had I foreseen the evils I had yet to suffer from them.

Before I left Paris, I enjoyed during the winter which preceded my retreat, a pleasure after my own heart, and of which I tasted in all its purity. Palissot, academician of Nancy, known by a few dramatic compositions, had just had one of them performed at Luneville before the King of Poland. He perhaps thought to make his court by representing in his piece a man who had dared to enter into a literary dispute with the king. Stanislaus, who was generous, and did not like satire, was filled with indignation at the author's daring to be personal in his presence. The Comte de Tressan, by order of the prince, wrote to M. d'Alembert, as well as to myself, to inform me that it was the intention of his majesty to have Palissot expelled his academy. My answer was a strong solicitation in favor of Palissot, begging M. de Tressan to intercede with the king in his behalf. His pardon was granted, and M. de Tressan, when he communicated to me the information in the name of the monarch, added that the whole of what had passed should be inserted in the register of the academy. I replied that this was less granting a pardon than perpetuating a punishment. At length, after repeated solicitations, I obtained a promise, that nothing relative to the affair should be inserted in the register, and that no public trace should remain of it. The promise was accompanied, as well on the part of the king as on that of M. de Tressan, with assurance of esteem and respect, with which I was extremely flattered; and I felt on this occasion that the esteem of men who are themselves worthy of it, produced in the mind a sentiment infinitely more noble and pleasing than that of vanity. I have transcribed into my collection the letters of M. de Tressan, with my answers to them: and the original of the former will be found amongst my other papers.

I am perfectly aware that if ever these memoirs become public, I here perpetuate the remembrance of a fact of which I would wish to efface every trace; but I transmit many others as much against my inclination. The grand object of my undertaking, constantly before my eyes, and the indispensable duty of fulfilling it to its utmost extent, will not permit me to be turned aside by

trifling considerations, which would lead me from my purpose. In my strange and unparalleled situation, I owe too much to truth to be further than this indebted to any person whatever. They who wish to know me well must be acquainted with me in every point of view, in every relative situation, both good and bad. My confessions are necessarily connected with those of many other people: I write both with the same frankness in everything that relates to that which has befallen me; and am not obliged to spare any person more than myself, although it is my wish to do it. I am determined always to be just and true, to say of others all the good I can, never speaking of evil except when it relates to my own conduct, and there is a necessity for my so doing. Who, in the situation in which the world has placed me, has a right to require more at my hands? My confessions are not intended to appear during my lifetime, nor that of those they may disagreeably affect. Were I master of my own destiny, and that of the book I am now writing, it should never be made public until after my death and theirs. But the efforts which the dread of truth obliges my powerful enemies to make to destroy every trace of it, render it necessary for me to do everything, which the strictest right, and the most severe justice, will permit, to preserve what I have written. Were the remembrance of me to be lost at my dissolution, rather than expose any person alive, I would without a murmur suffer an unjust and momentary reproach. But since my name is to live, it is my duty to endeavor to transmit with it to posterity the remembrance of the unfortunate man by whom it was borne, such as he really was, and not such as his unjust enemies incessantly endeavored to describe him.

BOOK IX

My impatience to inhabit the Hermitage not permitting me to wait until the return of fine weather, the moment my lodging was prepared I hastened to take possession of it, to the great amusement of the 'Coterie Holbachique', which publicly predicted I should not be able to support solitude for three months, and that I should unsuccessfully return to Paris, and live there as they did.

For my part, having for fifteen years been out of my element, finding myself upon the eve of returning to it, I paid no attention to their pleasantries. Since contrary to my inclinations, I have again entered the world, I have incessantly regretted my dear Charmettes, and the agreeable life I led there. I felt a natural inclination to retirement and the country: it was impossible for me to live happily elsewhere. At Venice, in the train of public affairs, in the dignity of a kind of representation, in the pride of projects of advancement; at Paris, in the vortex of the great world, in the luxury of suppers, in the brilliancy of spectacles, in the rays of splendor; my groves, rivulets, and solitary walks, constantly presented themselves to my recollection, interrupted my thought, rendered me melancholy, and made me sigh with desire. All the labor to which I had subjected myself, every project of ambition which by fits had animated my ardor, all had for object this happy country retirement, which I now thought near at hand. Without having acquired a genteel independence, which I had judged to be the only means of accomplishing my views, I imagined myself, in my particular situation, to be able to do without it, and that I could obtain the same end by a means quite opposite. I had no regular income; but I possessed some talents, and had acquired a name. My wants were few, and I had freed myself from all those which were most expensive, and which merely depended on prejudice and opinion. Besides this, although naturally indolent, I was laborious when I chose to be so. and my idleness was less that of an indolent man, than that of an independent one who applies to business when it pleases him. My profession of a copyist of music was neither splendid nor lucrative, but it was certain. The world gave me credit for the courage I had shown in making choice of it. I might depend upon having sufficient employment to enable me to live. Two thousand livres which remained of the produce of the 'Devin du Village', and my other writings, were a sum which kept me from being straitened, and several works I had upon the stocks promised me, without extorting money from the booksellers, supplies sufficient to enable me to work at my ease without exhausting myself, even by turning to advantage the leisure of my walks. My little family,

consisting of three persons, all of whom were usefully employed, was not expensive to support. Finally, from my resources, proportioned to my wants and desires, I might reasonably expect a happy and permanent existence, in that manner of life which my inclination had induced me to adopt.

I might have taken the interested side of the question, and, instead of subjecting my pen to copying, entirely devoted it to works which, from the elevation to which I had soared, and at which I found myself capable of continuing, might have enabled me to live in the midst of abundance, nay, even of opulence, had I been the least disposed to join the manoeuvres of an author to the care of publishing a good book. But I felt that writing for bread would soon have extinguished my genius, and destroyed my talents, which were less in my pen than in my heart, and solely proceeded from an elevated and noble manner of thinking, by which alone they could be cherished and preserved. Nothing vigorous or great can come from a pen totally venal. Necessity, nay, even avarice, perhaps, would have made me write rather rapidly than well. If the desire of success had not led me into cabals, it might have made me endeavor to publish fewer true and useful works than those which might be pleasing to the multitude; and instead of a distinguished author, which I might possibly become, I should have been nothing more than a scribbler. No: I have always felt that the profession of letters was illustrious in proportion as it was less a trade. It is too difficult to think nobly when we think for a livelihood. To be able to dare even to speak great truths, an author must be independent of success. I gave my books to the public with a certainty of having written for the general good of mankind, without giving myself the least concern about what was to follow. If the work was thrown aside, so much the worse for such as did not choose to profit by it. Their approbation was not necessary to enable me to live, my profession was sufficient to maintain me had not my works had a sale, for which reason alone they all sold.

It was on the ninth of August, 1756, that I left cities, never to reside in them again: for I do not call a residence the few days I afterwards remained in Paris, London, or other cities, always on

the wing, or contrary to my inclinations. Madam d'Epina y came and took us all three in her coach; her farmer carted away my little baggage, and I was put into possession the same day. I found my little retreat simply furnished, but neatly, and with some taste. The hand which had lent its aid in this furnishing rendered it inestimable in my eyes, and I thought it charming to be the guest of my female friend in a house I had made choice of, and which she had caused to be built purposely for me.

Although the weather was cold, and the ground lightly covered with snow, the earth began to vegetate: violets and primroses already made their appearance, the trees began to bud, and the evening of my arrival was distinguished by the song of the nightingale, which was heard almost under my window, in a wood adjoining the house. After a light sleep, forgetting when I awoke my change of abode, I still thought myself in the Rue Grenelle, when suddenly this warbling made me give a start, and I exclaimed in my transport: "At length, all my wishes are accomplished!" The first thing I did was to abandon myself to the impression of the rural objects with which I was surrounded. Instead of beginning to set things in order in my new habitation, I began by doing it for my walks, and there was not a path, a copse, a grove, nor a corner in the environs of my place of residence that I did not visit the next day. The more I examined this charming retreat, the more I found it to my wishes. This solitary, rather than savage, spot transported me in idea to the end of the world. It had striking beauties which are but seldom found near cities, and never, if suddenly transported thither, could any person have imagined himself within four leagues of Paris.

After abandoning myself for a few days to this rural delirium, I began to arrange my papers, and regulate my occupations. I set apart, as I had always done, my mornings to copying, and my afternoons to walking, provided with my little paper book and a pencil, for never having been able to write and think at my ease except 'sub dio', I had no inclination to depart from this method, and I was persuaded the forest of Montmorency, which was almost at my door, would in future be my closet and study. I had several works begun; these I cast my eye over. My mind was

indeed fertile in great projects, but in the noise of the city the execution of them had gone on but slowly. I proposed to myself to use more diligence when I should be less interrupted. I am of opinion I have sufficiently fulfilled this intention; and for a man frequently ill, often at La Chevrette, at Epinay, at Raubonne, at the castle of Montmorency, at other times interrupted by the indolent and curious, and always employed half the day in copying, if what I produced during the six years I passed at the Hermitage and at Montmorency be considered, I am persuaded it will appear that if, in this interval, I lost my time, it was not in idleness.

Of the different works I had upon the stocks, that I had longest resolved in my mind which was most to my taste, to which I destined a certain portion of my life, and which, in my opinion, was to confirm the reputation I had acquired, was my 'Institutions Politiques'. I had, fourteen years before, when at Venice, where I had an opportunity of remarking the defects of that government so much boasted of, conceived the first idea of them. Since that time my views had become much more extended by the historical study of morality. I had perceived everything to be radically connected with politics, and that, upon whatever principles these were founded, a people would never be more than that which the nature of the government made them; therefore the great question of the best government possible appeared to me to be reduced to this: What is the nature of a government the most proper to form the most virtuous and enlightened, the wisest and best people, taking the last epithet in its most extensive meaning? I thought this question was much if not quite of the same nature with that which follows: What government is that which, by its nature, always maintains itself nearest to the laws, or least deviates from the laws. Hence, what is the law? and a series of questions of similar importance. I perceived these led to great truths, useful to the happiness of mankind, but more especially to that of my country, wherein, in the journey I had just made to it, I had not found notions of laws and liberty either sufficiently just or clear. I had thought this indirect manner of communicating these to my fellow-citizens would be least mortifying to their pride, and might

obtain me forgiveness for having seen a little further than themselves.

Although I had already labored five or six years at the work, the progress I had made in it was not considerable. Writings of this kind require meditation, leisure and tranquillity. I had besides written the 'Institutions Politiques', as the expression is, 'en bonne fortune', and had not communicated my project to any person; not even to Diderot. I was afraid it would be thought too daring for the age and country in which I wrote, and that the fears of my friends would restrain me from carrying it into execution.

845

[It was more especially the wise severity of Duclos which inspired me with this fear; as for Diderot, I know not by what means all my conferences with him tended to make me more satirical than my natural disposition inclined me to be. This prevented me from consulting him upon an undertaking, in which I wished to introduce nothing but the force of reasoning without the least appearance of ill humor or partiality. The manner of this work may be judged of by that of the 'Contrat Social', which is taken from it.]

I did not yet know that it would be finished in time, and in such a manner as to appear before my decease. I wished fearlessly to give to my subject everything it required; fully persuaded that not being of a satirical turn, and never wishing to be personal, I should in equity always be judged irreprehensible. I undoubtedly wished fully to enjoy the right of thinking which I had by birth; but still respecting the government under which I lived, without ever disobeying its laws, and very attentive not to violate the rights of persons, I would not from fear renounce its advantages.

I confess, even that, as a stranger, and living in France, I found my situation very favorable in daring to speak the truth; well knowing that continuing, as I was determined to do, not to print anything in the kingdom without permission, I was not obliged to give to any person in it an account of my maxims nor of their publication elsewhere. I should have been less independent even at Geneva, where, in whatever place my books might have been printed, the magistrate had a right to criticise their contents. This consideration had greatly contributed to make me yield to the solicitations of Madam d'Epinay, and abandon the project of fixing my residence at Geneva. I felt, as I have remarked in my

Emilius, that unless an author be a man of intrigue, when he wishes to render his works really useful to any country whatsoever, he must compose them in some other.

What made me find my situation still more happy, was my being persuaded that the government of France would, perhaps, without looking upon me with a very favorable eye, make it a point to protect me, or at least not to disturb my tranquillity. It appeared to me a stroke of simple, yet dexterous policy, to make a merit of tolerating that which there was no means of preventing; since, had I been driven from France, which was all government had the right to do, my work would still have been written, and perhaps with less reserve; whereas if I were left undisturbed, the author remained to answer for what he wrote, and a prejudice, general throughout all Europe, would be destroyed by acquiring the reputation of observing a proper respect for the rights of persons.

They who, by the event, shall judge I was deceived, may perhaps be deceived in their turn. In the storm which has since broken over my head, my books served as a pretence, but it was against my person that every shaft was directed. My persecutors gave themselves but little concern about the author, but they wished to ruin Jean Jacques; and the greatest evil they found in my writings was the honor they might possibly do me. Let us not encroach upon the future. I do not know that this mystery, which is still one to me, will hereafter be cleared up to my readers; but had my avowed principles been of a nature to bring upon me the treatment I received, I should sooner have become their victim, since the work in which these principles are manifested with most courage, not to call it audacity, seemed to have had its effect previous to my retreat to the Hermitage, without I will not only say my having received the least censure, but without any steps having been taken to prevent the publication of it in France, where it was sold as publicly as in Holland. The New Eloisa afterwards appeared with the same facility, I dare add; with the same applause: and, what seems incredible, the profession of faith of this Eloisa at the point of death is exactly similar to that of the Savoyard vicar. Every strong idea in the Social Contract had been

before published in the discourse on Inequality; and every bold opinion in *Emilius* previously found in *Eloisa*. This unrestrained freedom did not excite the least murmur against the first two works; therefore it was not that which gave cause to it against the latter.

Another undertaking much of the same kind, but of which the project was more recent, then engaged my attention: this was the extract of the works of the Abbe de Saint Pierre, of which, having been led away by the thread of my narrative, I have not hitherto been able to speak. The idea was suggested to me, after my return from Geneva, by the Abbe Malby, not immediately from himself, but by the interposition of Madam Dupin, who had some interest in engaging me to adopt it. She was one of the three or four pretty women of Paris, of whom the Abbe de Saint Pierre had been the spoiled child, and although she had not decidedly had the preference, she had at least partaken of it with Madam d'Aiguillon. She preserved for the memory of the good man a respect and an affection which did honor to them both; and her self-love would have been flattered by seeing the still-born works of her friend brought to life by her secretary. These works contained excellent things, but so badly told that the reading of them was almost insupportable; and it is astonishing the Abbe de Saint Pierre, who looked upon his readers as schoolboys, should nevertheless have spoken to them as men, by the little care he took to induce them to give him a hearing. It was for this purpose that the work was proposed to me as useful in itself, and very proper for a man laborious in manoeuvre, but idle as an author, who finding the trouble of thinking very fatiguing, preferred, in things which pleased him, throwing a light upon and extending the ideas of others, to producing any himself. Besides, not being confined to the functions of a translator, I was at liberty sometimes to think for myself; and I had it in my power to give such a form to my work, that many important truths would pass in it under the name of the Abbe de Saint Pierre, much more safely than under mine. The undertaking also was not trifling; the business was nothing less than to read and meditate twenty-three volumes, diffuse, confused, full of long narrations and periods,

repetitions, and false or little views, from amongst which it was necessary to select some few that were good and useful, and sufficiently encouraging to enable me to support the painful labor. I frequently wished to have given it up, and should have done so, could I have got it off my hands with a great grace; but when I received the manuscripts of the abbe, which were given to me by his nephew, the Comte de Saint Pierre, I had, by the solicitation of St. Lambert, in some measure engaged to make use of them, which I must either have done, or have given them back. It was with the former intention I had taken the manuscripts to the Hermitage, and this was the first work to which I proposed to dedicate my leisure hours.

I had likewise in my own mind projected a third, the idea of which I owed to the observations I had made upon myself and I felt the more disposed to undertake this work, as I had reason to hope I could make it a truly useful one, and perhaps, the most so of any that could be offered to the world, were the execution equal to the plan I had laid down. It has been remarked that most men are in the course of their lives frequently unlike themselves, and seem to be transformed into others very different from what they were. It was not to establish a thing so generally known that I wished to write a book; I had a newer and more important object. This was to search for the causes of these variations, and, by confining my observations to those which depend on ourselves, to demonstrate in what manner it might be possible to direct them, in order to render us better and more certain of our dispositions. For it is undoubtedly more painful to an honest man to resist desires already formed, and which it is his duty to subdue, than to prevent, change, or modify the same desires in their source, were he capable of tracing them to it. A man under temptation resists once because he has strength of mind, he yields another time because this is overcome; had it been the same as before he would again have triumphed.

By examining within myself, and searching in others what could be the cause of these different manners of being, I discovered that, in a great measure they depended on the anterior impressions of external objects; and that, continually modified by

our senses and organs, we, without knowing it, bore in our ideas, sentiments, and even actions, the effect of these modifications. The striking and numerous observations I had collected were beyond all manner of dispute, and by their natural principle seemed proper to furnish an exterior regimen, which varied according to circumstances, might place and support the mind in the state most favorable to virtue. From how many mistakes would reason be preserved, how many vices would be stifled in their birth, were it possible to force animal economy to favor moral order, which it so frequently disturbs! Climate, seasons, sounds, colors, light, darkness, the elements, ailments, noise, silence, motion, rest, all act on the animal machine, and consequently on the mind: all offer a thousand means, almost certain of directing in their origin the sentiments by which we suffer ourselves to be governed. Such was the fundamental idea of which I had already made a sketch upon paper, and whence I hoped for an effect the more certain, in favor of persons well disposed, who, sincerely loving virtue, were afraid of their own weakness, as it appeared to me easy to make of it a book as agreeable to read as it was to compose. I have, however, applied myself but very little to this work, the title of which was to have been 'Morale Sensitive' ou le Materialisme du Sage.— Interruptions, the cause of which will soon appear, prevented me from continuing it, and the fate of the sketch, which is more connected with my own than it may appear to be, will hereafter be seen.

Besides this, I had for some time meditated a system of education, of which Madam de Chenonceaux, alarmed for her son by that of her husband, had desired me to consider. The authority of friendship placed this object, although less in itself to my taste, nearer to my heart than any other. On which account this subject, of all those of which I have just spoken, is the only one I carried to its utmost extent. The end I proposed to myself in treating of it should, I think, have procured the author a better fate. But I will not here anticipate this melancholy subject. I shall have too much reason to speak of it in the course of my work.

These different objects offered me subjects of meditation for my walks; for, as I believed I had already observed, I am unable to reflect when I am not walking: the moment I stop, I think no more, and as soon as I am again in motion my head resumes its workings. I had, however, provided myself with a work for the closet upon rainy days. This was my dictionary of music, which my scattered, mutilated, and unshapen materials made it necessary to rewrite almost entirely. I had with me some books necessary to this purpose; I had spent two months in making extracts from others, I had borrowed from the king's library, whence I was permitted to take several to the Hermitage. I was thus provided with materials for composing in my apartment when the weather did not permit me to go out, and my copying fatigued me. This arrangement was so convenient that it made it turn to advantage as well at the Hermitage as at Montmorency, and afterwards even at Motiers, where I completed the work whilst I was engaged in others, and constantly found a change of occupation to be a real relaxation.

During a considerable time I exactly followed the distribution I had prescribed myself, and found it very agreeable; but as soon as the fine weather brought Madam d'Epainay more frequently to Epinay, or to the Chervette, I found that attentions, in the first instance natural to me, but which I had not considered in my scheme, considerably deranged my projects. I have already observed that Madam d'Epainay had many amiable qualities; she sincerely loved her friends; served them with zeal; and, not sparing for them either time or pains, certainly deserved on their part every attention in return. I had hitherto discharged this duty without considering it as one, but at length I found that I had given myself a chain of which nothing but friendship prevented me from feeling the weight, and this was still aggravated by my dislike to numerous societies. Madam d' Epainay took advantage of these circumstances to make me a proposition seemingly agreeable to me, but which was more so to herself; this was to let me know when she was alone, or had but little company. I consented, without perceiving to what a degree I engaged myself. The consequence was that I no longer visited her at my own hour

—but at hers, and that I never was certain of being master of myself for a day together. This constraint considerably diminished the pleasure I had in going to see her. I found the liberty she had so frequently promised was given me upon no other condition than that of my never enjoying it; and once or twice when I wished to do this there were so many messages, notes, and alarms relative to my health, that I perceived that I could have no excuse but being confined to my bed, for not immediately running to her upon the first intimation. It was necessary I should submit to this yoke, and I did it, even more voluntarily than could be expected from so great an enemy to dependence: the sincere attachment I had to Madam D'Epinay preventing me, in a great measure, from feeling the inconvenience with which it was accompanied. She, on her part, filled up, well or ill, the void which the absence of her usual circle left in her amusements. This for her was but a very slender supplement, although preferable to absolute solitude, which she could not support. She had the means of doing it much more at her ease after she began with literature, and at all events to write novels, letters, comedies, tales, and other trash of the same kind. But she was not so much amused in writing these as in reading them; and she never scribbled over two or three pages—at one sitting—without being previously assured of having, at least, two or three benevolent auditors at the end of so much labor. I seldom had the honor of being one of the chosen few except by means of another. When alone, I was, for the most part, considered as a cipher in everything; and this not only in the company of Madam D'Epinay, but in that of M. d'Holbach, and in every place where Grimm gave the 'ton'. This nullity was very convenient to me, except in a *tete-a-tete*, when I knew not what countenance to put on, not daring to speak of literature, of which it was not for me to say a word; nor of gallantry, being too timid, and fearing, more than death, the ridiculousness of an old gallant; besides that, I never had such an idea when in the company of Madam D'Epinay, and that it perhaps would never have occurred to me, had I passed my whole life with her; not that her person was in the least disagreeable to me; on the contrary, I loved her perhaps too much as a friend to do it as a lover. I felt a pleasure in

seeing and speaking to her. Her conversation, although agreeable enough in a mixed company, was uninteresting in private; mine, not more elegant or entertaining than her own, was no great amusement to her. Ashamed of being long silent, I endeavored to enliven our *tete-a-tete* and, although this frequently fatigued me, I was never disgusted with it. I was happy to show her little attentions, and gave her little fraternal kisses, which seemed not to be more sensual to herself; these were all. She was very thin, very pale, and had a bosom which resembled the back of her hand. This defect alone would have been sufficient to moderate my most ardent desires; my heart never could distinguish a woman in a person who had it; and besides other causes useless to mention, always made me forget the sex of this lady.

Having resolved to conform to an assiduity which was necessary, I immediately and voluntarily entered upon it, and for the first year at least, found it less burthensome than I could have expected. Madam d'Epinay, who commonly passed the summer in the country, continued there but a part of this; whether she was more detained by her affairs in Paris, or that the absence of Grimm rendered the residence of the Chevrette less agreeable to her, I know not. I took the advantage of the intervals of her absence, or when the company with her was numerous, to enjoy my solitude with my good Theresa and her mother, in such a manner as to taste all its charms. Although I had for several years past been frequently in the country, I seldom had enjoyed much of its pleasures; and these excursions, always made in company with people who considered themselves as persons of consequence, and rendered insipid by constraint, served to increase in me the natural desire I had for rustic pleasures. The want of these was the more sensible to me as I had the image of them immediately before my eyes. I was so tired of saloons, jets d'eau, groves, parterres, and of more fatiguing persons by whom they were shown; so exhausted with pamphlets, harpsichords, trios, unravellings of plots, stupid *bon mots*, insipid affections, pitiful storytellers, and great suppers; that when I gave a side glance at a poor simple hawthorn bush, a hedge, a barn, or a meadow; when, in passing through a hamlet, I scented a good chervil omelette,

and heard at a distance the burden of a rustic song of the Bisquieres; I wished all rouge, furbelows and ambergris at the devil, and envying the dinner of the good housewife, and the wine of her own vineyard, I heartily wished to give a slap on the chaps to Monsieur le Chef and Monsieur le Maitre, who made me dine at the hour of supper, and sup when I should have been asleep, but especially to Messieurs the lackeys, who devoured with their eyes the morsel I put into my mouth, and upon pain of my dying with thirst, sold me the adulterated wine of their master, ten times dearer than that of a better quality would have cost me at a public house.

At length I was settled in an agreeable and solitary asylum, at liberty to pass there the remainder of my days, in that peaceful, equal, and independent life for which I felt myself born. Before I relate the effects this situation, so new to me, had upon my heart, it is proper I should recapitulate its secret affections, that the reader may better follow in their causes the progress of these new modifications.

I have always considered the day on which I was united to Theresa as that which fixed my moral existence. An attachment was necessary for me, since that which should have been sufficient to my heart had been so cruelly broken. The thirst after happiness is never extinguished in the heart of man. Mamma was advancing into years, and dishonored herself! I had proofs that she could never more be happy here below; it therefore remained to me to seek my own happiness, having lost all hopes of partaking of hers. I was sometimes irresolute, and fluctuated from one idea to another, and from project to project. My journey to Venice would have thrown me into public life, had the man with whom, almost against my inclination, I was connected there had common sense. I was easily discouraged, especially in undertakings of length and difficulty. The ill success of this disgusted me with every other; and, according to my old maxims, considering distant objects as deceitful allurements, I resolved in future to provide for immediate wants, seeing nothing in life which could tempt me to make extraordinary efforts.

It was precisely at this time we became acquainted. The mild character of the good Theresa seemed so fitted to my own, that I united myself to her with an attachment which neither time nor injuries have been able to impair, and which has constantly been increased by everything by which it might have been expected to be diminished. The force of this sentiment will hereafter appear when I come to speak of the wounds she has given my heart in the height of my misery, without my ever having, until this moment, once uttered a word of complaint to any person whatever.

When it shall be known, that after having done everything, braved everything, not to separate from her; that after passing with her twenty years in despite of fate and men; I have in my old age made her my wife, without the least expectation or solicitation on her part, or promise or engagement on mine, the world will think that love bordering upon madness, having from the first moment turned my head, led me by degrees to the last act of extravagance; and this will no longer appear doubtful when the strong and particular reasons which should forever have prevented me from taking such a step are made known. What, therefore, will the reader think when I shall have told him, with all the truth he has ever found in me, that, from the first moment in which I saw her, until that wherein I write, I have never felt the least love for her, that I never desired to possess her more than I did to possess Madam de Warens, and that the physical wants which were satisfied with her person were, to me, solely those of the sex, and by no means proceeding from the individual? He will think that, being of a constitution different from that of other men, I was incapable of love, since this was not one of the sentiments which attached me to women the most dear to my heart. Patience, O my dear reader! the fatal moment approaches in which you will be but too much undeceived.

I fall into repetitions; I know it; and these are necessary. The first of my wants, the greatest, strongest and most insatiable, was wholly in my heart; the want of an intimate connection, and as intimate as it could possibly be: for this reason especially, a woman was more necessary to me than a man, a female rather

than a male friend. This singular want was such that the closest corporal union was not sufficient: two souls would have been necessary to me in the same body, without which I always felt a void. I thought I was upon the point of filling it up forever. This young person, amiable by a thousand excellent qualities, and at that time by her form, without the shadow of art or coquetry, would have confined within herself my whole existence, could hers, as I had hoped it would, have been totally confined to me. I had nothing to fear from men; I am certain of being the only man she ever really loved and her moderate passions seldom wanted another, not even after I ceased in this respect to be one to her. I had no family; she had one; and this family was composed of individuals whose dispositions were so different from mine, that I could never make it my own. This was the first cause of my unhappiness. What would I not have given to be the child of her mother? I did everything in my power to become so, but could never succeed. I in vain attempted to unite all our interests: this was impossible. She always created herself one different from mine, contrary to it, and to that even of her daughter, which already was no longer separated from it. She, her other children, and grand-children, became so many leeches, and the least evil these did to Theresa was robbing her. The poor girl, accustomed to submit, even to her nieces, suffered herself to be pilfered and governed without saying a word; and I perceived with grief that by exhausting my purse, and giving her advice, I did nothing that could be of any real advantage to her. I endeavored to detach her from her mother; but she constantly resisted such a proposal. I could not but respect her resistance, and esteemed her the more for it; but her refusal was not on this account less to the prejudice of us both. Abandoned to her mother and the rest of her family, she was more their companion than mine, and rather at their command than mistress of herself. Their avarice was less ruinous than their advice was pernicious to her; in fact, if, on account of the love she had for me, added to her good natural disposition, she was not quite their slave, she was enough so to prevent in a great measure the effect of the good maxims I endeavored to instil

into her, and, notwithstanding all my efforts, to prevent our being united.

Thus was it, that notwithstanding a sincere and reciprocal attachment, in which I had lavished all the tenderness of my heart, the void in that heart was never completely filled. Children, by whom this effect should have been produced, were brought into the world, but these only made things worse. I trembled at the thought of intrusting them to a family ill brought up, to be still worse educated. The risk of the education of the foundling hospital was much less. This reason for the resolution I took, much stronger than all those I stated in my letter to Madam de Francueil, was, however, the only one with which I dared not make her acquainted; I chose rather to appear less excusable than to expose to reproach the family of a person I loved. But by the conduct of her wretched brother, notwithstanding all that can be said in his defence, it will be judged whether or not I ought to have exposed my children to an education similar to his.

Not having it in my power to taste in all its plentitude the charms of that intimate connection of which I felt the want, I sought for substitutes which did not fill up the void, yet they made it less sensible. Not having a friend entirely devoted to me, I wanted others, whose impulse should overcome my indolence; for this reason I cultivated and strengthened my connection with Diderot and the Abbe de Condillac, formed with Grimm a new one still more intimate, till at length by the unfortunate discourse, of which I have related some particulars, I unexpectedly found myself thrown back into a literary circle which I thought I had quitted forever.

My first steps conducted me by a new path to another intellectual world, the simple and noble economy of which I cannot contemplate without enthusiasm. I reflected so much on the subject that I soon saw nothing but error and folly in the doctrine of our sages, and oppression and misery in our social order. In the illusion of my foolish pride, I thought myself capable of destroying all imposture; and thinking that, to make myself listened to, it was necessary my conduct should agree with my principles, I adopted the singular manner of life which I have not

been permitted to continue, the example of which my pretended friends have never forgiven me, which at first made me ridiculous, and would at length have rendered me respectable, had it been possible for me to persevere.

Until then I had been good; from that moment I became virtuous, or at least infatuated with virtue. This infatuation had begun in my head, but afterwards passed into my heart. The most noble pride there took root amongst the ruins of extirpated vanity. I affected nothing; I became what I appeared to be, and during four years at least, whilst this effervescence continued at its greatest height, there is nothing great and good that can enter the heart of man, of which I was not capable between heaven and myself. Hence flowed my sudden eloquence; hence, in my first writings, that fire really celestial, which consumed me, and whence during forty years not a single spark had escaped, because it was not yet lighted up.

I was really transformed; my friends and acquaintance scarcely knew me. I was no longer that timid, and rather bashful than modest man, who neither dared to present himself, nor utter a word; whom a single pleasantry disconcerted, and whose face was covered with a blush the moment his eyes met those of a woman. I became bold, haughty, intrepid, with a confidence the more firm, as it was simple, and resided in my soul rather than in my manner. The contempt with which my profound meditations had inspired me for the manners, maxims and prejudices of the age in which I lived, rendered me proof against the raillery of those by whom they were possessed, and I crushed their little pleasantries with a sentence, as I would have crushed an insect with my fingers.

What a change! All Paris repeated the severe and acute sarcasms of the same man who, two years before, and ten years afterwards, knew not how to find what he had to say, nor the word he ought to employ. Let the situation in the world the most contrary to my natural disposition be sought after, and this will be found. Let one of the short moments of my life in which I became another man, and ceased to be myself, be recollected, this also will be found in the time of which I speak; but, instead of

continuing only six days, or six weeks, it lasted almost six years, and would perhaps still continue, but for the particular circumstances which caused it to cease, and restored me to nature, above which I had wished to soar.

The beginning of this change took place as soon as I had quitted Paris, and the sight of the vices of that city no longer kept up the indignation with which it had inspired me. I no sooner had lost sight of men than I ceased to despise them, and once removed from those who designed me evil, my hatred against them no longer existed. My heart, little fitted for hatred, pitied their misery, and even their wickedness. This situation, more pleasing but less sublime, soon allayed the ardent enthusiasm by which I had so long been transported; and I insensibly, almost to myself even, again became fearful, complaisant and timid; in a word, the same Jean Jacques I before had been.

Had this resolution gone no further than restoring me to myself, all would have been well; but unfortunately it rapidly carried me away to the other extreme. From that moment my mind in agitation passed the line of repose, and its oscillations, continually renewed, have never permitted it to remain here. I must enter into some detail of this second revolution; terrible and fatal era, of a fate unparalleled amongst mortals.

We were but three persons in our retirement; it was therefore natural our intimacy should be increased by leisure and solitude. This was the case between Theresa and myself. We passed in conversations in the shade the most charming and delightful hours, more so than any I had hitherto enjoyed. She seemed to taste of this sweet intercourse more than I had until then observed her to do; she opened her heart, and communicated to me, relative to her mother and family, things she had had resolution enough to conceal for a great length of time. Both had received from Madam Dupin numerous presents, made them on my account, and mostly for me, but which the cunning old woman, to prevent my being angry, had appropriated to her own use and that of her other children, without suffering Theresa to have the least share, strongly forbidding her to say a word to me of the matter: an order the poor girl had obeyed with an incredible exactness.

But another thing which surprised me more than this had done, was the discovery that besides the private conversations Diderot and Grimm had frequently had with both to endeavor to detach them from me, in which, by means of the resistance of Theresa, they had not been able to succeed, they had afterwards had frequent conferences with the mother, the subject of which was a secret to the daughter. However, she knew little presents had been made, and that there were mysterious goings backward and forward, the motive of which was entirely unknown to her. When we left Paris, Madam le Vasseur had long been in the habit of going to see Grimm twice or thrice a month, and continuing with him for hours together, in conversation so secret that the servant was always sent out of the room.

I judged this motive to be of the same nature with the project into which they had attempted to make the daughter enter, by promising to procure her and her mother, by means of Madam d'Epinay, a salt huckster's license, or snuff-shop; in a word, by tempting her with the allurements of gain. They had been told that, as I was not in a situation to do anything for them, I could not, on their account, do anything for myself. As in all this I saw nothing but good intentions, I was not absolutely displeased with them for it. The mystery was the only thing which gave me pain, especially on the part of the old woman, who moreover daily became more parasitical and flattering towards me. This, however, did not prevent her from reproaching her daughter in private with telling me everything, and loving me too much, observing to her she was a fool and would at length be made a dupe.

This woman possessed, to a supreme degree, the art of multiplying the presents made her, by concealing from one what she received from another, and from me what she received from all. I could have pardoned her avarice, but it was impossible I should forgive her dissimulation. What could she have to conceal from me whose happiness she knew principally consisted in that of herself and her daughter? What I had done for the daughter I had done for myself, but the services I rendered the mother merited on her part some acknowledgment. She ought, at least, to

have thought herself obliged for them to her daughter, and to have loved me for the sake of her by whom I was already beloved. I had raised her from the lowest state of wretchedness; she received from my hands the means of subsistence, and was indebted to me for her acquaintance with the persons from whom she found means to reap considerable benefit. Theresa had long supported her by her industry, and now maintained her with my bread. She owed everything to this daughter, for whom she had done nothing, and her other children, to whom she had given marriage portions, and on whose account she had ruined herself, far from giving her the least aid, devoured her substance and mine. I thought that in such a situation she ought to consider me as her only friend and most sure protector, and that, far from making of my own affairs a secret to me, and conspiring against me in my house, it was her duty faithfully to acquaint me with everything in which I was interested, when this came to her knowledge before it did to mine. In what light, therefore, could I consider her false and mysterious conduct? What could I think of the sentiments with which she endeavored to inspire her daughter? What monstrous ingratitude was hers, to endeavor to instil it into her from whom I expected my greatest consolation?

These reflections at length alienated my affections from this woman, and to such a degree that I could no longer look upon her but with contempt. I nevertheless continued to treat with respect the mother of the friend of my bosom, and in everything to show her almost the reverence of a son; but I must confess I could not remain long with her without pain, and that I never knew how to bear restraint.

This is another short moment of my life, in which I approached near to happiness without being able to attain it, and this by no fault of my own. Had the mother been of a good disposition we all three should have been happy to the end of our days; the longest liver only would have been to be pitied. Instead of which, the reader will see the course things took, and judge whether or not it was in my power to change it.

Madam le Vasseur, who perceived I had got more full possession of the heart of Theresa, and that she had lost ground

with her, endeavored to regain it; and instead of striving to restore herself to my good opinion by the mediation of her daughter attempted to alienate her affections from me. One of the means she employed was to call her family to her aid. I had begged Theresa not to invite any of her relations to the Hermitage, and she had promised me she would not. These were sent for in my absence, without consulting her, and she was afterwards prevailed upon to promise not to say anything of the matter. After the first step was taken all the rest were easy. When once we make a secret of anything to the person we love, we soon make little scruple of doing it in everything; the moment I was at the Chevette the Hermitage was full of people who sufficiently amused themselves. A mother has always great power over a daughter of a mild disposition; yet notwithstanding all the old woman could do, she was never able to prevail upon Theresa to enter into her views, nor to persuade her to join in the league against me. For her part, she resolved upon doing it forever, and seeing on one side her daughter and myself, who were in a situation to live, and that was all; on the other, Diderot, Grimm, D' Holbach and Madam d'Epinay, who promised great things, and gave some little ones, she could not conceive it was possible to be in the wrong with the wife of a farmer-general and baron. Had I been more clear sighted, I should from this moment have perceived I nourished a serpent in my bosom. But my blind confidence, which nothing had yet diminished, was such that I could not imagine she wished to injure the person she ought to love. Though I saw numerous conspiracies formed on every side, all I complain of was the tyranny of persons who called themselves my friends, and who, as it seemed, would force me to be happy in the manner they should point out, and not in that I had chosen for myself.

Although Theresa refused to join in the confederacy with her mother, she afterwards kept her secret. For this her motive was commendable, although I will not determine whether she did it well or ill. Two women, who have secrets between them, love to prattle together; this attracted them towards each other, and Theresa, by dividing herself, sometimes let me feel I was alone;

for I could no longer consider as a society that which we all three formed.

I now felt the neglect I had been guilty of during the first years of our connection, in not taking advantage of the docility with which her love inspired her, to improve her talents and give her knowledge, which, by more closely connecting us in our retirement would agreeably have filled up her time and my own, without once suffering us to perceive the length of a private conversation. Not that this was ever exhausted between us, or that she seemed disgusted with our walks; but we had not a sufficient number of ideas common to both to make ourselves a great store, and we could not incessantly talk of our future projects which were confined to those of enjoying the pleasures of life. The objects around us inspired me with reflections beyond the reach of her comprehension. An attachment of twelve years' standing had no longer need of words: we were too well acquainted with each other to have any new knowledge to acquire in that respect. The resource of puns, jests, gossiping and scandal, was all that remained. In solitude especially is it, that the advantage of living with a person who knows how to think is particularly felt. I wanted not this resource to amuse myself with her; but she would have stood in need of it to have always found amusement with me. The worst of all was our being obliged to hold our conversations when we could; her mother, who became importunate, obliged me to watch for opportunities to do it. I was under constraint in my own house: this is saying everything; the air of love was prejudicial to good friendship. We had an intimate intercourse without living in intimacy.

The moment I thought I perceived that Theresa sometimes sought for a pretext to elude the walks I proposed to her, I ceased to invite her to accompany me, without being displeased with her for not finding in them so much amusement as I did. Pleasure is not a thing which depends upon the will. I was sure of her heart, and the possession of this was all I desired. As long as my pleasures were hers, I tasted of them with her; when this ceased to be the case I preferred her contentment to my own.

In this manner it was that, half deceived in my expectation, leading a life after my own heart, in a residence I had chosen with a person who was dear to me, I at length found myself almost alone. What I still wanted prevented me from enjoying what I had. With respect to happiness and enjoyment, everything or nothing, was what was necessary to me. The reason of these observations will hereafter appear. At present I return to the thread of my narrative.

I imagined that I possessed treasures in the manuscripts given me by the Comte de St. Pierre. On examination I found they were a little more than the collection of the printed works of his uncle, with notes and corrections by his own hand, and a few other trifling fragments which had not yet been published. I confirmed myself by these moral writings in the idea I had conceived from some of his letters, shown me by Madam de Crequi, that he had more sense and ingenuity than at first I had imagined; but after a careful examination of his political works, I discerned nothing but superficial notions, and projects that were useful but impracticable, in consequence of the idea from which the author never could depart, that men conducted themselves by their sagacity rather than by their passions. The high opinion he had of the knowledge of the moderns had made him adopt this false principle of improved reason, the basis of all the institutions he proposed, and the source of his political sophisms. This extraordinary man, an honor to the age in which he lived, and to the human species, and perhaps the only person, since the creation of mankind, whose sole passion was that of reason, wandered in all his systems from error to error, by attempting to make men like himself, instead of taking them as they were, are, and will continue to be. He labored for imaginary beings, while he thought himself employed for the benefit of his contemporaries.

All these things considered, I was rather embarrassed as to the form I should give to my work. To suffer the author's visions to pass was doing nothing useful; fully to refute them would have been unpolite, as the care of revising and publishing his manuscripts, which I had accepted, and even requested, had been

intrusted to me; this trust had imposed on me the obligation of treating the author honorably. I at length concluded upon that which to me appeared the most decent, judicious, and useful. This was to give separately my own ideas and those of the author, and, for this purpose, to enter into his views, to set them in a new light, to amplify, extend them, and spare nothing which might contribute to present them in all their excellence.

My work therefore was to be composed of two parts absolutely distinct: one, to explain, in the manner I have just mentioned, the different projects of the author; in the other, which was not to appear until the first had had its effect, I should have given my opinion upon these projects, which I confess might sometimes have exposed them to the fate of the sonnet of the misanthrope. At the head of the whole was to have been the life of the author. For this I had collected some good materials, and which I flattered myself I should not spoil in making use of them. I had been a little acquainted with the Abbe de St. Pierre, in his old age, and the veneration I had for his memory warranted to me, upon the whole, that the comte would not be dissatisfied with the manner in which I should have treated his relation.

I made my first essay on the 'Perpetual Peace', the greatest and most elaborate of all the works which composed the collection; and before I abandoned myself to my reflections I had the courage to read everything the abbe had written upon this fine subject, without once suffering myself to be disgusted either by his slowness or his repetitions. The public has seen the extract, on which account I have nothing to say upon the subject. My opinion of it has not been printed, nor do I know that it ever will be; however, it was written at the same time the extract was made. From this I passed to the 'Polysynodie', or Plurality of Councils, a work written under the regent to favor the administration he had chosen, and which caused the Abbe de Saint Pierre to be expelled from the academy, on account of some remarks unfavorable to the preceding administration, and with which the Duchess of Maine and the Cardinal de Polignac were displeased. I completed this work as I did the former, with an extract and remarks; but I

stopped here without intending to continue the undertaking which I ought never to have begun.

The reflection which induced me to give it up naturally presents itself, and it was astonishing I had not made it sooner.

885

Most of the writings of the Abbe de Saint Pierre were either observations, or contained observations, on some parts of the government of France, and several of these were of so free a nature, that it was happy for him he had made them with impunity. But in the offices of all the ministers of state the Abbe de St. Pierre had ever been considered as a kind of preacher rather than a real politician, and he was suffered to say what he pleased, because it appeared that nobody listened to him. Had I procured him readers the case would have been different. He was a Frenchman, and I was not one; and by repeating his censures, although in his own name, I exposed myself to be asked, rather rudely, but without injustice, what it was with which I meddled. Happily before I proceeded any further, I perceived the hold I was about to give the government against me, and I immediately withdrew. I knew that, living alone in the midst of men more powerful than myself, I never could by any means whatever be sheltered from the injury they chose to do me. There was but one thing which depended upon my own efforts: this was, to observe such a line of conduct that whenever they chose to make me feel the weight of authority they could not do it without being unjust. The maxim which induced me to decline proceeding with the works of the Abbe de Saint Pierre, has frequently made me give up projects I had much more at heart. People who are always ready to construe adversity into a crime, would be much surprised were they to know the pains I have taken, that during my misfortunes it might never with truth be said of me, Thou hast deserved them.

After having given up the manuscript, I remained some time without determining upon the work which should succeed it, and this interval of inactivity was destructive; by permitting me to turn my reflections on myself, for want of another object to engage my attention. I had no project for the future which could amuse my imagination. It was not even possible to form any, as

my situation was precisely that in which all my desires were united. I had not another to conceive, and yet there was a void in my heart. This state was the more cruel, as I saw no other that was to be preferred to it. I had fixed my most tender affections upon a person who made me a return of her own. I lived with her without constraint, and, so to speak, at discretion. Notwithstanding this, a secret grief of mind never quitted me for a moment, either when she was present or absent. In possessing Theresa, I still perceived she wanted something to her happiness; and the sole idea of my not being everything to her had such an effect upon my mind that she was next to nothing to me.

I had friends of both sexes, to whom I was attached by the purest friendship and most perfect esteem; I depended upon a real return on their part, and a doubt of their sincerity never entered my mind; yet this friendship was more tormenting than agreeable to me, by their obstinate perseverance and even by their affectation, in opposing my taste, inclinations and manner of living; and this to such a degree, that the moment I seemed to desire a thing which interested myself only, and depended not upon them, they immediately joined their efforts to oblige me to renounce it. This continued desire to control me in all my wishes, the more unjust, as I did not so much as make myself acquainted with theirs, became so cruelly oppressive, that I never received one of their letters without feeling a certain terror as I opened it, and which was but too well justified by the contents. I thought being treated like a child by persons younger than myself, and who, of themselves, stood in great need of the advice they so prodigally bestowed on me, was too much: "Love me," said I to them, "as I love you, but, in every other respect, let my affairs be as indifferent to you, as yours are to me: this is all I ask." If they granted me one of these two requests, it was not the latter.

I had a retired residence in a charming solitude, was master of my own house, and could live in it in the manner I thought proper, without being controlled by any person. This habitation imposed on me duties agreeable to discharge, but which were indispensable. My liberty was precarious. In a greater state of subjection than a person at the command of another, it was my

duty to be so by inclination. When I arose in the morning, I never could say to myself, I will employ this day as I think proper. And, moreover, besides my being subject to obey the call of Madam d'Epinay, I was exposed to the still more disagreeable importunities of the public and chance comers. The distance I was at from Paris did not prevent crowds of idlers, not knowing how to spend their time, from daily breaking in upon me, and, without the least scruple, freely disposing of mine. When I least expected visitors I was unmercifully assailed by them, and I seldom made a plan for the agreeable employment of the day that was not counteracted by the arrival of some stranger.

In short, finding no real enjoyment in the midst of the pleasures I had been most desirous to obtain, I, by sudden mental transitions, returned in imagination to the serene days of my youth, and sometimes exclaimed with a sigh: "Ah! this is not Les Charmettes!"

890

The recollection of the different periods of my life led me to reflect upon that at which I was arrived, and I found I was already on the decline, a prey to painful disorders, and imagined I was approaching the end of my days without having, tasted, in all its plentitude, scarcely any one of the pleasures after which my heart had so much thirsted, or having given scope to the lively sentiments I felt it had in reserve. I had not favored even that intoxicating voluptuousness with which my mind was richly stored, and which, for want of an object, was always compressed, and never exhaled but by signs.

How was it possible that, with a mind naturally expansive, I, with whom to live was to love, should not hitherto have found a friend entirely devoted to me; a real friend: I who felt myself so capable of being such a friend to another? How can it be accounted for that with such warm affections, such combustible senses, and a heart wholly made up of love, I had not once, at least, felt its flame for a determinate object? Tormented by the want of loving, without ever having been able to satisfy it, I perceived myself approaching the eve of old age, and hastening on to death without having lived.

These melancholy but affecting recollections led me to others, which, although accompanied with regret, were not wholly unsatisfactory. I thought something I had not yet received was still due to me from destiny.

To what end was I born with exquisite faculties? To suffer them to remain unemployed? the sentiment of conscious merit, which made me consider myself as suffering injustice, was some kind of reparation, and caused me to shed tears which with pleasure I suffered to flow.

These were my meditations during the finest season of the year, in the month of June, in cool shades, to the songs of the nightingale, and the warbling of brooks. Everything concurred in plunging me into that too seducing state of indolence for which I was born, and from which my austere manner, proceeding from a long effervescence, should forever have delivered me. I unfortunately remembered the dinner of the Chateau de Toune, and my meeting with the two charming girls in the same season, in places much resembling that in which I then was. The remembrance of these circumstances, which the innocence that accompanied them rendered to me still more dear, brought several others of the nature to my recollection. I presently saw myself surrounded by all the objects which, in my youth, had given me emotion. Mademoiselle Galley, Mademoiselle de Graffenried, Mademoiselle de Breil, Madam Basile, Madam de Larnage, my pretty scholars, and even the bewitching Zulietta, whom my heart could not forget. I found myself in the midst of a seraglio of houris of my old acquaintance, for whom the most lively inclination was not new to me. My blood became inflamed, my head turned, notwithstanding my hair was almost gray, and the grave citizen of Geneva, the austere Jean Jacques, at forty-five years of age, again became the fond shepherd. The intoxication, with which my mind was seized, although sudden and extravagant, was so strong and lasting, that, to enable me to recover from it, nothing less than the unforeseen and terrible crisis it brought on was necessary.

This intoxication, to whatever degree it was carried, went not so far as to make me forget my age and situation, to flatter me

that I could still inspire love, nor to make me attempt to communicate the devouring flame by which ever since my youth I had felt my heart in vain consumed. For this I did not hope; I did not even desire it. I knew the season of love was past; I knew too well in what contempt the ridiculous pretensions of superannuated gallants were held, ever to add one to the number, and I was not a man to become an impudent coxcomb in the decline of life, after having been so little such during the flower of my age. Besides, as a friend to peace, I should have been apprehensive of domestic dissensions; and I too sincerely loved Theresa to expose her to the mortification of seeing me entertain for others more lively sentiments than those with which she inspired me for herself.

What step did I take upon this occasion? My reader will already have guessed it, if he has taken the trouble to pay the least attention to my narrative. The impossibility of attaining real beings threw me into the regions of chimera, and seeing nothing in existence worthy of my delirium, I sought food for it in the ideal world, which my imagination quickly peopled with beings after my own heart. This resource never came more apropos, nor was it ever so fertile. In my continual ecstasy I intoxicated my mind with the most delicious sentiments that ever entered the heart of man. Entirely forgetting the human species, I formed to myself societies of perfect beings, whose virtues were as celestial as their beauty, tender and faithful friends, such as I never found here below. I became so fond of soaring in the empyrean, in the midst of the charming objects with which I was surrounded, that I thus passed hours and days without perceiving it; and, losing the remembrance of all other things, I scarcely had eaten a morsel in haste before I was impatient to make my escape and run to regain my groves. When ready to depart for the enchanted world, I saw arrive wretched mortals who came to detain me upon earth, I could neither conceal nor moderate my vexation; and no longer master of myself, I gave them so uncivil a reception, that it might justly be termed brutal. This tended to confirm my reputation as a misanthrope, from the very cause which, could the world have

read my heart, should have acquired me one of a nature directly opposite.

In the midst of my exultation I was pulled down like a paper kite, and restored to my proper place by means of a smart attack of my disorder. I recurred to the only means that had before given me relief, and thus made a truce with my angelic amours; for besides that it seldom happens that a man is amorous when he suffers, my imagination, which is animated in the country and beneath the shade of trees, languishes and becomes extinguished in a chamber, and under the joists of a ceiling. I frequently regretted that there existed no dryads; it would certainly have been amongst these that I should have fixed my attachment.

Other domestic broils came at the same time to increase my chagrin. Madam le Vasseur, while making me the finest compliments in the world, alienated from me her daughter as much as she possibly could. I received letters from my late neighborhood, informing me that the good old lady had secretly contracted several debts in the name of Theresa, to whom these became known, but of which she had never mentioned to me a word. The debts to be paid hurt me much less than the secret that had been made of them. How could she, for whom I had never had a secret, have one from me? Is it possible to dissimulate with persons whom we love? The 'Coterie Holbachique', who found I never made a journey to Paris, began seriously to be afraid I was happy and satisfied in the country, and madman enough to reside there.

Hence the cabals by which attempts were made to recall me indirectly to the city. Diderot, who did not immediately wish to show himself, began by detaching from me De Leyre, whom I had brought acquainted with him, and who received and transmitted to me the impressions Diderot chose to give without suspecting to what end they were directed.

Everything seemed to concur in withdrawing me from my charming and mad reverie. I was not recovered from the late attack I had when I received the copy of the poem on the destruction of Lisbon, which I imagined to be sent by the author. This made it necessary I should write to him and speak of his

composition. I did so, and my letter was a long time afterwards printed without my consent, as I shall hereafter have occasion to remark.

Struck by seeing this poor man overwhelmed, if I may so speak, with prosperity and honor, bitterly exclaiming against the miseries of this life, and finding everything to be wrong, I formed the mad project of making him turn his attention to himself, and of proving to him that everything was right. Voltaire, while he appeared to believe in God, never really believed in anything but the devil; since his pretended deity is a malicious being, who, according to him, had no pleasure but in evil. The glaring absurdity of this doctrine is particularly disgusting from a man enjoying the greatest prosperity; who, from the bosom of happiness, endeavors, by the frightful and cruel image of all the calamities from which he is exempt, to reduce his fellow creatures to despair. I, who had a better right than he to calculate and weigh all the evils of human life, impartially examined them, and proved to him that of all possible evils there was not one to be attributed to Providence, and which had not its source rather in the abusive use man made of his faculties than in nature. I treated him, in this letter, with the greatest respect and delicacy possible. Yet, knowing his self-love to be extremely irritable, I did not send the letter immediately to himself, but to Doctor Tronchin, his physician and friend, with full power either to give it him or destroy it. Voltaire informed me in a few lines that being ill, having likewise the care of a sick person, he postponed his answer until some future day, and said not a word on the subject. Tronchin, when he sent me the letter, inclosed in it another, in which he expressed but very little esteem for the person from whom he received it.

I have never published, nor even shown, either of these two letters, not liking to make a parade of such little triumphs; but the originals are in my collections. Since that time Voltaire has published the answer he promised me, but which I never received. This is the novel of 'Candide', of which I cannot speak because I have not read it.

All these interruptions ought to have cured me of my fantastic amours, and they were perhaps the means offered me by Heaven to prevent their destructive consequences; but my evil genius prevailed, and I had scarcely begun to go out before my heart, my head, and my feet returned to the same paths. I say the same in certain respects; for my ideas, rather less exalted, remained this time upon earth, but yet were busied in making so exquisite a choice of all that was to be found there amiable of every kind, that it was not much less chimerical than the imaginary world I had abandoned.

I figured to myself love and friendship, the two idols of my heart, under the most ravishing images. I amused myself in adorning them with all the charms of the sex I had always adored. I imagined two female friends rather than two of my own sex, because, although the example be more rare, it is also more amiable. I endowed them with different characters, but analogous to their connection, with two faces, not perfectly beautiful, but according to my taste, and animated with benevolence and sensibility. I made one brown and the other fair, one lively and the other languishing, one wise and the other weak, but of so amiable a weakness that it seemed to add a charm to virtue. I gave to one of the two a lover, of whom the other was the tender friend, and even something more, but I did not admit either rivalry, quarrels, or jealousy: because every painful sentiment is painful for me to imagine, and I was unwilling to tarnish this delightful picture by anything which was degrading to nature. Smitten with my two charming models, I drew my own portrait in the lover and the friend, as much as it was possible to do it; but I made him young and amiable, giving him, at the same time, the virtues and the defects which I felt in myself.

That I might place my characters in a residence proper for them, I successively passed in review the most beautiful places I had seen in my travels. But I found no grove sufficiently delightful, no landscape that pleased me. The valleys of Thessaly would have satisfied me had I but once had a sight of them; but my imagination, fatigued with invention, wished for some real place which might serve it as a point to rest upon, and create in

me an illusion with respect to the real existence of the inhabitants I intended to place there. I thought a good while upon the Borromean Islands, the delightful prospect of which had transported me, but I found in them too much art and ornament for my lovers. I however wanted a lake, and I concluded by making choice of that about which my heart has never ceased to wander. I fixed myself upon that part of the banks of this lake where my wishes have long since placed my residence in the imaginary happiness to which fate has confined me. The native place of my poor mamma had still for me a charm. The contrast of the situations, the richness and variety of the sites, the magnificence, the majesty of the whole, which ravishes the senses, affects the heart, and elevates the mind, determined me to give it the preference, and I placed my young pupils at Vervey. This is what I imagined at the first sketch; the rest was not added until afterwards.

I for a long time confined myself to this vague plan, because it was sufficient to fill my imagination with agreeable objects, and my heart with sentiments in which it delighted. These fictions, by frequently presenting themselves, at length gained a consistence, and took in my mind a determined form. I then had an inclination to express upon paper some of the situations fancy presented to me, and, recollecting everything I had felt during my youth, thus, in some measure, gave an object to that desire of loving, which I had never been able to satisfy, and by which I felt myself consumed.

I first wrote a few incoherent letters, and when I afterwards wished to give them connection, I frequently found a difficulty in doing it. What is scarcely credible, although most strictly true, is my having written the first two parts almost wholly in this manner, without having any plan formed, and not foreseeing I should one day be tempted to make it a regular work. For this reason the two parts afterwards formed of materials not prepared for the place in which they are disposed, are full of unmeaning expressions not found in the others.

In the midst of my reveries I had a visit from Madam d'Houdetot, the first she had ever made me, but which

unfortunately was not the last, as will hereafter appear. The Comtesse d'Houdetot was the daughter of the late M. de Bellegarde, a farmer-general, sister to M. d'Epinay, and Messieurs de Lalive and De la Briche, both of whom have since been introductions to ambassadors. I have spoken of the acquaintance I made with her before she was married: since that event I had not seen her, except at the fetes at La Chevrette, with Madam d'Epinay, her sister-in-law. Having frequently passed several days with her, both at La Chevrette and Epinay, I always thought her amiable, and that she seemed to be my well-wisher. She was fond of walking with me; we were both good walkers, and the conversation between us was inexhaustible. However, I never went to see her in Paris, although she had several times requested and solicited me to do it. Her connections with M. de St. Lambert, with whom I began to be intimate, rendered her more interesting to me, and it was to bring me some account of that friend who was, I believe, then at Mahon, that she came to see me at the Hermitage.

This visit had something of the appearance of the beginning of a romance. She lost her way. Her coachman, quitting the road, which turned to the right, attempted to cross straight over from the mill of Clairvaux to the Hermitage: her carriage stuck in a quagmire in the bottom of the valley, and she got out and walked the rest of the road. Her delicate shoes were soon worn through; she sunk into the dirt, her servants had the greatest difficulty in extricating her, and she at length arrived at the Hermitage in boots, making the place resound with her laughter, in which I most heartily joined. She had to change everything. Theresa provided her with what was necessary, and I prevailed upon her to forget her dignity and partake of a rustic collation, with which she seemed highly satisfied. It was late, and her stay was short; but the interview was so mirthful that it pleased her, and she seemed disposed to return. She did not however put this project into execution until the next year: but, alas! the delay was not favorable to me in anything.

I passed the autumn in an employment no person would suspect me of undertaking: this was guarding the fruit of M.

d'Epinay. The Hermitage was the reservoir of the waters of the park of the Chevrette; there was a garden walled round and planted with espaliers and other trees, which produced M. d'Epinay more fruit than his kitchen-garden at the Chevrette, although three-fourths of it were stolen from him. That I might not be a guest entirely useless, I took upon myself the direction of the garden and the inspection of the conduct of the gardener. Everything went on well until the fruit season, but as this became ripe, I observed that it disappeared without knowing in what manner it was disposed of. The gardener assured me it was the dormice which eat it all. I destroyed a great number of these animals, notwithstanding which the fruit still diminished. I watched the gardener's motions so narrowly, that I found he was the great dormouse. He lodged at Montmorency, whence he came in the night with his wife and children to take away the fruit he had concealed in the daytime, and which he sold in the market at Paris as publicly as if he had brought it from a garden of his own. The wretch whom I loaded with kindness, whose children were clothed by Theresa, and whose father, who was a beggar, I almost supported, robbed us with as much ease as effrontery, not one of the three being sufficiently vigilant to prevent him: and one night he emptied my cellar.

Whilst he seemed to address himself to me only, I suffered everything, but being desirous of giving an account of the fruit, I was obliged to declare by whom a great part of it had been stolen. Madam d'Epinay desired me to pay and discharge him, and look out for another; I did so. As this rascal rambled about the Hermitage in the night, armed with a thick club staff with an iron ferrule, and accompanied by other villains like himself, to relieve the governesses from their fears, I made his successor sleep in the house with us; and this not being sufficient to remove their apprehensions, I sent to ask M. d'Epinay for a musket, which I kept in the chamber of the gardener, with a charge not to make use of it except an attempt was made to break open the door or scale the walls of the garden, and to fire nothing but powder, meaning only to frighten the thieves. This was certainly the least precaution a man indisposed could take for the common safety of

himself and family, having to pass the winter in the midst of a wood, with two timid women. I also procured a little dog to serve as a sentinel. De Leyre coming to see me about this time, I related to him my situation, and we laughed together at my military apparatus. At his return to Paris he wished to amuse Diderot with the story, and by this means the 'Coterie d'Holbachique' learned that I was seriously resolved to pass the winter at the Hermitage. This perseverance, of which they had not imagined me to be capable, disconcerted them, and, until they could think of some other means of making my residence disagreeable to me, they sent back, by means of Diderot, the same De Leyre, who, though at first he had thought my precautions quite natural, now pretended to discover that they were inconsistent with my principles, and styled them more than ridiculous in his letters, in which he overwhelmed me with pleasantries sufficiently bitter and satirical to offend me had I been the least disposed to take offence. But at that time being full of tender and affectionate sentiments, and not susceptible of any other, I perceived in his biting sarcasms nothing more than a jest, and believed him only jocose when others would have thought him mad.

By my care and vigilance I guarded the garden so well, that, although there had been but little fruit that year the produce was triple that of the preceding years; it is true, I spared no pains to preserve it, and I went so far as to escort what I sent to the Chevrette and to Epinay, and to carry baskets of it myself. The aunt and I carried one of these, which was so heavy that we were obliged to rest at every dozen steps, and which we arrived with it we were quite wet with perspiration.

As soon as the bad season began to confine me to the house, I wished to return to my indolent amusements, but this I found impossible. I had everywhere two charming female friends before my eyes, their friend, everything by which they were surrounded, the country they inhabited, and the objects created or embellished for them by my imagination. I was no longer myself for a moment, my delirium never left me. After many useless efforts to banish all fictions from my mind, they at length seduced me, and my future endeavors were confined to giving them order and

coherence, for the purpose of converting them into a species of novel.

What embarrassed me most was, that I had contradicted myself so openly and fully. After the severe principles I had just so publicly asserted, after the austere maxims I had so loudly preached, and my violent invectives against books which breathed nothing but effeminacy and love, could anything be less expected or more extraordinary, than to see me, with my own hand, write my name in the list of authors of those books I had so severely censured? I felt this incoherence in all its extent. I reproached myself with it, I blushed at it and was vexed; but all this could not bring me back to reason. Completely overcome, I was at all risks obliged to submit, and to resolve to brave whatever the world might say of it. Except only deliberating afterwards whether or not I should show my work, for I did not yet suppose I should ever determine to publish it.

915

This resolution taken, I entirely abandoned myself to my reveries, and, by frequently resolving these in my mind, formed with them the kind of plan of which the execution has been seen. This was certainly the greatest advantage that could be drawn from my follies; the love of good which has never once been effaced from my heart, turned them towards useful objects, the moral of which might have produced its good effects. My voluptuous descriptions would have lost all their graces, had they been devoid of the coloring of innocence.

A weak girl is an object of pity, whom love may render interesting, and who frequently is not therefore the less amiable; but who can see without indignation the manners of the age; and what is more disgusting than the pride of an unchaste wife, who, openly treading under foot every duty, pretends that her husband ought to be grateful for her unwillingness to suffer herself to be taken in the fact? Perfect beings are not in nature, and their examples are not near enough to us. But whoever says that the description of a young person born with good dispositions, and a heart equally tender and virtuous, who suffers herself, when a girl, to be overcome by love, and when a woman, has resolution

enough to conquer in her turn, is upon the whole scandalous and useless, is a liar and a hypocrite; hearken not to him.

Besides this object of morality and conjugal chastity which is radically connected with all social order, I had in view one more secret in behalf of concord and public peace, a greater, and perhaps more important object in itself, at least for the moment for which it was created. The storm brought on by the 'Encyclopedie', far from being appeased, was at the time at its height. Two parties exasperated against each other to the last degree of fury soon resembled enraged wolves, set on for their mutual destruction, rather than Christians and philosophers, who had a reciprocal wish to enlighten and convince each other, and lead their brethren to the way of truth. Perhaps nothing more was wanting to each party than a few turbulent chiefs, who possessed a little power, to make this quarrel terminate in a civil war; and God only knows what a civil war of religion founded on each side upon the most cruel intolerance would have produced. Naturally an enemy to all spirit of party, I had freely spoken severe truths to each, of which they had not listened. I thought of another expedient, which, in my simplicity, appeared to me admirable: this was to abate their reciprocal hatred by destroying their prejudices, and showing to each party the virtue and merit which in the other was worthy of public esteem and respect. This project, little remarkable for its wisdom, which supported sincerity in mankind, and whereby I fell into the error with which I reproached the Abbe de Saint Pierre, had the success that was to be expected from it: it drew together and united the parties for no other purpose than that of crushing the author. Until experience made me discover my folly, I gave my attention to it with a zeal worthy of the motive by which I was inspired; and I imagined the two characters of Wolmar and Julia in an ecstasy, which made me hope to render them both amiable, and, what is still more, by means of each other.

Satisfied with having made a rough sketch of my plan, I returned to the situations in detail, which I had marked out; and from the arrangement I gave them resulted the first two parts of the Eloisa, which I finished during the winter with inexpressible

pleasure, procuring gilt-paper to receive a fair copy of them, azure and silver powder to dry the writing, and blue narrow ribbon to tack my sheets together; in a word, I thought nothing sufficiently elegant and delicate for my two charming girls, of whom, like another Pygmalion, I became madly enamoured. Every evening, by the fireside, I read the two parts to the governesses. The daughter, without saying a word, was like myself moved to tenderness, and we mingled our sighs; her mother, finding there were no compliments, understood nothing of the matter, remained unmoved, and at the intervals when I was silent always repeated: "Sir, that is very fine."

Madam d'Epinay, uneasy at my being alone, in winter, in a solitary house, in the midst of woods, often sent to inquire after my health. I never had such real proofs of her friendship for me, to which mine never more fully answered. It would be wrong in me were not I, among these proofs, to make special mention of her portrait, which she sent me, at the same time requesting instructions from me in what manner she might have mine, painted by La Tour, and which had been shown at the exhibition. I ought equally to speak of another proof of her attention to me, which, although it be laughable, is a feature in the history of my character, on account of the impression received from it. One day when it froze to an extreme degree, in opening a packet she had sent me of several things I had desired her to purchase for me, I found a little under-petticoat of English flannel, which she told me she had worn, and desired I would make of it an under-waistcoat.

This care, more than friendly, appeared to me so tender, and as if she had stripped herself to clothe me, that in my emotion I repeatedly kissed, shedding tears at the same time, both the note and the petticoat. Theresa thought me mad. It is singular that of all the marks of friendship Madam d'Epinay ever showed me this touched me the most, and that ever since our rupture I have never recollected it without being very sensibly affected. I for a long time preserved her little note, and it would still have been in my possession had not it shared the fate of my other notes received at the same period.

Although my disorder then gave me but little respite in winter, and a part of the interval was employed in seeking relief from pain, this was still upon the whole the season which since my residence in France I had passed with most pleasure and tranquillity. During four or five months, whilst the bad weather sheltered me from the interruptions of importunate visits, I tasted to a greater degree than I had ever yet or have since done, of that equal simple and independent life, the enjoyment of which still made it more desirable to me; without any other company than the two governesses in reality, and the two female cousins in idea. It was then especially that I daily congratulated myself upon the resolution I had had the good sense to take, unmindful of the clamors of my friends, who were vexed at seeing me delivered from their tyranny; and when I heard of the attempt of a madman, when De Leyre and Madam d'Epinay spoke to me in letters of the trouble and agitation which reigned in Paris, how thankful was I to Heaven for having placed me at a distance from all such spectacles of horror and guilt. These would have been continued and increased the bilious humor which the sight of public disorders had given me; whilst seeing nothing around me in my retirement but gay and pleasing objects, my heart was wholly abandoned to sentiments which were amiable.

I remark here with pleasure the course of the last peaceful moments that were left me. The spring succeeding to this winter, which had been so calm, developed the germ of the misfortunes I have yet to describe; in the tissue of which, a like interval, wherein I had leisure to respite, will not be found.

I think however, I recollect, that during this interval of peace, and in the bosom of my solitude, I was not quite undisturbed by the Holbachiens. Diderot stirred me up some strife, and I am much deceived if it was not in the course of this winter that the 'Fils Naturel'—[Natural Son]—of which I shall soon have occasion to speak, made its appearance. Independently of the causes which left me but few papers relative to that period, those even which I have been able to preserve are not very exact with respect to dates. Diderot never dated his letters—Madam d'Epinay and Madam d' Houdetot seldom dated theirs except the day of the

week, and De Leyre mostly confined himself to the same rules. When I was desirous of putting these letters in order I was obliged to supply what was wanting by guessing at dates, so uncertain that I cannot depend upon them. Unable therefore to fix with certainty the beginning of these quarrels, I prefer relating in one subsequent article everything I can recollect concerning them.

The return of spring had increased my amorous delirium, and in my melancholy, occasioned by the excess of my transports, I had composed for the last parts of Eloisa several letters, wherein evident marks of the rapture in which I wrote them are found. Amongst others I may quote those from the Elysium, and the excursion upon the lake, which, if my memory does not deceive me, are at the end of the fourth part. Whoever, in reading these letters, does not feel his heart soften and melt into the tenderness by which they were dictated, ought to lay down the book: nature has refused him the means of judging of sentiment.

Precisely at the same time I received a second unforeseen visit from Madam d'Houdetot, in the absence of her husband, who was captain of the Gendarmarie, and of her lover, who was also in the service. She had come to Eaubonne, in the middle of the Valley of Montmorency, where she had taken a pretty house, from thence she made a new excursion to the Hermitage. She came on horseback, and dressed in men's clothes. Although I am not very fond of this kind of masquerade, I was struck with the romantic appearance she made, and, for once, it was with love. As this was the first and only time in all my life, the consequence of which will forever render it terrible to my remembrance, I must take the permission to enter into some particulars on the subject.

The Countess d'Houdetot was nearly thirty years of age, and not handsome; her face was marked with the smallpox, her complexion coarse, she was short-sighted, and her eyes were rather round; but she had fine long black hair, which hung down in natural curls below her waist; her figure was agreeable, and she was at once both awkward and graceful in her motions; her wit was natural and pleasing; to this gayety, heedlessness and ingenuousness were perfectly suited: she abounded in charming sallies, after which she so little sought, that they sometimes

escaped her lips in spite of herself. She possessed several agreeable talents, played the harpsichord, danced well, and wrote pleasing poetry. Her character was angelic—this was founded upon a sweetness of mind, and except prudence and fortitude, contained in it every virtue. She was besides so much to be depended upon in all intercourse, so faithful in society, even her enemies were not under the necessity of concealing from her their secrets. I mean by her enemies the men, or rather the women, by whom she was not beloved; for as to herself she had not a heart capable of hatred, and I am of opinion this conformity with mine greatly contributed towards inspiring me with a passion for her. In confidence of the most intimate friendship, I never heard her speak ill of persons who were absent, not even of her sister-in-law. She could neither conceal her thoughts from anyone, nor disguise any of her sentiments, and I am persuaded she spoke of her lover to her husband, as she spoke of him to her friends and acquaintances, and to everybody without distinction of persons. What proved, beyond all manner of doubt, the purity and sincerity of her nature was, that subject to very extraordinary absences of mind, and the most laughable inconsiderateness, she was often guilty of some very imprudent ones with respect to herself, but never in the least offensive to any person whatsoever.

She had been married very young and against her inclinations to the Comte d'Houdetot, a man of fashion, and a good officer; but a man who loved play and chicane, who was not very amiable, and whom she never loved. She found in M. de Saint Lambert all the merit of her husband, with more agreeable qualities of mind, joined with virtue and talents. If anything in the manners of the age can be pardoned, it is an attachment which duration renders more pure, to which its effects do honor, and which becomes cemented by reciprocal esteem. It was a little from inclination, as I am disposed to think, but much more to please Saint Lambert, that she came to see me. He had requested her to do it, and there was reason to believe the friendship which began to be established between us would render this society agreeable to all three. She knew I was acquainted with their connection, and as she could speak to me without restraint, it was

natural she should find my conversation agreeable. She came; I saw her; I was intoxicated with love without an object; this intoxication fascinated my eyes; the object fixed itself upon her. I saw my Julia in Madam d'Houdetot, and I soon saw nothing but Madam d'Houdetot, but with all the perfections with which I had just adorned the idol of my heart. To complete my delirium she spoke to me of Saint Lambert with a fondness of a passionate lover. Contagious force of love! while listening to her, and finding myself near her, I was seized with a delicious trembling, which I had never before experienced when near to any person whatsoever. She spoke, and I felt myself affected; I thought I was nothing more than interested in her sentiments, when I perceived I possessed those which were similar; I drank freely of the poisoned cup, of which I yet tasted nothing more than the sweetness. Finally, imperceptibly to us both, she inspired me for herself with all she expressed for her lover. Alas! it was very late in life, and cruel was it to consume with a passion not less violent than unfortunate for a woman whose heart was already in the possession of another.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary emotions I had felt when near to her, I did not at first perceive what had happened to me; it was not until after her departure that, wishing to think of Julia, I was struck with surprise at being unable to think of anything but Madam d'Houdetot. Then was it my eyes were opened: I felt my misfortune, and lamented what had happened, but I did not foresee the consequences.

I hesitated a long time on the manner in which I should conduct myself towards her, as if real love left behind it sufficient reason to deliberate and act accordingly. I had not yet determined upon this when she unexpectedly returned and found me unprovided. It was this time, perfectly acquainted with my situation, shame, the companion of evil, rendered me dumb, and made me tremble in her presence; I neither dared to open my mouth or raise my eyes; I was in an inexpressible confusion which it was impossible she should not perceive. I resolved to confess to her my troubled state of mind, and left her to guess the

cause whence it proceeded: this was telling her in terms sufficiently clear.

Had I been young and amiable, and Madam d'Houdetot afterwards weak, I should here blame her conduct; but this was not the case, and I am obliged to applaud and admire it. The resolution she took was equally prudent and generous. She could not suddenly break with me without giving her reasons for it to Saint Lambert, who himself had desired her to come and see me; this would have exposed two friends to a rupture, and perhaps a public one, which she wished to avoid. She had for me esteem and good wishes; she pitied my folly without encouraging it, and endeavored to restore me to reason. She was glad to preserve to her lover and herself a friend for whom she had some respect; and she spoke of nothing with more pleasure than the intimate and agreeable society we might form between us three the moment I should become reasonable. She did not always confine herself to these friendly exhortations, and, in case of need, did not spare me more severe reproaches, which I had richly deserved.

I spared myself still less: the moment I was alone I began to recover; I was more calm after my declaration—love, known to the person by whom it is inspired, becomes more supportable.

The forcible manner in which I approached myself with mine, ought to have cured me of it had the thing been possible. What powerful motives did I not call to my mind to stifle it? My morals, sentiments and principles; the shame, the treachery and crime, of abusing what was confided to friendship, and the ridiculousness of burning, at my age, with the most extravagant passion for an object whose heart was preengaged, and who could neither make me a return, nor least hope; moreover with a passion which, far from having anything to gain by constancy, daily became less sufferable.

We would imagine that the last consideration which ought to have added weight to all the others, was that whereby I eluded them! What scruple, thought I, ought I to make of a folly prejudicial to nobody but myself? Am I then a young man of whom Madam d'Houdetot ought to be afraid? Would not it be said by my presumptive remorse that, by my gallantry, manner and

dress, I was going to seduce her? Poor Jean Jacques, love on at thy ease, in all safety of conscience, and be not afraid that thy sighs will be prejudicial to Saint Lambert.

It has been seen that I never was a coxcomb, not even in my youth. The manner of thinking, of which I have spoken, was according to my turn of mind, it flattered my passion; this was sufficient to induce me to abandon myself to it without reserve, and to laugh even at the impertinent scruple I thought I had made from vanity, rather than from reason. This is a great lesson for virtuous minds, which vice never attacks openly; it finds means to surprise them by masking itself with sophisms, and not unfrequently with a virtue.

Guilty without remorse, I soon became so without measure; and I entreat it may be observed in what manner my passion followed my nature, at length to plunge me into an abyss. In the first place, it assumed the air of humility to encourage me; and to render me intrepid it carried this humility even to mistrust. Madam d'Houdetot incessantly putting in mind of my duty, without once for a single moment flattering my folly, treated me with the greatest mildness, and remained with me upon the footing of the most tender friendship. This friendship would, I protest, have satisfied my wishes, had I thought it sincere; but finding it too strong to be real, I took it into my head that love, so ill-suited to my age and appearance, had rendered me contemptible in the eyes of Madam d'Houdetot; that this young mad creature only wished to divert herself with me and my superannuated passion; that she had communicated this to Saint Lambert; and that the indignation caused by my breach of friendship, having made her lover enter into her views, they were agreed to turn my head and then to laugh at me. This folly, which at twenty-six years of age, had made me guilty of some extravagant behavior to Madam de Larnage, whom I did not know, would have been pardonable in me at forty-five with Madam d'Houdetot had not I known that she and her lover were persons of too much uprightness to indulge themselves in such a barbarous amusement.

Madam d' Houdetot continued her visits, which I delayed not to return. She, as well as myself, was fond of walking, and we took long walks in an enchanting country. Satisfied with loving and daring to say I loved, I should have been in the most agreeable situation had not my extravagance spoiled all the charm of it. She, at first, could not comprehend the foolish pettishness with which I received her attentions; but my heart, incapable of concealing what passed in it, did not long leave her ignorant of my suspicions; she endeavored to laugh at them, but this expedient did not succeed; transports of rage would have been the consequence, and she changed her tone. Her compassionate gentleness was invincible; she made me reproaches, which penetrated my heart; she expressed an inquietude at my unjust fears, of which I took advantage. I required proofs of her being in earnest. She perceived there was no other means of relieving me from my apprehensions. I became pressing: the step was delicate. It is astonishing, and perhaps without example, that a woman having suffered herself to be brought to hesitate should have got herself off so well. She refused me nothing the most tender friendship could grant; yet she granted me nothing that rendered her unfaithful, and I had the mortification to see that the disorder into which the most trifling favors had thrown all my senses had not the least effect upon hers.

I have somewhere said, that nothing should be granted to the senses, when we wished to refuse them anything. To prove how false this maxim was relative to Madam d' Houdetot, and how far she was right to depend upon her own strength of mind, it would be necessary to enter into the detail of our long and frequent conversations, and follow them, in all their liveliness during the four months we passed together in an intimacy almost without example between two friends of different sexes who contain themselves within the bounds which we never exceeded. Ah! if I had lived so long without feeling the power of real love, my heart and senses abundantly paid the arrears. What, therefore, are the transports we feel with the object of our affections by whom we are beloved, since the passions of which my idol did not partake inspired such as I felt?

But I am wrong in saying Madam Houdetot did not partake of the passion of love; that which I felt was in some measure confined to myself; yet love was equal on both sides, but not reciprocal. We were both intoxicated with the passion, she for her lover, and I for herself; our sighs and delicious tears were mingled together. Tender confidants of the secrets of each other, there was so great a similarity in our sentiments that it was impossible they should not find some common point of union. In the midst of this delicious intoxication, she never forgot herself for a moment, and I solemnly protest that, if ever, led away by my senses, I have attempted to render her unfaithful, I was never really desirous of succeeding. The vehemence itself of my passion restrained it within bounds. The duty of self-denial had elevated my mind. The lustre of every virtue adorned in my eyes the idol of my heart; to have soiled their divine image would have been to destroy it. I might have committed the crime; it has been a hundred times committed in my heart; but to dishonor my Sophia! Ah! was this ever possible? No! I have told her a hundred times it was not. Had I had it in my power to satisfy my desires, had she consented to commit herself to my discretion, I should, except in a few moments of delirium, have refused to be happy at the price of her honor. I loved her too well to wish to possess her.

The distance from the Hermitage to Raubonne is almost a league; in my frequent excursions to it I have sometimes slept there. One evening after having supped *tete-a-tete* we went to walk in the garden by a fine moonlight. At the bottom of the garden a considerable copse, through which we passed on our way to a pretty grove ornamented with a cascade, of which I had given her the idea, and she had procured it to be executed accordingly.

Eternal remembrance of innocence and enjoyment! It was in this grove that, seated by her side upon a seat of turf under an acacia in full bloom, I found for the emotions of my heart a language worthy of them. It was the first and only time of my life; but I was sublime: if everything amiable and seducing with which the most tender and ardent love can inspire the heart of man can be so called. What intoxicating tears did I shed upon her knees!

how many did I make her to shed involuntarily! At length in an involuntary transport she exclaimed: "No, never was a man so amiable, nor ever was there one who loved like you! But your friend Saint Lambert hears us, and my heart is incapable of loving twice." I exhausted myself with sighs; I embraced her—what an embrace! But this was all. She had lived alone for the last six months, that is absent from her husband and lover; I had seen her almost every day during three months, and love seldom failed to make a third. We had supped *tete-a-tete*, we were alone, in the grove by moonlight, and after two hours of the most lively and tender conversation, she left this grove at midnight, and the arms of her lover, as morally and physically pure as she had entered it. Reader, weigh all these circumstances; I will add nothing more.

Do not, however, imagine that in this situation my passions left me as undisturbed as I was with Theresa and mamma. I have already observed I was this time inspired not only with love, but with love and all its energy and fury. I will not describe either the agitations, tremblings, palpitations, convulsionary emotions, nor faintings of the heart, I continually experienced; these may be judged of by the effect her image alone made upon me. I have observed the distance from the Hermitage to Eaubonne was considerable; I went by the hills of Andilly, which are delightful; I mused, as I walked, on her whom I was going to see, the charming reception she would give me, and upon the kiss which awaited me at my arrival. This single kiss, this pernicious embrace, even before I received it, inflamed my blood to such a degree as to affect my head, my eyes were dazzled, my knees trembled, and were unable to support me; I was obliged to stop and sit down; my whole frame was in inconceivable disorder, and I was upon the point of fainting. Knowing the danger, I endeavored at setting out to divert my attention from the object, and think of something else. I had not proceeded twenty steps before the same recollection, and all that was the consequence of it, assailed me in such a manner that it was impossible to avoid them, and in spite of all my efforts I do not believe I ever made this little excursion alone with impunity. I arrived at Eaubonne, weak, exhausted, and scarcely able to support myself. The

moment I saw her everything was repaired; all I felt in her presence was the importunity of an inexhaustible and useless ardor. Upon the road to Raubonne there was a pleasant terrace called Mont Olympe, at which we sometimes met. I arrived first, it was proper I should wait for her; but how dear this waiting cost me! To divert my attention, I endeavored to write with my pencil billets, which I could have written with the purest drops of my blood; I never could finish one which was eligible. When she found a note in the niche upon which we had agreed, all she learned from the contents was the deplorable state in which I was when I wrote it. This state and its continuation, during three months of irritation and self-denial, so exhausted me, that I was several years before I recovered from it, and at the end of these it left me an ailment which I shall carry with me, or which will carry me to the grave. Such was the sole enjoyment of a man of the most combustible constitution, but who was, at the same time, perhaps, one of the most timid mortals nature ever produced. Such were the last happy days I can reckon upon earth; at the end of these began the long train of evils, in which there will be found but little interruption.

It has been seen that, during the whole course of my life, my heart, as transparent as crystal, has never been capable of concealing for the space of a moment any sentiment in the least lively which had taken refuge in it. It will therefore be judged whether or not it was possible for me long to conceal my affection for Madam d'Houdetot. Our intimacy struck the eyes of everybody, we did not make of it either a secret or a mystery. It was not of a nature to require any such precaution, and as Madam d'Houdetot had for me the most tender friendship with which she did not reproach herself, and I for her an esteem with the justice of which nobody was better acquainted than myself; she frank, absent, heedless; I true, awkward, haughty, impatient and choleric; We exposed ourselves more in deceitful security than we should have done had we been culpable. We both went to the Chevrette; we sometimes met there by appointment. We lived there according to our accustomed manner; walking together every day talking of our amours, our duties, our friend, and our

innocent projects; all this in the park opposite the apartment of Madam d'Epinay, under her windows, whence incessantly examining us, and thinking herself braved, she by her eyes filled her heart with rage and indignation.

Women have the art of concealing their anger, especially when it is great. Madam d'Epinay, violent but deliberate, possessed this art to an eminent degree. She feigned not to see or suspect anything, and at the same time that she doubled towards me her cares, attention, and allurements, she affected to load her sister-in-law with incivilities and marks of disdain, which she seemingly wished to communicate to me. It will easily be imagined she did not succeed; but I was on the rack. Torn by opposite passions, at the same time that I was sensible of her caresses, I could scarcely contain my anger when I saw her wanting in good manners to Madam d'Houdetot. The angelic sweetness of this lady made her endure everything without complaint, or even without being offended.

She was, in fact, so absent, and always so little attentive to these things, that half the time she did not perceive them.

945

I was so taken up with my passion, that, seeing nothing but Sophia (one of the names of Madam d'Houdetot), I did not perceive that I was become the laughing-stock of the whole house, and all those who came to it. The Baron d'Holbach, who never, as I heard of, had been at the Chevrette, was one of the latter. Had I at that time been as mistrustful as I am since become, I should strongly have suspected Madam d'Epinay to have contrived this journey to give the baron the amusing spectacle of an amorous citizen. But I was then so stupid that I saw not that even which was glaring to everybody. My stupidity did not, however, prevent me from finding in the baron a more jovial and satisfied appearance than ordinary. Instead of looking upon me with his usual moroseness, he said to me a hundred jocose things without my knowing what he meant. Surprise was painted in my countenance, but I answered not a word: Madam d'Epinay shook her sides with laughing; I knew not what possessed them. As nothing yet passed the bounds of pleasantry, the best thing I could have done, had I been in the secret, would have been to have

humored the joke. It is true I perceived amid the rallying gayety of the baron, that his eyes sparkled with a malicious joy, which could have given me pain had I then remarked it to the degree it has since occurred to my recollection.

One day when I went to see Madam d'Houdetot, at Eaubonne, after her return from one of her journeys to Paris, I found her melancholy, and observed that she had been weeping. I was obliged to put a restraint on myself, because Madam de Blainville, sister to her husband, was present; but the moment I found an opportunity, I expressed to her my uneasiness. "Ah," said she, with a sigh, "I am much afraid your follies will cost me the repose of the rest of my days. St. Lambert has been informed of what has passed, and ill informed of it. He does me justice, but he is vexed; and what is still worse, he conceals from me a part of his vexation. Fortunately I have not concealed from him anything relative to our connection which was formed under his auspices. My letters, like my heart, were full of yourself; I made him acquainted with everything, except your extravagant passion, of which I hoped to cure you; and which he imputes to me as a crime. Somebody has done us ill offices. I have been injured, but what does this signify? Either let us entirely break with each other, or do you be what you ought to be. I will not in future have anything to conceal from my lover."

This was the first moment in which I was sensible of the shame of feeling myself humbled by the sentiment of my fault, in presence of a young woman of whose just reproaches I approved, and to whom I ought to have been a mentor. The indignation I felt against myself would, perhaps, have been sufficient to overcome my weakness, had not the tender passion inspired me by the victim of it, again softened my heart. Alas! was this a moment to harden it when it was overflowed by the tears which penetrated it in every part? This tenderness was soon changed into rage against the vile informers, who had seen nothing but the evil of a criminal but involuntary sentiment, without believing or even imagining the sincere uprightness of heart by which it was counteracted. We did not remain long in doubt about the hand by which the blow was directed.

We both knew that Madam d'Epinay corresponded with St. Lambert. This was not the first storm she had raised up against Madam d'Houdetot, from whom she had made a thousand efforts to detach her lover, the success of some of which made the consequences to be dreaded. Besides, Grimm, who, I think, had accompanied M. de Castries to the army, was in Westphalia, as well as Saint Lambert; they sometimes visited. Grimm had made some attempts on Madam d'Houdetot, which had not succeeded, and being extremely piqued, suddenly discontinued his visits to her. Let it be judged with what calmness, modest as he is known to be, he supposed she preferred to him a man older than himself, and of whom, since he had frequented the great, he had never spoken but as a person whom he patronized.

My suspicions of Madam d'Epinay were changed into a certainty the moment I heard what had passed in my own house. When I was at the Chevrette, Theresa frequently came there, either to bring me letters or to pay me that attention which my ill state of health rendered necessary. Madam d'Epinay had asked her if Madam d'Houdetot and I did not write to each other. Upon her answering in the affirmative, Madam d'Epinay pressed her to give her the letters of Madam d'Houdetot, assuring her that she would reseal them in such a manner as it should never be known. Theresa, without showing how much she was shocked at the proposition, and without even putting me upon my guard, did nothing more than seal the letters she brought me more carefully; a lucky precaution, for Madam d'Epinay had her watched when she arrived, and, waiting for her in the passage, several times carried her audaciousness as far as to examine her tucker. She did more even than this: having one day invited herself with M. de Margency to dinner at the Hermitage, for the first time since I resided there, she seized the moment I was walking with Margency to go into my closet with the mother and daughter, and to press them to show her the letters of Madam d'Houdetot. Had the mother known where the letters were, they would have been given to her; fortunately, the daughter was the only person who was in the secret, and denied my having preserved any one of them. A virtuous, faithful and generous falsehood; whilst truth

would have been a perfidy. Madam d' Epinay, perceiving Theresa was not to be seduced, endeavored to irritate her by jealousy, reproaching her with her easy temper and blindness. "How is it possible," said she to her, "you cannot perceive there is a criminal intercourse between them? If besides what strikes your eyes you stand in need of other proofs, lend your assistance to obtain that which may furnish them; you say he tears the letters from Madam d'Houdetot as soon as he has read them. Well, carefully gather up the pieces and give them to me; I will take upon myself to put them together."

Such were the lessons my friend gave to the partner of my bed.

Theresa had the discretion to conceal from me, for a considerable time, all these attempts; but perceiving how much I was perplexed, she thought herself obliged to inform me of everything, to the end that knowing with whom I had to do, I might take my measures accordingly. My rage and indignation are not to be described. Instead of dissembling with Madam d'Epinay, according to her own example, and making use of counterplots, I abandoned myself without reserve to the natural impetuosity of my temper; and with my accustomed inconsiderateness came to an open rupture. My imprudence will be judged of by the following letters, which sufficiently show the manner of proceeding of both parties on this occasion:

NOTE FROM MADAM D'EPINAY.

Why, my dear friend, do I not see you? You make me uneasy. You have so often promised me to do nothing but go and come between this place and the Hermitage! In this I have left you at liberty; and you have suffered a week to pass without coming. Had not I been told you were well I should have imagined the contrary. I expected you either the day before yesterday, or yesterday, but found myself disappointed. My God, what is the matter with you? You have no business, nor can you have any uneasiness; for had this been the case, I flatter myself you would have come and communicated it to me. You are, therefore, ill! Relieve me, I beseech you, speedily from my fears. Adieu, my dear friend: let this adieu produce me a good-morning from you.

ANSWER.

I cannot yet say anything to you. I wait to be better informed, and this I shall be sooner or later. In the meantime be persuaded that innocence will find a defender sufficiently powerful to cause some repentance in the slanderers, be they who they may.

SECOND NOTE FROM THE SAME.

Do you know that your letter frightens me? What does it mean? I have read it twenty times. In truth I do not understand what it means. All I can perceive is, that you are uneasy and tormented, and that you wait until you are no longer so before you speak to me upon the subject. Is this, my dear friend, what we agreed upon? What then is become of that friendship and confidence, and by what means have I lost them? Is it with me or for me that you are angry? However this may be, come to me this evening I conjure you; remember you promised me no longer than a week ago to let nothing remain upon your mind, but immediately to communicate to me whatever might make it uneasy. My dear friend, I live in that confidence—There—I have just read your letter again; I do not understand the contents better, but they make me tremble. You seem to be cruelly agitated. I could wish to calm your mind, but as I am ignorant of the cause whence your uneasiness arises, I know not what to say, except that I am as wretched as yourself, and shall remain so until we meet. If you are not here this evening at six o'clock, I set off to morrow for the Hermitage, let the weather be how it will, and in whatever state of health I may be; for I can no longer support the inquietude I now feel. Good day, my dear friend, at all risks I take the liberty to tell you, without knowing whether or not you are in need of such advice, to endeavor to stop the progress uneasiness makes in solitude. A fly becomes a monster. I have frequently experienced it.

ANSWER.

I can neither come to see you nor receive your visit so long as my present inquietude continues. The confidence of which you speak no longer exists, and it will be easy for you to recover it. I see nothing more in your present anxiety than the desire of drawing from the confessions of others some advantage agreeable to your views; and my heart, so ready to pour its overflowings into another which opens itself to receive them, is shut against trick and cunning. I distinguish your ordinary address in the difficulty you find in understanding my note. Do you think me dupe enough to believe you have not comprehended what it meant? No: but I shall know how to overcome your subtleties by my frankness. I will explain myself more clearly, that you may understand me still less.

Two lovers closely united and worthy of each other's love are dear to me; I expect you will not know who I mean unless I name them. I presume attempts have been made to disunite them, and that I have been made use of to inspire one of the two with jealousy. The choice was not judicious, but it appeared convenient to the purposes of malice, and of this malice it is you whom I suspect to be guilty. I hope this becomes more clear.

Thus the woman whom I most esteem would, with my knowledge, have been loaded with the infamy of dividing her heart and person between two lovers, and I with that of being one of these wretches. If I knew that, for a single moment in your life, you ever had thought this, either of her or myself, I should hate you until my last hour. But it is with having said, and not with having thought it, that I charge you. In this case, I cannot comprehend which of the three you wished to injure; but, if you love peace of mind, tremble lest you should have succeeded. I have not concealed either from you or her all the ill I think of certain connections, but I wish these to end by a means as virtuous as their cause, and that an illegitimate love may be changed into an eternal friendship. Should I, who never do ill to any person, be the innocent means of doing it to my friends? No, I should never forgive you; I should become your irreconcilable enemy. Your secrets are all I should respect; for I will never be a man without honor.

I do not apprehend my present perplexity will continue a long time. I shall soon know whether or not I am deceived; I shall then perhaps have great injuries to repair, which I will do with as much cheerfulness as that with which the most agreeable act of my life has been accompanied. But do you know in what manner I will make amends for my faults during the short space of time I have to remain near to you? By doing what nobody but myself would do; by telling you freely what the world thinks of you, and the breaches you have to repair in your reputation. Notwithstanding all the pretended friends by whom you are surrounded, the moment you see me depart you may bid adieu to truth, you will no longer find any person who will tell it to you.

THIRD LETTER FROM THE SAME.

I did not understand your letter of this morning; this I told you because it was the case. I understand that of this evening; do not imagine I shall ever return an answer to it; I am too anxious to forget what it contains; and although you excite my pity, I am not proof against the bitterness with which it has filled my mind. I! descend to trick and cunning with you! I! accused of the blackest of all infamies! Adieu, I regret your having the adieu. I know not what I say adieu: I shall be very anxious to forgive you. You will come when you please; you will be better received than your suspicions deserve. All I have to desire of you is not to trouble yourself about my reputation. The opinion of the world concerning me is of but little importance in my esteem. My conduct is good, and this is sufficient for me. Besides, I am ignorant of what has happened to the two persons who are dear to me as they are to you.

This last letter extricated me from a terrible embarrassment, and threw me into another of almost the same magnitude. Although these letters and answers were sent and returned the same day with an extreme rapidity, the interval had been sufficient to place another between my rage and transport, and to give me time to reflect on the enormity of my imprudence. Madam d'Houdetot had not recommended to me anything so much as to remain quiet, to leave her the care of extricating herself, and to avoid, especially at that moment, all noise and rupture; and I, by the most open and atrocious insults, took the properest means of carrying rage to its greatest height in the heart of a woman who was already but too well disposed to it. I now could naturally expect nothing from her but an answer so haughty, disdainful, and expressive of contempt, that I could not, without the utmost meanness, do otherwise than immediately quit her house. Happily she, more adroit than I was furious, avoided, by the manner of her answer, reducing me to that extremity. But it was necessary either to quit or immediately go and see her; the alternative was inevitable; I resolved on the latter, though I foresaw how much I must be embarrassed in the explanation. For how was I to get through it without exposing either Madam d'Houdetot or Theresa? and woe to her whom I should have named! There was nothing that the vengeance of an implacable and an intriguing woman did not make me fear for the person who should be the object of it. It was to prevent this misfortune

that in my letter I had spoken of nothing but suspicions, that I might not be under the necessity of producing my proofs. This, it is true, rendered my transports less excusable; no simple suspicions being sufficient to authorize me to treat a woman, and especially a friend, in the manner I had treated Madam d'Epinay. But here begins the noble task I worthily fulfilled of expiating my faults and secret weaknesses by charging myself with such of the former as I was incapable of committing, and which I never did commit.

I had not to bear the attack I had expected, and fear was the greatest evil I received from it. At my approach, Madam d'Epinay threw her arms about my neck, bursting into tears. This unexpected reception, and by an old friend, extremely affected me; I also shed many tears. I said to her a few words which had not much meaning; she uttered others with still less, and everything ended here. Supper was served; we sat down to table, where, in expectation of the explanation I imagined to be deferred until supper was over, I made a very poor figure; for I am so overpowered by the most trifling inquietude of mind that I cannot conceal it from persons the least clear-sighted. My embarrassed appearance must have given her courage, yet she did not risk anything upon that foundation. There was no more explanation after than before supper: none took place on the next day, and our little *tete-a-tete* conversations consisted of indifferent things, or some complimentary words on my part, by which, while I informed her I could not say more relative to my suspicions, I asserted, with the greatest truth, that, if they were ill-founded, my whole life should be employed in repairing the injustice. She did not show the least curiosity to know precisely what they were, nor for what reason I had formed them, and all our peacemaking consisted, on her part as well as on mine, in the embrace at our first meeting. Since Madam d'Epinay was the only person offended, at least in form, I thought it was not for me to strive to bring about an *eclaircissement* for which she herself did not seem anxious, and I returned as I had come; continuing, besides, to live with her upon the same footing as before, I soon almost entirely

forgot the quarrel, and foolishly believed she had done the same, because she seemed not to remember what had passed.

This, it will soon appear, was not the only vexation caused me by weakness; but I had others not less disagreeable which I had not brought upon myself. The only cause of these was a desire of forcing me from my solitude, by means of tormenting me. These originated from Diderot and the d'Holbachiens.

955

[That is to take from it the old woman who was wanted in the conspiracy. It is astonishing that, during this long quarrel, my stupid confidence presented me from comprehending that it was not me but her whom they wanted in Paris.]

Since I had resided at the Hermitage, Diderot incessantly harrassed me, either himself or by means of De Leyre, and I soon perceived from the pleasantries of the latter upon my ramblings in the groves, with what pleasure he had travestied the hermit into the gallant shepherd. But this was not the question in my quarrels with Diderot; the cause of these were more serious. After the publication of *Fils Naturel* he had sent me a copy of it, which I had read with the interest and attention I ever bestowed on the works of a friend. In reading the kind of poem annexed to it, I was surprised and rather grieved to find in it, amongst several things, disobliging but supportable against men in solitude, this bitter and severe sentence without the least softening: 'Il n'y a que le méchant qui soit seul.' —This sentence is equivocal, and seems to present a double meaning; the one true, the other false, since it is impossible that a man who is determined to remain alone can do the least harm to anybody, and consequently he cannot be wicked. The sentence in itself therefore required an interpretation; the more so from an author who, when he sent it to the press, had a friend retired from the world. It appeared to me shocking and uncivil, either to have forgotten that solitary friend, or, in remembering him, not to have made from the general maxim the honorable and just exception which he owed, not only to his friend, but to so many respectable sages, who, in all ages, have sought for peace and tranquillity in retirement, and of whom, for the first time since the creation of the world, a writer took it into his head indiscriminately to make so many villains.

I had a great affection and the most sincere esteem for Diderot, and fully depended upon his having the same sentiments for me. But tired with his indefatigable obstinacy in continually opposing my inclinations, taste, and manner of living, and everything which related to no person but myself; shocked at seeing a man younger than I was wish, at all events, to govern me like a child; disgusted with his facility in promising, and his negligence in performing; weary of so many appointments given by himself, and capriciously broken, while new ones were again given only to be again broken; displeased at uselessly waiting for him three or four times a month on the days he had assigned, and in dining alone at night after having gone to Saint Denis to meet him, and waited the whole day for his coming; my heart was already full of these multiplied injuries. This last appeared to me still more serious, and gave me infinite pain. I wrote to complain of it, but in so mild and tender a manner that I moistened my paper with my tears, and my letter was sufficiently affecting to have drawn others from himself. It would be impossible to guess his answer on this subject: it was literally as follows: "I am glad my work has pleased and affected you. You are not of my opinion relative to hermits. Say as much good of them as you please, you will be the only one in the world of whom I shall think well: even on this there would be much to say were it possible to speak to you without giving you offence. A woman eighty years of age! etc. A phrase of a letter from the son of Madam d'Epinaÿ which, if I know you well, must have given you much pain, has been mentioned to me."

The last two expressions of this letter want explanation.

Soon after I went to reside at the Hermitage, Madam le Vasseur seemed dissatisfied with her situation, and to think the habitation too retired. Having heard she had expressed her dislike to the place, I offered to send her back to Paris, if that were more agreeable to her; to pay her lodging, and to have the same care taken of her as if she remained with me. She rejected my offer, assured me she was very well satisfied with the Hermitage, and that the country air was of service to her. This was evident, for, if I may so speak, she seemed to become young again, and enjoyed

better health than at Paris. Her daughter told me her mother would, on the whole, have been very sorry to quit the Hermitage, which was really a very delightful abode, being fond of the little amusements of the garden and the care of the fruit of which she had the handling, but that she had said, what she had been desired to say, to induce me to return to Paris.

Failing in this attempt they endeavored to obtain by a scruple the effect which complaisance had not produced, and construed into a crime my keeping the old woman at a distance from the succors of which, at her age, she might be in need. They did not recollect that she, and many other old people, whose lives were prolonged by the air of the country, might obtain these succors at Montmorency, near to which I lived; as if there were no old people, except in Paris, and that it was impossible for them to live in any other place. Madam le Vasseur who ate a great deal, and with extreme voracity, was subject to overflowings of bile and to strong diarrhoeas, which lasted several days, and served her instead of clysters. At Paris she neither did nor took anything for them, but left nature to itself. She observed the same rule at the Hermitage, knowing it was the best thing she could do. No matter, since there were not in the country either physicians or apothecaries, keeping her there must, no doubt, be with the desire of putting an end to her existence, although she was in perfect health. Diderot should have determined at what age, under pain of being punished for homicide, it is no longer permitted to let old people remain out of Paris.

This was one of the atrocious accusations from which he did not except me in his remark; that none but the wicked were alone: and the meaning of his pathetic exclamation with the *et cetera*, which he had benignantly added: A woman of eighty years of age, etc.

I thought the best answer that could be given to this reproach would be from Madam le Vasseur herself. I desired her to write freely and naturally her sentiments to Madam d'Epinaÿ. To relieve her from all constraint I would not see her letter. I showed her that which I am going to transcribe. I wrote it to Madam d'Epinaÿ upon the subject of an answer I wished to return to a letter still

more severe from Diderot, and which she had prevented me from sending.

Thursday.

My good friend. Madam le Vasseur is to write to you: I have desired her to tell you sincerely what she thinks. To remove from her all constraint, I have intimated to her that I will not see what she writes, and I beg of you not to communicate to me any part of the contents of her letter.

I will not send my letter because you do not choose I should; but, feeling myself grievously offended, it would be baseness and falsehood, of either of which it is impossible for me to be guilty, to acknowledge myself in the wrong. Holy writ commands him to whom a blow is given, to turn the other cheek, but not to ask pardon. Do you remember the man in comedy who exclaims, while he is giving another blows with his staff, "This is the part of a philosopher!"

Do not flatter yourself that he will be prevented from coming by the bad weather we now have. His rage will give him the time and strength which friendship refuses him, and it will be the first time in his life he ever came upon the day he had appointed.

He will neglect nothing to come and repeat to me verbally the injuries with which he loads me in his letters; I will endure them all with patience—he will return to Paris to be ill again; and, according to custom, I shall be a very hateful man. What is to be done? Endure it all.

But do not you admire the wisdom of the man who would absolutely come to Saint Denis in a hackney-coach to dine there, bring me home in a hackney-coach, and whose finances, eight days afterwards, obliges him to come to the Hermitage on foot? It is not possible, to speak his own language, that this should be the style of sincerity. But were this the case, strange changes of fortune must have happened in the course of a week.

I join in your affliction for the illness of madam, your mother, but you will perceive your grief is not equal to mine. We suffer less by seeing the persons we love ill than when they are unjust and cruel.

Adieu, my good friend, I shall never again mention to you this unhappy affair. You speak of going to Paris with an unconcern, which, at any other time, would give me pleasure.

I wrote to Diderot, telling him what I had done, relative to Madam le Vasseur, upon the proposal of Madam d'Epainay herself; and Madam le Vasseur having, as it may be imagined, chosen to remain at the Hermitage, where she enjoyed a good state of health, always had company, and lived very agreeably, Diderot,

not knowing what else to attribute to me as a crime, construed my precaution into one, and discovered another in Madam le Vasseur continuing to reside at the Hermitage, although this was by her own choice; and though her going to Paris had depended, and still depended upon herself, where she would continue to receive the same succors from me as I gave her in my house.

This is the explanation of the first reproach in the letter of Diderot. That of the second is in the letter which follows:

The learned man (a name given in a joke by Grimm to the son of Madam d'Epinay) must have informed you there were upon the rampart twenty poor persons who were dying with cold and hunger, and waiting for the farthing you customarily gave them. This is a specimen of our little babbling.....And if you understand the rest it will amuse you perhaps.

My answer to this terrible argument, of which Diderot seemed so proud, was in the following words:

965

I think I answered the learned man; that is, the farmer-general, that I did not pity the poor whom he had seen upon the rampart, waiting for my farthing; that he had probably amply made it up to them; that I appointed him my substitute, that the poor of Paris would have no reason to complain of the change; and that I should not easily find so good a one for the poor of Montmorency, who were in much greater need of assistance. Here is a good and respectable old man, who, after having worked hard all his lifetime, no longer being able to continue his labors, is in his old days dying with hunger. My conscience is more satisfied with the two sous I give him every Monday, than with the hundred farthings I should have distributed amongst all the beggars on the rampart. You are pleasant men, you philosophers, while you consider the inhabitants of the cities as the only persons whom you ought to befriend. It is in the country men learn how to love and serve humanity; all they learn in cities is to despise it.

Such were the singular scruples on which a man of sense had the folly to attribute to me as a crime my retiring from Paris, and pretended to prove to me by my own example, that it was not possible to live out of the capital without becoming a bad man. I cannot at present conceive how I could be guilty of the folly of answering him, and of suffering myself to be angry instead of laughing in his face. However, the decisions of Madam d'Epinay and the clamors of the 'Coterie Holbachique' had so far operated in her favor, that I was generally thought to be in the wrong; and

the D'Houdetot herself, very partial to Diderot, insisted upon my going to see him at Paris, and making all the advances towards an accommodation which, full and sincere as it was on my part, was not of long duration. The victorious argument by which she subdued my heart was, that at that moment Diderot was in distress. Besides the storm excited against the 'Encyclopedie', he had then another violent one to make head against, relative to his piece, which, notwithstanding the short history he had printed at the head of it, he was accused of having entirely taken from Goldoni. Diderot, more wounded by criticisms than Voltaire, was overwhelmed by them. Madam de Grasnigny had been malicious enough to spread a report that I had broken with him on this account. I thought it would be just and generous publicly to prove the contrary, and I went to pass two days, not only with him, but at his lodgings. This, since I had taken up my abode at the Hermitage, was my second journey to Paris. I had made the first to run to poor Gauffecourt, who had had a stroke of apoplexy, from which he has never perfectly recovered: I did not quit the side of his pillow until he was so far restored as to have no further need of my assistance.

Diderot received me well. How many wrongs are effaced by the embraces of a friend! after these, what resentment can remain in the heart? We came to but little explanation. This is needless for reciprocal invectives. The only thing necessary is to know how to forget them. There had been no underhand proceedings, none at least that had come to my knowledge: the case was not the same with Madam d' Epinay. He showed me the plan of the 'Pere de Famille'. "This," said I to him, "is the best defence to the 'Fils Naturel'. Be silent, give your attention to this piece, and then throw it at the head of your enemies as the only answer you think proper to make them." He did so, and was satisfied with what he had done.

I had six months before sent him the first two parts of my 'Eloisa' to have his opinion upon them. He had not yet read the work over. We read a part of it together. He found this 'feuillet', that was his term, by which he meant loaded with words and redundancies. I myself had already perceived it; but it was the

babbling of the fever: I have never been able to correct it. The last parts are not the same. The fourth especially, and the sixth, are master-pieces of diction.

The day after my arrival, he would absolutely take me to sup with M. d'Holbach. We were far from agreeing on this point; for I wished even to get rid of the bargain for the manuscript on chemistry, for which I was enraged to be obliged to that man. Diderot carried all before him. He swore D'Holbach loved me with all his heart, said I must forgive him his manner, which was the same to everybody, and more disagreeable to his friends than to others. He observed to me that, refusing the produce of this manuscript, after having accepted it two years before, was an affront to the donor which he had not deserved, and that my refusal might be interpreted into a secret reproach, for having waited so long to conclude the bargain. "I see," added he, "D'Holbach every day, and know better than you do the nature of his disposition. Had you reason to be dissatisfied with him, do you think your friend capable of advising you to do a mean thing?" In short, with my accustomed weakness, I suffered myself to be prevailed upon, and we went to sup with the baron, who received me as he usually had done. But his wife received me coldly and almost uncivilly. I saw nothing in her which resembled the amiable Caroline, who, when a maid, expressed for me so many good wishes. I thought I had already perceived that since Grimm had frequented the house of D'Aine, I had not met there so friendly a reception.

Whilst I was at Paris, Saint Lambert arrived there from the army. As I was not acquainted with his arrival, I did not see him until after my return to the country, first at the Chevrette, and afterwards at the Hermitage; to which he came with Madam d'Houdetot, and invited himself to dinner with me. It may be judged whether or not I received him with pleasure! But I felt one still greater at seeing the good understanding between my guests. Satisfied with not having disturbed their happiness, I myself was happy in being a witness to it, and I can safely assert that, during the whole of my mad passion, and especially at the moment of which I speak, had it been in my power to take from him Madam

d'Houdetot I would not have done it, nor should I have so much as been tempted to undertake it. I found her so amiable in her passion for Saint Lambert, that I could scarcely imagine she would have been as much so had she loved me instead of him; and without wishing to disturb their union, all I really desired of her was to permit herself to be loved. Finally, however violent my passion may have been for this lady, I found it as agreeable to be the confidant, as the object of her amours, and I never for a moment considered her lover as a rival, but always as my friend. It will be said this was not love: be it so, but it was something more.

As for Saint Lambert, he behaved like an honest and judicious man: as I was the only person culpable, so was I the only one who was punished; this, however, was with the greatest indulgence. He treated me severely, but in a friendly manner, and I perceived I had lost something in his esteem, but not the least part of his friendship. For this I consoled myself, knowing it would be much more easy to me to recover the one than the other, and that he had too much sense to confound an involuntary weakness and a passion with a vice of character. If even I were in fault in all that had passed, I was but very little so. Had I first sought after his mistress? Had not he himself sent her to me? Did not she come in search of me? Could I avoid receiving her? What could I do? They themselves had done the evil, and I was the person on whom it fell. In my situation they would have done as much as I did, and perhaps more; for, however estimable and faithful Madam d'Houdetot might be, she was still a woman; her lover was absent; opportunities were frequent; temptations strong; and it would have been very difficult for her always to have defended herself with the same success against a more enterprising man. We certainly had done a great deal in our situation, in placing boundaries beyond which we never permitted ourselves to pass.

Although at the bottom of my heart I found evidence sufficiently honorable in my favor, so many appearances were against me, that the invincible shame always predominant in me, gave me in his presence the appearance of guilt, and of this he took advantage for the purpose of humbling me: a single

circumstance will describe this reciprocal situation. I read to him, after dinner, the letter I had written the preceding year to Voltaire, and of which Saint Lambert had heard speak. Whilst I was reading he fell asleep, and I, lately so haughty, at present so foolish, dared not stop, and continued to read whilst he continued to snore. Such were my indignities and such his revenge; but his generosity never permitted him to exercise them; except between ourselves.

After his return to the army, I found Madam d'Houdetot greatly changed in her manner with me. At this I was as much surprised as if it had not been what I ought to have expected; it affected me more than it ought to have done, and did me considerable harm. It seemed that everything from which I expected a cure, still plunged deeper into my heart the dart, which I at length broke in rather than draw out.

I was quite determined to conquer myself, and leave no means untried to change my foolish passion into a pure and lasting friendship. For this purpose I had formed the finest projects in the world; for the execution of which the concurrence of Madam d'Houdetot was necessary. When I wished to speak to her I found her absent and embarrassed; I perceived I was no longer agreeable to her, and that something had passed which she would not communicate to me, and which I have never yet known. This change, and the impossibility of knowing the reason of it, grieved me to the heart.

She asked me for her letters; these I returned her with a fidelity of which she did me the insult to doubt for a moment.

975

This doubt was another wound given to my heart, with which she must have been so well acquainted. She did me justice, but not immediately: I understood that an examination of the packet I had sent her, made her perceive her error; I saw she reproached herself with it, by which I was a gainer of something. She could not take back her letters without returning me mine. She told me she had burnt them: of this I dared to doubt in my turn, and I confess I doubt of it at this moment. No, such letters as mine to her were, are never thrown into the fire. Those of Eloisa have been found ardent.

Heavens! what would have been said of these! No, No, she who can inspire a like passion, will never have the courage to burn the proofs of it. But I am not afraid of her having made a bad use of them: of this I do not think her capable; and besides I had taken proper measures to prevent it. The foolish, but strong apprehension of raillery, had made me begin this correspondence in a manner to secure my letters from all communication. I carried the familiarity I permitted myself with her in my intoxication so far as to speak to her in the singular number: but what theeing and thouing! she certainly could not be offended with it. Yet she several times complained, but this was always useless: her complaints had no other effect than that of awakening my fears, and I besides could not suffer myself to lose ground. If these letters be not yet destroyed, and should they ever be made public, the world will see in what manner I have loved.

The grief caused me by the coldness of Madam d'Houdetot, and the certainty of not having merited it, made me take the singular resolution to complain of it to Saint Lambert himself. While waiting the effect of the letter I wrote to him, I sought dissipations to which I ought sooner to have had recourse. Fetes were given at the Chevrette for which I composed music. The pleasure of honoring myself in the eyes of Madam d'Houdetot by a talent she loved, warmed my imagination, and another object still contributed to give it animation, this was the desire the author of the 'Devin du Village' had of showing he understood music; for I had perceived some persons had, for a considerable time past, endeavored to render this doubtful, at least with respect to composition. My beginning at Paris, the ordeal through which I had several times passed there, both at the house of M. Dupin and that of M. de la Popliniere; the quantity of music I had composed during fourteen years in the midst of the most celebrated masters and before their eyes:—finally, the opera of the 'Muses Gallantes', and that even of the 'Devin'; a motet I had composed for Mademoiselle Fel, and which she had sung at the spiritual concert; the frequent conferences I had had upon this fine art with the first composers, all seemed to prevent or dissipate a doubt of such a nature. This however existed even at the Chevrette, and in

the mind of M. d'Epinay himself. Without appearing to observe it, I undertook to compose him a motet for the dedication of the chapel of the Chevrette, and I begged him to make choice of the words. He directed de Linant, the tutor to his son, to furnish me with these. De Linant gave me words proper to the subject, and in a week after I had received them the motet was finished. This time, spite was my Apollo, and never did better music come from my hand. The words began with: 'Ecce sedes hic Tonantis'. (I have since learned these were by Santeuil, and that M. de Linant had without scruple appropriated them to himself.) The grandeur of the opening is suitable to the words, and the rest of the motet is so elegantly harmonious that everyone was struck with it. I had composed it for a great orchestra. D'Epinay procured the best performers. Madam Bruna, an Italian singer, sung the motet, and was well accompanied. The composition succeeded so well that it was afterwards performed at the spiritual concert, where, in spite of secret cabals, and notwithstanding it was badly executed, it was twice generally applauded. I gave for the birthday of M. d'Epinay the idea of a kind of piece half dramatic and half pantomimical, of which I also composed the music. Grimm, on his arrival, heard speak of my musical success. An hour afterwards not a word more was said on the subject; but there no longer remained a doubt, not at least that I know of, of my knowledge of composition.

Grimm was scarcely arrived at the Chevrette, where I already did not much amuse myself, before he made it insupportable to me by airs I never before saw in any person, and of which I had no idea. The evening before he came, I was dislodged from the chamber of favor, contiguous to that of Madam d'Epinay; it was prepared for Grimm, and instead of it, I was put into another further off. "In this manner," said I, laughingly, to Madam d'Epinay, "new-comers displace those which are established." She seemed embarrassed. I was better acquainted the same evening with the reason for the change, in learning that between her chamber and that I had quitted there was a private door which she had thought needless to show me. Her intercourse with Grimm was not a secret either in her own house or to the public, not even

to her husband; yet, far from confessing it to me, the confidant of secrets more important to her, and which was sure would be faithfully kept, she constantly denied it in the strongest manner. I comprehended this reserve proceeded from Grimm, who, though intrusted with all my secrets, did not choose I should be with any of his.

However prejudiced I was in favor of this man by former sentiments, which were not extinguished, and by the real merit he had, all was not proof against the cares he took to destroy it. He received me like the Comte de Tuffiere; he scarcely deigned to return my salute; he never once spoke to me, and prevented my speaking to him by not making me any answer; he everywhere passed first, and took the first place without ever paying me the least attention. All this would have been supportable had he not accompanied it with a shocking affectation, which may be judged of by one example taken from a hundred. One evening Madam d'Epinau, finding herself a little indisposed, ordered something for her supper to be carried into her chamber, and went up stairs to sup by the side of the fire. She asked me to go with her, which I did. Grimm came afterwards. The little table was already placed, and there were but two covers. Supper was served; Madam d'Epinau took her place on one side of the fire, Grimm took an armed chair, seated himself at the other, drew the little table between them, opened his napkin, and prepared himself for eating without speaking to me a single word.

Madam d' Epinau blushed at his behavior, and, to induce him to repair his rudeness, offered me her place. He said nothing, nor did he ever look at me. Not being able to approach the fire, I walked about the chamber until a cover was brought. Indisposed as I was, older than himself, longer acquainted in the house than he had been, the person who had introduced him there, and to whom as a favorite of the lady he ought to have done the honors of it, he suffered me to sup at the end of the table, at a distance from the fire, without showing me the least civility. His whole behavior to me corresponded with this example of it. He did not treat me precisely as his inferior, but he looked upon me as a cipher. I could scarcely recognize the same Grimm, who, at the

house of the Prince de Saxe-Gotha, thought himself honored when I cast my eyes upon him. I had still more difficulty in reconciling this profound silence and insulting haughtiness with the tender friendship he professed for me to those whom he knew to be real friends. It is true the only proofs he gave of it was pitying my wretched fortune, of which I did not complain; compassionating my sad fate, with which I was satisfied; and lamenting to see me obstinately refuse the benevolent services, he said, he wished to render me. Thus was it he artfully made the world admire his affectionate generosity, blame my ungrateful misanthropy, and insensibly accustomed people to imagine there was nothing more between a protector like him and a wretch like myself, than a connection founded upon benefactions on one part and obligations on the other, without once thinking of a friendship between equals. For my part, I have vainly sought to discover in what I was under an obligation to this new protector. I had lent him money, he had never lent me any; I had attended him in his illness, he scarcely came to see me in mine; I had given him all my friends, he never had given me any of his; I had said everything I could in his favor, and if ever he has spoken of me it has been less publicly and in another manner. He has never either rendered or offered me the least service of any kind. How, therefore, was he my Mecaenas? In what manner was I protected by him? This was incomprehensible to me, and still remains so.

It is true, he was more or less arrogant with everybody, but I was the only person with whom he was brutally so. I remember Saint Lambert once ready to throw a plate at his head, upon his, in some measure, giving him the lie at table by vulgarly saying, "That is not true." With his naturally imperious manner he had the self-sufficiency of an upstart, and became ridiculous by being extravagantly impertinent. An intercourse with the great had so far intoxicated him that he gave himself airs which none but the contemptible part of them ever assume. He never called his lackey but by "Eh!" as if amongst the number of his servants my lord had not known which was in waiting. When he sent him to buy anything, he threw the money upon the ground instead of putting it into his hand. In short, entirely forgetting he was a man,

he treated him with such shocking contempt, and so cruel a disdain in everything, that the poor lad, a very good creature, whom Madam d'Epinaÿ had recommended, quitted his service without any other complaint than that of the impossibility of enduring such treatment. This was the la Fleur of this new presuming upstart.

As these things were nothing more than ridiculous, but quite opposite to my character, they contributed to render him suspicious to me. I could easily imagine that a man whose head was so much deranged could not have a heart well placed. He piqued himself upon nothing so much as upon sentiments. How could this agree with defects which are peculiar to little minds? How can the continued overflowings of a susceptible heart suffer it to be incessantly employed in so many little cares relative to the person? He who feels his heart inflamed with this celestial fire strives to diffuse it, and wishes to show what he internally is. He would wish to place his heart in his countenance, and thinks not of other paint for his cheeks.

I remember the summary of his morality which Madam d'Epinaÿ had mentioned to me and adopted. This consisted in one single article; that the sole duty of man is to follow all the inclinations of his heart. This morality, when I heard it mentioned, gave me great matter of reflection, although I at first considered it solely as a play of wit. But I soon perceived it was a principle really the rule of his conduct, and of which I afterwards had, at my own expense, but too many convincing proofs. It is the interior doctrine Diderot has so frequently intimated to me, but which I never heard him explain.

I remember having several years before been frequently told that Grimm was false, that he had nothing more than the appearance of sentiment, and particularly that he did not love me. I recollected several little anecdotes which I had heard of him by M. de Francueil and Madam de Chenonceaux, neither of whom esteemed him, and to whom he must have been known, as Madam de Chenonceaux was daughter to Madam de Rochechouart, the intimate friend of the late Comte de Friese, and that M. de Francueil, at that time very intimate with the Viscount de

Polignac, had lived a good deal at the Palais Royal precisely when Grimm began to introduce himself there. All Paris heard of his despair after the death of the Comte de Friese. It was necessary to support the reputation he had acquired after the rigors of Mademoiselle Fel, and of which I, more than any other person, should have seen the imposture, had I been less blind. He was obliged to be dragged to the Hotel de Castries where he worthily played his part, abandoned to the most mortal affliction. There, he every morning went into the garden to weep at his ease, holding before his eyes his handkerchief moistened with tears, as long as he was in sight of the hotel, but at the turning of a certain alley, people, of whom he little thought, saw him instantly put his handkerchief in his pocket and take out of it a book. This observation, which was repeatedly made, soon became public in Paris, and was almost as soon forgotten. I myself had forgotten it; a circumstance in which I was concerned brought it to my recollection. I was at the point of death in my bed, in the Rue de Grenelle, Grimm was in the country; he came one morning, quite out of breath, to see me, saying, he had arrived in town that very instant; and a moment afterwards I learned he had arrived the evening before, and had been seen at the theatre.

I heard many things of the same kind; but an observation, which I was surprised not to have made sooner, struck me more than anything else. I had given to Grimm all my friends without exception, they were become his. I was so inseparable from him, that I should have had some difficulty in continuing to visit at a house where he was not received. Madam de Crequi was the only person who refused to admit him into her company, and whom for that reason I have seldom since seen. Grimm on his part made himself other friends, as well by his own means, as by those of the Comte de Friese. Of all these not one of them ever became my friend: he never said a word to induce me even to become acquainted with them, and not one of those I sometimes met at his apartments ever showed me the least good will; the Comte de Friese, in whose house he lived, and with whom it consequently would have been agreeable to me to form some connection, not

excepted, nor the Comte de Schomberg, his relation, with whom Grimm was still more intimate.

Add to this, my own friends, whom I made his, and who were all tenderly attached to me before this acquaintance, were no longer so the moment it was made. He never gave me one of his. I gave him all mine, and these he has taken from me. If these be the effects of friendship, what are those of enmity?

Diderot himself told me several times at the beginning that Grimm in whom I had so much confidence, was not my friend. He changed his language the moment he was no longer so himself.

The manner in which I had disposed of my children wanted not the concurrence of any person. Yet I informed some of my friends of it, solely to make it known to them, and that I might not in their eyes appear better than I was. These friends were three in number: Diderot, Grimm, and Madam d'Epinay. Duclos, the most worthy of my confidence, was the only real friend whom I did not inform of it. He nevertheless knew what I had done. By whom? This I know not. It is not very probable the perfidy came from Madam d'Epinay, who knew that by following her example, had I been capable of doing it, I had in my power the means of a cruel revenge. It remains therefore between Grimm and Diderot, then so much united, especially against me, and it is probable this crime was common to them both. I would lay a wager that Duclos, to whom I never told my secret, and who consequently was at liberty to make what use he pleased of his information, is the only person who has not spoken of it again.

Grimm and Diderot, in their project to take from me the governesses, had used the greatest efforts to make Duclos enter into their views; but this he refused to do with disdain. It was not until sometime afterwards that I learned from him what had passed between them on the subject; but I learned at the time from Theresa enough to perceive there was some secret design, and that they wished to dispose of me, if not against my own consent, at least without my knowledge, or had an intention of making these two persons serve as instruments of some project they had in view. This was far from upright conduct. The

opposition of Duclos is a convincing proof of it. They who think proper may believe it to be friendship.

This pretended friendship was as fatal to me at home as it was abroad. The long and frequent conversations with Madam le Vasseur, for several years past, had made a sensible change in this woman's behavior to me, and the change was far from being in my favor. What was the subject of these singular conversations? Why such a profound mystery? Was the conversation of that old woman agreeable enough to take her into favor, and of sufficient importance to make of it so great a secret? During the two or three years these colloquies had, from time to time, been continued, they had appeared to me ridiculous; but when I thought of them again, they began to astonish me. This astonishment would have been carried to inquietude had I then known what the old creature was preparing for me.

Notwithstanding the pretended zeal for my welfare of which Grimm made such a public boast, difficult to reconcile with the airs he gave himself when we were together, I heard nothing of him from any quarter the least to my advantage, and his feigned commiseration tended less to do me service than to render me contemptible. He deprived me as much as he possibly could of the resource I found in the employment I had chosen, by decrying me as a bad copyist. I confess he spoke the truth; but in this case it was not for him to do it. He proved himself in earnest by employing another copyist, and prevailing upon everybody he could, by whom I was engaged, to do the same. His intention might have been supposed to be that of reducing me to a dependence upon him and his credit for a subsistence, and to cut off the latter until I was brought to that degree of distress.

All things considered, my reason imposed silence upon my former prejudice, which still pleaded in his favor. I judged his character to be at least suspicious, and with respect to his friendship I positively decided it to be false. I then resolved to see him no more, and informed Madam d'Epinay of the resolution I had taken, supporting it with several unanswerable facts, but which I have now forgotten.

She strongly combated my resolution without knowing how to reply to the reasons on which it was founded. She had not concerted with him; but the next day, instead of explaining herself verbally, she, with great address, gave me a letter they had drawn up together, and by which, without entering into a detail of facts, she justified him by his concentrated character, attributed to me as a crime my having suspected him of perfidy towards his friend, and exhorted me to come to an accommodation with him. This letter staggered me. In a conversation we afterwards had together, and in which I found her better prepared than she had been the first time, I suffered myself to be quite prevailed upon, and was inclined to believe I might have judged erroneously. In this case I thought I really had done a friend a very serious injury, which it was my duty to repair. In short, as I had already done several times with Diderot, and the Baron d'Holbach, half from inclination, and half from weakness, I made all the advances I had a right to require; I went to M. Grimm, like another George Dandin, to make him my apologies for the offence he had given me; still in the false persuasion, which, in the course of my life has made me guilty of a thousand meannesses to my pretended friends, that there is no hatred which may not be disarmed by mildness and proper behavior; whereas, on the contrary, the hatred of the wicked becomes still more envenomed by the impossibility of finding anything to found it upon, and the sentiment of their own injustice is another cause of offence against the person who is the object of it. I have, without going further than my own history, a strong proof of this maxim in Grimm, and in Tronchin; both became my implacable enemies from inclination, pleasure and fancy, without having been able to charge me with having done either of them the most trifling injury, and whose rage, like that of tigers, becomes daily more fierce by the facility of satiating it.

[I did not give the surname of Jongleur to the latter until a long time after his enmity had been declared, and the persecutions he brought upon me at Geneva and elsewhere. I soon suppressed the name the moment I perceived I was entirely his victim. Mean vengeance is unworthy of my heart, and hatred never takes the least root in it.]

I expected that Grimm, confused by my condescension and advances, would receive me with open arms, and the most tender friendship. He received me as a Roman Emperor would have done, and with a haughtiness I never saw in any person but himself. I was by no means prepared for such a reception. When, in the embarrassment of the part I had to act, and which was so unworthy of me, I had, in a few words and with a timid air, fulfilled the object which had brought me to him; before he received me into favor, he pronounced, with a deal of majesty, an harangue he had prepared, and which contained a long enumeration of his rare virtues, and especially those connected with friendship. He laid great stress upon a thing which at first struck me a great deal: this was his having always preserved the same friends. Whilst he was yet speaking, I said to myself, it would be cruel for me to be the only exception to this rule. He returned to the subject so frequently, and with such emphasis, that I thought, if in this he followed nothing but the sentiments of his heart, he would be less struck with the maxim, and that he made of it an art useful to his views by procuring the means of accomplishing them. Until then I had been in the same situation; I had preserved all my first friends, those even from my tenderest infancy, without having lost one of them except by death, and yet I had never before made the reflection: it was not a maxim I had prescribed myself. Since, therefore, the advantage was common to both, why did he boast of it in preference, if he had not previously intended to deprive me of the merit? He afterwards endeavored to humble me by proofs of the preference our common friends gave to him. With this I was as well acquainted as himself; the question was, by what means he had obtained it? whether it was by merit or address? by exalting himself, or endeavoring to abase me? At last, when he had placed between us all the distance that he could add to the value of the favor he was about to confer, he granted me the kiss of peace, in a slight embrace which resembled the accolade which the king gives to newmade knights. I was stupefied with surprise: I knew not what to say; not a word could I utter. The whole scene had the appearance of the reprimand a preceptor gives to his pupil while

he graciously spares inflicting the rod. I never think of it without perceiving to what degree judgments, founded upon appearances to which the vulgar give so much weight, are deceitful, and how frequently audaciousness and pride are found in the guilty, and shame and embarrassment in the innocent.

We were reconciled: this was a relief to my heart, which every kind of quarrel fills with anguish. It will naturally be supposed that a like reconciliation changed nothing in his manners; all it effected was to deprive me of the right of complaining of them. For this reason I took a resolution to endure everything, and for the future to say not a word.

So many successive vexations overwhelmed me to such a degree as to leave me but little power over my mind. Receiving no answer from Saint Lambert, neglected by Madam d'Houdetot, and no longer daring to open my heart to any person, I began to be afraid that by making friendship my idol, I should sacrifice my whole life to chimeras. After putting all those with whom I had been acquainted to the test, there remained but two who had preserved my esteem, and in whom my heart could confide: Duclos, of whom since my retreat to the Hermitage I had lost sight, and Saint Lambert. I thought the only means of repairing the wrongs I had done the latter, was to open myself to him without reserve, and I resolved to confess to him everything by which his mistress should not be exposed. I have no doubt but this was another snare of my passions to keep me nearer to her person; but I should certainly have had no reserve with her lover, entirely submitting to his direction, and carrying sincerity as far as it was possible to do it. I was upon the point of writing to him a second letter, to which I was certain he would have returned an answer, when I learned the melancholy cause of his silence relative to the first. He had been unable to support until the end the fatigues of the campaign. Madam d'Epinay informed me he had had an attack of the palsy, and Madam d'Houdetot, ill from affliction, wrote me two or three days after from Paris, that he was going to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the benefit of the waters. I will not say this melancholy circumstance afflicted me as it did her; but I am of opinion my grief of heart was as painful as her

tears. The pain of knowing him to be in such a state, increased by the fear least inquietude should have contributed to occasion it, affected me more than anything that had yet happened, and I felt most cruelly a want of fortitude, which in my estimation was necessary to enable me to support so many misfortunes. Happily this generous friend did not long leave me so overwhelmed with affliction; he did not forget me, notwithstanding his attack; and I soon learned from himself that I had ill judged his sentiments, and been too much alarmed for his situation. It is now time I should come to the grand revolution of my destiny, to the catastrophe which has divided my life in two parts so different from each other, and, from a very trifling cause, produced such terrible effects.

One day, little thinking of what was to happen, Madam d'Epinaÿ sent for me to the Chevrette. The moment I saw her I perceived in her eyes and whole countenance an appearance of uneasiness, which struck me the more, as this was not customary, nobody knowing better than she did how to govern her features and her movements. "My friend," said she to me, "I am immediately going to set off for Geneva; my breast is in a bad state, and my health so deranged that I must go and consult Tronchin." I was the more astonished at this resolution so suddenly taken, and at the beginning of the bad season of the year, as thirty-six hours before she had not, when I left her, so much as thought of it. I asked her who she would take with her. She said her son and M. de Linant; and afterwards carelessly added, "And you, dear, will not you go also?" As I did not think she spoke seriously, knowing that at the season of the year I was scarcely in a situation to go to my chamber, I joked upon the utility of the company, of one sick person to another. She herself had not seemed to make the proposition seriously, and here the matter dropped. The rest of our conversation ran upon the necessary preparations for her journey, about which she immediately gave orders, being determined to set off within a fortnight. She lost nothing by my refusal, having prevailed upon her husband to accompany her.

A few days afterwards I received from Diderot the note I am going to transcribe. This note, simply doubled up, so that the contents were easily read, was addressed to me at Madam d'Epinay's, and sent to M. de Linant, tutor to the son, and confidant to the mother.

NOTE FROM DIDEROT.

I am naturally disposed to love you, and am born to give you trouble. I am informed Madam d'Epinay is going to Geneva, and do not hear you are to accompany her. My friend, you are satisfied with Madam d'Epinay, you must go, with her; if dissatisfied you ought still less to hesitate. Do you find the weight of the obligations you are under to her uneasy to you? This is an opportunity of discharging a part of them, and relieving your mind. Do you ever expect another opportunity like the present one, of giving her proofs of your gratitude? She is going to a country where she will be quite a stranger. She is ill, and will stand in need of amusement and dissipation. The winter season too! Consider, my friend. Your ill state of health may be a much greater objection than I think it is; but are you now more indisposed than you were a month ago, or than you will be at the beginning of spring? Will you three months hence be in a situation to perform the journey more at your ease than at present? For my part I cannot but observe to you that were I unable to bear the shaking of the carriage I would take my staff and follow her. Have you no fears lest your conduct should be misinterpreted? You will be suspected of ingratitude or of a secret motive. I well know, that let you do as you will you will have in your favor the testimony of your conscience, but will this alone be sufficient, and is it permitted to neglect to a certain degree that which is necessary to acquire the approbation of others? What I now write, my good friend, is to acquit myself of what I think I owe to us both. Should my letter displease you, throw it into the fire and let it be forgotten. I salute, love and embrace you.

Although trembling and almost blind with rage whilst I read this epistle, I remarked the address with which Diderot affected a milder and more polite language than he had done in his former ones, wherein he never went further than "My dear," without ever deigning to add the name of friend. I easily discovered the secondhand means by which the letter was conveyed to me; the subscription, manner and form awkwardly betrayed the manoeuvre; for we commonly wrote to each other by post, or the messenger of Montmorency, and this was the first and only time he sent me his letter by any other conveyance.

As soon as the first transports of my indignation permitted me to write, I, with great precipitation, wrote him the following

answer, which I immediately carried from the Hermitage, where I then was, to Chevrette, to show it to Madam d' Epinay; to whom, in my blind rage, I read the contents, as well as the letter from Diderot.

You cannot, my dear friend, either know the magnitude of the obligations I am under to Madam d'Epina y, to what a degree I am bound by them, whether or not she is desirous of my accompanying her, that this is possible, or the reasons I may have for my noncompliance. I have no objection to discuss all these points with you; but you will in the meantime confess that prescribing to me so positively what I ought to do, without first enabling yourself to judge of the matter, is, my dear philosopher, acting very inconsiderately. What is still worse, I perceive the opinion you give comes not from yourself. Besides my being but little disposed to suffer myself to be led by the nose under your name by any third or fourth person, I observe in this secondary advice certain underhand dealing, which ill agrees with your candor, and from which you will on your account, as well as mine, do well in future to abstain.

You are afraid my conduct should be misinterpreted; but I defy a heart like yours to think ill of mine. Others would perhaps speak better of me if I resembled them more. God preserve me from gaining their approbation! Let the vile and wicked watch over my conduct and misinterpret my actions, Rousseau is not a man to be afraid of them, nor is Diderot to be prevailed upon to hearken to what they say.

If I am displeased with your letter, you wish me to throw it into the fire, and pay no attention to the contents. Do you imagine that anything coming from you can be forgotten in such a manner? You hold, my dear friend, my tears as cheap in the pain you give me, as you do my life and health, in the cares you exhort me to take. Could you but break yourself of this, your friendship would be more pleasing to me, and I should be less to be pitied.

On entering the chamber of Madam d'Epina y I found Grimm with her, with which I was highly delighted. I read to them, in a loud and clear voice, the two letters, with an intrepidity of which I should not have thought myself capable, and concluded with a few observations not in the least derogatory to it. At this unexpected audacity in a man generally timid, they were struck dumb with surprise; I perceived that arrogant man look down upon the ground, not daring to meet my eyes, which sparkled with indignation; but in the bottom of his heart he from that instant resolved upon my destruction, and, with Madam d' Epina y, I am certain concerted measures to that effect before they separated.

It was much about this time that I at length received, by Madam d'Houdetot, the answer from Saint Lambert, dated from

Wolfenbüttel, a few days after the accident had happened to him, to my letter which had been long delayed upon the road. This answer gave me the consolation of which I then stood so much in need; it was full of assurance of esteem and friendship, and these gave me strength and courage to deserve them. From that moment I did my duty, but had Saint Lambert been less reasonable, generous and honest, I was inevitably lost.

The season became bad, and people began to quit the country. Madam d'Houdetot informed me of the day on which she intended to come and bid adieu to the valley, and gave me a rendezvous at Eaubonne. This happened to be the same day on which Madam d'Epinay left the Chevrette to go to Paris for the purpose of completing preparations for her journey. Fortunately she set off in the morning, and I had still time to go and dine with her sister-in-law. I had the letter from Saint Lambert in my pocket, and read it over several times as I walked along. This letter served me as a shield against my weakness. I made and kept to the resolution of seeing nothing in Madam d'Houdetot but my friend and the mistress of Saint Lambert; and I passed with her a tete-a-tete of four hours in a most delicious calm, infinitely preferable, even with respect to enjoyment, to the paroxysms of a burning fever, which, always, until that moment, I had had when in her presence. As she too well knew my heart not to be changed, she was sensible of the efforts I made to conquer myself, and esteemed me the more for them, and I had the pleasure of perceiving that her friendship for me was not extinguished. She announced to me the approaching return of Saint Lambert, who, although well enough recovered from his attack, was unable to bear the fatigues of war, and was quitting the service to come and live in peace with her. We formed the charming project of an intimate connection between us three, and had reason to hope it would be lasting, since it was founded on every sentiment by which honest and susceptible hearts could be united; and we had moreover amongst us all the knowledge and talents necessary to be sufficient to ourselves without the aid of any foreign supplement. Alas! in abandoning myself to the hope of so agreeable a life I little suspected that which awaited me.

We afterwards spoke of my situation with Madam d'Epinay. I showed her the letter from Diderot, with my answer to it; I related to her everything that had passed upon the subject, and declared to her my resolution of quitting the Hermitage.

This she vehemently opposed, and by reasons all powerful over my heart. She expressed to me how much she could have wished I had been of the party to Geneva, foreseeing she should inevitably be considered as having caused the refusal, which the letter of Diderot seemed previously to announce. However, as she was acquainted with my reasons, she did not insist upon this point, but conjured me to avoid coming to an open rupture let it cost me what mortification it would, and to palliate my refusal by reasons sufficiently plausible to put away all unjust suspicions of her having been the cause of it. I told her the task she imposed on me was not easy; but that, resolved to expiate my faults at the expense of my reputation, I would give the preference to hers in everything that honor permitted me to suffer. It will soon be seen whether or not I fulfilled this engagement.

My passion was so far from having lost any part of its force that I never in my life loved my Sophia so ardently and tenderly as on that day, but such was the impression made upon me by the letter of Saint Lambert, the sentiment of my duty and the horror in which I held perfidy, that during the whole time of the interview my senses left me in peace, and I was not so much as tempted to kiss her hand. At parting she embraced me before her servants. This embrace, so different from those I had sometimes stolen from her under the foliage, proved I was become master of myself; and I am certain that had my mind, undisturbed, had time to acquire more firmness, three months would have cured me radically.

Here ends my personal connections with Madam d'Houdetot; connections of which each has been able to judge by appearance according to the disposition of his own heart, but in which the passion inspired me by that amiable woman, the most lively passion, perhaps, man ever felt, will be honorable in our own eyes by the rare and painful sacrifice we both made to duty, honor, love, and friendship. We each had too high an opinion of the other

easily to suffer ourselves to do anything derogatory to our dignity. We must have been unworthy of all esteem had we not set a proper value upon one like this, and the energy of my sentiments which have rendered us culpable, was that which prevented us from becoming so.

Thus after a long friendship for one of these women, and the strongest affection for the other, I bade them both adieu the same day, to one never to see her more, to the other to see her again twice, upon occasions of which I shall hereafter speak.

After their departure, I found myself much embarrassed to fulfill so many pressing and contradictory duties, the consequences of my imprudence; had I been in my natural situation, after the proposition and refusal of the journey to Geneva, I had only to remain quiet, and everything was as it should be. But I had foolishly made of it an affair which could not remain in the state it was, and an explanation was absolutely necessary, unless I quitted the Hermitage, which I had just promised Madam d'Houdetot not to do, at least for the present. Moreover she had required me to make known the reasons for my refusal to my pretended friends, that it might not be imputed to her. Yet I could not state the true reason without doing an outrage to Madam d'Epinay, who certainly had a right to my gratitude for what she had done for me. Everything well considered, I found myself reduced to the severe but indispensable necessity of failing in respect, either to Madam d'Upinay, Madam d'Houdetot or to myself; and it was the last I resolved to make my victim. This I did without hesitation, openly and fully, and with so much generosity as to make the act worthy of expiating the faults which had reduced me to such an extremity. This sacrifice, taken advantage of by my enemies, and which they, perhaps, did not expect, has ruined my reputation, and by their assiduity, deprived me of the esteem of the public; but it has restored to me my own, and given me consolation in my misfortune. This, as it will hereafter appear, is not the last time I made such a sacrifice, nor that advantages were taken of it to do me an injury.

Grimm was the only person who appeared to have taken no part in the affair, and it was to him I determined to address

myself. I wrote him a long letter, in which I set forth the ridiculousness of considering it as my duty to accompany Madam d' Epinay to Geneva, the inutility of the measure, and the embarrassment even it would have caused her, besides the inconvenience to myself. I could not resist the temptation of letting him perceive in this letter how fully I was informed in what manner things were arranged, and that to me it appeared singular I should be expected to undertake the journey whilst he himself dispensed with it, and that his name was never mentioned. This letter, wherein, on account of my not being able clearly to state my reasons, I was often obliged to wander from the text, would have rendered me culpable in the eyes of the public, but it was a model of reservedness and discretion for the people who, like Grimm, were fully acquainted with the things I forbore to mention, and which justified my conduct. I did not even hesitate to raise another prejudice against myself in attributing the advice of Diderot, to my other friends. This I did to insinuate that Madam d'Houdetot had been in the same opinion as she really was, and in not mentioning that, upon the reasons I gave her, she thought differently, I could not better remove the suspicion of her having connived at my proceedings than appearing dissatisfied with her behavior.

This letter was concluded by an act of confidence which would have had an effect upon any other man; for, in desiring Grimm to weigh my reasons and afterwards to give me his opinion, I informed him that, let this be what it would, I should act accordingly, and such was my intention had he even thought I ought to set off; for M. d'Epinaÿ having appointed himself the conductor of his wife, my going with them would then have had a different appearance; whereas it was I who, in the first place, was asked to take upon me that employment, and he was out of the question until after my refusal.

The answer from Grimm was slow incoming; it was singular enough, on which account I will here transcribe it.

The departure of Madam d'Epinay is postponed; her son is ill, and it is necessary to wait until his health is re-established. I will consider the contents of your letter. Remain quiet at your Hermitage. I will send you my opinion as soon as this shall be necessary. As she will certainly not set off for some days, there is no immediate occasion for it. In the meantime you may, if you think proper, make her your offers, although this to me seems a matter of indifference. For, knowing your situation as well as you do yourself, I doubt not of her returning to your offer such an answer as she ought to do; and all the advantage which, in my opinion, can result from this, will be your having it in your power to say to those by whom you may be importuned, that your not being of the travelling party was not for want of having made your offers to that effect. Moreover, I do not see why you will absolutely have it that the philosopher is the speaking-trumpet of all the world, nor because he is of opinion you ought to go, why you should imagine all your friends think as he does? If you write to Madam d'Epinay, her answer will be yours to all your friends, since you have it so much at heart to give them all an answer. Adieu. I embrace Madam le Vasseur and the Criminal.

[M. le Vasseur, whose wife governed him rather rudely, called her the Lieutenant Criminal. Grimm in a joke gave the same name to the daughter, and by way of abridgment was pleased to retrench the first word.]

Struck with astonishment at reading this letter I vainly endeavored to find out what it meant. How! instead of answering me with simplicity, he took time to consider of what I had written, as if the time he had already taken was not sufficient! He intimates even the state of suspense in which he wishes to keep me, as if a profound problem was to be resolved, or that it was of importance to his views to deprive me of every means of comprehending his intentions until the moment he should think proper to make them known. What therefore did he mean by these precautions, delays, and mysteries? Was this manner of acting consistent with honor and uprightness? I vainly sought for some favorable interpretation of his conduct; it was impossible to find one. Whatever his design might be, were this inimical to me, his situation facilitated the execution of it without its being possible for me in mine to oppose the least obstacle. In favor in the house of a great prince, having an extensive acquaintance, and giving the tone to common circles of which he was the oracle, he had it in his power, with his usual address, to dispose everything in his favor; and I, alone in my Hermitage, far removed from all society,

without the benefit of advice, and having no communication with the world, had nothing to do but to remain in peace. All I did was to write to Madam d'Epinay upon the illness of her son, as polite a letter as could be written, but in which I did not fall into the snare of offering to accompany her to Geneva.

After waiting for a long time in the most cruel uncertainty, into which that barbarous man had plunged me, I learned, at the expiration of eight or ten days, that Madam d'Epinay was set off, and received from him a second letter. It contained not more than seven or eight lines which I did not entirely read. It was a rupture, but in such terms as the most infernal hatred only can dictate, and these became unmeaning by the excessive degree of acrimony with which he wished to charge them. He forbade me his presence as he would have forbidden me his states. All that was wanting to his letter to make it laughable, was to be read over with coolness. Without taking a copy of it, or reading the whole of the contents, I returned it him immediately, accompanied by the following note:

1015

I refused to admit the force of the just reasons I had of suspicion: I now, when it is too late, am become sufficiently acquainted with your character.

This then is the letter upon which you took time to meditate: I return it to you, it is not for me. You may show mine to the whole world and hate me openly; this on your part will be a falsehood the less.

My telling he might show my preceding letter related to an article in his by which his profound address throughout the whole affair will be judged of.

I have observed that my letter might inculpate me in the eyes of persons unacquainted with the particulars of what had passed. This he was delighted to discover; but how was he to take advantage of it without exposing himself? By showing the letter he ran the risk of being reproached with abusing the confidence of his friend.

To relieve himself from this embarrassment he resolved to break with me in the most violent manner possible, and to set forth in his letter the favor he did me in not showing mine. He was certain that in my indignation and anger I should refuse his feigned discretion, and permit him to show my letter to

everybody; this was what he wished for, and everything turned out as he expected it would. He sent my letter all over Paris, with his own commentaries upon it, which, however, were not so successful as he had expected them to be. It was not judged that the permission he had extorted to make my letter public exempted him from the blame of having so lightly taken me at my word to do me an injury. People continually asked what personal complaints he had against me to authorize so violent a hatred. Finally, it was thought that if even my behavior had been such as to authorize him to break with me, friendship, although extinguished, had rights which he ought to have respected. But unfortunately the inhabitants of Paris are frivolous; remarks of the moment are soon forgotten; the absent and unfortunate are neglected; the man who prospers secures favor by his presence; the intriguing and malicious support each other, renew their vile efforts, and the effects of these, incessantly succeeding each other, efface everything by which they were preceded.

Thus, after having so long deceived me, this man threw aside his mask; convinced that, in the state to which he had brought things, he no longer stood in need of it. Relieved from the fear of being unjust towards the wretch, I left him to his reflections, and thought no more of him. A week afterwards I received an answer from Madam d'Epinay, dated from Geneva. I understood from the manner of her letter, in which for the first time in her life, she put on airs of state with me, that both depending but little upon the success of their measures, and considering me a man inevitably lost, their intentions were to give themselves the pleasure of completing my destruction.

In fact, my situation was deplorable. I perceived all my friends withdrew themselves from me without knowing how or for why. Diderot, who boasted of the continuation of his attachment, and who, for three months past, had promised me a visit, did not come. The winter began to make its appearance, and brought with it my habitual disorders. My constitution, although vigorous, had been unequal to the combat of so many opposite passions. I was so exhausted that I had neither strength nor courage sufficient to resist the most trifling indisposition. Had my engagements, and

the continued remonstrances of Diderot and Madam d'Houdetot then permitted me to quit the Hermitage, I knew not where to go, nor in what manner to drag myself along. I remained stupid and immovable. The idea alone of a step to take, a letter to write, or a word to say, made me tremble. I could not however do otherwise than reply to the letter of Madam d'Epinay without acknowledging myself to be worthy of the treatment with which she and her friend overwhelmed me. I determined upon notifying to her my sentiments and resolutions, not doubting a moment that from humanity, generosity, propriety, and the good manner of thinking, I imagined I had observed in her, notwithstanding her bad one, she would immediately subscribe to them. My letter was as follows:

HERMITAGE 23d NOV., 1757.

Were it possible to die of grief I should not now be alive.

But I have at length determined to triumph over everything. Friendship, madam, is extinguished between us, but that which no longer exists still has its rights, and I respect them.

I have not forgotten your goodness to me, and you may, on my part, expect as much gratitude as it is possible to have towards a person I no longer can love. All further explanation would be useless. I have in my favor my own conscience, and I return you your letter.

I wished to quit the Hermitage, and I ought to have done it. My friends pretend I must stay there until spring; and since my friends desire it I will remain there until that season if you will consent to my stay.

After writing and despatching this letter all I thought of was remaining quiet at the Hermitage and taking care of my health; of endeavoring to recover my strength, and taking measures to remove in the spring without noise or making the rupture public. But these were not the intentions either of Grimm or Madam d'Epinay, as it will presently appear.

A few days afterwards, I had the pleasure of receiving from Diderot the visit he had so frequently promised, and in which he had as constantly failed. He could not have come more opportunely; he was my oldest friend: almost the only one who

remained to me; the pleasure I felt in seeing him, as things were circumstanced, may easily be imagined. My heart was full, and I disclosed it to him. I explained to him several facts which either had not come to his knowledge, or had been disguised or suppressed. I informed him, as far as I could do it with propriety, of all that had passed. I did not affect to conceal from him that with which he was but too well acquainted, that a passion equally unreasonable and unfortunate, had been the cause of my destruction; but I never acknowledged that Madam d'Houdetot had been made acquainted with it, or at least that I had declared it to her. I mentioned to him the unworthy manoeuvres of Madam d'Epinay to intercept the innocent letters her sister-in-law wrote to me. I was determined he should hear the particulars from the mouth of the persons whom she had attempted to seduce. Theresa related them with great precision; but what was my astonishment when the mother came to speak, and I heard her declare and maintain that nothing of this had come to her knowledge? These were her words from which she would never depart. Not four days before she herself had recited to me all the particulars Theresa had just stated, and in presence of my friend she contradicted me to my face. This, to me, was decisive, and I then clearly saw my imprudence in having so long a time kept such a woman near me. I made no use of invective; I scarcely deigned to speak to her a few words of contempt. I felt what I owed to the daughter, whose steadfast uprightness was a perfect contrast to the base manoeuvres of the mother. But from the instant my resolution was taken relative to the old woman, and I waited for nothing but the moment to put it into execution.

This presented itself sooner than I expected. On the 10th of December I received from Madam d'Epinay the following answer to my preceding letter:

GENEVA, 1st December, 1757.

After having for several years given you every possible mark of friendship all I can now do is to pity you. You are very unhappy. I wish your conscience may be as calm as mine. This may be necessary to the repose of your whole life.

Since you are determined to quit the Hermitage, and are persuaded that you ought to do it, I am astonished your friends have prevailed upon you to stay there. For my part I never consult mine upon my duty, and I have nothing further to say to you upon your own.

Such an unforeseen dismissal, and so fully pronounced, left me not a moment to hesitate. It was necessary to quit immediately, let the weather and my health be in what state they might, although I were to sleep in the woods and upon the snow, with which the ground was then covered, and in defiance of everything Madam d'Houdetot might say; for I was willing to do everything to please her except render myself infamous.

I never had been so embarrassed in my whole life as I then was; but my resolution was taken. I swore, let what would happen, not to sleep at the Hermitage on the night of that day week. I began to prepare for sending away my effects, resolving to leave them in the open field rather than not give up the key in the course of the week: for I was determined everything should be done before a letter could be written to Geneva, and an answer to it received. I never felt myself so inspired with courage: I had recovered all my strength. Honor and indignation, upon which Madam d'Epinaÿ had not calculated, contributed to restore me to vigor. Fortune aided my audacity. M. Mathas, fiscal procurer, heard of my embarrassment. He sent to offer me a little house he had in his garden of Mont Louis, at Montmorency. I accepted it with eagerness and gratitude. The bargain was soon concluded: I immediately sent to purchase a little furniture to add to that we already had. My effects I had carted away with a deal of trouble, and a great expense: notwithstanding the ice and snow my removal was completed in a couple of days, and on the fifteenth of December I gave up the keys of the Hermitage, after having paid the wages of the gardener, not being able to pay my rent.

With respect to Madam le Vasseur, I told her we must part; her daughter attempted to make me renounce my resolution, but I was inflexible. I sent her off, to Paris in a carriage of the messenger with all the furniture and effects she and her daughter had in common. I gave her some money, and engaged to pay her lodging with her children, or elsewhere to provide for her subsistence as much as it should be possible for me to do it, and never to let her want bread as long as I should have it myself.

Finally the day after my arrival at Mont Louis, I wrote to Madam d'Epinaÿ the following letter:

MONTMORENCY, 17th December 1757.

Nothing, madam, is so natural and necessary as to leave your house the moment you no longer approve of my remaining there. Upon your refusing your consent to my passing the rest of the winter at the Hermitage I quitted it on the fifteenth of December. My destiny was to enter it in spite of myself and to leave it the same. I thank you for the residence you prevailed upon me to make there, and I would thank you still more had I paid for it less dear. You are right in believing me unhappy; nobody upon earth knows better than yourself to what a degree I must be so. If being deceived in the choice of our friends be a misfortune, it is another not less cruel to recover from so pleasing an error.

Such is the faithful narrative of my residence at the Hermitage, and of the reasons which obliged me to leave it. I could not break off the recital, it was necessary to continue it with the greatest exactness; this epoch of my life having had upon the rest of it an influence which will extend to my latest remembrance.

BOOK X

The extraordinary degree of strength a momentary effervescence had given me to quit the Hermitage, left me the moment I was out of it. I was scarcely established in my new habitation before I frequently suffered from retentions, which were accompanied by a new complaint; that of a rupture, from which I had for some time, without knowing what it was, felt great inconvenience. I soon was reduced to the most cruel state. The physician Thieiry, my old friend, came to see me, and made me acquainted with my situation. The sight of all the apparatus of

the infirmities of years, made me severely feel that when the body is no longer young, the heart is not so with impunity. The fine season did not restore me, and I passed the whole year, 1758, in a state of languor, which made me think I was almost at the end of my career. I saw, with impatience, the closing scene approach. Recovered from the chimeras of friendship, and detached from everything which had rendered life desirable to me, I saw nothing more in it that could make it agreeable; all I perceived was wretchedness and misery, which prevented me from enjoying myself. I sighed after the moment when I was to be free and escape from my enemies. But I must follow the order of events.

My retreat to Montmorency seemed to disconcert Madam d'Epinay; probably she did not expect it. My melancholy situation, the severity of the season, the general dereliction of me by my friends, all made her and Grimm believe, that by driving me to the last extremity, they should oblige me to implore mercy, and thus, by vile meanness, render myself contemptible, to be suffered to remain in an asylum which honor commanded me to leave. I left it so suddenly that they had not time to prevent the step from being taken, and they were reduced to the alternative of double or quit, to endeavor to ruin me entirely, or to prevail upon me to return. Grimm chose the former; but I am of opinion Madam d'Epinay would have preferred the latter, and this from her answer to my last letter, in which she seemed to have laid aside the airs she had given herself in the preceding ones, and to give an opening to an accommodation. The long delay of this answer, for which she made me wait a whole month, sufficiently indicates the difficulty she found in giving it a proper turn, and the deliberations by which it was preceded. She could not make any further advances without exposing herself; but after her former letters, and my sudden retreat from her house, it is impossible not to be struck with the care she takes in this letter not to suffer an offensive expression to escape her. I will copy it at length to enable my reader to judge of what she wrote:

GENEVA, January 17, 1758.

SIR: I did not receive your letter of the 17th of December until yesterday. It was sent me in a box filled with different things, and which has been all this time upon the road. I shall answer only the postscript. You may recollect, sir, that we agreed the wages of the gardener of the Hermitage should pass through your hands, the better to make him feel that he depended upon you, and to avoid the ridiculous and indecent scenes which happened in the time of his predecessor. As a proof of this, the first quarter of his wages were given to you, and a few days before my departure we agreed I should reimburse you what you had advanced. I know that of this you, at first, made some difficulty; but I had desired you to make these advances; it was natural I should acquit myself towards you, and this we concluded upon. Cahouet informs me that you refused to receive the money. There is certainly some mistake in the matter. I have given orders that it may again be offered to you, and I see no reason for your wishing to pay my gardener, notwithstanding our conventions, and beyond the term even of your inhabiting the Hermitage. I therefore expect, sir, that recollecting everything I have the honor to state, you will not refuse to be reimbursed for the sums you have been pleased to advance for me.

After what had passed, not having the least confidence in Madam d' Epinay, I was unwilling to renew my connection with her; I returned no answer to this letter, and there our correspondence ended. Perceiving I had taken my resolution, she took hers; and, entering into all the views of Grimm and the Coterie Holbachique, she united her efforts with theirs to accomplish my destruction. Whilst they manoeuvred at Paris, she did the same at Geneva. Grimm, who afterwards went to her there, completed what she had begun. Tronchin, whom they had no difficulty in gaining over, seconded them powerfully, and became the most violent of my persecutors, without having against me, any more than Grimm had, the least subject of complaint. They all three spread in silence that of which the effects were seen there four years afterwards.

They had more trouble at Paris, where I was better known to the citizens, whose hearts, less disposed to hatred, less easily received its impressions. The better to direct their blow, they began by giving out that it was I who had left them. Thence, still feigning to be my friends, they dexterously spread their malignant accusations by complaining of the injustice of their friend. Their auditors, thus thrown off their guard, listened more attentively to

what was said of me, and were inclined to blame my conduct. The secret accusations of perfidy and ingratitude were made with greater precaution, and by that means with greater effect. I knew they imputed to me the most atrocious crimes without being able to learn in what these consisted. All I could infer from public rumor was that this was founded upon the four following capital offences: my retiring to the country; my passion for Madam d'Houdetot; my refusing to accompany Madam d'Epinay to Geneva, and my leaving the Hermitage. If to these they added other griefs, they took their measures so well that it has hitherto been impossible for me to learn the subject of them.

It is therefore at this period that I think I may fix the establishment of a system, since adopted by those by whom my fate has been determined, and which has made such a progress as will seem miraculous to persons who know not with what facility everything which favors the malignity of man is established. I will endeavor to explain in a few words what to me appeared visible in this profound and obscure system.

With a name already distinguished and known throughout all Europe, I had still preserved my primitive simplicity. My mortal aversion to all party faction and cabal had kept me free and independent, without any other chain than the attachments of my heart. Alone, a stranger, without family or fortune, and unconnected with everything except my principles and duties, I intrepidly followed the paths of uprightness, never flattering or favoring any person at the expense of truth and justice. Besides, having lived for two years past in solitude, without observing the course of events, I was unconnected with the affairs of the world, and not informed of what passed, nor desirous of being acquainted with it. I lived four leagues from Paris as much separated from that capital by my negligence as I should have been in the Island of Tinian by the sea.

Grimm, Diderot and D'Holbach were, on the contrary, in the centre of the vortex, lived in the great world, and divided amongst them almost all the spheres of it. The great wits, men of letters, men of long robe, and women, all listened to them when they chose to act in concert. The advantage three men in this situation

united must have over a fourth in mine, cannot but already appear. It is true Diderot and D'Holbach were incapable, at least I think so, of forming black conspiracies; one of them was not base enough, nor the other sufficiently able; but it was for this reason that the party was more united. Grimm alone formed his plan in his own mind, and discovered more of it than was necessary to induce his associates to concur in the execution. The ascendancy he had gained over them made this quite easy, and the effect of the whole answered to the superiority of his talents.

It was with these, which were of a superior kind, that, perceiving the advantage he might acquire from our respective situations, he conceived the project of overturning my reputation, and, without exposing himself, of giving me one of a nature quite opposite, by raising up about me an edifice of obscurity which it was impossible for me to penetrate, and by that means throw a light upon his manoeuvres and unmask him.

This enterprise was difficult, because it was necessary to palliate the iniquity in the eyes of those of whose assistance he stood in need. He had honest men to deceive, to alienate from me the good opinion of everybody, and to deprive me of all my friends. What say I? He had to cut off all communication with me, that not a single word of truth might reach my ears. Had a single man of generosity come and said to me, "You assume the appearance of virtue, yet this is the manner in which you are treated, and these the circumstances by which you are judged: what have you to say?" truth would have triumphed and Grimm have been undone. Of this he was fully convinced; but he had examined his own heart and estimated men according to their merit. I am sorry, for the honor of humanity, that he judged with so much truth.

In these dark and crooked paths his steps to be the more sure were necessarily slow. He has for twelve years pursued his plan and the most difficult part of the execution of it is still to come; this is to deceive the public entirely. He is afraid of this public, and dares not lay his conspiracy open.

[Since this was written he has made the dangerous step with the fullest and most inconceivable success. I am of opinion it was Tronchin who inspired him with courage, and supplied him with the means.]

But he has found the easy means of accompanying it with power, and this power has the disposal of me. Thus supported he advances with less danger. The agents of power piquing themselves but little on uprightness, and still less on candor, he has no longer the indiscretion of an honest man to fear. His safety is in my being enveloped in an impenetrable obscurity, and in concealing from me his conspiracy, well knowing that with whatever art he may have formed it, I could by a single glance of the eye discover the whole. His great address consists in appearing to favor whilst he defames me, and in giving to his perfidy an air of generosity.

I felt the first effects of this system by the secret accusations of the Coterie Holbachique without its being possible for me to know in what the accusations consisted, or to form a probable conjecture as to the nature of them. De Leyre informed me in his letters that heinous things were attributed to me. Diderot more mysteriously told me the same thing, and when I came to an explanation with both, the whole was reduced to the heads of accusation of which I have already spoken. I perceived a gradual increase of coolness in the letters from Madam d'Houdetot. This I could not attribute to Saint Lambert; he continued to write to me with the same friendship, and came to see me after his return. It was also impossible to think myself the cause of it, as we had separated well satisfied with each other, and nothing since that time had happened on my part, except my departure from the Hermitage, of which she felt the necessity. Therefore, not knowing whence this coolness, which she refused to acknowledge, although my heart was not to be deceived, could proceed, I was uneasy upon every account. I knew she greatly favored her sister-in-law and Grimm, in consequence of their connections with Saint Lambert; and I was afraid of their machinations. This agitation opened my wounds, and rendered my correspondence so disagreeable as quite to disgust her with it.

I saw, as at a distance, a thousand cruel circumstances, without discovering anything distinctly. I was in a situation the most insupportable to a man whose imagination is easily heated. Had I been quite retired from the world, and known nothing of the matter I should have become more calm; but my heart still clung to attachments, by means of which my enemies had great advantages over me; and the feeble rays which penetrated my asylum conveyed to me nothing more than a knowledge of the blackness of the mysteries which were concealed from my eyes.

I should have sunk, I have not a doubt of it, under these torments, too cruel and insupportable to my open disposition, which, by the impossibility of concealing my sentiments, makes me fear everything from those concealed from me, if fortunately objects sufficiently interesting to my heart to divert it from others with which, in spite of myself, my imagination was filled, had not presented themselves. In the last visit Diderot paid me, at the Hermitage, he had spoken of the article 'Geneva', which D'Alembert had inserted in the 'Encyclopedie'; he had informed me that this article, concerted with people of the first consideration, had for object the establishment of a theatre at Geneva, that measures had been taken accordingly, and that the establishment would soon take place. As Diderot seemed to think all this very proper, and did not doubt of the success of the measure, and as I had besides to speak to him upon too many other subjects to touch upon that article, I made him no answer: but scandalized at these preparatives to corruption and licentiousness in my country, I waited with impatience for the volume of the 'Encyclopedie', in which the article was inserted; to see whether or not it would be possible to give an answer which might ward off the blow. I received the volume soon after my establishment at Mont Louis, and found the articles to be written with much art and address, and worthy of the pen whence it proceeded. This, however, did not abate my desire to answer it, and notwithstanding the dejection of spirits I then labored under, my griefs and pains, the severity of the season, and the inconvenience of my new abode, in which I had not yet had time

to arrange myself, I set to work with a zeal which surmounted every obstacle.

In a severe winter, in the month of February, and in the situation I have described, I went every day, morning and evening, to pass a couple of hours in an open alcove which was at the bottom of the garden in which my habitation stood. This alcove, which terminated an alley of a terrace, looked upon the valley and the pond of Montmorency, and presented to me, as the closing point of a prospect, the plain but respectable castle of St. Gratien, the retreat of the virtuous Catinat. It was in this place, then, exposed to freezing cold, that without being sheltered from the wind and snow, and having no other fire than that in my heart; I composed, in the space of three weeks, my letter to D'Alembert on theatres. It was in this, for my 'Eloisa' was not then half written, that I found charms in philosophical labor. Until then virtuous indignation had been a substitute to Apollo, tenderness and a gentleness of mind now became so. The injustice I had been witness to had irritated me, that of which I became the object rendered me melancholy; and this melancholy without bitterness was that of a heart too tender and affectionate, and which, deceived by those in whom it had confided, was obliged to remain concentrated. Full of that which had befallen me, and still affected by so many violent emotions, my heart added the sentiment of its sufferings to the ideas with which a meditation on my subject had inspired me; what I wrote bore evident marks of this mixture. Without perceiving it I described the situation I was then in, gave portraits of Grimm, Madam d'Epinay, Madam d'Houdetot, Saint Lambert and myself. What delicious tears did I shed as I wrote! Alas! in these descriptions there are proofs but too evident that love, the fatal love of which I made such efforts to cure myself, still remained in my heart. With all this there was a certain sentiment of tenderness relative to myself; I thought I was dying, and imagined I bid the public my last adieu. Far from fearing death, I joyfully saw it approach; but I felt some regret at leaving my fellow creatures without their having perceived my real merit, and being convinced how much I should have deserved their esteem had they known me better. These are the secret

causes of the singular manner in which this work, opposite to that of the work by which it was preceded, is written.—[Discours sur l'Inegalite. Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind.]

I corrected and copied the letter, and was preparing to print it when, after a long silence, I received one from Madam d'Houdetot, which brought upon me a new affliction more painful than any I had yet suffered. She informed me that my passion for her was known to all Paris, that I had spoken of it to persons who had made it public, that this rumor, having reached the ears of her lover, had nearly cost him his life; yet he did her justice, and peace was restored between them; but on his account, as well as on hers, and for the sake of her reputation, she thought it her duty to break off all correspondence with me, at the same time assuring me that she and her friend were both interested in my welfare, that they would defend me to the public, and that she herself would, from time to time, send to inquire after my health.

"And thou also, Diderot," exclaimed I, "unworthy friend!"

I could not, however, yet resolve to condemn him. My weakness was known to others who might have spoken of it. I wished to doubt, but this was soon out of my power. Saint Lambert shortly after performed an action worthy of himself. Knowing my manner of thinking, he judged of the state in which I must be; betrayed by one part of my friends and forsaken by the other. He came to see me. The first time he had not many moments to spare. He came again. Unfortunately, not expecting him, I was not at home. Theresa had with him a conversation of upwards of two hours, in which they informed each other of facts of great importance to us all. The surprise with which I learned that nobody doubted of my having lived with Madam d'Epinay, as Grimm then did, cannot be equalled, except by that of Saint Lambert, when he was convinced that the rumor was false. He, to the great dissatisfaction of the lady, was in the same situation with myself, and the eclairsissements resulting from the conversation removed from me all regret, on account of my having broken with her forever. Relative to Madam d'Houdetot, he mentioned several circumstances with which neither Theresa nor Madam d'Houdetot herself were acquainted; these were known to me only in the first

instance, and I had never mentioned them except to Diderot, under the seal of friendship; and it was to Saint Lambert himself to whom he had chosen to communicate them. This last step was sufficient to determine me. I resolved to break with Diderot forever, and this without further deliberation, except on the manner of doing it; for I had perceived secret ruptures turned to my prejudice, because they left the mask of friendship in possession of my most cruel enemies.

The rules of good breeding, established in the world on this head, seem to have been dictated by a spirit of treachery and falsehood. To appear the friend of a man when in reality we are no longer so, is to reserve to ourselves the means of doing him an injury by surprising honest men into an error. I recollected that when the illustrious Montesquieu broke with Father de Tournemine, he immediately said to everybody: "Listen neither to Father Tournemine nor myself, when we speak of each other, for we are no longer friends." This open and generous proceeding was universally applauded. I resolved to follow the example with Diderot; but what method was I to take to publish the rupture authentically from my retreat, and yet without scandal? I concluded on inserting in the form of a note, in my work, a passage from the book of Ecclesiasticus, which declared the rupture and even the subject of it, in terms sufficiently clear to such as were acquainted with the previous circumstances, but could signify nothing to the rest of the world. I determined not to speak in my work of the friend whom I renounced, except with the honor always due to extinguished friendship. The whole may be seen in the work itself.

There is nothing in this world but time and misfortune, and every act of courage seems to be a crime in adversity. For that which has been admired in Montesquieu, I received only blame and reproach. As soon as my work was printed, and I had copies of it, I sent one to Saint Lambert, who, the evening before, had written to me in his own name and that of Madam d' Houdetot, a note expressive of the most tender friendship.

The following is the letter he wrote to me when he returned the copy I had sent him.

EAUBONNE, 10th October, 1758.

Indeed, sir, I cannot accept the present you have just made me. In that part of your preface where, relative to Diderot, you quote a passage from Ecclesiastes (he mistakes, it is from Ecclesiasticus) the book dropped from my hand. In the conversations we had together in the summer, you seemed to be persuaded Diderot was not guilty of the pretended indiscretions you had imputed to him. You may, for aught I know to the contrary, have reason to complain of him, but this does not give you a right to insult him publicly. You are not unacquainted with the nature of the persecutions he suffers, and you join the voice of an old friend to that of envy. I cannot refrain from telling you, sir, how much this heinous act of yours has shocked me. I am not acquainted with Diderot, but I honor him, and I have a lively sense of the pain you give to a man, whom, at least not in my hearing, you have never reproached with anything more than a trifling weakness. You and I, sir, differ too much in our principles ever to be agreeable to each other. Forget that I exist; this you will easily do. I have never done to men either good or evil of a nature to be long remembered. I promise you, sir, to forget your person and to remember nothing relative to you but your talents.

This letter filled me with indignation and affliction; and, in the excess of my pangs, feeling my pride wounded, I answered him by the following note:

MONTMORENCY, 11th October, 1758.

SIR: While reading your letter, I did you the honor to be surprised at it, and had the weakness to suffer it to affect me; but I find it unworthy of an answer.

I will no longer continue the copies of Madam d'Houdetot. If it be not agreeable to her to keep that she has, she may send it me back and I will return her money. If she keeps it, she must still send for the rest of her paper and the money; and at the same time I beg she will return me the prospectus which she has in her possession. Adieu, sir.

Courage under misfortune irritates the hearts of cowards, but it is pleasing to generous minds. This note seemed to make Saint Lambert reflect with himself and to regret his having been so violent; but too haughty in his turn to make open advances, he seized and perhaps prepared, the opportunity of palliating what he had done.

A fortnight afterwards I received from Madam d'Epinay the following letter:

Thursday, 26th.

SIR: I received the book you had the goodness to send me, and which I have read with much pleasure. I have always experienced the same sentiment in reading all the works which have come from your pen. Receive my thanks for the whole. I should have returned you these in person had my affairs permitted me to remain any time in your neighborhood; but I was not this year long at the Chevette. M. and Madam Dupin come there on Sunday to dinner. I expect M. de Saint Lambert, M. de Francueil, and Madam d'Houdetot will be of the party; you will do me much pleasure by making one also. All the persons who are to dine with me, desire, and will, as well as myself, be delighted to pass with you a part of the day. I have the honor to be with the most perfect consideration, etc.

This letter made my heart beat violently; after having for a year past been the subject of conversation of all Paris, the idea of presenting myself as a spectacle before Madam d'Houdetot, made me tremble, and I had much difficulty to find sufficient courage to support that ceremony. Yet as she and Saint Lambert were desirous of it, and Madam d'Epinay spoke in the name of her guests without naming one whom I should not be glad to see, I did not think I should expose myself accepting a dinner to which I was in some degree invited by all the persons who with myself were to partake of it. I therefore promised to go: on Sunday the weather was bad, and Madam D'Epinay sent me her carriage.

My arrival caused a sensation. I never met a better reception. An observer would have thought the whole company felt how much I stood in need of encouragement. None but French hearts are susceptible of this kind of delicacy. However, I found more people than I expected to see. Amongst others the Comte d'Houdetot, whom I did not know, and his sister Madam de Blainville, without whose company I should have been as well pleased. She had the year before came several times to Eaubonne, and her sister-in-law had left her in our solitary walks to wait until she thought proper to suffer her to join us. She had harbored a resentment against me, which during this dinner she gratified at her ease. The presence of the Comte d'Houdetot and Saint Lambert did not give me the laugh on my side, and it may be judged that a man embarrassed in the most common conversations was not very brilliant in that which then took place.

I never suffered so much, appeared so awkward, or received more unexpected mortifications. As soon as we had risen from table, I withdrew from that wicked woman; I had the pleasure of seeing Saint Lambert and Madam d'Houdetot approach me, and we conversed together a part of the afternoon, upon things very indifferent it is true, but with the same familiarity as before my involuntary error. This friendly attention was not lost upon my heart, and could Saint Lambert have read what passed there, he certainly would have been satisfied with it. I can safely assert that although on my arrival the presence of Madam d'Houdetot gave me the most violent palpitations, on returning from the house I scarcely thought of her; my mind was entirely taken up with Saint Lambert.

Notwithstanding the malignant sarcasms of Madam de Blainville, the dinner was of great service to me, and I congratulated myself upon not having refused the invitation. I not only discovered that the intrigues of Grimm and the Holbachiens had not deprived me of my old acquaintance, but, what flattered me still more, that Madam d'Houdetot and Saint Lambert were less changed than I had imagined, and I at length understood that his keeping her at a distance from me proceeded more from jealousy than from disesteem.

[Such in the simplicity of my heart was my opinion when I wrote these confessions.]

This was a consolation to me, and calmed my mind. Certain of not being an object of contempt in the eyes of persons whom I esteemed, I worked upon my own heart with greater courage and success. If I did not quite extinguish in it a guilty and an unhappy passion, I at least so well regulated the remains of it that they have never since that moment led me into the most trifling error. The copies of Madam d' Houdetot, which she prevailed upon me to take again, and my works, which I continued to send her as soon as they appeared, produced me from her a few notes and messages, indifferent but obliging. She did still more, as will hereafter appear, and the reciprocal conduct of her lover and

myself, after our intercourse had ceased, may serve as an example of the manner in which persons of honor separate when it is no longer agreeable to them to associate with each other.

Another advantage this dinner procured me was its being spoken of in Paris, where it served as a refutation of the rumor spread by my enemies, that I had quarrelled with every person who partook of it, and especially with M. d'Epinay. When I left the Hermitage I had written him a very polite letter of thanks, to which he answered not less politely, and mutual civilities had continued, as well between us as between me and M. de la Lalive, his brother-in-law, who even came to see me at Montmorency, and sent me some of his engravings. Excepting the two sisters-in-law of Madam d'Houdetot, I have never been on bad terms with any person of the family.

My letter to D'Alembert had great success. All my works had been very well received, but this was more favorable to me. It taught the public to guard against the insinuations of the Coterie Holbachique. When I went to the Hermitage, this Coterie predicted with its usual sufficiency, that I should not remain there three months. When I had stayed there twenty months, and was obliged to leave it, I still fixed my residence in the country. The Coterie insisted this was from a motive of pure obstinacy, and that I was weary even to death of my retirement; but that, eaten up with pride, I chose rather to become a victim of my stubbornness than to recover from it and return to Paris. The letter to D'Alembert breathed a gentleness of mind which every one perceived not to be affected. Had I been dissatisfied with my retreat, my style and manner would have borne evident marks of my ill-humor. This reigned in all the works I had written in Paris; but in the first I wrote in the country not the least appearance of it was to be found. To persons who knew how to distinguish, this remark was decisive. They perceived I was returned to my element.

Yet the same work, notwithstanding all the mildness it breathed, made me by a mistake of my own and my usual ill-luck, another enemy amongst men of letters. I had become acquainted with Marmontel at the house of M. de la Popliniere, and his

acquaintance had been continued at that of the baron. Marmontel at that time wrote the 'Mercure de France'. As I had too much pride to send my works to the authors of periodical publications, and wishing to send him this without his imagining it was in consequence of that title, or being desirous he should speak of it in the Mercure, I wrote upon the book that it was not for the author of the Mercure, but for M. Marmontel. I thought I paid him a fine compliment; he mistook it for a cruel offence, and became my irreconcilable enemy. He wrote against the letter with politeness, it is true, but with a bitterness easily perceptible, and since that time has never lost an opportunity of injuring me in society, and of indirectly ill-treating me in his works. Such difficulty is there in managing the irritable self-love of men of letters, and so careful ought every person to be not to leave anything equivocal in the compliments they pay them.

Having nothing more to disturb me, I took advantage of my leisure and independence to continue my literary pursuits with more coherence. I this winter finished my *Eloisa*, and sent it to Rey, who had it printed the year following. I was, however, interrupted in my projects by a circumstance sufficiently disagreeable. I heard new preparations were making at the opera-house to give the '*Devin du Village*'. Enraged at seeing these people arrogantly dispose of my property, I again took up the memoir I had sent to M. D'Argenson, to which no answer had been returned, and having made some trifling alterations in it, I sent the manuscript by M. Sellon, resident from Geneva, and a letter with which he was pleased to charge himself, to the Comte de St. Florentin, who had succeeded M. D'Argenson in the opera department. Duclos, to whom I communicated what I had done, mentioned it to the '*petits violons*', who offered to restore me, not my opera, but my freedom of the theatre, which I was no longer in a situation to enjoy. Perceiving I had not from any quarter the least justice to expect, I gave up the affair; and the directors of the opera, without either answering or listening to my reasons, have continued to dispose as of their own property, and to turn to their profit, the *Devin du Village*, which incontestably belongs to nobody but myself.

Since I had shaken off the yoke of my tyrants, I led a life sufficiently agreeable and peaceful; deprived of the charm of too strong attachments I was delivered from the weight of their chains. Disgusted with the friends who pretended to be my protectors, and wished absolutely to dispose of me at will, and in spite of myself, to subject me to their pretended good services, I resolved in future to have no other connections than those of simple benevolence. These, without the least constraint upon liberty, constitute the pleasure of society, of which equality is the basis. I had of them as many as were necessary to enable me to taste of the charm of liberty without being subject to the dependence of it; and as soon as I had made an experiment of this manner of life, I felt it was the most proper to my age, to end my days in peace, far removed from the agitations, quarrels and cavillings in which I had just been half submerged.

During my residence at the Hermitage, and after my settlement at Montmorency, I had made in the neighborhood some agreeable acquaintance, and which did not subject me to any inconvenience. The principal of these was young Loyseau de Mauleon, who, then beginning to plead at the bar, did not yet know what rank he would one day hold there. I for my part was not in the least doubt about the matter. I soon pointed out to him the illustrious career in the midst of which he is now seen, and predicted that, if he laid down to himself rigid rules for the choice of causes, and never became the defender of anything but virtue and justice, his genius, elevated by this sublime sentiment, would be equal to that of the greatest orators. He followed my advice, and now feels the good effects of it. His defence of M. de Portes is worthy of Demosthenes. He came every year within a quarter of a league of the Hermitage to pass the vacation at St. Brice, in the fief of Mauleon, belonging to his mother, and where the great Bossuet had formerly lodged. This is a fief, of which a like succession of proprietors would render nobility difficult to support.

I had also for a neighbor in the same village of St. Brice, the bookseller Guerin, a man of wit, learning, of an amiable disposition, and one of the first in his profession. He brought me

acquainted with Jean Neaulme, bookseller of Amsterdam, his friend and correspondent, who afterwards printed *Emilius*.

I had another acquaintance still nearer than St. Brice, this was M. Maltor, vicar of Groslay, a man better adapted for the functions of a statesman and a minister, than for those of the vicar of a village, and to whom a diocese at least would have been given to govern if talents decided the disposal of places. He had been secretary to the Comte de Luc, and was formerly intimately acquainted with Jean Baptiste Rousseau. Holding in as much esteem the memory of that illustrious exile, as he held the villain who ruined him in horror; he possessed curious anecdotes of both, which Segur had not inserted in the life, still in manuscript, of the former, and he assured me that the Comte de Luc, far from ever having had reason to complain of his conduct, had until his last moment preserved for him the warmest friendship. M. Maltor, to whom M. de Vintimille gave this retreat after the death of his patron, had formerly been employed in many affairs of which, although far advanced in years, he still preserved a distinct remembrance, and reasoned upon them tolerably well. His conversation, equally amusing and instructive, had nothing in it resembling that of a village pastor: he joined the manners of a man of the world to the knowledge of one who passes his life in study. He, of all my permanent neighbors, was the person whose society was the most agreeable to me.

I was also acquainted at Montmorency with several fathers of the oratory, and amongst others Father Berthier, professor of natural philosophy; to whom, notwithstanding some little tincture of pedantry, I became attached on account of a certain air of cordial good nature which I observed in him. I had, however, some difficulty to reconcile this great simplicity with the desire and the art he had of everywhere thrusting himself into the company of the great, as well as that of the women, devotees, and philosophers. He knew how to accommodate himself to every one. I was greatly pleased with the man, and spoke of my satisfaction to all my other acquaintances. Apparently what I said of him came to his ear. He one day thanked me for having thought him a good-natured man. I observed something in his forced

smile which, in my eyes, totally changed his physiognomy, and which has since frequently occurred to my mind. I cannot better compare this smile than to that of Panurge purchasing the Sheep of Dindenaut. Our acquaintance had begun a little time after my arrival at the Hermitage, to which place he frequently came to see me. I was already settled at Montmorency when he left it to go and reside at Paris. He often saw Madam le Vasseur there. One day, when I least expected anything of the kind, he wrote to me in behalf of that woman, informing me that Grimm offered to maintain her, and to ask my permission to accept the offer. This I understood consisted in a pension of three hundred livres, and that Madam le Vasseur was to come and live at Deuil, between the Chevrette and Montmorency. I will not say what impression the application made on me. It would have been less surprising had Grimm had ten thousand livres a year, or any relation more easy to comprehend with that woman, and had not such a crime been made of my taking her to the country, where, as if she had become younger, he was now pleased to think of placing her. I perceived the good old lady had no other reason for asking my permission, which she might easily have done without, but the fear of losing what I already gave her, should I think ill of the step she took. Although this charity appeared to be very extraordinary, it did not strike me so much then as afterwards. But had I known even everything I have since discovered, I should still as readily have given my consent as I did and was obliged to do, unless I had exceeded the offer of M. Grimm. Father Berthier afterwards cured me a little of my opinion of his good nature and cordiality, with which I had so unthinkingly charged him.

This same Father Berthier was acquainted with two men, who, for what reason I know not, were to become so with me; there was but little similarity between their taste and mine. They were the children of Melchisedec, of whom neither the country nor the family was known, no more than, in all probability, the real name. They were Jansenists, and passed for priests in disguise, perhaps on account of their ridiculous manner of wearing long swords, to which they appeared to have been fastened. The prodigious mystery in all their proceedings gave them the appearance of the

heads of a party, and I never had the least doubt of their being the authors of the 'Gazette Ecclesiastique'. The one, tall, smooth-tongued, and sharping, was named Ferrand; the other, short, squat, a sneerer, and punctilious, was a M. Minard. They called each other cousin. They lodged at Paris with D'Alembert, in the house of his nurse named Madam Rousseau, and had taken at Montmorency a little apartment to pass the summers there. They did everything for themselves, and had neither a servant nor runner; each had his turn weekly to purchase provisions, do the business of the kitchen, and sweep the house. They managed tolerably well, and we sometimes ate with each other. I know not for what reason they gave themselves any concern about me: for my part, my only motive for beginning an acquaintance with them was their playing at chess, and to make a poor little party I suffered four hours' fatigue. As they thrust themselves into all companies, and wished to intermeddle in everything, Theresa called them the gossips, and by this name they were long known at Montmorency.

Such, with my host M. Mathas, who was a good man, were my principal country acquaintance. I still had a sufficient number at Paris to live there agreeably whenever I chose it, out of the sphere of men of letters, amongst whom Duclos, was the only friend I reckoned: for De Leyre was still too young, and although, after having been a witness to the manoeuvres of the philosophical tribe against me, he had withdrawn from it, at least I thought so, I could not yet forget the facility with which he made himself the mouthpiece of all the people of that description.

In the first place I had my old and respectable friend Roguin. This was a good old-fashioned friend for whom I was not indebted to my writings but to myself, and whom for that reason I have always preserved. I had the good Lenieps, my countryman, and his daughter, then alive, Madam Lambert. I had a young Genevese, named Coindet, a good creature, careful, officious, zealous, who came to see me soon after I had gone to reside at the Hermitage, and, without any other introducer than himself, had made his way into my good graces. He had a taste for drawing, and was acquainted with artists. He was of service to me relative

to the engravings of the New Eloisa; he undertook the direction of the drawings and the plates, and acquitted himself well of the commission.

I had free access to the house of M. Dupin, which, less brilliant than in the young days of Madam Dupin, was still, by the merit of the heads of the family, and the choice of company which assembled there, one of the best houses in Paris. As I had not preferred anybody to them, and had separated myself from their society to live free and independent, they had always received me in a friendly manner, and I was always certain of being well received by Madam Dupin. I might even have counted her amongst my country neighbors after her establishment at Clichy, to which place I sometimes went to pass a day or two, and where I should have been more frequently had Madam Dupin and Madam de Chenonceaux been upon better terms. But the difficulty of dividing my time in the same house between two women whose manner of thinking was unfavorable to each other, made this disagreeable: however I had the pleasure of seeing her more at my ease at Deuil, where, at a trifling distance from me, she had taken a small house, and even at my own habitation, where she often came to see me.

I had likewise for a friend Madam de Crequi, who, having become devout, no longer received D'Alembert, Marmontel, nor a single man of letters, except, I believe the Abbe Trublet, half a hypocrite, of whom she was weary. I, whose acquaintance she had sought, lost neither her good wishes nor intercourse. She sent me young fat pullets from Mons, and her intention was to come and see me the year following had not a journey, upon which Madam de Luxembourg determined, prevented her. I here owe her a place apart; she will always hold a distinguished one in my remembrance.

In this list I should also place a man whom, except Roguin, I ought to have mentioned as the first upon it; my old friend and brother politician, De Carrio, formerly titular secretary to the embassy from Spain to Venice, afterwards in Sweden, where he was charge des affaires, and at length really secretary to the embassy from Spain at Paris. He came and surprised me at

Montmorency when I least expected him. He was decorated with the insignia of a Spanish order, the name of which I have forgotten, with a fine cross in jewelry. He had been obliged, in his proofs of nobility, to add a letter to his name, and to bear that of the Chevalier de Carrion. I found him still the same man, possessing the same excellent heart, and his mind daily improving, and becoming more and more amiable. We would have renewed our former intimacy had not Coindet interposed according to custom, taken advantage of the distance I was at from town to insinuate himself into my place, and, in my name, into his confidence, and supplant me by the excess of his zeal to render me services.

The remembrance of Carrion makes me recollect one of my country neighbors, of whom I should be inexcusable not to speak, as I have to make confession of an unpardonable neglect of which I was guilty towards him: this was the honest M. le Blond, who had done me a service at Venice, and, having made an excursion to France with his family, had taken a house in the country, at Birche, not far from Montmorency.

[When I wrote this, full of my blind confidence, I was far from suspecting the real motive and the effect of his journey to Paris.]

As soon as I heard he was my neighbor, I, in the joy of my heart, and making it more a pleasure than a duty, went to pay him a visit. I set off upon this errand the next day. I was met by people who were coming to see me, and with whom I was obliged to return. Two days afterwards I set off again for the same purpose: he had dined at Paris with all his family. A third time he was at home: I heard the voice of women, and saw, at the door, a coach which alarmed me. I wished to see him, at least for the first time, quite at my ease, that we might talk over what had passed during our former connection.

In fine, I so often postponed my visit from day to day, that the shame of discharging a like duty so late prevented me from doing it at all; after having dared to wait so long, I no longer dared to present myself. This negligence, at which M. le Blond could not

but be justly offended, gave, relative to him, the appearance of ingratitude to my indolence, and yet I felt my heart so little culpable that, had it been in my power to do M. le Blond the least service, even unknown to himself, I am certain he would not have found me idle. But indolence, negligence and delay in little duties to be fulfilled have been more prejudicial to me than great vices. My greatest faults have been omissions: I have seldom done what I ought not to have done, and unfortunately it has still more rarely happened that I have done what I ought.

Since I am now upon the subject of my Venetian acquaintance, I must not forget one which I still preserved for a considerable time after my intercourse with the rest had ceased. This was M. de Joinville, who continued after his return from Genoa to show me much friendship. He was fond of seeing me and of conversing with me upon the affairs of Italy, and the follies of M. de Montaigu, of whom he of himself knew many anecdotes, by means of his acquaintance in the office for foreign affairs in which he was much connected. I had also the pleasure of seeing at my house my old comrade Dupont who had purchased a place in the province of which he was, and whose affairs had brought him to Paris. M. de Joinville became by degrees so desirous of seeing me, that he in some measure laid me under constraint; and, although our places of residence were at a great distance from each other, we had a friendly quarrel when I let a week pass without going to dine with him. When he went to Joinville he was always desirous of my accompanying him; but having once been there to pass a week I had not the least desire to return. M. de Joinville was certainly an honest man, and even amiable in certain respects but his understanding was beneath mediocrity; he was handsome, rather fond of his person and tolerably fatiguing. He had one of the most singular collections perhaps in the world, to which he gave much of his attention and endeavored to acquire it that of his friends, to whom it sometimes afforded less amusement than it did to himself. This was a complete collection of songs of the court and Paris for upwards of fifty years past, in which many anecdotes were to be found that would have been

sought for in vain elsewhere. These are memoirs for the history of France, which would scarcely be thought of in any other country.

One day, whilst we were still upon the very best terms, he received me so coldly and in a manner so different from that which was customary to him, that after having given him an opportunity to explain, and even having begged him to do it, I left his house with a resolution, in which I have persevered, never to return to it again; for I am seldom seen where I have been once ill received, and in this case there was no Diderot who pleaded for M. de Joinville. I vainly endeavored to discover what I had done to offend him; I could not recollect a circumstance at which he could possibly have taken offence. I was certain of never having spoken of him or his in any other than in the most honorable manner; for he had acquired my friendship, and besides my having nothing but favorable things to say of him, my most inviolable maxim has been that of never speaking but in an honorable manner of the houses I frequented.

At length, by continually ruminating. I formed the following conjecture: the last time we had seen each other, I had supped with him at the apartment of some girls of his acquaintance, in company with two or three clerks in the office of foreign affairs, very amiable men, and who had neither the manner nor appearance of libertines; and on my part, I can assert that the whole evening passed in making melancholy reflections on the wretched fate of the creatures with whom we were. I did not pay anything, as M. de Joinville gave the supper, nor did I make the girls the least present, because I gave them not the opportunity I had done to the padoana of establishing a claim to the trifle I might have offered. We all came away together, cheerfully and upon very good terms. Without having made a second visit to the girls, I went three or four days afterwards to dine with M. de Joinville, whom I had not seen during that interval, and who gave me the reception of which I have spoken. Unable to suppose any other cause for it than some misunderstanding relative to the supper, and perceiving he had no inclination to explain, I resolved to visit him no longer, but I still continued to send him my works: he frequently sent me his compliments, and one evening, meeting

him in the green-room of the French theatre, he obligingly reproached me with not having called to see him, which, however, did not induce me to depart from my resolution. Therefore this affair had rather the appearance of a coolness than a rupture. However, not having heard of nor seen him since that time, it would have been too late after an absence of several years, to renew my acquaintance with him. It is for this reason M. de Joinville is not named in my list, although I had for a considerable time frequented his house.

I will not swell my catalogue with the names of many other persons with whom I was or had become less intimate, although I sometimes saw them in the country, either at my own house or that of some neighbor, such for instance as the Abbes de Condillac and De Malby, MM. de Mairan, de Lalive, De Boisgelou, Vatelet, Ancelet, and others. I will also pass lightly over that of M. de Margency, gentleman in ordinary of the king, an ancient member of the 'Coterie Holbachique', which he had quitted as well as myself, and the old friend of Madam d'Epinay from whom he had separated as I had done; I likewise consider that of M. Desmahis, his friend, the celebrated but short-lived author of the comedy of the Impertinent, of much the same importance. The first was my neighbor in the country, his estate at Margency being near to Montmorency. We were old acquaintances, but the neighborhood and a certain conformity of experience connected us still more. The last died soon afterwards. He had merit and even wit, but he was in some degree the original of his comedy, and a little of a coxcomb with women, by whom he was not much regretted.

I cannot, however, omit taking notice of a new correspondence I entered into at this period, which has had too much influence over the rest of my life not to make it necessary for me to mark its origin. The person in question is De Lamoignon de Malesherbes of the 'Cour des aides', then censor of books, which office he exercised with equal intelligence and mildness, to the great satisfaction of men of letters. I had not once been to see him at Paris; yet I had never received from him any other than the most obliging condescensions relative to the censorship, and I knew

that he had more than once very severely reprimanded persons who had written against me. I had new proofs of his goodness upon the subject of the edition of *Eloisa*. The proofs of so great a work being very expensive from Amsterdam by post, he, to whom all letters were free, permitted these to be addressed to him, and sent them to me under the countersign of the chancellor his father. When the work was printed he did not permit the sale of it in the kingdom until, contrary to my wishes, an edition had been sold for my benefit. As the profit of this would on my part have been a theft committed upon Rey, to whom I had sold the manuscript, I not only refused to accept the present intended me, without his consent, which he very generously gave, but persisted upon dividing with him the hundred pistoles (a thousand livres—forty pounds), the amount of it but of which he would not receive anything. For these hundred pistoles I had the mortification, against which M. de Malesherbes had not guarded me, of seeing my work horribly mutilated, and the sale of the good edition stopped until the bad one was entirely disposed of.

I have always considered M. de Malesherbes as a man whose uprightness was proof against every temptation. Nothing that has happened has even made me doubt for a moment of his probity; but, as weak as he is polite, he sometimes injures those he wishes to serve by the excess of his zeal to preserve them from evil. He not only retrenched a hundred pages in the edition of Paris, but he made another retrenchment, which no person but the author could permit himself to do, in the copy of the good edition he sent to Madam de Pompadour. It is somewhere said in that work that the wife of a coal-heaver is more respectable than the mistress of a prince. This phrase had occurred to me in the warmth of composition without any application. In reading over the work I perceived it would be applied, yet in consequence of the very imprudent maxim I had adopted of not suppressing anything, on account of the application which might be made, when my conscience bore witness to me that I had not made them at the time I wrote, I determined not to expunge the phrase, and contented myself with substituting the word Prince to King, which I had first written. This softening did not seem sufficient to

M. de Malesherbes: he retrenched the whole expression in a new sheet which he had printed on purpose and stuck in between the other with as much exactness as possible in the copy of Madam de Pompadour. She was not ignorant of this manoeuvre. Some good-natured people took the trouble to inform her of it. For my part, it was not until a long time afterwards, and when I began to feel the consequences of it, that the matter came to my knowledge.

Is not this the origin of the concealed but implacable hatred of another lady who was in a like situation, without my knowing it, or even being acquainted with her person when I wrote the passage? When the book was published the acquaintance was made, and I was very uneasy. I mentioned this to the Chevalier de Lorenzy, who laughed at me, and said the lady was so little offended that she had not even taken notice of the matter. I believed him, perhaps rather too lightly, and made myself easy when there was much reason for my being otherwise.

1080

At the beginning of the winter I received an additional mark of the goodness of M. de Malesherbes of which I was very sensible, although I did not think proper to take advantage of it. A place was vacant in the 'Journal des Savans'. Margency wrote to me, proposing to me the place, as from himself. But I easily perceived from the manner of the letter that he was dictated to and authorized; he afterwards told me he had been desired to make me the offer. The occupations of this place were but trifling. All I should have had to do would have been to make two abstracts a month, from the books brought to me for that purpose, without being under the necessity of going once to Paris, not even to pay the magistrate a visit of thanks. By this employment I should have entered a society of men of letters of the first merit; M. de Mairan, Clairaut, De Guignes and the Abbe Barthelemi, with the first two of whom I had already made an acquaintance, and that of the two others was very desirable. In fine, for this trifling employment, the duties of which I might so commodiously have discharged, there was a salary of eight hundred livres (thirty-three pounds); I was for a few hours undecided, and this from a fear of making Margency angry and displeasing M. de Malesherbes. But

at length the insupportable constraint of not having it in my power to work when I thought proper, and to be commanded by time; and moreover the certainty of badly performing the functions with which I was to charge myself, prevailed over everything, and determined me to refuse a place for which I was unfit. I knew that my whole talent consisted in a certain warmth of mind with respect to the subjects of what I had to treat, and that nothing but the love of that which was great, beautiful and sublime, could animate my genius. What would the subjects of the extracts I should have had to make from books, or even the books themselves, have signified to me? My indifference about them would have frozen my pen, and stupefied my mind. People thought I could make a trade of writing, as most of the other men of letters did, instead of which I never could write but from the warmth of imagination. This certainly was not necessary for the 'Journal des Savans'. I therefore wrote to Margency a letter of thanks, in the politest terms possible, and so well explained to him my reasons, that it was not possible that either he or M. de Malesherbes could imagine there was pride or ill-humor in my refusal. They both approved of it without receiving me less politely, and the secret was so well kept that it was never known to the public.

The proposition did not come in a favorable moment. I had some time before this formed the project of quitting literature, and especially the trade of an author. I had been disgusted with men of letters by everything that had lately befallen me, and had learned from experience that it was impossible to proceed in the same track without having some connections with them. I was not much less dissatisfied with men of the world, and in general with the mixed life I had lately led, half to myself and half devoted to societies for which I was unfit. I felt more than ever, and by constant experience, that every unequal association is disadvantageous to the weaker person. Living with opulent people, and in a situation different from that I had chosen, without keeping a house as they did, I was obliged to imitate them in many things; and little expenses, which were nothing to their fortunes, were for me not less ruinous than indispensable.

Another man in the country-house of a friend, is served by his own servant, as well at table as in his chamber; he sends him to seek for everything he wants; having nothing directly to do with the servants of the house, not even seeing them, he gives them what he pleases, and when he thinks proper; but I, alone, and without a servant, was at the mercy of the servants of the house, of whom it was necessary to gain the good graces, that I might not have much to suffer; and being treated as the equal of their master, I was obliged to treat them accordingly, and better than another would have done, because, in fact, I stood in greater need of their services. This, where there are but few domestics, may be complied with; but in the houses I frequented there were a great number, and the knaves so well understood their interests that they knew how to make me want the services of them all successively. The women of Paris, who have so much wit, have no just idea of this inconvenience, and in their zeal to economize my purse they ruined me. If I supped in town, at any considerable distance from my lodgings, instead of permitting me to send for a hackney coach, the mistress of the house ordered her horses to be put to and sent me home in her carriage. She was very glad to save me the twenty-four sous (shilling) for the fiacre, but never thought of the half-crown I gave to her coachman and footman. If a lady wrote to me from Paris to the Hermitage or to Montmorency, she regretted the four sous (two pence) the postage of the letter would have cost me, and sent it by one of her servants, who came sweating on foot, and to whom I gave a dinner and half a crown, which he certainly had well earned. If she proposed to me to pass with her a week or a fortnight at her country-house, she still said to herself, "It will be a saving to the poor man; during that time his eating will cost him nothing." She never recollected that I was the whole time idle, that the expenses of my family, my rent, linen and clothes were still going on, that I paid my barber double that it cost me more being in her house than in my own, and although I confined my little largesses to the house in which I customarily lived, that these were still ruinous to me. I am certain I have paid upwards of twenty-five crowns in the house of Madam d'Houdetot, at Raubonne, where I never slept

more than four or five times, and upwards of a thousand livres (forty pounds) as well at Epinay as at the Chevrette, during the five or six years I was most assiduous there. These expenses are inevitable to a man like me, who knows not how to provide anything for himself, and cannot support the sight of a lackey who grumbles and serves him with a sour look. With Madam Dupin, even where I was one of the family, and in whose house I rendered many services to the servants, I never received theirs but for my money. In course of time it was necessary to renounce these little liberalities, which my situation no longer permitted me to bestow, and I felt still more severely the inconvenience of associating with people in a situation different from my own.

Had this manner of life been to my taste, I should have been consoled for a heavy expense, which I dedicated to my pleasures; but to ruin myself at the same time that I fatigued my mind, was insupportable, and I had so felt the weight of this, that, profiting by the interval of liberty I then had, I was determined to perpetuate it, and entirely to renounce great companies, the composition of books, and all literary concerns, and for the remainder of my days to confine myself to the narrow and peaceful sphere in which I felt I was born to move.

The produce of this letter to D'Alembert, and of the New Elosia, had a little improved the state of my finances, which had been considerably exhausted at the Hermitage. Emilius, to which, after I had finished Eloisa, I had given great application, was in forwardness, and the produce of this could not be less than the sum of which I was already in possession. I intended to place this money in such a manner as to produce me a little annual income, which, with my copying, might be sufficient to my wants without writing any more. I had two other works upon the stocks. The first of these was my 'Institutions Politiques'. I examined the state of this work, and found it required several years' labor. I had not courage enough to continue it, and to wait until it was finished before I carried my intentions into execution. Therefore, laying the book aside, I determined to take from it all I could, and to burn the rest; and continuing this with zeal without interrupting Emilius, I finished the 'Contrat Social'.

The dictionary of music now remained. This was mechanical, and might be taken up at any time; the object of it was entirely pecuniary. I reserved to myself the liberty of laying it aside, or of finishing it at my ease, according as my other resources collected should render this necessary or superfluous. With respect to the 'Morale Sensitive', of which I had made nothing more than a sketch, I entirely gave it up.

As my last project, if I found I could not entirely do without copying, was that of removing from Paris, where the affluence of my visitors rendered my housekeeping expensive, and deprived me of the time I should have turned to advantage to provide for it; to prevent in my retirement the state of lassitude into which an author is said to fall when he has laid down his pen, I reserved to myself an occupation which might fill up the void in my solitude without tempting me to print anything more. I know not for what reason they had long tormented me to write the memoirs of my life. Although these were not until that time interesting as to the facts, I felt they might become so by the candor with which I was capable of giving them, and I determined to make of these the only work of the kind, by an unexampled veracity, that, for once at least, the world might see a man such as he internally was. I had always laughed at the false ingenuousness of Montaigne, who, feigning to confess his faults, takes great care not to give himself any, except such as are amiable; whilst I, who have ever thought, and still think myself, considering everything, the best of men, felt there is no human being, however pure he may be, who does not internally conceal some odious vice. I knew I was described to the public very different from what I really was, and so opposite, that notwithstanding my faults, all of which I was determined to relate, I could not but be a gainer by showing myself in my proper colors. This, besides, not being to be done without setting forth others also in theirs and the work for the same reason not being of a nature to appear during my lifetime, and that of several other persons, I was the more encouraged to make my confession, at which I should never have to blush before any person. I therefore resolved to dedicate my leisure to the execution of this undertaking, and immediately began to collect

such letters and papers as might guide or assist my memory, greatly regretting the loss of all I had burned, mislaid and destroyed.

The project of absolute retirement, one of the most reasonable I had ever formed, was strongly impressed upon my mind, and for the execution of it I was already taking measures, when Heaven, which prepared me a different destiny, plunged me into a another vortex.

Montmorency, the ancient and fine patrimony of the illustrious family of that name, was taken from it by confiscation. It passed by the sister of Duke Henry, to the house of Conde, which has changed the name of Montmorency to that of Enguien, and the duchy has no other castle than an old tower, where the archives are kept, and to which the vassals come to do homage. But at Montmorency, or Enguien, there is a private house, built by Crosat, called 'le pauvre', which having the magnificence of the most superb chateaux, deserves and bears the name of a castle. The majestic appearance of this noble edifice, the view from it, not equalled perhaps in any country; the spacious saloon, painted by the hand of a master; the garden, planted by the celebrated Le Notre; all combined to form a whole strikingly majestic, in which there is still a simplicity that enforces admiration. The Marechal Duke de Luxembourg who then inhabited this house, came every year into the neighborhood where formerly his ancestors were the masters, to pass, at least, five or six weeks as a private inhabitant, but with a splendor which did not degenerate from the ancient lustre of his family. On the first journey he made to it after my residing at Montmorency, he and his lady sent to me a valet de chambre, with their compliments, inviting me to sup with them as often as it should be agreeable to me; and at each time of their coming they never failed to reiterate the same compliments and invitation. This called to my recollection Madam Beuzenval sending me to dine in the servants' hall. Times were changed; but I was still the same man. I did not choose to be sent to dine in the servants' hall, and was but little desirous of appearing at the table of the great; I should have been much better pleased had they left me as I was, without caressing me and rendering me ridiculous. I

answered politely and respectfully to Monsieur and Madam de Luxembourg, but I did not accept their offers, and my indisposition and timidity, with my embarrassment in speaking; making me tremble at the idea alone of appearing in an assembly of people of the court. I did not even go to the castle to pay a visit of thanks, although I sufficiently comprehended this was all they desired, and that their eager politeness was rather a matter of curiosity than benevolence.

However, advances still were made, and even became more pressing. The Countess de Boufflers, who was very intimate with the lady of the marechal, sent to inquire after my health, and to beg I would go and see her. I returned her a proper answer, but did not stir from my house. At the journey of Easter, the year following, 1759, the Chevalier de Lorenzy, who belonged to the court of the Prince of Conti, and was intimate with Madam de Luxembourg, came several times to see me, and we became acquainted; he pressed me to go to the castle, but I refused to comply. At length, one afternoon, when I least expected anything of the kind, I saw coming up to the house the Marechal de Luxembourg, followed by five or six persons. There was now no longer any means of defence; and I could not, without being arrogant and unmannerly, do otherwise than return this visit, and make my court to Madam la Marechale, from whom the marechal had been the bearer of the most obliging compliments to me. Thus, under unfortunate auspices, began the connections from which I could no longer preserve myself, although a too well-founded foresight made me afraid of them until they were made.

I was excessively afraid of Madam de Luxembourg. I knew she was amiable as to manner. I had seen her several times at the theatre, when she was Duchess of Boufflers, and in the bloom of her beauty; but she was said to be malignant; and this in a woman of her rank made me tremble. I had scarcely seen her before I was subjugated. I thought her charming, with that charm proof against time and which had the most powerful action upon my heart. I expected to find her conversation satirical and full of pleasantries and points. It was not so; it was much better. The conversation of Madam de Luxembourg is not remarkably full of wit; it has no

sallies, nor even finesse; it is exquisitely delicate, never striking, but always pleasing. Her flattery is the more intoxicating as it is natural; it seems to escape her involuntarily, and her heart to overflow because it is too full. I thought I perceived, on my first visit, that notwithstanding my awkward manner and embarrassed expression, I was not displeasing to her. All the women of the court know how to persuade us of this when they please, whether it be true or not, but they do not all, like Madam de Luxembourg, possess the art of rendering that persuasion so agreeable that we are no longer disposed ever to have a doubt remaining. From the first day my confidence in her would have been as full as it soon afterwards became, had not the Duchess of Montmorency, her daughter-in-law, young, giddy, and malicious also, taken it into her head to attack me, and in the midst of the eulogiums of her mamma, and feigned allurements on her own account, made me suspect I was only considered by them as a subject of ridicule.

It would perhaps have been difficult to relieve me from this fear with these two ladies had not the extreme goodness of the marechal confirmed me in the belief that theirs was not real. Nothing is more surprising, considering my timidity, than the promptitude with which I took him at his word on the footing of equality to which he would absolutely reduce himself with me, except it be that with which he took me at mine with respect to the absolute independence in which I was determined to live. Both persuaded I had reason to be content with my situation, and that I was unwilling to change it, neither he nor Madam de Luxembourg seemed to think a moment of my purse or fortune; although I can have no doubt of the tender concern they had for me, they never proposed to me a place nor offered me their interest, except it were once, when Madam de Luxembourg seemed to wish me to become a member of the French Academy. I alleged my religion; this she told me was no obstacle, or if it was one she engaged to remove it. I answered, that however great the honor of becoming a member of so illustrious a body might be, having refused M. de Tressan, and, in some measure, the King of Poland, to become a member of the Academy at Nancy, I could not with propriety enter into any other. Madam de Luxembourg

did not insist, and nothing more was said upon the subject. This simplicity of intercourse with persons of such rank, and who had the power of doing anything in my favor, M. de Luxembourg being, and highly deserving to be, the particular friend of the king, affords a singular contrast with the continual cares, equally importunate and officious, of the friends and protectors from whom I had just separated, and who endeavored less to serve me than to render me contemptible.

When the marechal came to see me at Mont Louis, I was uneasy at receiving him and his retinue in my only chamber; not because I was obliged to make them all sit down in the midst of my dirty plates and broken pots, but on account of the state of the floor, which was rotten and falling to ruin, and I was afraid the weight of his attendants would entirely sink it. Less concerned on account of my own danger than for that to which the affability of the marechal exposed him, I hastened to remove him from it by conducting him, notwithstanding the coldness of the weather, to my alcove, which was quite open to the air, and had no chimney. When he was there I told him my reason for having brought him to it; he told it to his lady, and they both pressed me to accept, until the floor was repaired, a lodging of the castle; or, if I preferred it, in a separate edifice called the Little Castle which was in the middle of the park. This delightful abode deserves to be spoken of.

The park or garden of Montmorency is not a plain, like that of the Chevrette. It is uneven, mountainous, raised by little hills and valleys, of which the able artist has taken advantage; and thereby varied his groves, ornaments, waters, and points of view, and, if I may so speak, multiplied by art and genius a space in itself rather narrow. This park is terminated at the top by a terrace and the castle; at bottom it forms a narrow passage which opens and becomes wider towards the valley, the angle of which is filled up with a large piece of water. Between the orangery, which is in this widening, and the piece of water, the banks of which are agreeably decorated, stands the Little Castle of which I have spoken. This edifice, and the ground about it, formerly belonged to the celebrated Le Brun, who amused himself in building and

decorating it in the exquisite taste of architectural ornaments which that great painter had formed to himself. The castle has since been rebuilt, but still, according to the plan and design of its first master. It is little and simple, but elegant. As it stands in a hollow between the orangery and the large piece of water, and consequently is liable to be damp, it is open in the middle by a peristyle between two rows of columns, by which means the air circulating throughout the whole edifice keeps it dry, notwithstanding its unfavorable situation. When the building is seen from the opposite elevation, which is a point of view, it appears absolutely surrounded with water, and we imagine we have before our eyes an enchanted island, or the most beautiful of the three Boromeans, called Isola Bella, in the greater lake.

In this solitary edifice I was offered the choice of four complete apartments it contains, besides the ground floor, consisting of a dancing room, billiard room and a kitchen. I chose the smallest over the kitchen, which also I had with it. It was charmingly neat, with blue and white furniture. In this profound and delicious solitude, in the midst of the woods, the singing of birds of every kind, and the perfume of orange flowers, I composed, in a continual ecstasy, the fifth book of Emilius, the coloring of which I owe in a great measure to the lively impression I received from the place I inhabited.

With what eagerness did I run every morning at sunrise to respire the perfumed air in the peristyle! What excellent coffee I took there *tete-a-tete* with my Theresa. My cat and dog were our company. This retinue alone would have been sufficient for me during my whole life, in which I should not have had one weary moment. I was there in a terrestrial paradise; I lived in innocence and tasted of happiness.

At the journey of July, M. and Madam de Luxembourg showed me so much attention, and were so extremely kind, that, lodged in their house, and overwhelmed with their goodness, I could not do less than make them a proper return in assiduous respect near their persons; I scarcely quitted them; I went in the morning to pay my court to Madam la Marechale; after dinner I walked with the marechal; but did not sup at the castle on account of the

numerous guests, and because they supped too late for me. Thus far everything was as it should be, and no harm would have been done could I have remained at this point. But I have never known how to preserve a medium in my attachments, and simply fulfil the duties of society. I have ever been everything or nothing. I was soon everything; and receiving the most polite attention from persons of the highest rank, I passed the proper bounds, and conceived for them a friendship not permitted except among equals. Of these I had all the familiarity in my manners, whilst they still preserved in theirs the same politeness to which they had accustomed me. Yet I was never quite at my ease with Madam de Luxembourg. Although I was not quite relieved from my fears relative to her character, I apprehended less danger from it than from her wit. It was by this especially that she impressed me with awe. I knew she was difficult as to conversation, and she had a right to be so. I knew women, especially those of her rank, would absolutely be amused, that it was better to offend than to weary them, and I judged by her commentaries upon what the people who went away had said what she must think of my blunders. I thought of an expedient to spare me with her the embarrassment of speaking; this was reading. She had heard of my *Eloisa*, and knew it was in the press; she expressed a desire to see the work; I offered to read it to her, and she accepted my offer. I went to her every morning at ten o'clock; M. de Luxembourg was present, and the door was shut. I read by the side of her bed, and so well proportioned my readings that there would have been sufficient for the whole time she had to stay, had they even not been interrupted.

[The loss of a great battle, which much afflicted the King, obliged M. de Luxembourg precipitately to return to court.]

The success of this expedient surpassed my expectation. Madam de Luxembourg took a great liking to Julia and the author; she spoke of nothing but me, thought of nothing else, said civil things to me from morning till night, and embraced me ten times a day. She insisted on me always having my place by her

side at table, and when any great lords wished it she told them it was mine, and made them sit down somewhere else. The impression these charming manners made upon me, who was subjugated by the least mark of affection, may easily be judged of. I became really attached to her in proportion to the attachment she showed me. All my fear in perceiving this infatuation, and feeling the want of agreeableness in myself to support it, was that it would be changed into disgust; and unfortunately this fear was but too well founded.

There must have been a natural opposition between her turn of mind and mine, since, independently of the numerous stupid things which at every instant escaped me in conversation, and even in my letters, and when I was upon the best terms with her, there were certain other things with which she was displeased without my being able to imagine the reason. I will quote one instance from among twenty. She knew I was writing for Madam d'Houdetot a copy of the New Eloisa. She was desirous to have one on the same footing. This I promised her, and thereby making her one of my customers, I wrote her a polite letter upon the subject, at least such was my intention. Her answer, which was as follows, stupefied me with surprise.

VERSAILLES, Tuesday.

I am ravished, I am satisfied: your letter has given me infinite pleasure, and I take the earliest moment to acquaint you with, and thank you for it.

These are the exact words of your letter: 'Although you are certainly a very good customer, I have some pain in receiving your money: according to regular order I ought to pay for the pleasure I should have in working for you.' I will say nothing more on the subject. I have to complain of your not speaking of your state of health: nothing interests me more. I love you with all my heart: and be assured that I write this to you in a very melancholy mood, for I should have much pleasure in telling it to you myself. M. de Luxembourg loves and embraces you with all his heart.

On receiving the letter I hastened to answer it, reserving to myself more fully to examine the matter, protesting against all disobliging interpretation, and after having given several days to this examination with an inquietude which may easily be

conceived, and still without being able to discover in what I could have erred, what follows was my final answer on the subject.

MONTMORENCY, 8th December, 1759.

Since my last letter I have examined a hundred times the passage in question. I have considered it in its proper and natural meaning, as well as in every other which may be given to it, and I confess to you, madam, that I know not whether it be I who owe to you excuses, or you from whom they are due to me.

It is now ten years since these letters were written. I have since that time frequently thought of the subject of them; and such is still my stupidity that I have hitherto been unable to discover what in the passages, quoted from my letter, she could find offensive, or even displeasing. 1100

I must here mention, relative to the manuscript copy of Eloisa Madam de Luxembourg wished to have, in what manner I thought to give it some marked advantage which should distinguish it from all others. I had written separately the adventures of Lord Edward, and had long been undetermined whether I should insert them wholly, or in extracts, in the work in which they seemed to be wanting. I at length determined to retrench them entirely, because, not being in the manner of the rest, they would have spoiled the interesting simplicity, which was its principal merit. I had still a stronger reason when I came to know Madam de Luxembourg: There was in these adventures a Roman marchioness, of a bad character, some parts of which, without being applicable, might have been applied to her by those to whom she was not particularly known. I was therefore, highly pleased with the determination to which I had come, and resolved to abide by it. But in the ardent desire to enrich her copy with something which was not in the other, what should I fall upon but these unfortunate adventures, and I concluded on making an extract from them to add to the work; a project dictated by madness, of which the extravagance is inexplicable, except by the blind fatality which led me on to destruction.

'Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementet.'

I was stupid enough to make this extract with the greatest care and pains, and to send it her as the finest thing in the world; it is true, I at the same time informed her the original was burned, which was really the case, that the extract was for her alone, and would never be seen, except by herself, unless she chose to show it; which, far from proving to her my prudence and discretion, as it was my intention to do, clearly intimated what I thought of the application by which she might be offended. My stupidity was such, that I had no doubt of her being delighted with what I had done. She did not make me the compliment upon it which I expected, and, to my great surprise, never once mentioned the paper I had sent her. I was so satisfied with myself, that it was not until a long time afterwards, I judged, from other indications, of the effect it had produced.

I had still, in favor of her manuscript, another idea more reasonable, but which, by more distant effects, has not been much less prejudicial to me; so much does everything concur with the work of destiny, when that hurries on a man to misfortune. I thought of ornamenting the manuscript with the engravings of the New Eloisa, which were of the same size. I asked Coindet for these engravings, which belonged to me by every kind of title, and the more so as I had given him the produce of the plates, which had a considerable sale. Coindet is as cunning as I am the contrary. By frequently asking him for the engravings he came to the knowledge of the use I intended to make of them. He then, under pretence of adding some new ornament, still kept them from me; and at length presented them himself.

'Ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores.'

This gave him an introduction upon a certain footing to the Hotel de Luxembourg. After my establishment at the little castle he came rather frequently to see me, and always in the morning, especially when M. and Madam de Luxembourg were at Montmorency. Therefore that I might pass the day with him, I did not go the castle. Reproaches were made me on account of my absence; I told the reason of them. I was desired to bring with me

M. Coindet; I did so. This was, what he had sought after. Therefore, thanks to the excessive goodness M. and Madam de Luxembourg had for me, a clerk to M. Thelusson, who was sometimes pleased to give him his table when he had nobody else to dine with him, was suddenly placed at that of a marechal of France, with princes, duchesses, and persons of the highest rank at court. I shall never forget, that one day being obliged to return early to Paris, the marechal said, after dinner, to the company, "Let us take a walk upon the road to St. Denis, and we will accompany M. Coindet." This was too much for the poor man; his head was quite turned. For my part, my heart was so affected that I could not say a word. I followed the company, weeping like a child, and having the strongest desire to kiss the foot of the good marechal; but the continuation of the history of the manuscript has made me anticipate. I will go a little back, and, as far as my memory will permit, mark each event in its proper order.

As soon as the little house of Mont Louis was ready, I had it neatly furnished and again established myself there. I could not break through the resolution I had made on quitting the Hermitage of always having my apartment to myself; but I found a difficulty in resolving to quit the little castle. I kept the key of it, and being delighted with the charming breakfasts of the peristyle, frequently went to the castle to sleep, and stayed three or four days as at a country-house. I was at that time perhaps better and more agreeably lodged than any private individual in Europe. My host, M. Mathas, one of the best men in the world, had left me the absolute direction of the repairs at Mont Louis, and insisted upon my disposing of his workmen without his interference. I therefore found the means of making of a single chamber upon the first story, a complete set of apartments consisting of a chamber, antechamber, and a water closet. Upon the ground-floor was the kitchen and the chamber of Theresa. The alcove served me for a closet by means of a glazed partition and a chimney I had made there. After my return to this habitation, I amused myself in decorating the terrace, which was already shaded by two rows of linden trees; I added two others to make a cabinet of verdure, and placed in it a table and stone benches: I surrounded it with lilies,

syringa and woodbines, and had a beautiful border of flowers parallel with the two rows of trees. This terrace, more elevated than that of the castle, from which the view was at least as fine, and where I had tamed a great number of birds, was my drawing-room, in which I received M. and Madam de Luxembourg, the Duke of Villeroy, the Prince of Tingry, the Marquis of Armentieres, the Duchess of Montmorency, the Duchess of Bouffiers, the Countess of Valentinois, the Countess of Boufflers, and other persons of the first rank; who, from the castle disdained not to make, over a very fatiguing mountain, the pilgrimage of Mont Louis. I owed all these visits to the favor of M. and Madam de Luxembourg; this I felt, and my heart on that account did them all due homage. It was with the same sentiment that I once said to M. de Luxembourg, embracing him: "Ah! Monsieur le Marechal, I hated the great before I knew you, and I have hated them still more since you have shown me with what ease they might acquire universal respect." Further than this I defy any person with whom I was then acquainted, to say I was ever dazzled for an instant with splendor, or that the vapor of the incense I received ever affected my head; that I was less uniform in my manner, less plain in my dress, less easy of access to people of the lowest rank, less familiar with neighbors, or less ready to render service to every person when I had it in my power so to do, without ever once being discouraged by the numerous and frequently unreasonable importunities with which I was incessantly assailed.

Although my heart led me to the castle of Montmorency, by my sincere attachment to those by whom it was inhabited, it by the same means drew me back to the neighborhood of it, there to taste the sweets of the equal and simple life, in which my only happiness consisted. Theresa had contracted a friendship with the daughter of one of my neighbors, a mason of the name of Pilleu; I did the same with the father, and after having dined at the castle, not without some constraint, to please Madam de Luxembourg, with what eagerness did I return in the evening to sup with the good man Pilleu and his family, sometimes at his own house and at others at mine.

Besides my two lodgings in the country, I soon had a third at the Hotel de Luxembourg, the proprietors of which pressed me so much to go and see them there, that I consented, notwithstanding my aversion to Paris, where, since my retiring to the Hermitage, I had been but twice, upon the two occasions of which I have spoken. I did not now go there except on the days agreed upon, solely to supper, and the next morning I returned to the country. I entered and came out by the garden which faces the boulevard, so that I could with the greatest truth, say I had not set my foot upon the stones of Paris.

In the midst of this transient prosperity, a catastrophe, which was to be the conclusion of it, was preparing at a distance. A short time after my return to Mont Louis, I made there, and as it was customary, against my inclination, a new acquaintance, which makes another era in my private history. Whether this be favorable or unfavorable, the reader will hereafter be able to judge. The person with whom I became acquainted was the Marchioness of Verdelin, my neighbor, whose husband had just bought a country-house at Soisy, near Montmorency. Mademoiselle d'Ars, daughter to the Comte d'Ars, a man of fashion, but poor, had married M. de Verdelin, old, ugly, deaf, uncouth, brutal, jealous, with gashes in his face, and blind of one eye, but, upon the whole, a good man when properly managed, and in possession of a fortune of from fifteen to twenty thousand a year. This charming object, swearing, roaring, scolding, storming, and making his wife cry all day long, ended by doing whatever she thought proper, and this to set her in a rage, because she knew how to persuade him that it was he who would, and she would not have it so. M. de Margency, of whom I have spoken, was the friend of madam, and became that of monsieur. He had a few years before let them his castle of Margency, near Eaubonne and Andilly, and they resided there precisely at the time of my passion for Madam d'Houdetot. Madam d'Houdetot and Madam de Verdelin became acquainted with each other, by means of Madam d'Aubeterre their common friend; and as the garden of Margency was in the road by which Madam d'Houdetot went to Mont Olympe, her favorite walk, Madam de Verdelin gave her a

key that she might pass through it. By means of this key I crossed it several times with her; but I did not like unexpected meetings, and when Madam de Verdelin was by chance upon our way I left them together without speaking to her, and went on before. This want of gallantry must have made on her an impression unfavorable to me. Yet when she was at Soisy she was anxious to have my company. She came several times to see me at Mont Louis, without finding me at home, and perceiving I did not return her visit, took it into her head, as a means of forcing me to do it, to send me pots of flowers for my terrace. I was under the necessity of going to thank her; this was all she wanted, and we thus became acquainted.

This connection, like every other I formed; or was led into contrary to my inclination, began rather boisterously. There never reigned in it a real calm. The turn of mind of Madam de Verdelin was too opposite to mine. Malignant expressions and pointed sarcasms came from her with so much simplicity, that a continual attention too fatiguing for me was necessary to perceive she was turning into ridicule the person to whom she spoke. One trivial circumstance which occurs to my recollection will be sufficient to give an idea of her manner. Her brother had just obtained the command of a frigate cruising against the English. I spoke of the manner of fitting out this frigate without diminishing its swiftness of sailing. "Yes," replied she, in the most natural tone of voice, "no more cannon are taken than are necessary for fighting." I seldom have heard her speak well of any of her absent friends without letting slip something to their prejudice. What she did not see with an evil eye she looked upon with one of ridicule, and her friend Margency was not excepted. What I found most insupportable in her was the perpetual constraint proceeding from her little messages, presents and billets, to which it was a labor for me to answer, and I had continual embarrassments either in thanking or refusing. However, by frequently seeing this lady I became attached to her. She had her troubles as well as I had mine. Reciprocal confidence rendered our conversations interesting. Nothing so cordially attaches two persons as the satisfaction of weeping together. We sought the company of each

other for our reciprocal consolation, and the want of this has frequently made me pass over many things. I had been so severe in my frankness with her, that after having sometimes shown so little esteem for her character, a great deal was necessary to be able to believe she could sincerely forgive me.

The following letter is a specimen of the epistles I sometimes wrote to her, and it is to be remarked that she never once in any of her answers to them seemed to be in the least degree piqued.

1110

MONTMORENCY, 5th November, 1760.

You tell me, madam, you have not well explained yourself, in order to make me understand I have explained myself ill. You speak of your pretended stupidity for the purpose of making me feel my own. You boast of being nothing more than a good kind of woman, as if you were afraid to being taken at your word, and you make me apologies to tell me I owe them to you. Yes, madam, I know it; it is I who am a fool, a good kind of man; and, if it be possible, worse than all this; it is I who make a bad choice of my expressions in the opinion of a fine French lady, who pays as much attention to words, and speaks as well as you do. But consider that I take them in the common meaning of the language without knowing or troubling my head about the polite acceptations in which they are taken in the virtuous societies of Paris. If my expressions are sometimes equivocal, I endeavored by my conduct to determine their meaning, etc.

The rest of the letter is much the same.

Coindet, enterprising, bold, even to effrontery, and who was upon the watch after all my friends, soon introduced himself in my name to the house of Madam de Verdelin, and, unknown to me, shortly became there more familiar than myself. This Coindet was an extraordinary man. He presented himself in my name in the houses of all my acquaintance, gained a footing in them, and ate there without ceremony. Transported with zeal to do me service, he never mentioned my name without his eyes being suffused with tears; but, when he came to see me, he kept the most profound silence on the subject of all these connections, and especially on that in which he knew I must be interested. Instead of telling me what he had heard, said, or seen, relative to my affairs, he waited for my speaking to him, and even interrogated me. He never knew anything of what passed in Paris, except that which I told him: finally, although everybody spoke to me of him,

he never once spoke to me of any person; he was secret and mysterious with his friend only; but I will for the present leave Coindet and Madam de Verdelin, and return to them at a proper time.

Sometime after my return to Mont Louis, La Tour, the painter, came to see me, and brought with him my portrait in crayons, which a few years before he had exhibited at the salon. He wished to give me this portrait, which I did not choose to accept. But Madam d'Epinay, who had given me hers, and would have had this, prevailed upon me to ask him for it. He had taken some time to retouch the features. In the interval happened my rupture with Madam d'Epinay; I returned her her portrait; and giving her mine being no longer in question, I put it into my chamber, in the castle. M. de Luxembourg saw it there, and found it a good one; I offered it him, he accepted it, and I sent it to the castle. He and his lady comprehended I should be very glad to have theirs. They had them taken in miniature by a very skilful hand, set in a box of rock crystal, mounted with gold, and in a very handsome manner, with which I was delighted, made me a present of both. Madam de Luxenbourg would never consent that her portrait should be on the upper part of the box. She had reproached me several times with loving M. de Luxembourg better than I did her; I had not denied it because it was true. By this manner of placing her portrait she showed very politely, but very clearly, she had not forgotten the preference.

Much about this time I was guilty of a folly which did not contribute to preserve me to her good graces. Although I had no knowledge of M. de Silhoutte, and was not much disposed to like him, I had a great opinion of his administration. When he began to let his hand fall rather heavily upon financiers, I perceived he did not begin his operation in a favorable moment, but he had my warmest wishes for his success; and as soon as I heard he was displaced I wrote to him, in my intrepid, heedless manner, the following letter, which I certainly do not undertake to justify.

MONTMORENCY, 2d December, 1759.

Vouchsafe, sir, to receive the homage of a solitary man, who is not known to you, but who esteems you for your talents, respects you for your administration, and who did you the honor to believe you would not long remain in it. Unable to save the State, except at the expense of the capital by which it has been ruined, you have braved the clamors of the gainers of money. When I saw you crush these wretches, I envied you your place; and at seeing you quit it without departing from your system, I admire you. Be satisfied with yourself, sir; the step you have taken will leave you an honor you will long enjoy without a competitor. The malediction of knaves is the glory of an honest man.

Madam de Luxembourg, who knew I had written this letter, spoke to me of it when she came into the country at Easter. I showed it to her and she was desirous of a copy; this I gave her, but when I did it I did not know she was interested in under-farms, and the displacing of M. de Silhoutte. By my numerous follies any person would have imagined I wilfully endeavored to bring on myself the hatred of an amiable woman who had power, and to whom, in truth, I daily became more attached, and was far from wishing to occasion her displeasure, although by my awkward manner of proceeding, I did everything proper for that purpose. I think it superfluous to remark here, that it is to her the history of the opiate of M. Tronchin, of which I have spoken in the first part of my memoirs, relates; the other lady was Madam de Mirepoix. They have never mentioned to me the circumstance, nor has either of them, in the least, seemed to have preserved a remembrance of it; but to presume that Madam de Luxembourg can possibly have forgotten it appears to me very difficult, and would still remain so, even were the subsequent events entirely unknown. For my part, I fell into a deceitful security relative to the effects of my stupid mistakes, by an internal evidence of my not having taken any step with an intention to offend; as if a woman could ever forgive what I had done, although she might be certain she had not the least part in the matter.

1114

Although she seemed not to see or feel anything, and that I did not immediately find either her warmth of friendship diminished or the least change in her manner, the continuation and even increase of a too well founded foreboding made me incessantly

tremble, lest disgust should succeed to infatuation. Was it possible for me to expect in a lady of such high rank, a constancy proof against my want of address to support it? I was unable to conceal from her this secret foreboding, which made me uneasy, and rendered me still more disagreeable. This will be judged of by the following letter, which contains a very singular prediction.

N. B. This letter, without date in my rough copy, was written in October, 1760, at latest.

How cruel is your goodness? Why disturb the peace of a solitary mortal who had renounced the pleasures of life, that he might no longer suffer the fatigues of them. I have passed my days in vainly searching for solid attachments. I have not been able to form any in the ranks to which I was equal; is it in yours that I ought to seek for them? Neither ambition nor interest can tempt me: I am not vain, but little fearful; I can resist everything except caresses. Why do you both attack me by a weakness which I must overcome, because in the distance by which we are separated, the over-flowings of susceptible hearts cannot bring mine near to you? Will gratitude be sufficient for a heart which knows not two manners of bestowing its affections, and feels itself incapable of everything except friendship? Of friendship, madam la marechale! Ah! there is my misfortune! It is good in you and the marechal to make use of this expression; but I am mad when I take you at your word. You amuse yourselves, and I become attached; and the end of this prepares for me new regrets. How I do hate all your titles, and pity you on account of your being obliged to bear them? You seem to me to be so worthy of tasting the charms of private life! Why do not you reside at Clarens? I would go there in search of happiness; but the castle of Montmorency, and the Hotel de Luxembourg! Is it in these places Jean Jacques ought to be seen? Is it there a friend to equality ought to carry the affections of a sensible heart, and who thus paying the esteem in which he is held, thinks he returns as much as he receives? You are good and susceptible also: this I know and have seen; I am sorry I was not sooner convinced of it; but in the rank you hold, in the manner of living, nothing can make a lasting impression; a succession of new objects efface each other so that not one of them remains. You will forget me, madam, after having made it impossible for me to imitate you. You have done a great deal to make me unhappy, to be inexcusable.

I joined with her the marechal, to render the compliment less severe; for I was moreover so sure of him, that I never had a doubt in my mind of the continuation of his friendship. Nothing that intimidated me in madam la marechale, ever for a moment extended to him. I never have had the least mistrust relative to his character, which I knew to be feeble, but constant. I no more feared a coldness on his part than I expected from him an heroic attachment. The simplicity and familiarity of our manners with

each other proved how far dependence was reciprocal. We were both always right: I shall ever honor and hold dear the memory of this worthy man, and, notwithstanding everything that was done to detach him from me, I am as certain of his having died my friend as if I had been present in his last moments.

At the second journey to Montmorency, in the year 1760, the reading of *Eloisa* being finished, I had recourse to that of *Emilius*, to support myself in the good graces of Madam de Luxembourg; but this, whether the subject was less to her taste; or that so much reading at length fatigued her, did not succeed so well. However, as she reproached me with suffering myself to be the dupe of booksellers, she wished me to leave to her care the printing the work, that I might reap from it a greater advantage. I consented to her doing it, on the express condition of its not being printed in France, on which we had long dispute; I affirming that it was impossible to obtain, and even imprudent to solicit, a tacit permission; and being unwilling to permit the impression upon any other terms in the kingdom; she, that the censor could not make the least difficulty, according to the system government had adopted. She found means to make M. de Malesherbes enter into her views. He wrote to me on the subject a long letter with his own hand, to prove the profession of faith of the Savoyard vicar to be a composition which must everywhere gain the approbation of its readers and that of the court, as things were then circumstanced. I was surprised to see this magistrate, always so prudent, become so smooth in the business, as the printing of a book was by that alone legal, I had no longer any objection to make to that of the work. Yet, by an extraordinary scruple, I still required it should be printed in Holland, and by the bookseller Neaulme, whom, not satisfied with indicating him, I informed of my wishes, consenting the edition should be brought out for the profit of a French bookseller, and that as soon as it was ready it should be sold at Paris, or wherever else it might be thought proper, as with this I had no manner of concern. This is exactly what was agreed upon between Madam de Luxembourg and myself, after which I gave her my manuscript.

Madam de Luxembourg was this time accompanied by her granddaughter Mademoiselle de Boufflers, now Duchess of Lauzun. Her name was Amelia. She was a charming girl. She really had a maiden beauty, mildness and timidity. Nothing could be more lovely than her person, nothing more chaste and tender than the sentiments she inspired. She was, besides, still a child under eleven years of age. Madam de Luxembourg, who thought her too timid, used every endeavor to animate her. She permitted me several times to give her a kiss, which I did with my usual awkwardness. Instead of saying flattering things to her, as any other person would have done, I remained silent and disconcerted, and I know not which of the two, the little girl or myself, was most ashamed.

I met her one day alone in the staircase of the little castle. She had been to see Theresa, with whom her governess still was. Not knowing what else to say, I proposed to her a kiss, which, in the innocence of her heart, she did not refuse; having in the morning received one from me by order of her grandmother, and in her presence. The next day, while reading Emilius by the side of the bed of Madam de Luxembourg, I came to a passage in which I justly censure that which I had done the preceding evening. She thought the reflection extremely just, and said some very sensible things upon the subject which made me blush. How was I enraged at my incredible stupidity, which has frequently given me the appearance of guilt when I was nothing more than a fool and embarrassed! A stupidity, which in a man known to be endowed with some wit, is considered as a false excuse. I can safely swear that in this kiss, as well as in the others, the heart and thoughts of Mademoiselle Amelia were not more pure than my own, and that if I could have avoided meeting her I should have done it; not that I had not great pleasure in seeing her, but from the embarrassment of not finding a word proper to say. Whence comes it that even a child can intimidate a man, whom the power of kings has never inspired with fear? What is to be done? How, without presence of mind, am I to act? If I strive to speak to the persons I meet, I certainly say some stupid thing to them; if I remain silent, I am a misanthrope, an unsociable animal, a bear. Total imbecility would

have been more favorable to me; but the talents which I have failed to improve in the world have become the instruments of my destruction, and of that of the talents I possessed.

At the latter end of this journey, Madam de Luxembourg did a good action in which I had some share. Diderot having very imprudently offended the Princess of Robeck, daughter of M. de Luxembourg, Palissot, whom she protected, took up the quarrel, and revenged her by the comedy of 'The Philosophers', in which I was ridiculed, and Diderot very roughly handled. The author treated me with more gentleness, less, I am of opinion, on account of the obligation he was under to me, than from the fear of displeasing the father of his protectress, by whom he knew I was beloved. The bookseller Duchesne, with whom I was not at that time acquainted, sent me the comedy when it was printed, and this I suspect was by the order of Palissot, who, perhaps, thought I should have a pleasure in seeing a man with whom I was no longer connected defamed. He was greatly deceived. When I broke with Diderot, whom I thought less ill-natured than weak and indiscreet, I still always preserved for his person an attachment, an esteem even, and a respect for our ancient friendship, which I know was for a long time as sincere on his part as on mine. The case was quite different with Grimm; a man false by nature, who never loved me, who is not even capable of friendship, and a person who, without the least subject of complaint, and solely to satisfy his gloomy jealousy, became, under the mask of friendship, my most cruel calumniator. This man is to me a cipher; the other will always be my old friend.

My very bowels yearned at the sight of this odious piece: the reading of it was insupportable to me, and, without going through the whole, I returned the copy to Duchesne with the following letter:

MONTMORENCY, 21st, May, 1760.

In casting my eyes over the piece you sent me, I trembled at seeing myself well spoken of in it. I do not accept the horrid present. I am persuaded that in sending it me, you did not intend an insult; but you do not know, or have forgotten, that I have the honor to be the friend of a respectable man, who is shamefully defamed and calumniated in this libel.

Duchense showed the letter. Diderot, upon whom it ought to have had an effect quite contrary, was vexed at it. His pride could not forgive me the superiority of a generous action, and I was informed his wife everywhere inveighed against me with a bitterness with which I was not in the least affected, as I knew she was known to everybody to be a noisy babbler.

Diderot in his turn found an avenger in the Abbe Morrellet, who wrote against Palissot a little work, imitated from the 'Petit Prophete', and entitled the Vision. In this production he very imprudently offended Madam de Robeck, whose friends got him sent to the Bastile; though she, not naturally vindictive, and at that time in a dying state, I am certain had nothing to do with the affair.

1124

D'Alembert, who was very intimately connected with Morrellet, wrote me a letter, desiring I would beg of Madam de Luxembourg to solicit his liberty, promising her in return encomiums in the 'Encyclopedie'; my answer to this letter was as follows:

I did not wait the receipt of your letter before I expressed to Madam de Luxembourg the pain the confinement of the Abbe Morrellet gave me. She knows my concern, and shall be made acquainted with yours, and her knowing that the abbe is a man of merit will be sufficient to make her interest herself in his behalf. However, although she and the marechal honor me with a benevolence which is my greatest consolation, and that the name of your friend be to them a recommendation in favor of the Abbe Morrellet, I know not how far, on this occasion, it may be proper for them to employ the credit attached to the rank they hold, and the consideration due to their persons. I am not even convinced that the vengeance in question relates to the Princess Robeck so much as you seem to imagine; and were this even the case, we must not suppose that the pleasure of vengeance belongs to philosophers exclusively, and that when they choose to become women, women will become philosophers.

I will communicate to you whatever Madam de Luxembourg may say to me after having shown her your letter. In the meantime, I think I know her well enough to assure you that, should she have the pleasure of contributing to the enlargement of the Abbe Morrellet, she will not accept the tribute of acknowledgment you promise her in the Encyclopedie, although she might think herself honored by it, because she does not do good in the expectation of praise, but from the dictates of her heart.

I made every effort to excite the zeal and commiseration of Madam de Luxembourg in favor of the poor captive, and succeeded to my wishes. She went to Versailles on purpose to speak to M. de St. Florentin, and this journey shortened the residence at Montmorency, which the marechal was obliged to quit at the same time to go to Rouen, whither the king sent him as governor of Normandy, on account of the motions of the parliament, which government wished to keep within bounds. Madam de Luxembourg wrote me the following letter the day after her departure:

VERSAILLES, Wednesday.

M. de Luxembourg set off yesterday morning at six o'clock. I do not yet know that I shall follow him. I wait until he writes to me, as he is not yet certain of the stay it will be necessary for him to make. I have seen M. de St. Florentin, who is as favorably disposed as possible towards the Abbe Morrellet; but he finds some obstacles to his wishes which however, he is in hopes of removing the first time he has to do business with the king, which will be next week. I have also desired as a favor that he might not be exiled, because this was intended; he was to be sent to Nancy. This, sir, is what I have been able to obtain; but I promise you I will not let M. de St. Florentin rest until the affair is terminated in the manner you desire. Let me now express to you how sorry I am on account of my being obliged to leave you so soon, of which I flatter myself you have not the least doubt. I love you with all my heart, and shall do so for my whole life.

A few days afterwards I received the following note from D'Alembert, which gave me real joy.

August 1st.

Thanks to your cares, my dear philosopher, the abbe has left the Bastile, and his imprisonment will have no other consequence. He is setting off for the country, and, as well as myself, returns you a thousand thanks and compliments. 'Vale et me ama.'

The abbe also wrote to me a few days afterwards a letter of thanks, which did not, in my opinion, seem to breathe a certain effusion of the heart, and in which he seemed in some measure to extenuate the service I had rendered him. Some time afterwards, I found that he and D'Alembert had, to a certain degree, I will not say supplanted, but succeeded me in the good graces of Madam

de Luxembourg, and that I had lost in them all they had gained. However, I am far from suspecting the Abbe Morrellet of having contributed to my disgrace; I have too much esteem for him to harbor any such suspicion. With respect to D'Alembert, I shall at present leave him out of the question, and hereafter say of him what may seem necessary.

I had, at the same time, another affair which occasioned the last letter I wrote to Voltaire; a letter against which he vehemently exclaimed, as an abominable insult, although he never showed it to any person. I will here supply the want of that which he refused to do.

1129

The Abbe Trublet, with whom I had a slight acquaintance, but whom I had but seldom seen, wrote to me on the 13th of June, 1760, informing me that M. Formey, his friend and correspondent, had printed in his journal my letter to Voltaire upon the disaster at Lisbon. The abbe wished to know how the letter came to be printed, and in his jesuitical manner, asked me my opinion, without giving me his own on the necessity of reprinting it. As I most sovereignly hate this kind of artifice and strategem, I returned such thanks as were proper, but in a manner so reserved as to make him feel it, although this did not prevent him from wheedling me in two or three other letters until he had gathered all he wished to know.

I clearly understood that, notwithstanding all Trublet could say, Formey had not found the letter printed, and that the first impression of it came from himself. I knew him to be an impudent pilferer, who, without ceremony, made himself a revenue by the works of others. Although he had not yet had the incredible effrontery to take from a book already published the name of the author, to put his own in the place of it, and to sell the book for his own profit.

[In this manner he afterwards appropriated to himself *Emilius*.]

But by what means had this manuscript fallen into his hands? That was a question not easy to resolve, but by which I had the weakness to be embarrassed. Although Voltaire was excessively

honored by the letter, as in fact, notwithstanding his rude proceedings, he would have had a right to complain had I had it printed without his consent, I resolved to write to him upon the subject. The second letter was as follows, to which he returned no answer, and giving greater scope to his brutality, he feigned to be irritated to fury.

MONTMORENCY, 17th June, 1760.

I did not think, sir, I should ever have occasion to correspond with you. But learning the letter I wrote to you in 1756 had been printed at Berlin, I owe you an account of my conduct in that respect, and will fulfil this duty with truth and simplicity.

The letter having really been addressed to you was not intended to be printed. I communicated the contents of it, on certain conditions, to three persons, to whom the right of friendship did not permit me to refuse anything of the kind, and whom the same rights still less permitted to abuse my confidence by betraying their promise. These persons are Madam de Chenonceaux, daughter-in-law to Madam Dupin, the Comtesse d'Houdetot, and a German of the name of Grimm. Madam de Chenonceaux was desirous the letter should be printed, and asked my consent. I told her that depended upon yours. This was asked of you which you refused, and the matter dropped.

However, the Abbe Trublet, with whom I have not the least connection, has just written to me from a motive of the most polite attention that having received the papers of the journal of M. Formey, he found in them this same letter with an advertisement, dated on the 23d of October, 1759, in which the editor states that he had a few weeks before found it in the shops of the booksellers of Berlin, and, as it is one of those loose sheets which shortly disappear, he thought proper to give it a place in his journal.

This, sir, is all I know of the matter. It is certain the letter had not until lately been heard of at Paris. It is also as certain that the copy, either in manuscript or print, fallen into the hands of M. de Formey, could never have reached them except by your means (which is not probable) or of those of one of the three persons I have mentioned. Finally, it is well known the two ladies are incapable of such a perfidy. I cannot, in my retirement learn more relative to the affair. You have a correspondence by means of which you may, if you think it worth the trouble, go back to the source and verify the fact.

In the same letter the Abbe Trublet informs me that he keeps the paper in reserve, and will not lend it without my consent, which most assuredly I will not give. But it is possible this copy may not be the only one in Paris. I wish, sir, the letter may not be printed there, and I will do all in my power to prevent this from happening; but if I cannot succeed, and that, timely perceiving it, I can have the preference, I will not then hesitate to have it immediately printed. This to me appears just and natural.

With respect to your answer to the same letter, it has not been communicated to

with respect to your answer to the same letter, it has not been communicated to anyone, and you may be assured it shall not be printed without your consent, which I certainly shall not be indiscreet enough to ask of you, well knowing that what one man writes to another is not written to the public. But should you choose to write one you wish to have published, and address it to me, I promise you faithfully to add to it my letter and not to make to it a single word of reply.

I love you not, sir; you have done me, your disciple and enthusiastic admirer; injuries which might have caused me the most exquisite pain. You have ruined Geneva, in return for the asylum it has afforded you; you have alienated from me my fellow-citizens, in return for eulogiums I made of you amongst them; it is you who render to me the residence of my own country insupportable; it is you who will oblige me to die in a foreign land, deprived of all the consolations usually administered to a dying person; and cause me, instead of receiving funeral rites, to be thrown to the dogs, whilst all the honors a man can expect will accompany you in my country. Finally I hate you because you have been desirous I should; but I hate you as a man more worthy of loving you had you chosen it. Of all the sentiments with which my heart was penetrated for you, admiration, which cannot be refused your fine genius, and a partiality to your writings, are those you have not effaced. If I can honor nothing in you except your talents, the fault is not mine. I shall never be wanting in the respect due to them, nor in that which this respect requires.

In the midst of these little literary cavillings, which still fortified my resolution, I received the greatest honor letters ever acquired me, and of which I was the most sensible, in the two visits the Prince of Conti deigned to make to me, one at the Little Castle and the other at Mont Louis. He chose the time for both of these when M. de Luxembourg was not at Montmorency, in order to render it more manifest that he came there solely on my account. I have never had a doubt of my owing the first condescensions of this prince to Madam de Luxembourg and Madam de Boufflers; but I am of opinion I owe to his own sentiments and to myself those with which he has since that time continually honored me.

[Remark the perseverance of this blind and stupid confidence in the midst of all the treatment which should soonest have undeceived me. It continued until my return to Paris in 1770.]

My apartments at Mont Louis being small, and the situation of the alcove charming, I conducted the prince to it, where, to complete the condescension he was pleased to show me, he chose

I should have the honor of playing with him a game of chess. I knew he beat the Chevalier de Lorenzy, who played better than I did. However, notwithstanding the signs and grimace of the chevalier and the spectators, which I feigned not to see, I won the two games we played: When they were ended, I said to him in a respectful but very grave manner: "My lord, I honor your serene highness too much not to beat you always at chess." This great prince, who had real wit, sense, and knowledge, and so was worthy not to be treated with mean adulation, felt in fact, at least I think so, that I was the only person present who treated him like a man, and I have every reason to believe he was not displeased with me for it.

Had this even been the case, I should not have reproached myself with having been unwilling to deceive him in anything, and I certainly cannot do it with having in my heart made an ill return for his goodness, but solely with having sometimes done it with an ill grace, whilst he himself accompanied with infinite gracefulness the manner in which he showed me the marks of it. A few days afterwards he ordered a hamper of game to be sent me, which I received as I ought. This in a little time was succeeded by another, and one of his gamekeepers wrote me, by order of his highness, that the game it contained had been shot by the prince himself. I received this second hamper, but I wrote to Madam de Boufflers that I would not receive a third. This letter was generally blamed, and deservedly so. Refusing to accept presents of game from a prince of the blood, who moreover sends it in so polite a manner, is less the delicacy of a haughty man, who wishes to preserve his independence, than the rusticity of a clown, who does not know himself. I have never read this letter in my collection without blushing and reproaching myself for having written it. But I have not undertaken my Confession with an intention of concealing my faults, and that of which I have just spoken is too shocking in my own eyes to suffer me to pass it over in silence.

If I were not guilty of the offence of becoming his rival I was very near doing it; for Madam de Boufflers was still his mistress, and I knew nothing of the matter. She came rather frequently to

see me with the Chevalier de Lorenzy. She was yet young and beautiful, affected to be whimsical, and my mind was always romantic, which was much of the same nature. I was near being laid hold of; I believe she perceived it; the chevalier saw it also, at least he spoke to me upon the subject, and in a manner not discouraging. But I was this time reasonable, and at the age of fifty it was time I should be so. Full of the doctrine I had just preached to graybeards in my letter to D'Alembert, I should have been ashamed of not profiting by it myself; besides, coming to the knowledge of that of which I had been ignorant, I must have been mad to have carried my pretensions so far as to expose myself to such an illustrious rivalry. Finally, ill cured perhaps of my passion for Madam de Houdetot, I felt nothing could replace it in my heart, and I bade adieu to love for the rest of my life. I have this moment just withstood the dangerous allurements of a young woman who had her views; and if she feigned to forget my twelve lustres I remember them. After having thus withdrawn myself from danger, I am no longer afraid of a fall, and I answer for myself for the rest of my days.

Madam de Boufflers, perceiving the emotion she caused in me, might also observe I had triumphed over it. I am neither mad nor vain enough to believe I was at my age capable of inspiring her with the same feelings; but, from certain words which she let drop to Theresa, I thought I had inspired her with a curiosity; if this be the case, and that she has not forgiven me the disappointment she met with, it must be confessed I was born to be the victim of my weaknesses, since triumphant love was so prejudicial to me, and love triumphed over not less so.

Here finishes the collection of letters which has served me as a guide in the last two books. My steps will in future be directed by memory only; but this is of such a nature, relative to the period to which I am now come, and the strong impression of objects has remained so perfectly upon my mind, that lost in the immense sea of my misfortunes, I cannot forget the detail of my first shipwreck, although the consequences present to me but a confused remembrance. I therefore shall be able to proceed in the

succeeding book with sufficient confidence. If I go further it will be groping in the dark.

BOOK XI

Although *Eloisa*, which for a long time had been in the press, did not yet, at the end of the year, 1760, appear, the work already began to make a great noise. Madam de Luxembourg had spoken of it at court, and Madam de Houdetot at Paris. The latter had obtained from me permission for Saint Lambert to read the manuscript to the King of Poland, who had been delighted with it. Duclos, to whom I had also given the perusal of the work, had spoken of it at the academy. All Paris was impatient to see the novel; the booksellers of the Rue Saint Jacques, and that of the Palais Royal, were beset with people who came to inquire when it was to be published. It was at length brought out, and the success it had, answered, contrary to custom, to the impatience with which it had been expected. The dauphiness, who was one of the first who read it, spoke of it to M. de Luxembourg as a ravishing performance. The opinions of men of letters differed from each other, but in those of any other class approbation was general, especially with the women, who became so intoxicated with the book and the author, that there was not one in high life with whom I might not have succeeded had I undertaken to do it. Of this I have such proofs as I will not commit to paper, and which without the aid of experience, authorized my opinion. It is singular that the book should have succeeded better in France than in the rest of Europe, although the French, both men and women, are severely treated in it. Contrary to my expectation it was least successful in Switzerland, and most so in Paris. Do friendship, love and virtue reign in this capital more than elsewhere? Certainly not; but there reigns in it an exquisite sensibility which transports the heart to their image, and makes us cherish in others the pure, tender and virtuous sentiments we no longer possess. Corruption is everywhere the same; virtue and morality no longer exist in Europe; but if the least love of them

still remains, it is in Paris that this will be found.—[I wrote this in 1769.]

In the midst of so many prejudices and feigned passions, the real sentiments of nature are not to be distinguished from others, unless we well know to analyze the human heart. A very nice discrimination, not to be acquired except by the education of the world, is necessary to feel the finesses of the heart, if I dare use the expression, with which this work abounds. I do not hesitate to place the fourth part of it upon an equality with the *Princess of Cleves*; nor to assert that had these two works been read nowhere but in the provinces, their merit would never have been discovered. It must not, therefore, be considered as a matter of astonishment, that the greatest success of my work was at court. It abounds with lively but veiled touches of the pencil, which could not but give pleasure there, because the persons who frequent it are more accustomed than others to discover them. A distinction must, however, be made. The work is by no means proper for the species of men of wit who have nothing but cunning, who possess no other kind of discernment than that which penetrates evil, and see nothing where good only is to be found. If, for instance, *Eloisa* had been published in a certain country, I am convinced it would not have been read through by a single person, and the work would have been stifled in its birth.

I have collected most of the letters written to me on the subject of this publication, and deposited them, tied up together, in the hands of Madam de Nadillac. Should this collection ever be given to the world, very singular things will be seen, and an opposition of opinion, which shows what it is to have to do with the public. The thing least kept in view, and which will ever distinguish it from every other work, is the simplicity of the subject and the continuation of the interest, which, confined to three persons, is kept up throughout six volumes, without episode, romantic adventure, or anything malicious either in the persons or actions. Diderot complimented Richardson on the prodigious variety of his portraits and the multiplicity of his persons. In fact, Richardson has the merit of having well characterized them all; but with respect to their number, he has that in common with the

most insipid writers of novels who attempt to make up for the sterility of their ideas by multiplying persons and adventures. It is easy to awaken the attention by incessantly presenting unheard of adventures and new faces, which pass before the imagination as the figures in a magic lanthorn do before the eye; but to keep up that attention to the same objects, and without the aid of the wonderful, is certainly more difficult; and if, everything else being equal, the simplicity of the subject adds to the beauty of the work, the novels of Richardson, superior in so many other respects, cannot in this be compared to mine. I know it is already forgotten, and the cause of its being so; but it will be taken up again. All my fear was that, by an extreme simplicity, the narrative would be fatiguing, and that it was not sufficiently interesting to engage the attention throughout the whole. I was relieved from this apprehension by a circumstance which alone was more flattering to my pride than all the compliments made me upon the work.

It appeared at the beginning of the carnival; a hawker carried it to the Princess of Talmont—[It was not the princess, but some other lady, whose name I do not know.]—on the evening of a ball night at the opera. After supper the Princess dressed herself for the ball, and until the hour of going there, took up the new novel. At midnight she ordered the horses to be put into the carriage, and continued to read. The servant returned to tell her the horses were put to; she made no answer. Her people perceiving she forgot herself, came to tell her it was two o'clock. "There is yet no hurry," replied the princess, still reading on. Some time afterwards, her watch having stopped, she rang to know the hour. She was told it was four o'clock. "That being the case," she said, "it is too late to go to the ball; let the horses be taken off." She undressed herself and passed the rest of the night in reading.

Ever since I came to the knowledge of this circumstance, I have had a constant desire to see the lady, not only to know from herself whether or not what I have related be exactly true, but because I have always thought it impossible to be interested in so lively a manner in the happiness of Julia, without having that sixth and moral sense with which so few hearts are endowed, and

without which no person whatever can understand the sentiments of mine.

What rendered the women so favorable to me was, their being persuaded that I had written my own history, and was myself the hero of the romance. This opinion was so firmly established, that Madam de Polignac wrote to Madam de Verdelin, begging she would prevail upon me to show her the portrait of Julia. Everybody thought it was impossible so strongly to express sentiments without having felt them, or thus to describe the transports of love, unless immediately from the feelings of the heart. This was true, and I certainly wrote the novel during the time my imagination was inflamed to ecstasy; but they who thought real objects necessary to this effect were deceived, and far from conceiving to what a degree I can at will produce it for imaginary beings. Without Madam d'Houdetot, and the recollection of a few circumstances in my youth, the amours I have felt and described would have been with fairy nymphs. I was unwilling either to confirm or destroy an error which was advantageous to me. The reader may see in the preface a dialogue, which I had printed separately, in what manner I left the public in suspense. Rigorous people say, I ought to have explicitly declared the truth. For my part I see no reason for this, nor anything that could oblige me to it, and am of opinion there would have been more folly than candor in the declaration without necessity.

Much about the same time the 'Paix Perpetuelle' made its appearance, of this I had the year before given the manuscript to a certain M. de Bastide, the author of a journal called *Le Monde*, into which he would at all events cram all my manuscripts. He was known to M. Duclos, and came in his name to beg I would help him to fill the *Monde*. He had heard speak of *Eloisa*, and would have me put this into his journal; he was also desirous of making the same use of *Emilius*; he would have asked me for the *Social Contract* for the same purpose, had he suspected it to be written. At length, fatigued with his importunities, I resolved upon letting him have the *Paix Perpetuelle*, which I gave him for twelve louis. Our agreement was, that he should print it in his

journal; but as soon as he became the proprietor of the manuscript, he thought proper to print it separately, with a few retrenchments, which the censor required him to make. What would have happened had I joined to the work my opinion of it, which fortunately I did not communicate to M. de Bastide, nor was it comprehended in our agreement? This remains still in manuscript amongst my papers. If ever it be made public, the world will see how much the pleasantries and self-sufficient manner of M. de Voltaire on the subject must have made me, who was so well acquainted with the short-sightedness of this poor man in political matters, of which he took it into his head to speak, shake my sides with laughter.

In the midst of my success with the women and the public, I felt I lost ground at the Hotel de Luxembourg, not with the marechal, whose goodness to me seemed daily to increase, but with his lady. Since I had had nothing more to read to her, the door of her apartment was not so frequently open to me, and during her stay at Montmorency, although I regularly presented myself, I seldom saw her except at table. My place even there was not distinctly marked out as usual. As she no longer offered me that by her side, and spoke to me but seldom, not having on my part much to say to her, I was well satisfied with another, where I was more at my ease, especially in the evening; for I mechanically contracted the habit of placing myself nearer and nearer to the marechal.

Apropos of the evening: I recollect having said I did not sup at the castle, and this was true, at the beginning of my acquaintance there; but as M. de Luxembourg did not dine, nor even sit down to table, it happened that I was for several months, and already very familiar in the family, without ever having eaten with him. This he had the goodness to remark, upon which I determined to sup there from time to time, when the company was not numerous; I did so, and found the suppers very agreeable, as the dinners were taken almost standing; whereas the former were long, everybody remaining seated with pleasure after a long walk; and very good and agreeable, because M. de Luxembourg loved good eating, and the honors of them were done in a charming

manner by madam de marechale. Without this explanation it would be difficult to understand the end of a letter from M. de Luxembourg, in which he says he recollects our walks with the greatest pleasure; especially, adds he, when in the evening we entered the court and did not find there the traces of carriages. The rake being every morning drawn over the gravel to efface the marks left by the coach wheels, I judged by the number of ruts of that of the persons who had arrived in the afternoon.

This year, 1761, completed the heavy losses this good man had suffered since I had had the honor of being known to him. As if it had been ordained that the evils prepared for me by destiny should begin by the man to whom I was most attached, and who was the most worthy of esteem. The first year he lost his sister, the Duchess of Villeroy; the second, his daughter, the Princess of Robeck; the third, he lost in the Duke of Montmorency his only son; and in the Comte de Luxembourg, his grandson, the last two supporters of the branch of which he was, and of his name. He supported all these losses with apparent courage, but his heart incessantly bled in secret during the rest of his life, and his health was ever after upon the decline. The unexpected and tragical death of his son must have afflicted him the more, as it happened immediately after the king had granted him for his child, and given him the promise for his grandson, the reversion of the commission he himself then held of the captain of the Gardes de Corps. He had the mortification to see the last, a most promising young man, perish by degrees from the blind confidence of the mother in the physician, who giving the unhappy youth medicines for food, suffered him to die of inanition. Alas! had my advice been taken, the grandfather and the grandson would both still have been alive. What did not I say and write to the marechal, what remonstrances did I make to Madam de Montmorency, upon the more than severe regimen, which, upon the faith of physicians, she made her son observe! Madam de Luxembourg, who thought as I did, would not usurp the authority of the mother; M. de Luxembourg, a man of mild and easy character, did not like to contradict her. Madam de Montmorency had in Borden a confidence to which her son at length became a victim. How

delighted was the poor creature when he could obtain permission to come to Mont Louis with Madam de Boufflers, to ask Theresa for some victuals for his famished stomach! How did I secretly deplore the miseries of greatness in seeing this only heir to a immense fortune, a great name, and so many dignified titles, devour with the greediness of a beggar a wretched morsel of bread! At length, notwithstanding all I could say and do, the physician triumphed, and the child died of hunger.

The same confidence in quacks, which destroyed the grandson, hastened the dissolution of the grandfather, and to this he added the pusillanimity of wishing to dissimulate the infirmities of age. M. de Luxembourg had at intervals a pain in the great toe; he was seized with it at Montmorency, which deprived him of sleep, and brought on slight fever. I had courage enough to pronounce the word gout. Madam de Luxembourg gave me a reprimand. The surgeon, valet de chambre of the marechal, maintained it was not the gout, and dressed the suffering part with beaume tranquille. Unfortunately the pain subsided, and when it returned the same remedy was had recourse to. The constitution of the marechal was weakened, and his disorder increased, as did his remedies in the same proportion. Madam de Luxembourg, who at length perceived the primary disorder to be the gout, objected to the dangerous manner of treating it. Things were afterwards concealed from her, and M. de Luxembourg in a few years lost his life in consequence of his obstinate adherence to what he imagined to be a method of cure. But let me not anticipate misfortune: how many others have I to relate before I come to this!

It is singular with what fatality everything I could say and do seemed of a nature to displease Madam de Luxembourg, even when I had it most at heart to preserve her friendship. The repeated afflictions which fell upon M. de Luxembourg still attached me to him the more, and consequently to Madam de Luxembourg; for they always seemed to me to be so sincerely united, that the sentiments in favor of the one necessarily extended to the other. The marechal grew old. His assiduity at court, the cares this brought on, continually hunting, fatigue, and

especially that of the service during the quarter he was in waiting, required the vigor of a young man, and I did not perceive anything that could support his in that course of life; since, besides after his death, his dignities were to be dispersed and his name extinct, it was by no means necessary for him to continue a laborious life of which the principal object had been to dispose the prince favorably to his children. One day when we three were together, and he complained of the fatigues of the court, as a man who had been discouraged by his losses, I took the liberty to speak of retirement, and to give him the advice Cyneas gave to Pyrrhus. He sighed, and returned no positive answer. But the moment Madam de Luxembourg found me alone she reprimanded me severely for what I had said, at which she seemed to be alarmed. She made a remark of which I so strongly felt the justness that I determined never again to touch upon the subject: this was, that the long habit of living at court made that life necessary, that it was become a matter of amusement for M. de Luxembourg, and that the retirement I proposed to him would be less a relaxation from care than an exile, in which inactivity, weariness and melancholy would soon put an end to his existence. Although she must have perceived I was convinced, and ought to have relied upon the promise I made her, and which I faithfully kept, she still seemed to doubt of it; and I recollect that the conversations I afterwards had with the marechal were less frequent and almost always interrupted.

Whilst my stupidity and awkwardness injured me in her opinion, persons whom she frequently saw and most loved, were far from being disposed to aid me in gaining what I had lost. The Abbe de Boufflers especially, a young man as lofty as it was possible for a man to be, never seemed well disposed towards me; and besides his being the only person of the society of Madam de Luxembourg who never showed me the least attention, I thought I perceived I lost something with her every time he came to the castle. It is true that without his wishing this to be the case, his presence alone was sufficient to produce the effect; so much did his graceful and elegant manner render still more dull my stupid propositions. During the first two years he seldom came to

Montmorency, and by the indulgence of Madam de Luxembourg I had tolerably supported myself, but as soon as his visits began to be regular I was irretrievably lost. I wished to take refuge under his wing, and gain his friendship; but the same awkwardness which made it necessary I should please him prevented me from succeeding in the attempt I made to do it, and what I did with that intention entirely lost me with Madam de Luxembourg, without being of the least service to me with the abbe. With his understanding he might have succeeded in anything, but the impossibility of applying himself, and his turn for dissipation, prevented his acquiring a perfect knowledge of any subject. His talents are however various, and this is sufficient for the circles in which he wishes to distinguish himself. He writes light poetry and fashionable letters, strums on the cithern, and pretends to draw with crayon. He took it into his head to attempt the portrait of Madam de Luxembourg; the sketch he produced was horrid. She said it did not in the least resemble her and this was true. The traitorous abbe consulted me, and I like a fool and a liar, said there was a likeness. I wished to flatter the abbe, but I did not please the lady who noted down what I had said, and the abbe, having obtained what he wanted, laughed at me in his turn. I perceived by the ill success of this my late beginning the necessity of making another attempt to flatter '*invita Minerva*'.

My talent was that of telling men useful but severe truths with energy and courage; to this it was necessary to confine myself. Not only I was not born to flatter, but I knew not how to commend. The awkwardness of the manner in which I have sometimes bestowed eulogium has done me more harm than the severity of my censure. Of this I have to adduce one terrible instance, the consequences of which have not only fixed my fate for the rest of my life, but will perhaps decide on my reputation throughout all posterity.

During the residence of M. de Luxembourg at Montmorency, M. de Choiseul sometimes came to supper at the castle. He arrived there one day after I had left it. My name was mentioned, and M. de Luxembourg related to him what had happened at Venice between me and M. de Montaigu. M. de Choiseul said it

was a pity I had quitted that track, and that if I chose to enter it again he would most willingly give me employment. M. de Luxembourg told me what had passed. Of this I was the more sensible as I was not accustomed to be spoiled by ministers, and had I been in a better state of health it is not certain that I should not have been guilty of a new folly. Ambition never had power over my mind except during the short intervals in which every other passion left me at liberty; but one of these intervals would have been sufficient to determine me. This good intention of M. de Choiseul gained him my attachment and increased the esteem which, in consequence of some operations in his administration, I had conceived for his talents; and the family compact in particular had appeared to me to evince a statesman of the first order. He moreover gained ground in my estimation by the little respect I entertained for his predecessors, not even excepting Madam de Pompadour, whom I considered as a species of prime minister, and when it was reported that one of these two would expel the other, I thought I offered up prayers for the honor of France when I wished that M. de Choiseul might triumph. I had always felt an antipathy to Madam de Pompadour, even before her preferment; I had seen her with Madam de la Popliniere when her name was still Madam d'Etioles. I was afterwards dissatisfied with her silence on the subject of Diderot, and with her proceedings relative to myself, as well on the subject of the 'Muses Galantes', as on that of the 'Devin du Village', which had not in any manner produced me advantages proportioned to its success; and on all occasions I had found her but little disposed to serve me. This however did not prevent the Chevalier de Lorenzy from proposing to me to write something in praise of that lady, insinuating that I might acquire some advantage by it. The proposition excited my indignation, the more as I perceived it did not come from himself, knowing that, passive as he was, he thought and acted according to the impulsion he received. I am so little accustomed to constraint that it was impossible for me to conceal from him my disdain, nor from anybody the moderate opinion I had of the favorite; this I am sure she knew, and thus my own interest was added to my natural inclination in the wishes I

formed for M. de Choiseul. Having a great esteem for his talents, which was all I knew of him, full of gratitude for his kind intentions, and moreover unacquainted in my retirement with his taste and manner of living, I already considered him as the avenger of the public and myself; and being at that time writing the conclusion of my Social Contract, I stated in it, in a single passage, what I thought of preceding ministers, and of him by whom they began to be eclipsed. On this occasion I acted contrary to my most constant maxim; and besides, I did not recollect that, in bestowing praise and strongly censuring in the same article, without naming the persons, the language must be so appropriated to those to whom it is applicable, that the most ticklish pride cannot find in it the least thing equivocal. I was in this respect in such an imprudent security, that I never once thought it was possible any one should make a false application. It will soon appear whether or not I was right.

One of my misfortunes was always to be connected with some female author. This I thought I might avoid amongst the great. I was deceived; it still pursued me. Madam de Luxembourg was not, however; at least that I know of, attacked with the mania of writing; but Madam de Boufflers was. She wrote a tragedy in prose, which, in the first place, was read, handed about, and highly spoken of in the society of the Prince Conti, and upon which, not satisfied with the encomiums she received, she would absolutely consult me for the purpose of having mine. This she obtained, but with that moderation which the work deserved. She besides had with it the information I thought it my duty to give her, that her piece, entitled 'L'Esclave Genereux', greatly resembled the English tragedy of 'Oroonoko', but little known in France, although translated into the French language. Madam de Boufflers thanked me for the remark, but, however, assured me there was not the least resemblance between her piece and the other. I never spoke of the plagiarisms except to herself, and I did it to discharge a duty she had imposed on me; but this has not since prevented me from frequently recollecting the consequences of the sincerity of Gil Blas to the preaching archbishop.

Besides the Abbe de Bouffiers, by whom I was not beloved, and Madam de Bouffiers, in whose opinion I was guilty of that which neither women nor authors ever pardon, the other friends of Madam de Luxembourg never seemed much disposed to become mine, particularly the President Henault, who, enrolled amongst authors, was not exempt from their weaknesses; also Madam du Deffand, and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, both intimate with Voltaire and the friends of D'Alembert, with whom the latter at length lived, however upon an honorable footing, for it cannot be understood I mean otherwise. I first began to interest myself for Madam du Deffand, whom the loss of her eyes made an object of commiseration in mine; but her manner of living so contrary to my own, that her hour of going to bed was almost mine for rising; her unbounded passion for low wit, the importance she gave to every kind of printed trash, either complimentary or abusive, the despotism and transports of her oracles, her excessive admiration or dislike of everything, which did not permit her to speak upon any subject without convulsions, her inconceivable prejudices, invincible obstinacy, and the enthusiasm of folly to which this carried her in her passionate judgments; all disgusted me and diminished the attention I wished to pay her. I neglected her and she perceived it; this was enough to set her in a rage, and, although I was sufficiently aware how much a woman of her character was to be feared, I preferred exposing myself to the scourge of her hatred rather than to that of her friendship.

My having so few friends in the society of Madam de Luxembourg would not have been in the least dangerous had I had no enemies in the family. Of these I had but one, who, in my then situation, was as powerful as a hundred. It certainly was not M. de Villeroy, her brother; for he not only came to see me, but had several times invited me to Villeroy; and as I had answered to the invitation with all possible politeness and respect, he had taken my vague manner of doing it as a consent, and arranged with Madam de Luxembourg a journey of a fortnight, in which it was proposed to me to make one of the party. As the cares my health then required did not permit me to go from home without

risk, I prayed Madam de Luxembourg to have the goodness to make my apologies. Her answer proves this was done with all possible ease, and M. de Villeroy still continued to show me his usual marks of goodness. His nephew and heir, the young Marquis of Villeroy, had not for me the same benevolence, nor had I for him the respect I had for his uncle. His harebrained manner rendered him insupportable to me, and my coldness drew upon me his aversion. He insultingly attacked me one evening at table, and I had the worst of it because I am a fool, without presence of mind; and because anger, instead of rendering my wit more poignant, deprives me of the little I have. I had a dog which had been given me when he was quite young, soon after my arrival at the Hermitage, and which I had called Duke. This dog, not handsome, but rare of his kind, of which I had made my companion and friend, a title which he certainly merited much more than most of the persons by whom it was taken, became in great request at the castle of Montmorency for his good nature and fondness, and the attachment we had for each other; but from a foolish pusillanimity I had changed his name to Turk, as if there were not many dogs called Marquis, without giving the least offence to any marquis whatsoever. The Marquis of Villeroy, who knew of the change of name, attacked me in such a manner that I was obliged openly at table to relate what I had done. Whatever there might be offensive in the name of duke, it was not in my having given but in my having taken it away. The worst of it all was, there were many dukes present, amongst others M. de Luxembourg and his son; and the Marquis de Villeroy, who was one day to have, and now has the title, enjoyed in the most cruel manner the embarrassment into which he had thrown me. I was told the next day his aunt had severely reprimanded him, and it may be judged whether or not, supposing her to have been serious, this put me upon better terms with him.

To enable me to support his enmity I had no person, neither at the Hotel de Luxembourg nor at the Temple, except the Chevalier de Lorenzy, who professed himself my friend; but he was more that of D'Alembert, under whose protection he passed with women for a great geometrician. He was moreover the cicisbeo,

or rather the complaisant chevalier of the Countess of Boufflers, a great friend also to D'Alembert, and the Chevalier de Lorenzy was the most passive instrument in her hands. Thus, far from having in that circle any counter-balance to my inaptitude, to keep me in the good graces of Madam de Luxembourg, everybody who approached her seemed to concur in injuring me in her good opinion. Yet, besides Emilius, with which she charged herself, she gave me at the same time another mark of her benevolence, which made me imagine that, although wearied with my conversation, she would still preserve for me the friendship she had so many times promised me for life.

As soon as I thought I could depend upon this, I began to ease my heart, by confessing to her all my faults, having made it an inviolable maxim to show myself to my friends such as I really was, neither better nor worse. I had declared to her my connection with Theresa, and everything that had resulted from it, without concealing the manner in which I had disposed of my children. She had received my confessions favorably, and even too much so, since she spared me the censures I so much merited; and what made the greatest impression upon me was her goodness to Theresa, making her presents, sending for her, and begging her to come and see her, receiving her with caresses, and often embracing her in public. This poor girl was in transports of joy and gratitude, of which I certainly partook; the friendship Madam de Luxembourg showed me in her condescensions to Theresa affected me much more than if they had been made immediately to myself.

Things remained in this state for a considerable time; but at length Madam de Luxembourg carried her goodness so far as to have a desire to take one of my children from the hospital. She knew I had put a cipher into the swaddling clothes of the eldest; she asked me for the counterpart of the cipher, and I gave it to her. In this research she employed La Roche, her valet de chambre and confidential servant, who made vain inquiries, although after only about twelve or fourteen years, had the registers of the foundling hospital been in order, or the search properly made, the original cipher ought to have been found. However this may be, I

was less sorry for his want of success than I should have been had I from time to time continued to see the child from its birth until that moment. If by the aid of the indications given, another child had been presented as my own, the doubt of its being so in fact, and the fear of having one thus substituted for it, would have contracted my affections, and I should not have tasted of the charm of the real sentiment of nature. This during infancy stands in need of being supported by habit. The long absence of a child whom the father has seen but for an instant, weakens, and at length annihilates paternal sentiment, and parents will never love a child sent to nurse, like that which is brought up under their eyes. This reflection may extenuate my faults in their effects, but it must aggravate them in their source.

It may not perhaps be useless to remark that by the means of Theresa, the same La Roche became acquainted with Madam le Vasseur, whom Grimm still kept at Deuil, near La Chevrette, and not far from Montmorency.

After my departure it was by means of La Roche that I continued to send this woman the money I had constantly sent her at stated times, and I am of opinion he often carried her presents from Madam de Luxembourg; therefore she certainly was not to be pitied, although she constantly complained. With respect to Grimm, as I am not fond of speaking of persons whom I ought to hate, I never mentioned his name to Madam de Luxembourg, except when I could not avoid it; but she frequently made him the subject of conversation, without telling me what she thought of the man, or letting me discover whether or not he was of her acquaintance. Reserve with people I love and who are open with me being contrary to my nature, especially in things relating to themselves, I have since that time frequently thought of that of Madam de Luxembourg; but never, except when other events rendered the recollection natural.

Having waited a long time without hearing speak of Emilius, after I had given it to Madam de Luxembourg, I at last heard the agreement was made at Paris, with the bookseller Duchesne, and by him with Neaulme, of Amsterdam. Madam de Luxembourg sent me the original and the duplicate of my agreement with

Duchesne, that I might sign them. I discovered the writing to be by the same hand as that of the letters of M. de Malesherbes, which he himself did not write. The certainty that my agreement was made by the consent, and under the eye of that magistrate, made me sign without hesitation. Duchesne gave me for the manuscript six thousand livres (two hundred and fifty pounds), half in specie, and one or two hundred copies. After having signed the two parts, I sent them both to Madam de Luxembourg, according to her desire; she gave one to Duchesne, and instead of returning the other kept it herself, so that I never saw it afterwards.

My acquaintance with M. and Madam de Luxembourg, though it diverted me a little from my plan of retirement, did not make me entirely renounce it. Even at the time I was most in favor with Madam de Luxembourg, I always felt that nothing but my sincere attachment to the marechal and herself could render to me supportable the people with whom they were connected, and all the difficulty I had was in conciliating this attachment with a manner of life more agreeable to my inclination, and less contrary to my health, which constraint and late suppers continually deranged, notwithstanding all the care taken to prevent it; for in this, as in everything else, attention was carried as far as possible; thus, for instance, every evening after supper the marechal, who went early to bed, never failed, notwithstanding everything that could be said to the contrary, to make me withdraw at the same time. It was not until some little time before my catastrophe that, for what reason I know not, he ceased to pay me that attention. Before I perceived the coolness of Madam de Luxembourg, I was desirous, that I might not expose myself to it, to execute my old project; but not having the means to that effect, I was obliged to wait for the conclusion of the agreement for 'Emilius', and in the time I finished the 'Social Contract', and sent it to Rey, fixing the price of the manuscript at a thousand livres (forty-one pounds), which he paid me.

I ought not perhaps to omit a trifling circumstance relative to this manuscript. I gave it, well sealed up, to Du Voisin, a minister in the pays de Vaud and chaplain at the Hotel de Hollande, who

sometimes came to see me, and took upon himself to send the packet to Rey, with whom he was connected. The manuscript, written in a small letter, was but very trifling, and did not fill his pocket. Yet, in passing the barriere, the packet fell, I know not by what means, into the hands of the Commis, who opened and examined it, and afterwards returned it to him, when he had reclaimed it in the name of the ambassador. This gave him an opportunity of reading it himself, which he ingeniously wrote me he had done, speaking highly of the work, without suffering a word of criticism or censure to escape him; undoubtedly reserving to himself to become the avenger of Christianity as soon as the work should appear. He resealed the packet and sent it to Rey. Such is the substance of his narrative in the letter in which he gave an account of the affair, and is all I ever knew of the matter.

Besides these two books and my dictionary of music, at which I still did something as opportunity offered, I had other works of less importance ready to make their appearance, and which I proposed to publish either separately or in my general collection, should I ever undertake it. The principal of these works, most of which are still in manuscript in the hands of De Peyrou, was an essay on the origin of Languages, which I had read to M. de Malesherbes and the Chevalier de Lorenzy, who spoke favorably of it. I expected all the productions together would produce me a net capital of from eight to ten thousand livres (three to four hundred pounds), which I intended to sink in annuities for my life and that of Theresa; after which, our design, as I have already mentioned, was to go and live together in the midst of some province, without further troubling the public about me, or myself with any other project than that of peacefully ending my days and still continuing to do in my neighborhood all the good in my power, and to write at leisure the memoirs which I intended.

Such was my intention, and the execution of it was facilitated by an act of generosity in Rey, upon which I cannot be silent. This bookseller, of whom so many unfavorable things were told me in Paris, is, notwithstanding, the only one with whom I have always had reason to be satisfied. It is true, we frequently disagreed as to the execution of my works. He was heedless and I was choleric;

but in matters of interest which related to them, although I never made with him an agreement in form, I always found in him great exactness and probity. He is also the only person of his profession who frankly confessed to me he gained largely by my means; and he frequently, when he offered me a part of his fortune, told me I was the author of it all. Not finding the means of exercising his gratitude immediately upon myself, he wished at least to give me proofs of it in the person of my governante, upon whom he settled an annuity of three hundred livres (twelve pounds), expressing in the deed that it was an acknowledgment for the advantages I had procured him. This he did between himself and me, without ostentation, pretension, or noise, and had not I spoken of it to anybody, not a single person would ever have known anything of the matter. I was so pleased with this action that I became attached to Rey, and conceived for him a real friendship. Sometime afterwards he desired I would become godfather to one of his children; I consented, and a part of my regret in the situation to which I am reduced, is my being deprived of the means of rendering in future my attachment of my goddaughter useful to her and her parents. Why am I, who am so sensible of the modest generosity of this bookseller, so little so of the noisy eagerness of many persons of the highest rank, who pompously fill the world with accounts of the services they say they wished to render me, but the good effects of which I never felt? Is it their fault or mine? Are they nothing more than vain; is my insensibility purely ingratitude? Intelligent reader, weigh and determine; for my part I say no more.

This pension was a great resource to Theresa and considerable alleviation to me, although I was far from receiving from it a direct advantage, any more than from the presents that were made her.

She herself has always disposed of everything. When I kept her money I gave her a faithful account of it, without ever applying any part of the deposit to our common expenses, not even when she was richer than myself. "What is mine is ours," said I to her; "and what is thine is thine." I never departed from this maxim. They who have had the baseness to accuse me of

receiving by her hands that which I refused to take with mine, undoubtedly judged of my heart by their own, and knew but little of me. I would willingly eat with her the bread she should have earned, but not that she should have had given her. For a proof of this I appeal to herself, both now and hereafter, when, according to the course of nature, she shall have survived me. Unfortunately, she understands but little of economy in any respect, and is, besides, careless and extravagant, not from vanity nor gluttony, but solely from negligence. No creature is perfect here below, and since the excellent qualities must be accompanied with some defects; I prefer these to vices; although her defects are more prejudicial to us both. The efforts I have made, as formerly I did for mamma, to accumulate something in advance which might some day be to her a never-failing resource, are not to be conceived; but my cares were always ineffectual.

Neither of these women ever called themselves to an account, and, notwithstanding all my efforts, everything I acquired was dissipated as fast as it came. Notwithstanding the great simplicity of Theresa's dress, the pension from Rey has never been sufficient to buy her clothes, and I have every year been under the necessity of adding something to it for that purpose. We are neither of us born to be rich, and this I certainly do not reckon amongst our misfortunes.

1169

The 'Social Contract' was soon printed. This was not the case with 'Emilius', for the publication of which I waited to go into the retirement I meditated. Duchesne, from time to time, sent me specimens of impression to choose from; when I had made my choice, instead of beginning he sent me others. When, at length, we were fully determined on the size and letter, and several sheets were already printed off, on some trifling alteration I made in a proof, he began the whole again; and at the end of six months we were in less forwardness than on the first day. During all these experiments I clearly perceived the work was printing in France as well as in Holland, and that two editions of it were preparing at the same time. What could I do? The manuscript was no longer mine. Far from having anything to do with the edition in France, I was always against it; but since, at length, this was preparing in

spite of all opposition, and was to serve as a model to the other, it was necessary I should cast my eyes over it and examine the proofs, that my work might not be mutilated. It was, besides, printed so much by the consent of the magistrate, that it was he who, in some measure, directed the undertaking; he likewise wrote to me frequently, and once came to see me and converse on the subject upon an occasion of which I am going to speak.

Whilst Duchesne crept like a snail, Neaulme, whom he withheld, scarcely moved at all. The sheets were not regularly sent him as they were printed. He thought there was some trick in the manoeuvre of Duchesne, that is, of Guy who acted for him; and perceiving the terms of the agreement to be departed from, he wrote me letter after letter full of complaints, and it was less possible for me to remove the subject of them than that of those I myself had to make. His friend Guerin, who at that time came frequently to see my house, never ceased speaking to me about the work, but always with the greatest reserve. He knew and he did not know that it was printing in France, and that the magistrate had a hand in it. In expressing his concern for my embarrassment, he seemed to accuse me of imprudence without ever saying in what this consisted; he incessantly equivocated, and seemed to speak for no other purpose than to hear what I had to say. I thought myself so secure that I laughed at his mystery and circumspection as at a habit he had contracted with ministers and magistrates whose offices he much frequented. Certain of having conformed to every rule with the work, and strongly persuaded that I had not only the consent and protection of the magistrate, but that the book merited and had obtained the favor of the minister, I congratulated myself upon my courage in doing good, and laughed at my pusillanimous friends who seemed uneasy on my account. Duclos was one of these, and I confess my confidence in his understanding and uprightness might have alarmed me, had I had less in the utility of the work and in the probity of those by whom it was patronized. He came from the house of M. Baille to see me whilst 'Emilius' was in the press; he spoke to me concerning it; I read to him the 'Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar', to which he listened attentively and, as it

seemed to me with pleasure. When I had finished he said: "What! citizen, this is a part of a work now printing in Paris?"—"Yes," answered I, and it ought to be printed at the Louvre by order of the king."—I confess it," replied he; "but pray do not mention to anybody your having read to me this fragment."

This striking manner of expressing himself surprised without alarming me. I knew Duclos was intimate with M. de Malesherbes, and I could not conceive how it was possible he should think so differently from him upon the same subject.

I had lived at Montmorency for the last four years without ever having had there one day of good health. Although the air is excellent, the water is bad, and this may possibly be one of the causes which contributed to increase my habitual complaints. Towards the end of the autumn of 1767, I fell quite ill, and passed the whole winter in suffering almost without intermission. The physical ill, augmented by a thousand inquietudes, rendered these terrible. For some time past my mind had been disturbed by melancholy forebodings without my knowing to what these directly tended. I received anonymous letters of an extraordinary nature, and others, that were signed, much of the same import. I received one from a counsellor of the parliament of Paris, who, dissatisfied with the present constitution of things, and foreseeing nothing but disagreeable events, consulted me upon the choice of an asylum at Geneva or in Switzerland, to retire to with his family. Another was brought me from M. de ——, 'president a mortier' of the parliament of ——, who proposed to me to draw up for this Parliament, which was then at variance with the court, memoirs and remonstrances, and offering to furnish me with all the documents and materials necessary for that purpose.

When I suffer I am subject to ill humor. This was the case when I received these letters, and my answers to them, in which I flatly refused everything that was asked of me, bore strong marks of the effect they had had upon my mind. I do not however reproach myself with this refusal, as the letters might be so many snares laid by my enemies, and what was required of me was contrary to the principles from which I was less willing than ever

to swerve. But having it within my power to refuse with politeness I did it with rudeness, and in this consists my error.

[I knew, for instance, the President de ——— to be connected with the Encyclopedists and the Holbachiens.]

The two letters of which I have just spoken will be found amongst my papers. The letter from the chancellor did not absolutely surprise me, because I agreed with him in opinion, and with many others, that the declining constitution of France threatened an approaching destruction. The disasters of an unsuccessful war, all of which proceeded from a fault in the government; the incredible confusion in the finances; the perpetual drawings upon the treasury by the administration, which was then divided between two or three ministers, amongst whom reigned nothing but discord, and who, to counteract the operations of each other, let the kingdom go to ruin; the discontent of the people, and of every other rank of subjects; the obstinacy of a woman who, constantly sacrificing her judgment, if she indeed possessed any, to her inclinations, kept from public employment persons capable of discharging the duties of them, to place in them such as pleased her best; everything occurred in justifying the foresight of the counsellor, that of the public, and my own. This, made me several times consider whether or not I myself should seek an asylum out of the kingdom before it was torn by the dissensions by which it seemed to be threatened; but relieved from my fears by my insignificance, and the peacefulness of my disposition, I thought that in the state of solitude in which I was determined to live, no public commotion could reach me. I was sorry only that, in this state of things, M. de Luxembourg should accept commissions which tended to injure him in the opinion of the persons of the place of which he was governor. I could have wished he had prepared himself a retreat there, in case the great machine had fallen in pieces, which seemed much to be apprehended; and still appears to me beyond a doubt, that if the reins of government had not fallen into a single hand, the French monarchy would now be at the last gasp.

Whilst my situation became worse the printing of 'Emilius' went on more slowly, and was at length suspended without my being able to learn the reason why; Guy did not deign to answer my letter of inquiry, and I could obtain no information from any person of what was going forward, M. de Malesherbes being then in the country. A misfortune never makes me uneasy provided I know in what it consists; but it is my nature to be afraid of darkness, I tremble at the appearance of it; mystery always gives me inquietude, it is too opposite to my natural disposition, in which there is an openness bordering on imprudence. The sight of the most hideous monster would, I am of opinion, alarm me but little; but if by night I were to see a figure in a white sheet I should be afraid of it. My imagination, wrought upon by this long silence, was now employed in creating phantoms. I tormented myself the more in endeavoring to discover the impediment to the printing of my last and best production, as I had the publication of it much at heart; and as I always carried everything to an extreme, I imagined that I perceived in the suspension the suppression of the work. Yet, being unable to discover either the cause or manner of it, I remained in the most cruel state of suspense. I wrote letter after letter to Guy, to M. de Malesherbes and to Madam de Luxembourg, and not receiving answers, at least when I expected them, my head became so affected that I was not far from a delirium. I unfortunately heard that Father Griffet, a Jesuit, had spoken of 'Emilius' and repeated from it some passages. My imagination instantly unveiled to me the mystery of iniquity; I saw the whole progress of it as clearly as if it had been revealed to me. I figured to myself that the Jesuits, furious on account of the contemptuous manner in which I had spoken of colleges, were in possession of my work; that it was they who had delayed the publication; that, informed by their friend Guerin of my situation, and foreseeing my approaching dissolution, of which I myself had no manner of doubt, they wished to delay the appearance of the work until after that event, with an intention to curtail and mutilate it, and in favor of their own views, to attribute to me sentiments not my own. The number of facts and circumstances which occurred to my mind, in confirmation of this silly

proposition, and gave it an appearance of truth supported by evidence and demonstration, is astonishing. I knew Guerin to be entirely in the interest of the Jesuits. I attributed to them all the friendly advances he had made me; I was persuaded he had, by their entreaties, pressed me to engage with Neaulme, who had given them the first sheets of my work; that they had afterwards found means to stop the printing of it by Duchesne, and perhaps to get possession of the manuscript to make such alterations in it as they should think proper, that after my death they might publish it disguised in their own manner. I had always perceived, notwithstanding the wheedling of Father Berthier, that the Jesuits did not like me, not only as an Encyclopedist, but because all my principles were more in opposition to their maxims and influence than the incredulity of my colleagues, since atheistical and devout fanaticism, approaching each other by their common enmity to toleration, may become united; a proof of which is seen in China, and in the cabal against myself; whereas religion, both reasonable and moral, taking away all power over the conscience, deprives those who assume that power of every resource. I knew the chancellor was a great friend to the Jesuits, and I had my fears less the son, intimidated by the father, should find himself under the necessity of abandoning the work he had protected. I besides imagined that I perceived this to be the case in the chicanery employed against me relative to the first two volumes, in which alterations were required for reasons of which I could not feel the force; whilst the other two volumes were known to contain things of such a nature as, had the censor objected to them in the manner he did to the passages he thought exceptionable in the others, would have required their being entirely written over again. I also understood, and M. de Malesherbes himself told me of it, that the Abbe de Grave, whom he had charged with the inspection of this edition, was another partisan of the Jesuits. I saw nothing but Jesuits, without considering that, upon the point of being suppressed, and wholly taken up in making their defence, they had something which interested them much more than the cavillings relative to a work in which they were not in question. I am wrong, however, in saying this did not occur to me; for I

really thought of it, and M. de Malesherbes took care to make the observation to me the moment he heard of my extravagant suspicions. But by another of those absurdities of a man, who, from the bosom of obscurity, will absolutely judge of the secret of great affairs, with which he is totally unacquainted. I never could bring myself to believe the Jesuits were in danger, and I considered the rumor of their suppression as an artful manoeuvre of their own to deceive their adversaries. Their past successes, which had been uninterrupted, gave me so terrible an idea of the power, that I already was grieved at the overthrow of the parliament. I knew M. de Choiseul had prosecuted his studies under the Jesuits, that Madam de Pompadour was not upon bad terms with them, and that their league with favorites and ministers had constantly appeared advantageous to their order against their common enemies. The court seemed to remain neutral, and persuaded as I was that should the society receive a severe check it would not come from the parliament, I saw in the inaction of government the ground of their confidence and the omen of their triumph. In fine, perceiving in the rumors of the day nothing more than art and dissimulation on their part, and thinking they, in their state of security, had time to watch over all their interests, I had had not the least doubt of their shortly crushing Jansenism, the parliament and the Encyclopedists, with every other association which should not submit to their yoke; and that if they ever suffered my work to appear, this would not happen until it should be so transformed as to favor their pretensions, and thus make use of my name the better to deceive my readers.

I felt my health and strength decline; and such was the horror with which my mind was filled, at the idea of dishonor to my memory in the work most worthy of myself, that I am surprised so many extravagant ideas did not occasion a speedy end to my existence. I never was so much afraid of death as at this time, and had I died with the apprehensions I then had upon my mind, I should have died in despair. At present, although I perceive no obstacle to the execution of the blackest and most dreadful conspiracy ever formed against the memory of a man, I shall die much more in peace, certain of leaving in my writings a

testimony in my favor, and one which, sooner or later, will triumph over the calumnies of mankind.

M. de Malesherbes, who discovered the agitation of my mind, and to whom I acknowledged it, used such endeavors to restore me to tranquility as proved his excessive goodness of heart. Madam de Luxembourg aided him in his good work, and several times went to Duchesne to know in what state the edition was. At length the impression was again begun, and the progress of it became more rapid than ever, without my knowing for what reason it had been suspended. M. de Malesherbes took the trouble to come to Montmorency to calm my mind; in this he succeeded, and the full confidence I had in his uprightness having overcome the derangement of my poor head, gave efficacy to the endeavors he made to restore it. After what he had seen of my anguish and delirium, it was natural he should think I was to be pitied; and he really commiserated my situation. The expressions, incessantly repeated, of the philosophical cabal by which he was surrounded, occurred to his memory. When I went to live at the Hermitage, they, as I have already remarked, said I should not remain there long. When they saw I persevered, they charged me with obstinacy and pride, proceeding from a want of courage to retract, and insisted that my life was there a burden to me; in short, that I was very wretched. M. de Malesherbes believed this really to be the case, and wrote to me upon the subject. This error in a man for whom I had so much esteem gave me some pain, and I wrote to him four letters successively, in which I stated the real motives of my conduct, and made him fully acquainted with my taste, inclination and character, and with the most interior sentiments of my heart. These letters, written hastily, almost without taking pen from paper, and which I neither copied, corrected, nor even read, are perhaps the only things I ever wrote with facility, which, in the midst of my sufferings, was, I think, astonishing. I sighed, as I felt myself declining, at the thought of leaving in the midst of honest men an opinion of me so far from truth; and by the sketch hastily given in my four letters, I endeavored, in some measure, to substitute them to the memoirs I had proposed to write. They are expressive of my grief to M. de Malesherbes, who showed them

in Paris, and are, besides, a kind of summary of what I here give in detail, and, on this account, merit preservation. The copy I begged of them some years afterwards will be found amongst my papers.

The only thing which continued to give me pain, in the idea of my approaching dissolution, was my not having a man of letters for a friend, to whom I could confide my papers, that after my death he might take a proper choice of such as were worthy of publication.

1179

After my journey to Geneva, I conceived a friendship for Moulton; this young man pleased me, and I could have wished him to receive my last breath. I expressed to him this desire, and am of opinion he would readily have complied with it, had not his affairs prevented him from so doing. Deprived of this consolation, I still wished to give him a mark of my confidence by sending him the 'Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar' before it was published. He was pleased with the work, but did not in his answer seem so fully to expect from it the effect of which I had but little doubt. He wished to receive from me some fragment which I had not given to anybody else. I sent him the funeral oration of the late Duke of Orleans; this I had written for the Abbe Darty, who had not pronounced it, because, contrary to his expectation, another person was appointed to perform that ceremony.

The printing of *Emilius*, after having been again taken in hand, was continued and completed without much difficulty; and I remarked this singularity, that after the curtailings so much insisted upon in the first two volumes, the last two were passed over without an objection, and their contents did not delay the publication for a moment. I had, however, some uneasiness which I must not pass over in silence. After having been afraid of the Jesuits, I begun to fear the Jansenists and philosophers. An enemy to party, faction and cabal, I never heard the least good of parties concerned in them. The gossips had quitted their old abode and taken up their residence by the side of me, so that in their chamber, everything said in mine, and upon the terrace, was distinctly heard; and from their garden it would have been easy to

scale the low wall by which it was separated from my alcove. This was become my study; my table was covered with proofsheets of *Emilius* and the *Social Contract* and stitching these sheets as they were sent to me, I had all my volumes a long time before they were published. My negligence and the confidence I had in M. Mathas, in whose garden I was shut up, frequently made me forget to lock the door at night, and in the morning I several times found it wide open; this, however, would not have given me the least inquietude had I not thought my papers seemed to have been deranged. After having several times made the same remark, I became more careful, and locked the door. The lock was a bad one, and the key turned in it no more than half round. As I became more attentive, I found my papers in a much greater confusion than they were when I left everything open. At length I missed one of my volumes without knowing what was become of it until the morning of the third day, when I again found it upon the table. I never suspected either M. Mathas or his nephew M. du Moulin, knowing myself to be beloved by both, and my confidence in them was unbounded. That I had in the gossips began to diminish. Although they were Jansenists, I knew them to have some connection with D' Alembert, and moreover they all three lodged in the same house. This gave me some uneasiness, and put me more upon my guard. I removed my papers from the alcove to my chamber, and dropped my acquaintance with these people, having learned they had shown in several houses the first volume of '*Emilius*', which I had been imprudent enough to lend them. Although they continued until my departure to be my neighbors I never, after my first suspicions, had the least communication with them. The '*Social Contract*' appeared a month or two before '*Emilius*'. Rey, whom I had desired never secretly to introduce into France any of my books, applied to the magistrate for leave to send this book by Rouen, to which place he sent his package by sea. He received no answer, and his bales, after remaining at Rouen several months, were returned to him, but not until an attempt had been made to confiscate them; this, probably, would have been done had not he made a great clamor. Several persons, whose curiosity the work had excited, sent to

Amsterdam for copies, which were circulated without being much noticed. Maulion, who had heard of this, and had, I believe, seen the work, spoke to me on the subject with an air of mystery which surprised me, and would likewise have made me uneasy if, certain of having conformed to every rule, I had not by virtue of my grand maxim, kept my mind calm. I moreover had no doubt but M. de Choiseul, already well disposed towards me, and sensible of the eulogium of his administration, which my esteem for him had induced me to make in the work, would support me against the malevolence of Madam de Pompadour.

I certainly had then as much reason as ever to hope for the goodness of M. de Luxembourg, and even for his assistance in case of need; for he never at any time had given me more frequent and more pointed marks of his friendship. At the journey of Easter, my melancholy state no longer permitting me to go to the castle, he never suffered a day to pass without coming to see me, and at length, perceiving my sufferings to be incessant, he prevailed upon me to determine to see Friar Come. He immediately sent for him, came with him, and had the courage, uncommon to a man of his rank, to remain with me during the operation which was cruel and tedious. Upon the first examination, Come thought he found a great stone, and told me so; at the second, he could not find it again. After having made a third attempt with so much care and circumspection that I thought the time long, he declared there was no stone, but that the prostate gland was schirrous and considerably thickened. He besides added, that I had a great deal to suffer, and should live a long time. Should the second prediction be as fully accomplished as the first, my sufferings are far from being at an end.

It was thus I learned after having been so many years treated for disorders which I never had, that my incurable disease, without being mortal, would last as long as myself. My imagination, repressed by this information, no longer presented to me in prospective a cruel death in the agonies of the stone.

Delivered from imaginary evils, more cruel to me than those which were real, I more patiently suffered the latter. It is certain I have since suffered less from my disorder than I had done before,

and every time I recollect that I owe this alleviation to M. de Luxembourg, his memory becomes more dear to me.

Restored, as I may say, to life, and more than ever occupied with the plan according to which I was determined to pass the rest of my days, all the obstacle to the immediate execution of my design was the publication of 'Emilius'. I thought of Touraine where I had already been and which pleased me much, as well on account of the mildness of the climate, as on that of the character of the inhabitants.

*'La terra molle lieta a diletta
Simile a se l'habitor produce.'*

I had already spoken of my project to M. de Luxembourg, who endeavored to dissuade me from it; I mentioned it to him a second time as a thing resolved upon. He then offered me the castle of Merlon, fifteen leagues from Paris, as an asylum which might be agreeable to me, and where he and Madam de Luxembourg would have a real pleasure in seeing me settled. The proposition made a pleasing impression on my mind. But the first thing necessary was to see the place, and we agreed upon a day when the marechal was to send his valet de chambre with a carriage to take me to it. On the day appointed, I was much indisposed; the journey was postponed, and different circumstances prevented me from ever making it. I have since learned the estate of Merlou did not belong to the marechal but to his lady, on which account I was the less sorry I had not gone to live there.

'Emilius' was at length given to the public, without my having heard further of retrenchments or difficulties. Previous to the publication, the marechal asked me for all the letters M. de Malesherbes had written to me on the subject of the work. My great confidence in both, and the perfect security in which I felt myself, prevented me from reflecting upon this extraordinary and even alarming request. I returned all the letters excepting one or two which, from inattention, were left between the leaves of a book. A little time before this, M. de Malesherbes told me he should withdraw the letters I had written to Duchesne during my

alarm relative to the Jesuits, and, it must be confessed, these letters did no great honor to my reason. But in my answer I assured him I would not in anything pass for being better than I was, and that he might leave the letters where they were. I know not what he resolved upon.

The publication of this work was not succeeded by the applause which had followed that of all my other writings. No work was ever more highly spoken of in private, nor had any literary production ever had less public approbation. What was said and written to me upon the subject by persons most capable of judging, confirmed me in my opinion that it was the best, as well as the most important of all the works I had produced. But everything favorable was said with an air of the most extraordinary mystery, as if there had been a necessity of keeping it a secret. Madam de Boufflers, who wrote to me that the author of the work merited a statue, and the homage of mankind, at the end of her letter desired it might be returned to her. D'Alembert, who in his note said the work gave me a decided superiority, and ought to place me at the head of men of letters, did not sign what he wrote, although he had signed every note I had before received from him. Duclos, a sure friend, a man of veracity, but circumspect, although he had a good opinion of the work, avoided mentioning it in his letters to me. La Condomine fell upon the Confession of Faith, and wandered from the subject. Clairaut confined himself to the same part; but he was not afraid of expressing to me the emotion which the reading of it had caused in him, and in the most direct terms wrote to me that it had warmed his old imagination: of all those to whom I had sent my book, he was the only person who spoke freely what he thought of it.

Mathas, to whom I also had given a copy before the publication, lent it to M. de Blaire, counsellor in the parliament of Strasbourg. M. de Blaire had a country-house at St. Gratien, and Mathas, his old acquaintance, sometimes went to see him there. He made him read *Emilius* before it was published. When he returned it to him, M. de Blaire expressed himself in the following terms, which were repeated to me the same day: "M.

Mathas, this is a very fine work, but it will in a short time be spoken of more than, for the author, might be wished." I laughed at the prediction, and saw in it nothing more than the importance of a man of the robe, who treats everything with an air of mystery. All the alarming observations repeated to me made no impression upon my mind, and, far from foreseeing the catastrophe so near at hand, certain of the utility and excellence of my work, and that I had in every respect conformed to established rules; convinced, as I thought I was that I should be supported by all the credit of M. de Luxembourg and the favor of the ministry, I was satisfied with myself for the resolution I had taken to retire in the midst of my triumphs, and at my return to crush those by whom I was envied.

One thing in the publication of the work alarmed me, less on account of my safety than for the unburdening of my mind. At the Hermitage and at Montmorency I had seen with indignation the vexations which the jealous care of the pleasures of princes causes to be exercised on wretched peasants, forced to suffer the havoc made by game in their fields, without daring to take any other measure to prevent this devastation than that of making a noise, passing the night amongst the beans and peas, with drums, kettles and bells, to keep off the wild boars. As I had been a witness to the barbarous cruelty with which the Comte de Charolois treated these poor people, I had toward the end of Emilius exclaimed against it. This was another infraction of my maxims, which has not remained unpunished. I was informed that the people of the Prince of Conti were but little less severe upon his estates; I trembled lest that prince, for whom I was penetrated with respect and gratitude, should take to his own account what shocked humanity had made me say on that of others, and feel himself offended. Yet, as my conscience fully acquitted me upon this article, I made myself easy, and by so doing acted wisely: at least, I have not heard that this great prince took notice of the passage, which, besides, was written long before I had the honor of being known to him.

A few days either before or after the publication of my work, for I do not exactly recollect the time, there appeared another work upon the same subject, taken verbatim from my first

volume, except a few stupid things which were joined to the extract. The book bore the name of a Genevese, one Balexsert, and, according to the title-page, had gained the premium in the Academy of Harlem. I easily imagined the academy and the premium to be newly founded, the better to conceal the plagiarism from the eyes of the public; but I further perceived there was some prior intrigue which I could not unravel; either by the lending of my manuscript, without which the theft could not have been committed, or for the purpose of forging the story of the pretended premium, to which it was necessary to give some foundation. It was not until several years afterwards, that by a word which escaped D'Ivernois, I penetrated the mystery and discovered those by whom Balexsert had been brought forward.

The low murmurings which precede a storm began to be heard, and men of penetration clearly saw there was something gathering, relative to me and my book, which would shortly break over my head. For my part my stupidity was such, that, far from foreseeing my misfortune, I did not suspect even the cause of it after I had felt its effect. It was artfully given out that while the Jesuits were treated with severity, no indulgence could be shown to books nor the authors of them in which religion was attacked. I was reproached with having put my name to Emilius, as if I had not put it to all my other works of which nothing was said. Government seemed to fear it should be obliged to take some steps which circumstances rendered necessary on account of my imprudence. Rumors to this effect reached my ears, but gave me not much uneasiness: it never even came into my head, that there could be the least thing in the whole affair which related to me personally, so perfectly irreproachable and well supported did I think myself; having besides conformed to every ministerial regulation, I did not apprehend Madam de Luxembourg would leave me in difficulties for an error, which, if it existed, proceeded entirely from herself. But knowing the manner of proceeding in like cases, and that it was customary to punish booksellers while authors were favored; I had some uneasiness on account of poor Duchesne, whom I saw exposed to danger, should M. de Malesherbes abandon him.

My tranquility still continued. Rumors increased and soon changed their nature. The public, and especially the parliament, seemed irritated by my composure. In a few days the fermentation became terrible, and the object of the menaces being changed, these were immediately addressed to me. The parliamentarians were heard to declare that burning books was of no effect, the authors also should be burned with them; not a word was said of the booksellers. The first time these expressions, more worthy of an inquisitor of Goa than a senator, were related to me, I had no doubt of their coming from the Holbachiques with an intention to alarm me and drive me from France. I laughed at their puerile manoeuvre, and said they would, had they known the real state of things, have thought of some other means of inspiring me with fear; but the rumor at length became such that I perceived the matter was serious. M. and Madam de Luxembourg had this year come to Montmorency in the month of June, which, for their second journey, was more early than common. I heard but little there of my new books, notwithstanding the noise they made in Paris; neither the marechal nor his lady said a single word to me on the subject. However, one morning, when M. de Luxembourg and I were together, he asked me if, in the 'Social Contract', I had spoken ill of M. de Choiseul. "I?" said I, retreating a few steps with surprise; "no, I swear to you I have not; but on the contrary, I have made on him, and with a pen not given to praise, the finest eulogium a minister ever received." I then showed him the passage. "And in Emilius?" replied he. "Not a word," said I; "there is not in it a single word which relates to him."—"Ah!" said he, with more vivacity than was common to him, "you should have taken the same care in the other book, or have expressed yourself more clearly!" "I thought," replied I, "what I wrote could not be misconstrued; my esteem for him was such as to make me extremely cautious not to be equivocal."

He was again going to speak; I perceived him ready to open his mind: he stopped short and held his tongue. Wretched policy of a courtier, which in the best of hearts, subjugates friendship itself!

This conversation although short, explained to me my situation, at least in certain respects, and gave me to understand that it was against myself the anger of administration was raised. The unheard of fatality, which turned to my prejudice all the good I did and wrote, afflicted my heart. Yet, feeling myself shielded in this affair by Madam de Luxembourg and M. de Malesherbes, I did not perceive in what my persecutors could deprive me of their protection. However, I, from that moment was convinced equity and judgment were no longer in question, and that no pains would be spared in examining whether or not I was culpable. The storm became still more menacing. Neaulme himself expressed to me, in the excess of his babbling, how much he repented having had anything to do in the business, and his certainty of the fate with which the book and the author were threatened. One thing, however, alleviated my fears: Madam de Luxembourg was so calm, satisfied and cheerful, that I concluded she must necessarily be certain of the sufficiency of her credit, especially if she did not seem to have the least apprehension on my account; moreover, she said not to me a word either of consolation or apology, and saw the turn the affair took with as much unconcern as if she had nothing to do with it or anything else that related to me. What surprised me most was her silence. I thought she should have said something on the subject. Madam de Boufflers seemed rather uneasy. She appeared agitated, strained herself a good deal, assured me the Prince of Conti was taking great pains to ward off the blow about to be directed against my person, and which she attributed to the nature of present circumstances, in which it was of importance to the parliament not to leave the Jesuits an opening whereby they might bring an accusation against it as being indifferent with respect to religion. She did not, however, seem to depend much either upon the success of her own efforts or even those of the prince. Her conversations, more alarming than consolatory, all tended to persuade me to leave the kingdom and go to England, where she offered me an introduction to many of her friends, amongst others one to the celebrated Hume, with whom she had long been upon a footing of intimate friendship. Seeing me still unshaken, she had recourse to other arguments

more capable of disturbing my tranquillity. She intimated that, in case I was arrested and interrogated, I should be under the necessity of naming Madam de Luxembourg, and that her friendship for me required, on my part, such precautions as were necessary to prevent her being exposed. My answer was, that should what she seemed to apprehend come to pass, she need not be alarmed; that I should do nothing by which the lady she mentioned might become a sufferer. She said such a resolution was more easily taken than adhered to, and in this she was right, especially with respect to me, determined as I always have been neither to prejudice myself nor lie before judges, whatever danger there might be in speaking the truth.

Perceiving this observation had made some impression upon my mind, without however inducing me to resolve upon evasion, she spoke of the Bastille for a few weeks, as a means of placing me beyond the reach of the jurisdiction of the parliament, which has nothing to do with prisoners of state. I had no objection to this singular favor, provided it were not solicited in my name. As she never spoke of it a second time, I afterwards thought her proposition was made to sound me, and that the party did not think proper to have recourse to an expedient which would have put an end to everything.

A few days afterwards the marechal received from the Cure de Dueil, the friend of Grimm and Madam d'Epinay, a letter informing him, as from good authority, that the parliament was to proceed against me with the greatest severity, and that, on a day which he mentioned, an order was to be given to arrest me. I imagined this was fabricated by the Holbachiques; I knew the parliament to be very attentive to forms, and that on this occasion, beginning by arresting me before it was juridically known I avowed myself the author of the book was violating them all. I observed to Madam de Boufflers that none but persons accused of crimes which tend to endanger the public safety were, on a simple information, ordered to be arrested lest they should escape punishment. But when government wish to punish a crime like mine, which merits honor and recompense, the proceedings are

directed against the book, and the author is as much as possible left out of the question.

Upon this she made some subtle distinction, which I have forgotten, to prove that ordering me to be arrested instead of summoning me to be heard was a matter of favor. The next day I received a letter from Guy, who informed me that having in the morning been with the attorney-general, he had seen in his office a rough draft of a requisition against Emilius and the author. Guy, it is to be remembered, was the partner of Duchesne, who had printed the work, and without apprehensions on his own account, charitably gave this information to the author. The credit I gave to him maybe judged of.

It was, no doubt, a very probable story, that a bookseller, admitted to an audience by the attorney-general, should read at ease scattered rough drafts in the office of that magistrate! Madam de Boufflers and others confirmed what he had said. By the absurdities which were incessantly rung in my ears, I was almost tempted to believe that everybody I heard speak had lost their senses.

1199

Clearly perceiving that there was some mystery, which no one thought proper to explain to me, I patiently awaited the event, depending upon my integrity and innocence, and thinking myself happy, let the persecution which awaited me be what it would, to be called to the honor of suffering in the cause of truth. Far from being afraid and concealing myself, I went every day to the castle, and in the afternoon took my usual walk. On the eighth of June, the evening before the order was concluded on, I walked in company with two professors of the oratory, Father Alamanni and Father Mandard. We carried to Champeaux a little collation, which we ate with a keen appetite. We had forgotten to bring glasses, and supplied the want of them by stalks of rye, through which we sucked up the wine from the bottle, piquing ourselves upon the choice of large tubes to vie with each other in pumping up what we drank. I never was more cheerful in my life.

I have related in what manner I lost my sleep during my youth. I had since that time contracted a habit of reading every night in my bed, until I found my eyes begin to grow heavy. I then

extinguished my wax taper, and endeavored to slumber for a few moments, which were in general very short. The book I commonly read at night was the Bible, which, in this manner I read five or six times from the beginning to the end. This evening, finding myself less disposed to sleep than ordinary, I continued my reading beyond the usual hour, and read the whole book which finishes at the Levite of Ephraim, the Book of judges, if I mistake not, for since that time I have never once seen it. This history affected me exceedingly, and, in a kind of a dream, my imagination still ran on it, when suddenly I was roused from my stupor by a noise and light. Theresa carrying a candle, lighted M. la Roche, who perceiving me hastily raise myself up, said: "Do not be alarmed; I come from Madam de Luxembourg, who, in her letter incloses you another from the Prince of Conti." In fact, in the letter of Madam de Luxembourg I found another, which an express from the prince had brought her, stating that, notwithstanding all his efforts, it was determined to proceed against me with the utmost rigor. "The fermentation," said he, "is extreme; nothing can ward off the blow; the court requires it, and the parliament will absolutely proceed; at seven o'clock in the morning an order will be made to arrest him, and persons will immediately be sent to execute it. I have obtained a promise that he shall not be pursued if he makes his escape; but if he persists in exposing himself to be taken this will immediately happen." La Roche conjured me in behalf of Madam de Luxembourg to rise and go and speak to her. It was two o'clock and she had just retired to bed. "She expects you," added he, "and will not go to sleep without speaking to you." I dressed myself in haste and ran to her.

She appeared to be agitated; this was for the first time. Her distress affected me. In this moment of surprise and in the night, I myself was not free from emotion; but on seeing her I forgot my own situation, and thought of nothing but the melancholy part she would have to act should I suffer myself to be arrested; for feeling I had sufficient courage strictly to adhere to truth, although I might be certain of its being prejudicial or even destructive to me, I was convinced I had not presence of mind, address, nor perhaps

firmness enough, not to expose her should I be closely pressed. This determined me to sacrifice my reputation to her tranquillity, and to do for her that which nothing could have prevailed upon me to do for myself. The moment I had come to this resolution, I declared it, wishing not to diminish the magnitude of the sacrifice by giving her the least trouble to obtain it. I am sure she could not mistake my motive, although she said not a word, which proved to me she was sensible of it. I was so much shocked at her indifference that I, for a moment, thought of retracting; but the marechal came in, and Madam de Boufflers arrived from Paris a few moments afterwards. They did what Madam de Luxembourg ought to have done. I suffered myself to be flattered; I was ashamed to retract; and the only thing that remained to be determined upon was the place of my retreat and the time of my departure. M. de Luxembourg proposed to me to remain incognito a few days at the castle, that we might deliberate at leisure, and take such measures as should seem most proper; to this I would not consent, no more than to go secretly to the temple. I was determined to set off the same day rather than remain concealed in any place whatever.

Knowing I had secret and powerful enemies in the kingdom, I thought, notwithstanding my attachment to France, I ought to quit it, the better to insure my future tranquillity. My first intention was to retire to Geneva, but a moment of reflection was sufficient to dissuade me from committing that act of folly; I knew the ministry of France, more powerful at Geneva than at Paris, would not leave me more at peace in one of these cities than in the other, were a resolution taken to torment me. I was also convinced the 'Discourse upon Inequality' had excited against me in the council a hatred the more dangerous as the council dared not make it manifest. I had also learned, that when the *New Eloisa* appeared, the same council had immediately forbidden the sale of that work, upon the solicitation of Doctor Tronchin; but perceiving the example not to be imitated, even in Paris, the members were ashamed of what they had done, and withdrew the prohibition.

I had no doubt that, finding in the present case a more favorable opportunity, they would be very careful to take

advantage of it. Notwithstanding exterior appearances, I knew there reigned against me in the heart of every Genevese a secret jealousy, which, in the first favorable moment, would publicly show itself. Nevertheless, the love of my country called me to it, and could I have flattered myself I should there have lived in peace, I should not have hesitated; but neither honor nor reason permitting me to take refuge as a fugitive in a place of which I was a citizen, I resolved to approach it only, and to wait in Switzerland until something relative to me should be determined upon in Geneva. This state of uncertainty did not, as it will soon appear, continue long.

Madam de Boufflers highly disapproved this resolution, and renewed her efforts to induce me to go to England, but all she could say was of no effect; I had never loved England nor the English, and the eloquence of Madam de Boufflers, far from conquering my repugnancy, seemed to increase it without my knowing why. Determined to set off the same day, I was from the morning inaccessible to everybody, and La Roche, whom I sent to fetch my papers, would not tell Theresa whether or not I was gone. Since I had determined to write my own memoirs, I had collected a great number of letters and other papers, so that he was obliged to return several times. A part of these papers, already selected, were laid aside, and I employed the morning in sorting the rest, that I might take with me such only as were necessary and destroy what remained. M. de Luxembourg was kind enough to assist me in this business, which we could not finish before it was necessary I should set off, and I had not time to burn a single paper. The marechal offered to take upon himself to sort what I should leave behind me, and throw into the fire every sheet that he found useless, without trusting to any person whomsoever, and to send me those of which he should make choice. I accepted his offer, very glad to be delivered from that care, that I might pass the few hours I had to remain with persons so dear to me, from whom I was going to separate forever. He took the key of the chamber in which I had left these papers; and, at my earnest solicitation, sent for my poor aunt, who, not knowing what had become of me, or what was to become of

herself, and in momentary expectation of the arrival of the officers of justice, without knowing how to act or what to answer them, was miserable to an extreme. La Roche accompanied her to the castle in silence; she thought I was already far from Montmorency; on perceiving me, she made the place resound with her cries, and threw herself into my arms. Oh, friendship, affinity of sentiment, habit and intimacy. In this pleasing yet cruel moment, the remembrance of so many days of happiness, tenderness and peace passed together augmented the grief of a first separation after an union of seventeen years during which we had scarcely lost sight of each other for a single day.

The marechal, who saw this embrace, could not suppress his tears. He withdrew. Theresa determined never more to leave me out of her sight. I made her feel the inconvenience of accompanying me at that moment, and the necessity of her remaining to take care of my effects and collect my money. When an order is made to arrest a man, it is customary to seize his papers and put a seal upon his effects, or to make an inventory of them and appoint a guardian to whose care they are intrusted. It was necessary Theresa should remain to observe what passed, and get everything settled in the most advantageous manner possible. I promised her she should shortly come to me; the marechal confirmed my promise; but I did not choose to tell her to what place I was going, that, in case of being interrogated by the persons who came to take me into custody, she might with truth plead ignorance upon that head. In embracing her the moment before we separated I felt within me a most extraordinary emotion, and I said to her with an agitation which, alas! was but too prophetic: "My dear girl, you must arm yourself with courage. You have partaken of my prosperity; it now remains to you, since you have chosen it, to partake of my misery. Expect nothing in future but insult and calamity in following me. The destiny begun for me by this melancholy day will pursue me until my latest hour."

I had now nothing to think of but my departure. The officers were to arrive at ten o'clock. It was four in the afternoon when I set off, and they were not yet come. It was determined I should

take post. I had no carriage, The marechal made me a present of a cabriolet, and lent me horses and a postillion the first stage, where, in consequence of the measures he had taken, I had no difficulty in procuring others.

As I had not dined at table, nor made my appearance in the castle, the ladies came to bid me adieu in the entresol where I had passed the day. Madam de Luxembourg embraced me several times with a melancholy air; but I did not in these embraces feel the pressing I had done in those she had lavished upon me two or three years before. Madam de Boufflers also embraced me, and said to me many civil things. An embrace which surprised me more than all the rest had done was one from Madam de Mirepoix, for she also was at the castle. Madam la Marechale de Mirepoix is a person extremely cold, decent, and reserved, and did not, at least as she appeared to me, seem quite exempt from the natural haughtiness of the house of Lorraine. She had never shown me much attention. Whether, flattered by an honor I had not expected, I endeavored to enhance the value of it; or that there really was in the embrace a little of that commiseration natural to generous hearts, I found in her manner and look something energetical which penetrated me. I have since that time frequently thought that, acquainted with my destiny, she could not refrain from a momentary concern for my fate.

The marechal did not open his mouth; he was as pale as death. He would absolutely accompany me to the carriage which waited at the watering place. We crossed the garden without uttering a single word. I had a key of the park with which I opened the gate, and instead of putting it again into my pocket, I held it out to the marechal without saying a word. He took it with a vivacity which surprised me, and which has since frequently intruded itself upon my thoughts.

I have not in my whole life had a more bitter moment than that of this separation. Our embrace was long and silent: we both felt that this was our last adieu.

Between Barre and Montmorency I met, in a hired carriage, four men in black, who saluted me smilingly. According to what Theresa has since told me of the officers of justice, the hour of

their arrival and their manner of behavior, I have no doubt, that they were the persons I met, especially as the order to arrest me, instead of being made out at seven o'clock, as I had been told it would, had not been given till noon. I had to go through Paris. A person in a cabriolet is not much concealed. I saw several persons in the streets who saluted me with an air of familiarity but I did not know one of them. The same evening I changed my route to pass Villeroy. At Lyons the couriers were conducted to the commandant. This might have been embarrassing to a man unwilling either to lie or change his name. I went with a letter from Madam de Luxembourg to beg M. de Villeroy would spare me this disagreeable ceremony. M. de Villeroy gave me a letter of which I made no use, because I did not go through Lyons. This letter still remains sealed up amongst my papers. The duke pressed me to sleep at Villeroy, but I preferred returning to the great road, which I did, and travelled two more stages the same evening.

My carriage was inconvenient and uncomfortable, and I was too much indisposed to go far in a day. My appearance besides was not sufficiently distinguished for me to be well served, and in France post-horses feel the whip in proportion to the favorable opinion the postillion has of his temporary master. By paying the guides generously thought I should make up for my shabby appearance: this was still worse. They took me for a worthless fellow who was carrying orders, and, for the first time in my life, travelling post. From that moment I had nothing but worn-out hacks, and I became the sport of the postillions. I ended as I should have begun by being patient, holding my tongue, and suffering myself to be driven as my conductors thought proper.

I had sufficient matter of reflection to prevent me from being weary on the road, employing myself in the recollection of that which had just happened; but this was neither my turn of mind nor the inclination of my heart. The facility with which I forget past evils, however recent they may be, is astonishing. The remembrance of them becomes feeble, and, sooner or later, effaced, in the inverse proportion to the greater degree of fear with which the approach of them inspires me. My cruel

imagination, incessantly tormented by the apprehension of evils still at a distance, diverts my attention, and prevents me from recollecting those which are past. Caution is needless after the evil has happened, and it is time lost to give it a thought. I, in some measure, put a period to my misfortunes before they happen: the more I have suffered at their approach the greater is the facility with which I forget them; whilst, on the contrary, incessantly recollecting my past happiness, I, if I may so speak, enjoy it a second time at pleasure. It is to this happy disposition I am indebted for an exemption from that ill humor which ferments in a vindictive mind, by the continual remembrance of injuries received, and torments it with all the evil it wishes to do its enemy. Naturally choleric, I have felt all the force of anger, which in the first moments has sometimes been carried to fury, but a desire of vengeance never took root within me. I think too little of the offence to give myself much trouble about the offender. I think of the injury I have received from him on account of that he may do me a second time, but were I certain he would never do me another the first would be instantly forgotten. Pardon of offences is continually preached to us. I knew not whether or not my heart would be capable of overcoming its hatred, for it never yet felt that passion, and I give myself too little concern about my enemies to have the merit of pardoning them. I will not say to what a degree, in order to torment me, they torment themselves. I am at their mercy, they have unbounded power, and make of it what use they please. There is but one thing in which I set them at defiance: which is in tormenting themselves about me, to force me to give myself the least trouble about them.

The day after my departure I had so perfectly forgotten what had passed, the parliament, Madam de Pompadour, M. de Choiseul, Grimm, and D'Alembert, with their conspiracies, that had not it been for the necessary precautions during the journey I should have thought no more of them. The remembrance of one thing which supplied the place of all these was what I had read the evening before my departure. I recollect, also, the pastorals of Gessner, which his translator Hubert had sent me a little time before. These two ideas occurred to me so strongly, and were

connected in such a manner in my mind, that I was determined to endeavor to unite them by treating after the manner of Gessner, the subject of the Levite of Ephraim. His pastoral and simple style appeared to me but little fitted to so horrid a subject, and it was not to be presumed the situation I was then in would furnish me with such ideas as would enliven it. However, I attempted the thing, solely to amuse myself in my cabriolet, and without the least hope of success. I had no sooner begun than I was astonished at the liveliness of my ideas, and the facility with which I expressed them. In three days I composed the first three cantos of the little poem I finished at Motiers, and I am certain of not having done anything in my life in which there is a more interesting mildness of manners, a greater brilliancy of coloring, more simple delineations, greater exactness of proportion, or more antique simplicity in general, notwithstanding the horror of the subject which in itself is abominable, so that besides every other merit I had still that of a difficulty conquered. If the Levite of Ephraim be not the best of my works, it will ever be that most esteemed. I have never read, nor shall I ever read it again without feeling interiorly the applause of a heart without acrimony, which, far from being embittered by misfortunes, is susceptible of consolation in the midst of them, and finds within itself a resource by which they are counterbalanced. Assemble the great philosophers, so superior in their books to adversity which they do not suffer, place them in a situation similar to mine, and, in the first moments of the indignation of their injured honor, give them a like work to compose, and it will be seen in what manner they will acquit themselves of the task.

When I set off from Montmorency to go into Switzerland, I had resolved to stop at Yverdon, at the house of my old friend Roguin, who had several years before retired to that place, and had invited me to go and see him. I was told Lyons was not the direct road, for which reason I avoided going through it. But I was obliged to pass through Besancon, a fortified town, and consequently subject to the same inconvenience. I took it into my head to turn about and to go to Salins, under the pretense of going to see M. de Marian, the nephew of M. Dupin, who had an

employment at the salt-works, and formerly had given me many invitations to his house. The expedition succeeded: M. de Marian was not in the way, and, happily, not being obliged to stop, I continued my journey without being spoken to by anybody.

The moment I was within the territory of Berne, I ordered the postillion to stop; I got out of my carriage, prostrated myself, kissed the ground, and exclaimed in a transport of joy: "Heaven, the protector of virtue be praised, I touch a land of liberty!" Thus blind and unsuspecting in my hopes, have I ever been passionately attached to that which was to make me unhappy. The man thought me mad. I got into the carriage, and a few hours afterwards I had the pure and lively satisfaction of feeling myself pressed within the arms of the respectable Rougin. Ah! let me breathe for a moment with this worthy host! It is necessary I should gain strength and courage before I proceed further. I shall soon find that in my way which will give employment to them both. It is not without reason that I have been diffuse in the recital of all the circumstances I have been able to recollect. Although they may seem uninteresting, yet, when once the thread of the conspiracy is got hold of, they may throw some light upon the progress of it; and, for instance, without giving the first idea of the problem I am going to propose, afford some aid in solving it.

Suppose that, for the execution of the conspiracy of which I was the object, my absence was absolutely necessary, everything tending to that effect could not have happened otherwise than it did; but if without suffering myself to be alarmed by the nocturnal embassy of Madam de Luxembourg, I had continued to hold out, and, instead of remaining at the castle, had returned to my bed and quietly slept until morning, should I have equally had an order of arrest made out against me? This is a great question upon which the solution of many others depends, and for the examination of it, the hour of the comminatory decree of arrest, and that of the real decree may be remarked to advantage. A rude but sensible example of the importance of the least detail in the exposition of facts, of which the secret causes are sought for to discover them by induction.

BOOK XII

With this book begins the work of darkness, in which I have for the last eight years been enveloped, though it has not by any means been possible for me to penetrate the dreadful obscurity. In the abyss of evil into which I am plunged, I feel the blows reach me, without perceiving the hand by which they are directed or the means it employs. Shame and misfortune seem of themselves to fall upon me. When in the affliction of my heart I suffer a groan to escape me, I have the appearance of a man who complains without reason, and the authors of my ruin have the inconceivable art of rendering the public, unknown to itself, or without its perceiving the effects of it, accomplice in their conspiracy. Therefore, in my narrative of circumstances relative to myself, of the treatment I have received, and all that has happened to me, I shall not be able to indicate the hand by which the whole has been directed, nor assign the causes, while I state the effect. The primitive causes are all given in the preceding books; and everything in which I am interested, and all the secret motives pointed out. But it is impossible for me to explain, even by conjecture, that in which the different causes are combined to operate the strange events of my life. If amongst my readers one even of them should be generous enough to wish to examine the mystery to the bottom, and discover the truth, let him carefully read over a second time the three preceding books, afterwards at each fact he shall find stated in the books which follow, let him gain such information as is within his reach, and go back from intrigue to intrigue, and from agent to agent, until he comes to the first mover of all. I know where his researches will terminate; but in the meantime I lose myself in the crooked and obscure subterraneous path through which his steps must be directed.

During my stay at Yverdon, I became acquainted with all the family of my friend Roguin, and amongst others with his niece, Madam Boy de la Tour, and her daughters, whose father, as I think I have already observed, I formerly knew at Lyons. She was at Yverdon, upon a visit to her uncle and his sister; her eldest daughter, about fifteen years of age, delighted me by her fine

understanding and excellent disposition. I conceived the most tender friendship for the mother and the daughter. The latter was destined by M. Rougin to the colonel, his nephew, a man already verging towards the decline of life, and who showed me marks of great esteem and affection; but although the heart of the uncle was set upon this marriage, which was much wished for by the nephew also, and I was greatly desirous to promote the satisfaction of both, the great disproportion of age, and the extreme repugnancy of the young lady, made me join with the mother in postponing the ceremony, and the affair was at length broken off. The colonel has since married Mademoiselle Dillan, his relation, beautiful, and amiable as my heart could wish, and who has made him the happiest of husbands and fathers. However, M. Rougin has not yet forgotten my opposition to his wishes. My consolation is in the certainty of having discharged to him, and his family, the duty of the most pure friendship, which does not always consist in being agreeable, but in advising for the best.

I did not remain long in doubt about the reception which awaited me at Geneva, had I chosen to return to that city. My book was burned there, and on the 18th of June, nine days after an order to arrest me had been given at Paris, another to the same effect was determined upon by the republic. So many incredible absurdities were stated in this second decree, in which the ecclesiastical edict was formally violated, that I refused to believe the first accounts I heard of it, and when these were well confirmed, I trembled lest so manifest an infraction of every law, beginning with that of common-sense, should create the greatest confusion in the city. I was, however, relieved from my fears; everything remained quiet. If there was any rumor amongst the populace, it was unfavorable to me, and I was publicly treated by all the gossips and pedants like a scholar threatened with a flogging for not having said his catechism.

These two decrees were the signal for the cry of malediction, raised against me with unexampled fury in every part of Europe. All the gazettes, journals and pamphlets, rang the alarm-bell. The French especially, that mild, generous, and polished people, who

so much pique themselves upon their attention and proper condescension to the unfortunate, instantly forgetting their favorite virtues, signalized themselves by the number and violence of the outrages with which, while each seemed to strive who should afflict me most, they overwhelmed me. I was impious, an atheist, a madman, a wild beast, a wolf. The continuator of the Journal of Trevoux was guilty of a piece of extravagance in attacking my pretended Lycanthropy, which was by no means proof of his own. A stranger would have thought an author in Paris was afraid of incurring the animadversion of the police, by publishing a work of any kind without cramming into it some insult to me. I sought in vain the cause of this unanimous animosity, and was almost tempted to believe the world was gone mad. What! said I to myself, the editor of the 'Perpetual Peace', spread discord; the author of the 'Confession of the Savoyard Vicar', impious; the writer of the 'New Eloisa', a wolf; the author of 'Emilius', a madman! Gracious God! what then should I have been had I published the treatise of 'Esprit', or any similar work? And yet, in the storm raised against the author of that book, the public, far from joining the cry of his persecutors, revenged him of them by eulogium. Let his book and mine, the receptions the two works met with, and the treatment of the two authors in the different countries of Europe, be compared; and for the difference let causes satisfactory to a man of sense be found, and I will ask no more.

I found the residence of Yverdon so agreeable that I resolved to yield to the solicitations of M. Roguin and his family, who, were desirous of keeping me there. M. de Moiry de Gingins, bailiff of that city, encouraged me by his goodness to remain within his jurisdiction. The colonel pressed me so much to accept for my habitation a little pavilion he had in his house between the court and the garden, that I complied with his request, and he immediately furnished it with everything necessary for my little household establishment. The banneret Roguin, one of the persons who showed me the most assiduous attention, did not leave me for an instant during the whole day. I was much flattered by his civilities, but they sometimes importuned me. The day on

which I was to take possession of my new habitation was already fixed, and I had written to Theresa to come to me, when suddenly a storm was raised against me in Berne, which was attributed to the devotees, but I have never been able to learn the cause of it. The senate, excited against me, without my knowing by whom, did not seem disposed to suffer me to remain undisturbed in my retreat. The moment the bailiff was informed of the new fermentation, he wrote in my favor to several of the members of the government, reproaching them with their blind intolerance, and telling them it was shameful to refuse to a man of merit, under oppression, the asylum which such a numerous banditti found in their states. Sensible people were of opinion the warmth of his reproaches had rather embittered than softened the minds of the magistrates. However this may be, neither his influence nor eloquence could ward off the blow. Having received an intimation of the order he was to signify to me, he gave me a previous communication of it; and that I might wait its arrival, I resolved to set off the next day. The difficulty was to know where to go, finding myself shut out from Geneva and all France, and foreseeing that in the affair each state would be anxious to imitate its neighbor.

Madam Boy de la Tour proposed to me to go and reside in an uninhabited but completely furnished house, which belonged to her son in the village of Motiers, in the Val de Travers, in the county of Neuchatel. I had only a mountain to cross to arrive at it. The offer came the more opportunely, as in the states of the King of Prussia I should naturally be sheltered from all persecution, at least religion could not serve as a pretext for it. But a secret difficulty: improper for me at that moment to divulge, had in it that which was very sufficient to make me hesitate. The innate love of justice, to which my heart was constantly subject, added to my secret inclination to France, had inspired me with an aversion to the King of Prussia, who by his maxims and conduct, seemed to tread under foot all respect for natural law and every duty of humanity. Amongst the framed engravings, with which I had decorated my alcove at Montmorency, was a portrait of this

prince, and under it a distich, the last line of which was as follows:

Il pense en philosophe, et se conduit en roi.
[He thinks like a philosopher, and acts like a king.]

This verse, which from any other pen would have been a fine eulogium, from mine had an unequivocal meaning, and too clearly explained the verse by which it was preceded. The distich had been, read by everybody who came to see me, and my visitors were numerous. The Chevalier de Lorenzy had even written it down to give it to D'Alembert, and I had no doubt but D' Alembert had taken care to make my court with it to the prince. I had also aggravated this first fault by a passage in 'Emilius', where under the name of Adrastus, king of the Daunians, it was clearly seen whom I had in view, and the remark had not escaped critics, because Madam de Boufflers had several times mentioned the subject to me. I was, therefore, certain of being inscribed in red ink in the registers of the King of Prussia, and besides, supposing his majesty to have the principles I had dared to attribute to him, he, for that reason, could not but be displeased with my writings and their author; for everybody knows the worthless part of mankind, and tyrants have never failed to conceive the most mortal hatred against me, solely on reading my works, without being acquainted with my person.

However, I had presumption enough to depend upon his mercy, and was far from thinking I ran much risk. I knew none but weak men were slaves to the base passions, and that these had but little power over strong minds, such as I had always thought his to be. According to his art of reigning, I thought he could not but show himself magnanimous on this occasion, and that being so in fact was not above his character. I thought a mean and easy vengeance would not for a moment counterbalance his love of glory, and putting myself in his place, his taking advantage of circumstances to overwhelm with the weight of his generosity a man who had dared to think ill of him, did not appear to me impossible. I therefore went to settle at Motiers, with a

confidence of which I imagined he would feel all the value, and said to myself: When Jean Jacques rises to the elevation of Coriolanus, will Frederick sink below the General of the Volsci?

Colonel Roguin insisted on crossing the mountain with me, and installing me at Moiters. A sister-in-law to Madam Boy de la Tour, named Madam Girardier, to whom the house in which I was going to live was very convenient, did not see me arrive there with pleasure; however, she with a good grace put me in possession of my lodgings, and I ate with her until Theresa came, and my little establishment was formed.

Perceiving at my departure from Montmorency I should in future be a fugitive upon the earth, I hesitated about permitting her to come to me and partake of the wandering life to which I saw myself condemned. I felt the nature of our relation to each other was about to change, and that what until then had on my part been favor and friendship, would in future become so on hers. If her attachment was proof against my misfortunes, to this I knew she must become a victim, and that her grief would add to my pain. Should my disgrace weaken her affections, she would make me consider her constancy as a sacrifice, and instead of feeling the pleasure I had in dividing with her my last morsel of bread, she would see nothing but her own merit in following me wherever I was driven by fate.

I must say everything; I have never concealed the vices either of my poor mamma or myself; I cannot be more favorable to Theresa, and whatever pleasure I may have in doing honor to a person who is dear to me, I will not disguise the truth, although it may discover in her an error, if an involuntary change of the affections of the heart be one. I had long perceived hers to grow cooler towards me, and that she was no longer for me what she had been in our younger days. Of this I was the more sensible, as for her I was what I had always been. I fell into the same inconvenience as that of which I had felt the effect with mamma, and this effect was the same now I was with Theresa. Let us not seek for perfection, which nature never produces; it would be the same thing with any other woman. The manner in which I had disposed of my children, however reasonable it had appeared to

me, had not always left my heart at ease. While writing my 'Treatise on Education', I felt I had neglected duties with which it was not possible to dispense. Remorse at length became so strong that it almost forced from me a public confession of my fault at the beginning of my 'Emilius', and the passage is so clear, that it is astonishing any person should, after reading it, have had the courage to reproach me with my error. My situation was however still the same, or something worse, by the animosity of my enemies, who sought to find me in a fault. I feared a relapse, and unwilling to run the risk, I preferred abstinence to exposing Theresa to a similar mortification. I had besides remarked that a connection with women was prejudicial to my health; this double reason made me form resolutions to which I had but sometimes badly kept, but for the last three or four years I had more constantly adhered to them. It was in this interval I had remarked Theresa's coolness; she had the same attachment to me from duty, but not the least from love. Our intercourse naturally became less agreeable, and I imagined that, certain of the continuation of my cares wherever she might be, she would choose to stay at Paris rather than to wander with me. Yet she had given such signs of grief at our parting, had required of me such positive promises that we should meet again, and, since my departure, had expressed to the Prince de Conti and M. de Luxembourg so strong a desire of it, that, far from having the courage to speak to her of separation, I scarcely had enough to think of it myself; and after having felt in my heart how impossible it was for me to do without her, all I thought of afterwards was to recall her to me as soon as possible. I wrote to her to this effect, and she came. It was scarcely two months since I had quitted her; but it was our first separation after a union of so many years. We had both of us felt it most cruelly. What emotion in our first embrace! O how delightful are the tears of tenderness and joy! How does my heart drink them up! Why have I not had reason to shed them more frequently?

On my arrival at Motiers I had written to Lord Keith, marshal of Scotland and governor of Neuchatel, informing him of my retreat into the states of his Prussian majesty, and requesting of

him his protection. He answered me with his well-known generosity, and in the manner I had expected from him. He invited me to his house. I went with M. Martinet, lord of the manor of Val de Travers, who was in great favor with his excellency. The venerable appearance of this illustrious and virtuous Scotchman powerfully affected my heart, and from that instant began between him and me the strong attachment, which on my part still remains the same, and would be so on his, had not the traitors, who have deprived me of all the consolation of life, taken advantage of my absence to deceive his old age and depreciate me in his esteem.

George Keith, hereditary marshal of Scotland, and brother to the famous General Keith, who lived gloriously and died in the bed of honor, had quitted his country at a very early age, and was proscribed on account of his attachment to the house of Stuart. With that house, however, he soon became disgusted with the unjust and tyrannical spirit he remarked in the ruling character of the Stuart family. He lived a long time in Spain, the climate of which pleased him exceedingly, and at length attached himself, as his brother had done, to the service of the King of Prussia, who knew men and gave them the reception they merited. His majesty received a great return for this reception, in the services rendered him by Marshal Keith, and by what was infinitely more precious, the sincere friendship of his lordship. The great mind of this worthy man, haughty and republican, could stoop to no other yoke than that of friendship, but to this it was so obedient, that with very different maxims he saw nothing but Frederic the moment he became attached to him. The king charged the marshal with affairs of importance, sent him to Paris, to Spain, and at length, seeing he was already advanced in years, let him retire with the government of Neuchatel, and the delightful employment of passing there the remainder of his life in rendering the inhabitants happy.

The people of Neuchatel, whose manners are trivial, know not how to distinguish solid merit, and suppose wit to consist in long discourses. When they saw a sedate man of simple manners appear amongst them, they mistook his simplicity for

haughtiness, his candor for rusticity, his laconism for stupidity, and rejected his benevolent cares, because, wishing to be useful, and not being a sycophant, he knew not how to flatter people he did not esteem. In the ridiculous affair of the minister Petitpierre, who was displaced by his colleagues, for having been unwilling they should be eternally damned, my lord, opposing the usurpations of the ministers, saw the whole country of which he took the part, rise up against him, and when I arrived there the stupid murmur had not entirely subsided. He passed for a man influenced by the prejudices with which he was inspired by others, and of all the imputations brought against him it was the most devoid of truth. My first sentiment on seeing this venerable old man, was that of tender commiseration, on account of his extreme leanness of body, years having already left him little else but skin and bone; but when I raised my eyes to his animated, open, noble countenance, I felt a respect, mingled with confidence, which absorbed every other sentiment. He answered the very short compliment I made him when I first came into his presence by speaking of something else, as if I had already been a week in his house. He did not bid us sit down. The stupid chatelain, the lord of the manor, remained standing. For my part I at first sight saw in the fine and piercing eye of his lordship something so conciliating that, feeling myself entirely at ease, I without ceremony, took my seat by his side upon the sofa. By the familiarity of his manner I immediately perceived the liberty I took gave him pleasure, and that he said to himself: This is not a Neuchatelois.

Singular effect of the similarity of characters! At an age when the heart loses its natural warmth, that of this good old man grew warm by his attachment to me to a degree which surprised everybody. He came to see me at Motiers under the pretence of quail shooting, and stayed there two days without touching a gun. We conceived such a friendship for each other that we knew not how to live separate; the castle of Colombier, where he passed the summer, was six leagues from Motiers; I went there at least once a fortnight, and made a stay of twenty-four hours, and then returned like a pilgrim with my heart full of affection for my host.

The emotion I had formerly experienced in my journeys from the Hermitage to Eaubonne was certainly very different, but it was not more pleasing than that with which I approached Columbier.

What tears of tenderness have I shed when on the road to it, while thinking of the paternal goodness, amiable virtues, and charming philosophy of this respectable old man! I called him father, and he called me son. These affectionate names give, in some measure, an idea of the attachment by which we were united, but by no means that of the want we felt of each other, nor of our continual desire to be together. He would absolutely give me an apartment at the castle of Columbier, and for a long time pressed me to take up my residence in that in which I lodged during my visits. I at length told him I was more free and at my ease in my own house, and that I had rather continue until the end of my life to come and see him. He approved of my candor, and never afterwards spoke to me on the subject. Oh, my good lord! Oh, my worthy father! How is my heart still moved when I think of your goodness? Ah, barbarous wretches! how deeply did they wound me when they deprived me of your friendship? But no, great man, you are and ever will be the same for me, who am still the same. You have been deceived, but you are not changed. My lord marechal is not without faults; he is a man of wisdom, but he is still a man. With the greatest penetration, the nicest discrimination, and the most profound knowledge of men, he sometimes suffers himself to be deceived, and never recovers his error. His temper is very singular and foreign to his general turn of mind. He seems to forget the people he sees every day, and thinks of them in a moment when they least expect it; his attention seems ill-timed; his presents are dictated by caprice and not by propriety. He gives or sends in an instant whatever comes into his head, be the value of it ever so small. A young Genevese, desirous of entering into the service of Prussia, made a personal application to him; his lordship, instead of giving him a letter, gave him a little bag of peas, which he desired him to carry to the king. On receiving this singular recommendation his majesty gave a commission to the bearer of it. These elevated geniuses have between themselves a language which the vulgar will never

understand. The whimsical manner of my lord marechal, something like the caprice of a fine woman, rendered him still more interesting to me. I was certain, and afterwards had proofs, that it had not the least influence over his sentiments, nor did it affect the cares prescribed by friendship on serious occasions, yet in his manner of obliging there is the same singularity as in his manners in general. Of this I will give one instance relative to a matter of no great importance. The journey from Motiers to Colombier being too long for me to perform in one day, I commonly divided it by setting off after dinner and sleeping at Brot, which is half way. The landlord of the house where I stopped, named Sandoz, having to solicit at Berlin a favor of importance to him, begged I would request his excellency to ask it in his behalf. "Most willingly," said I, and took him with me. I left him in the antechamber, and mentioned the matter to his lordship, who returned me no answer. After passing with him the whole morning, I saw as I crossed the hall to go to dinner, poor Sandoz, who was fatigued to death with waiting. Thinking the governor had forgotten what I had said to him, I again spoke of the business before we sat down to table, but still received no answer. I thought this manner of making me feel I was importunate rather severe, and, pitying the poor man in waiting, held my tongue. On my return the next day I was much surprised at the thanks he returned me for the good dinner his excellency had given him after receiving his paper. Three weeks afterwards his lordship sent him the rescript he had solicited, dispatched by the minister, and signed by the king, and this without having said a word either to myself or Sandoz concerning the business, about which I thought he did not wish to give himself the least concern.

I could wish incessantly to speak of George Keith; from him proceeds my recollection of the last happy moments I have enjoyed: the rest of my life, since our separation, has been passed in affliction and grief of heart. The remembrance of this is so melancholy and confused that it was impossible for me to observe the least order in what I write, so that in future I shall be under the necessity of stating facts without giving them a regular arrangement.

I was soon relieved from my inquietude arising from the uncertainty of my asylum, by the answer from his majesty to the lord marshal, in whom, as it will readily be believed, I had found an able advocate. The king not only approved of what he had done, but desired him, for I must relate everything, to give me twelve louis. The good old man, rather embarrassed by the commission, and not knowing how to execute it properly, endeavored to soften the insult by transforming the money into provisions, and writing to me that he had received orders to furnish me with wood and coal to begin my little establishment; he moreover added, and perhaps from himself, that his majesty would willingly build me a little house, such a one as I should choose to have, provided I would fix upon the ground. I was extremely sensible of the kindness of the last offer, which made me forget the weakness of the other. Without accepting either, I considered Frederic as my benefactor and protector, and became so sincerely attached to him, that from that moment I interested myself as much in his glory as until then I had thought his successes unjust. At the peace he made soon after, I expressed my joy by an illumination in a very good taste: it was a string of garlands, with which I decorated the house I inhabited, and in which, it is true, I had the vindictive haughtiness to spend almost as much money as he had wished to give me. The peace ratified, I thought as he was at the highest pinnacle of military and political fame, he would think of acquiring that of another nature, by reanimating his states, encouraging in them commerce and agriculture, creating a new soil, covering it with a new people, maintaining peace amongst his neighbors, and becoming the arbitrator, after having been the terror, of Europe. He was in a situation to sheath his sword without danger, certain that no sovereign would oblige him again to draw it. Perceiving he did not disarm, I was afraid he would profit but little by the advantages he had gained, and that he would be great only by halves. I dared to write to him upon the subject, and with a familiarity of a nature to please men of his character, conveying to him the sacred voice of truth, which but few kings are worthy to hear. The liberty I took was a secret between him and myself. I

did not communicate it even to the lord marshal, to whom I sent my letter to the king sealed up. His lordship forwarded my dispatch without asking what it contained. His majesty returned me no answer and the marshal going soon after to Berlin, the king told him he had received from me a scolding. By this I understood my letter had been ill received, and the frankness of my zeal had been mistaken for the rusticity of a pedant. In fact, this might possibly be the case; perhaps I did not say what was necessary, nor in the manner proper to the occasion. All I can answer for is the sentiment which induced me to take up the pen.

Shortly after my establishment at Motiers, Travers having every possible assurance that I should be suffered to remain there in peace, I took the Armenian habit. This was not the first time I had thought of doing it. I had formerly had the same intention, particularly at Montmorency, where the frequent use of probes often obliging me to keep my chamber, made me more clearly perceive the advantages of a long robe. The convenience of an Armenian tailor, who frequently came to see a relation he had at Montmorency, almost tempted me to determine on taking this new dress, troubling myself but little about what the world would say of it. Yet, before I concluded about the matter, I wished to take the opinion of M. de Luxembourg, who immediately advised me to follow my inclination. I therefore procured a little Armenian wardrobe, but on account of the storm raised against me, I was induced to postpone making use of it until I should enjoy tranquillity, and it was not until some months afterwards that, forced by new attacks of my disorder, I thought I could properly, and without the least risk, put on my new dress at Motiers, especially after having consulted the pastor of the place, who told me I might wear it even in the temple without indecency. I then adopted the waistcoat, caffetan, fur bonnet, and girdle; and after having in this dress attended divine service, I saw no impropriety in going in it to visit his lordship. His excellency in seeing me clothed in this manner made me no other compliment than that which consisted in saying "Salaam aleki," i.e., "Peace be with you;" the common Turkish salutation; after

which nothing more was said upon the subject, and I continued to wear my new dress.

Having quite abandoned literature, all I now thought of was leading a quiet life, and one as agreeable as I could make it. When alone, I have never felt weariness of mind, not even in complete inaction; my imagination filling up every void, was sufficient to keep up my attention. The inactive babbling of a private circle, where, seated opposite to each other, they who speak move nothing but the tongue, is the only thing I have ever been unable to support. When walking and rambling about there is some satisfaction in conversation; the feet and eyes do something; but to hear people with their arms across speak of the weather, of the biting of flies, or what is still worse, compliment each other, is to me an insupportable torment. That I might not live like a savage, I took it into my head to learn to make laces. Like the women, I carried my cushion with me, when I went to make visits, or sat down to work at my door, and chatted with passers-by. This made me the better support the emptiness of babbling, and enabled me to pass my time with my female neighbors without weariness. Several of these were very amiable and not devoid of wit. One in particular, Isabella d'Ivernois, daughter of the attorney-general of Neuchatel, I found so estimable as to induce me to enter with her into terms of particular friendship, from which she derived some advantage by the useful advice I gave her, and the services she received from me on occasions of importance, so that now a worthy and virtuous mother of a family, she is perhaps indebted to me for her reason, her husband, her life, and happiness. On my part, I received from her gentle consolation, particularly during a melancholy winter, throughout the whole of which when my sufferings were most cruel, she came to pass with Theresa and me long evenings, which she made very short for us by her agreeable conversation, and our mutual openness of heart. She called me papa, and I called her daughter, and these names, which we still give to each other, will, I hope, continue to be as dear to her as they are to me. That my laces might be of some utility, I gave them to my young female friends at their marriages, upon condition of their suckling their children; Isabella's eldest sister

had one upon these terms, and well deserved it by her observance of them; Isabella herself also received another, which, by intention, she as fully merited. She has not been happy enough to be able to pursue her inclination. When I sent the laces to the two sisters, I wrote each of them a letter; the first has been shown about in the world; the second has not the same celebrity: friendship proceeds with less noise.

Amongst the connections I made in my neighborhood, of which I will not enter into a detail, I must mention that with Colonel Pury, who had a house upon the mountain, where he came to pass the summer. I was not anxious to become acquainted with him, because I knew he was upon bad terms at court, and with the lord marshal, whom he did not visit. Yet, as he came to see me, and showed me much attention, I was under the necessity of returning his visit; this was repeated, and we sometimes dined with each other. At his house I became acquainted with M. du Perou, and afterwards too intimately connected with him to pass his name over in silence.

M. du Perou was an American, son to a commandant of Surinam, whose successor, M. le Chambrier, of Neuchatel, married his widow. Left a widow a second time, she came with her son to live in the country of her second husband.

1239

Du Perou, an only son, very rich, and tenderly beloved by his mother, had been carefully brought up, and his education was not lost upon him. He had acquired much knowledge, a taste for the arts, and piqued himself upon his having cultivated his rational faculty: his Dutch appearance, yellow complexion, and silent and close disposition, favored this opinion. Although young, he was already deaf and gouty. This rendered his motions deliberate and very grave, and although he was fond of disputing, he in general spoke but little because his hearing was bad. I was struck with his exterior, and said to myself, this is a thinker, a man of wisdom, such a one as anybody would be happy to have for a friend. He frequently addressed himself to me without paying the least compliment, and this strengthened the favorable opinion I had already formed of him. He said but little to me of myself or my books, and still less of himself; he was not destitute of ideas, and

what he said was just. This justness and equality attracted my regard. He had neither the elevation of mind, nor the discrimination of the lord marshal, but he had all his simplicity: this was still representing him in something. I did not become infatuated with him, but he acquired my attachment from esteem; and by degrees this esteem led to friendship, and I totally forgot the objection I made to the Baron Holbach: that he was too rich.

For a long time I saw but little of Du Perou, because I did not go to Neuchatel, and he came but once a year to the mountain of Colonel Pury. Why did I not go to Neuchatel? This proceeded from a childishness upon which I must not be silent.

Although protected by the King of Prussia and the lord marshal, while I avoided persecution in my asylum, I did not avoid the murmurs of the public, of municipal magistrates and ministers. After what had happened in France it became fashionable to insult me; these people would have been afraid to seem to disapprove of what my persecutors had done by not imitating them. The 'classe' of Neuchatel, that is, the ministers of that city, gave the impulse, by endeavoring to move the council of state against me. This attempt not having succeeded, the ministers addressed themselves to the municipal magistrate, who immediately prohibited my book, treating me on all occasions with but little civility, and saying, that had I wished to reside in the city I should not have been suffered to do it. They filled their Mercury with absurdities and the most stupid hypocrisy, which, although, it makes every man of sense laugh, animated the people against me. This, however, did not prevent them from setting forth that I ought to be very grateful for their permitting me to live at Motiers, where they had no authority; they would willingly have measured me the air by the pint, provided I had paid for it a dear price. They would have it that I was obliged to them for the protection the king granted me in spite of the efforts they incessantly made to deprive me of it. Finally, failing of success, after having done me all the injury they could, and defamed me to the utmost of their power, they made a merit of their impotence, by boasting of their goodness in suffering me to stay in their country. I ought to have laughed at their vain efforts, but I was

foolish enough to be vexed at them, and had the weakness to be unwilling to go to Neuchatel, to which I yielded for almost two years, as if it was not doing too much honor to such wretches, to pay attention to their proceedings, which, good or bad, could not be imputed to them, because they never act but from a foreign impulse. Besides, minds without sense or knowledge, whose objects of esteem are influence, power and money, and far from imagining even that some respect is due to talents, and that it is dishonorable to injure and insult them.

A certain mayor of a village, who from sundry malversations had been deprived of his office, said to the lieutenant of Val de Travers, the husband of Isabella: "I am told this Rousseau has great wit,—bring him to me that I may see whether he has or not." The disapprobation of such a man ought certainly to have no effect upon those on whom it falls.

After the treatment I had received at Paris, Geneva, Berne, and even at Neuchatel, I expected no favor from the pastor of this place. I had, however, been recommended to him by Madam Boy de la Tour, and he had given me a good reception; but in that country where every new-comer is indiscriminately flattered, civilities signify but little. Yet, after my solemn union with the reformed church, and living in a Protestant country, I could not, without failing in my engagements, as well as in the duty of a citizen, neglect the public profession of the religion into which I had entered; I therefore attended divine service. On the other hand, had I gone to the holy table, I was afraid of exposing myself to a refusal, and it was by no means probable, that after the tumult excited at Geneva by the council, and at Neuchatel by the classe (the ministers), he would, without difficulty, administer to me the sacrament in his church. The time of communion approaching, I wrote to M. de Montmollin, the minister, to prove to him my desire of communicating, and declaring myself heartily united to the Protestant church; I also told him, in order to avoid disputing upon articles of faith, that I would not hearken to any particular explanation of the point of doctrine. After taking these steps I made myself easy, not doubting but M. de Montmollin would refuse to admit me without the preliminary discussion to which I

refused to consent, and that in this manner everything would be at an end without any fault of mine. I was deceived: when I least expected anything of the kind, M. de Montmollin came to declare to me not only that he admitted me to the communion under the condition which I had proposed, but that he and the elders thought themselves much honored by my being one of their flock. I never in my whole life felt greater surprise or received from it more consolation. Living always alone and unconnected appeared to me a melancholy destiny, especially in adversity. In the midst of so many proscriptions and persecutions, I found it extremely agreeable to be able to say to myself: I am at least amongst my brethren; and I went to the communion with an emotion of heart, and my eyes suffused with tears of tenderness, which perhaps were the most agreeable preparation to Him to whose table I was drawing near.

Sometime afterwards his lordship sent me a letter from Madam de Boufflers, which he had received, at least I presumed so, by means of D'Alembert, who was acquainted with the marechal. In this letter, the first this lady had written to me after my departure from Montmorency, she rebuked me severely for having written to M. de Montmollin, and especially for having communicated. I the less understood what she meant by her reproof, as after my journey to Geneva, I had constantly declared myself a Protestant, and had gone publicly to the Hotel de Hollande without incurring the least censure from anybody. It appeared to me diverting enough, that Madam de Boufflers should wish to direct my conscience in matters of religion. However, as I had no doubt of the purity of her intention, I was not offended by this singular sally, and I answered her without anger, stating to her my reasons.

Calumnies in print were still industriously circulated, and their benign authors reproached the different powers with treating me too mildly. For my part, I let them say and write what they pleased, without giving myself the least concern about the matter. I was told there was a censure from the Sorbonne, but this I could not believe. What could the Sorbonne have to do in the matter? Did the doctors wish to know to a certainty that I was not a Catholic? Everybody already knew I was not one. Were they

desirous of proving I was not a good Calvinist? Of what consequence was this to them? It was taking upon themselves a singular care, and becoming the substitutes of our ministers. Before I saw this publication I thought it was distributed in the name of the Sorbonne, by way of mockery: and when I had read it I was convinced this was the case. But when at length there was not a doubt of its authenticity, all I could bring myself to believe was, that the learned doctors would have been better placed in a madhouse than they were in the college.

I was more affected by another publication, because it came from a man for whom I always had an esteem, and whose constancy I admired, though I pitied his blindness. I mean the mandatory letter against me by the archbishop of Paris. I thought to return an answer to it was a duty I owed myself. This I felt I could do without derogating from my dignity; the case was something similar to that of the King of Poland. I had always detested brutal disputes, after the manner of Voltaire. I never combat but with dignity, and before I deign to defend myself I must be certain that he by whom I am attacked will not dishonor my retort. I had no doubt but this letter was fabricated by the Jesuits, and although they were at that time in distress, I discovered in it their old principle of crushing the wretched. I was therefore at liberty to follow my ancient maxim, by honoring the titular author, and refuting the work which I think I did completely.

I found my residence at Motiers very agreeable, and nothing was wanting to determine me to end my days there, but a certainty of the means of subsistence. Living is dear in that neighborhood, and all my old projects had been overturned by the dissolution of my household arrangements at Montmorency, the establishment of others, the sale or squandering of my furniture, and the expenses incurred since my departure. The little capital which remained to me daily diminished. Two or three years were sufficient to consume the remainder without my having the means of renewing it, except by again engaging in literary pursuits: a pernicious profession which I had already abandoned. Persuaded that everything which concerned me would change, and that the

public, recovered from its frenzy, would make my persecutors blush, all my endeavors tended to prolong my resources until this happy revolution should take place, after which I should more at my ease choose a resource from amongst those which might offer themselves. To this effect I took up my Dictionary of Music, which ten years' labor had so far advanced as to leave nothing wanting to it but the last corrections. My books which I had lately received, enabled me to finish this work; my papers sent me by the same conveyance, furnished me with the means of beginning my memoirs to which I was determined to give my whole attention. I began by transcribing the letters into a book, by which my memory might be guided in the order of fact and time. I had already selected those I intended to keep for this purpose, and for ten years the series was not interrupted. However, in preparing them for copying I found an interruption at which I was surprised. This was for almost six months, from October, 1756, to March following. I recollected having put into my selection a number of letters from Diderot, De Leyre, Madam d' Epinay, Madam de Chenonceaux, etc., which filled up the void and were missing. What was become of them? Had any person laid their hands upon my papers whilst they remained in the Hotel de Luxembourg? This was not conceivable, and I had seen M. de Luxembourg take the key of the chamber in which I had deposited them. Many letters from different ladies, and all those from Diderot, were without date, on which account I had been under the necessity of dating them from memory before they could be put in order, and thinking I might have committed errors, I again looked them over for the purpose of seeing whether or not I could find those which ought to fill up the void. This experiment did not succeed. I perceived the vacancy to be real, and that the letters had certainly been taken away. By whom and for what purpose? This was what I could not comprehend. These letters, written prior to my great quarrels, and at the time of my first enthusiasm in the composition of 'Eloisa', could not be interesting to any person. They contained nothing more than cavillings by Diderot, jeerings from De Leyre, assurances of friendship from M. de Chenonceaux, and even Madam d'Epainay, with whom I was then

upon the best of terms. To whom were these letters of consequence? To what use were they to be put? It was not until seven years afterwards that I suspected the nature of the theft.

The deficiency being no longer doubtful, I looked over my rough drafts to see whether or not it was the only one. I found several, which on account of the badness of my memory, made me suppose others in the multitude of my papers. Those I remarked were that of the 'Morale Sensitive', and the extract of the adventures of Lord Edward. The last, I confess, made me suspect Madam de Luxembourg. La Roche, her valet de chambre, had sent me the papers, and I could think of nobody but herself to whom this fragment could be of consequence; but what concern could the other give her, any more than the rest of the letters missing, with which, even with evil intentions, nothing to my prejudice could be done, unless they were falsified? As for the marechal, with whose friendship for me, and invariable integrity, I was perfectly acquainted, I never could suspect him for a moment. The most reasonable supposition, after long tormenting my mind in endeavoring to discover the author of the theft, was that which imputed it to D'Alembert, who, having thrust himself into the company of Madam de Luxembourg, might have found means to turn over these papers, and take from amongst them such manuscripts and letters as he might have thought proper, either for the purpose of endeavoring to embroil me with the writer of them, or to appropriate those he should find useful to his own private purposes. I imagined that, deceived by the title of *Morale Sensitive*, he might have supposed it to be the plan of a real treatise upon materialism, with which he would have armed himself against me in a manner easy to be imagined. Certain that he would soon be undeceived by reading the sketch and determined to quit all literary pursuits, these larcenies gave me but little concern. They besides were not the first the same hand had committed upon me without having complained of these pilferings.

[I had found in his 'Elemens de Musique' (Elements of Music) several things taken from what I had written for the 'Encyclopedie', and which were given to him several years before the publication of his elements. I know not what he may have had to do with a book entitled 'Dictionnaire des Beaux Arts' (Dictionary of the Fine Arts) but I found in it articles transcribed word for word from mine, and this long before the same articles were printed in the Encyclopedie.]

In a very little time I thought no more of the trick that had been played me than if nothing had happened, and began to collect the materials I had left for the purpose of undertaking my projected confessions.

I had long thought the company of ministers, or at least the citizens and burgesses of Geneva, would remonstrate against the infraction of the edict in the decree made against me. Everything remained quiet, at least to all exterior appearance; for discontent was general, and ready, on the first opportunity, openly to manifest itself. My friends, or persons calling themselves such, wrote letter after letter exhorting me to come and put myself at their head, assuring me of public separation from the council. The fear of the disturbance and troubles which might be caused by my presence, prevented me from acquiescing with their desires, and, faithful to the oath I had formerly made, never to take the least part in any civil dissension in my country, I chose rather to let the offence remain as it was, and banish myself forever from the country, than to return to it by means which were violent and dangerous. It is true, I expected the burgesses would make legal remonstrances against an infraction in which their interests were deeply concerned; but no such steps were taken. They who conducted the body of citizens sought less the real redress of grievances than an opportunity to render themselves necessary. They caballed but were silent, and suffered me to be bespattered by the gossips and hypocrites set on to render me odious in the eyes of the populace, and pass off their misdemeanors as religious zeal.

After having, during a whole year, vainly expected that some one would remonstrate against an illegal proceeding, and seeing myself abandoned by my fellow-citizens, I determined to

renounce my ungrateful country in which I never had lived, from which I had not received either inheritance or services, and by which, in return for the honor I had endeavored to do it, I saw myself so unworthily treated by unanimous consent, since they, who should have spoken, had remained silent. I therefore wrote to the first syndic for that year, to M. Favre, if I remember right, a letter in which I solemnly gave up my freedom of the city of Geneva, carefully observing in it, however, that decency and moderation, from which I have never departed in the acts of haughtiness which, in my misfortunes, the cruelty of my enemies have frequently forced upon me,

This step opened the eyes of the citizens, who feeling they had neglected their own interests by abandoning my defence, took my part when it was too late. They had wrongs of their own which they joined to mine, and made these the subject of several well-reasoned representations, which they strengthened and extended, as the refusal of the council, supported by the ministry of France, made them more clearly perceive the project formed to impose on them a yoke. These altercations produced several pamphlets which were undecisive, until that appeared entitled '*Lettres ecrites de la Campagne*', a work written in favor of the council, with infinite art, and by which the remonstrating party, reduced to silence, was crushed for a time. This production, a lasting monument of the rare talents of its author, came from the Attorney-General Tronchin, a man of wit and an enlightened understanding, well versed in the laws and government of the republic. '*Siluit terra*'.

The remonstrators, recovered from their first overthrow, undertook to give an answer, and in time produced one which brought them off tolerably well. But they all looked to me, as the only person capable of combating a like adversary with hope of success. I confess I was of their opinion, and excited by my former fellow-citizens, who thought it was my duty to aid them with my pen, as I had been the cause of their embarrassment, I undertook to refute the '*Lettres ecrites de la Campagne*', and parodied the title of them by that of '*Lettres ecrites de la Montagne*,' which I gave to mine. I wrote this answer so secretly,

that at a meeting I had at Thonon, with the chiefs of the malcontents to talk of their affairs, and where they showed me a sketch of their answer, I said not a word of mine, which was quite ready, fearing obstacles might arise relative to the impression of it, should the magistrate or my enemies hear of what I had done. This work was, however known in France before the publication; but government chose rather to let it appear, than to suffer me to guess at the means by which my secret had been discovered. Concerning this I will state what I know, which is but trifling: what I have conjectured shall remain with myself.

I received, at Motiers, almost as many visits as at the Hermitage and Montmorency; but these, for the most part were a different kind. They who had formerly come to see me were people who, having taste, talents, and principles, something similar to mine, alleged them as the causes of their visits, and introduced subjects on which I could converse. At Motiers the case was different, especially with the visitors who came from France. They were officers or other persons who had no taste for literature, nor had many of them read my works, although, according to their own accounts, they had travelled thirty, forty, sixty, and even a hundred leagues to come and see me, and admire the illustrious man, the very celebrated, the great man, etc. For from the time of my settling at Motiers, I received the most impudent flattery, from which the esteem of those with whom I associated had formerly sheltered me. As but few of my new visitors deigned to tell me who or what they were, and as they had neither read nor cast their eye over my works, nor had their researches and mine been directed to the same objects, I knew not what to speak to them upon: I waited for what they had to say, because it was for them to know and tell me the purpose of their visit. It will naturally be imagined this did not produce conversations very interesting to me, although they, perhaps, were so to my visitors, according to the information they might wish to acquire; for as I was without suspicion, I answered without reserve, to every question they thought proper to ask me, and they commonly went away as well informed as myself of the particulars of my situation.

I was, for example, visited in this manner by M. de Feins, equerry to the queen, and captain of cavalry, who had the patience to pass several days at Motiers, and to follow me on foot even to La Ferriere, leading his horse by the bridle, without having with me any point of union, except our acquaintance with Mademoiselle Fel, and that we both played at 'bilboquet'. [A kind of cup and ball.]

Before this I had received another visit much more extraordinary. Two men arrived on foot, each leading a mule loaded with his little baggage, lodging at the inn, taking care of their mules and asking to see me. By the equipage of these muleteers they were taken for smugglers, and the news that smugglers were come to see me was instantly spread. Their manner of addressing me sufficiently showed they were persons of another description; but without being smugglers they might be adventurers, and this doubt kept me for some time on my guard. They soon removed my apprehensions. One was M. de Montauban, who had the title of Comte de la Tour du Pin, gentleman to the dauphin; the other, M. Dastier de Carpentras, an old officer who had his cross of St. Louis in his pocket, because he could not display it. These gentlemen, both very amiable, were men of sense, and their manner of travelling, so much to my own taste, and but little like that of French gentlemen, in some measure gained them my attachment, which an intercourse with them served to improve. Our acquaintance did not end with the visit; it is still kept up, and they have since been several times to see me, not on foot, that was very well for the first time; but the more I have seen of these gentlemen the less similarity have I found between their taste and mine; I have not discovered their maxims to be such as I have ever observed, that my writings are familiar to them, or that there is any real sympathy between them and myself. What, therefore, did they want with me? Why came they to see me with such an equipage? Why repeat their visit? Why were they so desirous of having me for their host? I did not at that time propose to myself these questions; but they have sometimes occurred to me since.

Won by their advances, my heart abandoned itself without reserve, especially to M. Dastier, with whose open countenance I was more particularly pleased. I even corresponded with him, and when I determined to print the 'Letters from the Mountains', I thought of addressing myself to him, to deceive those by whom my packet was waited for upon the road to Holland. He had spoken to me a good deal, and perhaps purposely, upon the liberty of the press at Avignon; he offered me his services should I have anything to print there: I took advantage of the offer and sent him successively by the post my first sheets. After having kept these for some time, he sent them back to me, "Because," said he, "no bookseller dared to sell them;" and I was obliged to have recourse to Rey taking care to send my papers, one after the other, and not to part with those which succeeded until I had advice of the reception of those already sent. Before the work was published, I found it had been seen in the office of the ministers, and D'Escherny, of Neuchatel, spoke to me of the book, entitled 'De l'Homme de la Montagne', which D'Holbach had told him was by me. I assured him, and it was true, that I never had written a book which bore that title. When the letters appeared he became furious, and accused me of falsehood; although I had told him truth. By this means I was certain my manuscript had been read; as I could not doubt the fidelity of Rey, the most rational conjecture seemed to be, that my packets had been opened at the post-house.

Another acquaintance I made much about the same time, but which was begun by letters, was that with M. Laliand of Nimes, who wrote to me from Paris, begging I would send him my profile; he said he was in want of it for my bust in marble, which Le Moine was making for him to be placed in his library. If this was a pretence invented to deceive me, it fully succeeded. I imagined that a man who wished to have my bust in marble in his library had his head full of my works, consequently of my principles, and that he loved me because his mind was in unison with mine. It was natural this idea should seduce me. I have since seen M. Laliand. I found him very ready to render me many trifling services, and to concern himself in my little affairs, but I

have my doubts of his having, in the few books he ever read, fallen upon any one of those I have written. I do not know that he has a library, or that such a thing is of any use to him; and for the bust he has a bad figure in plaster, by Le Moine, from which has been engraved a hideous portrait that bears my name, as if it bore to me some resemblance.

The only Frenchman who seemed to come to see me, on account of my sentiments, and his taste for my works, was a young officer of the regiment of Limousin, named Seguiet de St. Brisson. He made a figure in Paris, where he still perhaps distinguishes himself by his pleasing talents and wit. He came once to Montmorency, the winter which preceded my catastrophe. I was pleased with his vivacity. He afterwards wrote to me at Motiers, and whether he wished to flatter me, or that his head was turned with Emilius, he informed me he was about to quit the service to live independently, and had begun to learn the trade of a carpenter. He had an elder brother, a captain in the same regiment, the favorite of the mother, who, a devotee to excess, and directed by I know not what hypocrite, did not treat the youngest son well, accusing him of irreligion, and what was still worse, of the unpardonable crime of being connected with me. These were the grievances, on account of which he was determined to break with his mother, and adopt the manner of life of which I have just spoken, all to play the part of the young Emilius. Alarmed at his petulance, I immediately wrote to him, endeavoring to make him change his resolution, and my exhortations were as strong as I could make them. They had their effect. He returned to his duty, to his mother, and took back the resignation he had given the colonel, who had been prudent enough to make no use of it, that the young man might have time to reflect upon what he had done. St. Brisson, cured of these follies, was guilty of another less alarming, but, to me, not less disagreeable than the rest: he became an author. He successively published two or three pamphlets which announced a man not devoid of talents, but I have not to reproach myself with having encouraged him by my praises to continue to write.

Some time afterwards he came to see me, and we made together a pilgrimage to the island of St. Pierre. During this journey I found him different from what I saw of him at Montmorency. He had, in his manner, something affected, which at first did not much disgust me, although I have since thought of it to his disadvantage. He once visited me at the hotel de St. Simon, as I passed through Paris on my way to England. I learned there what he had not told me, that he lived in the great world, and often visited Madam de Luxembourg. Whilst I was at Trie, I never heard from him, nor did he so much as make inquiry after me, by means of his relation Mademoiselle Segulier, my neighbor. This lady never seemed favorably disposed towards me. In a word, the infatuation of M. de St. Brisson ended suddenly, like the connection of M. de Feins: but this man owed me nothing, and the former was under obligations to me, unless the follies I prevented him from committing were nothing more than affectation; which might very possibly be the case.

I had visits from Geneva also. The Delucs, father and son, successively chose me for their attendant in sickness. The father was taken ill on the road, the son was already sick when he left Geneva; they both came to my house. Ministers, relations, hypocrites, and persons of every description came from Geneva and Switzerland, not like those from France, to laugh at and admire me, but to rebuke and catechise me. The only person amongst them who gave me pleasure, was Moulton, who passed with me three or four days, and whom I wished to remain much longer; the most persevering of all, the most obstinate, and who conquered me by importunity, was a M. d'Ivernois, a merchant at Geneva, a French refugee, and related to the attorney-general of Neuchatel. This man came from Geneva to Motiers twice a year, on purpose to see me, remained with me several days together from morning to night, accompanied me in my walks, brought me a thousand little presents, insinuated himself in spite of me into my confidence, and intermeddled in all my affairs, notwithstanding there was not between him and myself the least similarity of ideas, inclination, sentiment, or knowledge. I do not believe he ever read a book of any kind throughout, or that he

knows upon what subject mine are written. When I began to herbalize, he followed me in my botanical rambles, without taste for that amusement, or having anything to say to me or I to him. He had the patience to pass with me three days in a public house at Goumains, whence, by wearying him and making him feel how much he wearied me, I was in hopes of driving him away. I could not, however, shake his incredible perseverance, nor by any means discover the motive of it.

Amongst these connections, made and continued by force, I must not omit the only one that was agreeable to me, and in which my heart was really interested: this was that I had with a young Hungarian who came to live at Neuchatel, and from that place to Motiers, a few months after I had taken up my residence there. He was called by the people of the country the Baron de Sauttern, by which name he had been recommended from Zurich. He was tall, well made, had an agreeable countenance, and mild and social qualities. He told everybody, and gave me also to understand that he came to Neuchatel for no other purpose, than that of forming his youth to virtue, by his intercourse with me. His physiognomy, manner, and behavior, seemed well suited to his conversation, and I should have thought I failed in one of the greatest duties had I turned my back upon a young man in whom I perceived nothing but what was amiable, and who sought my acquaintance from so respectable a motive. My heart knows not how to connect itself by halves. He soon acquired my friendship, and all my confidence, and we were presently inseparable. He accompanied me in all my walks, and became fond of them. I took him to the marechal, who received him with the utmost kindness. As he was yet unable to explain himself in French, he spoke and wrote to me in Latin, I answered in French, and this mingling of the two languages did not make our conversations either less smooth or lively. He spoke of his family, his affairs, his adventures, and of the court of Vienna, with the domestic details of which he seemed well acquainted. In fine, during two years which we passed in the greatest intimacy, I found in him a mildness of character proof against everything, manners not only polite but elegant, great neatness of person, an extreme decency

in his conversation, in a word, all the marks of a man born and educated a gentleman, and which rendered him in my eyes too estimable not to make him dear to me.

At the time we were upon the most intimate and friendly terms, D' Ivernois wrote to me from Geneva, putting me upon my guard against the young Hungarian who had taken up his residence in my neighborhood; telling me he was a spy whom the minister of France had appointed to watch my proceedings. This information was of a nature to alarm me the more, as everybody advised me to guard against the machinations of persons who were employed to keep an eye upon my actions, and to entice me into France for the purpose of betraying me. To shut the mouths, once for all, of these foolish advisers, I proposed to Sauttern, without giving him the least intimation of the information I had received, a journey on foot to Pontarlier, to which he consented. As soon as we arrived there I put the letter from D'Ivernois into his hands, and after giving him an ardent embrace, I said: "Sauttern has no need of a proof of my confidence in him, but it is necessary I should prove to the public that I know in whom to place it." This embrace was accompanied with a pleasure which persecutors can neither feel themselves, nor take away from the oppressed.

I will never believe Sauttern was a spy, nor that he betrayed me: but I was deceived by him. When I opened to him my heart without reserve, he constantly kept his own shut, and abused me by lies. He invented I know not what kind of story, to prove to me his presence was necessary in his own country. I exhorted him to return to it as soon as possible. He set off, and when I thought he was in Hungary, I learned he was at Strasbourgh. This was not the first time he had been there. He had caused some disorder in a family in that city; and the husband knowing I received him in my house, wrote to me. I used every effort to bring the young woman back to the paths of virtue, and Sauttern to his duty.

When I thought they were perfectly detached from each other, they renewed their acquaintance, and the husband had the complaisance to receive the young man at his house; from that moment I had nothing more to say. I found the pretended baron

had imposed upon me by a great number of lies. His name was not Sauttern, but Sauttersheim. With respect to the title of baron, given him in Switzerland, I could not reproach him with the impropriety, because he had never taken it; but I have not a doubt of his being a gentleman, and the marshal, who knew mankind, and had been in Hungary, always considered and treated him as such.

He had no sooner left my neighborhood, than the girl at the inn where he ate, at Motiers, declared herself with child by him. She was so dirty a creature, and Sauttern, generally esteemed in the country for his conduct and purity of morals, piqued himself so much upon cleanliness, that everybody was shocked at this impudent pretension. The most amiable women of the country, who had vainly displayed to him their charms, were furious: I myself was almost choked with indignation. I used every effort to get the tongue of this impudent woman stopped, offering to pay all expenses, and to give security for Sauttersheim. I wrote to him in the fullest persuasion, not only that this pregnancy could not relate to him, but that it was feigned, and the whole a machination of his enemies and mine. I wished him to return and confound the strumpet, and those by whom she was dictated to. The pusillanimity of his answer surprised me. He wrote to the master of the parish to which the creature belonged, and endeavored to stifle the matter. Perceiving this, I concerned myself no more about it, but I was astonished that a man who could stoop so low should have been sufficiently master of himself to deceive me by his reserve in the closest familiarity.

From Strasbourgh, Sauttersheim went to seek his fortune in Paris, and found there nothing but misery. He wrote to me acknowledging his error. My compassion was excited by the recollection of our former friendship, and I sent him a sum of money. The year following, as I passed through Paris, I saw him much in the same situation; but he was the intimate friend of M. de Laliand, and I could not learn by what means he had formed this acquaintance, or whether it was recent or of long standing. Two years afterwards Sauttersheim returned to Strasbourgh, whence he wrote to me and where he died. This, in a few words,

is the history of our connection, and what I know of his adventures; but while I mourn the fate of the unhappy young man, I still, and ever shall, believe he was the son of people of distinction, and the impropriety of his conduct was the effect of the situations to which he was reduced.

Such were the connections and acquaintance I acquired at Motiers. How many of these would have been necessary to compensate the cruel losses I suffered at the same time.

1269

The first of these was that of M. de Luxembourg, who, after having been long tormented by the physicians, at length became their victim, by being treated for the gout which they would not acknowledge him to have, as for a disorder they thought they could cure.

According to what La Roche, the confidential servant of Madam de Luxembourg, wrote to me relative to what had happened, it is by this cruel and memorable example that the miseries of greatness are to be deplored.

The loss of this good nobleman afflicted me the more, as he was the only real friend I had in France, and the mildness of his character was such as to make me quite forget his rank, and attach myself to him as his equal. Our connection was not broken off on account of my having quitted the kingdom; he continued to write to me as usual.

I nevertheless thought I perceived that absence, or my misfortune, had cooled his affection for me. It is difficult to a courtier to preserve the same attachment to a person whom he knows to be in disgrace with courts. I moreover suspected the great ascendancy Madam de Luxembourg had over his mind had been unfavorable to me, and that she had taken advantage of our separation to injure me in his esteem. For her part, notwithstanding a few affected marks of regard, which daily became less frequent, she less concealed the change in her friendship. She wrote to me four or five times into Switzerland, after which she never wrote to me again, and nothing but my prejudice, confidence and blindness, could have prevented my discovering in her something more than a coolness towards me.

Guy the bookseller, partner with Duchesne, who, after I had left Montmorency, frequently went to the hotel de Luxembourg, wrote to me that my name was in the will of the marechal. There was nothing in this either incredible or extraordinary, on which account I had no doubt of the truth of the information. I deliberated within myself whether or not I should receive the legacy. Everything well considered, I determined to accept it, whatever it might be, and to do that honor to the memory of an honest man, who, in a rank in which friendship is seldom found, had had a real one for me. I had not this duty to fulfill. I heard no more of the legacy, whether it were true or false; and in truth I should have felt some pain in offending against one of the great maxims of my system of morality, in profiting by anything at the death of a person whom I had once held dear. During the last illness of our friend Mussard, Leneips proposed to me to take advantage of the grateful sense he expressed for our cares, to insinuate to him dispositions in our favor. "Ah! my dear Leneips," said I, "let us not pollute by interested ideas the sad but sacred duties we discharge towards our dying friend. I hope my name will never be found in the testament of any person, at least not in that of a friend." It was about this time that my lord marshal spoke to me of his, of what he intended to do in it for me, and that I made him the answer of which I have spoken in the first part of my memoirs.

My second loss, still more afflicting and irreparable, was that of the best of women and mothers, who, already weighed down with years, and overburthened with infirmities and misery, quitted this vale of tears for the abode of the blessed, where the amiable remembrance of the good we have done here below is the eternal reward of our benevolence. Go, gentle and beneficent shade, to those of Fenelon, Bernex, Catinat, and others, who in a more humble state have, like them, opened their hearts to pure charity; go and taste of the fruit of your own benevolence, and prepare for your son the place he hopes to fill by your side. Happy in your misfortunes that Heaven, in putting to them a period, has spared you the cruel spectacle of his! Fearing, lest I should fill her heart with sorrow by the recital of my first disasters, I had not written

to her since my arrival in Switzerland; but I wrote to M. de Conzie, to inquire after her situation, and it was from him I learned she had ceased to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted, and that her own were at an end. I myself shall not suffer long; but if I thought I should not see her again in the life to come, my feeble imagination would less delight in the idea of the perfect happiness I there hope to enjoy.

My third and last loss, for since that time I have not had a friend to lose, was that of the lord marshal. He did not die but tired of serving the ungrateful, he left Neuchatel, and I have never seen him since. He still lives, and will, I hope, survive me: he is alive, and thanks to him all my attachments on earth are not destroyed. There is one man still worthy of my friendship; for the real value of this consists more in what we feel than in that which we inspire; but I have lost the pleasure I enjoyed in his, and can rank him in the number of those only whom I love, but with whom I am no longer connected. He went to England to receive the pardon of the king, and acquired the possession of the property which formerly had been confiscated. We did not separate without an intention of again being united, the idea of which seemed to give him as much pleasure as I received from it. He determined to reside at Keith Hall, near Aberdeen, and I was to join him as soon as he was settled there: but this project was too flattering to my hopes to give me any of its success. He did not remain in Scotland. The affectionate solicitations of the King of Prussia induced him to return to Berlin, and the reason of my not going to him there will presently appear.

Before this departure, foreseeing the storm which my enemies began to raise against me, he of his own accord sent me letters of naturalization, which seemed to be a certain means of preventing me from being driven from the country. The community of the Convent of Val de Travers followed the example of the governor, and gave me letters of Communion, gratis, as they were the first. Thus, in every respect, become a citizen, I was sheltered from legal expulsion, even by the prince; but it has never been by legitimate means, that the man who, of all others, has shown the greatest respect for the laws, has been persecuted. I do not think I

ought to enumerate, amongst the number of my losses at this time, that of the Abbe Malby. Having lived sometime at the house of his mother, I have been acquainted with the abbe, but not very intimately, and I have reason to believe the nature of his sentiments with respect to me changed after I acquired a greater celebrity than he already had. But the first time I discovered his insincerity was immediately after the publication of the 'Letters from the Mountain'. A letter attributed to him, addressed to Madam Saladin, was handed about in Geneva, in which he spoke of this work as the seditious clamors of a furious demagogue.

The esteem I had for the Abbe Malby, and my great opinion of his understanding, did not permit me to believe this extravagant letter was written by him. I acted in this business with my usual candor. I sent him a copy of the letter, informing him he was said to be the author of it. He returned me no answer. This silence astonished me: but what was my surprise when by a letter I received from Madam de Chenonceaux, I learned the Abbe was really the author of that which was attributed to him, and found himself greatly embarrassed by mine. For even supposing for a moment that what he stated was true, how could he justify so public an attack, wantonly made, without obligation or necessity, for the sole purpose of overwhelming in the midst of his greatest misfortunes, a man to whom he had shown himself a well-wisher, and who had not done anything that could excite his enmity? In a short time afterwards the 'Dialogues of Phocion', in which I perceived nothing but a compilation, without shame or restraint, from my writings, made their appearance.

In reading this book I perceived the author had not the least regard for me, and that in future I must number him among my most bitter enemies. I do not believe he has ever pardoned me for the Social Contract, far superior to his abilities, or the Perpetual Peace; and I am, besides, of opinion that the desire he expressed that I should make an extract from the Abbe de St. Pierre, proceeded from a supposition in him that I should not acquit myself of it so well.

The further I advance in my narrative, the less order I feel myself capable of observing. The agitation of the rest of my life

has deranged in my ideas the succession of events. These are too numerous, confused, and disagreeable to be recited in due order. The only strong impression they have left upon my mind is that of the horrid mystery by which the cause of them is concealed, and of the deplorable state to which they have reduced me. My narrative will in future be irregular, and according to the events which, without order, may occur to my recollection. I remember about the time to which I refer, full of the idea of my confessions, I very imprudently spoke of them to everybody, never imagining it could be the wish or interest, much less within the power of any person whatsoever, to throw an obstacle in the way of this undertaking, and had I suspected it, even this would not have rendered me more discreet, as from the nature of my disposition it is totally impossible for me to conceal either my thoughts or feelings. The knowledge of this enterprise was, as far as I can judge, the cause of the storm that was raised to drive me from Switzerland, and deliver me into the hands of those by whom I might be prevented from executing it.

I had another project in contemplation which was not looked upon with a more favorable eye by those who were afraid of the first: this was a general edition of my works. I thought this edition of them necessary to ascertain what books, amongst those to which my name was affixed, were really written by me, and to furnish the public with the means of distinguishing them from the writings falsely attributed to me by my enemies, to bring me to dishonor and contempt. This was besides a simple and an honorable means of insuring to myself a livelihood, and the only one that remained to me. As I had renounced the profession of an author, my memoirs not being of a nature to appear during my lifetime; as I no longer gained a farthing in any manner whatsoever, and constantly lived at a certain expense, I saw the end of my resources in that of the produce of the last things I had written. This reason had induced me to hasten the finishing of my Dictionary of Music, which still was incomplete. I had received for it a hundred louis (guineas) and a life annuity of three hundred livres; but a hundred louis could not last long in the hands of a man who annually expended upwards of sixty, and three-hundred

livres (twelve guineas) a year was but a trifling sum to one upon whom parasites and beggarly visitors lighted like a swarm of flies.

A company of merchants from Neuchatel came to undertake the general edition, and a printer or bookseller of the name of Reguillat, from Lyons, thrust himself, I know not by what means, amongst them to direct it. The agreement was made upon reasonable terms, and sufficient to accomplish my object. I had in print and manuscript, matter for six volumes in quarto. I moreover agreed to give my assistance in bringing out the edition. The merchants were, on their part, to pay me a thousand crowns (one hundred and twenty-five pounds) down, and to assign me an annuity of sixteen hundred livres (sixty-six pounds) for life.

The agreement was concluded but not signed, when the Letters from the Mountain appeared. The terrible explosion caused by this infernal work, and its abominable author, terrified the company, and the undertaking was at an end. I would compare the effect of this last production to that of the Letter on French Music, had not that letter, while it brought upon me hatred, and exposed me to danger, acquired me respect and esteem. But after the appearance of the last work, it was a matter of astonishment at Geneva and Versailles that such a monster as the author of it should be suffered to exist. The little council, excited by the French resident, and directed by the attorney-general, made a declaration against my work, by which, in the most severe terms, it was declared to be unworthy of being burned by the hands of the hangman, adding, with an address which bordered upon the burlesque, there was no possibility of speaking of or answering it without dishonor. I would here transcribe the curious piece of composition, but unfortunately I have it not by me. I ardently wish some of my readers, animated by the zeal of truth and equity, would read over the Letters from the Mountain: they will, I dare hope, feel the stoical moderation which reigns throughout the whole, after all the cruel outrages with which the author was loaded. But unable to answer the abuse, because no part of it could be called by that name nor to the reasons because these were unanswerable, my enemies pretended to appear too much

enraged to reply: and it is true, if they took the invincible arguments it contains for abuse, they must have felt themselves roughly treated.

The remonstrating party, far from complaining of the odious declaration, acted according to the spirit of it, and instead of making a trophy of the Letters from the Mountain, which they veiled to make them serve as a shield, were pusillanimous enough not to do justice or honor to that work, written to defend them, and at their own solicitation. They did not either quote or mention the letters, although they tacitly drew from them all their arguments, and by exactly following the advice with which they conclude, made them the sole cause of their safety and triumph. They had imposed on me this duty: I had fulfilled it, and unto the end had served their cause and the country. I begged of them to abandon me, and in their quarrels to think of nobody but themselves. They took me at my word, and I concerned myself no more about their affairs, further than constantly to exhort them to peace, not doubting, should they continue to be obstinate, of their being crushed by France; this however did not happen; I know the reason why it did not, but this is not the place to explain what I mean.

The effect produced at Neuchatel by the Letters from the Mountain was at first very mild. I sent a copy of them to M. de Montmollin, who received it favorably, and read it without making any objection. He was ill as well as myself; as soon as he recovered he came in a friendly manner to see me, and conversed on general subjects. A rumor was however begun; the book was burned I know not where. From Geneva, Berne, and perhaps from Versailles, the effervescence quickly passed to Neuchatel, and especially to Val de Travers, where, before even the ministers had taken any apparent steps, an attempt was secretly made to stir up the people. I ought, I dare assert, to have been beloved by the people of that country in which I have lived, giving alms in abundance, not leaving about me an indigent person without assistance, never refusing to do any service in my power, and which was consistent with justice, making myself perhaps too familiar with everybody, and avoiding, as far as it was possible

for me to do it, all distinction which might excite the least jealousy. This, however, did not prevent the populace, secretly stirred up against me, by I know not whom, from being by degrees irritated against me, even to fury, nor from publicly insulting me, not only in the country and upon the road, but in the street. Those to whom I had rendered the greatest services became most irritated against me, and even people who still continued to receive my benefactions, not daring to appear, excited others, and seemed to wish thus to be revenged of me for their humiliation, by the obligations they were under for the favors I had conferred upon them. Montmollin seemed to pay no attention to what was passing, and did not yet come forward. But as the time of communion approached, he came to advise me not to present myself at the holy table, assuring me, however, he was not my enemy, and that he would leave me undisturbed. I found this compliment whimsical enough; it brought to my recollection the letter from Madam de Boufflers, and I could not conceive to whom it could be a matter of such importance whether I communicated or not. Considering this condescension on my part as an act of cowardice, and moreover, being unwilling to give to the people a new pretext under which they might charge me with impiety, I refused the request of the minister, and he went away dissatisfied, giving me to understand I should repent of my obstinacy.

He could not of his own authority forbid me the communion: that of the Consistory, by which I had been admitted to it, was necessary, and as long as there was no objection from that body I might present myself without the fear of being refused. Montmollin procured from the Classe (the ministers) a commission to summon me to the Consistory, there to give an account of the articles of my faith, and to excommunicate me should I refuse to comply. This excommunication could not be pronounced without the aid of the Consistory also, and a majority of the voices. But the peasants, who under the appellation of elders, composed this assembly, presided over and governed by their minister, might naturally be expected to adopt his opinion, especially in matters of the clergy, which they still less

understood than he did. I was therefore summoned, and I resolved to appear.

What a happy circumstance and triumph would this have been to me could I have spoken, and had I, if I may so speak, had my pen in my mouth! With what superiority, with what facility even, should I have overthrown this poor minister in the midst of his six peasants! The thirst after power having made the Protestant clergy forget all the principles of the reformation, all I had to do to recall these to their recollection and to reduce them to silence, was to make comments upon my first 'Letters from the Mountain', upon which they had the folly to animadvert.

My text was ready, and I had only to enlarge on it, and my adversary was confounded. I should not have been weak enough to remain on the defensive; it was easy to me to become an assailant without his even perceiving it, or being able to shelter himself from my attack. The contemptible priests of the Classe, equally careless and ignorant, had of themselves placed me in the most favorable situation I could desire to crush them at pleasure. But what of this? It was necessary I should speak without hesitation, and find ideas, turn of expression, and words at will, preserving a presence of mind, and keeping myself collected, without once suffering even a momentary confusion. For what could I hope, feeling as I did, my want of aptitude to express myself with ease? I had been reduced to the most mortifying silence at Geneva, before an assembly which was favorable to me, and previously resolved to approve of everything I should say. Here, on the contrary, I had to do with a cavalier who, substituting cunning to knowledge, would spread for me a hundred snares before I could perceive one of them, and was resolutely determined to catch me in an error let the consequence be what it would. The more I examined the situation in which I stood, the greater danger I perceived myself exposed to, and feeling the impossibility of successfully withdrawing from it, I thought of another expedient. I meditated a discourse which I intended to pronounce before the Consistory, to exempt myself from the necessity of answering. The thing was easy. I wrote the discourse and began to learn it by memory, with an inconceivable

ardor. Theresa laughed at hearing me mutter and incessantly repeat the same phrases, while endeavoring to cram them into my head. I hoped, at length, to remember what I had written: I knew the chatelain as an officer attached to the service of the prince, would be present at the Consistory, and that notwithstanding the manoeuvres and bottles of Montmollin, most of the elders were well disposed towards me. I had, moreover, in my favor, reason, truth, and justice, with the protection of the king, the authority of the council of state, and the good wishes of every real patriot, to whom the establishment of this inquisition was threatening. In fine, everything contributed to encourage me.

On the eve of the day appointed, I had my discourse by rote, and recited it without missing a word. I had it in my head all night: in the morning I had forgotten it. I hesitated at every word, thought myself before the assembly, became confused, stammered, and lost my presence of mind. In fine, when the time to make my appearance was almost at hand, my courage totally failed me. I remained at home and wrote to the Consistory, hastily stating my reasons, and pleaded my disorder, which really, in the state to which apprehension had reduced me, would scarcely have permitted me to stay out the whole sitting.

The minister, embarrassed by my letter, adjourned the Consistory. In the interval, he of himself, and by his creatures, made a thousand efforts to seduce the elders, who, following the dictates of their consciences, rather than those they received from him, did not vote according to his wishes, or those of the Classe. Whatever power his arguments drawn from his cellar might have over this kind of people, he could not gain one of them, more than the two or three who were already devoted to his will, and who were called his 'ames damnees'.—[damned souls]—The officer of the prince, and the Colonel Pury, who, in this affair, acted with great zeal, kept the rest to their duty, and when Montmollin wished to proceed to excommunication, his Consistory, by a majority of voices, flatly refused to authorize him to do it. Thus reduced to the last expedient, that of stirring up the people against me, he, his colleagues, and other persons, set about it openly, and were so successful, that notwithstanding the strong and frequent

rescripts of the king, and the orders of the council of state, I was at length obliged to quit the country, that I might not expose the officer of the king to be himself assassinated while he protected me.

The recollection of the whole of this affair is so confused, that it is impossible for me to reduce to or connect the circumstances of it. I remember a kind of negotiation had been entered into with the Classe, in which Montmollin was the mediator. He feigned to believe it was feared I should, by my writings, disturb the peace of the country, in which case, the liberty I had of writing would be blamed. He had given me to understand that if I consented to lay down my pen, what was past would be forgotten. I had already entered into this engagement with myself, and did not hesitate in doing it with the Classe, but conditionally and solely in matters of religion. He found means to have a duplicate of the agreement upon some change necessary to be made in it, the condition having been rejected by the Classe; I demanded back the writing, which was returned to me, but he kept the duplicate, pretending it was lost. After this, the people, openly excited by the ministers, laughed at the rescripts of the king, and the orders of the council of state, and shook off all restraint. I was declaimed against from the pulpit, called antichrist, and pursued in the country like a mad wolf. My Armenian dress discovered me to the populace; of this I felt the cruel inconvenience, but to quit it in such circumstances, appeared to me an act of cowardice. I could not prevail upon myself to do it, and I quietly walked through the country with my caffetan and fur bonnet in the midst of the hootings of the dregs of the people, and sometimes through a shower of stones. Several times as I passed before houses, I heard those by whom they were inhabited call out: "Bring me my gun that I may fire at him." As I did not on this account hasten my pace, my calmness increased their fury, but they never went further than threats, at least with respect to firearms.

During the fermentation I received from two circumstances the most sensible pleasure. The first was my having it in my power to prove my gratitude by means of the lord marshal. The honest part of the inhabitants of Neuchatel, full of indignation at the

treatment I received, and the manoeuvres of which I was the victim, held the ministers in execration, clearly perceiving they were obedient to a foreign impulse, and the vile agents of people, who, in making them act, kept themselves concealed; they were moreover afraid my case would have dangerous consequences, and be made a precedent for the purpose of establishing a real inquisition.

The magistrates, and especially M. Meuron, who had succeeded M. d' Ivernois in the office of attorney-general, made every effort to defend me. Colonel Pury, although a private individual, did more and succeeded better. It was the colonel who found means to make Montmollin submit in his Consistory, by keeping the elders to their duty. He had credit, and employed it to stop the sedition; but he had nothing more than the authority of the laws, and the aid of justice and reason, to oppose to that of money and wine: the combat was unequal, and in this point Montmollin was triumphant. However, thankful for his zeal and cares, I wished to have it in my power to make him a return of good offices, and in some measure discharge a part of the obligations I was under to him. I knew he was very desirous of being named a counsellor of state; but having displeased the court by his conduct in the affair of the minister Petitpierre, he was in disgrace with the prince and governor. I however undertook, at all risks, to write to the lord marshal in his favor: I went so far as even to mention the employment of which he was desirous, and my application was so well received that, contrary to the expectations of his most ardent well wishers, it was almost instantly conferred upon him by the king. In this manner fate, which has constantly raised me to too great an elevation, or plunged me into an abyss of adversity, continued to toss me from one extreme to another, and whilst the populace covered me with mud I was able to make a counsellor of state.

The other pleasing circumstance was a visit I received from Madam de Verdelin with her daughter, with whom she had been at the baths of Bourbonne, whence they came to Motiers and stayed with me two or three days. By her attention and cares, she at length conquered my long repugnancy; and my heart, won by

her endearing manner, made her a return of all the friendship of which she had long given me proofs. This journey made me extremely sensible of her kindness: my situation rendered the consolations of friendship highly necessary to support me under my sufferings. I was afraid she would be too much affected by the insults I received from the populace, and could have wished to conceal them from her that her feelings might not be hurt, but this was impossible; and although her presence was some check upon the insolent populace in our walks, she saw enough of their brutality to enable her to judge of what passed when I was alone. During the short residence she made at Motiers, I was still attacked in my habitation. One morning her chambermaid found my window blocked up with stones, which had been thrown at it during the night. A very heavy bench placed in the street by the side of the house, and strongly fastened down, was taken up and reared against the door in such a manner as, had it not been perceived from the window, to have knocked down the first person who should have opened the door to go out. Madam de Verdelin was acquainted with everything that passed; for, besides what she herself was witness to, her confidential servant went into many houses in the village, spoke to everybody, and was seen in conversation with Montmollin. She did not, however, seem to pay the least attention to that which happened to me, nor never mentioned Montmollin nor any other person, and answered in a few words to what I said to her of him. Persuaded that a residence in England would be more agreeable to me than any other, she frequently spoke of Mr. Hume who was then at Paris, of his friendship for me, and the desire he had of being of service to me in his own country. It is time I should say something of Hume.

He had acquired a great reputation in France amongst the Encyclopedists by his essays on commerce and politics, and in the last place by his history of the House of Stuart, the only one of his writings of which I had read a part, in the translation of the Abbe Prevot. For want of being acquainted with his other works, I was persuaded, according to what I heard of him, that Mr. Hume joined a very republican mind to the English Paradoxes in favor of luxury. In this opinion I considered his whole apology of

Charles I. as a prodigy of impartiality, and I had as great an idea of his virtue as of his genius. The desire of being acquainted with this great man, and of obtaining his friendship, had greatly strengthened the inclination I felt to go to England, induced by the solicitations of Madam de Boufflers, the intimate friend of Hume. After my arrival in Switzerland, I received from him, by means of this lady, a letter extremely flattering; in which, to the highest encomiums on my genius, he subjoined a pressing invitation to induce me to go to England, and the offer of all his interest, and that of his friends, to make my residence there agreeable. I found in the country to which I had retired, the lord marshal, the countryman and friend of Hume, who confirmed my good opinion of him, and from whom I learned a literary anecdote, which did him great honor in the opinion of his lordship and had the same effect in mine. Wallace, who had written against Hume upon the subject of the population of the ancients, was absent whilst his work was in the press. Hume took upon himself to examine the proofs, and to do the needful to the edition. This manner of acting was according to my way of thinking. I had sold at six sous (three pence) a piece, the copies of a song written against myself. I was, therefore, strongly prejudiced in favor of Hume, when Madam de Verdelin came and mentioned the lively friendship he expressed for me, and his anxiety to do me the honors of England; such was her expression. She pressed me a good deal to take advantage of this zeal and to write to him. As I had not naturally an inclination to England, and did not intend to go there until the last extremity, I refused to write or make any promise; but I left her at liberty to do whatever she should think necessary to keep Mr. Hume favorably disposed towards me. When she went from Motiers, she left me in the persuasion, by everything she had said to me of that illustrious man, that he was my friend, and she herself still more his.

After her departure, Montmollin carried on his manoeuvres with more vigor, and the populace threw off all restraint. Yet I still continued to walk quietly amidst the hootings of the vulgar; and a taste for botany, which I had begun to contract with Doctor d'Ivernois, making my rambling more amusing, I went through

the country herbalising, without being affected by the clamors of this scum of the earth, whose fury was still augmented by my calmness. What affected me most was, seeing families of my friends, or of persons who gave themselves that name, openly join the league of my persecutors; such as the D'Ivernois, without excepting the father and brother of my Isabel le Boy de la Tour, a relation to the friend in whose house I lodged, and Madam Girardier, her sister-in-law.

[This fatality had begun with my residence at Yverdon; the banneret Roguin dying a year or two after my departure from that city, the old papa Roguin had the candor to inform me with grief, as he said, that in the papers of his relation, proofs had been found of his having been concerned in the conspiracy to expel me from Yverdon and the state of Berne. This clearly proved the conspiracy not to be, as some people pretended to believe, an affair of hypocrisy; since the banneret, far from being a devotee, carried materialism and incredulity to intolerance and fanaticism. Besides, nobody at Yverdon had shown me more constant attention, nor had so prodigally bestowed upon me praises and flattery as this banneret. He faithfully followed the favorite plan of my persecutors.]

This Peter Boy was such a brute; so stupid, and behaved so uncouthly, that, to prevent my mind from being disturbed, I took the liberty to ridicule him; and after the manner of the 'Petit Prophete', I wrote a pamphlet of a few pages, entitled, 'la Vision de Pierre de la Montagne dit le Voyant,—[The vision of Peter of the Mountain called the Seer.]—in which I found means to be diverting enough on the miracles which then served as the great pretext for my persecution. Du Peyrou had this scrap printed at Geneva, but its success in the country was but moderate; the Neuchatelois with all their wit, taste but weakly attic salt or pleasantry when these are a little refined.

In the midst of decrees and persecutions, the Genevese had distinguished themselves by setting up a hue and cry with all their might; and my friend Vernes amongst others, with an heroic generosity, chose that moment precisely to publish against me letters in which he pretended to prove I was not a Christian. These letters, written with an air of self-sufficiency, were not the better for it, although it was positively said the celebrated Bonnet had given them some correction: for this man, although a materialist, has an intolerant orthodoxy the moment I am in question. There

certainly was nothing in this work which could tempt me to answer it; but having an opportunity of saying a few words upon it in my 'Letters from the Mountain', I inserted in them a short note sufficiently expressive of disdain to render Vernes furious. He filled Geneva with his furious exclamations, and D'Ivernois wrote me word he had quite lost his senses. Sometime afterwards appeared an anonymous sheet, which instead of ink seemed to be written with water of Phlegethon. In this letter I was accused of having exposed my children in the streets, of taking about with me a soldier's trull, of being worn out with debaucheries..., and other fine things of a like nature. It was not difficult for me to discover the author. My first idea on reading this libel, was to reduce to its real value everything the world calls fame and reputation amongst men; seeing thus a man who was never in a brothel in his life, and whose greatest defect was in being as timid and shy as a virgin, treated as a frequenter of places of that description; and in finding myself charged with being....., I, who not only never had the least taint of such disorder, but, according to the faculty, was so constructed as to make it almost impossible for me to contract it. Everything well considered, I thought I could not better refute this libel than by having it printed in the city in which I longest resided, and with this intention I sent it to Duchesne to print it as it was with an advertisement in which I named M. Vernes and a few short notes by way of eclaireissement. Not satisfied with printing it only, I sent copies to several persons, and amongst others one copy to the Prince Louis of Wirtemberg, who had made me polite advances and with whom I was in correspondence. The prince, Du Peyrou, and others, seemed to have their doubts about the author of the libel, and blamed me for having named Vernes upon so slight a foundation. Their remarks produced in me some scruples, and I wrote to Duchesne to suppress the paper. Guy wrote to me he had suppressed it: this may or may not be the case; I have been deceived on so many occasions that there would be nothing extraordinary in my being so on this, and from the time of which I speak, was so enveloped in profound darkness that it was impossible for me to come at any kind of truth.

M. Vernes bore the imputation with a moderation more than astonishing in a man who was supposed not to have deserved it, and after the fury with which he was seized on former occasions. He wrote me two or three letters in very guarded terms, with a view, as it appeared to me, to endeavor by my answers to discover how far I was certain of his being the author of the paper, and whether or not I had any proofs against him. I wrote him two short answers, severe in the sense, but politely expressed, and with which he was not displeased. To his third letter, perceiving he wished to form with me a kind of correspondence, I returned no answer, and he got D'Ivernois to speak to me. Madam Cramer wrote to Du Peyrou, telling him she was certain the libel was not by Vernes. This however, did not make me change my opinion. But as it was possible I might be deceived, and as it is certain that if I were, I owed Vernes an explicit reparation, I sent him word by D'Ivernois that I would make him such a one as he should think proper, provided he would name to me the real author of the libel, or at least prove that he himself was not so. I went further: feeling that, after all, were he not culpable, I had no right to call upon him for proofs of any kind, I stated in a memoir of considerable length, the reasons whence I had inferred my conclusion, and determined to submit them to the judgment of an arbitrator, against whom Vernes could not except. But few people would guess the arbitrator of whom I made choice. I declared at the end of the memoir, that if, after having examined it, and made such inquiries as should seem necessary, the council pronounced M. Vernes not to be the author of the libel, from that moment I should be fully persuaded he was not, and would immediately go and throw myself at his feet, and ask his pardon until I had obtained it. I can say with the greatest truth that my ardent zeal for equity, the uprightness and generosity of my heart, and my confidence in the love of justice innate in every mind never appeared more fully and perceptible than in this wise and interesting memoir, in which I took, without hesitation, my most implacable enemies for arbitrators between a calumniator and myself. I read to Du Peyrou what I had written: he advised me to suppress it, and I did so. He wished me to wait for the proofs

Vernes promised, and I am still waiting for them: he thought it best that I should in the meantime be silent, and I held my tongue, and shall do so the rest of my life, censured as I am for having brought against Vernes a heavy imputation, false and unsupportable by proof, although I am still fully persuaded, nay, as convinced as I am of my existence, that he is the author of the libel. My memoir is in the hands of Du Peyrou. Should it ever be published my reasons will be found in it, and the heart of Jean Jacques, with which my contemporaries would not be acquainted, will I hope be known.

I have now to proceed to my catastrophe at Motiers, and to my departure from Val de Travers, after a residence of two years and a half, and an eight months suffering with unshaken constancy of the most unworthy treatment. It is impossible for me clearly to recollect the circumstances of this disagreeable period, but a detail of them will be found in a publication to that effect by Du Peyrou, of which I shall hereafter have occasion to speak.

After the departure of Madam de Verdelin the fermentation increased, and, notwithstanding the reiterated rescripts of the king, the frequent orders of the council of state, and the cares of the chatelain and magistrates of the place, the people, seriously considering me as antichrist, and perceiving all their clamors to be of no effect, seemed at length determined to proceed to violence; stones were already thrown after me in the roads, but I was however in general at too great a distance to receive any harm from them. At last, in the night of the fair of Motiers, which is in the beginning of September, I was attacked in my habitation in such a manner as to endanger the lives of everybody in the house.

At midnight I heard a great noise in the gallery which ran along the back part of the house. A shower of stones thrown against the window and the door which opened to the gallery fell into it with so much noise and violence, that my dog, which usually slept there, and had begun to bark, ceased from fright, and ran into a corner gnawing and scratching the planks to endeavor to make his escape. I immediately rose, and was preparing to go from my chamber into the kitchen, when a stone thrown by a

vigorous arm crossed the latter, after having broken the window, forced open the door of my chamber, and fell at my feet, so that had I been a moment sooner upon the floor I should have had the stone against my stomach. I judged the noise had been made to bring me to the door, and the stone thrown to receive me as I went out. I ran into the kitchen, where I found Theresa, who also had risen, and was tremblingly making her way to me as fast as she could. We placed ourselves against the wall out of the direction of the window to avoid the stones, and deliberate upon what was best to be done; for going out to call assistance was the certain means of getting ourselves knocked on the head. Fortunately the maid-servant of an old man who lodged under me was waked by the noise, and got up and ran to call the chatelain, whose house was next to mine. He jumped from his bed, put on his robe de chambre, and instantly came to me with the guard, which, on account of the fair, went the round that night, and was just at hand. The chatelain was so alarmed at the sight of the effects of what had happened that he turned pale and on seeing the stones in the gallery, exclaimed, "Good God! here is a quarry!" On examining below stairs, a door of a little court was found to have been forced, and there was an appearance of an attempt having been made to get into the house by the gallery. On inquiring the reason why the guard had neither prevented nor perceived the disturbance, it came out that the guards of Motiers had insisted upon doing duty that night, although it was the turn of those of another village.

The next day the chatelain sent his report to the council of state, which two days afterwards sent an order to inquire into the affair, to promise a reward and secrecy to those who should impeach such as were guilty, and in the meantime to place, at the expense of the king, guards about my house, and that of the chatelain, which joined to it. The day after the disturbance, Colonel Pury, the Attorney-General Meuron, the Chatelain Martinet, the Receiver Guyenet, the Treasurer d'Ivernois and his father, in a word, every person of consequence in the country, came to see me, and united their solicitations to persuade me to yield to the storm and leave, at least for a time, a place in which I

could no longer live in safety nor with honor. I perceived that even the chatelain was frightened at the fury of the people, and apprehending it might extend to himself, would be glad to see me depart as soon as possible, that he might no longer have the trouble of protecting me there, and be able to quit the parish, which he did after my departure. I therefore yielded to their solicitations, and this with but little pain, for the hatred of the people so afflicted my heart that I was no longer able to support it.

I had a choice of places to retire to. After Madam de Verdelin returned to Paris, she had, in several letters, mentioned a Mr. Walpole, whom she called my lord, who, having a strong desire to serve me, proposed to me an asylum at one of his country houses, of the situation of which she gave me the most agreeable description; entering, relative to lodging and subsistence, into a detail which proved she and Lord Walpole had held particular consultations upon the project. My lord marshal had always advised me to go to England or Scotland, and in case of my determining upon the latter, offered me there an asylum. But he offered me another at Potsdam, near to his person, and which tempted me more than all the rest.

1304

He had just communicated to me what the king had said to him about my going there, which was a kind of invitation to me from that monarch, and the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha depended so much upon my taking the journey that she wrote to me desiring I should go to see her in my way to the court of Prussia, and stay some time before I proceeded farther; but I was so attached to Switzerland that I could not resolve to quit it so long as it was possible for me to live there, and I seized this opportunity to execute a project of which I had for several months conceived the idea, and of which I have deferred speaking, that I might not interrupt my narrative.

This project consisted in going to reside in the island of St. Peter, an estate belonging to the Hospital of Berne, in the middle of the lake of Bienne. In a pedestrian pilgrimage I had made the preceding year with Du Peyrou we had visited this isle, with which I was so much delighted that I had since that time

incessantly thought of the means of making it my place of residence. The greatest obstacle to my wishes arose from the property of the island being vested in the people of Berne, who three years before had driven me from amongst them; and besides the mortification of returning to live with people who had given me so unfavorable a reception, I had reason to fear they would leave me no more at peace in the island than they had done at Yverdon. I had consulted the lord marshal upon the subject, who thinking as I did, that the people of Berne would be glad to see me banished to the island, and to keep me there as a hostage for the works I might be tempted to write, and sounded their dispositions by means of M. Sturler, his old neighbor at Colombier. M. Sturler addressed himself to the chiefs of the state, and, according to their answer assured the marshal the Bernois, sorry for their past behavior, wished to see me settled in the island of St. Peter, and to leave me there at peace. As an additional precaution, before I determined to reside there, I desired the Colonel Chaillet to make new inquiries. He confirmed what I had already heard, and the receiver of the island having obtained from his superiors permission to lodge me in it, I thought I might without danger go to the house, with the tacit consent of the sovereign and the proprietors; for I could not expect the people of Berne would openly acknowledge the injustice they had done me, and thus act contrary to the most inviolable maxim of all sovereigns.

The island of St. Peter, called at Neuchatel the island of La Motte, in the middle of the lake of Bienne, is half a league in circumference; but in this little space all the chief productions necessary to subsistence are found. The island has fields, meadows, orchards, woods, and vineyards, and all these, favored by variegated and mountainous situations, form a distribution of the more agreeable, as the parts, not being discovered all at once, are seen successively to advantage, and make the island appear greater than it really is. A very elevated terrace forms the western part of it, and commands Gleresse and Neuverville. This terrace is planted with trees which form a long alley, interrupted in the middle by a great saloon, in which, during the vintage, the people

from the neighboring shores assemble and divert themselves. There is but one house in the whole island, but that is very spacious and convenient, inhabited by the receiver, and situated in a hollow by which it is sheltered from the winds.

Five or six hundred paces to the south of the island of St. Peter is another island, considerably less than the former, wild and uncultivated, which appears to have been detached from the greater island by storms: its gravelly soil produces nothing but willows and persicaria, but there is in it a high hill well covered with greensward and very pleasant. The form of the lake is an almost regular oval. The banks, less rich than those of the lake of Geneva and Neuchatel, form a beautiful decoration, especially towards the western part, which is well peopled, and edged with vineyards at the foot of a chain of mountains, something like those of Cote-Rotie, but which produce not such excellent wine. The bailiwick of St. John, Neuveville, Berne, and Bienne, lie in a line from the south to the north, to the extremity of the lake, the whole interspersed with very agreeable villages.

Such was the asylum I had prepared for myself, and to which I was determined to retire after quitting Val de Travers.

1309

[It may perhaps be necessary to remark that I left there an enemy in M. du Teneaux, mayor of Verrieres, not much esteemed in the country, but who has a brother, said to be an honest man, in the office of M. de St. Florentin. The mayor had been to see him some time before my adventure. Little remarks of this kind, though of no consequence, in themselves, may lead to the discovery of many underhand dealings.]

This choice was so agreeable to my peaceful inclinations, and my solitary and indolent disposition, that I consider it as one of the pleasing reveries of which I became the most passionately fond. I thought I should in that island be more separated from men, more sheltered from their outrages, and sooner forgotten by mankind: in a word, more abandoned to the delightful pleasures of the inaction of a contemplative life. I could have wished to have been confined in it in such a manner as to have had no intercourse with mortals, and I certainly took every measure I

could imagine to relieve me from the necessity of troubling my head about them.

The great question was that of subsistence, and by the dearness of provisions, and the difficulty of carriage, this is expensive in the island; the inhabitants are besides at the mercy of the receiver. This difficulty was removed by an arrangement which Du Peyrou made with me in becoming a substitute to the company which had undertaken and abandoned my general edition. I gave him all the materials necessary, and made the proper arrangement and distribution. To the engagement between us I added that of giving him the memoirs of my life, and made him the general depositary of all my papers, under the express condition of making no use of them until after my death, having it at heart quietly to end my days without doing anything which should again bring me back to the recollection of the public. The life annuity he undertook to pay me was sufficient to my subsistence. My lord marshal having recovered all his property, had offered me twelve hundred livres (fifty pounds) a year, half of which I accepted. He wished to send me the principal, and this I refused on account of the difficulty of placing it. He then sent the amount to Du Peyrou, in whose hands it remained, and who pays me the annuity according to the terms agreed upon with his lordship. Adding therefore to the result of my agreement with Du Peyrou, the annuity of the marshal, two-thirds of which were reversible to Theresa after my death, and the annuity of three hundred livres from Duchesne, I was assured of a genteel subsistence for myself, and after me for Theresa, to whom I left seven hundred livres (twenty-nine pounds) a year, from the annuities paid me by Rey and the lord marshal; I had therefore no longer to fear a want of bread. But it was ordained that honor should oblige me to reject all these resources which fortune and my labors placed within my reach, and that I should die as poor as I had lived. It will be seen whether or not, without reducing myself to the last degree of infamy, I could abide by the engagements which care has always taken to render ignominious, by depriving me of every other resource to force me to consent to my own dishonor. How was it possible anybody could doubt of

the choice I should make in such an alternative? Others have judged of my heart by their own.

My mind at ease relative to subsistence was without care upon every other subject. Although I left in the world the field open to my enemies, there remained in the noble enthusiasm by which my writings were dictated, and in the constant uniformity of my principles, an evidence of the uprightness of my heart which answered to that deducible from my conduct in favor of my natural disposition. I had no need of any other defense against my calumniators. They might under my name describe another man, but it was impossible they should deceive such as were unwilling to be imposed upon. I could have given them my whole life to animadvert upon, with a certainty, notwithstanding all my faults and weaknesses, and my want of aptitude to support the lightest yoke, of their finding me in every situation a just and good man, without bitterness, hatred, or jealousy, ready to acknowledge my errors, and still more prompt to forget the injuries I received from others; seeking all my happiness in love, friendship, and affection, and in everything carrying my sincerity even to imprudence and the most incredible disinterestedness.

I therefore in some measure took leave of the age in which I lived and my contemporaries, and bade adieu to the world, with an intention to confine myself for the rest of my days to that island; such was my resolution, and it was there I hoped to execute the great project of the indolent life to which I had until then consecrated the little activity with which Heaven had endowed me. The island was to become to me that of Papimanie, that happy country where the inhabitants sleep:

On n'y fait plus, on n'y fait nulle chose.

[There they do no more: there they do nothing.]

This 'no more' was everything for me, for I never much regretted sleep; indolence is sufficient to my happiness, and provided I do nothing, I had rather dream waking than asleep. Being past the age of romantic projects, and having been more stunned than flattered by the trumpet of fame, my only hope was

that of living at ease, and constantly at leisure. This is the life of the blessed in the world to come, and for the rest of mine here below I made it my supreme happiness.

They who reproach me with so many contradictions, will not fail here to add another to the number. I have observed the indolence of great companies made them unsupportable to me, and I am now seeking solitude for the sole purpose of abandoning myself to inaction. This however is my disposition; if there be in it a contradiction, it proceeds from nature and not from me; but there is so little that it is precisely on that account that I am always consistent. The indolence of company is burdensome because it is forced. That of solitude is charming because it is free, and depends upon the will. In company I suffer cruelly by inaction, because this is of necessity. I must there remain nailed to my chair, or stand upright like a picket, without stirring hand or foot, not daring to run, jump, sing, exclaim, nor gesticulate when I please, not allowed even to dream, suffering at the same time the fatigue of inaction and all the torment of constraint; obliged to pay attention to every foolish thing uttered, and to all the idle compliments paid, and constantly to keep my mind upon the rack that I may not fail to introduce in my turn my jest or my lie. And this is called idleness! It is the labor of a galley slave.

The indolence I love is not that of a lazy fellow who sits with his arms across in total inaction, and thinks no more than he acts, but that of a child which is incessantly in motion doing nothing, and that of a dotard who wanders from his subject. I love to amuse myself with trifles, by beginning a hundred things and never finishing one of them, by going or coming as I take either into my head, by changing my project at every instant, by following a fly through all its windings, in wishing to overturn a rock to see what is under it, by undertaking with ardor the work of ten years, and abandoning it without regret at the end of ten minutes; finally, in musing from morning until night without order or coherence, and in following in everything the caprice of a moment.

Botany, such as I have always considered it, and of which after my own manner I began to become passionately fond, was

precisely an idle study, proper to fill up the void of my leisure, without leaving room for the delirium of imagination or the weariness of total inaction. Carelessly wandering in the woods and the country, mechanically gathering here a flower and there a branch; eating my morsel almost by chance, observing a thousand and a thousand times the same things, and always with the same interest, because I always forgot them, were to me the means of passing an eternity without a weary moment. However elegant, admirable, and variegated the structure of plants may be, it does not strike an ignorant eye sufficiently to fix the attention. The constant analogy, with, at the same time, the prodigious variety which reigns in their conformation, gives pleasure to those only who have already some idea of the vegetable system. Others at the sight of these treasures of nature feel nothing more than a stupid and monotonous admiration. They see nothing in detail because they know not for what to look, nor do they perceive the whole, having no idea of the chain of connection and combinations which overwhelms with its wonders the mind of the observer. I was arrived at that happy point of knowledge, and my want of memory was such as constantly to keep me there, that I knew little enough to make the whole new to me, and yet everything that was necessary to make me sensible to the beauties of all the parts. The different soils into which the island, although little, was divided, offered a sufficient variety of plants, for the study and amusement of my whole life. I was determined not to leave a blade of grass without analyzing it, and I began already to take measures for making, with an immense collection of observations, the '*Flora Petrinsularis*'.

I sent for Theresa, who brought with her my books and effects. We boarded with the receiver of the island. His wife had sisters at Nidau, who by turns came to see her, and were company for Theresa. I here made the experiment of the agreeable life which I could have wished to continue to the end of my days, and the pleasure I found in it only served to make me feel to a greater degree the bitterness of that by which it was shortly to be succeeded.

I have ever been passionately fond of water, and the sight of it throws me into a delightful reverie, although frequently without a determinate object.

Immediately after I rose from my bed I never failed, if the weather was fine, to run to the terrace to respire the fresh and salubrious air of the morning, and glide my eye over the horizon of the lake, bounded by banks and mountains, delightful to the view. I know no homage more worthy of the divinity than the silent admiration excited by the contemplation of his works, and which is not externally expressed. I can easily comprehend the reason why the inhabitants of great cities, who see nothing but walls, and streets, have but little faith; but not whence it happens that people in the country, and especially such as live in solitude, can possibly be without it. How comes it to pass that these do not a hundred times a day elevate their minds in ecstasy to the Author of the wonders which strike their senses. For my part, it is especially at rising, wearied by a want of sleep, that long habit inclines me to this elevation which imposes not the fatigue of thinking. But to this effect my eyes must be struck with the ravishing beauties of nature. In my chamber I pray less frequently, and not so fervently; but at the view of a fine landscape I feel myself moved, but by what I am unable to tell. I have somewhere read of a wise bishop who in a visit to his diocese found an old woman whose only prayer consisted in the single interjection "Oh!"—"Good mother," said he to her, "continue to pray in this manner; your prayer is better than ours." This better prayer is mine also.

After breakfast, I hastened, with a frown on my brow, to write a few pitiful letters, longing ardently for the moment after which I should have no more to write. I busied myself for a few minutes about my books and papers, to unpack and arrange them, rather than to read what they contained; and this arrangement, which to me became the work of Penelope, gave me the pleasure of musing for a while. I then grew weary, and quitted my books to spend the three or four hours which remained to me of the morning in the study of botany, and especially of the system of Linnaeus, of which I became so passionately fond, that, after having felt how

useless my attachment to it was, I yet could not entirely shake it off. This great observer is, in my opinion, the only one who, with Ludwig, has hitherto considered botany as a naturalist, and a philosopher; but he has too much studied it in herbals and gardens, and not sufficiently in nature herself. For my part, whose garden was always the whole island, the moment I wanted to make or verify an observation, I ran into the woods or meadows with my book under my arm, and there laid myself upon the ground near the plant in question, to examine it at my ease as it stood. This method was of great service to me in gaining a knowledge of vegetables in their natural state, before they had been cultivated and changed in their nature by the hands of men. Fagon, first physician to Louis XIV., and who named and perfectly knew all the plants in the royal garden, is said to have been so ignorant in the country as not to know how to distinguish the same plants. I am precisely the contrary. I know something of the work of nature, but nothing of that of the gardener.

I gave every afternoon totally up to my indolent and careless disposition, and to following without regularity the impulse of the moment. When the weather was calm, I frequently went immediately after I rose from dinner, and alone got into the boat. The receiver had taught me to row with one oar; I rowed out into the middle of the lake. The moment I withdrew from the bank, I felt a secret joy which almost made me leap, and of which it is impossible for me to tell or even comprehend the cause, if it were not a secret congratulation on my being out of the reach of the wicked. I afterwards rowed about the lake, sometimes approaching the opposite bank, but never touching at it. I often let my boat float at the mercy of the wind and water, abandoning myself to reveries without object, and which were not the less agreeable for their stupidity. I sometimes exclaimed, "O nature! O my mother! I am here under thy guardianship alone; here is no deceitful and cunning mortal to interfere between thee and me." In this manner I withdrew half a league from land; I could have wished the lake had been the ocean. However, to please my poor dog, who was not so fond as I was of such a long stay on the water, I commonly followed one constant course; this was going

to land at the little island where I walked an hour or two, or laid myself down on the grass on the summit of the hill, there to satiate myself with the pleasure of admiring the lake and its environs, to examine and dissect all the herbs within my reach, and, like another Robinson Crusoe, built myself an imaginary place of residence in the island. I became very much attached to this eminence. When I brought Theresa, with the wife of the receiver and her sisters, to walk there, how proud was I to be their pilot and guide! We took there rabbits to stock it. This was another source of pleasure to Jean Jacques. These animals rendered the island still more interesting to me. I afterwards went to it more frequently, and with greater pleasure to observe the progress of the new inhabitants.

To these amusements I added one which recalled to my recollection the delightful life I led at the Charmettes, and to which the season particularly invited me. This was assisting in the rustic labors of gathering of roots and fruits, of which Theresa and I made it a pleasure to partake with the wife of the receiver and his family. I remember a Bernois, one M. Kirkeberguer, coming to see me, found me perched upon a tree with a sack fastened to my waist, and already so full of apples that I could not stir from the branch on which I stood. I was not sorry to be caught in this and similar situations. I hoped the people of Berne, witnesses to the employment of my leisure, would no longer think of disturbing my tranquillity but leave me at peace in my solitude. I should have preferred being confined there by their desire: this would have rendered the continuation of my repose more certain.

This is another declaration upon which I am previously certain of the incredulity of many of my readers, who obstinately continue to judge me by themselves, although they cannot but have seen, in the course of my life, a thousand internal affections which bore no resemblance to any of theirs. But what is still more extraordinary is, that they refuse me every sentiment, good or indifferent, which they have not, and are constantly ready to attribute to me such bad ones as cannot enter into the heart of man: in this case they find it easy to set me in opposition to nature, and to make of me such a monster as cannot in reality

exist. Nothing absurd appears to them incredible, the moment it has a tendency to blacken me, and nothing in the least extraordinary seems to them possible, if it tends to do me honor.

But, notwithstanding what they may think or say, I will still continue faithfully to state what J. J. Rousseau was, did, and thought; without explaining, or justifying, the singularity of his sentiments and ideas, or endeavoring to discover whether or not others have thought as he did. I became so delighted with the island of St. Peter, and my residence there was so agreeable to me that, by concentrating all my desires within it, I formed the wish that I might stay there to the end of my life. The visits I had to return in the neighborhood, the journeys I should be under the necessity of making to Neuchatel, Bienne, Yverdon, and Nidau, already fatigued my imagination. A day passed out of the island, seemed to me a loss of so much happiness, and to go beyond the bounds of the lake was to go out of my element. Past experience had besides rendered me apprehensive. The very satisfaction that I received from anything whatever was sufficient to make me fear the loss of it, and the ardent desire I had to end my days in that island, was inseparable from the apprehension of being obliged to leave it. I had contracted a habit of going in the evening to sit upon the sandy shore, especially when the lake was agitated. I felt a singular pleasure in seeing the waves break at my feet. I formed of them in my imagination the image of the tumult of the world contrasted with the peace of my habitation; and this pleasing idea sometimes softened me even to tears. The repose I enjoyed with ecstasy was disturbed by nothing but the fear of being deprived of it, and this inquietude was accompanied with some bitterness. I felt my situation so precarious as not to dare to depend upon its continuance. "Ah! how willingly," said I to myself, "would I renounce the liberty of quitting this place, for which I have no desire, for the assurance of always remaining in it. Instead of being permitted to stay here by favor, why am I not detained by force! They who suffer me to remain may in a moment drive me away, and can I hope my persecutors, seeing me happy, will leave me here to continue to be so? Permitting me to live in the island is but a trifling favor. I could wish to be condemned to do it, and

constrained to remain here that I may not be obliged to go elsewhere." I cast an envious eye upon Micheli du Cret, who, quiet in the castle of Arbourg, had only to determine to be happy to become so. In fine, by abandoning myself to these reflections, and the alarming apprehensions of new storms always ready to break over my head, I wished for them with an incredible ardor, and that instead of suffering me to reside in the island, the Bernois would give it me for a perpetual prison; and I can assert that had it depended upon me to get myself condemned to this, I would most joyfully have done it, preferring a thousand times the necessity of passing my life there to the danger of being driven to another place.

This fear did not long remain on my mind. When I least expected what was to happen, I received a letter from the bailiff of Nidau, within whose jurisdiction the island of St. Peter was; by his letter he announced to me from their excellencies an order to quit the island and their states. I thought myself in a dream. Nothing could be less natural, reasonable, or foreseen than such an order: for I considered my apprehensions as the result of inquietude in a man whose imagination was disturbed by his misfortunes, and not to proceed from a foresight which could have the least foundation. The measures I had taken to insure myself the tacit consent of the sovereign, the tranquillity with which I had been left to make my establishment, the visits of several people from Berne, and that of the bailiff himself, who had shown me such friendship and attention, and the rigor of the season in which it was barbarous to expel a man who was sickly and infirm, all these circumstances made me and many people believe that there was some mistake in the order and that ill-disposed people had purposely chosen the time of the vintage and the vacation of the senate suddenly to do me an injury.

Had I yielded to the first impulse of my indignation, I should immediately have departed. But to what place was I to go? What was to become of me at the beginning of the winter, without object, preparation, guide or carriage? Not to leave my papers and effects at the mercy of the first comer, time was necessary to make proper arrangements, and it was not stated in the order

whether or not this would be granted me. The continuance of misfortune began to weigh down my courage. For the first time in my life I felt my natural haughtiness stoop to the yoke of necessity, and, notwithstanding the murmurs of my heart, I was obliged to demean myself by asking for a delay. I applied to M. de Graffenried, who had sent me the order, for an explanation of it. His letter, conceived in the strongest terms of disapprobation of the step that had been taken, assured me it was with the greatest regret he communicated to me the nature of it, and the expressions of grief and esteem it contained seemed so many gentle invitations to open to him my heart: I did so. I had no doubt but my letter would open the eyes of my persecutors, and that if so cruel an order was not revoked, at least a reasonable delay, perhaps the whole winter, to make the necessary preparations for my retreat, and to choose a place of abode, would be granted me.

Whilst I waited for an answer, I reflected upon my situation, and deliberated upon the steps I had to take. I perceived so many difficulties on all sides, the vexation I had suffered had so strongly affected me, and my health was then in such a bad state, that I was quite overcome, and the effect of my discouragement was to deprive me of the little resource which remained in my mind, by which I might, as well as it was possible to do it, have withdrawn myself from my melancholy situation. In whatever asylum I should take refuge, it appeared impossible to avoid either of the two means made use of to expel me. One of which was to stir up against me the populace by secret manoeuvres; and the other to drive me away by open force, without giving a reason for so doing. I could not, therefore, depend upon a safe retreat, unless I went in search of it farther than my strength and the season seemed likely to permit. These circumstances again bringing to my recollection the ideas which had lately occurred to me, I wished my persecutors to condemn me to perpetual imprisonment rather than oblige me incessantly to wander upon the earth, by successively expelling me from the asylums of which I should make choice: and to this effect I made them a proposal. Two days after my first letter to M. de Graffenried, I

wrote him a second, desiring he would state what I had proposed to their excellencies. The answer from Berne to both was an order, conceived in the most formal and severe terms, to go out of the island, and leave every territory, mediate and immediate of the republic, within the space of twenty-four hours, and never to enter them again under the most grievous penalties.

This was a terrible moment. I have since that time felt greater anguish, but never have I been more embarrassed. What afflicted me most was being forced to abandon the project which had made me desirous to pass the winter in the island. It is now time I should relate the fatal anecdote which completed my disasters, and involved in my ruin an unfortunate people, whose rising virtues already promised to equal those of Rome and Sparta, I had spoken of the Corsicans in the 'Social Contract' as a new people, the only nation in Europe not too worn out for legislation, and had expressed the great hope there was of such a people, if it were fortunate enough to have a wise legislator. My work was read by some of the Corsicans, who were sensible of the honorable manner in which I had spoken of them; and the necessity under which they found themselves of endeavoring to establish their republic, made their chiefs think of asking me for my ideas upon the subject. M. Buttafuoco, of one of the first families in the country, and captain in France, in the Royal Italians, wrote to me to that effect, and sent me several papers for which I had asked to make myself acquainted with the history of the nation and the state of the country. M. Paoli, also, wrote to me several times, and although I felt such an undertaking to be superior to my abilities; I thought I could not refuse to give my assistance to so great and noble a work, the moment I should have acquired all the necessary information. It was to this effect I answered both these gentlemen, and the correspondence lasted until my departure.

Precisely at the same time, I heard that France was sending troops to Corsica, and that she had entered into a treaty with the Genoese. This treaty and sending of troops gave me uneasiness, and, without imagining I had any further relation with the business, I thought it impossible and the attempt ridiculous, to labor at an undertaking which required such undisturbed

tranquillity as the political institution of a people in the moment when perhaps they were upon the point of being subjugated. I did not conceal my fears from M. Buttafuoco, who rather relieved me from them by the assurance that, were there in the treaty things contrary to the liberty of his country, a good citizen like himself would not remain as he did in the service of France. In fact, his zeal for the legislation of the Corsicans, and his connections with M. Paoli, could not leave a doubt on my mind respecting him; and when I heard he made frequent journeys to Versailles and Fontainebleau, and had conversations with M. de Choiseul, all I concluded from the whole was, that with respect to the real intentions of France he had assurances which he gave me to understand, but concerning which he did not choose openly to explain himself by letter.

This removed a part of my apprehensions. Yet, as I could not comprehend the meaning of the transportation of troops from France, nor reasonably suppose they were sent to Corsica to protect the liberty of the inhabitants, which they of themselves were very well able to defend against the Genoese, I could neither make myself perfectly easy, nor seriously undertake the plan of the proposed legislation, until I had solid proofs that the whole was serious, and that the parties meant not to trifle with me. I much wished for an interview with M. Buttafuoco, as that was certainly the best means of coming at the explanation I wished. Of this he gave me hopes, and I waited for it with the greatest impatience. I know not whether he really intended me any interview or not; but had this even been the case, my misfortunes would have prevented me from profiting by it.

The more I considered the proposed undertaking, and the further I advanced in the examination of the papers I had in my hands, the greater I found the necessity of studying, in the country, the people for whom institutions were to be made, the soil they inhabited, and all the relative circumstances by which it was necessary to appropriate to them that institution. I daily perceived more clearly the impossibility of acquiring at a distance all the information necessary to guide me. This I wrote to M. Buttafuoco, and he felt as I did. Although I did not form the

precise resolution of going to Corsica. I considered a good deal of the means necessary to make that voyage. I mentioned it to M. Dastier, who having formerly served in the island under M. de Maillebois, was necessarily acquainted with it. He used every effort to dissuade me from this intention, and I confess the frightful description he gave me of the Corsicans and their country, considerably abated the desire I had of going to live amongst them.

But when the persecutions of Motiers made me think of quitting Switzerland, this desire was again strengthened by the hope of at length finding amongst these islanders the repose refused me in every other place. One thing only alarmed me, which was my unfitness for the active life to which I was going to be condemned, and the aversion I had always had to it. My disposition, proper for meditating at leisure and in solitude, was not so for speaking and acting, and treating of affairs with men. Nature, which had endowed me with the first talent, had refused me the last. Yet I felt that, even without taking a direct and active part in public affairs, I should as soon as I was in Corsica, be under the necessity of yielding to the desires of the people, and of frequently conferring with the chiefs. The object even of the voyage required that, instead of seeking retirement, I should in the heart of the country endeavor to gain the information of which I stood in need. It was certain that I should no longer be master of my own time, and that, in spite of myself, precipitated into the vortex in which I was not born to move, I should there lead a life contrary to my inclination, and never appear but to disadvantage. I foresaw that ill-supporting by my presence the opinion my books might have given the Corsicans of my capacity, I should lose my reputation amongst them, and, as much to their prejudice as my own, be deprived of the confidence they had in me, without which, however, I could not successfully produce the work they expected from my pen. I am certain that, by thus going out of my sphere, I should become useless to the inhabitants, and render myself unhappy.

Tormented, beaten by storms from every quarter, and, for several years past, fatigued by journeys and persecution, I

strongly felt a want of the repose of which my barbarous enemies wantonly deprived me: I sighed more than ever after that delicious indolence, that soft tranquillity of body and mind, which I had so much desired, and to which, now that I had recovered from the chimeras of love and friendship, my heart limited its supreme felicity. I viewed with terror the work I was about to undertake; the tumultuous life into which I was to enter made me tremble, and if the grandeur, beauty, and utility of the object animated my courage, the impossibility of conquering so many difficulties entirely deprived me of it.

Twenty years of profound meditation in solitude would have been less painful to me than an active life of six months in the midst of men and public affairs, with a certainty of not succeeding in my undertaking.

I thought of an expedient which seemed proper to obviate every difficulty. Pursued by the underhand dealings of my secret persecutors to every place in which I took refuge, and seeing no other except Corsica where I could in my old days hope for the repose I had until then been everywhere deprived of, I resolved to go there with the directions of M. Buttafuoco as soon as this was possible, but to live there in tranquillity; renouncing, in appearance, everything relative to legislation, and, in some measure, to make my hosts a return for their hospitality, to confine myself to writing in the country the history of the Corsicans, with a reserve in my own mind of the intention of secretly acquiring the necessary information to become more useful to them should I see a probability of success. In this manner, by not entering into an engagement, I hoped to be enabled better to meditate in secret and more at my ease, a plan which might be useful to their purpose, and this without much breaking in upon my dearly beloved solitude, or submitting to a kind of life which I had ever found insupportable.

But the journey was not, in my situation, a thing so easy to get over. According to what M. Dastier had told me of Corsica, I could not expect to find there the most simple conveniences of life, except such as I should take with me; linen, clothes, plate, kitchen furniture, and books, all were to be conveyed thither. To

get there myself with my *gouvernante*, I had the Alps to cross, and in a journey of two hundred leagues to drag after me all my baggage; I had also to pass through the states of several sovereigns, and according to the example set to all Europe, I had, after what had befallen me, naturally to expect to find obstacles in every quarter, and that each sovereign would think he did himself honor by overwhelming me with some new insult, and violating in my person all the rights of persons and humanity. The immense expense, fatigue, and risk of such a journey made a previous consideration of them, and weighing every difficulty, the first step necessary. The idea of being alone, and, at my age, without resource, far removed from all my acquaintance, and at the mercy of these semi-barbarous and ferocious people, such as M. Dastier had described them to me, was sufficient to make me deliberate before I resolved to expose myself to such dangers. I ardently wished for the interview for which M. Buttafuoco had given me reason to hope, and I waited the result of it to guide me in my determination.

Whilst I thus hesitated came on the persecutions of Motiers, which obliged me to retire. I was not prepared for a long journey, especially to Corsica. I expected to hear from Buttafuoco; I took refuge in the island of St. Peter, whence I was driven at the beginning of winter, as I have already stated. The Alps, covered with snow, then rendered my emigration impracticable, especially with the promptitude required from me. It is true, the extravagant severity of a like order rendered the execution of it almost impossible; for, in the midst of that concentrated solitude, surrounded by water, and having but twenty-four hours after receiving the order to prepare for my departure, and find a boat and carriages to get out of the island and the territory, had I had wings, I should scarcely have been able to pay obedience to it. This I wrote to the bailiff of Nidau, in answer to his letter, and hastened to take my departure from a country of iniquity. In this manner was I obliged to abandon my favorite project, for which reason, not having in my oppression been able to prevail upon my persecutors to dispose of me otherwise, I determined, in consequence of the invitation of my lord marshal, upon a journey

to Berlin, leaving Theresa to pass the winter in the island of St. Peter, with my books and effects, and depositing my papers in the hands of M. du Peyrou. I used so much diligence that the next morning I left the island and arrived at Bienne before noon. An accident, which I cannot pass over in silence, had here well nigh put an end to my journey.

As soon as the news of my having received an order to quit my asylum was circulated, I received a great number of visits from the neighborhood, and especially from the Bernois, who came with the most detestable falsehood to flatter and soothe me, protesting that my persecutors had seized the moment of the vacation of the senate to obtain and send me the order, which, said they, had excited the indignation of the two hundred. Some of these comforters came from the city of Bienne, a little free state within that of Berne, and amongst others a young man of the name of Wildremet whose family was of the first rank, and had the greatest credit in that city. Wildremet strongly solicited me in the name of his fellow-citizens to choose my retreat amongst them, assuring me that they were anxiously desirous of it, and that they would think it an honor and their duty to make me forget the persecutions I had suffered; that with them I had nothing to fear from the influence of the Bernois, that Bienne was a free city, governed by its own laws, and that the citizens were unanimously resolved not to hearken to any solicitation which should be unfavorable to me.

Wildremet perceiving all he could say to be ineffectual, brought to his aid several other persons, as well from Bienne and the environs as from Berne; even, and amongst others, the same Kirkeberguer, of whom I have spoken, who, after my retreat to Switzerland had endeavored to obtain my esteem, and by his talents and principles had interested me in his favor. But I received much less expected and more weighty solicitations from M. Barthes, secretary to the embassy from France, who came with Wildremet to see me, exhorted me to accept his invitation, and surprised me by the lively and tender concern he seemed to feel for my situation. I did not know M. Barthes; however I perceived in what he said the warmth and zeal of friendship, and that he had

it at heart to persuade me to fix my residence at Bienne. He made the most pompous eulogium of the city and its inhabitants, with whom he showed himself so intimately connected as to call them several times in my presence his patrons and fathers.

This from Barthes bewildered me in my conjectures. I had always suspected M. de Choiseul to be the secret author of all the persecutions I suffered in Switzerland. The conduct of the resident of Geneva, and that of the ambassador at Soleure but too much confirmed my suspicion; I perceived the secret influence of France in everything that happened to me at Berne, Geneva and Neuchatel, and I did not think I had any powerful enemy in that kingdom, except the Duke de Choiseul. What therefore could I think of the visit of Barthes and the tender concern he showed for my welfare? My misfortunes had not yet destroyed the confidence natural to my heart, and I had still to learn from experience to discern snares under the appearance of friendship. I sought with surprise the reason of the benevolence of M. Barthes; I was not weak enough to believe he had acted from himself; there was in his manner something ostentatious, an affectation even which declared a concealed intention, and I was far from having found in any of these little subaltern agents, that generous intrepidity which, when I was in a similar employment, had often caused a fermentation in my heart. I had formerly known something of the Chevalier Beauteville, at the castle of Montmorency; he had shown me marks of esteem; since his appointment to the embassy he had given me proofs of his not having entirely forgotten me, accompanied with an invitation to go and see him at Soleure. Though I did not accept this invitation, I was extremely sensible of his civility, not having been accustomed to be treated with such kindness by people in place. I presume M. de Beauteville, obliged to follow his instructions in what related to the affairs of Geneva, yet pitying me under my misfortunes, had by his private cares prepared for me the asylum of Bienne, that I might live there in peace under his auspices. I was properly sensible of his attention, but without wishing to profit by it and quite determined upon the journey to Berlin, I sighed after the moment in which I was to see

my lord marshal, persuaded I should in future find real repose and lasting happiness nowhere but near his person.

On my departure from the island, Kirkeberguer accompanied me to Bienne. I found Wildremet and other Biennois, who, by the water side, waited my getting out of the boat. We all dined together at the inn, and on my arrival there my first care was to provide a chaise, being determined to set off the next morning. Whilst we were at dinner these gentlemen repeated their solicitations to prevail upon me to stay with them, and this with such warmth and obliging protestations, that notwithstanding all my resolutions, my heart, which has never been able to resist friendly attentions, received an impression from theirs; the moment they perceived I was shaken, they redoubled their efforts with so much effect that I was at length overcome, and consented to remain at Bienne, at least until the spring.

Wildremet immediately set about providing me with a lodging, and boasted, as of a fortunate discovery, of a dirty little chamber in the back of the house, on the third story, looking into a courtyard, where I had for a view the display of the stinking skins of a dresser of chamois leather. My host was a man of a mean appearance, and a good deal of a rascal; the next day after I went to his house I heard that he was a debauchee, a gamester, and in bad credit in the neighborhood. He had neither wife, children, nor servants, and shut up in my solitary chamber, I was in the midst of one of the most agreeable countries in Europe, lodged in a manner to make me die of melancholy in the course of a few days. What affected me most was, that, notwithstanding what I had heard of the anxious wish of the inhabitants to receive me amongst them, I had not perceived, as I passed through the streets, anything polite towards me in their manners, or obliging in their looks. I was, however, determined to remain there; but I learned, saw, and felt, the day after, that there was in the city a terrible fermentation, of which I was the cause. Several persons hastened obligingly to inform me that on the next day I was to receive an order conceived in the most severe terms, immediately to quit the state, that is the city. I had nobody in whom I could confide; they who had detained me were dispersed. Wildremet

had disappeared; I heard no more of Barthes, and it did not appear that his recommendation had brought me into great favor with those whom he had styled his patrons and fathers. One M. de Van Travers, a Bernois, who had an agreeable house not far from the city, offered it to me for my asylum, hoping, as he said, that I might there avoid being stoned. The advantage this offer held out was not sufficiently flattering to tempt me to prolong my abode with these hospitable people.

Yet, having lost three days by the delay, I had greatly exceeded the twenty-four hours the Bernois had given me to quit their states, and knowing their severity, I was not without apprehensions as to the manner in which they would suffer me to cross them, when the bailiff of Nidau came opportunely and relieved me from my embarrassment. As he had highly disapproved of the violent proceedings of their excellencies, he thought, in his generosity, he owed me some public proof of his taking no part in them, and had courage to leave his bailiwick to come and pay me a visit at Bienne. He did me this favor the evening before my departure, and far from being incognito he affected ceremony, coming in fiocchi in his coach with his secretary, and brought me a passport in his own name that I might cross the state of Berne at my ease, and without fear of molestation. I was more flattered by the visit than by the passport, and should have been as sensible of the merit of it, had it had for object any other person whatsoever. Nothing makes a greater impression on my heart than a well-timed act of courage in favor of the weak unjustly oppressed.

At length, after having with difficulty procured a chaise, I next morning left this barbarous country, before the arrival of the deputation with which I was to be honored, and even before I had seen Theresa, to whom I had written to come to me, when I thought I should remain at Bienne, and whom I had scarcely time to countermand by a short letter, informing her of my new disaster. In the third part of my memoirs, if ever I be able to write them, I shall state in what manner, thinking to set off for Berlin, I really took my departure for England, and the means by which the two ladies who wished to dispose of my person, after having by

their manoeuvres driven me from Switzerland, where I was not sufficiently in their power, at last delivered me into the hands of their friend.

I added what follows on reading my memoirs to M. and Madam, the Countess of Egmont, the Prince Pignatelli, the Marchioness of Mesme, and the Marquis of Juigne.

I have written the truth: if any person has heard of things contrary to those I have just stated, were they a thousand times proved, he has heard calumny and falsehood; and if he refuses thoroughly to examine and compare them with me whilst I am alive, he is not a friend either to justice or truth. For my part, I openly, and without the least fear declare, that whoever, even without having read my works, shall have examined with his own eyes, my disposition, character, manners, inclinations, pleasures, and habits, and pronounce me a dishonest man, is himself one who deserves a gibbet.

Thus I concluded, and every person was silent; Madam d'Egmont was the only person who seemed affected; she visibly trembled, but soon recovered herself, and was silent like the rest of the company. Such were the fruits of my reading and declaration.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Faust

German

Romanticism

It is in part thanks to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that this world literature anthology exists, since both the name and the concept of *Weltliteratur* (world literature) come from him. One of the most important and influential figures of European Romanticism, Goethe exemplified the concept of a Renaissance man in ways that few people could ever hope to emulate. His contributions in almost every literary genre would be daunting enough to attempt to equal, but what makes him particularly unusual are his equally-influential contributions to science, philosophy, politics, and the arts. Goethe studied and wrote about botany, anatomy, color theory in optics, and mineralogy; his interest in meteorology led to what is called Goethe's barometer. He held administrative positions in a variety of fields, studied law, sketched and drew thousands of pictures, wrote essays on art criticism, was the manager and director of a theater company, and wrote guidelines on how to be an actor. His love life was extensive, very dramatic (in true Romantic fashion), and occasionally (perhaps even regularly) scandalous. He became both famous and infamous when his early Romantic novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was published in 1774, in part because the main character commits suicide. Goethe's *Faust* (Part One in 1806; final version of Part Two in 1832) is representative of later Romantic works; other authors had tackled the topic of the legendary medieval figure who sells his soul to the devil (including Christopher Marlowe in his play *Dr. Faustus*), but Goethe's treatment of the character alters the story in profound ways. In this version, Faust does not sell his soul; he offers a bet to Mephistopheles, with his soul as the prize. It is a bet that Faust is destined to win, as Goethe highlights in the "Prologue in Heaven," when God makes a similar bet with Mephistopheles that Faust's search for truth will lead him back to God in the end. As Goethe makes clear, God does not lose bets.

The path from Faust as sinner to Faust redeemed is a long one, encompassing the breadth and depth of Goethe's learning in science and the arts, in much the same way that Dante had displayed his formidable intellect in his *Divine Comedy*. In particular, Part Two of *Faust* is so complicated that it is rarely included in anthologies, which choose to include Part One only (again, as Dante's *Inferno* is usually the only section included). *Faust* is written in the form of a play, although Goethe intended it to be read, rather than performed. Like Shakespeare, Goethe ignores the rules about the unity of time and space in drama, jumping from one location and scene to the next. Goethe directly addresses Shakespeare's *Hamlet* several times in the play; Mephistopheles sings one of Ophelia's mad songs, and readers of *Hamlet* will notice multiple points of comparison with Ophelia in Margaret's final scene. Goethe's mature approach to Romanticism allows Margaret to be saved in a way that Shakespeare denies Ophelia. Faust may not be redeemed at the end of Part One, but readers can see the first signs of how Goethe plans to accomplish this transformation in that powerful final act.

Consider while reading:

1. *The Sorrows of Young Werther* is the epitome of the early Romantic movement called *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress"), and Werther's suicide in the novel supposedly led to copycat suicides. Napoleon Bonaparte claimed to have read *The Sorrows of Young Werther* multiple times. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the Creature finds a copy of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and sympathizes with the protagonist. After reading the story, discuss why these two very different figures might be drawn to this work.
2. *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was so popular that people dressed in Werther-style clothing and sold fan merchandise: common enough in the modern world, but a new phenomenon in Goethe's time. Why might early Romanticism have inspired such loyal fans of that book?

Written by Laura Getty

FAUST

License: Public Domain

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Translated by Baynard Taylor

Prologue in Heaven

[*THE LORD, THE HEAVENLY HOST. AFTERWARDS, MEPHISTOPHELES.
THE THREE ARCHANGELS COME FORWARD.*]

RAPHAEL

The sun-orb sings, in emulation, 'Mid brother-spheres, his ancient round: His
path predestined through Creation He ends with step of thunder-sound.
The angels from his visage splendid Draw power, whose measure none can say;
The lofty works, uncomprehended, Are bright as on the earliest day.

GABRIEL

And swift, and swift beyond conceiving, The splendor of the world goes round,
Day's Eden-brightness still relieving The awful Night's intense profound:
The ocean-tides in foam are breaking, Against the rocks' deep bases hurled,
And both, the spheric race partaking, Eternal, swift, are onward whirled!

MICHAEL

And rival storms abroad are surging From sea to land, from land to sea.
A chain of deepest action forging Round all, in wrathful energy.
There flames a desolation, blazing Before the Thunder's crashing way: Yet,
Lord, Thy messengers are praising The gentle movement of Thy Day.

THE THREE

Though still by them uncomprehended, From these the angels draw their
power, And all Thy works, sublime and splendid, Are bright as in Creation's
hour.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Since Thou, O Lord, deign'st to approach again And ask us how we do, in
manner kindest, And heretofore to meet myself wert fain, Among Thy
menials, now, my face Thou findest.
Pardon, this troop I cannot follow after With lofty speech, though by them
scorned and spurned: My pathos certainly would move Thy laughter, If
Thou hadst not all merriment unlearned.
Of suns and worlds I've nothing to be quoted; How men torment themselves, is
all I've noted.
The little god o' the world sticks to the same old way, And is as whimsical as
on Creation's day.

Life somewhat better might content him, But for the gleam of heavenly light
which Thou hast lent him: He calls it Reason—thence his power's increased,
To be far beastlier than any beast.

Saving Thy Gracious Presence, he to me A long-legged grasshopper appears to
be, That springing flies, and flying springs, And in the grass the same old
ditty sings.

Would he still lay among the grass he grows in!
Each bit of dung he seeks, to stick his nose in.

THE LORD

Hast thou, then, nothing more to mention?
Com'st ever, thus, with ill intention?
Find'st nothing right on earth, eternally?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No, Lord! I find things, there, still bad as they can be.
Man's misery even to pity moves my nature; I've scarce the heart to plague the
wretched creature.

THE LORD

Know'st Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The Doctor Faust?

THE LORD

My servant, he!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Forsooth! He serves you after strange devices: No earthly meat or drink the
fool suffices: His spirit's ferment far aspireth; Half conscious of his frenzied,
crazed unrest, The fairest stars from Heaven he requireth, From Earth the
highest raptures and the best, And all the Near and Far that he desireth Fails
to subdue the tumult of his breast.

THE LORD

Though still confused his service unto Me, I soon shall lead him to a clearer
morning.
Sees not the gardener, even while buds his tree, Both flower and fruit the future
years adorning?

MEPHISTOPHELES

What will you bet? There's still a chance to gain him, If unto me full leave you
give, Gently upon *my* road to train him!

THE LORD

As long as he on earth shall live, So long I make no prohibition.
While Man's desires and aspirations stir, He cannot choose but err.

MEPHISTOPHELES

My thanks! I find the dead no acquisition, And never cared to have them in my
keeping.
I much prefer the cheeks where ruddy blood is leaping, And when a corpse
approaches, close my house: It goes with me, as with the cat the mouse.

THE LORD

Enough! What thou hast asked is granted.
Turn off this spirit from his fountain-head; To trap him, let thy snares be
planted, And him, with thee, be downward led; Then stand abashed, when
thou art forced to say: A good man, through obscurest aspiration, Has still
an instinct of the one true way.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Agreed! But 'tis a short probation.
About my bet I feel no trepidation.
If I fulfill my expectation,
You'll let me triumph with a swelling breast: Dust shall he eat, and with a zest,
As did a certain snake, my near relation.

THE LORD

Therein thou'rt free, according to thy merits; The like of thee have never moved
My hate.
Of all the bold, denying Spirits, The waggish knave least trouble doth create.
Man's active nature, flagging, seeks too soon the level; Unqualified repose he
learns to crave; Whence, willingly, the comrade him I gave, Who works,
excites, and must create, as Devil.
But ye, God's sons in love and duty, Enjoy the rich, the ever-living Beauty!
Creative Power, that works eternal schemes, Clasp you in bonds of love,
relaxing never, And what in wavering apparition gleams Fix in its place with
thoughts that stand forever!

[HEAVEN CLOSES. THE ARCHANGELS SEPARATE.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

[SOLUS.]

I like, at times, to hear The Ancient's word, And have a care to be most civil:
It's really kind of such a noble Lord So humanly to gossip with the Devil!

First Part of the Tragedy

NIGHT

[A LOFTY-ARCHED, NARROW, GOTHIC CHAMBER. FAUST, IN A CHAIR
AT HIS DESK, RESTLESS.]

FAUST

I've studied now Philosophy
And Jurisprudence, Medicine,— And even, alas! Theology,—
From end to end, with labor keen; And here, poor fool! with all my lore I stand,
no wiser than before: I'm Magister—yea, Doctor—hight, And straight or
cross-wise, wrong or right, These ten years long, with many woes, I've led
my scholars by the nose,— And see, that nothing can be known!
That knowledge cuts me to the bone.
I'm cleverer, true, than those fops of teachers, Doctors and Magisters, Scribes
and Preachers; Neither scruples nor doubts come now to smite me, Nor Hell
nor Devil can longer affright me.

For this, all pleasure am I foregoing; I do not pretend to aught worth knowing, I
do not pretend I could be a teacher To help or convert a fellow-creature.
Then, too, I've neither lands nor gold, Nor the world's least pomp or honor hold
— No dog would endure such a curst existence!
Wherefore, from Magic I seek assistance, That many a secret perchance I reach
Through spirit-power and spirit-speech, And thus the bitter task forego Of
saying the things I do not know,— That I may detect the inmost force Which
binds the world, and guides its course; Its germs, productive powers explore,
And rummage in empty words no more!

O full and splendid Moon, whom I Have, from this desk, seen climb the sky So
many a midnight,—would thy glow For the last time beheld my woe!
Ever thine eye, most mournful friend, O'er books and papers saw me bend; But
would that I, on mountains grand, Amid thy blessed light could stand, With
spirits through mountain-caverns hover, Float in thy twilight the meadows
over, And, freed from the fumes of lore that swathe me, To health in thy
dewy fountains bathe me!

Ah, me! this dungeon still I see.
This drear, accursed masonry, Where even the welcome daylight strains But
duskly through the painted panes.
Hemmed in by many a toppling heap Of books worm-eaten, gray with dust,
Which to the vaulted ceiling creep, Against the smoky paper thrust,— With
glasses, boxes, round me stacked, And instruments together hurled,

Ancestral lumber, stuffed and packed— Such is my world: and what a world!

And do I ask, wherefore my heart Falters, oppressed with unknown needs?

Why some inexplicable smart
All movement of my life impedes?
Alas! in living Nature's stead, Where God His human creature set, In smoke
and mould the fleshless dead And bones of beasts surround me yet!

Fly! Up, and seek the broad, free land!
And this one Book of Mystery
From Nostradamus' very hand,
Is't not sufficient company?
When I the starry courses know, And Nature's wise instruction seek, With light
of power my soul shall glow, As when to spirits spirits speak.
Tis vain, this empty brooding here, Though guessed the holy symbols be: Ye,
Spirits, come—ye hover near— Oh, if you hear me, answer me!

*[HE OPENS THE BOOK, AND PERCEIVES THE SIGN OF THE
MACROCOSM.]*

Ha! what a sudden rapture leaps from this I view, through all my senses swiftly
flowing!

I feel a youthful, holy, vital bliss In every vein and fibre newly glowing.
Was it a God, who traced this sign, With calm across my tumult stealing, My
troubled heart to joy unsealing, With impulse, mystic and divine, The
powers of Nature here, around my path, revealing?

Am I a God?—so clear mine eyes!

In these pure features I behold Creative Nature to my soul unfold.

What says the sage, now first I recognize: "The spirit-world no closures fasten;
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead: Disciple, up! untiring, hasten To bathe
thy breast in morning-red!"

[HE CONTEMPLATES THE SIGN.]

How each the Whole its substance gives, Each in the other works and lives!
Like heavenly forces rising and descending, Their golden urns reciprocally
lending, With wings that winnow blessing From Heaven through Earth I see
them pressing, Filling the All with harmony unceasing!

How grand a show! but, ah! a show alone.

Thee, boundless Nature, how make thee my own?

Where you, ye beasts? Founts of all Being, shining, Whereon hang Heaven's
and Earth's desire, Whereto our withered hearts aspire,— Ye flow, ye feed:
and am I vainly pining?

*[HE TURNS THE LEAVES IMPATIENTLY, AND PERCEIVES THE SIGN OF
THE EARTH-SPIRIT.]*

How otherwise upon me works this sign!

Thou, Spirit of the Earth, art nearer: Even now my powers are loftier, clearer; I
glow, as drunk with new-made wine: New strength and heart to meet the
world incite me, The woe of earth, the bliss of earth, invite me, And though

the shock of storms may smite me, No crash of shipwreck shall have power
to fright me!

Clouds gather over me—

The moon conceals her light—

The lamp's extinguished!—

Mists rise,—red, angry rays are darting Around my head!—There falls

A horror from the vaulted roof, And seizes me!

I feel thy presence, Spirit I invoke!

Reveal thyself!

Ha! in my heart what rending stroke!

With new impulsion
My senses heave in this convulsion!
I feel thee draw my heart, absorb, exhaust me: Thou must! thou must! and
though my life it cost me!

*[HE SEIZES THE BOOK, AND MYSTERIOUSLY PRONOUNCES THE SIGN OF
THE SPIRIT. A RUDDY FLAME FLASHES. THE SPIRIT APPEARS IN
THE FLAME.]*

SPIRIT

Who calls me?

FAUST

[WITH AVERTED HEAD.]

Terrible to see!

SPIRIT

Me hast thou long with might attracted, Long from my sphere thy food exacted,
And now—

FAUST

Woe! I endure not thee!

SPIRIT

To view me is thine aspiration, My voice to hear, my countenance to see; Thy
powerful yearning moveth me, Here am I!—what mean perturbation Thee,
superhuman, shakes? Thy soul's high calling, where?

Where is the breast, which from itself a world did bear, And shaped and
cherished—which with joy expanded, To be our peer, with us, the Spirits,
banded?

Where art thou, Faust, whose voice has pierced to me, Who towards me
pressed with all thine energy?

He art thou, who, my presence breathing, seeing, Trembles through all the
depths of being, A writhing worm, a terror-stricken form?

FAUST

Thee, form of flame, shall I then fear?

Yes, I am Faust: I am thy peer!

SPIRIT

In the tides of Life, in Action's storm, A fluctuant wave,
A shuttle free,
Birth and the Grave,
An eternal sea,
A weaving, flowing
Life, all-glowing,

Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares The garment of Life
which the Deity wears!

FAUST

Thou, who around the wide world wendest, Thou busy Spirit, how near I feel to
thee!

SPIRIT

Thou'rt like the Spirit which thou comprehendest, Not me!

[DISAPPEARS.]

FAUST

[OVERWHELMED.]

Not thee!

Whom then?

I, image of the Godhead!

Not even like thee!

[A KNOCK.]

O Death!—I know it—'tis my Famulus!

My fairest luck finds no fruition: In all the fullness of my vision The soulless
sneak disturbs me thus!

*[ENTER WAGNER, IN DRESSING-GOWN AND NIGHT-CAP, A LAMP IN HIS
HAND. FAUST TURNS IMPATIENTLY.]*

WAGNER

Pardon, I heard your declamation; 'Twas sure an old Greek tragedy you read?
In such an art I crave some preparation, Since now it stands one in good stead.
I've often heard it said, a preacher Might learn, with a comedian for a teacher.

FAUST

Yes, when the priest comedian is by nature, As haply now and then the case
may be.

WAGNER

Ah, when one studies thus, a prisoned creature, That scarce the world on
holidays can see,— Scarce through a glass, by rare occasion, How shall one
lead it by persuasion?

FAUST

You'll ne'er attain it, save you know the feeling, Save from the soul it rises
clear, Serene in primal strength, compelling The hearts and minds of all who
hear.

You sit forever gluing, patching; You cook the scraps from others' fare; And
from your heap of ashes hatching A starveling flame, ye blow it bare!

Take children's, monkeys' gaze admiring, If such your taste, and be content; But
ne'er from heart to heart you'll speak inspiring, Save your own heart is

eloquent!

WAGNER

Yet through delivery orators succeed; I feel that I am far behind, indeed.

FAUST

Seek thou the honest recompense!

Beware, a tinkling fool to be!

With little art, clear wit and sense Suggest their own delivery;

And if thou'rt moved to speak in earnest, What need, that after words thou
yearnest?

Yes, your discourses, with their glittering show, Where ye for men twist
shredded thought like paper, Are unrefreshing as the winds that blow The
rustling leaves through chill autumnal vapor!

WAGNER

Ah, God! but Art is long,

And Life, alas! is fleeting.

And oft, with zeal my critic-duties meeting, In head and breast there's
something wrong.

How hard it is to compass the assistance Whereby one rises to the source!

And, haply, ere one travels half the course Must the poor devil quit existence.

FAUST

Is parchment, then, the holy fount before thee, A draught wherefrom thy thirst
forever slakes?

No true refreshment can restore thee, Save what from thine own soul
spontaneous breaks.

WAGNER

Pardon! a great delight is granted When, in the spirit of the ages planted, We
mark how, ere our times, a sage has thought, And then, how far his work,
and grandly, we have brought.

FAUST

O yes, up to the stars at last!

Listen, my friend: the ages that are past Are now a book with seven seals
protected: What you the Spirit of the Ages call Is nothing but the spirit of
you all, Wherein the Ages are reflected.

So, oftentimes, you miserably mar it!

At the first glance who sees it runs away.

An offal-barrel and a lumber-garret, Or, at the best, a Punch-and-Judy play,

With maxims most pragmatistical and hitting, As in the mouths of puppets are

befitting!

WAGNER

But then, the world—the human heart and brain!
Of these one covets some slight apprehension.

FAUST

Yes, of the kind which men attain!
Who dares the child's true name in public mention?
The few, who thereof something really learned, Unwisely frank, with hearts
that spurned concealing, And to the mob laid bare each thought and feeling,
Have evermore been crucified and burned.
I pray you, Friend, 'tis now the dead of night; Our converse here must be
suspended.

WAGNER

I would have shared your watches with delight, That so our learned talk might
be extended.
To-morrow, though, I'll ask, in Easter leisure, This and the other question, at
your pleasure.
Most zealously I seek for erudition: Much do I know—but to know all is my
ambition.

[EXIT WAGNER.]

FAUST

[SOLUS.]

That brain, alone, not loses hope, whose choice is To stick in shallow trash
forevermore,— Which digs with eager hand for buried ore, And, when it
finds an angle-worm, rejoices!

Dare such a human voice disturb the flow, Around me here, of spirit-presence
fullest?

And yet, this once my thanks I owe To thee, of all earth's sons the poorest,
dullest!

For thou hast torn me from that desperate state Which threatened soon to
overwhelm my senses: The apparition was so giant-great, It dwarfed and
withered all my soul's pretences!

I, image of the Godhead, who began— Deeming Eternal Truth secure in
nearness— Ye choirs, have ye begun the sweet, consoling chant, Which,
through the night of Death, the angels ministrant Sang, God's new Covenant
repeating?

CHORUS OF WOMEN

With spices and precious Balm, we arrayed him;
Faithful and gracious, We tenderly laid him:

Linen to bind him
Cleanlily wound we:
Ah! when we would find him, Christ no more found we!

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Christ is ascended!
Bliss hath invested him,— Woes that molested him, Trials that tested him,
Gloriously ended!

FAUST

Why, here in dust, entice me with your spell, Ye gentle, powerful sounds of
Heaven?
Peal rather there, where tender natures dwell.
Your messages I hear, but faith has not been given; The dearest child of Faith is
Miracle.
I venture not to soar to yonder regions Whence the glad tidings hither float;
And yet, from childhood up familiar with the note, To Life it now renews
the old allegiance.
Once Heavenly Love sent down a burning kiss Upon my brow, in Sabbath
silence holy; And, filled with mystic presage, chimed the church-bell slowly,
And prayer dissolved me in a fervent bliss.
A sweet, uncomprehended yearning Drove forth my feet through woods and
meadows free, And while a thousand tears were burning, I felt a world arise
for me.
These chants, to youth and all its sports appealing, Proclaimed the Spring's
rejoicing holiday; And Memory holds me now, with childish feeling, Back
from the last, the solemn way.
Sound on, ye hymns of Heaven, so sweet and mild!
My tears gush forth: the Earth takes back her child!

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES

Has He, victoriously,
Burst from the vaulted Grave, and all-gloriously Now sits exalted?
Is He, in glow of birth, Rapture creative near?
Ah! to the woe of earth Still are we native here.
We, his aspiring
Followers, Him we miss; Weeping, desiring,
Master, Thy bliss!

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Christ is arisen,
Out of Corruption's womb: Burst ye the prison,
Break from your gloom!

Praising and pleading him, Lovingly needing him,
Brotherly feeding him, Preaching and speeding him, Blessing, succeeding
Him, Thus is the Master near,— Thus is He here!

BEFORE THE CITY GATE

[*PEDESTRIANS OF ALL KINDS COME FORTH.*]

SEVERAL APPRENTICES

Why do you go that way?

OTHERS

We're for the Hunters' lodge, to-day.

THE FIRST

We'll saunter to the Mill, in yonder hollow.

AN APPRENTICE

Go to the River Tavern, I should say.

SECOND APPRENTICE

But then, it's not a pleasant way.

THE OTHERS

And what will *you*?

A THIRD

As goes the crowd, I follow.

A FOURTH

Come up to Burgdorf? There you'll find good cheer, The finest lasses and the
best of beer, And jolly rows and squabbles, trust me!

A FIFTH

You swaggering fellow, is your hide A third time itching to be tried?
I won't go there, your jolly rows disgust me!

SERVANT-GIRL

No,—no! I'll turn and go to town again.

ANOTHER

We'll surely find him by those poplars yonder.

THE FIRST

That's no great luck for me, 'tis plain.
You'll have him, when and where you wander: His partner in the dance you'll
be,— But what is all your fun to me?

THE OTHER

He's surely not alone to-day: He'll be with Curly-head, I heard him say.

A STUDENT

Deuce! how they step, the buxom wenches!

Come, Brother! we must see them to the benches.

A strong, old beer, a pipe that stings and bites, A girl in Sunday clothes,—these three are my delights.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER

Just see those handsome fellows, there!

It's really shameful, I declare;— To follow servant-girls, when they Might have the most genteel society to-day!

SECOND STUDENT

[TO THE FIRST.]

Not quite so fast! Two others come behind,— Those, dressed so prettily and neatly.

My neighbor's one of them, I find, A girl that takes my heart, completely.

They go their way with looks demure, But they'll accept us, after all, I'm sure.

THE FIRST

No, Brother! not for me their formal ways.

Quick! lest our game escape us in the press: The hand that wields the broom on Saturdays Will best, on Sundays, fondle and caress.

CITIZEN

He suits me not at all, our new-made Burgomaster!

Since he's installed, his arrogance grows faster.

How has he helped the town, I say?

Things worsen,—what improvement names he?

Obedience, more than ever, claims he, And more than ever we must pay!

BEGGAR

[SINGS.]

Good gentlemen and lovely ladies, So red of cheek and fine of dress,

Behold, how needful here your aid is, And see and lighten my distress!

Let me not vainly sing my ditty; He's only glad who gives away: A holiday, that shows your pity, Shall be for me a harvest-day!

ANOTHER CITIZEN

On Sundays, holidays, there's naught I take delight in, Like gossiping of war, and war's array, When down in Turkey, far away, The foreign people are a-fighting.

One at the window sits, with glass and friends, And sees all sorts of ships go
down the river gliding: And blesses then, as home he wends At night, our
times of peace abiding.

THIRD CITIZEN

Yes, Neighbor! that's my notion, too: Why, let them break their heads, let loose
their passions, And mix things madly through and through, So, here, we
keep our good old fashions!

OLD WOMAN

[To the CITIZEN's DAUGHTER.]

Dear me, how fine! So handsome, and so young!
Who wouldn't lose his heart, that met you?
Don't be so proud! I'll hold my tongue, And what you'd like I'll undertake to get
you.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER

Come, Agatha! I shun the witch's sight Before folks, lest there be misgiving:
'Tis true, she showed me, on Saint Andrew's Night, My future sweetheart,
just as he were living.

THE OTHER

She showed me mine, in crystal clear, With several wild young blades, a
soldier-lover: I seek him everywhere, I pry and peer, And yet, somehow, his
face I can't discover.

SOLDIERS

Castles, with lofty
Ramparts and towers,

Maidens disdainful
In Beauty's array,
Both shall be ours!
Bold is the venture,
Splendid the pay!
Lads, let the trumpets For us be suing,— Calling to pleasure,
Calling to ruin.
Stormy our life is;
Such is its boon!

Maidens and castles
Capitulate soon.
Bold is the venture,
Splendid the pay!
And the soldiers go marching, Marching away!

FAUST AND WAGNER

FAUST

Released from ice are brook and river By the quickening glance of the gracious
Spring; The colors of hope to the valley cling, And weak old Winter himself
must shiver, Withdrawn to the mountains, a crownless king: Whence, ever
retreating, he sends again Impotent showers of sleet that darkle In belts
across the green o' the plain.

But the sun will permit no white to sparkle; Everywhere form in development
moveth; He will brighten the world with the tints he loveth, And, lacking
blossoms, blue, yellow, and red, He takes these gaudy people instead.

Turn thee about, and from this height Back on the town direct thy sight.

Out of the hollow, gloomy gate, The motley throngs come forth elate: Each will
the joy of the sunshine hoard, To honor the Day of the Risen Lord!

They feel, themselves, their resurrection: From the low, dark rooms, scarce
habitable; From the bonds of Work, from Trade's restriction; From the
pressing weight of roof and gable; From the narrow, crushing streets and
alleys; From the churches' solemn and reverend night, All come forth to the
cheerful light.

How lively, see! the multitude sallies, Scattering through gardens and fields
remote, While over the river, that broadly dallies, Dances so many a festive
boat; And overladen, nigh to sinking, The last full wherry takes the stream.

Yonder afar, from the hill-paths blinking, Their clothes are colors that softly
gleam.

I hear the noise of the village, even; Here is the People's proper Heaven; Here
high and low contented see!

Here I am Man,—dare man to be!

WAGNER

To stroll with you, Sir Doctor, flatters; 'Tis honor, profit, unto me.

But I, alone, would shun these shallow matters, Since all that's coarse provokes
my enmity.

This fiddling, shouting, ten-pin rolling I hate,—these noises of the throng: They
rave, as Satan were their sports controlling.

And call it mirth, and call it song!

PEASANTS, UNDER THE LINDEN-TREE

[DANCE AND SONG.]

All for the dance the shepherd dressed, In ribbons, wreath, and gayest vest
Himself with care arraying: Around the linden lass and lad Already
footed it like mad: Hurrah! hurrah!

Hurrah—tarara-la!

The fiddle-bow was playing.

He broke the ranks, no whit afraid, And with his elbow punched a maid,
Who stood, the dance surveying: The buxom wench, she turned and said:
"Now, you I call a stupid-head!"

Hurrah! hurrah!

Hurrah—tarara-la!

"Be decent while you're staying!"

Then round the circle went their flight, They danced to left, they danced to
right: Their kirtles all were playing.

They first grew red, and then grew warm, And rested, panting, arm in arm,
— Hurrah! hurrah!

Hurrah—tarara-la!

And hips and elbows straying.

Now, don't be so familiar here!

How many a one has fooled his dear, Waylaying and betraying!

And yet, he coaxed her soon aside, And round the linden sounded wide.

Hurrah! hurrah!

Hurrah—tarara-la!

And the fiddle-bow was playing.

OLD PEASANT

Sir Doctor, it is good of you, That thus you condescend, to-day, Among this
crowd of merry folk, A highly-learned man, to stray.

Then also take the finest can, We fill with fresh wine, for your sake: I offer it,
and humbly wish

That not alone your thirst is slake,— That, as the drops below its brink, So
many days of life you drink!

FAUST

I take the cup you kindly reach, With thanks and health to all and each.

[THE PEOPLE GATHER IN A CIRCLE ABOUT HIM.]

OLD PEASANT

In truth, 'tis well and fitly timed, That now our day of joy you share, Who
heretofore, in evil days, Gave us so much of helping care.
Still many a man stands living here, Saved by your father's skillful hand, That
snatched him from the fever's rage And stayed the plague in all the land.
Then also you, though but a youth, Went into every house of pain: Many the
corpses carried forth, But you in health came out again.

FAUST

No test or trial you evaded:
A Helping God the helper aided.

ALL

Health to the man, so skilled and tried.
That for our help he long may abide!

FAUST

To Him above bow down, my friends, Who teaches help, and succor sends!
[HE GOES ON WITH WAGNER.]

WAGNER

With what a feeling, thou great man, must thou Receive the people's honest
veneration!
How lucky he, whose gifts his station With such advantages endow!
Thou'rt shown to all the younger generation: Each asks, and presses near to
gaze; The fiddle stops, the dance delays.
Thou goest, they stand in rows to see, And all the caps are lifted high; A little
more, and they would bend the knee As if the Holy Host came by.

FAUST

A few more steps ascend, as far as yonder stone!— Here from our wandering
will we rest contented.
Here, lost in thought, I've lingered oft alone, When foolish fasts and prayers my
life tormented.
Here, rich in hope and firm in faith, With tears, wrung hands and sighs, I've
striven, The end of that far-spreading death Entreating from the Lord of
Heaven!
Now like contempt the crowd's applauses seem: Couldst thou but read, within
mine inmost spirit, How little now I deem,
That sire or son such praises merit!
My father's was a sombre, brooding brain, Which through the holy spheres of
Nature groped and wandered, And honestly, in his own fashion, pondered
With labor whimsical, and pain: Who, in his dusky work-shop bending,

With proved adepts in company, Made, from his recipes unending, Opposing substances agree.

There was a Lion red, a wooer daring, Within the Lily's tepid bath espoused, And both, tormented then by flame unsparing, By turns in either bridal chamber housed.

If then appeared, with colors splendid, The young Queen in her crystal shell, This was the medicine—the patients' woes soon ended, And none demanded: who got well?

Thus we, our hellish boluses compounding, Among these vales and hills surrounding, Worse than the pestilence, have passed.

Thousands were done to death from poison of my giving; And I must hear, by all the living, The shameless murderers praised at last!

WAGNER

Why, therefore, yield to such depression?

A good man does his honest share In exercising, with the strictest care, The art bequeathed to his possession!

Dost thou thy father honor, as a youth?

Then may his teaching cheerfully impel thee: Dost thou, as man, increase the stores of truth?

Then may thine own son afterwards excel thee.

FAUST

O happy he, who still renews

The hope, from Error's deeps to rise forever!

That which one does not know, one needs to use; And what one knows, one uses never.

But let us not, by such despondence, so The fortune of this hour embitter!

Mark how, beneath the evening sunlight's glow, The green-embosomed houses glitter!

The glow retreats, done is the day of toil; It yonder hastes, new fields of life exploring; Ah, that no wing can lift me from the soil, Upon its track to follow, follow soaring!

Then would I see eternal Evening gild The silent world beneath me glowing, On fire each mountain-peak, with peace each valley filled, The silver brook to golden rivers flowing.

The mountain-chain, with all its gorges deep, Would then no more impede my godlike motion; And now before mine eyes expands the ocean With all its bays, in shining sleep!

Yet, finally, the weary god is sinking; The new-born impulse fires my mind,— I hasten on, his beams eternal drinking, The Day before me and the Night

behind, Above me heaven unfurled, the floor of waves beneath me,— A glorious dream! though now the glories fade.

Alas! the wings that lift the mind no aid Of wings to lift the body can bequeath me.

Yet in each soul is born the pleasure Of yearning onward, upward and away,
When o'er our heads, lost in the vaulted azure, The lark sends down his flickering lay,—
When over crags and piny highlands The poising eagle slowly soars, And over plains and lakes and islands The crane sails by to other shores.

WAGNER

I've had, myself, at times, some odd caprices, But never yet such impulse felt, as this is.

One soon fatigues, on woods and fields to look, Nor would I beg the bird his wing to spare us: How otherwise the mental raptures bear us From page to page, from book to book!

Then winter nights take loveliness untold, As warmer life in every limb had crowned you; And when your hands unroll some parchment rare and old, All Heaven descends, and opens bright around you!

FAUST

One impulse art thou conscious of, at best; O, never seek to know the other! Two souls, alas! reside within my breast, And each withdraws from, and repels, its brother.

One with tenacious organs holds in love And clinging lust the world in its embraces; The other strongly sweeps, this dust above, Into the high ancestral spaces.

If there be airy spirits near, 'Twixt Heaven and Earth on potent errands fleeing, Let them drop down the golden atmosphere, And bear me forth to new and varied being!

Yea, if a magic mantle once were mine, To waft me o'er the world at pleasure, I would not for the costliest stores of treasure— Not for a monarch's robe—the gift resign.

WAGNER

Invoke not thus the well-known throng, Which through the firmament diffused is faring, And danger thousand-fold, our race to wrong.

In every quarter is preparing.

Swift from the North the spirit-fangs so sharp Sweep down, and with their barbéd points assail you; Then from the East they come, to dry and warp Your lungs, till breath and being fail you: If from the Desert sendeth them the South, With fire on fire your throbbing forehead crowning, The West

leads on a host, to cure the drouth Only when meadow, field, and you are
drowning.

They gladly hearken, prompt for injury,— Gladly obey, because they gladly
cheat us; From Heaven they represent themselves to be, And lisp like angels,
when with lies they meet us.

But, let us go! 'Tis gray and dusky all: The air is cold, the vapors fall.

At night, one learns his house to prize:— Why stand you thus, with such
astonished eyes?

What, in the twilight, can your mind so trouble?

FAUST

Seest thou the black dog coursing there, through corn and stubble?

WAGNER

Long since: yet deemed him not important in the least.

FAUST

Inspect him close: for what tak'st thou the beast?

WAGNER

Why, for a poodle who has lost his master, And scents about, his track to find.

FAUST

Seest thou the spiral circles, narrowing faster, Which he, approaching, round us
seems to wind?

A streaming trail of fire, if I see rightly, Follows his path of mystery.

WAGNER

It may be that your eyes deceive you slightly; Naught but a plain black poodle
do I see.

FAUST

It seems to me that with enchanted cunning He snares our feet, some future
chain to bind.

WAGNER

I see him timidly, in doubt, around us running, Since, in his master's stead, two
strangers doth he find.

FAUST

The circle narrows: he is near!

WAGNER

A dog thou seest, and not a phantom, here!

Behold him stop—upon his belly crawl—His tail set wagging: canine habits,
all!

FAUST

Come, follow us! Come here, at least!

WAGNER

'Tis the absurdest, drollest beast.

Stand still, and you will see him wait; Address him, and he gambols straight; If something's lost, he'll quickly bring it,— Your cane, if in the stream you fling it.

FAUST

No doubt you're right: no trace of mind, I own, Is in the beast: I see but drill, alone.

WAGNER

The dog, when he's well educated, Is by the wisest tolerated.

Yes, he deserves your favor thoroughly,— The clever scholar of the students, he!

[THEY PASS IN THE CITY-GATE.]

THE STUDY

FAUST

[ENTERING WITH THE POODLE.]

Behind me, field and meadow sleeping, I leave in deep, prophetic night,
Within whose dread and holy keeping The better soul awakes to light.

The wild desires no longer win us, The deeds of passion cease to chain; The
love of Man revives within us, The love of God revives again.

Be still, thou poodle; make not such racket and riot!

Why at the threshold wilt snuffing be?

Behind the stove repose thee in quiet!

My softest cushion I give to thee.

As thou, up yonder, with running and leaping Amused us hast, on the
mountain's crest,

So now I take thee into my keeping, A welcome, but also a silent, guest.

Ah, when, within our narrow chamber The lamp with friendly lustre glows,
Flames in the breast each faded ember, And in the heart, itself that
knows.

Then Hope again lends sweet assistance, And Reason then resumes her
speech: One yearns, the rivers of existence, The very founts of Life, to
reach.

Snarl not, poodle! To the sound that rises, The sacred tones that my soul
embrace, This bestial noise is out of place.

We are used to see, that Man despises What he never comprehends,
And the Good and the Beautiful vilipends, Finding them often hard to measure:
Will the dog, like man, snarl *his* displeasure?
But ah! I feel, though will thereto be stronger, Contentment flows from out my
breast no longer.
Why must the stream so soon run dry and fail us, And burning thirst again
assail us?
Therein I've borne so much probation!
And yet, this want may be supplied us; We call the Supernatural to guide us;
We pine and thirst for Revelation, Which nowhere worthier is, more nobly
sent, Than here, in our New Testament.
I feel impelled, its meaning to determine,— With honest purpose, once for all,
The hallowed Original
To change to my beloved German.

[*HE OPENS A VOLUME, AND COMMENCES.*]

"Tis written: "In the Beginning was the *Word*."
Here am I balked: who, now can help afford?
The *Word*?—impossible so high to rate it; And otherwise must I translate it.
If by the Spirit I am truly taught.
Then thus: "In the Beginning was the *Thought*"
This first line let me weigh completely, Lest my impatient pen proceed too
fleetly.
Is it the *Thought* which works, creates, indeed?
"In the Beginning was the *Power*," I read.
Yet, as I write, a warning is suggested, That I the sense may not have fairly
tested.
The Spirit aids me: now I see the light!
"In the Beginning was the *Act*," I write.

If I must share my chamber with thee, Poodle, stop that howling, prithee!
Cease to bark and bellow!
Such a noisy, disturbing fellow I'll no longer suffer near me.
One of us, dost hear me!
Must leave, I fear me.
No longer guest-right I bestow; The door is open, art free to go.
But what do I see in the creature?
Is that in the course of nature?
Is't actual fact? or Fancy's shows?
How long and broad my poodle grows!
He rises mightily:

A canine form that cannot be!
What a spectre I've harbored thus!
He resembles a hippopotamus,
With fiery eyes, teeth terrible to see: O, now am I sure of thee!
For all of thy half-hellish brood The Key of Solomon is good.

SPIRITS

[*IN THE CORRIDOR.*]

Some one, within, is caught!
Stay without, follow him not!
Like the fox in a snare, Quakes the old hell-lynx there.
Take heed—look about!
Back and forth hover,
Under and over,
And he'll work himself out.
If your aid avail him, Let it not fail him;
For he, without measure, Has wrought for our pleasure.

FAUST

First, to encounter the beast, The Words of the Four be addressed: Salamander,
shine glorious!
Wave, Undine, as bidden!
Sylph, be thou hidden!
Gnome, be laborious!

Who knows not their sense
(These elements),—

Their properties
And power not sees,—

No mastery he inherits
Over the Spirits.

Vanish in flaming ether, Salamander!
Flow foamingly together, Undine!
Shine in meteor-sheen, Sylph!
Bring help to hearth and shelf.
Incubus! Incubus!
Step forward, and finish thus!

Of the Four, no feature
Lurks in the creature.

Quiet he lies, and grins disdain: Not yet, it seems, have I given him pain.

Now, to undisguise thee,
Hear me exorcise thee!

Art thou, my gay one,
Hell's fugitive stray-one?

The sign witness now,
Before which they bow,
The cohorts of Hell!

With hair all bristling, it begins to swell.

Base Being, hearest thou?

Knowest and fearest thou The One, unoriginate,
Named inexpressibly,

Through all Heaven impermeate, Pierced irredressibly!

Behind the stove still banned, See it, an elephant, expand!

It fills the space entire,

Mist-like melting, ever faster.

'Tis enough: ascend no higher,— Lay thyself at the feet of the Master!

Thou seest, not vain the threats I bring thee: With holy fire I'll scorch and sting
thee!

Wait not to know
The threefold dazzling glow!

Wait not to know
The strongest art within my hands!

MEPHISTOPHELES

*[WHILE THE VAPOR IS DISSIPATING, STEPS FORTH FROM BEHIND THE
STOVE, IN THE COSTUME OF A TRAVELLING SCHOLAR.]*

Why such a noise? What are my lord's commands?

FAUST

This was the poodle's real core, A travelling scholar, then? The *casus* is
diverting.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The learned gentleman I bow before: You've made me roundly sweat, that's
certain!

FAUST

What is thy name?

MEPHISTOPHELES

A question small, it seems,
For one whose mind the Word so much despises; Who, scorning all external
gleams, The depths of being only prizes.

FAUST

With all you gentlemen, the name's a test, Whereby the nature usually is
expressed.
Clearly the latter it implies In names like Beelzebub, Destroyer, Father of Lies.
Who art thou, then?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Part of that Power, not understood, Which always wills the Bad, and always
works the Good.

FAUST

What hidden sense in this enigma lies?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I am the Spirit that Denies!
And justly so: for all things, from the Void Called forth, deserve to be
destroyed: 'Twere better, then, were naught created.
Thus, all which you as Sin have rated,— Destruction,—ought with Evil blent,
— That is my proper element.

FAUST

Thou nam'st thyself a part, yet show'st complete to me?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The modest truth I speak to thee.

If Man, that microcosmic fool, can see Himself a whole so frequently, Part of the Part am I, once All, in primal Night,— Part of the Darkness which brought forth the Light, The haughty Light, which now disputes the space, And claims of Mother Night her ancient place.

And yet, the struggle fails; since Light, howe'er it weaves, Still, fettered, unto bodies cleaves: It flows from bodies, bodies beautifies; By bodies is its course impeded; And so, but little time is needed, I hope, ere, as the bodies die, it dies!

FAUST

I see the plan thou art pursuing: Thou canst not compass general ruin, And hast on smaller scale begun.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And truly 'tis not much, when all is done.

That which to Naught is in resistance set,— The Something of this clumsy world,—has yet, With all that I have undertaken, Not been by me disturbed or shaken: From earthquake, tempest, wave, volcano's brand, Back into quiet settle sea and land!

And that damned stuff, the bestial, human brood,— What use, in having that to play with?

How many have I made away with!

And ever circulates a newer, fresher blood.

It makes me furious, such things beholding: From Water, Earth, and Air unfolding, A thousand germs break forth and grow, In dry, and wet, and warm, and chilly; And had I not the Flame reserved, why, really, There's nothing special of my own to show!

FAUST

So, to the actively eternal

Creative force, in cold disdain You now oppose the fist infernal, Whose wicked clench is all in vain!

Some other labor seek thou rather, Queer Son of Chaos, to begin!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well, we'll consider: thou canst gather My views, when next I venture in. Might I, perhaps, depart at present?

FAUST

Why thou shouldst ask, I don't perceive.

Though our acquaintance is so recent, For further visits thou hast leave.

The window's here, the door is yonder; A chimney, also, you behold.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I must confess that forth I may not wander, My steps by one slight obstacle
controlled,— The wizard's-foot, that on your threshold made is.

FAUST

The pentagram prohibits thee?
Why, tell me now, thou Son of Hades, If that prevents, how cam'st thou in to
me?
Could such a spirit be so cheated?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Inspect the thing: the drawing's not completed.
The outer angle, you may see, Is open left—the lines don't fit it.

FAUST

Well,—Chance, this time, has fairly hit it!
And thus, thou'rt prisoner to me?
It seems the business has succeeded.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The poodle naught remarked, as after thee he speeded; But other aspects now
obtain: The Devil can't get out again.

FAUST

Try, then, the open window-pane!

MEPHISTOPHELES

For Devils and for spectres this is law: Where they have entered in, there also
they withdraw.
The first is free to us; we're governed by the second.

FAUST

In Hell itself, then, laws are reckoned?
That's well! So might a compact be Made with you gentlemen—and binding,—
surely?

MEPHISTOPHELES

All that is promised shall delight thee purely; No skinflint bargain shalt thou
see.
But this is not of swift conclusion; We'll talk about the matter soon.
And now, I do entreat this boon— Leave to withdraw from my intrusion.

FAUST

One moment more I ask thee to remain, Some pleasant news, at least, to tell me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Release me, now! I soon shall come again; Then thou, at will, mayst question and compel me.

FAUST

I have not snares around thee cast; Thyself hast led thyself into the meshes.
Who traps the Devil, hold him fast!
Not soon a second time he'll catch a prey so precious.

MEPHISTOPHELES

An't please thee, also I'm content to stay, And serve thee in a social station; But stipulating, that I may
With arts of mine afford thee recreation.

FAUST

Thereto I willingly agree,
If the diversion pleasant be.

MEPHISTOPHELES

My friend, thou'lt win, past all pretences, More in this hour to soothe thy senses, Than in the year's monotony.
That which the dainty spirits sing thee, The lovely pictures they shall bring thee, Are more than magic's empty show.
Thy scent will be to bliss invited; Thy palate then with taste delighted, Thy nerves of touch ecstatic glow!
All unprepared, the charm I spin: We're here together, so begin!

SPIRITS

Vanish, ye darking
Arches above him!
Loveliest weather,
Born of blue ether,
Break from the sky!

O that the darkling
Clouds had departed!
Starlight is sparkling, Tranquiller-hearted
Suns are on high.
Heaven's own children
In beauty bewildering, Waveringly bending,
Pass as they hover;

Longing unending
Follows them over.
They, with their glowing Garments, out-flowing, Cover, in going,
Landscape and bower,
Where, in seclusion,
Lovers are plighted,
Lost in illusion.
Bower on bower!
Tendrils unblighted!
Lo! in a shower
Grapes that o'ercluster Gush into must, or

Flow into rivers
Of foaming and flashing Wine, that is dashing
Gems, as it boundeth
Down the high places,
And spreading, surroundeth With crystalline spaces, In happy embraces,
Blossoming forelands,
Emerald shore-lands!

And the winged races
Drink, and fly onward— Fly ever sunward

To the enticing
Islands, that flatter, Dipping and rising
Light on the water!
Hark, the inspiring
Sound of their quiring!
See, the entrancing
Whirl of their dancing!

All in the air are
Freer and fairer.

Some of them scaling
Boldly the highlands,
Others are sailing,
Circling the islands;
Others are flying;
Life-ward all hieing,— All for the distant

Star of existent
Rapture and Love!

MEPHISTOPHELES

He sleeps! Enough, ye fays! your airy number Have sung him truly into
slumber: For this performance I your debtor prove.— Not yet art thou the
man, to catch the Fiend and hold him!— With fairest images of dreams
infold him, Plunge him in seas of sweet untruth!

Yet, for the threshold's magic which controlled him, The Devil needs a rat's
quick tooth.

I use no lengthened invocation: Here rustles one that soon will work my
liberation.

The lord of rats and eke of mice, Of flies and bed-bugs, frogs and lice,
Summons thee hither to the door-sill, To gnaw it where, with just a morsel
Of oil, he paints the spot for thee:— There com'st thou, hopping on to me!
To work, at once! The point which made me craven Is forward, on the ledge,
engraven.

Another bite makes free the door: So, dream thy dreams, O Faust, until we
meet once more!

FAUST

[*AWAKING.*]

Am I again so foully cheated?

Remains there naught of lofty spirit-sway, But that a dream the Devil
counterfeited, And that a poodle ran away?

THE STUDY

[*FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

FAUST

A knock? Come in! Again my quiet broken?

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis I!

FAUST

Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thrice must the words be spoken.

FAUST

Come in, then!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thus thou pleasest me.

I hope we'll suit each other well; For now, thy vapors to dispel, I come, a squire
of high degree, In scarlet coat, with golden trimming, A cloak in silken
lustre swimming, A tall cock's-feather in my hat, A long, sharp sword for
show or quarrel,— And I advise thee, brief and flat, To don the self-same
gay apparel, That, from this den released, and free, Life be at last revealed to
thee!

FAUST

This life of earth, whatever my attire, Would pain me in its wonted fashion.
Too old am I to play with passion; Too young, to be without desire.
What from the world have I to gain?
Thou shalt abstain—renounce—refrain!

Such is the everlasting song
That in the ears of all men rings,— That unrelieved, our whole life long, Each
hour, in passing, hoarsely sings.
In very terror I at morn awake, Upon the verge of bitter weeping, To see the
day of disappointment break, To no one hope of mine—not one—its
promise keeping:— That even each joy's presentiment With wilful cavil
would diminish, With grinning masks of life prevent My mind its fairest
work to finish!
Then, too, when night descends, how anxiously Upon my couch of sleep I lay
me: There, also, comes no rest to me, But some wild dream is sent to fray
me.
The God that in my breast is owned Can deeply stir the inner sources; The God,
above my powers enthroned, He cannot change external forces.
So, by the burden of my days oppressed, Death is desired, and Life a thing
unblest!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet is never Death a wholly welcome guest.

FAUST

O fortunate, for whom, when victory glances, The bloody laurels on the brow
he bindeth!
Whom, after rapid, maddening dances, In clasping maiden-arms he findeth!
O would that I, before that spirit-power, Ravished and rapt from life, had
sunken!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet, by some one, in that nightly hour, A certain liquid was not drunken.

FAUST

Eavesdropping, ha! thy pleasure seems to be.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Omniscient am I not; yet much is known to me.

FAUST

Though some familiar tone, retrieving My thoughts from torment, led me on,
And sweet, clear echoes came, deceiving A faith bequeathed from
Childhood's dawn, Yet now I curse whate'er entices And snares the soul with
visions vain; With dazzling cheats and dear devices Confines it in this cave
of pain!
Cursed be, at once, the high ambition Wherewith the mind itself deludes!
Cursed be the glare of apparition That on the finer sense intrudes!

Cursed be the lying dream's impression Of name, and fame, and laurelled
brow!
Cursed, all that flatters as possession, As wife and child, as knave and plow!
Cursed Mammon be, when he with treasures To restless action spurs our fate!
Cursed when, for soft, indulgent leasures, He lays for us the pillows straight!
Cursed be the vine's transcendent nectar,— The highest favor Love lets fall!
Cursed, also, Hope!—cursed Faith, the spectre!
And cursed be Patience most of all!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

[*INVISIBLE.*]

Woe! woe!
Thou hast it destroyed, The beautiful world,
With powerful fist:
In ruin 'tis hurled,
By the blow of a demigod shattered!

The scattered
Fragments into the Void we carry, Deploring
The beauty perished beyond restoring.

Mightier
For the children of men, Brightlier
Build it again,
In thine own bosom build it anew!

Bid the new career
Commence,
With clearer sense,
And the new songs of cheer Be sung thereto!

MEPHISTOPHELES

These are the small dependants Who give me attendance.
Hear them, to deeds and passion Counsel in shrewd old-fashion!
Into the world of strife,

Out of this lonely life
That of senses and sap has betrayed thee, They would persuade thee.
This nursing of the pain forego thee, That, like a vulture, feeds upon thy breast!
The worst society thou find'st will show thee Thou art a man among the rest.
But 'tis not meant to thrust
Thee into the mob thou hatest!
I am not one of the greatest, Yet, wilt thou to me entrust
Thy steps through life, I'll guide thee,— Will willingly walk beside thee,—
Will serve thee at once and forever With best endeavor,
And, if thou art satisfied,
Will as servant, slave, with thee abide.

FAUST

And what shall be my counter-service therefor?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The time is long; thou need'st not now insist.

FAUST

No—no! The Devil is an egotist, And is not apt, without a why or wherefore,
"For God's sake," others to assist.
Speak thy conditions plain and clear!
With such a servant danger comes, I fear.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Here, an unwearied slave, I'll wear thy tether, And to thine every nod obedient
be: When *There* again we come together, Then shalt thou do the same for
me.

FAUST

The *There* my scruples naught increases.
When thou hast dashed this world to pieces, The other, then, its place may fill.
Here, on this earth, my pleasures have their sources; Yon sun beholds my
sorrows in his courses; And when from these my life itself divorces, Let
happen all that can or will!
I'll hear no more: 'tis vain to ponder If there we cherish love or hate, Or, in the
spheres we dream of yonder, A High and Low our souls await.

MEPHISTOPHELES

In this sense, even, canst thou venture.
Come, bind thyself by prompt indenture, And thou mine arts with joy shalt see:
What no man ever saw, I'll give to thee.

FAUST

Canst thou, poor Devil, give me whatsoever?
When was a human soul, in its supreme endeavor, E'er understood by such as
thou?
Yet, hast thou food which never satiates, now,— The restless, ruddy gold hast
thou, That runs, quicksilver-like, one's fingers through,— A game whose
winnings no man ever knew,— A maid that, even from my breast, Beckons
my neighbor with her wanton glances, And Honor's godlike zest,
The meteor that a moment dances,— Show me the fruits that, ere they're
gathered, rot, And trees that daily with new leafage clothe them!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Such a demand alarms me not:
Such treasures have I, and can show them.
But still the time may reach us, good my friend.
When peace we crave and more luxurious diet.

FAUST

When on an idler's bed I stretch myself in quiet.
There let, at once, my record end!
Canst thou with lying flattery rule me, Until, self-pleased, myself I see,—
Canst thou with rich enjoyment fool me, Let that day be the last for me!
The bet I offer.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Done!

FAUST

And heartily!
When thus I hail the Moment flying: "Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!"
Then bind me in thy bonds undying, My final ruin then declare!
Then let the death-bell chime the token.
Then art thou from thy service free!
The clock may stop, the hand be broken, Then Time be finished unto me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Consider well: my memory good is rated.

FAUST

Thou hast a perfect right thereto.
My powers I have not rashly estimated: A slave am I, whate'er I do— If thine,
or whose? 'tis needless to debate it.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then at the Doctors'-banquet I, to-day, Will as a servant wait behind thee.

But one thing more! Beyond all risk to bind thee, Give me a line or two, I pray.

FAUST

Demand'st thou, Pedant, too, a document?

Hast never known a man, nor proved his word's intent?

Is't not enough, that what I speak to-day Shall stand, with all my future days
agreeing?

In all its tides sweeps not the world away, And shall a promise bind my being?

Yet this delusion in our hearts we bear: Who would himself therefrom deliver?

Blest he, whose bosom Truth makes pure and fair!

No sacrifice shall he repent of ever.

Nathless a parchment, writ and stamped with care, A spectre is, which all to
shun endeavor.

The word, alas! dies even in the pen, And wax and leather keep the lordship
then.

What wilt from me, Base Spirit, say?— Brass, marble, parchment, paper, clay?

The terms with graver, quill, or chisel, stated?

I freely leave the choice to thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why heat thyself, thus instantly, With eloquence exaggerated?

Each leaf for such a pact is good; And to subscribe thy name thou'lt take a drop
of blood.

FAUST

If thou therewith art fully satisfied, So let us by the farce abide.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Blood is a juice of rarest quality.

FAUST

Fear not that I this pact shall seek to sever?

The promise that I make to thee Is just the sum of my endeavor.

I have myself inflated all too high; My proper place is thy estate: The Mighty

Spirit deigns me no reply, And Nature shuts on me her gate.

The thread of Thought at last is broken, And knowledge brings disgust
unspoken.

Let us the sensual deeps explore, To quench the fervors of glowing passion!

Let every marvel take form and fashion Through the impervious veil it wore!

Plunge we in Time's tumultuous dance, In the rush and roll of Circumstance!

Then may delight and distress, And worry and success,

Alternately follow, as best they can: Restless activity proves the man!

MEPHISTOPHELES

For you no bound, no term is set.
Whether you everywhere be trying, Or snatch a rapid bliss in flying, May it
agree with you, what you get!
Only fall to, and show no timid balking.

FAUST

But thou hast heard, 'tis not of joy we're talking.
I take the wildering whirl, enjoyment's keenest pain, Enamored hate, exhilarant
disdain.
My bosom, of its thirst for knowledge sated, Shall not, henceforth, from any
pang be wrested, And all of life for all mankind created Shall be within mine
inmost being tested: The highest, lowest forms my soul shall borrow, Shall
heap upon itself their bliss and sorrow, And thus, my own sole self to all
their selves expanded, I too, at last, shall with them all be stranded!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Believe me, who for many a thousand year The same tough meat have chewed
and tested, That from the cradle to the bier No man the ancient leaven has
digested!
Trust one of us, this Whole supernal Is made but for a God's delight!
He dwells in splendor single and eternal, But *us* he thrusts in darkness, out of
sight, And *you* he dowers with Day and Night.

FAUST

Nay, but I will!

MEPHISTOPHELES

A good reply!
One only fear still needs repeating: The art is long, the time is fleeting.
Then let thyself be taught, say I!
Go, league thyself with a poet, Give the rein to his imagination, Then wear the
crown, and show it, Of the qualities of his creation,— The courage of the
lion's breed, The wild stag's speed,
The Italian's fiery blood,
The North's firm fortitude!
Let him find for thee the secret tether That binds the Noble and Mean together.
And teach thy pulses of youth and pleasure To love by rule, and hate by
measure!
I'd like, myself, such a one to see: Sir Microcosm his name should be.

FAUST

What am I, then, if 'tis denied my part The crown of all humanity to win me,
Whereto yearns every sense within me?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why, on the whole, thou'rt—what thou art.
Set wigs of million curls upon thy head, to raise thee, Wear shoes an ell in height,—the truth betrays thee, And thou remainest—what thou art.

FAUST

I feel, indeed, that I have made the treasure Of human thought and knowledge mine, in vain; And if I now sit down in restful leisure, No fount of newer strength is in my brain: I am no hair's-breadth more in height, Nor nearer, to the Infinite.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Good Sir, you see the facts precisely As they are seen by each and all.
We must arrange them now, more wisely, Before the joys of life shall pall.
Why, Zounds! Both hands and feet are, truly— And head and virile forces—
thine: Yet all that I indulge in newly, Is't thence less wholly mine?
If I've six stallions in my stall, Are not their forces also lent me?
I speed along, completest man of all, As though my legs were four-and-twenty.
Take hold, then! let reflection rest, And plunge into the world with zest!
I say to thee, a speculative wight Is like a beast on moorlands lean, That round and round some fiend misleads to evil plight, While all about lie pastures fresh and green.

FAUST

Then how shall we begin?

MEPHISTOPHELES

We'll try a wider sphere.
What place of martyrdom is here!
Is't life, I ask, is't even prudence, To bore thyself and bore the students?
Let Neighbor Paunch to that attend!
Why plague thyself with threshing straw forever?
The best thou learnest, in the end Thou dar'st not tell the youngsters—never!
I hear one's footsteps, hither steering.

FAUST

To see him now I have no heart.

MEPHISTOPHELES

So long the poor boy waits a hearing, He must not unconsolated depart.
Thy cap and mantle straightway lend me!
I'll play the comedy with art.

[*HE DISGUISES HIMSELF.*]

My wits, be certain, will befriend me.

But fifteen minutes' time is all I need; For our fine trip, meanwhile, prepare
thyself with speed!

[*EXIT FAUST.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*IN FAUST'S LONG MANTLE.*]

Reason and Knowledge only thou despise, The highest strength in man that
lies!

Let but the Lying Spirit bind thee With magic works and shows that blind thee,
And I shall have thee fast and sure!— Fate such a bold, untrammelled spirit
gave him, As forwards, onwards, ever must endure; Whose over-hasty
impulse drave him Past earthly joys he might secure.

Dragged through the wildest life, will I enslave him, Through flat and stale
indifference; With struggling, chilling, checking, so deprave him That, to his
hot, insatiate sense, The dream of drink shall mock, but never lave him:
Refreshment shall his lips in vain implore— Had he not made himself the
Devil's, naught could save him, Still were he lost forevermore!

[*ENTER A STUDENT.*]

STUDENT

A short time, only, am I here, And come, devoted and sincere, To greet and
know the man of fame, Whom men to me with reverence name.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Your courtesy doth flatter me: You see a man, as others be.
Have you, perchance, elsewhere begun?

STUDENT

Receive me now, I pray, as one Who comes to you with courage good,
Somewhat of cash, and healthy blood: My mother was hardly willing to let
me; But knowledge worth having I fain would get me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then you have reached the right place now.

STUDENT

I'd like to leave it, I must avow; I find these walls, these vaulted spaces Are
anything but pleasant places.
Tis all so cramped and close and mean; One sees no tree, no glimpse of green,
And when the lecture-halls receive me, Seeing, hearing, and thinking leave
me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

All that depends on habitude.

So from its mother's breasts a child At first, reluctant, takes its food, But soon
to seek them is beguiled.
Thus, at the breasts of Wisdom clinging, Thou'lt find each day a greater rapture
bringing.

STUDENT

I'll hang thereon with joy, and freely drain them; But tell me, pray, the proper
means to gain them.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Explain, before you further speak, The special faculty you seek.

STUDENT

I crave the highest erudition; And fain would make my acquisition All that
there is in Earth and Heaven, In Nature and in Science too.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Here is the genuine path for you; Yet strict attention must be given.

STUDENT

Body and soul thereon I'll wreak; Yet, truly, I've some inclination On summer
holidays to seek
A little freedom and recreation.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Use well your time! It flies so swiftly from us; But time through order may be
won, I promise.
So, Friend (my views to briefly sum), First, the *collegium logicum*.
There will your mind be drilled and braced, As if in Spanish boots 'twere laced,
And thus, to graver paces brought, 'Twill plod along the path of thought,
Instead of shooting here and there, A will-o'-the-wisp in murky air.
Days will be spent to bid you know, What once you did at a single blow, Like
eating and drinking, free and strong,— That one, two, three! thereto belong.
Truly the fabric of mental fleece Resembles a weaver's masterpiece, Where a
thousand threads one treadle throws, Where fly the shuttles hither and
thither.
Unseen the threads are knit together.
And an infinite combination grows.
Then, the philosopher steps in And shows, no otherwise it could have been:
The first was so, the second so, Therefore the third and fourth are so; Were
not the first and second, then The third and fourth had never been.
The scholars are everywhere believers, But never succeed in being weavers.
He who would study organic existence, First drives out the soul with rigid
persistence; Then the parts in his hand he may hold and class, But the

spiritual link is lost, alas!
Encheiresin natures, this Chemistry names, Nor knows how herself she banters
and blames!

STUDENT

I cannot understand you quite.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Your mind will shortly be set aright, When you have learned, all things
reducing, To classify them for your using.

STUDENT

I feel as stupid, from all you've said, As if a mill-wheel whirled in my head!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And after—first and foremost duty—Of Metaphysics learn the use and beauty!
See that you most profoundly gain What does not suit the human brain!
A splendid word to serve, you'll find For what goes in—or won't go in—your
mind.
But first, at least this half a year, To order rigidly adhere;
Five hours a day, you understand, And when the clock strikes, be on hand!
Prepare beforehand for your part With paragraphs all got by heart, So you can
better watch, and look That naught is said but what is in the book: Yet in thy
writing as unwearied be, As did the Holy Ghost dictate to thee!

STUDENT

No need to tell me twice to do it!
I think, how useful 'tis to write; For what one has, in black and white, One
carries home and then goes through it.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet choose thyself a faculty!

STUDENT

I cannot reconcile myself to Jurisprudence.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Nor can I therefore greatly blame you students: I know what science this has
come to be.
All rights and laws are still transmitted Like an eternal sickness of the race,—
From generation unto generation fitted, And shifted round from place to
place.
Reason becomes a sham, Beneficence a worry: Thou art a grandchild, therefore
woe to thee!
The right born with us, ours in verity, This to consider, there's, alas! no hurry.

STUDENT

My own disgust is strengthened by your speech: O lucky he, whom you shall teach!

I've almost for Theology decided.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I should not wish to see you here misguided: For, as regards this science, let me hint 'Tis very hard to shun the false direction; There's so much secret poison lurking in 't, So like the medicine, it baffles your detection.

Hear, therefore, one alone, for that is best, in sooth, And simply take your master's words for truth.

On *words* let your attention centre!

Then through the safest gate you'll enter The temple-halls of Certainty.

STUDENT

Yet in the word must some idea be.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of course! But only shun too over-sharp a tension, For just where fails the comprehension, A word steps promptly in as deputy.

With words 'tis excellent disputing; Systems to words 'tis easy suiting; On words 'tis excellent believing; No word can ever lose a jot from thieving.

STUDENT

Pardon! With many questions I detain you.

Yet must I trouble you again.

Of Medicine I still would fain Hear one strong word that might explain you.

Three years is but a little space.

And, God! who can the field embrace?

If one some index could be shown, 'Twere easier groping forward, truly.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*ASIDE.*]

I'm tired enough of this dry tone,— Must play the Devil again, and fully.

[*ALOUD.*]

To grasp the spirit of Medicine is easy: Learn of the great and little world your fill, To let it go at last, so please ye, Just as God will!

In vain that through the realms of science you may drift; Each one learns only —just what learn he can: Yet he who grasps the Moment's gift, He is the proper man.

Well-made you are, 'tis not to be denied, The rest a bold address will win you;

If you but in yourself confide, At once confide all others in you.

To lead the women, learn the special feeling!

Their everlasting aches and groans, In thousand tones,

Have all one source, one mode of healing; And if your acts are half discreet,
You'll always have them at your feet.
A title first must draw and interest them, And show that yours all other arts
exceeds; Then, as a greeting, you are free to touch and test them, While, thus
to do, for years another pleads.
You press and count the pulse's dances, And then, with burning sidelong
glances, You clasp the swelling hips, to see If tightly laced her corsets be.

STUDENT

That's better, now! The How and Where, one sees.

MEPHISTOPHELES

My worthy friend, gray are all theories, And green alone Life's golden tree.

STUDENT

I swear to you, 'tis like a dream to me.
Might I again presume, with trust unbounded, To hear your wisdom thoroughly
expounded?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Most willingly, to what extent I may.

STUDENT

I cannot really go away:
Allow me that my album first I reach you,— Grant me this favor, I beseech
you!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Assuredly.

[HE WRITES, AND RETURNS THE BOOK.]

STUDENT

[READS.]

Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.

[CLOSES THE BOOK WITH REVERENCE, AND WITHDRAWS.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

Follow the ancient text, and the snake thou wast ordered to trample!
With all thy likeness to God, thou'lt yet be a sorry example!

[ENTER FAUST.]

FAUST

Now, whither shall we go?

MEPHISTOPHELES

As best it pleases thee.
The little world, and then the great, we'll see.

With what delight, what profit winning, Shalt thou sponge through the term
beginning!

FAUST

Yet with the flowing beard I wear, Both ease and grace will fail me there.
The attempt, indeed, were a futile strife; I never could learn the ways of life.
I feel so small before others, and thence Should always find embarrassments.

MEPHISTOPHELES

My friend, thou soon shalt lose all such misgiving: Be thou but self-possessed,
thou hast the art of living!

FAUST

How shall we leave the house, and start?
Where hast thou servant, coach and horses?

MEPHISTOPHELES

We'll spread this cloak with proper art, Then through the air direct our courses.
But only, on so bold a flight, Be sure to have thy luggage light.
A little burning air, which I shall soon prepare us, Above the earth will nimbly
bear us, And, if we're light, we'll travel swift and clear: I gratulate thee on
thy new career!

AUERBACH'S CELLAR IN LEIPZIG

[CAROUSAL OF JOLLY COMPANIONS.]

FROSCH

Is no one laughing? no one drinking?
I'll teach you how to grin, I'm thinking.
To-day you're like wet straw, so tame; And usually you're all aflame.

BRANDER

Now that's your fault; from you we nothing see, No beastliness and no
stupidity.

FROSCH

[POURS A GLASS OF WINE OVER BRANDER'S HEAD.]

There's both together!

BRANDER

Twice a swine!

FROSCH

You wanted them: I've given you mine.

SIEBEL

Turn out who quarrels—out the door!
With open throat sing chorus, drink and roar!
Up! holla! ho!

ALTMAYER

Woe's me, the fearful bellow!
Bring cotton, quick! He's split my ears, that fellow.

SIEBEL

When the vault echoes to the song, One first perceives the bass is deep and strong.

FROSCH

Well said! and out with him that takes the least offence!
Ah, tara, lara da!

ALTMAYER

Ah, tara, lara, da!

FROSCH

The throats are tuned, commence!

[SINGS.]

The dear old holy Roman realm, How does it hold together?

BRANDER

A nasty song! Fie! a political song— A most offensive song! Thank God, each morning, therefore, That you have not the Roman realm to care for!
At least, I hold it so much gain for me, That I nor Chancellor nor Kaiser be.
Yet also we must have a ruling head, I hope, And so we'll choose ourselves a Pope.
You know the quality that can Decide the choice, and elevate the man.

FROSCH

[SINGS.]

Soar up, soar up, Dame Nightingale!
Ten thousand times my sweetheart hail!

SIEBEL

No, greet my sweetheart not! I tell you, I'll resent it.

FROSCH

My sweetheart greet and kiss! I dare you to prevent it!

[SINGS.]

Draw the latch! the darkness makes: Draw the latch! the lover wakes.
Shut the latch! the morning breaks

SIEBEL

Yes, sing away, sing on, and praise, and brag of her!
I'll wait my proper time for laughter: Me by the nose she led, and now she'll
lead you after.
Her paramour should be an ugly gnome, Where four roads cross, in wanton
play to meet her: An old he-goat, from Blocksberg coming home, Should his
good-night in lustful gallop bleat her!
A fellow made of genuine flesh and blood Is for the wench a deal too good.
Greet her? Not I: unless, when meeting, To smash her windows be a greeting!

BRANDER

[*POUNDING ON THE TABLE.*]

Attention! Hearken now to me!
Confess, Sirs, I know how to live.
Enamored persons here have we, And I, as suits their quality, Must something
fresh for their advantage give.
Take heed! 'Tis of the latest cut, my strain, And all strike in at each refrain!

[*HE SINGS.*]

There was a rat in the cellar-nest, Whom fat and butter made smoother: He
had a paunch beneath his vest Like that of Doctor Luther.
The cook laid poison cunningly, And then as sore oppressed was he As if he
had love in his bosom.

CHORUS

[*SHOUTING.*]

As if he had love in his bosom!

BRANDER

He ran around, he ran about, His thirst in puddles laving; He gnawed and
scratched the house throughout.
But nothing cured his raving.
He whirled and jumped, with torment mad, And soon enough the poor beast
had, As if he had love in his bosom.

CHORUS

As if he had love in his bosom!

BRANDER

And driven at last, in open day, He ran into the kitchen, Fell on the hearth,
and squirming lay, In the last convulsion twitching.
Then laughed the murderess in her glee: "Ha! ha! he's at his last gasp," said
she, "As if he had love in his bosom!"

CHORUS

As if he had love in his bosom!

SIEBEL

How the dull fools enjoy the matter!
To me it is a proper art
Poison for such poor rats to scatter.

BRANDER

Perhaps you'll warmly take their part?

ALTMAYER

The bald-pate pot-belly I have noted: Misfortune tames him by degrees; For in
the rat by poison bloated His own most natural form he sees.

[*FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES

Before all else, I bring thee hither Where boon companions meet together, To
let thee see how smooth life runs away.
Here, for the folk, each day's a holiday: With little wit, and ease to suit them,
They whirl in narrow, circling trails, Like kittens playing with their tails?
And if no headache persecute them, So long the host may credit give, They
merrily and careless live.

BRANDER

The fact is easy to unravel,
Their air's so odd, they've just returned from travel: A single hour they've not
been here.

FROSCH

You've verily hit the truth! Leipzig to me is dear: Paris in miniature, how it
refines its people!

SIEBEL

Who are the strangers, should you guess?

FROSCH

Let me alone! I'll set them first to drinking, And then, as one a child's tooth
draws, with cleverness, I'll worm their secret out, I'm thinking.
They're of a noble house, that's very clear: Haughty and discontented they
appear.

BRANDER

They're mountebanks, upon a revel.

ALTMAYER

Perhaps.

FROSCH

Look out, I'll smoke them now!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[To FAUST.]

Not if he had them by the neck, I vow, Would e'er these people scent the Devil!

FAUST

Fair greeting, gentlemen!

SIEBEL

Our thanks: we give the same.

[MURMURS, INSPECTING MEPHISTOPHELES FROM THE SIDE.]

In one foot is the fellow lame?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Is it permitted that we share your leisure?

In place of cheering drink, which one seeks vainly here, Your company shall
give us pleasure.

ALTMAYER

A most fastidious person you appear.

FROSCH

No doubt 'twas late when you from Rippach started?
And supping there with Hans occasioned your delay?

MEPHISTOPHELES

We passed, without a call, to-day.

At our last interview, before we parted Much of his cousins did he speak,
entreating That we should give to each his kindly greeting.

[HE BOWS TO FROSCH.]

ALTMAYER

[ASIDE.]

You have it now! he understands.

SIEBEL

A knave sharp-set!

FROSCH

Just wait awhile: I'll have him yet.

MEPHISTOPHELES

If I am right, we heard the sound Of well-trained voices, singing chorus; And
truly, song must here rebound Superbly from the arches o'er us.

FROSCH

Are you, perhaps, a virtuoso?

MEPHISTOPHELES

O no! my wish is great, my power is only so-so.

ALTMAYER

Give us a song!

MEPHISTOPHELES

If you desire, a number.

SIEBEL

So that it be a bran-new strain!

MEPHISTOPHELES

We've just retraced our way from. Spain, The lovely land of wine, and song,
and slumber.

[SINGS.]

There was a king once reigning, Who had a big black flea—

FROSCH

Hear, hear! A flea! D'ye rightly take the jest?
I call a flea a tidy guest.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[SINGS.]

There was a king once reigning, Who had a big black flea, And loved him
past explaining, As his own son were he.

He called his man of stitches; The tailor came straightway: Here, measure
the lad for breeches.

And measure his coat, I say!

BRANDER

But mind, allow the tailor no caprices: Enjoin upon him, as his head is dear, To
most exactly measure, sew and shear, So that the breeches have no creases!

MEPHISTOPHELES

In silk and velvet gleaming He now was wholly drest— Had a coat with
ribbons streaming, A cross upon his breast.

He had the first of stations, A minister's star and name; And also all his
relations Great lords at court became.

And the lords and ladies of honor Were plagued, awake and in bed; The
queen she got them upon her, The maids were bitten and bled.

And they did not dare to brush them, Or scratch them, day or night: We
crack them and we crush them, At once, whene'er they bite.

CHORUS

[SHOUTING.]

We crack them and we crush them, At once, whene'er they bite!

FROSCH

Bravo! bravo! that was fine.

SIEBEL

Every flea may it so befall!

BRANDER

Point your fingers and nip them all!

ALTMAYER

Hurrah for Freedom! Hurrah for wine!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I fain would drink with you, my glass to Freedom clinking, If 'twere a better wine that here I see you drinking.

SIEBEL

Don't let us hear that speech again!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Did I not fear the landlord might complain, I'd treat these worthy guests, with pleasure, To some from out our cellar's treasure.

SIEBEL

Just treat, and let the landlord me arraign!

FROSCH

And if the wine be good, our praises shall be ample.

But do not give too very small a sample; For, if its quality I decide, With a good mouthful I must be supplied.

ALTMAYER

[ASIDE.]

They're from the Rhine! I guessed as much, before.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Bring me a gimlet here!

BRANDER

What shall therewith be done?

You've not the casks already at the door?

ALTMAYER

Yonder, within the landlord's box of tools, there's one!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[TAKES THE GIMLET.]

[To FROSCH.]

Now, give me of your taste some intimation.

FROSCH

How do you mean? Have you so many kinds?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The choice is free: make up your minds.

ALTMAYER

[To FROSCH.]

Aha! you lick your chops, from sheer anticipation.

FROSCH

Good! if I have the choice, so let the wine be Rhenish!
Our Fatherland can best the sparkling cup replenish.

MEPHISTOPHELES

*[BORING A HOLE IN THE EDGE OF THE TABLE, AT THE PLACE WHERE
FROSCH SITS.]*

Get me a little wax, to make the stoppers, quick!

ALTMAYER

Ah! I perceive a juggler's trick.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[To BRANDER.]

And you?

BRANDER

Champagne shall be my wine,
And let it sparkle fresh and fine!

MEPHISTOPHELES

*[BORES. IN THE MEANTIME ONE HAS MADE THE WAX STOPPERS, AND
PLUGGED THE HOLES WITH THEM.]*

BRANDER

What's foreign one can't always keep quite clear of, For good things, oft, are
not so near; A German can't endure the French to see or hear of, Yet drinks
their wines with hearty cheer.

SIEBEL

[As MEPHISTOPHELES APPROACHES HIS SEAT.]

For me, I grant, sour wine is out of place; Fill up my glass with sweetest, will
you?

MEPHISTOPHELES

[BORING.]

Tokay shall flow at once, to fill you!

ALTMAYER

No—look me, Sirs, straight in the face!

I see you have your fun at our expense.

MEPHISTOPHELES

O no! with gentlemen of such pretence, That were to venture far, indeed.
Speak out, and make your choice with speed! With what a vintage can I serve
you?

ALTMAYER

With any—only satisfy our need.

[AFTER THE HOLES HAVE BEEN BORED AND PLUGGED.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

[WITH SINGULAR GESTURES.]

Grapes the vine-stem bears, Horns the he-goat wears!

The grapes are juicy, the vines are wood, The wooden table gives wine as
good!

Into the depths of Nature peer,— Only believe there's a miracle here!
Now draw the stoppers, and drink your fill!

ALL

[AS THEY DRAW OUT THE STOPPERS, AND THE WINE WHICH HAS BEEN
DESIRED FLOWS INTO THE GLASS OF EACH.]

O beautiful fountain, that flows at will!

MEPHISTOPHELES

But have a care that you nothing spill!

[THEY DRINK REPEATEDLY.]

ALL

[SING.]

As 'twere five hundred hogs, we feel So cannibalic jolly!

MEPHISTOPHELES

See, now, the race is happy—it is free!

FAUST

To leave them is my inclination.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Take notice, first! their bestiality Will make a brilliant demonstration.

SIEBEL

[*DRINKS CARELESSLY. THE WINE SPILLS UPON THE EARTH, AND TURNS
TO FLAME.*]

Help! Fire! Help! Hell-fire is sent!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*CHARMING AWAY THE FLAME.*]

Be quiet, friendly element!

[*TO THE REVELLERS.*]

A bit of purgatory 'twas for this time, merely.

SIEBEL

What mean you? Wait!—you'll pay for't dearly!

You'll know us, to your detriment.

FROSCH

Don't try that game a second time upon us!

ALTMAYER

I think we'd better send him packing quietly.

SIEBEL

What, Sir! you dare to make so free, And play your hocus-pocus on us!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Be still, old wine-tub.

SIEBEL

Broomstick, you!

You face it out, impertinent and heady?

BRANDER

Just wait! a shower of blows is ready.

ALTMAYER

[*DRAWS A STOPPER OUT OF THE TABLE. FIRE FLIES IN HIS FACE.*]

I burn! I burn!

SIEBEL

'Tis magic! Strike—

The knave is outlawed! Cut him as you like!

[*THEY DRAW THEIR KNIVES, AND RUSH UPON MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*WITH SOLEMN GESTURES.*]

False word and form of air, Change place, and sense ensnare!

Be here—and there!

[*THEY STAND AMAZED AND LOOK AT EACH OTHER.*]

ALTMAYER

Where am I? What a lovely land!

FROSCH

Vines? Can I trust my eyes?

SIEBEL

And purple grapes at hand!

BRANDER

Here, over this green arbor bending, See what a vine! what grapes depending!

*[HE TAKES SIEBEL BY THE NOSE. THE OTHERS DO THE SAME
RECIPROCALLY, AND RAISE THEIR KNIVES.]*

MEPHISTOPHELES

[AS ABOVE.]

Loose, Error, from their eyes the band, And how the Devil jests, be now
enlightened!

[HE DISAPPEARS WITH FAUST. THE REVELLERS START AND SEPARATE.]

SIEBEL

What happened?

ALTMAYER

How?

FROSCH

Was that your nose I tightened?

BRANDER

[TO SIEBEL.]

And yours that still I have in hand?

ALTMAYER

It was a blow that went through every limb!
Give me a chair! I sink! my senses swim.

FROSCH

But what has happened, tell me now?

SIEBEL

Where is he? If I catch the scoundrel hiding, He shall not leave alive, I vow.

ALTMAYER

I saw him with these eyes upon a wine-cask riding Out of the cellar-door, just
now.

Still in my feet the fright like lead is weighing.

[HE TURNS TOWARDS THE TABLE.]

Why! If the fount of wine should still be playing?

SIEBEL

'Twas all deceit, and lying, false design!

FROSCH

And yet it seemed as I were drinking wine.

BRANDER

But with the grapes how was it, pray?

ALTMAYER

Shall one believe no miracles, just say!

WITCH'S KITCHEN

[UPON A LOW HEARTH STANDS A GREAT CALDRON, UNDER WHICH A FIRE IS BURNING. VARIOUS FIGURES APPEAR IN THE VAPORS WHICH RISE FROM THE CALDRON. A SHE-APE SITS BESIDE IT, SKIMS IT, AND WATCHES LEST IT BOIL OVER. THE HE-APE, WITH THE YOUNG ONES, SITS NEAR AND WARMS HIMSELF. CEILING AND WALLS ARE COVERED WITH THE MOST FANTASTIC WITCH-IMPLEMENTS. ENTER FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES.]

FAUST

These crazy signs of witches' craft repel me!
I shall recover, dost thou tell me, Through this insane, chaotic play?
From an old hag shall I demand assistance?
And will her foul mess take away Full thirty years from my existence?
Woe's me, canst thou naught better find!
Another baffled hope must be lamented: Has Nature, then, and has a noble
mind Not any potent balsam yet invented?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Once more, my friend, thou talkest sensibly.
There is, to make thee young, a simpler mode and apter; But in another book
'tis writ for thee, And is a most eccentric chapter.

FAUST

Yet will I know it.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Good! the method is revealed
Without or gold or magic or physician.
Betake thyself to yonder field, There hoe and dig, as thy condition; Restrain
thyself, thy sense and will Within a narrow sphere to flourish; With unmixed
food thy body nourish; Live with the ox as ox, and think it not a theft That

thou manur'st the acre which thou reapest;— That, trust me, is the best mode left, Whereby for eighty years thy youth thou keepest!

FAUST

I am not used to that; I cannot stoop to try it— To take the spade in hand, and ply it.

The narrow being suits me not at all.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then to thine aid the witch must call.

FAUST

Wherefore the hag, and her alone?

Canst thou thyself not brew the potion?

MEPHISTOPHELES

That were a charming sport, I own: I'd build a thousand bridges meanwhile, I've a notion.

Not Art and Science serve, alone; Patience must in the work be shown.

Long is the calm brain active in creation; Time, only, strengthens the fine fermentation.

And all, belonging thereunto, Is rare and strange, howe'er you take it: The Devil taught the thing, 'tis true, And yet the Devil cannot make it.

[*PERCEIVING THE ANIMALS.*]

See, what a delicate race they be!

That is the maid! the man is he!

[*TO THE ANIMALS.*]

It seems the mistress has gone away?

THE ANIMALS

Carousing, to-day!

Off and about,

By the chimney out!

MEPHISTOPHELES

What time takes she for dissipating?

THE ANIMALS

While we to warm our paws are waiting.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*TO FAUST.*]

How findest thou the tender creatures?

FAUST

Absurder than I ever yet did see.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why, just such talk as this, for me, Is that which has the most attractive features!

[TO THE ANIMALS.]

But tell me now, ye cursed puppets, Why do ye stir the porridge so?

THE ANIMALS

We're cooking watery soup for beggars.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then a great public you can show.

THE HE-APE

[COMES UP AND FAWNS ON MEPHISTOPHELES.]

O cast thou the dice!

Make me rich in a trice, Let me win in good season!

Things are badly controlled, And had I but gold,

So had I my reason.

MEPHISTOPHELES

How would the ape be sure his luck enhances.

Could he but try the lottery's chances!

[IN THE MEANTIME THE YOUNG APES HAVE BEEN PLAYING WITH A LARGE BALL, WHICH THEY NOW ROLL FORWARD.]

THE HE-APE

The world's the ball:

Doth rise and fall,

And roll incessant:

Like glass doth ring,

A hollow thing,—

How soon will't spring, And drop, quiescent?

Here bright it gleams, Here brighter seems:

I live at present!

Dear son, I say,

Keep thou away!

Thy doom is spoken!

'Tis made of clay,

And will be broken.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What means the sieve?

THE HE-APE

[TAKING IT DOWN.]

Wert thou the thief,

I'd know him and shame him.

[HE RUNS TO THE SHE-APE, AND LETS HER LOOK THROUGH IT.]

Look through the sieve!

Know'st thou the thief, And darest not name him?

MEPHISTOPHELES

[APPROACHING THE FIRE.]

And what's this pot?

HE-APE AND SHE-APE

The fool knows it not!

He knows not the pot,

He knows not the kettle!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Impertinent beast!

THE HE-APE

Take the brush here, at least, And sit down on the settle!

[HE INVITES MEPHISTOPHELES TO SIT DOWN.]

FAUST

*[WHO DURING ALL THIS TIME HAS BEEN STANDING BEFORE A MIRROR,
NOW APPROACHING AND NOW RETREATING FROM IT.]*

What do I see? What heavenly form revealed Shows through the glass from
Magic's fair dominions!

O lend me, Love, the swiftest of thy pinions, And bear me to her beauteous
field!

Ah, if I leave this spot with fond designing, If I attempt to venture near, Dim, as
through gathering mist, her charms appear!— A woman's form, in beauty
shining!

Can woman, then, so lovely be?

And must I find her body, there reclining, Of all the heavens the bright
epitome?

Can Earth with such a thing be mated?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why, surely, if a God first plagues Himself six days, Then, self-contented,
Bravo! says, Must something clever be created.

This time, thine eyes be satiate!

I'll yet detect thy sweetheart and ensnare her, And blest is he, who has the lucky
fate, Some day, as bridegroom, home to bear her.

*[FAUST GAZES CONTINUALLY IN THE MIRROR. MEPHISTOPHELES,
STRETCHING HIMSELF OUT ON THE SETTLE, AND PLAYING WITH THE
BRUSH, CONTINUES TO SPEAK.]*

So sit I, like the King upon his throne: I hold the sceptre, here,—and lack the crown alone.

THE ANIMALS

[WHO UP TO THIS TIME HAVE BEEN MAKING ALL KINDS OF FANTASTIC
MOVEMENTS TOGETHER BRING A CROWN TO *MEPHISTOPHELES*
WITH GREAT NOISE.]

O be thou so good
With sweat and with blood The crown to belime!

*[THEY HANDLE THE CROWN AWKWARDLY AND BREAK IT INTO TWO
PIECES, WITH WHICH THEY SPRING AROUND.]*

'Tis done, let it be!
We speak and we see,
We hear and we rhyme!

FAUST

[BEFORE THE MIRROR.]

Woe's me! I fear to lose my wits.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[POINTING TO THE ANIMALS.]

My own head, now, is really nigh to sinking.

THE ANIMALS

If lucky our hits,
And everything fits,
'Tis thoughts, and we're thinking!

FAUST

[AS ABOVE.]

My bosom burns with that sweet vision; Let us, with speed, away from here!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[IN THE SAME ATTITUDE.]

One must, at least, make this admission— They're poets, genuine and sincere.

*[THE CALDRON, WHICH THE SHE-APE HAS UP TO THIS TIME
NEGLECTED TO WATCH, BEGINS TO BOIL OVER. THERE ENSUES A
GREAT FLAME, WHICH BLAZES OUT THE CHIMNEY. THE WITCH
COMES CAREERING DOWN THROUGH THE FLAME, WITH TERRIBLE
CRIES.]*

THE WITCH

Ow! ow! ow! ow!
The damnéd beast—the curséd sow!
To leave the kettle, and singe the Frau!
Accurséd fere!

[PERCEIVING FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES.]

What is that here?
Who are you here?
What want you thus?
Who sneaks to us?
The fire-pain
Burn bone and brain!

[SHE PLUNGES THE SKIMMING-LADLE INTO THE CALDRON, AND
SCATTERS FLAMES TOWARDS FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, AND THE
ANIMALS. THE ANIMALS WHIMPER.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

[REVERSING THE BRUSH, WHICH HE HAS BEEN HOLDING IN HIS HAND,
AND STRIDING AMONG THE JARS AND GLASSES.]

In two! in two!
There lies the brew!
There lies the glass!
The joke will pass,
As time, foul ass!
To the singing of thy crew.

[AS THE WITCH STARTS BACK, FULL OF WRATH AND HORROR.]

Ha! know'st thou me? Abomination, thou!
Know'st thou, at last, thy Lord and Master?
What hinders me from smiting now Thee and thy monkey-sprites with fell
disaster?
Hast for the scarlet coat no reverence?
Dost recognize no more the tall cock's-feather?
Have I concealed this countenance?— Must tell my name, old face of leather?

THE WITCH

O pardon, Sir, the rough salute!
Yet I perceive no cloven foot; And both your ravens, where are *they* now?

MEPHISTOPHELES

This time, I'll let thee 'scape the debt; For since we two together met, 'Tis verily
full many a day now.
Culture, which smooth the whole world licks, Also unto the Devil sticks.
The days of that old Northern phantom now are over: Where canst thou horns
and tail and claws discover?
And, as regards the foot, which I can't spare, in truth, 'Twould only make the
people shun me; Therefore I've worn, like many a spindly youth, False
calves these many years upon me.

THE WITCH

[DANCING.]

Reason and sense forsake my brain, Since I behold Squire Satan here again!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Woman, from such a name refrain!

THE WITCH

Why so? What has it done to thee?

MEPHISTOPHELES

It's long been written in the Book of Fable; Yet, therefore, no whit better men we see: The Evil One has left, the evil ones are stable.

Sir Baron call me thou, then is the matter good; A cavalier am I, like others in my bearing.

Thou hast no doubt about my noble blood: See, here's the coat-of-arms that I am wearing!

[HE MAKES AN INDECENT GESTURE.]

THE WITCH

[LAUGHS IMMODERATELY.]

Ha! ha! That's just your way, I know: A rogue you are, and you were always so.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[TO FAUST.]

My friend, take proper heed, I pray!

To manage witches, this is just the way.

THE WITCH

Wherein, Sirs, can I be of use?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Give us a goblet of the well-known juice!

But, I must beg you, of the oldest brewage; The years a double strength produce.

THE WITCH

With all my heart! Now, here's a bottle, Wherefrom, sometimes, I wet my throttle, Which, also, not the slightest, stinks; And willingly a glass I'll fill him.

[WHISPERING.]

Yet, if this man without due preparation drinks, As well thou know'st, within an hour 'twill kill him.

MEPHISTOPHELES

He is a friend of mine, with whom it will agree, And he deserves thy kitchen's best potation: Come, draw thy circle, speak thine adjuration, And fill thy goblet full and free!

THE WITCH

[WITH FANTASTIC GESTURES DRAWS A CIRCLE AND PLACES MYSTERIOUS ARTICLES THEREIN; MEANWHILE THE GLASSES BEGIN TO RING, THE CALDRON TO SOUND, AND MAKE A MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT. FINALLY SHE BRINGS A GREAT BOOK, AND STATIONS IN THE CIRCLE THE APES, WHO ARE OBLIGED TO SERVE AS READING-DESK, AND TO HOLD THE TORCHES. SHE THEN BECKONS FAUST TO APPROACH.]

FAUST

[To MEPHISTOPHELES.]

Now, what shall come of this? the creatures antic, The crazy stuff, the gestures
frantic,— All the repulsive cheats I view,— Are known to me, and hated,
too.

MEPHISTOPHELES

O, nonsense! That's a thing for laughter; Don't be so terribly severe!
She juggles you as doctor now, that, after, The beverage may work the proper
cheer.

[HE PERSUADES FAUST TO STEP INTO THE CIRCLE.]

THE WITCH

[BEGINS TO DECLAIM, WITH MUCH EMPHASIS, FROM THE BOOK.]

See, thus it's done!
Make ten of one,
And two let be,
Make even three,
And rich thou 'It be.
Cast o'er the four!

From five and six
(The witch's tricks)
Make seven and eight,
'Tis finished straight!
And nine is one,
And ten is none.
This is the witch's once-one's-one!

FAUST

She talks like one who raves in fever.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thou'lt hear much more before we leave her.

'Tis all the same: the book I can repeat, Such time I've squandered o'er the
history: A contradiction thus complete Is always for the wise, no less than
fools, a mystery.

The art is old and new, for verily All ages have been taught the matter,— By
Three and One, and One and Three, Error instead of Truth to scatter.

They prate and teach, and no one interferes; All from the fellowship of fools
are shrinking.

Man usually believes, if only words he hears, That also with them goes material
for thinking!

THE WITCH

[CONTINUES.]

The lofty skill
Of Science, still
From all men deeply hidden!
Who takes no thought,
To him 'tis brought,
'Tis given unsought, unbidden!

FAUST

What nonsense she declaims before us!
My head is nigh to split, I fear: It seems to me as if I hear
A hundred thousand fools in chorus.

MEPHISTOPHELES

O Sibyl excellent, enough of adjuration!
But hither bring us thy potation, And quickly fill the beaker to the brim!
This drink will bring my friend no injuries: He is a man of manifold degrees,
And many draughts are known to him.

*[THE WITCH, WITH MANY CEREMONIES, POURS THE DRINK INTO A
CUP; AS FAUST SETS IT TO HIS LIPS, A LIGHT FLAME ARISES.]*

Down with it quickly! Drain it off!
'Twill warm thy heart with new desire: Art with the Devil hand and glove, And
wilt thou be afraid of fire?

[THE WITCH BREAKS THE CIRCLE. FAUST STEPS FORTH.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

And now, away! Thou dar'st not rest.

THE WITCH

And much good may the liquor do thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[TO THE WITCH.]

Thy wish be on Walpurgis Night expressed; What boon I have, shall then be
given unto thee.

THE WITCH

Here is a song, which, if you sometimes sing, You'll find it of peculiar
operation.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[TO FAUST.]

Come, walk at once! A rapid occupation Must start the needful perspiration,
And through thy frame the liquor's potency fling.
The noble indolence I'll teach thee then to treasure, And soon thou'lt be aware,
with keenest thrills of pleasure, How Cupid stirs and leaps, on light and
restless wing.

FAUST

One rapid glance within the mirror give me, How beautiful that woman-form!

MEPHISTOPHELES

No, no! The paragon of all, believe me, Thou soon shalt see, alive and warm.

[*ASIDE.*]

Thou'lt find, this drink thy blood compelling, Each woman beautiful as Helen!

STREET

[*FAUST. MARGARET PASSING BY.*]

FAUST

Fair lady, let it not offend you, That arm and escort I would lend you!

MARGARET

I'm neither lady, neither fair, And home I can go without your care.

[*SHE RELEASES HERSELF, AND EXITS.*]

FAUST

By Heaven, the girl is wondrous fair!

Of all I've seen, beyond compare; So sweetly virtuous and pure, And yet a little
pert, be sure!

The lip so red, the cheek's clear dawn, I'll not forget while the world rolls on!

How she cast down her timid eyes, Deep in my heart imprinted lies: How short
and sharp of speech was she, Why, 'twas a real ecstasy!

[*ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

FAUST

Hear, of that girl I'd have possession!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Which, then?

FAUST

The one who just went by.

MEPHISTOPHELES

She, there? She's coming from confession, Of every sin absolved; for I, Behind
her chair, was listening nigh.

So innocent is she, indeed,

That to confess she had no need.

I have no power o'er souls so green.

FAUST

And yet, she's older than fourteen.

MEPHISTOPHELES

How now! You're talking like Jack Rake, Who every flower for himself would
take, And fancies there are no favors more, Nor honors, save for him in
store; Yet always doesn't the thing succeed.

FAUST

Most Worthy Pedagogue, take heed!
Let not a word of moral law be spoken!
I claim, I tell thee, all my right; And if that image of delight
Rest not within mine arms to-night, At midnight is our compact broken.

MEPHISTOPHELES

But think, the chances of the case!
I need, at least, a fortnight's space, To find an opportune occasion.

FAUST

Had I but seven hours for all, I should not on the Devil call, But win her by my
own persuasion.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You almost like a Frenchman prate; Yet, pray, don't take it as annoyance!
Why, all at once, exhaust the joyance?
Your bliss is by no means so great As if you'd use, to get control, All sorts of
tender rigmarole, And knead and shape her to your thought, As in Italian
tales 'tis taught.

FAUST

Without that, I have appetite.

MEPHISTOPHELES

But now, leave jesting out of sight!
I tell you, once for all, that speed With this fair girl will not succeed; By storm
she cannot captured be; We must make use of strategy.

FAUST

Get me something the angel keeps!
Lead me thither where she sleeps!
Get me a kerchief from her breast,— A garter that her knee has pressed!

MEPHISTOPHELES

That you may see how much I'd fain Further and satisfy your pain, We will no
longer lose a minute; I'll find her room to-day, and take you in it.

FAUST

And shall I see—possess her?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No!

Unto a neighbor she must go,
And meanwhile thou, alone, mayst glow With every hope of future pleasure,
Breathing her atmosphere in fullest measure.

FAUST

Can we go thither?

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis too early yet.

FAUST

A gift for her I bid thee get!

[EXIT FAUST.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

Presents at once? That's good: he's certain to get at her!
Full many a pleasant place I know, And treasures, buried long ago: I must,
perforce, look up the matter.

[EXIT MEPHISTOPHELES.]

EVENING

[A SMALL, NEATLY KEPT CHAMBER.]

MARGARET

[PLAITING AND BINDING UP THE BRAIDS OF HER HAIR.]

I'd something give, could I but say Who was that gentleman, to-day.
Surely a gallant man was he,
And of a noble family;
And much could I in his face behold,— And he wouldn't, else, have been so
bold!

[EXIT MARGARET.]

[ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES AND FAUST.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

Come in, but gently: follow me!

FAUST

[AFTER A MOMENT'S SILENCE.]

Leave me alone, I beg of thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[PRYING ABOUT.]

Not every girl keeps things so neat.

FAUST

[*LOOKING AROUND.*]

O welcome, twilight soft and sweet, That breathes throughout this hallowed shrine!

Sweet pain of love, bind thou with fetters fleet The heart that on the dew of hope must pine!

How all around a sense impresses Of quiet, order, and content!

This poverty what bounty blesses!

What bliss within this narrow den is pent!

[*HE THROWS HIMSELF INTO A LEATHERN ARM-CHAIR NEAR THE BED.*]

Receive me, thou, that in thine open arms Departed joy and pain wert wont to gather!

How oft the children, with their ruddy charms, Hung here, around this throne, where sat the father!

Perchance my love, amid the childish band, Grateful for gifts the Holy Christmas gave her, Here meekly kissed the grandsire's withered hand.

I feel, O maid! thy very soul Of order and content around me whisper,— Which leads thee with its motherly control, The cloth upon thy board bids smoothly thee unroll, The sand beneath thy feet makes whiter, crisper.

O dearest hand, to thee 'tis given To change this hut into a lower heaven!

And here!

[*HE LIFTS ONE OF THE BED-CURTAINS.*]

What sweetest thrill is in my blood!

Here could I spend whole hours, delaying: Here Nature shaped, as if in sportive playing, The angel blossom from the bud.

Here lay the child, with Life's warm essence The tender bosom filled and fair, And here was wrought, through holier, purer presence, The form diviner beings wear!

And I? What drew me here with power?

How deeply am I moved, this hour!

What seek I? Why so full my heart, and sore?

Miserable Faust! I know thee now no more.

Is there a magic vapor here?

I came, with lust of instant pleasure, And lie dissolved in dreams of love's sweet leisure!

Are we the sport of every changeeful atmosphere?

And if, this moment, came she in to me, How would I for the fault atonement render!

How small the giant lout would be, Prone at her feet, relaxed and tender!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Be quick! I see her there, returning.

FAUST

Go! go! I never will retreat.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Here is a casket, not unmeet, Which elsewhere I have just been earning.

Here, set it in the press, with haste!

I swear, 'twill turn her head, to spy it: Some baubles I therein had placed, That
you might win another by it.

True, child is child, and play is play.

FAUST

I know not, should I do it?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ask you, pray?

Yourself, perhaps, would keep the bubble?

Then I suggest, 'twere fair and just To spare the lovely day your lust, And spare
to me the further trouble.

You are not miserly, I trust?

I rub my hands, in expectation tender—

[HE PLACES THE CASKET IN THE PRESS, AND LOCKS IT AGAIN.]

Now quick, away!

The sweet young maiden to betray, So that by wish and will you bend her; And
you look as though

To the lecture-hall you were forced to go,— As if stood before you, gray and
loath, Physics and Metaphysics both!

But away!

[EXEUNT FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES.]

MARGARET

[WITH A LAMP.]

It is so close, so sultry, here!

[SHE OPENS THE WINDOW.]

And yet 'tis not so warm outside.

I feel, I know not why, such fear!— Would mother came!—where can she
bide?

My body's chill and shuddering,— I'm but a silly, fearsome thing!

[SHE BEGINS TO SING WHILE UNDRESSING.]

There was a King in Thule, Was faithful till the grave,— To whom his
mistress, dying, A golden goblet gave.

Naught was to him more precious; He drained it at every bout: His eyes with
tears ran over, As oft as he drank thereout.

When came his time of dying, The towns in his land he told, Naught else to
his heir denying Except the goblet of gold.

He sat at the royal banquet With his knights of high degree, In the lofty hall
of his fathers In the Castle by the Sea.

There stood the old carouser, And drank the last life-glow; And hurled the
hallowed goblet Into the tide below.

He saw it plunging and filling, And sinking deep in the sea: Then fell his
eyelids forever, And never more drank he!

*[SHE OPENS THE PRESS IN ORDER TO ARRANGE HER CLOTHES, AND
PERCEIVES THE CASKET OF JEWELS.]*

How comes that lovely casket here to me?

I locked the press, most certainly.

'Tis truly wonderful! What can within it be?

Perhaps 'twas brought by some one as a pawn, And mother gave a loan
thereon?

And here there hangs a key to fit: I have a mind to open it.

What is that? God in Heaven! Whence came Such things? Never beheld I aught
so fair!

Rich ornaments, such as a noble dame On highest holidays might wear!

How would the pearl-chain suit my hair?

Ah, who may all this splendor own?

*[SHE ADORNS HERSELF WITH THE JEWELRY, AND STEPS BEFORE THE
MIRROR.]*

Were but the ear-rings mine, alone!

One has at once another air.

What helps one's beauty, youthful blood?

One may possess them, well and good; But none the more do others care.

They praise us half in pity, sure: To gold still tends,

On gold depends
All, all! Alas, we poor!

PROMENADE

[*FAUST WALKING THOUGHTFULLY UP AND DOWN. ENTER
MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES

By all love ever rejected! By hell-fire hot and unsparing!
I wish I knew something worse, that I might use it for swearing!

FAUST

What ails thee? What is't gripes thee, elf?
A face like thine beheld I never.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I would myself unto the Devil deliver, If I were not a Devil myself!

FAUST

Thy head is out of order, sadly: It much becomes thee to be raving madly.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Just think, the pocket of a priest should get The trinkets left for Margaret!
The mother saw them, and, instant, A secret dread began to haunt her.
Keen scent has she for tainted air; She snuffs within her book of prayer, And
smells each article, to see If sacred or profane it be;
So here she guessed, from every gem, That not much blessing came with them.
"My child," she said, "ill-gotten good Ensnares the soul, consumes the blood.
Before the Mother of God we'll lay it; With heavenly manna she'll repay it!"
But Margaret thought, with sour grimace, "A gift-horse is not out of place,
And, truly! godless cannot be The one who brought such things to me."
A parson came, by the mother bidden: He saw, at once, where the game was
hidden, And viewed it with a favor stealthy.
He spake: "That is the proper view,— Who overcometh, winneth too.
The Holy Church has a stomach healthy: Hath eaten many a land as forfeit,
And never yet complained of surfeit: The Church alone, beyond all question,
Has for ill-gotten goods the right digestion."

FAUST

A general practice is the same, Which Jew and King may also claim.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then bagged the spangles, chains, and rings, As if but toadstools were the
things, And thanked no less, and thanked no more Than if a sack of nuts he

bore,— Promised them fullest heavenly pay, And deeply edified were they.

FAUST

And Margaret?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Sits unrestful still, And knows not what she should, or will; Thinks on the
jewels, day and night, But more on him who gave her such delight.

FAUST

The darling's sorrow gives me pain.
Get thou a set for her again!
The first was not a great display.

MEPHISTOPHELES

O yes, the gentleman finds it all child's-play!

FAUST

Fix and arrange it to my will; And on her neighbor try thy skill!
Don't be a Devil stiff as paste, But get fresh jewels to her taste!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, gracious Sir, in all obedience!

[*EXIT FAUST.*]

Such an enamored fool in air would blow Sun, moon, and all the starry legions,
To give his sweetheart a diverting show.

[*EXIT MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

THE NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE

MARTHA

[*SOLUS.*]

God forgive my husband, yet he Hasn't done his duty by me!
Off in the world he went straightway,— Left me lie in the straw where I lay.
And, truly, I did naught to fret him: God knows I loved, and can't forget him!

[*SHE WEEPS.*]

Perhaps he's even dead! Ah, woe!— Had I a certificate to show!

MARGARET

[*COMES.*]

Dame Martha!

MARTHA

Margaret! what's happened thee?

MARGARET

I scarce can stand, my knees are trembling!

I find a box, the first resembling, Within my press! Of ebony,— And things, all
splendid to behold, And richer far than were the old.

MARTHA

You mustn't tell it to your mother!
'Twould go to the priest, as did the other.

MARGARET

Ah, look and see—just look and see!

MARTHA

[ADORNING HER.]

O, what a blessed luck for thee!

MARGARET

But, ah! in the streets I dare not bear them, Nor in the church be seen to wear
them.

MARTHA

Yet thou canst often this way wander, And secretly the jewels don,
Walk up and down an hour, before the mirror yonder,— We'll have our private
joy thereon.
And then a chance will come, a holiday, When, piece by piece, can one the
things abroad display, A chain at first, then other ornament: Thy mother will
not see, and stories we'll invent.

MARGARET

Whoever could have brought me things so precious?
That something's wrong, I feel suspicious.

[A KNOCK.]

Good Heaven! My mother can that have been?

MARTHA

[PEEPING THROUGH THE BLIND.]

'Tis some strange gentleman.—Come in!

[ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

That I so boldly introduce me, I beg you, ladies, to excuse me.

[STEPS BACK REVERENTLY, ON SEEING MARGARET.]

For Martha Schwerdtlein I'd inquire!

MARTHA

I'm she: what does the gentleman desire?

MEPHISTOPHELES

[ASIDE TO HER.]

It is enough that you are she: You've a visitor of high degree.
Pardon the freedom I have ta'en,— Will after noon return again.

MARTHA

[*ALoud.*]

Of all things in the world! Just hear— He takes thee for a lady, dear!

MARGARET

I am a creature young and poor: The gentleman's too kind, I'm sure.
The jewels don't belong to me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ah, not alone the jewelry!
The look, the manner, both betray— Rejoiced am I that I may stay!

MARTHA

What is your business? I would fain—

MEPHISTOPHELES

I would I had a more cheerful strain!
Take not unkindly its repeating: Your husband's dead, and sends a greeting.

MARTHA

Is dead? Alas, that heart so true!
My husband dead! Let me die, too!

MARGARET

Ah, dearest dame, let not your courage fail!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Hear me relate the mournful tale!

MARGARET

Therefore I'd never love, believe me!
A loss like this to death would grieve me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Joy follows woe, woe after joy comes flying.

MARTHA

Relate his life's sad close to me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

In Padua buried, he is lying
Beside the good Saint Antony, Within a grave well consecrated, For cool,
eternal rest created.

MARTHA

He gave you, further, no commission?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, one of weight, with many sighs: Three hundred masses buy, to save him
from perdition!

My hands are empty, otherwise.

MARTHA

What! Not a pocket-piece? no jewelry?

What every journeyman within his wallet spares, And as a token with him
bears, And rather starves or begs, than loses?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Madam, it is a grief to me;

Yet, on my word, his cash was put to proper uses.

Besides, his penitence was very sore, And he lamented his ill fortune all the
more.

MARGARET

Alack, that men are so unfortunate!

Surely for his soul's sake full many a prayer I'll proffer.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You well deserve a speedy marriage-offer: You are so kind, compassionate.

MARGARET

O, no! As yet, it would not do.

MEPHISTOPHELES

If not a husband, then a beau for you!

It is the greatest heavenly blessing, To have a dear thing for one's caressing.

MARGARET

The country's custom is not so.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Custom, or not! It happens, though.

MARTHA

Continue, pray!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I stood beside his bed of dying.

'Twas something better than manure,— Half-rotten straw: and yet, he died a
Christian, sure, And found that heavier scores to his account were lying.

He cried: "I find my conduct wholly hateful!

To leave my wife, my trade, in manner so ungrateful!
Ah, the remembrance makes me die!
Would of my wrong to her I might be shriven!"

MARTHA

[*WEeping.*]

The dear, good man! Long since was he forgiven.

MEPHISTOPHELES

"Yet she, God knows! was more to blame than I."

MARTHA

He lied! What! On the brink of death he slandered?

MEPHISTOPHELES

In the last throes his senses wandered, If I such things but half can judge.
He said: "I had no time for play, for gaping freedom: First children, and then
work for bread to feed 'em,— For bread, in the widest sense, to drudge, And
could not even eat my share in peace and quiet!"

MARTHA

Had he all love, all faith forgotten in his riot?
My work and worry, day and night?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Not so: the memory of it touched him quite.
Said he: "When I from Malta went away My prayers for wife and little ones
were zealous, And such a luck from Heaven befell us, We made a Turkish
merchantman our prey, That to the Soldan bore a mighty treasure.
Then I received, as was most fit, Since bravery was paid in fullest measure, My
well-apportioned share of it."

MARTHA

Say, how? Say, where? If buried, did he own it?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Who knows, now, whither the four winds have blown it?
A fair young damsel took him in her care, As he in Naples wandered round,
unfriended; And she much love, much faith to him did bear, So that he felt it
till his days were ended.

MARTHA

The villain! From his children thieving!
Even all the misery on him cast Could not prevent his shameful way of living!

MEPHISTOPHELES

But see! He's dead therefrom, at last.
Were I in *your* place, do not doubt me, I'd mourn him decently a year, And for
another keep, meanwhile, my eyes about me.

MARTHA

Ah, God! another one so dear
As was my first, this world will hardly give me.
There never was a sweeter fool than mine, Only he loved to roam and leave me,
And foreign wenches and foreign wine, And the damned throw of dice,
indeed.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well, well! That might have done, however, If he had only been as clever, And
treated *your* slips with as little heed.
I swear, with this condition, too, I would, myself, change rings with you.

MARTHA

The gentleman is pleased to jest.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll cut away, betimes, from here: She'd take the Devil at his word, I fear.

[*TO MARGARET.*]

How fares the heart within your breast?

MARGARET

What means the gentleman?

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*ASIDE.*]

Sweet innocent, thou art!

[*ALOUD.*]

Ladies, farewell!

MARGARET

Farewell!

MARTHA

A moment, ere we part!
I'd like to have a legal witness, Where, how, and when he died, to certify his
fitness.
Irregular ways I've always hated; I want his death in the weekly paper stated.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, my good dame, a pair of witnesses Always the truth establishes.
I have a friend of high condition, Who'll also add his deposition.
I'll bring him here.

MARTHA

Good Sir, pray do!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And this young lady will be present, too?

A gallant youth! has travelled far: Ladies with him delighted are.

MARGARET

Before him I should blush, ashamed.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Before no king that could be named!

MARTHA

Behind the house, in my garden, then, This eve we'll expect the gentlemen.

STREET

[*FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

FAUST

How is it? under way? and soon complete?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ah, bravo! Do I find you burning?

Well, Margaret soon will still your yearning: At Neighbor Martha's you'll this evening meet.

A fitter woman ne'er was made To ply the pimp and gypsy trade!

FAUST

Tis well.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet something is required from us.

FAUST

One service pays the other thus.

MEPHISTOPHELES

We've but to make a deposition valid That now her husband's limbs,
outstretched and pallid, At Padua rest, in consecrated soil.

FAUST

Most wise! And first, of course, we'll make the journey thither?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Sancta simplicitas! no need of such a toil; Depose, with knowledge or without it, either!

FAUST

If you've naught better, then, I'll tear your pretty plan!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now, there you are! O holy man!

Is it the first time in your life you're driven To bear false witness in a case?
Of God, the world and all that in it has a place, Of Man, and all that moves the
being of his race, Have you not terms and definitions given With brazen
forehead, daring breast?

And, if you'll probe the thing profoundly, Knew you so much—and you'll
confess it roundly!— As here of Schwerdtlein's death and place of rest?

FAUST

Thou art, and thou remain'st, a sophist, liar.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, knew I not more deeply thy desire.

For wilt thou not, no lover fairer, Poor Margaret flatter, and ensnare her, And
all thy soul's devotion swear her?

FAUST

And from my heart.

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis very fine!

Thine endless love, thy faith assuring, The one almighty force enduring,— Will
that, too, prompt this heart of thine?

FAUST

Hold! hold! It will!—If such my flame, And for the sense and power intense I
seek, and cannot find, a name; Then range with all my senses through
creation, Craving the speech of inspiration, And call this ardor, so supernal,
Endless, eternal and eternal,— Is that a devilish lying game?

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet I'm right!

FAUST

Mark this, I beg of thee!

And spare my lungs henceforth: whoever Intends to have the right, if but his
tongue be clever, Will have it, certainly.

But come: the further talking brings disgust, For thou art right, especially since
I must.

GARDEN

[MARGARET ON FAUST'S ARM. MARTHA AND MEPHISTOPHELES
WALKING UP AND DOWN.]

MARGARET

I feel, the gentleman allows for me, Demeans himself, and shames me by it; A
traveller is so used to be
Kindly content with any diet.
I know too well that my poor gossip can Ne'er entertain such an experienced
man.

FAUST

A look from thee, a word, more entertains Than all the lore of wisest brains.
[HE KISSES HER HAND.]

MARGARET

Don't incommode yourself! How could you ever kiss it!
It is so ugly, rough to see!
What work I do,—how hard and steady is it!
Mother is much too close with me.
[THEY PASS.]

MARTHA

And you, Sir, travel always, do you not?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Alas, that trade and duty us so harry!
With what a pang one leaves so many a spot, And dares not even now and then
to tarry!

MARTHA

In young, wild years it suits your ways, This round and round the world in
freedom sweeping; But then come on the evil days, And so, as bachelor, into
his grave a-creeping, None ever found a thing to praise.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I dread to see how such a fate advances.

MARTHA

Then, worthy Sir, improve betimes your chances!
[THEY PASS.]

MARGARET

Yes, out of sight is out of mind!
Your courtesy an easy grace is; But you have friends in other places, And
sensibler than I, you'll find.

FAUST

Trust me, dear heart! what men call sensible
Is oft mere vanity and narrowness.

MARGARET

How so?

FAUST

Ah, that simplicity and innocence ne'er know Themselves, their holy value, and
their spell!
That meekness, lowliness, the highest graces Which Nature portions out so
lovingly—

MARGARET

So you but think a moment's space on me, All times I'll have to think on you,
all places!

FAUST

No doubt you're much alone?

MARGARET

Yes, for our household small has grown, Yet must be cared for, you will own.
We have no maid: I do the knitting, sewing, sweeping, The cooking, early work
and late, in fact; And mother, in her notions of housekeeping, Is so exact!
Not that she needs so much to keep expenses down: We, more than others,
might take comfort, rather: A nice estate was left us by my father, A house, a
little garden near the town.
But now my days have less of noise and hurry; My brother is a soldier,
My little sister's dead.
True, with the child a troubled life I led, Yet I would take again, and willing, all
the worry,
So very dear was she.

FAUST

An angel, if like thee!

MARGARET

I brought it up, and it was fond of me.
Father had died before it saw the light, And mother's case seemed hopeless
quite, So weak and miserable she lay; And she recovered, then, so slowly,
day by day.
She could not think, herself, of giving The poor wee thing its natural living;
And so I nursed it all alone
With milk and water: 'twas my own.
Lulled in my lap with many a song, It smiled, and tumbled, and grew strong.

FAUST

The purest bliss was surely then thy dower.

MARGARET

But surely, also, many a weary hour.

I kept the baby's cradle near My bed at night: if 't even stirred, I'd guess it, And waking, hear.

And I must nurse it, warm beside me press it, And oft, to quiet it, my bed forsake, And dandling back and forth the restless creature take, Then at the wash-tub stand, at morning's break; And then the marketing and kitchen-tending, Day after day, the same thing, never-ending.

One's spirits, Sir, are thus not always good, But then one learns to relish rest and food.

[*THEY PASS.*]

MARTHA

Yes, the poor women are bad off, 'tis true: A stubborn bachelor there's no converting.

MEPHISTOPHELES

It but depends upon the like of you, And I should turn to better ways than flirting.

MARTHA

Speak plainly, Sir, have you no one detected?
Has not your heart been anywhere subjected?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The proverb says: One's own warm hearth And a good wife, are gold and jewels worth.

MARTHA

I mean, have you not felt desire, though ne'er so slightly?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've everywhere, in fact, been entertained politely.

MARTHA

I meant to say, were you not touched in earnest, ever?

MEPHISTOPHELES

One should allow one's self to jest with ladies never.

MARTHA

Ah, you don't understand!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm sorry I'm so blind: But I am sure—that you are very kind.

[*THEY PASS.*]

FAUST

And me, thou angel! didst thou recognize, As through the garden-gate I came?

MARGARET

Did you not see it? I cast down my eyes.

FAUST

And thou forgiv'st my freedom, and the blame To my impertinence befitting,
As the Cathedral thou wert quitting?

MARGARET

I was confused, the like ne'er happened me; No one could ever speak to my
discredit.

Ah, thought I, in my conduct has he read it— Something immodest or
unseemly free?

He seemed to have the sudden feeling That with this wench 'twere very easy
dealing.

I will confess, I knew not what appeal On your behalf, here, in my bosom
grew; But I was angry with myself, to feel That I could not be angrier with
you.

FAUST

Sweet darling!

MARGARET

Wait a while!

[*SHE PLUCKS A STAR-FLOWER, AND PULLS OFF THE LEAVES, ONE
AFTER THE OTHER.*]

FAUST

Shall that a nosegay be?

MARGARET

No, it is just in play.

FAUST

How?

MARGARET

Go! you'll laugh at me.

[*SHE PULLS OFF THE LEAVES AND MURMURS.*]

FAUST

What murmurest thou?

MARGARET

[*HALF ALOUD.*]

He loves me—loves me not.

FAUST

Thou sweet, angelic soul!

MARGARET

[*CONTINUES.*]

Loves me—not—loves me—not—

[*PLUCKING THE LAST LEAF, SHE CRIES WITH FRANK DELIGHT.*]

He loves me!

FAUST

Yes, child! and let this blossom-word For thee be speech divine! He loves thee!

Ah, know'st thou what it means? He loves thee!

[*HE GRASPS BOTH HER HANDS.*]

MARGARET

I'm all a-tremble!

FAUST

O tremble not! but let this look, Let this warm clasp of hands declare thee What
is unspeakable!

To yield one wholly, and to feel a rapture In yielding, that must be eternal!

Eternal!—for the end would be despair.

No, no,—no ending! no ending!

MARTHA

[*COMING FORWARD.*]

The night is falling.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ay! we must away.

MARTHA

I'd ask you, longer here to tarry, But evil tongues in this town have full play.

It's as if nobody had nothing to fetch and carry, Nor other labor,

But spying all the doings of one's neighbor: And one becomes the talk, do
whatsoe'er one may.

Where is our couple now?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Flown up the alley yonder,

The wilful summer-birds!

MARTHA

He seems of her still fonder.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And she of him. So runs the world away!

A GARDEN-ARBOR

*[MARGARET COMES IN, CONCEALS HERSELF BEHIND THE DOOR, PUTS
HER FINGER TO HER LIPS, AND PEEPS THROUGH THE CRACK.]*

MARGARET

He comes!

FAUST

[ENTERING.]

Ah, rogue! a tease thou art:

I have thee!

[HE KISSES HER.]

MARGARET

[CLASPING HIM, AND RETURNING THE KISS.]

Dearest man! I love thee from my heart.

[MEPHISTOPHELES KNOCKS.]

FAUST

[STAMPING HIS FOOT.]

Who's there?

MEPHISTOPHELES

A friend!

FAUST

A beast!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Tis time to separate.

MARTHA

[COMING.]

Yes, Sir, 'tis late.

FAUST

May I not, then, upon you wait?

MARGARET

My mother would—farewell!

FAUST

Ah, can I not remain?

Farewell!

MARTHA

Adieu!

MARGARET

And soon to meet again!

[*EXEUNT FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

MARGARET

Dear God! However is it, such A man can think and know so much?

I stand ashamed and in amaze, And answer "Yes" to all he says, A poor,
unknowing child! and he— I can't think what he finds in me!

[*EXIT MARGARET.*]

FOREST AND CAVERN

FAUST

[*SOLUS.*]

Spirit sublime, thou gav'st me, gav'st me all For which I prayed. Not unto me in
vain Hast thou thy countenance revealed in fire.

Thou gav'st me Nature as a kingdom grand, With power to feel and to enjoy it.

Thou Not only cold, amazed acquaintance yield'st, But grantest, that in her
profoundest breast I gaze, as in the bosom of a friend.

The ranks of living creatures thou dost lead Before me, teaching me to know
my brothers In air and water and the silent wood.

And when the storm in forests roars and grinds, The giant firs, in falling,
neighbor boughs And neighbor trunks with crushing weight bear down, And
falling, fill the hills with hollow thunders,— Then to the cave secure thou
ledest me, Then show'st me mine own self, and in my breast The deep,
mysterious miracles unfold.

And when the perfect moon before my gaze Comes up with soothing light,
around me float From every precipice and thicket damp The silvery
phantoms of the ages past, And temper the austere delight of thought.

That nothing can be perfect unto Man I now am conscious. With this ecstasy,
Which brings me near and nearer to the Gods, Thou gav'st the comrade,
whom I now no more Can do without, though, cold and scornful, he
Demeans me to myself, and with a breath, A word, transforms thy gifts to
nothingness.

Within my breast he fans a lawless fire, Unwearied, for that fair and lovely
form: Thus in desire I hasten to enjoyment, And in enjoyment pine to feel
desire.

[*ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES

Have you not led this life quite long enough?
How can a further test delight you?
'Tis very well, that once one tries the stuff, But something new must then
requite you.

FAUST

Would there were other work for thee!
To plague my day auspicious thou returnest.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well! I'll engage to let thee be: Thou darest not tell me so in earnest.
The loss of thee were truly very slight,— comrade crazy, rude, repelling: One
has one's hands full all the day and night; If what one does, or leaves
undone, is right, From such a face as thine there is no telling.

FAUST

There is, again, thy proper tone!— That thou hast bored me, I must thankful be!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Poor Son of Earth, how couldst thou thus alone Have led thy life, bereft of me?
I, for a time, at least, have worked thy cure; Thy fancy's rickets plague thee not
at all: Had I not been, so hadst thou, sure, Walked thyself off this earthly ball
Why here to caverns, rocky hollows slinking, Sit'st thou, as 'twere an owl a-
blinking?
Why suck'st, from sodden moss and dripping stone, Toad-like, thy nourishment
alone?
A fine way, this, thy time to fill!
The Doctor's in thy body still.

FAUST

What fresh and vital forces, canst thou guess, Spring from my commerce with
the wilderness?
But, if thou hadst the power of guessing, Thou wouldst be devil enough to
grudge my soul the blessing.

MEPHISTOPHELES

A blessing drawn from supernatural fountains!
In night and dew to lie upon the mountains; All Heaven and Earth in rapture
penetrating; Thyself to Godhood haughtily inflating; To grub with yearning
force through Earth's dark marrow, Compress the six days' work within thy
bosom narrow,— To taste, I know not what, in haughty power, Thine own
ecstatic life on all things shower, Thine earthly self behind thee cast,
And then the lofty instinct, thus—

[WITH A GESTURE.]

at last,—

I daren't say how—to pluck the final flower!

FAUST

Shame on thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, thou findest that unpleasant!

Thou hast the moral right to cry me "shame!" at present.

One dares not that before chaste ears declare, Which chaste hearts,
notwithstanding, cannot spare; And, once for all, I grudge thee not the
pleasure Of lying to thyself in moderate measure.

But such a course thou wilt not long endure; Already art thou o'er-excited, And,
if it last, wilt soon be plighted To madness and to horror, sure.

Enough of that! Thy love sits lonely yonder, By all things saddened and
oppressed; Her thoughts and yearnings seek thee, tenderer, fonder,— mighty
love is in her breast.

First came thy passion's flood and poured around her As when from melted
snow a streamlet overflows; Thou hast therewith so filled and drowned her,
That now *thy* stream all shallow shows.

Methinks, instead of in the forests lording, The noble Sir should find it good,
The love of this young silly blood At once to set about rewarding.

Her time is miserably long;

She haunts her window, watching clouds that stray O'er the old city-wall, and
far away.

"Were I a little bird!" so runs her song, Day long, and half night long.

Now she is lively, mostly sad, Now, wept beyond her tears;

Then again quiet she appears,—Always love-mad.

FAUST

Serpent! Serpent!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*ASIDE.*]

Ha! do I trap thee!

FAUST

Get thee away with thine offences, Reprobate! Name not that fairest thing, Nor
the desire for her sweet body bring Again before my half-distracted senses!

MEPHISTOPHELES

What wouldst thou, then? She thinks that thou art flown; And half and half thou
art, I own.

FAUST

Yet am I near, and love keeps watch and ward; Though I were ne'er so far, it
cannot falter: I envy even the Body of the Lord The touching of her lips,
before the altar.

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis very well! My envy oft reposes On your twin-pair, that feed among the
roses.

FAUST

Away, thou pimp!

MEPHISTOPHELES

You rail, and it is fun to me.

The God, who fashioned youth and maid, Perceived the noblest purpose of His
trade, And also made their opportunity.

Go on! It is a woe profound!

'Tis for your sweetheart's room you're bound, And not for death, indeed.

FAUST

What are, within her arms, the heavenly blisses?

Though I be glowing with her kisses, Do I not always share her need?

I am the fugitive, all houseless roaming, The monster without air or rest, That
like a cataract, down rocks and gorges foaming, Leaps, maddened, into the
abyss's breast!

And side-wards she, with young unwakened senses, Within her cabin on the
Alpine field Her simple, homely life commences, Her little world therein
concealed.

And I, God's hate flung o'er me, Had not enough, to thrust

The stubborn rocks before me
And strike them into dust!
She and her peace I yet must undermine: Thou, Hell, hast claimed this sacrifice
as thine!
Help, Devil! through the coming pangs to push me; What must be, let it quickly
be!
Let fall on me her fate, and also crush me,— One ruin overwhelm both her and me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Again it seethes, again it glows!
Thou fool, go in and comfort her!
When such a head as thine no outlet knows, It thinks the end must soon occur.
Hail him, who keeps a steadfast mind!
Thou, else, dost well the devil-nature wear: Naught so insipid in the world I
find As is a devil in despair.

MARGARET'S ROOM

MARGARET

[*AT THE SPINNING-WHEEL, ALONE.*]

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore:
I never shall find it, Ah, nevermore!

Save I have him near.
The grave is here;

The world is gall
And bitterness all.

My poor weak head
Is racked and crazed;
My thought is lost,
My senses mazed.

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore:
I never shall find it, Ah, nevermore!

To see him, him only,
At the pane I sit;
To meet him, him only, The house I quit.

His lofty gait,
His noble size,
The smile of his mouth, The power of his eyes,

And the magic flow
Of his talk, the bliss In the clasp of his hand, And, ah! his kiss!

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore:
I never shall find it, Ah, nevermore!

My bosom yearns
For him alone;
Ah, dared I clasp him, And hold, and own!

And kiss his mouth,
To heart's desire,

And on his kisses
At last expire!

MARTHA'S GARDEN

[*MARGARET. FAUST.*]

MARGARET

Promise me, Henry!—

FAUST

What I can!

MARGARET

How is't with thy religion, pray?

Thou art a dear, good-hearted man, And yet, I think, dost not incline that way.

FAUST

Leave that, my child! Thou know'st my love is tender; For love, my blood and
life would I surrender, And as for Faith and Church, I grant to each his own.

MARGARET

That's not enough: we must believe thereon.

FAUST

Must we?

MARGARET

Would that I had some influence!

Then, too, thou honorest not the Holy Sacraments.

FAUST

I honor them.

MARGARET

Desiring no possession 'Tis long since thou hast been to mass or to confession.
Believest thou in God?

FAUST

My darling, who shall dare "I believe in God!" to say?
Ask priest or sage the answer to declare, And it will seem a mocking play,
A sarcasm on the asker.

MARGARET

Then thou believest not!

FAUST

Hear me not falsely, sweetest countenance!

Who dare express Him?
And who profess Him,
Saying: I believe in Him!
Who, feeling, seeing,
Deny His being,
Saying: I believe Him not!
The All-enfolding,
The All-upholding,

Folds and upholds he not
Thee, me, Himself?
Arches not there the sky above us?
Lies not beneath us, firm, the earth?
And rise not, on us shining,
Friendly, the everlasting stars?
Look I not, eye to eye, on thee, And feel'st not, thronging
To head and heart, the force, Still weaving its eternal secret, Invisible, visible,
round thy life?
Vast as it is, fill with that force thy heart, And when thou in the feeling wholly
blessed art, Call it, then, what thou wilt,— Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name to give it!
Feeling is all in all:
The Name is sound and smoke,
Obscuring Heaven's clear glow.

MARGARET

All that is fine and good, to hear it so: Much the same way the preacher spoke,
Only with slightly different phrases.

FAUST

The same thing, in all places, All hearts that beat beneath the heavenly day—
Each in its language—say;
Then why not I, in mine, as well?

MARGARET

To hear it thus, it may seem passable; And yet, some hitch in't there must be
For thou hast no Christianity.

FAUST

Dear love!

MARGARET

I've long been grieved to see That thou art in such company.

FAUST

How so?

MARGARET

The man who with thee goes, thy mate, Within my deepest, inmost soul I hate.
In all my life there's nothing Has given my heart so keen a pang of loathing, As
his repulsive face has done.

FAUST

Nay, fear him not, my sweetest one!

MARGARET

I feel his presence like something ill.
I've else, for all, a kindly will, But, much as my heart to see thee yearneth, The
secret horror of him returneth; And I think the man a knave, as I live!
If I do him wrong, may God forgive!

FAUST

There must be such queer birds, however.

MARGARET

Live with the like of him, may I never!
When once inside the door comes he, He looks around so sneeringly, And half
in wrath:
One sees that in nothing no interest he hath: 'Tis written on his very forehead
That love, to him, is a thing abhorred.
I am so happy on thine arm,
So free, so yielding, and so warm, And in his presence stifled seems my heart.

FAUST

Foreboding angel that thou art!

MARGARET

It overcomes me in such degree, That wheresoe'er he meets us, even, I feel as
though I'd lost my love for thee.
When he is by, I could not pray to Heaven.
That burns within me like a flame, And surely, Henry, 'tis with thee the same.

FAUST

There, now, is thine antipathy!

MARGARET

But I must go.

FAUST

Ah, shall there never be A quiet hour, to see us fondly plighted, With breast to
breast, and soul to soul united?

MARGARET

Ah, if I only slept alone!
I'd draw the bolts to-night, for thy desire; But mother's sleep so light has grown,
And if we were discovered by her, 'Twould be my death upon the spot!

FAUST

Thou angel, fear it not!

Here is a phial: in her drink But three drops of it measure, And deepest sleep
will on her senses sink.

MARGARET

What would I not, to give thee pleasure?
It will not harm her, when one tries it?

FAUST

If 'twould, my love, would I advise it?

MARGARET

Ah, dearest man, if but thy face I see, I know not what compels me to thy will:
So much have I already done for thee, That scarcely more is left me to fulfil.

[ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES.]

[EXIT MARGARET.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

The monkey! Is she gone?

FAUST

Hast played the spy again?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've heard, most fully, how she drew thee.

The Doctor has been catechised, 'tis plain; Great good, I hope, the thing will do
thee.

The girls have much desire to ascertain If one is prim and good, as ancient rules
compel: If there he's led, they think, he'll follow them as well.

FAUST

Thou, monster, wilt nor see nor own How this pure soul, of faith so lowly, So
loving and ineffable,— The faith alone
That her salvation is,—with scruples holy Pines, lest she hold as lost the man
she loves so well!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thou, full of sensual, super-sensual desire, A girl by the nose is leading thee.

FAUST

Abortion, thou, of filth and fire!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And then, how masterly she reads physiognomy!
When I am present she's impressed, she knows not how; She in my mask a
hidden sense would read: She feels that surely I'm a genius now,— Perhaps
the very Devil, indeed!

Well, well,—to-night—?

FAUST

What's that to thee?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet my delight 'twill also be!

AT THE FOUNTAIN

[*MARGARET AND LISBETH WITH PITCHERS.*]

LISBETH

Hast nothing heard of Barbara?

MARGARET

No, not a word. I go so little out.

LISBETH

It's true, Sibylla said, to-day.
She's played the fool at last, there's not a doubt.
Such taking-on of airs!

MARGARET

How so?

LISBETH

It stinks!
She's feeding two, whene'er she eats and drinks.

MARGARET

Ah!

LISBETH

And so, at last, it serves her rightly.
She clung to the fellow so long and tightly!
That was a promenading!
At village and dance parading!
As the first they must everywhere shine, And he treated her always to pies and
wine, And she made a to-do with her face so fine; So mean and shameless
was her behavior, She took all the presents the fellow gave her.
'Twas kissing and coddling, on and on!
So now, at the end, the flower is gone.

MARGARET

The poor, poor thing!

LISBETH

Dost pity her, at that?

When one of us at spinning sat, And mother, nights, ne'er let us out the door

She sported with her paramour.

On the door-bench, in the passage dark, The length of the time they'd never
mark.

So now her head no more she'll lift, But do church-penance in her sinner's shift!

MARGARET

He'll surely take her for his wife.

LISBETH

He'd be a fool! A brisk young blade Has room, elsewhere, to ply his trade.

Besides, he's gone.

MARGARET

That is not fair!

LISBETH

If him she gets, why let her beware!

The boys shall dash her wreath on the floor, And we'll scatter chaff before her
door!

[EXIT LISBETH.]

MARGARET

[RETURNING HOME.]

How scornfully I once reviled, When some poor maiden was beguiled!

More speech than any tongue suffices I craved, to censure others' vices.

Black as it seemed, I blackened still, And blacker yet was in my will; And

blessed myself, and boasted high,— And now—a living sin am I!

Yet—all that drove my heart thereto, God! was so good, so dear, so true!

DONJON

*[IN A NICHE OF THE WALL A SHRINE, WITH AN IMAGE OF THE MATER
DOLOROSA. POTS OF FLOWERS BEFORE IT.]*

MARGARET

[PUTTING FRESH FLOWERS IN THE POTS.]

Incline, O Maiden,

Thou sorrow-laden,

Thy gracious countenance upon my pain!

The sword Thy heart in, With anguish smarting, Thou lookest up to where
Thy Son is slain!

Thou seest the Father; Thy sad sighs gather,
And bear aloft Thy sorrow and His pain!

Ah, past guessing,
Beyond expressing,
The pangs that wring my flesh and bone!
Why this anxious heart so burneth, Why it trembleth, why it yearneth,
Knowest Thou, and Thou alone!

Where'er I go, what sorrow, What woe, what woe and sorrow Within my
bosom aches!
Alone, and ah! unsleeping, I'm weeping, weeping, weeping, The heart
within me breaks.

The pots before my window, Alas! my tears did wet, As in the early morning
For thee these flowers I set.

Within my lonely chamber The morning sun shone red: I sat, in utter sorrow,
Already on my bed.

Help! rescue me from death and stain!
O Maiden!
Thou sorrow-laden,
Incline Thy countenance upon my pain!

NIGHT

[*STREET BEFORE MARGARET'S DOOR.*]

VALENTINE

[*SOLDIER, MARGARET'S BROTHER.*]

When I have sat at some carouse, Where each to each his brag allows, And
many a comrade praised to me His pink of girls right lustily, With brimming
glass that spilled the toast, And elbows planted as in boast: I sat in
unconcerned repose,
And heard the swagger as it rose.
And stroking then my beard, I'd say, Smiling, the bumper in my hand: "Each
well enough in her own way.

But is there one in all the land Like sister Margaret, good as gold,— One that to her can a candle hold?"

Cling! clang! "Here's to her!" went around The board: "He speaks the truth!" cried some; "In her the flower o' the sex is found!"

And all the swaggerers were dumb.

And now!—I could tear my hair with vexation.

And dash out my brains in desperation!

With turned-up nose each scamp may face me, With sneers and stinging taunts disgrace me, And, like a bankrupt debtor sitting, A chance-dropped word may set me sweating!

Yet, though I thresh them all together, I cannot call them liars, either.

But what comes sneaking, there, to view?

If I mistake not, there are two.

If *he's* one, let me at him drive!

He shall not leave the spot alive.

[*ENTER FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

FAUST

How from the window of the sacristy Upward th'eternal lamp sends forth a glimmer, That, lessening side-wards, fainter grows and dimmer, Till darkness closes from the sky!

The shadows thus within my bosom gather.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm like a sentimental tom-cat, rather, That round the tall fire-ladders sweeps, And stealthy, then, along the coping creeps: Quite virtuous, withal, I come, A little thievish and a little frolicsome.

I feel in every limb the presage Forerunning the grand Walpurgis-Night: Day after to-morrow brings its message, And one keeps watch then with delight.

FAUST

Meanwhile, may not the treasure risen be, Which there, behind, I glimmering see?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Shalt soon experience the pleasure, To lift the kettle with its treasure. I lately gave therein a squint— Saw splendid lion-dollars in 't.

FAUST

Not even a jewel, not a ring, To deck therewith my darling girl?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I saw, among the rest, a thing That seemed to be a chain of pearl.

FAUST

That's well, indeed! For painful is it To bring no gift when her I visit.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thou shouldst not find it so annoying, Without return to be enjoying.

Now, while the sky leads forth its starry throng, Thou'lt hear a masterpiece, no
work completer: I'll sing her, first, a moral song, The surer, afterwards, to
cheat her.

[*SINGS TO THE CITHER.*]

What dost thou here
In daybreak clear,
Kathrina dear,
Before thy lover's door?
Beware! the blade
Lies in a maid.

That out a maid
Departeth nevermore!

The coaxing shun
Of such an one!
When once 'tis done
Good-night to thee, poor thing!
Love's time is brief:

Unto no thief
Be warm and lief,
But with the wedding-ring!

VALENTINE

[COMES FORWARD.]

Whom wilt thou lure? God's-element!
Rat-catching piper, thou!—perdition!
To the Devil, first, the instrument!
To the Devil, then, the curst musician!

MEPHISTOPHELES

The cither's smashed! For nothing more 'tis fitting.

VALENTINE

There's yet a skull I must be splitting!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[TO FAUST.]

Sir Doctor, don't retreat, I pray!
Stand by: I'll lead, if you'll but tarry: Out with your spit, without delay!
You've but to lunge, and I will parry.

VALENTINE

Then parry that!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why not? 'tis light.

VALENTINE

That, too!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of course.

VALENTINE

I think the Devil must fight!
How is it, then? my hand's already lame:

MEPHISTOPHELES

[TO FAUST.]

Thrust home!

VALENTINE

[FALLS.]

O God!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now is the lubber tame!
But come, away! 'Tis time for us to fly; For there arises now a murderous cry.
With the police 'twere easy to compound it, But here the penal court will sift
and sound it.

[EXIT MEPHISTOPHELES, WITH FAUST.]

MARTHA

[AT THE WINDOW.]

Come out! Come out!

MARGARET

[AT THE WINDOW.]

Quick, bring a light!

MARTHA

[AS ABOVE.]

They swear and storm, they yell and fight!

PEOPLE

Here lies one dead already—see!

MARTHA

[COMING FROM THE HOUSE.]

The murderers, whither have they run?

MARGARET

[COMING OUT.]

Who lies here?

PEOPLE

'Tis thy mother's son!

MARGARET

Almighty God! what misery!

VALENTINE

I'm dying! That is quickly said, And quicker yet 'tis done.

Why howl, you women there? Instead, Come here and listen, every one!

[ALL GATHER AROUND HIM.]

My Margaret, see! still young thou art, But not the least bit shrewd or smart,

Thy business thus to slight:

So this advice I bid thee heed— Now that thou art a whore indeed, Why, be one
then, outright!

MARGARET

My brother! God! such words to me?

VALENTINE

In this game let our Lord God be!
 What's done's already done, alas!
 What follows it, must come to pass.
 With one begin'st thou secretly, Then soon will others come to thee, And when
 a dozen thee have known, Thou'rt also free to all the town.
 When Shame is born and first appears, She is in secret brought to light, And
 then they draw the veil of night Over her head and ears;
 Her life, in fact, they're loath to spare her.
 But let her growth and strength display, She walks abroad unveiled by day, Yet
 is not grown a whit the fairer.
 The uglier she is to sight,
 The more she seeks the day's broad light.
 The time I verily can discern When all the honest folk will turn From thee, thou
 jade! and seek protection As from a corpse that breeds infection.
 Thy guilty heart shall then dismay thee.
 When they but look thee in the face:— Shalt not in a golden chain array thee,
 Nor at the altar take thy place!
 Shalt not, in lace and ribbons flowing, Make merry when the dance is going!
 But in some corner, woe betide thee!
 Among the beggars and cripples hide thee; And so, though even God forgive,
 On earth a damned existence live!

MARTHA

Commend your soul to God for pardon, That you your heart with slander
 harden!

VALENTINE

Thou pimp most infamous, be still!
 Could I thy withered body kill, 'Twould bring, for all my sinful pleasure,
 Forgiveness in the richest measure.

MARGARET

My brother! This is Hell's own pain!

VALENTINE

I tell thee, from thy tears refrain!
 When thou from honor didst depart It stabbed me to the very heart.
 Now through the slumber of the grave I go to God as a soldier brave.

[DIES.]

CATHEDRAL

[SERVICE, ORGAN, AND ANTHEM. MARGARET AMONG MUCH PEOPLE.
 EVIL SPIRIT BEHIND MARGARET.]

EVIL SPIRIT

How otherwise was it, Margaret, When thou, still innocent,
Here to the altar cam'st,
And from the worn and fingered book Thy prayers didst prattle,
Half sport of childhood,
Half God within thee!
Margaret!
Where tends thy thought?

Within thy bosom
What hidden crime?
Pray'st thou for mercy on thy mother's soul, That fell asleep to long, long
torment, and through thee?
Upon thy threshold whose the blood?
And stirreth not and quickens Something beneath thy heart,

Thy life disquieting
With most foreboding presence?

MARGARET

Woe! woe!
Would I were free from the thoughts That cross me, drawing hither and thither
Despite me!

CHORUS

Diesira, dies illa, Solvet soecum in favilla!

[*SOUND OF THE ORGAN.*]

EVIL SPIRIT

Wrath takes thee!
The trumpet peals!
The graves tremble!

And thy heart

From ashy rest

To fiery torments
Now again requickened,
Throbs to life!

MARGARET

Would I were forth!
I feel as if the organ here
My breath takes from me,

My very heart
Dissolved by the anthem!

CHORUS

Judex ergo cum sedebit, Quidquid latet, ad parebit, Nil inultum remanebit.

MARGARET

I cannot breathe!

The massy pillars
Imprison me!

The vaulted arches
Crush me!—Air!

EVIL SPIRIT

Hide thyself! Sin and shame
Stay never hidden.
Air? Light?
Woe to thee!

CHORUS

*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus, Quem patronem rogaturus, Cum vix Justus sit
securus*

EVIL SPIRIT

They turn their faces,
The glorified, from thee:
The pure, their hands to offer, Shuddering, refuse thee!
Woe!

CHORUS

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?

MARGARET

Neighbor! your cordial!
[SHE FALLS IN A SWOON.]

WALPURGIS-NIGHT

[HARTZ MOUNTAINS. DISTRICT OF SCHIERKE AND ELENDE. FAUST
AND MEPHISTOPHELES.]

MEPHISTOPHELES

Dost thou not wish a broomstick-steed's assistance?
The sturdiest he-goat I would gladly see: The way we take, our goal is yet some
distance.

FAUST

So long as in my legs I feel the fresh existence.
This knotted staff suffices me.
What need to shorten so the way?
Along this labyrinth of vales to wander, Then climb the rocky ramparts yonder,
Wherefrom the fountain flings eternal spray, Is such delight, my steps would
fain delay.
The spring-time stirs within the fragrant birches, And even the fir-tree feels it
now: Should then our limbs escape its gentle searches?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I notice no such thing, I vow!

'Tis winter still within my body: Upon my path I wish for frost and snow.

How sadly rises, incomplete and ruddy, The moon's lone disk, with its belated glow, And lights so dimly, that, as one advances, At every step one strikes a rock or tree!

Let us, then, use a Jack-o'-lantern's glances: I see one yonder, burning merrily.

Ho, there! my friend! I'll levy thine attendance: Why waste so vainly thy resplendence?

Be kind enough to light us up the steep!

WILL-O'-THE-WISP

My reverence, I hope, will me enable To curb my temperament unstable; For zigzag courses we are wont to keep.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Indeed? he'd like mankind to imitate!

Now, in the Devil's name, go straight, Or I'll blow out his being's flickering spark!

WILL-O'-THE-WISP

You are the master of the house, I mark, And I shall try to serve you nicely.

But then, reflect: the mountain's magic-mad to-day, And if a will-o'-the-wisp must guide you on the way, You mustn't take things too precisely.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, WILL-O'-THE-WISP

[IN ALTERNATING SONG.]

We, it seems, have entered newly In the sphere of dreams enchanted.

Do thy bidding, guide us truly, That our feet be forwards planted In the vast, the desert spaces!

See them swiftly changing places, Trees on trees beside us trooping, And the crags above us stooping, And the rocky snouts, outgrowing,— Hear them snoring, hear them blowing!

O'er the stones, the grasses, flowing Stream and streamlet seek the hollow.

Hear I noises? songs that follow?

Hear I tender love-petitions?

Voices of those heavenly visions?

Sounds of hope, of love undying!

And the echoes, like traditions Of old days, come faint and hollow.

Hoo-hoo! Shoo-hoo! Nearer hover Jay and screech-owl, and the plover,—

Are they all awake and crying?

Is't the salamander pushes, Bloated-bellied, through the bushes?

And the roots, like serpents twisted, Through the sand and boulders toiling,
Fright us, weirdest links uncoiling To entrap us, unresisted: Living knots
and gnarls uncanny Feel with polypus-antennae For the wanderer. Mice
are flying, Thousand-colored, herd-wise hieing Through the moss and
through the heather!

And the fire-flies wink and darkle, Crowded swarms that soar and sparkle,
And in wildering escort gather!

Tell me, if we still are standing, Or if further we're ascending?
All is turning, whirling, blending, Trees and rocks with grinning faces,
Wandering lights that spin in mazes, Still increasing and expanding!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Grasp my skirt with heart undaunted!
Here a middle-peak is planted, Whence one seeth, with amaze, Mammon in the
mountain blaze.

FAUST

How strangely glimmers through the hollows A dreary light, like that of dawn!
Its exhalation tracks and follows The deepest gorges, faint and wan.
Here steam, there rolling vapor sweepeth; Here burns the glow through film
and haze: Now like a tender thread it creepeth, Now like a fountain leaps
and plays.
Here winds away, and in a hundred Divided veins the valley braids: There, in a
corner pressed and sundered, Itself detaches, spreads and fades.
Here gush the sparkles incandescent Like scattered showers of golden sand;—
But, see! in all their height, at present, The rocky ramparts blazing stand.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Has not Sir Mammon grandly lighted His palace for this festal night?
'Tis lucky thou hast seen the sight; The boisterous guests approach that were
invited.

FAUST

How raves the tempest through the air!
With what fierce blows upon my neck 'tis beating!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Under the old ribs of the rock retreating, Hold fast, lest thou be hurled down the
abysses there!
The night with the mist is black; Hark! how the forests grind and crack!
Frightened, the owlets are scattered: Harken! the pillars are shattered.

The evergreen palaces shaking!
Boughs are groaning and breaking, The tree-trunks terribly thunder, The roots
are twisting asunder!
In frightfully intricate crashing Each on the other is dashing, And over the
wreck-strewn gorges The tempest whistles and surges!
Hear'st thou voices higher ringing?
Far away, or nearer singing?
Yes, the mountain's side along, Sweeps an infuriate glamouring song!

WITCHES

[*IN CHORUS.*]

The witches ride to the Brocken's top, The stubble is yellow, and green the
crop.

There gathers the crowd for carnival: Sir Urian sits over all.

And so they go over stone and stock; The witch she——s, and——s the
buck.

A VOICE

Alone, old Baubo's coming now; She rides upon a farrow-sow.

CHORUS

Then honor to whom the honor is due!

Dame Baubo first, to lead the crew!

A tough old sow and the mother thereon, Then follow the witches, every
one.

A VOICE

Which way com'st thou hither?

VOICE

O'er the Ilsen-stone.

I peeped at the owl in her nest alone: How she stared and glared!

VOICE

Betake thee to Hell!

Why so fast and so fell?

VOICE

She has scored and has flayed me: See the wounds she has made me!

WITCHES

[*CHORUS.*]

The way is wide, the way is long: See, what a wild and crazy throng!

The broom it scratches, the fork it thrusts, The child is stifled, the mother bursts.

WIZARDS

[SEMICHORUS.]

As doth the snail in shell, we crawl: Before us go the women all.
When towards the Devil's House we tread, Woman's a thousand steps ahead.

OTHER SEMICHORUS

We do not measure with such care: Woman in thousand steps is theft.
But howsoe'er she hasten may, Man in one leap has cleared the way.

VOICE

[FROM ABOVE.]

Come on, come on, from Rocky Lake!

VOICE

[FROM BELOW.]

Aloft we'd fain ourselves betake.
We've washed, and are bright as ever you will, Yet we're eternally sterile still.

BOTH CHORUSES

The wind is hushed, the star shoots by.
The dreary moon forsakes the sky; The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.

VOICE

[FROM BELOW.]

Halt, there! Ho, there!

VOICE

[FROM ABOVE.]

Who calls from the rocky cleft below there?

VOICE

[BELOW.]

Take me, too! take me, too!
I'm climbing now three hundred years, And yet the summit cannot see: Among
my equals I would be.

BOTH CHORUSES

Bears the broom and bears the stock, Bears the fork and bears the buck:
Who cannot raise himself to-night Is evermore a ruined wight.

HALF-WITCH

[BELOW.]

So long I stumble, ill bestead, And the others are now so far ahead!
At home I've neither rest nor cheer, And yet I cannot gain them here.

CHORUS OF WITCHES

To cheer the witch will salve avail; A rag will answer for a sail; Each trough
a goodly ship supplies; He ne'er will fly, who now not flies.

BOTH CHORUSES

When round the summit whirls our flight, Then lower, and on the ground
alight; And far and wide the heather press With witchhood's swarms of
wantonness!

[*THEY SETTLE DOWN.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES

They crowd and push, they roar and clatter!
They whirl and whistle, pull and chatter!
They shine, and spirt, and stink, and burn!
The true witch-element we learn.
Keep close! or we are parted, in our turn,
Where art thou?

FAUST

[*IN THE DISTANCE.*]

Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES

What! whirled so far astray?
Then house-right I must use, and clear the way.
Make room! Squire Voland comes! Room, gentle rabble, room!

Here, Doctor, hold to me: in one jump we'll resume An easier space, and from
the crowd be free: It's too much, even for the like of me.
Yonder, with special light, there's something shining clearer Within those
bushes; I've a mind to see.
Come on! well slip a little nearer.

FAUST

Spirit of Contradiction! On! I'll follow straight.
'Tis planned most wisely, if I judge aright: We climb the Brocken's top in the
Walpurgis-Night, That arbitrarily, here, ourselves we isolate.

MEPHISTOPHELES

But see, what motley flames among the heather!
There is a lively club together: In smaller circles one is not alone.

FAUST

Better the summit, I must own: There fire and whirling smoke I see.

They seek the Evil One in wild confusion: Many enigmas there might find solution.

MEPHISTOPHELES

But there enigmas also knotted be.
Leave to the multitude their riot!
Here will we house ourselves in quiet.
It is an old, transmitted trade, That in the greater world the little worlds are made.
I see stark-nude young witches congregate, And old ones, veiled and hidden shrewdly: On my account be kind, nor treat them rudely!
The trouble's small, the fun is great.
I hear the noise of instruments attuning,— Vile din! yet one must learn to bear the crooning.
Come, come along! It *must* be, I declare!
I'll go ahead and introduce thee there, Thine obligation newly earning.
That is no little space: what say'st thou, friend?
Look yonder! thou canst scarcely see the end: A hundred fires along the ranks are burning.
They dance, they chat, they cook, they drink, they court: Now where, just tell me, is there better sport?

FAUST

Wilt thou, to introduce us to the revel, Assume the part of wizard or of devil?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm mostly used, 'tis true, to go incognito, But on a gala-day one may his orders show.
The Garter does not deck my suit, But honored and at home is here the cloven foot.
Perceiv'st thou yonder snail? It cometh, slow and steady; So delicately its feelers pry, That it hath scented me already: I cannot here disguise me, if I try.
But come! we'll go from this fire to a newer: I am the go-between, and thou the wooer.

[TO SOME, WHO ARE SITTING AROUND DYING EMBERS.]

Old gentlemen, why at the outskirts? Enter!
I'd praise you if I found you snugly in the centre, With youth and revel round you like a zone: You each, at home, are quite enough alone.

GENERAL

Say, who would put his trust in nations, Howe'er for them one may have worked and planned?

For with the people, as with women, Youth always has the upper hand.

MINISTER

They're now too far from what is just and sage.

I praise the old ones, not unduly: When we were all-in-all, then, truly, *Then* was the real golden age.

PARVENU

We also were not stupid, either, And what we should not, often did; But now all things have from their bases slid, Just as we meant to hold them fast together.

AUTHOR

Who, now, a work of moderate sense will read?

Such works are held as antique and mossy; And as regards the younger folk, indeed, They never yet have been so pert and saucy.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[*WHO ALL AT ONCE APPEARS VERY OLD.*]

I feel that men are ripe for Judgment-Day, Now for the last time I've the witches'-hill ascended: Since to the lees *my* cask is drained away, The world's, as well, must soon be ended.

HUCKSTER-WITCH

Ye gentlemen, don't pass me thus!

Let not the chance neglected be!

Behold my wares attentively:

The stock is rare and various.

And yet, there's nothing I've collected— No shop, on earth, like this you'll find!
— Which has not, once, sore hurt inflicted Upon the world, and on mankind.

No dagger's here, that set not blood to flowing; No cup, that hath not once, within a healthy frame Poured speedy death, in poison glowing: No gems, that have not brought a maid to shame; No sword, but severed ties for the unwary, Or from behind struck down the adversary.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Gossip! the times thou badly comprehendest: What's done has happed—what haps, is done!

'Twere better if for novelties thou sendest: By such alone can we be won.

FAUST

Let me not lose myself in all this pother!

This is a fair, as never was another!

MEPHISTOPHELES

The whirlpool swirls to get above: Thou'rt shoved thyself, imagining to shove.

FAUST

But who is that?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Note her especially,
Tis Lilith.

FAUST

Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Adam's first wife is she.
Beware the lure within her lovely tresses, The splendid sole adornment of her
hair!
When she succeeds therewith a youth to snare, Not soon again she frees him
from her jesses.

FAUST

Those two, the old one with the young one sitting, They've danced already
more than fitting.

MEPHISTOPHELES

No rest to-night for young or old!
They start another dance: come now, let us take hold!

FAUST

[DANCING WITH THE YOUNG WITCH.]

A lovely dream once came to me; I then beheld an apple-tree, And there two
fairest apples shone: They lured me so, I climbed thereon.

THE FAIR ONE

Apples have been desired by you, Since first in Paradise they grew; And I
am moved with joy, to know That such within my garden grow.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[DANCING WITH THE OLD ONE.]

A dissolute dream once came to me: Therein I saw a cloven tree, Which had
a—————;
Yet,—as 'twas, I fancied it.

THE OLD ONE

I offer here my best salute Unto the knight with cloven foot!
Let him a—————prepare, If him—————does not scare.

PROKTOPHANTASMIST

Accurséd folk! How dare you venture thus?
Had you not, long since, demonstration That ghosts can't stand on ordinary
foundation?
And now you even dance, like one of us!

THE FAIR ONE

[DANCING.]

Why does he come, then, to our ball?

FAUST

[DANCING.]

O, everywhere on him you fall!

When others dance, he weighs the matter: If he can't every step bechatter, Then
'tis the same as were the step not made; But if you forwards go, his ire is
most displayed.

If you would whirl in regular gyration As he does in his dull old mill, He'd
show, at any rate, good-will,— Especially if you heard and heeded his
hortation.

PROKTOPHANTASMIST

You still are here? Nay, 'tis a thing unheard!

Vanish, at once! We've said the enlightening word.

The pack of devils by no rules is daunted: We are so wise, and yet is Tegel
haunted.

To clear the folly out, how have I swept and stirred!

Twill ne'er be clean: why, 'tis a thing unheard!

THE FAIR ONE

Then cease to bore us at our ball!

PROKTOPHANTASMIST

I tell you, spirits, to your face, I give to spirit-despotism no place; My spirit
cannot practise it at all.

[THE DANCE CONTINUES.]

Naught will succeed, I see, amid such revels; Yet something from a tour I
always save, And hope, before my last step to the grave, To overcome the
poets and the devils.

MEPHISTOPHELES

He now will seat him in the nearest puddle; The solace this, whereof he's most
assured: And when upon his rump the leeches hang and fuddle, He'll be of
spirits and of Spirit cured.

[TO FAUST, WHO HAS LEFT THE DANCE.]

Wherefore forsakest thou the lovely maiden, That in the dance so sweetly sang?

FAUST

Ah! in the midst of it there sprang A red mouse from her mouth—sufficient reason.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That's nothing! One must not so squeamish be; So the mouse was not gray,
enough for thee.
Who'd think of that in love's selected season?

FAUST

Then saw I—.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What?

FAUST

Mephisto, seest thou there, Alone and far, a girl most pale and fair?
She falters on, her way scarce knowing, As if with fettered feet that stay her
going.
I must confess, it seems to me As if my kindly Margaret were she.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Let the thing be! All thence have evil drawn: It is a magic shape, a lifeless
eidolon.
Such to encounter is not good: Their blank, set stare benumbs the human blood,
And one is almost turned to stone.
Medusa's tale to thee is known.

FAUST

Forsooth, the eyes they are of one whom, dying, No hand with loving pressure
closed; That is the breast whereon I once was lying,— The body sweet,
beside which I reposed!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Tis magic all, thou fool, seduced so easily!
Unto each man his love she seems to be.

FAUST

The woe, the rapture, so ensnare me, That from her gaze I cannot tear me!
And, strange! around her fairest throat A single scarlet band is gleaming, No
broader than a knife-blade seeming!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Quite right! The mark I also note.

Her head beneath her arm she'll sometimes carry; Twas Perseus lopped it, her
old adversary.

Thou crav'st the same illusion still!

Come, let us mount this little hill; The Prater shows no livelier stir, And, if
they've not bewitched my sense, I verily see a theatre.

What's going on?

SERVIBILIS

'Twill shortly recommence: A new performance—'tis the last of seven.

To give that number is the custom here: 'Twas by a Dilettante written, And
Dilettanti in the parts appear.

That now I vanish, pardon, I entreat you!

As Dilettante I the curtain raise.

MEPHISTOPHELES

When I upon the Blocksberg meet you, I find it good: for that's your proper
place.

WALPURGIS-NIGHT'S DREAM OR OBERON AND TITANIA'S GOLDEN WEDDING

Intermezzo

MANAGER

Sons of Mieding, rest to-day!

Needless your machinery:

Misty vale and mountain gray, That is all the scenery.

HERALD

That the wedding golden be.

Must fifty years be rounded:

But *the Golden* give to me, When the strife's compounded.

OBERON

Spirits, if you're here, be seen— Show yourselves, delighted!

Fairy king and fairy queen,

They are newly plighted.

PUCK

Cometh Puck, and, light of limb, Whisks and whirls in measure: Come a
hundred after him,

To share with him the pleasure.

ARIEL

Ariel's song is heavenly-pure, His tones are sweet and rare ones: Though ugly
faces he allure,
Yet he allures the fair ones.

OBERON

Spouses, who would fain agree, Learn how we were mated!
If your pairs would loving be, First be separated!

TITANIA

If her whims the wife control, And the man berate her,
Take him to the Northern Pole, And her to the Equator!

ORCHESTRA TUTTI

[*FORTISSIMO.*]

Snout of fly, mosquito-bill,
And kin of all conditions,
Frog in grass, and cricket-trill,— These are the musicians!

SOLO

See the bagpipe on our track!
'Tis the soap-blown bubble:
Hear the *schnecke-schnicke-schnack* Through his nostrils double!

SPIRIT, JUST GROWING INTO FORM

Spider's foot and paunch of toad, And little wings—we know 'em!

A little creature 'twill not be, But yet, a little poem.

A LITTLE COUPLE

Little step and lofty leap
Through honey-dew and fragrance: You'll never mount the airy steep With all
your tripping vagrance.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER

Is't but masquerading play?
See I with precision?
Oberon, the beauteous fay,
Meets, to-night, my vision!

ORTHODOX

Not a claw, no tail I see!
And yet, beyond a cavil,
Like "the Gods of Greece," must he Also be a devil.

NORTHERN ARTIST

I only seize, with sketchy air, Some outlines of the tourney; Yet I betimes
myself prepare
For my Italian journey.

PURIST

My bad luck brings me here, alas!
How roars the orgy louder!
And of the witches in the mass, But only two wear powder.

YOUNG WITCH

Powder becomes, like petticoat, A gray and wrinkled noddy;
So I sit naked on my goat,
And show a strapping body.

MATRON

We've too much tact and policy To rate with gibes a scolder; Yet, young and
tender though you be, I hope to see you moulder.

LEADER OF THE BAND

Fly-snout and mosquito-bill,
Don't swarm so round the Naked!
Frog in grass and cricket-trill, Observe the time, and make it!

WEATHCOCK

[TOWARDS ONE SIDE.]

Society to one's desire!
Brides only, and the sweetest!
And bachelors of youth and fire.
And prospects the completest!

WEATHCOCK

[TOWARDS THE OTHER SIDE.]

And if the Earth don't open now To swallow up each ranter,
Why, then will I myself, I vow, Jump into hell instanter!

XENIES

Us as little insects see!
With sharpest nippers flitting, That our Papa Satan we
May honor as is fitting.

HENNINGS

How, in crowds together massed, They are jesting, shameless!
They will even say, at last,
That their hearts are blameless.

MUSAGETES

Among this witches' revelry
His way one gladly loses;
And, truly, it would easier be Than to command the Muses.

CI-DEVANT GENIUS OF THE AGE

The proper folks one's talents laud: Come on, and none shall pass us!

The Blocksberg has a summit broad, Like Germany's Parnassus.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER

Say, who's the stiff and pompous man?
He walks with haughty paces:
He snuffles all he snuffle can: "He scents the Jesuits' traces."

CRANE

Both clear and muddy streams, for me Are good to fish and sport in: And thus
the pious man you see With even devils consorting.

WORLDLING

Yes, for the pious, I suspect, All instruments are fitting;
And on the Blocksberg they erect Full many a place of meeting.

DANCER

A newer chorus now succeeds!
I hear the distant drumming.
"Don't be disturbed! 'tis, in the reeds, The bittern's changeless booming."

DANCING-MASTER

How each his legs in nimble trip Lifts up, and makes a clearance!
The crooked jump, the heavy skip, Nor care for the appearance.

GOOD FELLOW

The rabble by such hate are held, To maim and slay delights them: As Orpheus'
lyre the brutes compelled, The bagpipe here unites them.

DOGMATIST

I'll not be led by any lure
Of doubts or critic-cavils:
The Devil must be something, sure,— Or how should there be devils?

IDEALIST

This once, the fancy wrought in me Is really too despotic:
Forsooth, if I am all I see,
I must be idiotic!

REALIST

This racking fuss on every hand, It gives me great vexation;
And, for the first time, here I stand On insecure foundation.

SUPERNATURALIST

With much delight I see the play, And grant to these their merits, Since from
the devils I also may Infer the better spirits.

SCEPTIC

The flame they follow, on and on, And think they're near the treasure: But
Devil rhymes with *Doubt* alone, So I am here with pleasure.

LEADER OF THE BAND

Frog in green, and cricket-trill.
Such dilettants!—perdition!
Fly-snout and mosquito-bill,— Each one's a fine musician!

THE ADROIT

Sans souci, we call the clan Of merry creatures so, then;
Go a-foot no more we can,
And on our heads we go, then.

THE AWKWARD

Once many a bit we sponged, but now, God help us! that is done with: Our
shoes are all danced out, we trow, We've but naked soles to run with.

WILL-O'-THE-WISPS

From the marshes we appear,
Where we originated;
Yet in the ranks, at once, we're here As glittering gallants rated.

SHOOTING-STAR

Darting hither from the sky,
In star and fire light shooting, Cross-wise now in grass I lie: Who'll help me to
my footing?

THE HEAVY FELLOWS

Room! and round about us, room!
Trodden are the grasses:
Spirits also, spirits come,
And they are bulky masses.

PUCK

Enter not so stall-fed quite, Like elephant-calves about one!
And the heaviest weight to-night Be Puck, himself, the stout one!

ARIEL

If loving Nature at your back, Or Mind, the wings uncloses,

Follow up my airy track
To the mount of roses!

ORCHESTRA

[*PIANISSIMO.*]

Cloud and trailing mist o'erhead Are now illuminated:
Air in leaves, and wind in reed, And all is dissipated.

DREARY DAY

[*FIELD. FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES.*]

FAUST

In misery! In despair! Long wretchedly astray on the face of the earth, and now imprisoned! That gracious, ill-starred creature shut in a dungeon as a criminal, and given up to fearful torments! To this has it come! to this!— Treacherous, contemptible spirit, and thou hast concealed it from me!— Stand, then,—stand! Roll the devilish eyes wrathfully in thy head! Stand and defy me with thine intolerable presence! Imprisoned! In irretrievable misery! Delivered up to evil spirits, and to condemning, unfeeling Man! And thou hast lulled me, meanwhile, with the most insipid dissipations, hast concealed from me her increasing wretchedness, and suffered her to go helplessly to ruin!

MEPHISTOPHELES

She is not the first.

FAUST

Dog! Abominable monster! Transform him, thou Infinite Spirit! transform the reptile again into his dog-shape? in which it pleased him often at night to scamper on before me, to roll himself at the feet of the unsuspecting wanderer, and hang upon his shoulders when he fell! Transform him again into his favorite likeness, that he may crawl upon his belly in the dust before me,—that I may trample him, the outlawed, under foot! Not the first! O woe! woe which no human soul can grasp, that more than one being should sink into the depths of this misery,—that the first, in its writhing death-agony under the eyes of the Eternal Forgiver, did not expiate the guilt of all others! The misery of this single one pierces to the very marrow of my life; and thou art calmly grinning at the fate of thousands!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now we are already again at the end of our wits, where the understanding of you men runs wild. Why didst thou enter into fellowship with us, if thou

canst not carry it out? Wilt fly, and art not secure against dizziness? Did we thrust ourselves upon thee, or thou thyself upon us?

FAUST

Gnash not thus thy devouring teeth at me? It fills me with horrible disgust. Mighty, glorious Spirit, who hast vouchsafed to me Thine apparition, who knowest my heart and my soul, why fetter me to the felon-comrade, who feeds on mischief and gluts himself with ruin?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Hast thou done?

FAUST

Rescue her, or woe to thee! The fearfullest curse be upon thee for thousands of ages!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I cannot loosen the bonds of the Avenger, nor undo his bolts. Rescue her? Who was it that plunged her into ruin? I, or thou?

[FAUST LOOKS AROUND WILDLY.]

Wilt thou grasp the thunder? Well that it has not been given to you, miserable mortals! To crush to pieces the innocent respondent—that is the tyrant-fashion of relieving one's self in embarrassments.

FAUST

Take me thither! She shall be free!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And the danger to which thou wilt expose thyself? Know that the guilt of blood, from thy hand, still lies upon the town! Avenging spirits hover over the spot where the victim fell, and lie in wait for the returning murderer.

FAUST

That, too, from thee? Murder and death of a world upon thee, monster! Take me thither, I say, and liberate her!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I will convey thee there; and hear, what I can do! Have I all the power in Heaven and on Earth? I will becloud the jailer's senses: get possession of the key, and lead her forth with human hand! I will keep watch: the magic steeds are ready, I will carry you off. So much is in my power.

FAUST

Up and away!

NIGHT, OPEN FIELD

[FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES SPEEDING ONWARD ON BLACK HORSES.]

FAUST

What weave they there round the raven-stone?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I know not what they are brewing and doing.

FAUST

Soaring up, sweeping down, bowing and bending!

MEPHISTOPHELES

A witches'-guild.

FAUST

They scatter, devote and doom!

MEPHISTOPHELES

On! on!

DUNGEON

FAUST

[WITH A BUNCH OF KEYS AND A LAMP, BEFORE AN IRON DOOR.]

A shudder, long unfelt, comes o'er me; Mankind's collected woe o'erwhelms me, here.

She dwells within the dark, damp walls before me, And all her crime was a delusion dear!

What! I delay to free her?

I dread, once again to see her?

On! my shrinking but lingers Death more near.

[HE GRASPS THE LOCK. THE SOUND OF SINGING IS HEARD INSIDE.]

My mother, the harlot, Who put me to death; My father, the varlet, Who eaten me hath!

Little sister, so good, Laid my bones in the wood, In the damp moss and clay:
Then was I a beautiful bird o' the wood; Fly away! Fly away!

FAUST

[UNLOCKING.]

She does not dream her lover listens near; That he the rattling chain, the rustling straw, can hear.

[FAUST ENTERS.]

MARGARET

[HIDING HERSELF ON THE PALLET.]

Woe! woe! They come. O death of bitterness!

FAUST

[WHISPERING.]

Hush! hush! The hour is come that frees thee.

MARGARET

[THROWING HERSELF BEFORE HIM.]

Art thou a man, then pity my distress!

FAUST

Thy cries will wake the guards, and they will seize thee!

[HE TAKES HOLD OF THE FETTERS TO UNLOCK THEM.]

MARGARET

[ON HER KNEES.]

Who, headsman! unto thee such power Over me could give?

Thou'rt come for me at midnight-hour: Have mercy on me, let me live!

Is't not soon enough when morning chime has run?

[SHE RISES.]

And I am yet so young, so young!

And now Death comes, and ruin!

I, too, was fair, and that was my undoing.

My love was near, but now he's far; Torn lies the wreath, scattered the blossoms
are.

Seize me not thus so violently!

Spare me! What have I done to thee?

Let me not vainly entreat thee!

I never chanced, in all my days, to meet thee!

FAUST

Shall I outlive this misery?

MARGARET

Now am I wholly in thy might.

But let me suckle, first, my baby!

I blissed it all this livelong night; They took 't away, to vex me, maybe, And
now they say I killed the child outright.

And never shall I be glad again.

They sing songs about me! 'tis bad of the folk to do it!

There's an old story has the same refrain; Who bade them so construe it?

FAUST

[FALLING UPON HIS KNEES.]

Here lieth one who loves thee ever, The thraldom of thy woe to sever.

MARGARET

[FLINGING HERSELF BESIDE HIM.]

O let us kneel, and call the Saints to hide us!
Under the steps beside us,
The threshold under,
Hell heaves in thunder!

The Evil One

With terrible wrath

Seeketh a path
His prey to discover!

FAUST

[*ALOUD.*]

Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET

[*ATTENTIVELY LISTENING.*]

That was the voice of my lover!

[*SHE SPRINGS TO HER FEET. THE FETTERS FALL OFF.*]

Where is he? I heard him call me.

I am free! No one shall enthrall me.

To his neck will I fly,

On his bosom lie!

On the threshold he stood, and *Margaret!* calling, Midst of Hell's howling and
noises appalling, Midst of the wrathful, infernal derision, I knew the sweet
sound of the voice of the vision!

FAUST

'Tis I!

MARGARET

'Tis thou! O, say it once again!

[*CLASPING HIM.*]

'Tis he! 'tis he! Where now is all my pain?

The anguish of the dungeon, and the chain?

'Tis thou! Thou comest to save me, And I am saved!— Again the street I see

Where first I looked on thee; And the garden, brightly blooming, Where I and
Martha wait thy coming.

FAUST

[*STRUGGLING TO LEAVE.*]

Come! Come with me!

MARGARET

Delay, now!

So fain I stay, when thou delayest!

[*CARESSING HIM.*]

FAUST

Away, now!

If longer here thou stayest,

We shall be made to dearly rue it.

MARGARET

Kiss me!—canst no longer do it?
My friend, so short a time thou'rt missing, And hast unlearned thy kissing?
Why is my heart so anxious, on thy breast?
Where once a heaven thy glances did create me, A heaven thy loving words
expressed, And thou didst kiss, as thou wouldst suffocate me— Kiss me!
Or I'll kiss thee!
[*SHE EMBRACES HIM.*]
Ah, woe! thy lips are chill,
And still.

How changed in fashion
Thy passion!
Who has done me this ill?

[SHE TURNS AWAY FROM HIM.]

FAUST

Come, follow me! My darling, be more bold: I'll clasp thee, soon, with warmth
a thousand-fold; But follow now! 'Tis all I beg of thee.

MARGARET

[TURNING TO HIM.]

And is it thou? Thou, surely, certainly?

FAUST

'Tis I! Come on!

MARGARET

Thou wilt unloose my chain, And in thy lap wilt take me once again.
How comes it that thou dost not shrink from me?— Say, dost thou know, my
friend, whom thou mak'st free?

FAUST

Come! come! The night already vanisheth.

MARGARET

My mother have I put to death; I've drowned the baby born to thee.
Was it not given to thee and me?
Thee, too!—"Tis thou! It scarcely true doth seem— Give me thy hand! 'Tis not
a dream!
Thy dear, dear hand!—But, ah, 'tis wet!
Why, wipe it off! Methinks that yet There's blood thereon.
Ah, God! what hast thou done?
Nay, sheathe thy sword at last!
Do not affray me!

FAUST

O, let the past be past!
Thy words will slay me!

MARGARET

No, no! Thou must outlive us.
Now I'll tell thee the graves to give us: Thou must begin to-morrow
The work of sorrow!
The best place give to my mother, Then close at her side my brother, And me a
little away,

But not too very far, I pray!
And here, on my right breast, my baby lay!
Nobody else will lie beside me!— Ah, within thine arms to hide me, That was a
sweet and a gracious bliss, But no more, no more can I attain it!
I would force myself on thee and constrain it, And it seems thou repellst my
kiss: And yet 'tis thou, so good, so kind to see!

FAUST

If thou feel'st it is I, then come with me!

MARGARET

Out yonder?

FAUST

To freedom.

MARGARET

If the grave is there,
Death lying in wait, then come!
From here to eternal rest:
No further step—no, no!
Thou goest away! O Henry, if I could go!

FAUST

Thou canst! Just will it! Open stands the door.

MARGARET

I dare not go: there's no hope any more.
Why should I fly? They'll still my steps waylay!
It is so wretched, forced to beg my living, And a bad conscience sharper misery
giving!
It is so wretched, to be strange, forsaken, And I'd still be followed and taken!

FAUST

I'll stay with thee.

MARGARET

Be quick! Be quick!
Save thy perishing child!
Away! Follow the ridge
Up by the brook,
Over the bridge,
Into the wood,
To the left, where the plank is placed In the pool!
Seize it in haste!

'Tis trying to rise,
'Tis struggling still!
Save it! Save it!

FAUST

Recall thy wandering will!
One step, and thou art free at last!

MARGARET

If the mountain we had only passed!
There sits my mother upon a stone,— I feel an icy shiver!
There sits my mother upon a stone, And her head is wagging ever.
She beckons, she nods not, her heavy head falls o'er; She slept so long that she
wakes no more.
She slept, while we were caressing: Ah, those were the days of blessing!

FAUST

Here words and prayers are nothing worth; I'll venture, then, to bear thee forth.

MARGARET

No—let me go! I'll suffer no force!
Grasp me not so murderously!
I've done, else, all things for the love of thee.

FAUST

The day dawns: Dearest! Dearest!

MARGARET

Day? Yes, the day comes,—the last day breaks for me!
My wedding-day it was to be!
Tell no one thou has been with Margaret!
Woe for my garland! The chances Are over—'tis all in vain!
We shall meet once again,
But not at the dances!
The crowd is thronging, no word is spoken: The square below
And the streets overflow:
The death-bell tolls, the wand is broken.
I am seized, and bound, and delivered— Shoved to the block—they give the
sign!
Now over each neck has quivered The blade that is quivering over mine.
Dumb lies the world like the grave!

FAUST

O had I ne'er been born!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[APPEARS OUTSIDE.]

Off! or you're lost ere morn.
Useless talking, delaying and praying!
My horses are neighing:
The morning twilight is near.

MARGARET

What rises up from the threshold here?
He! he! suffer him not!
What does he want in this holy spot?
He seeks me!

FAUST

Thou shalt live.

MARGARET

Judgment of God! myself to thee I give.

MEPHISTOPHELES

[To FAUST.]

Come! or I'll leave her in the lurch, and thee!

MARGARET

Thine am I, Father! rescue me!
Ye angels, holy cohorts, guard me, Camp around, and from evil ward me!
Henry! I shudder to think of thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES

She is judged!

VOICE

[FROM ABOVE.]

She is saved!

MEPHISTOPHELES

[To FAUST.]

Hither to me!

[HE DISAPPEARS WITH FAUST.]

VOICE

[FROM WITHIN, DYING AWAY.]

Henry! Henry!

William Blake (1757-1827)

Selected Poems

British

Romanticism

"To see a world in a grain of sand" opens Blake's "Auguries of Innocence." More than any other Romantic poet, Blake's poems demand the use of the imagination and the willing suspension of disbelief (see Coleridge). For William Blake, from a young age, saw the world differently than his fellow human beings. The young poet, engraver, and painter saw the divine in various forms, such as in visions of angels and departed souls; he enjoyed a genius that many thought bordered on madness. Undaunted by public opinion, Blake espoused his prophetic visions of God, of Heaven and Hell, and of the human being's place in the realms of mysticism and God's place in the human mind. In his epic poem *Jerusalem*, Blake writes,

I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought, into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination.

Audiences are probably more familiar with his early *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. Set up as a set of binaries, in these complementary poems Blake describes visions and events, first from the eyes of an innocent, and then through the adult voice that resonates of resistance to tyranny and cruelty. For all of Blake's works make some kind of political or social statement, sometimes subtle, but always present.

Blake made a living through his imaginative illustrations and paintings, which may be found today in some of the most prestigious museums in the world.

Consider while reading:

1. Discuss the "mind-forged manacles" in Blake's "London."

2. How does Blake convict organized religion in his "Holy Thursday" poems?
3. Discuss the distinct speaker voices in the two "Chimney Sweeper" poems.
4. Compare the representation of a divine creator in "The Lamb" and "The Tyger."

Written by Karen Dodson

SONGS OF INNOCENCE: THE LAMB

License: Public Domain

William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee Dost thou know who made thee Gave thee life & bid
thee feed.

By the stream & o'er the mead; Gave thee clothing of delight, Softest clothing
wooly bright; Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice!

Little Lamb who made thee Dost thou know who made thee Little Lamb I'll tell
thee, Little Lamb I'll tell thee!

He is called by thy name,

For he calls himself a Lamb: He is meek & he is mild, He became a little child:

I a child & thou a lamb, We are called by his name.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

SONGS OF INNOCENCE: THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

License: Public Domain

William Blake

When my mother died I was very young, And my father sold me while yet my
tongue
Could scarcely cry "'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!'"
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head That curled like a lamb's back,
was shaved, so I said, "Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night, As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a
sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack, Were all of them locked up
in coffins of black; And by came an Angel who had a bright key, And he
opened the coffins & set them all free; Then down a green plain, leaping,
laughing they run, And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind, They rise upon clouds, and sport in
the wind.
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark And got with our bags & our brushes
to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm; So if all do their duty,
they need not fear harm.

SONGS OF INNOCENCE: HOLY THURSDAY

License: Public Domain

William Blake

Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
Grey-headed beadles walkd before with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters flow
O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of London town
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own
The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands
Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of Heaven among
Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE: HOLY THURSDAY

License: Public Domain

William Blake

Is this a holy thing to see, In a rich and fruitful land, Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine.
And their fields are bleak & bare.
And their ways are fill'd with thorns.
It is eternal winter there.

For where-e'er the sun does shine, And where-e'er the rain does fall: Babe can
never hunger there, Nor poverty the mind appall.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE: THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

License: Public Domain

William Blake

A little black thing among the snow, Crying "weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father and mother? say?"
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath, And smil'd among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death, And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy and dance and sing, They think they have done me no
injury, And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King, Who make up a
heaven of our misery."

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE: THE TYGER

William Blake

License: Public Domain

Tyger Tyger, burning bright, In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art, Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat, What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain, In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp, Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears And water'd heaven with their tears: Did
 he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright, In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

LONDON

License: Public Domain

William Blake

I wander thro' each charter'd street, Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man, In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear How the Chimney-sweepers cry Every blackning
Church appalls, And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls But most thro' midnight streets I hear How the
youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

British

Romanticism

More than any other woman in Britain, Mary Wollstonecraft represents the eighteenth-century movement in feminist thought. Wollstonecraft's alcoholic and abusive father failed to provide a consistent living for his family, so her childhood was spent in the turmoil of poverty and violence, and she had to earn a living early in life as a lady's companion, a teacher, a schoolmaster, a translator, and eventually a writer. Wollstonecraft's writing reflects her belief in the education of women as a remedy for inequality. She abhorred the conditions of women of all classes and the limited opportunities afforded them. Socially and politically active, Wollstonecraft became part of a group of radical dissenters who questioned the role of the individual in all phases of human life and espoused revolution as a means of liberty. She spent two years in France during the latter stage of the French Revolution, known as the Reign of Terror, and she recorded her observations in *An Historical and Moral View of the Origins and Progress of the French Revolution; and the Effect it Has Produced in Europe* (1794). In the treatise, Wollstonecraft expresses her disillusionment with a revolution which, in spite of assurances for total equality, excluded women from the political arena. Wollstonecraft faced a lifetime of personal and relational challenges; she survived as a single mother, only to die during the birth of her second daughter. That daughter, Mary Shelley, went on to create the classic Romantic novel *Frankenstein*.

Foremost in Wollstonecraft's most famous and widely read work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) is the call for equal rights for all human beings and equal education for men and women. Like her eighteenth-century predecessors, such as Mary Astell and Elizabeth Carter, Wollstonecraft admonishes her own sex against the frivolity that limits their ability to think rationally and weakens their characters. Her argument focuses on making women better wives and mothers through a combination of dignified treatment and intellectual encouragement. She also champions

the right of women to participate in middle class work for financial security. The essay was well received in its initial publication, but its revolutionary ideas were not truly appreciated or realized until over one hundred years later, when the feminist movement revived Wollstonecraft's work and named her as the one of the most influential voices in the fight for women's rights.

Consider while reading:

1. Name some of the causes of what Wollstonecraft calls "women's degradation."
2. What roles do women play in their own oppression?

Written by Karen Dodson

FROM A VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN

License: Public Domain

Mary Wollstonecraft

Introduction

After considering the historic page, and viewing the living world with anxious solicitude, the most melancholy emotions of sorrowful indignation have depressed my spirits, and I have sighed when obliged to confess, that either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the civilization, which has hitherto taken place in the world, has been very partial. I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been the result? a profound conviction, that the neglected education of my fellow creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove, that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers that are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity. One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men, who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than rational wives; and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilized women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect.

In a treatise, therefore, on female rights and manners, the works which have been particularly written for their improvement must not be overlooked; especially when it is asserted, in direct terms, that the minds of women are enfeebled by false refinement;

that the books of instruction, written by men of genius, have had the same tendency as more frivolous productions; and that, in the true style of Mahometanism, they are only considered as females, and not as a part of the human species, when improvable reason is allowed to be the dignified distinction, which raises men above the brute creation, and puts a natural sceptre in a feeble hand.

Yet, because I am a woman, I would not lead my readers to suppose, that I mean violently to agitate the contested question respecting the equality and inferiority of the sex; but as the subject lies in my way, and I cannot pass it over without subjecting the main tendency of my reasoning to misconstruction, I shall stop a moment to deliver, in a few words, my opinion. In the government of the physical world, it is observable that the female, in general, is inferior to the male. The male pursues, the female yields—this is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be suspended or abrogated in favour of woman. This physical superiority cannot be denied—and it is a noble prerogative! But not content with this natural pre-eminence, men endeavour to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment; and women, intoxicated by the adoration which men, under the influence of their senses, pay them, do not seek to obtain a durable interest in their hearts, or to become the friends of the fellow creatures who find amusement in their society.

I am aware of an obvious inference: from every quarter have I heard exclamations against masculine women; but where are they to be found? If, by this appellation, men mean to inveigh against their ardour in hunting, shooting, and gaming, I shall most cordially join in the cry; but if it be, against the imitation of manly virtues, or, more properly speaking, the attainment of those talents and virtues, the exercise of which ennobles the human character, and which raise females in the scale of animal being, when they are comprehensively termed mankind—all those who view them with a philosophical eye must, I should think, wish with me, that they may every day grow more and more masculine.

This discussion naturally divides the subject. I shall first consider women in the grand light of human creatures, who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to unfold their

faculties; and afterwards I shall more particularly point out their peculiar designation.

I wish also to steer clear of an error, which many respectable writers have fallen into; for the instruction which has hitherto been addressed to women, has rather been applicable to LADIES, if the little indirect advice, that is scattered through Sandford and Merton, be excepted; but, addressing my sex in a firmer tone, I pay particular attention to those in the middle class, because they appear to be in the most natural state. Perhaps the seeds of false refinement, immorality, and vanity have ever been shed by the great. Weak, artificial beings raised above the common wants and affections of their race, in a premature unnatural manner, undermine the very foundation of virtue, and spread corruption through the whole mass of society! As a class of mankind they have the strongest claim to pity! the education of the rich tends to render them vain and helpless, and the unfolding mind is not strengthened by the practice of those duties which dignify the human character. They only live to amuse themselves, and by the same law which in nature invariably produces certain effects, they soon only afford barren amusement.

But as I purpose taking a separate view of the different ranks of society, and of the moral character of women, in each, this hint is, for the present, sufficient; and I have only alluded to the subject, because it appears to me to be the very essence of an introduction to give a cursory account of the contents of the work it introduces.

My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their FASCINATING graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists—I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them, that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity and that kind of

love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.

Dismissing then those pretty feminine phrases, which the men condescendingly use to soften our slavish dependence, and despising that weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel, I wish to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex; and that secondary views should be brought to this simple touchstone.

This is a rough sketch of my plan; and should I express my conviction with the energetic emotions that I feel whenever I think of the subject, the dictates of experience and reflection will be felt by some of my readers. Animated by this important object, I shall disdain to cull my phrases or polish my style—I aim at being useful, and sincerity will render me unaffected; for wishing rather to persuade by the force of my arguments, than dazzle by the elegance of my language, I shall not waste my time in rounding periods, nor in fabricating the turgid bombast of artificial feelings, which, coming from the head, never reach the heart. I shall be employed about things, not words! and, anxious to render my sex more respectable members of society, I shall try to avoid that flowery diction which has slid from essays into novels, and from novels into familiar letters and conversation.

10

These pretty nothings, these caricatures of the real beauty of sensibility, dropping glibly from the tongue, vitiate the taste, and create a kind of sickly delicacy that turns away from simple unadorned truth; and a deluge of false sentiments and over-stretched feelings, stifling the natural emotions of the heart, render the domestic pleasures insipid, that ought to sweeten the exercise of those severe duties, which educate a rational and immortal being for a nobler field of action.

The education of women has, of late, been more attended to than formerly; yet they are still reckoned a frivolous sex, and ridiculed or pitied by the writers who endeavour by satire or instruction to improve them. It is acknowledged that they spend

many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments: meanwhile, strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves, the only way women can rise in the world—by marriage. And this desire making mere animals of them, when they marry, they act as such children may be expected to act: they dress; they paint, and nickname God's creatures. Surely these weak beings are only fit for the seraglio! Can they govern a family, or take care of the poor babes whom they bring into the world?

If then it can be fairly deduced from the present conduct of the sex, from the prevalent fondness for pleasure, which takes place of ambition and those nobler passions that open and enlarge the soul; that the instruction which women have received has only tended, with the constitution of civil society, to render them insignificant objects of desire; mere propagators of fools! if it can be proved, that in aiming to accomplish them, without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short lived bloom of beauty is over*, I presume that RATIONAL men will excuse me for endeavouring to persuade them to become more masculine and respectable.

(*Footnote. A lively writer, I cannot recollect his name, asks what business women turned of forty have to do in the world.)

Indeed the word masculine is only a bugbear: there is little reason to fear that women will acquire too much courage or fortitude; for their apparent inferiority with respect to bodily strength, must render them, in some degree, dependent on men in the various relations of life; but why should it be increased by prejudices that give a sex to virtue, and confound simple truths with sensual reveries?

Women are, in fact, so much degraded by mistaken notions of female excellence, that I do not mean to add a paradox when I assert, that this artificial weakness produces a propensity to tyrannize, and gives birth to cunning, the natural opponent of strength, which leads them to play off those contemptible infantile airs that undermine esteem even whilst they excite desire. Do not

foster these prejudices, and they will naturally fall into their subordinate, yet respectable station in life.

It seems scarcely necessary to say, that I now speak of the sex in general. Many individuals have more sense than their male relatives; and, as nothing preponderates where there is a constant struggle for an equilibrium, without it has naturally more gravity, some women govern their husbands without degrading themselves, because intellect will always govern.

Chapter 2. The prevailing opinion of a sexual character discussed.

* * *

To prevent any misconstruction, I must add, that I do not believe that a private education can work the wonders which some sanguine writers have attributed to it. Men and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in. In every age there has been a stream of popular opinion that has carried all before it, and given a family character, as it were, to the century. It may then fairly be inferred, that, till society be differently constituted, much cannot be expected from education. It is, however, sufficient for my present purpose to assert, that, whatever effect circumstances have on the abilities, every being may become virtuous by the exercise of its own reason; for if but one being was created with vicious inclinations—that is, positively bad— what can save us from atheism? or if we worship a God, is not that God a devil?

Consequently, the most perfect education, in my opinion, is such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart; or, in other words, to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent. In fact, it is a farce to call any being virtuous whose virtues do not result from the exercise of its own reason. This was Rousseau's opinion respecting men: I extend it to women, and confidently assert that they have been drawn out of their sphere by false refinement, and not by an endeavour to

acquire masculine qualities. Still the regal homage which they receive is so intoxicating, that, till the manners of the times are changed, and formed on more reasonable principles, it may be impossible to convince them that the illegitimate power, which they obtain by degrading themselves, is a curse, and that they must return to nature and equality, if they wish to secure the placid satisfaction that unsophisticated affections impart. But for this epoch we must wait—wait, perhaps, till kings and nobles, enlightened by reason, and, preferring the real dignity of man to childish state, throw off their gaudy hereditary trappings; and if then women do not resign the arbitrary power of beauty, they will prove that they have LESS mind than man. I may be accused of arrogance; still I must declare, what I firmly believe, that all the writers who have written on the subject of female education and manners, from Rousseau to Dr. Gregory, have contributed to render women more artificial, weaker characters, than they would otherwise have been; and, consequently, more useless members of society. I might have expressed this conviction in a lower key; but I am afraid it would have been the whine of affectation, and not the faithful expression of my feelings, of the clear result, which experience and reflection have led me to draw. When I come to that division of the subject, I shall advert to the passages that I more particularly disapprove of, in the works of the authors I have just alluded to; but it is first necessary to observe, that my objection extends to the whole purport of those books, which tend, in my opinion, to degrade one half of the human species, and render women pleasing at the expense of every solid virtue.

Though to reason on Rousseau's ground, if man did attain a degree of perfection of mind when his body arrived at maturity, it might be proper in order to make a man and his wife ONE, that she should rely entirely on his understanding; and the graceful ivy, clasping the oak that supported it, would form a whole in which strength and beauty would be equally conspicuous. But, alas! husbands, as well as their helpmates, are often only overgrown children; nay, thanks to early debauchery, scarcely men in their outward form, and if the blind lead the blind, one need not come from heaven to tell us the consequence.

Many are the causes that, in the present corrupt state of society, contribute to enslave women by cramping their understandings and sharpening their senses. One, perhaps, that silently does more mischief than all the rest, is their disregard of order.

To do every thing in an orderly manner, is a most important precept, which women, who, generally speaking, receive only a disorderly kind of education, seldom attend to with that degree of exactness that men, who from their infancy are broken into method, observe. This negligent kind of guesswork, for what other epithet can be used to point out the random exertions of a sort of instinctive common sense, never brought to the test of reason? prevents their generalizing matters of fact, so they do to-day, what they did yesterday, merely because they did it yesterday.

This contempt of the understanding in early life has more baneful consequences than is commonly supposed; for the little knowledge which women of strong minds attain, is, from various circumstances, of a more desultory kind than the knowledge of men, and it is acquired more by sheer observations on real life, than from comparing what has been individually observed with the results of experience generalized by speculation. Led by their dependent situation and domestic employments more into society, what they learn is rather by snatches; and as learning is with them, in general, only a secondary thing, they do not pursue any one branch with that persevering ardour necessary to give vigour to the faculties, and clearness to the judgment. In the present state of society, a little learning is required to support the character of a gentleman; and boys are obliged to submit to a few years of discipline. But in the education of women the cultivation of the understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporeal accomplishment; even while enervated by confinement and false notions of modesty, the body is prevented from attaining that grace and beauty which relaxed half-formed limbs never exhibit. Besides, in youth their faculties are not brought forward by emulation; and having no serious scientific study, if they have natural sagacity it is turned too soon on life and manners. They

dwell on effects, and modifications, without tracing them back to causes; and complicated rules to adjust behaviour are a weak substitute for simple principles.

As a proof that education gives this appearance of weakness to females, we may instance the example of military men, who are, like them, sent into the world before their minds have been stored with knowledge or fortified by principles. The consequences are similar; soldiers acquire a little superficial knowledge, snatched from the muddy current of conversation, and, from continually mixing with society, they gain, what is termed a knowledge of the world; and this acquaintance with manners and customs has frequently been confounded with a knowledge of the human heart. But can the crude fruit of casual observation, never brought to the test of judgment, formed by comparing speculation and experience, deserve such a distinction? Soldiers, as well as women, practice the minor virtues with punctilious politeness. Where is then the sexual difference, when the education has been the same; all the difference that I can discern, arises from the superior advantage of liberty which enables the former to see more of life.

It is wandering from my present subject, perhaps, to make a political remark; but as it was produced naturally by the train of my reflections, I shall not pass it silently over.

25

Standing armies can never consist of resolute, robust men; they may be well disciplined machines, but they will seldom contain men under the influence of strong passions or with very vigorous faculties. And as for any depth of understanding, I will venture to affirm, that it is as rarely to be found in the army as amongst women; and the cause, I maintain, is the same. It may be further observed, that officers are also particularly attentive to their persons, fond of dancing, crowded rooms, adventures, and ridicule. Like the FAIR sex, the business of their lives is gallantry. They were taught to please, and they only live to please. Yet they do not lose their rank in the distinction of sexes, for they are still reckoned superior to women, though in what their superiority consists, beyond what I have just mentioned, it is difficult to discover.

The great misfortune is this, that they both acquire manners before morals, and a knowledge of life before they have from reflection, any acquaintance with the grand ideal outline of human nature. The consequence is natural; satisfied with common nature, they become a prey to prejudices, and taking all their opinions on credit, they blindly submit to authority. So that if they have any sense, it is a kind of instinctive glance, that catches proportions, and decides with respect to manners; but fails when arguments are to be pursued below the surface, or opinions analyzed.

May not the same remark be applied to women? Nay, the argument may be carried still further, for they are both thrown out of a useful station by the unnatural distinctions established in civilized life. Riches and hereditary honours have made cyphers of women to give consequence to the numerical figure; and idleness has produced a mixture of gallantry and despotism in society, which leads the very men who are the slaves of their mistresses, to tyrannize over their sisters, wives, and daughters. This is only keeping them in rank and file, it is true. Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience; but, as blind obedience is ever sought for by power, tyrants and sensualists are in the right when they endeavour to keep women in the dark, because the former only want slaves, and the latter a play-thing. The sensualist, indeed, has been the most dangerous of tyrants, and women have been duped by their lovers, as princes by their ministers, whilst dreaming that they reigned over them.

* * *

Olympe De Gouges (1748-1793)

Declaration of the Rights of Woman

French

Romanticism

Olympe de Gouges was born Marie Gouze, and later became Marie Aubry upon her marriage. After her husband's death, she adopted the name Olympe de Gouges and began her career as a social reformer and intellectual radical. She was a prolific pamphlet and play write. She used these works to advocate for her political causes, such as rights for orphans, legal privileges for unwed mothers, and the abolishment of slavery. One of her most notable works is *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* also known as *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*. During the French Revolution, De Gouges supported the Girondins (often referred to as Brissotins), which played a large role in the Legislative Assembly from 1791 to 1792. In 1791 she published her *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* as a response to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, which had adopted by the National Assembly. In her work, De Gouges suggests the women should have the same rights as men under the new French government. Additionally, she suggests that children born outside of marriage should have right to an inheritance as children born within the marriage. After the Girondins fell from power, the leaders of the French Revolution deemed her too radical and had her put to death by the guillotine.

Consider while reading:

1. What rhetorical strategy is De Gouges using, and how do these rhetorical choices reflect her awareness of her audience and the social upheaval of that time?
2. How did De Gouges's conception of gender equality differ from past ideas of gender roles in her culture?
3. De Gouges's assertions are very bold. How do they fit/not fit with the Enlightenment presumption of "natural" rights?

4. Thomas Jefferson's ideas influenced the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. How does De Gouges's work engage with the ideas put forth in America's *Declaration of Independence*?

Written by Laura Ng

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN

License: Public Domain

Olympe De Gouges

Translated by Clarissa Palmer

Introduction

Man, are you capable of being fair? A woman is asking: at least you will allow her that right. Tell me? What gave you the sovereign right to oppress my sex? Your strength? Your talents? Observe the creator in his wisdom, examine nature in all its grandeur for you seem to wish to get closer to it, and give me, if you dare, a pattern for this tyrannical power.

Reconsider animals, consult the elements, study plants, finally, cast an eye over all the variations of all living organisms; yield to the evidence that I have given you: search, excavate and discover, if you can, sexual characteristics in the workings of nature: everywhere you will find them intermingled, everywhere cooperating harmoniously within this immortal masterpiece.

Only man has cobbled together a rule to exclude himself from this system. Bizarre, blind, puffed up with science and degenerate, in this century of enlightenment and wisdom, with the crassest ignorance, he wants to command, like a despot, a sex that is blessed with every intellectual faculty; he feigns to rejoice in the revolution and demands its equal rights, to say nothing more.

Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen

*To be decreed by the National Assembly in its last sessions or in
those of the next legislature.*

PREAMBLE

Mothers, daughters, sisters, representatives of the Nation, all demand to be constituted into a national assembly. Given that ignorance, disregard or the disdain of the rights of woman are the only causes of public misfortune and the corruption of

governments [they] have decided to make known in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of woman; this declaration, constantly in the thoughts of all members of society, will ceaselessly remind them of their rights and responsibilities, allowing the political acts of women, and those of men, to be compared in all respects to the aims of political institutions, which will become increasingly respected, so that the demands of female citizens, henceforth based on simple and incontestable principles, will always seek to maintain the constitution, good morals and the happiness of all.

As a result, the sex that is superior in beauty as it is in courage during the pains of childbirth recognises and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen.

5

FIRST ARTICLE

Woman is born free and remains the equal of man in rights. Social distinctions can only be founded on a common utility.

II

The purpose of all political organisations must be the protection of the natural and imprescriptible rights of Woman and Man: these rights are liberty, property, security and above all the right to resist oppression.

III

The principle of sovereignty is vested primarily in the Nation, which is but the union of Woman and Man: no body, no individual, can exercise authority that does not explicitly emanate from it.

IV

Liberty and justice exist to render unto others what is theirs; therefore the only limit to the exercise of the natural rights of

woman is the perpetual tyranny that man opposes to it: these limits must be reformed by the laws of nature and reason.

V

The laws of nature and reason forbid all acts that are harmful to society: anything not forbidden by these wise and divine laws must be allowed and no one can be constrained to do what the laws do not demand.

10

VI

The law must embody the will of the majority; all Female and Male citizens must contribute personally, or through their representatives, to its development; it must be the same for one and all: all Female and all Male citizens, being equal in law, must be equally entitled to all public honours, positions and employment according to their capacities and with no other distinctions than those based solely on talent and virtue.

VII

No woman may be exempt; she must be accused, arrested and imprisoned according to the law. Women, like men, will obey this rigorous law.

VIII

The law must only establish punishments that are strictly necessary, and none can be punished other than by a law established and promulgated prior to the offence, and legally applied to women.

IX

The law will rigorously pursue any woman found to be guilty.

X

None must be disquieted for their opinions however fundamental: woman is entitled to mount the scaffold; she must be equally entitled to mount the rostra so long as her manifestos do not disturb the public order according to the law.

15

XI

The free expression of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious rights of woman given that this liberty ensures the legitimacy of fathers and their children. Any Female citizen can therefore freely declare "I am the mother of your child" without a barbrous prejudice forcing them to hide the truth, unless in response to the abuse of this freedom in cases determined by the law.

XII

Guaranteeing the rights of woman and the female citizen will be a great benefit: this guarantee must be instituted for the good of all and not just to benefit those individuals to whom it is entrusted.

XIII

Women and men are to contribute equally to the upkeep of the forces of law and order and to the costs of administration: woman shares all the labour, all the hard tasks; she should therefore have an equal share of positions, employment, responsibilities, honours and professions.

XIV

Female and male citizens have a right to decide for themselves, or through their representatives, the necessity of public contribution. Female citizens can only subscribe to it if they are allowed an equal share not only of wealth but also of public administration and in determining the amount, assessment, collection and duration of the tax.

XV

The collective of women, joined to that of men for the purposes of taxation, has the right to demand of any public agent an account of its administration.

20

XVI

No society can have a constitution if rights are not guaranteed, or the separation of powers not determined; the constitution is worthless if the majority that make up the Nation has not participated in its redaction.

XVII

Property belongs to both sexes, united or separated; for each it is an inviolable and sacred right; no one can be deprived of a true natural heritage unless a general necessity, legally verified, obviously requires it and on condition of a fair indemnity agreed in advance.

POSTSCRIPT

Woman, wake up; the tocsin of reason is resounding throughout the universe: acknowledge your rights. Nature's powerful empire is no longer surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition or untruth. The light of truth has dissipated all the clouds of nonsense and usurpation. Enslaved man increased his power and had to have recourse to yours in order to break his fetters. Freed he became unjust towards his companion. Oh women! Women, when will you cease to be blind? What advantages have you gained through the Revolution? A greater scorn, a more pronounced disdain. During the centuries of corruption you only reigned over the weakness of men. Your empire is destroyed: what is left to you? The conviction that men are unjust? Reclaim your heritage, that right founded on the wise decrees of nature; what can you fear from such a fine undertaking? A witticism from the Governor of the Feast of

Can't? Are you afraid that our French Governors, correctors of an inappropriate morality that was too long caught up in the branches of politics, will say repeatedly: women, what have we got in common? Everything, you must reply. If, in their weakness, they should obstinately allow such inconsequentiality to get in the way of their principles then courageously oppose their vain claims of superiority; unite under the banner of philosophy; use all your innate energy and you will soon see these haughty men, our slavish admirers, [not?] grovelling at your feet but proud to share with you the treasures of the Supreme-Being. Whatever barriers are thrown in your way it is in your power to overcome them; you simply have to want to. Let us move on and reflect on the frightful position that women held in society; given that a system of national education is now being contemplated, let us see if our wise Legislators will be rational in their consideration of the education of women.

Women have done more harm than good. Constraint and dissimulation have been their lot. What force stole from them, ruse returned; they had to resort to the power of their charms and the most irreproachable man could not resist. All was submitted to them, poison, the sword; they commanded over crime as over virtue. The French government, in particular, depended for centuries on the nocturnal administration of women; their indiscretion prised secrets from the cabinet, ambassadors, officers, ministers, presidents, pontiffs, cardinals, all that characterises the stupidity of men, sacred or profane, all was subject to the cupidity and ambition of this sex once despicable yet respected but since the revolution, respected and despised.

What an opportunity this sort of antithesis offers me for commentary! I have only a moment to make it known but the moment will fix the attention of the most distant posterity. Under the ancien régime everything was deceitful, everything was shameful yet is it not possible to perceive an improvement in things even in the substance of these vices? A woman had only to be beautiful and amiable; when she possessed both advantages a hundred fortunes would be spread at her feet. If she did not take advantage of them she was deemed to be odd or of an unusual

bent that encouraged her to despise riches: she was then reduced to being considered awkward. The most indecent woman became respectable through gold; the commerce of women was a sort of trade that was accepted in the highest circles which, from now on, will have no credit. If it still had any then the revolution would be lost and, in new relations, we would still be corrupted: yet can reason pretend that all other paths to fortune are closed to a woman purchased by a man, like a slave on the coasts of Africa. The difference is great; that is understood. The slave commands the master, but if the master frees the slave with no recompense at an age when the slave has lost all her charms, what becomes of this unfortunate woman? The plaything of scorn, even the doors of generosity close on her; she is poor and old, they say, why did she not understand how to make a fortune? Other even more touching examples come to mind. A young inexperienced person, seduced by a man she loves, will abandon her parents to follow him; the ingrate will abandon her after a few years, the longer she has aged with him the more inhuman his inconstancy; if she has children, he will abandon her anyway. If he is rich he will consider himself exempt from sharing his fortune with his noble victims. If some agreement ties him to his duty he will violate its power in expectation that the law will be tolerant. If he is married any other agreement becomes worthless. What laws are still to be created in order to extirpate vice at its root? One that will share wealth, and public administration, between men and women. It is obvious that she who is born of a rich family will gain much from an equal partition. But she who is born of a poor family, with merit and virtue, what is her lot? Poverty and opprobrium. If she does not excel specifically in music or painting she can hold no position in public even though she has all the capabilities to do so. I want only to give an overview of how things stand, I will go into greater depth in the new edition of my political works that I plan to offer the public in a few days, with notes.

I take up my text again with regard to morals. Marriage is the tomb of trust and love. A married woman can, with impunity, give bastards to her husband and a fortune that is not theirs. The unmarried woman only has the feeblest rights; ancient and

inhuman laws forbid her the right to the name or wealth of the father of her children and no new laws have been devised to address this matter. If trying to give my sex an honourable and fair substance seems, at this time, paradoxical on my part, like attempting the impossible, then I will leave the glory of treating on this matter to the men to come but, while we wait, we can pave the way through national education, the reestablishment of morals, and by addressing conjugal conventions.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Preface to Lyrical Ballads

Selected Poems

British

Romanticism

As a young man, Wordsworth memorized passages from Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and John Milton. His lyrical poetry, therefore, bears the imprint of the musical quality of the early modern poets who lived before him. From Milton's concept of the sublime, he created work that celebrates the sublimity of the natural world. Wordsworth, who is now considered the premier poet of the Romantic movement, enjoyed most of his acclaim long after his death. During his lifetime, his work was overshadowed by the more immediate popularity of Lord Tennyson and Byron. When the Romantic Movement spread to other parts of Europe and America, however, Wordsworth's connection of nature and the human imagination sparked an immense following.

Together with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey, Wordsworth's literary circle became known as the "Lake Poets," named after the Lake District in England. In 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge published their collaboration, *Lyrical Ballads*, which was popular and brought them some financial success. The book contained one of Wordsworth's best-known poems, "Tintern Abbey," the study of a natural location with thematic undertones of loss and consolation. The book also contains one of Coleridge's famous poems, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Much to the chagrin of the literary establishment, the innovation of *Lyrical Ballads* influenced a rising, younger group of poets such as Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.

In the Preface to the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth proposes a theory that connects poetry and the workings of the human mind. His intended audience is not the high-brow literary elite, but the common men and women. For example, he addresses those who were caught in the industrial confines of cities due to the loss of common land in

the country in his poignant poem "Michael." In the "Preface," Wordsworth writes, "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility," an example of which he demonstrates in "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." Perhaps his most powerful and influential poem, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," captures the human mind and its connection to the natural world.

Consider while reading:

1. Discuss lines from "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" that illustrate Wordsworth's idea of "emotion recollected in tranquility."
2. Discuss lines from "Michael" that demonstrate the heartbreak of broken family tradition.
3. Discuss lines from "Immortality Ode" that demonstrate humanity's reliance on nature.

Written by Karen Dodson

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

License: Public Domain

William Wordsworth

On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length Of five long winters! and
again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs With a sweet inland murmur.—
Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect The landscape with the quiet of the
sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view These plots of cottage-ground, these
orchard-tufts, Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits, Among the woods
and copses lose themselves, Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb The
wild green landscape. Once again I see These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows,
little lines Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms, Green to the very
door; and wreathes of smoke Sent up, in silence, from among the trees, With
some uncertain notice, as might seem, Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless
woods, Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long, These forms of beauty have not been
to me, As is a landscape to a blind man's eye: But oft,
in lonely rooms, and mid the din Of towns and cities, I
have owed to them, In hours of weariness, sensations
sweet, Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart, And
passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
As may have had no trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life; His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, To them I may have owed another
gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood, In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight Of all this unintelligible world
Is lighten'd:—that serene and blessed mood, In which the affections gently lead us
on, Until, the breath of this corporeal frame, And even the motion of our human
blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power Of harmony, and the deep power of
joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft, In
darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless day-light; when the fretful stir Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart, How oft, in spirit, have I turned to
thee O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the wood How often has my spirit
turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd thought, With many recognitions dim
and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
thoughts That in this moment there is life and food For future years. And so I
dare to hope Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first I came
among these hills; when like a roe I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams, Wherever nature led; more like a
man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one Who sought the thing he loved.

For nature then (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days, And their glad
animal movements all gone by,) To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock, The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
wood, Their colours and their forms, were then to me An appetite: a feeling and
a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, or any interest

Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past, And all its aching joys are now no
more, And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur;
other gifts Have followed, for such loss, I would believe, Abundant
recompence. For I have learned To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power To chasten and subdue. And I have
felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused, Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns, And the round ocean, and the living air, And the blue sky, and in the mind
of man, A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things.
Therefore am I still A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold From this green earth; of all the mighty
world Of eye and ear, both what they half-create, And what perceive; well
pleased to recognize In nature and the language of the sense, The anchor of my
purest thoughts, the nurse, The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul Of all
my moral being.

Nor, perchance, If I were not thus taught, should I the
more Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks Of this fair river; thou, my dearest
Friend, My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch The language of my
former heart, and read My former pleasures in the shooting lights Of thy wild
eyes. Oh! yet a little while May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make, Knowing that Nature never did
betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege, Through all the years of this our life, to
lead From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues, Rash judgments, nor the sneers of
selfish men, Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all The dreary intercourse
of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free To blow against thee: and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured Into a sober pleasure, when thy
mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then, If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts Of tender joy wilt thou
remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance, If I should be, where I no more can
hear Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams Of past existence,
wilt thou then forget That on the banks of this delightful stream We stood
together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then
forget, That after many wanderings, many years

Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs, And this green pastoral landscape,
were to me More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

FROM PREFACE TO LYRICAL BALLADS

License: Public Domain

William Wordsworth

[*The Subject and Language of Poetry*]

The first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that I have pleased a greater number, than I ventured to hope I should please. For the sake of variety, and from a consciousness of my own weakness, I was induced to request the assistance of a Friend, who furnished me with the Poems of the ANCIENT MARINER, the FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE:, the NIGHTINGALE, and the Poem entitled LOVE. I should not, however, have requested this assistance, had I not believed that the Poems of my Friend would in a great measure have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realized, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the multiplicity, and in the quality of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory, upon which the poems were

written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, because I knew that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display my opinions, and fully to enforce my arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to the nature of a preface. For to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence, of which I believe it susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those, upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprizes the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which by the act of writing in verse an Author, in the present day, makes to his Reader; but I am certain, it will appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many

modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope therefore the Reader will not censure me, if I attempt to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also, (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from the most dishonorable accusation which can be brought against an Author, namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to chuse incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of

these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

I cannot, however, be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge, that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose. Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If in this opinion I am mistaken, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by

our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections ameliorated.

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. I have also informed my Reader what this purpose will be found principally to be: namely to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement. But, speaking in language somewhat more appropriate, it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This object I have endeavoured in these short essays to attain by various means; by tracing the maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings, as in the poems of the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER; by accompanying the last struggles of a human being, at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the Poem of the FORSAKEN INDIAN; by shewing, as in the Stanzas entitled WE ARE SEVEN, the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion; or by displaying the strength of fraternal, or to speak more philosophically, of moral attachment when early associated with the great and beautiful objects of nature, as in THE BROTHERS; or, as in the Incident of SIMON LEE, by placing my Reader in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them. It has also been part of my general purpose to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned feelings, as in the TWO APRIL

MORNINGS, THE FOUNTAIN, THE OLD MAN TRAVELLING, THE TWO THIEVES, &c. characters of which the elements are simple, belonging rather to nature than to manners, such as exist now, and will probably always exist, and which from their constitution may be distinctly and profitably contemplated. I will not abuse the indulgence of my Reader by dwelling longer upon this subject; but it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my Reader to the Poems entitled POOR SUSAN and the CHILDLESS FATHER, particularly to the last Stanza of the latter Poem.

I will not suffer a sense of false modesty to prevent me from asserting, that I point my Reader's attention to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The

invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavoured to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it which are equally inherent and indestructible; and did I not further add to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their style, in order, among other reasons, that I may not be censured for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and, I hope, are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. I have proposed to myself to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but I have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. I am, however, well aware that others who pursue a different track may interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, I only wish to prefer a different claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it; this I have

done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. I do not know how without being culpably particular I can give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which I wished these poems to be written than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject, consequently, I hope that there is in these Poems little falsehood of description, and that my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something I must have gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a Poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even

of Milton himself. I have not space for much quotation; but, to illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who by their reasonings have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
These ears alas! for other notes repine;
*A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear
And weep the more because I weep in vain.*

—"SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST"
by Thomas Gray, 1742

It will easily be perceived that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics: it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word "fruitless" for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation I have shewn that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and I have previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. I will go further. I do not doubt that it may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose

composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry* sheds no tears "such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial Ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

* * *

[*"What Is a Poet?"*]

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, I ask what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than any thing which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of

his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But, whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him, must, in liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself. However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him, by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle on which I have so much insisted, namely, that of selection; on this he will depend for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and

unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for Rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, hath said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet, who has an adequate notion of the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere because it is not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of

particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of Science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and reacting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions which by habit become of the nature of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding every where objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which without any other discipline than that of our daily life we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of Science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow- beings. The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of

truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after." He is the rock of defence of human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying every where with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are every where; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge--it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective Sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called Science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man. It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental

ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What I have thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to have such weight that I will conclude, there are few persons, of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet, or belonging simply to Poets in general, to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer: by referring my Reader to the description which I have before given of a Poet. Among the qualities which I have enumerated as principally conducting to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what I have there said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sun-shine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the

passions of men. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be proved that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language, when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which depends upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height, and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves.

* * *

[*"Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity"*]

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now, if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from

works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely, all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling, which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. I might perhaps include all which it is necessary to say upon this subject by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

* * *

I know that nothing would have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view as to have shewn of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what can I do more for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if I propose to furnish him with new friends, it is only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is a host of arguments in these

feelings; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, I might have removed many obstacles, and assisted my Reader in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible that poetry may give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of my subject I have not altogether neglected; but it has been less my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, than to offer reasons for presuming, that, if the object which I have proposed to myself were adequately attained, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself: he will determine how far I have attained this object; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public.

*Wordsworth's Note: I here use the word "Poetry" (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a strict antithesis; because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

MICHAEL, A PASTORAL POEM

License: Public Domain

William Wordsworth

If from the public way you turn your steps Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill, You will suppose that with an upright path Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent The pastoral Mountains front you, face to face. But, courage! for beside that boisterous Brook The mountains have all open'd out themselves, And made a hidden valley of their own.

No habitation there is seen; but such As journey thither find themselves alone With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites That overhead are sailing in the sky.

It is in truth an utter solitude, Nor should I have made mention of this Dell But for one object which you might pass by, Might see and notice not. Beside the brook There is a straggling heap of unhewn stones!

And to that place a story appertains, Which, though it be ungarnish'd with events, Is not unfit, I deem, for the fire-side, Or for the summer shade. It was the first, The earliest of those tales that spake to me Of Shepherds, dwellers in the vallies, men Whom I already lov'd, not verily For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills Where was their occupation and abode.

And hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy Careless of books, yet having felt the power Of Nature, by the gentle agency Of natural objects led me on to feel For passions that were not my own, and think At random and imperfectly indeed On man; the heart of man and human life. Therefore, although it be a history Homely and rude, I will relate the same For the delight of a few natural hearts, And with yet fonder feeling, for the sake Of youthful Poets, who among these Hills Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name.

An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb. His bodily frame had been from youth to age Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs, And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt And watchful more than ordinary men.

Hence he had learn'd the meaning of all winds, Of blasts of every tone, and often-
times When others heeded not, He heard the South Make subterraneous music,
like the noise Of Bagpipers on distant Highland hills;
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock Bethought him, and he to himself
would say The winds are now devising work for me!

And truly at all times the storm, that drives The Traveller to a shelter, summon'd
him Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So liv'd he till his eightieth year was pass'd.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose That the green Valleys, and the
Streams and Rocks Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with chearful spirits he had breath'd The common air; the hills,
which he so oft Had climb'd with vigorous steps; which had impress'd So many
incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear; Which like a book preserv'd the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had sav'd,
Had fed or shelter'd, linking to such acts, So grateful in themselves, the certainty
Of honorable gains; these fields, these hills Which were his living Being, even
more
Than his own Blood—what could they less? had laid Strong hold on his
affections, were to him A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

He had not passed his days in singleness.
He had a Wife, a comely Matron, old
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had Of antique form, this large for
spinning wool, That small for flax, and if one wheel had rest, It was because
the other was at work.
The Pair had but one Inmate in their house, An only Child, who had been born to
them When Michael telling o'er his years began To deem that he was old, in
Shepherd's phrase, With one foot in the grave. This only son, With two brave
sheep dogs tried in many a storm.

The one of an inestimable worth, Made all their Household. I may truly say, That
they were as a proverb in the vale

For endless industry. When day was gone, And from their occupations out of doors

The Son and Father were come home, even then, Their labour did not cease, unless when all Turn'd to their cleanly supper-board, and there Each with a mess of pottage and skimm'd milk, Sate round their basket pil'd with oaten cakes, And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal Was ended, LUKE (for so the Son was nam'd) And his old Father, both betook themselves To such convenient work, as might employ Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card Wool for the House-wife's spindle, or repair Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe, Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the cicling by the chimney's edge, Which in our ancient uncouth country style Did with a huge projection overbrow Large space beneath, as duly as the light Of day grew dim, the House-wife hung a lamp; An aged utensil, which had perform'd Service beyond all others of its kind.

Early at evening did it burn and late, Surviving Comrade of uncounted Hours Which going by from year to year had found And left the Couple neither gay perhaps Nor chearful, yet with objects and with hopes Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when LUKE was in his eighteenth year, There by the light of this old lamp they sate, Father and Son, while late into the night The House-wife plied her own peculiar work, Making the cottage thro' the silent hours Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.

Not with a waste of words, but for the sake Of pleasure, which I know that I shall give To many living now, I of this Lamp Speak thus minutely: for there are no few Whose memories will bear witness to my tale, The Light was famous in its neighbourhood, And was a public Symbol of the life,

The thrifty Pair had liv'd. For, as it chanc'd, Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground Stood single, with large prospect North and South, High into Easedale, up to Dunmal-Raise,

And Westward to the village near the Lake.

And from this constant light so regular

And so far seen, the House itself by all Who dwelt within the limits of the vale, Both old and young, was nam'd The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years, The Shepherd, if he lov'd himself,
must needs Have lov'd his Help-mate; but to Michael's heart This Son of his old
age was yet more dear— Effect which might perhaps have been produc'd By
that instinctive tenderness, the same Blind Spirit, which is in the blood of all,
Or that a child, more than all other gifts, Brings hope with it, and forward-
looking thoughts, And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.

From such, and other causes, to the thoughts Of the old Man his only Son was
now
The dearest object that he knew on earth.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes Old Michael, while he was a babe in
arms, Had done him female service, not alone
For dalliance and delight, as is the use Of Fathers, but with patient mind enforc'd
To acts of tenderness; and he had rock'd His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy Had put on Boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young one in his sight, when he Had work by his own door, or when
he sate With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool, Beneath that large old
Oak, which near their door Stood, and from it's enormous breadth of shade
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun, Thence in our rustic dialect was
call'd
The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.

There, while they two were sitting in the shade, With others round them, earnest
all and blithe, Would Michael exercise his heart with looks Of fond correction
and reproof bestow'd
Upon the child, if he dislurb'd the sheep By catching at their legs, or with his
shouts Scar'd them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up A healthy Lad, and carried in
his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old, Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hoop'd With iron, making it throughout in
all
Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's Staff, And gave it to the Boy; wherewith
equipp'd He as a Watchman oftentimes was plac'd
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock, And to his office prematurely call'd

There stood the urchin, as you will divine, Something between a hindrance and a help, And for this cause not always, I believe, Receiving from his Father hire of praise.

While this good household thus were living on From day to day, to Michael's ear there came Distressful tidings. Long before, the time Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound In surety for his Brother's Son, a man Of an industrious life, and ample means, But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly Had press'd upon him, and old Michael now Was summon'd to discharge the forfeiture, A grievous penalty, but little less Than half his substance. This un-look'd-for claim At the first hearing, for a moment took More hope out of his life than he supposed That any old man ever could have lost.

As soon as he had gather'd so much strength That he could look his trouble in the face, It seem'd that his sole refuge was to sell A portion of his patrimonial fields.

Such was his first resolve; he thought again, And his heart fail'd him. "Isabel," said he, Two evenings after he had heard the news, "I have been toiling more than seventy years, And in the open sun-shine of God's love Have we all liv'd, yet if these fields of ours Should pass into a Stranger's hand, I think That I could not lie quiet in my grave."

"Our lot is a hard lot; the Sun itself Has scarcely been more diligent than I, And I have liv'd to be a fool at last To my own family. An evil Man That was, and made an evil choice, if he Were false to us; and if he were not false, There are ten thousand to whom loss like this Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus. When I began, my purpose was to speak Of remedies and of a chearful hope."

"Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land Shall not go from us, and it shall be free, He shall possess it, free as is the wind That passes over it. We have, thou knowest, Another Kinsman, he will be our friend In this distress. He is a prosperous man, Thriving in trade, and Luke to him shall go, And with his Kinsman's help and his own thrift, He quickly will repair this loss, and then May come again to us. If here he stay, What can be done? Where every one is poor What can be gain'd?" At this, the old man paus'd, And Isabel sate silent, for her mind

Was busy, looking back into past times.

There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself, He was a parish-boy—at the church-door

They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence, And halfpennies, wherewith the Neighbours bought A Basket, which they fill'd with Pedlar's wares, And with this Basket on his arm, the Lad Went up to London, found a Master there, Who out of many chose the trusty Boy

To go and overlook his merchandise

Beyond the seas, where he grew wond'rous rich, And left estates and monies to the poor, And at his birth-place built a Chapel, floor'd With Marble, which he sent from foreign lands.

These thoughts, and many others of like sort, Pass'd quickly thro' the mind of Isabel, And her face brighten'd. The Old Man was glad.

And thus resum'd. "Well I Isabel, this scheme These two days has been meat and drink to me.

Far more than we have lost is left us yet.

—We have enough—I wish indeed that I

Were younger, but this hope is a good hope.

—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best Buy for him more, and let us send him forth To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night: —If he could go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceas'd, and to the fields went forth With a light heart. The Housewife for five days Was restless morn and night, and all day long Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare Things needful for the journey of her Son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came To stop her in her work; for, when she lay By Michael's side, she for the two last nights Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep: And when they rose at morning she could see That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon She said to Luke, while they two by themselves Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go, We have no other Child but thee to lose, None to remember—do not go away,

For if thou leave thy Father he will die."

The Lad made answer with a jocund voice, And Isabel, when she had told her fears, Recover'd heart. That evening her best fare Did she bring forth, and all together sate Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

Next morning Isabel resum'd her work, And all the ensuing week the house appear'd As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length The expected letter from their Kinsman came, With kind assurances that he would do

His utmost for the welfare of the Boy,
To which requests were added that forthwith He might be sent to him. Ten times or
more The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to shew it to the neighbours round: Nor was there at that time on
English Land A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel Had to her house
return'd, the Old Man said, "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word The
House—wife answered, talking much of things Which, if at such, short notice
he should go, Would surely be forgotten. But at length She gave consent, and
Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill, In that deep Valley, Michael had
design'd To build a Sheep-fold, and, before he heard The tidings of his
melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up A heap of stones, which close to the
brook side Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walk'd; And soon as they had reach'd the
place he stopp'd, And thus the Old Man spake to him. "My Son, To-morrow
thou wilt leave me; with full heart I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth, And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good When thou art from me, even if I should
speak Of things thou caust not know of.—After thou First cam'st into the
world, as it befalls To new-born infants, thou didst sleep away Two days, and
blessings from thy Father's tongue Then fell upon thee. Day by day pass'd on,
And still I lov'd thee with encreasing love."

Never to living ear came sweeter sounds Than when I heard thee by our own fire-
side First uttering without words a natural tune, When thou, a feeding babe,
didst in thy joy Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month follow'd month, And in the
open fields my life was pass'd And in the mountains, else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
—But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills, As well thou know'st, in us
the old and young Have play'd together, nor with me didst thou Lack any
pleasure which a boy can know.

Luke had a manly heart; but at these words He sobb'd aloud; the Old Man grasp'd
his hand, And said, "Nay do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself

Receiv'd at others' hands, for, though now old Beyond the common life of man, I
still
Remember them who lov'd me in my youth."

Both of them sleep together: here they liv'd As all their Forefathers had done, and
when At length their time was come, they were not loth To give their bodies to
the family mold.

I wish'd that thou should'st live the life they liv'd.

But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son, And see so little gain from sixty years.
These fields were burthen'd when they came to me; 'Till I was forty years of age,
not more Than half of my inheritance was mine.

"I toil'd and toil'd; God bless'd me in my work, And 'till these three weeks past the
land was free.

—It looks as if it never could endure

Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go." At this the Old Man paus'd, Then, pointing to the
Stones near which they stood, Thus, after a short silence, he resum'd: "This was
a work for us, and now, my Son, It is a work for me. But, lay one Stone— Here,
lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.

I for the purpose brought thee to this place."

Nay, Boy, be of good hope:—we both may live To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and stout;—do thou thy part, I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resign'd to thee; Up to the heights, and in among the
storms, Will I without thee go again, and do

All works which I was wont to do alone,

Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!

Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast With many hopes—it should be
so—yes—yes— I knew that thou could'st never have a wish To leave me,
Luke, thou hast been bound to me Only by links of love, when thou art gone
What will be left to us!—But, I forget

My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,

As I requested, and hereafter, Luke,

When thou art gone away, should evil men Be thy companions, let this Sheep-fold
be Thy anchor and thy shield; amid all fear And all temptation, let it be to thee
An emblem of the life thy Fathers liv'd, Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well— When thou return'st, thou in this
place wilt see A work which is not here, a covenant

'Twill be between us—but whatever fate

Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last, And bear thy memory with me to the grave.

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stoop'd down, And as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold; at the sight The Old Man's grief broke from him, to his heart He press'd his Son, he kissed him and wept; And to the House together they return'd.

Next morning, as had been resolv'd, the Boy Began his journey, and when he had reach'd The public Way, he put on a bold face;
And all the Neighbours as he pass'd their doors Came forth, with wishes and with farewell pray'rs, That follow'd him 'till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come, Of Luke and his well-doing; and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wond'rous news, Which, as the House-wife phrased it, were throughout The prettiest letters that were ever seen.

Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months pass'd on: and once again The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour He to that valley took his way, and there Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began To slacken in his duty, and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love; 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else Would break the heart:—Old Michael found it so.
I have convers'd with more than one who well Remember the Old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still look'd up upon the sun.
And listen'd to the wind; and as before
Perform'd all kinds of labour for his Sheep, And for the land his small inheritance.

And to that hollow Dell from time to time Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet The pity which was then in every
heart
For the Old Man—ands 'tis believ'd by all That many and many a day he thither
went, And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen Sitting alone, with that his
faithful Dog, Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years from time to time He at the building of this Sheep-
fold wrought, And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel, Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a Stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was nam'd The Evening Star Is gone, the ploughshare has been
through the ground On which it stood; great changes have been wrought In all
the neighbourhood, yet the Oak is left That grew beside their Door; and the
remains Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen Beside the boisterous brook
of Green-head Gill.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

License: Public Domain

William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at
once I saw a crowd, A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine and twinkle on the Milky Way, They stretched in
never-ending line along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance, tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: A
poet could not but be gay,
in such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought what wealth the show to me had brought:
For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon
that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart with pleasure
fills, And dances with the daffodils.

ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

License: Public Domain

William Wordsworth

From Recollections of Early Childhood

*The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, The earth, and every common sight, To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light, The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;— Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes, And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth; But yet I know, where'er I go, That there hath
past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song, And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief: A timely utterance gave that thought
relief, And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep; No more shall grief of mine the
season wrong; I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng, The Winds
come to me from the fields of sleep, And all the earth is gay; Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity, And with the heart of May Doth every Beast keep
holiday;— Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call Ye to each other make; I see The
heavens laugh with you in your jubilee; My heart is at your festival, My head
hath its coronal, The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.

Oh evil day! if I were sullen While the Earth herself is adorning, This sweet
May-morning,

And the Children are culling On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide, Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
warm, And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:— I hear, I hear, with
joy I hear!

—But there's a Tree, of many, one, A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone: The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat: Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness, And not in utter nakedness, But trailing clouds of
glory do we come From God, who is our home: Heaven lies about us in
our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close Upon the growing Boy,

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows, He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east Must travel, still is Nature's Priest, And
by the vision splendid Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away, And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own; Yearnings she hath in her own
natural kind, And, even with something of a Mother's mind, And no unworthy
aim,

The homely Nurse doth all she can To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known, And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses, A six years' Darling of a pigmy
size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies, Fretted by sallies of his mother's
kisses, With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, Some fragment from his dream of human
life, Shaped by himself with newly-learned art; A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart, And unto this he frames his song: Then will he
fit his tongue To dialogues of business, love, or strife; But it will not be
long
Ere this be thrown aside, And with new joy and pride The little Actor cons
another part; Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age, That Life brings with her in her
equipage; As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep, Haunted for ever by the eternal
mind,— Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest, Which we are toiling all our lives to find, In
darkness lost, the darkness of the grave; Thou, over whom thy
Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave, A Presence which is not to be put by;
To whom the grave
Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight Of day or the warm light,
A place of thought where we in waiting lie; Thou little Child, yet glorious in the
might Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height, Why with such earnest
pains dost thou provoke The years to bring the inevitable yoke, Thus blindly
with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight, And custom lie upon thee with a
weight, Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers Is something that doth live, That nature yet
remembers What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest— Delight and liberty, the simple
creed Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest, With new-fledged hope still
fluttering in his breast:— Not for these I raise

The song of thanks and praise; But for those obstinate questionings Of sense
and outward things, Fallings from us, vanishings; Blank misgivings of a
Creature Moving about in worlds not realised, High instincts before
which our mortal Nature Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised: But
for those first affections, Those shadowy recollections, Which, be they
what they may, Are yet the fountain-light of all our day, Are yet a master-
light of all our seeing; Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make Our
noisy years seem moments in the being Of the eternal Silence: truths that
wake, To perish never;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor, Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy, Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence in a season of calm weather Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither, And see the Children sport upon the shore, And
hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!

And let the young Lambs bound As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng, Ye that pipe and ye that play, Ye that through
your hearts today Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright Be now for ever taken from
my sight, Though nothing can bring back the hour Of splendour in the grass, of
glory in the flower; We will grieve not, rather find Strength in what remains
behind; In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be; In the soothing thoughts that spring Out of
human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death, In years that bring the philosophic
mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves, Forebode not any severing of
our loves!

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might; I only have relinquished one delight To
live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret, Even more than when I tripped
lightly as they; The innocent brightness of a new-born Day Is lovely yet;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun Do take a sober colouring from an
eye That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality; Another race hath been, and
other palms are won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live, Thanks to its tenderness, its joys,
and fears, To me the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often
lie too deep for tears.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Selected Poems

British

Romanticism

Coleridge is the first critic of the Romantic literary movement in England. His father was a school-master and a vicar, and Coleridge grew up in a household full of books, which he read voraciously. His father's fascination with astronomy created in the young man a vision of the vastness of the world, a vision that would later inform his own work. His character and literary style were formed when he was an adolescent student at Christ's Hospital school in London; there, he immersed himself in the classics and English poets such as Shakespeare and Milton. From the English poets, he drew the significance of sound and imagery. Coleridge saw poetry as a means of enjoyment and science as a means to scientific truth; according to Coleridge, however, the best poetry uses metaphor and imagery to express truth. He is responsible for bringing the ideas of Immanuel Kant and human understanding to the literary circles of England. He also introduces an innovative supernatural context in much of his poetry, which requires that his audience release their grip on reason. He collaborated with William Wordsworth in *Lyrical Ballads*, a foundational book of verse for the Romantic period. In his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge introduces the concept of a "willing suspension of disbelief":

In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.

The suspension of disbelief or poetic faith is necessary for the enjoyment of two of Coleridge's famous poems, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) and "Kubla Khan" (1817).

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Coleridge's poem is written in tight rhyme and meter, yet his subject is otherworldly. In the poem, he introduces the psychological concept of mesmerizing with the Mariner's "glittering eye." The concept of the eye that can mesmerize, or hold the mind of its object captive, is one he borrowed from the German physician Frank Mesmer, who proposed that all living creatures have "animal magnetism." Coleridge's verse is indeed haunting and mesmerizing throughout the poem, holding both the Wedding Guest and the poem's audience captive to the tragic story of the sole survivor of a fateful voyage. The poem, full of metaphor and symbolism, introduces the Romantic era to the disturbing sensations that disturb the human imagination.

Kubla Kahn; or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment

Coleridge's "Kubla Kahn" appeared in his imagination in the waking moments of an opium-induced sleep; the poem represents the poet's fascination with the human imagination and the vastness of nature, the unconscious and fantasy. This poem, though not Coleridge's most prized work, has stimulated scholarly conversation for its potent and vivid imagery and language, and foreshadows the work of poets like William Blake and the American poet Edgar Allan Poe.

Consider while reading:

1. Discuss the significance of the Wedding Guest being kept from a celebration.
2. What is the significance of the albatross around the neck of the Mariner?
3. How does Coleridge depict the voyage as the life of every human being?
4. Choose and discuss an image from "Kubla Khan."

Written by Karen Dodson

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

License: Public Domain

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye, Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set: May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand, 'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye— The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child: The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone: He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man, The bright-eyed Mariner.

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared, Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left, Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day, Till over the mast at noon—'
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast, For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall, Red as a rose is she;

Nodding their heads before her goes The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast, Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man, The bright-eyed Mariner.

And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings, And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, As who pursued with yell and blow Still
treads the shadow of his foe, And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast, And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow, And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by, As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken— The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there, The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled, Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross, Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul, We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat, And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit; The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind; The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white, Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!— Why look'st thou so?'—With my cross-
bow I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,

Still hid in mist, and on the left Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind, But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo!

And I had done a hellish thing, And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay, That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head, The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay, That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down, 'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky, The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand, No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where, And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assurèd were Of the Spirit that plagued us so; Nine fathom
deep he had followed us From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross About my neck was hung.

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,

When looking westward, I beheld A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck, And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in.
As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide, She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars, (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud) How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun, Like restless gossameres?

Are those her *ribs* through which the Sun Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a DEATH? and are there two?
Is DEATH that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, *her* looks were free, Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy, The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she, Who
thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came, And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out; At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea, Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night, The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white; From the sails the dew did drip— Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon, Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang, And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men, (And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump, They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,— They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

PART IV

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown, As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye, And thy skinny hand, so brown.'— Fear not, fear
not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone, Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea, And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray; But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close, And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky Lay dead like a load on my weary
eye, And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs, Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse, And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky, And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main, Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay, The charmèd water burnt away

A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship, I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white, And when they reared, the elfish light Fell
off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black, They coiled and swam; and every track Was
a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart, And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me, And I blessed them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray; And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck, That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew; And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold, My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs: I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep, And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind: It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails, That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!

And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud, And the sails did sigh like sedge, And
the rain poured down from one black cloud; The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag, The lightning fell with never a jag, A river
steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship, Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose, Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream, To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on; Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes, Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools— We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope, But he said nought to me.

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!'
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain, Which to their corses came again, But a
troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms, And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths, And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound, Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again, Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are, How they seemed to fill the sea and air With
their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments, Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on, Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship, Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep, From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune, And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast, Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go, She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay, I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice, As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done, And penance more will do.'

PART VI

First Voice

'But tell me, tell me! speak again, Thy soft response renewing— What makes that
ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice

Still as a slave before his lord, The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently Up to the Moon is cast— If he may know which
way to go; For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously She looketh down on him.'

First Voice

'But why drives on that ship so fast, Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go, When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

I woke, and we were sailing on As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high; The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck, For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes, That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died, Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw Of what had else been seen— Like one, that on
a lonesome road Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on, And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me, Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek Like a meadow-gale of spring— It mingled
strangely with my fears, Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze— On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar, And I with sobs did pray— O let me be awake,
my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass, So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay, And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less, That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light, Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were, In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat, And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand: It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land, Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand, No voice did they impart— No voice; but
oh! the silence sank Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy, I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice: It is the Hermit good!

He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve— He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk, 'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair, That signal made but now?'

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said— 'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails, How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look— (The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship, But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship, And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on, Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay; The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship, The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy, Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see, The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree, I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat, And scarcely he could stand.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say— What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale; And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour, That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told, This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land; I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me: To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast, 'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk, And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends, Old men, and babes, and loving friends And
youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright, Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned, And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

KUBLA KHAN

License: Public Domain

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground With walls and towers were girdled round;
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills, Where blossomed many an
incense-bearing tree; And here were forests ancient as the hills, Enfolding
sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted Down the green hill athwart a
cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted As e'er beneath a waning moon was
haunted By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething, As if this earth in fast thick
pants were breathing, A mighty fountain momentarily was forced: Amid whose
swift half-intermitted burst Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail, Or
chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail: And mid these dancing rocks at once
and ever It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion Through wood and dale the sacred
river ran, Then reached the caverns measureless to man, And sank in tumult to
a lifeless ocean; And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far Ancestral voices
propheying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure Floated midway on the waves; Where was
heard the mingled measure From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she played, Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me, That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there, And all should cry, Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Selected Poems

A Defence of Poetry

British

Romanticism

From an early age, Percy Bysshe Shelley was a controversial figure. He was the first-born male of his family, and therefore he had expectations of a substantial family inheritance. He was expelled from Oxford for publishing a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811), copies of which he sent to every conservative professor at the college. Shelley and his father parted company upon his refusal to accept Christianity as a means of reinstatement to the college, forcing Shelley to wait for two years to receive his inheritance. Shelley would continue to defy religious hypocrisy and espouse politically radical ideas for the rest of his short life.

Shelley's defiance of social traditions extended to his personal life. His first wife, Harriett Westbrook, committed suicide when Shelley began an affair with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. The group of radical intellectuals with which Shelley associated touted free love and lived on the fringe of respectable society. Shelley legally married Mary, but continued to have affairs with many women as the couple made their way across Europe. Mary Shelley would later write the Romantic masterpiece *Frankenstein*.

Shelley's death by drowning in 1822 established him as a tragic figure in the Romantic era. In spite of the few years in which he lived and composed, Shelley leaves behind some of the period's most elegant poetry. He is buried beside John Keats in Italy.

A Defence of Poetry

In his defense, published in 1821, Shelley relates the poem as "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth," and poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world." He defends poetry against the allegation that it has no value in a world of science and rational thought.

Distinguishing between two mental operations, reason as the logical thought process and imagination as the power of perception, Shelley concludes that poetry is necessary for the mind to recognize beauty, and that beauty defines human civilization.

Selected Poems

Shelley's poetry practically trips from the lips in tremendous similes, alliterations, and phrases. In "Mutability," he presents the changeable and swift flow of life; in "To Wordsworth," a reordering of the Shakespearean sonnet, he laments the way in which Wordsworth has abandoned truth and freedom for comfort and fame; in "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," he celebrates poetry's purpose in lifting the human mind from the mundane things of the world; in "Ozymandias," he explains the vanity of greatness in the fall of Ramesses II of Egypt; and, in "Song to the Men of England," a radical and revolutionary work, he bemoans the working class's oppression by the aristocracy of England. It is in "Ode to the West Wind," however, that Shelley's brilliance truly shines. He adopts Dante's terza rima rhyme scheme to emphasize the movement of seasons, both of nature and of humankind. The poem ends with his much-quoted question, "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

Consider while reading:

1. According to Shelley, in what ways does poetry elevate and celebrate the human condition?
2. Discuss Shelley's alteration of traditional poetry forms. For example, why does the poet change the English sonnet?
3. Discuss the way in which Shelley invokes the west wind to carry his words across the world.

Written by Karen Dodson

TO WORDSWORTH

License: Public Domain

Percy Shelley

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know That things depart which never may
return: Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow, Have fled like
sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.

These common woes I feel. One loss is mine Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone
deplore.

Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine On some frail bark in winter's
midnight roar: Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood Above the blind and
battling multitude:

In honoured poverty thy voice did weave

Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—

Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve, Thus having been, that thou shouldst
cease to be.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

License: Public Domain

Percy Shelley

The awful shadow of some unseen Power Floats though unseen among us; visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing As summer winds that creep from
flower to flower; Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower, It
visits with inconstant glance

Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread, Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate With thine own hues all thou dost shine
upon Of human thought or form, where art thou gone?

Why dost thou pass away and leave our state, This dim vast vale of tears, vacant
and desolate?

Ask why the sunlight not for ever

Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river, Why aught should fail and fade
that once is shown, Why fear and dream and death and birth Cast on the
daylight of this earth

Such gloom, why man has such a scope For love and hate, despondency and
hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever To sage or poet these responses
given: Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven, Remain the records
of their vain endeavour: Frail spells whose utter'd charm might not avail to
sever, From all we hear and all we see,

Doubt, chance and mutability.

Thy light alone like mist o'er mountains driven, Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument, Or moonlight on a midnight
stream,

Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart And come, for some uncertain
moments lent.

Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;

Thou, that to human thought art nourishment, Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be, Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped Through many a listening chamber,
cave and ruin, And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing Hopes of high
talk with the departed dead.

I call'd on poisonous names with which our youth is fed; I was not heard; I saw
them not;

When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing All vital things that wake to
bring News of birds and blossoming,
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shriek'd, and clasp'd my hands in ecstasy!

I vow'd that I would dedicate my powers To thee and thine: have I not kept the
vow?

With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now I call the phantoms of a
thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in vision'd bowers Of studious zeal or
love's delight
Outwatch'd with me the envious night: They know that never joy illum'd my
brow
Unlink'd with hope that thou wouldst free This world from its dark slavery,
That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene When noon is past; there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen, As if it could not be, as if it had
not been!

Thus let thy power, which like the truth Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm, to one who worships thee, And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind To fear himself, and love all human
kind.

OZYMANDIAS

License: Public Domain

Percy Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land, Who said—"Two vast and trunkless
legs of stone Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand, Half sunk a
shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold
command, Tell that its sculptor well those passions read Which yet
survive, stamped on these lifeless things, The hand that mocked them,
and the heart that fed; And on the pedestal, these words appear: My
name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch
far away."

A SONG: "MEN OF ENGLAND"

License: Public Domain

Percy Shelley

Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed and clothe and save From the cradle to the grave
Those ungrateful drones who would Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge Many a weapon, chain, and scourge, That
these stingless drones may spoil The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm, Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps; The wealth ye find, another keeps; The robes ye
weave, another wears; The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap: Find wealth—let no imposter heap: Weave
robes—let not the idle wear: Forge arms—in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells— In hall ye deck another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade and hoe and loom Trace your grave and build your tomb
And weave your winding-sheet—till fair England be your Sepulchre.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

License: Public Domain

Percy Shelley

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,

Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, Each like a corpse within its grave, until

Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air) With living hues and odours plain and hill: Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed, Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean, Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,

Like the bright hair uplifted from the head Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge Of the horizon to the zenith's height,

The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge Of the dying year, to which this closing night Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,

Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,

Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams, Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,

And saw in sleep old palaces and towers

Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers So sweet, the sense faints picturing
them! Thou For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below The sea-blooms and the oozy
woods which wear The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear, And tremble and despoil
themselves: oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear; If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share The impulse of thy strength, only
less free Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven, As then, when to outstrip thy skiey
speed

Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven As thus with thee in prayer in
my sore need.

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd One too like thee: tameless, and
swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is: What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, Sweet though in sadness. Be thou,
Spirit fierce, My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new
birth!

And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth Ashes and sparks, my words among
mankind!

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind, If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

MUTABILITY

License: Public Domain

Percy Shelley

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon; How restlessly they speed
and gleam and quiver, Streaking the darkness radiantly! yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:— Or like forgotten lyres
whose dissonant strings Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings One mood or
modulation like the last.

We rest—a dream has power to poison sleep; We rise—one wandering
thought pollutes the day; We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep,
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:— It is the same!—For, be it
joy or sorrow, The path of its departure still is free; Man's yesterday
may ne'er be like his morrow; Nought may endure but Mutability.

FROM A DEFENCE OF POETRY

License: Public Domain

Percy Bysshe Shelley

According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced; and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them, as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity. The one is the *to poiein*, or the principle of synthesis, and has for its objects those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is the *to logizein*, or principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things, simply as relations; considering thoughts, not in their integral unity, but as the algebraical representations which conduct to certain general results. Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to the imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance.

Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be "the expression of the imagination": and poetry is connate with the origin of man. Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Aeolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre. A child at play by itself will express its delight by its voice and motions; and every inflexion of tone and every gesture will bear

exact relation to a corresponding antitype in the pleasurable impressions which awakened it; it will be the reflected image of that impression; and as the lyre trembles and sounds after the wind has died away, so the child seeks, by prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause. In relation to the objects which delight a child, these expressions are, what poetry is to higher objects. The savage (for the savage is to ages what the child is to years) expresses the emotions produced in him by surrounding objects in a similar manner; and language and gesture, together with plastic or pictorial imitation, become the image of the combined effect of those objects, and of his apprehension of them. Man in society, with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of the passions and pleasures of man; an additional class of emotions produces an augmented treasure of expressions; and language, gesture, and the imitative arts, become at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture, the chisel and the statue, the chord and the harmony. The social sympathies, or those laws from which, as from its elements, society results, begin to develop themselves from the moment that two human beings coexist; the future is contained within the present, as the plant within the seed; and equality, diversity, unity, contrast, mutual dependence, become the principles alone capable of affording the motives according to which the will of a social being is determined to action, inasmuch as he is social; and constitute pleasure in sensation, virtue in sentiment, beauty in art, truth in reasoning, and love in the intercourse of kind. Hence men, even in the infancy of society, observe a certain order in their words and actions, distinct from that of the objects and the impressions represented by them, all expression being subject to the laws of that from which it proceeds. But let us dismiss those more general considerations which might involve an inquiry into the principles of society itself, and restrict our view to the manner in which the imagination is expressed upon its forms.

In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects, observing in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar,

they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects. For there is a certain order or rhythm belonging to each of these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other: the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste by modern writers. Every man in the infancy of art observes an order which approximates more or less closely to that from which this highest delight results: but the diversity is not sufficiently marked, as that its gradations should be sensible, except in those instances where the predominance of this faculty of approximation to the beautiful (for so we may be permitted to name the relation between this highest pleasure and its cause) is very great. Those in whom it exists in excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word; and the pleasure resulting from the manner in which they express the influence of society or nature upon their own minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort or reduplication from that community. Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. These similitudes or relations are finely said by Lord Bacon to be "the same footsteps of nature impressed upon the various subjects of the world"; [Footnote: *De Augment. Scient.*, cap. i, lib. iii.] and he considers the faculty which perceives them as the storehouse of axioms common to all knowledge. In the infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry; and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. Every original language near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem: the copiousness of lexicography and

the distinctions of grammar are the works of a later age, and are merely the catalogue and the form of the creations of poetry.

But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true, that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion. Hence all original religions are allegorical, or susceptible of allegory, and, like Janus, have a double face of false and true. Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters. For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time. Not that I assert poets to be prophets in the gross sense of the word, or that they can foretell the form as surely as they foreknow the spirit of events: such is the pretence of superstition, which would make poetry an attribute of prophecy, rather than prophecy an attribute of poetry. A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not. The grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of persons, and the distinction of place, are convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry; and the choruses of Aeschylus, and the book of Job, and Dante's Paradise, would afford, more than any other writings, examples of this fact, if the limits of this essay did not forbid citation. The creations of sculpture, painting, and music, are illustrations still more decisive.

Language, colour, form, and religious and civil habits of action, are all the instruments and materials of poetry; they may be called poetry by that figure of speech which considers the effect as a synonym of the cause. But poetry in a more restricted

sense expresses those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty; whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man. And this springs from the nature itself of language, which is a more direct representation of the actions and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of more various and delicate combinations, than colour, form, or motion, and is more plastic and obedient to the control of that faculty of which it is the creation. For language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments and conditions of art, have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. The former is as a mirror which reflects, the latter as a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are mediums of communication. Hence the fame of sculptors, painters, and musicians, although the intrinsic powers of the great masters of these arts may yield in no degree to that of those who have employed language as the hieroglyphic of their thoughts, has never equalled that of poets in the restricted sense of the term, as two performers of equal skill will produce unequal effects from a guitar and a harp. The fame of legislators and founders of religions, so long as their institutions last, alone seems to exceed that of poets in the restricted sense; but it can scarcely be a question, whether, if we deduct the celebrity which their flattery of the gross opinions of the vulgar usually conciliates, together with that which belonged to them in their higher character of poets, any excess will remain.

We have thus circumscribed the word poetry within the limits of that art which is the most familiar and the most perfect expression of the faculty itself. It is necessary, however, to make the circle still narrower, and to determine the distinction between measured and unmeasured language; for the popular division into prose and verse is inadmissible in accurate philosophy.

Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thoughts. Hence the

language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence, than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order. Hence the vanity of translation; it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel.

An observation of the regular mode of the recurrence of harmony in the language of poetical minds, together with its relation to music, produced metre, or a certain system of traditional forms of harmony and language. Yet it is by no means essential that a poet should accommodate his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed. The practice is indeed convenient and popular, and to be preferred, especially in such composition as includes much action: but every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification. The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error. The distinction between philosophers and poets has been anticipated. Plato was essentially a poet—the truth and splendour of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it is possible to conceive. He rejected the measure of the epic, dramatic, and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forbore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which would include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style. Cicero sought to imitate the cadence of his periods, but with little success. Lord Bacon was a poet. [Footnote: See the *Filum Labyrinthi*, and the *Essay on Death* particularly]. His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual

sympathy. All the authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music. Nor are those supreme poets, who have employed traditional forms of rhythm on account of the form and action of their subjects, less capable of perceiving and teaching the truth of things, than those who have omitted that form. Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philosophers of the very loftiest power.

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connexion than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular facts, stripped of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of poetry, and for ever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history; they eat out the poetry of it. A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem. A single sentence may be considered as a whole, though it may be found in the midst of a series of unassimilated portions: a single word even may be a spark of inextinguishable thought. And thus all the great historians, Herodotus, Plutarch, Livy, were poets; and although, the plan of these writers, especially that of Livy, restrained them;

from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they made copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images.

Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society.

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware of the excellence of poetry: for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness; and it is reserved for future generations to contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendour of their union. Even in modern times, no living poet ever arrived at the fullness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgement upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impanelled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations. A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. The poems of Homer and his contemporaries were the delight of infant Greece; they were the elements of that social system which is the column upon which all succeeding civilization has reposed. Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character; nor can we doubt that those who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses; the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to the depths in these immortal creations: the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined and enlarged by a sympathy with such great and lovely impersonations, until from admiring they imitated, and from imitation they identified themselves with the objects of their admiration. Nor let it be objected, that these characters are remote from moral perfection, and that they can by no means be considered as edifying patterns for general imitation. Every epoch, under names more or less specious, has deified its peculiar

errors; Revenge is the naked idol of the worship of a semi-barbarous age; and Self-deceit is the veiled image of unknown evil, before which luxury and satiety lie prostrate. But a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as a temporary dress in which his creations must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty. An epic or dramatic personage is understood to wear them around his soul, as he may the ancient armour or the modern uniform around his body; whilst it is easy to conceive a dress more graceful than either. The beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far concealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn. A majestic form and graceful motions will express themselves through the most barbarous and tasteless costume. Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, &c., be not necessary to temper this planetary music for mortal ears.

The whole objection, however, of the immorality of poetry rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life: nor is it for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another. But poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in

thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thought of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in a participation in the cause. There was little danger that Homer, or any of the eternal poets should have so far misunderstood themselves as to have abdicated this throne of their widest dominion. Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose.

* * *

It is difficult to define pleasure in its highest sense; the definition involving a number of apparent paradoxes. For, from an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the pleasures of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair itself, are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of the pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the

melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. And hence the saying, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of mirth." Not that this highest species of pleasure is necessarily linked with pain. The delight of love and friendship, the ecstasy of the admiration of nature, the joy of the perception and still more of the creation of poetry, is often wholly unalloyed.

The production and assurance of pleasure in this highest sense is true utility. Those who produce and preserve this pleasure are poets or poetical philosophers.

15

The exertions of Locke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau, [Footnote: Although Rousseau has been thus classed, he was essentially a poet. The others, even Voltaire, were mere reasoners.] and their disciples, in favour of oppressed and deluded humanity, are entitled to the gratitude of mankind. Yet it is easy to calculate the degree of moral and intellectual improvement which the world would have exhibited, had they never lived. A little more nonsense would have been talked for a century or two; and perhaps a few more men, women, and children, burnt as heretics. We might not at this moment have been congratulating each other on the abolition of the Inquisition in Spain. But it exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world if neither Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Calderon, Lord Bacon, nor Milton, had ever existed; if Raphael and Michael Angelo had never been born; if the Hebrew poetry had never been translated; if a revival of the study of Greek literature had never taken place; if no monuments of ancient sculpture had been handed down to us; and if the poetry of the religion of the ancient world had been extinguished together with its belief. The human mind could never, except by the intervention of these excitements, have been awakened to the invention of the grosser sciences, and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of society, which it is now attempted to exalt over the direct expression of the inventive and creative faculty itself.

We have more moral, political and historical wisdom, than we know how to reduce into practice; we have more scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies. The poetry in these systems of thought, is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes. There is no want of knowledge respecting what is wisest and best in morals, government, and political economy, or at least, what is wiser and better than what men now practise and endure. But we let "*I DARE NOT* wait upon *I WOULD*, like the poor cat in the adage." We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know; we want the generous impulse to act that which we imagine; we want the poetry of life: our calculations have outrun conception; we have eaten more than we can digest. The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind? From what other cause has it arisen that the discoveries which should have lightened, have added a weight to the curse imposed on Adam? Poetry, and the principle of Self, of which money is the visible, incarnation, are the God and Mammon of the world.

The functions of the poetical faculty are two-fold; by one it creates new materials of knowledge and power and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order which may be called the beautiful and the good. The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it.

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship—what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet. I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study. The toil and the delay recommended by critics, can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connexion of the spaces between their suggestions by the intertexture of conventional expressions; a necessity only

imposed by the limitedness of the poetical faculty itself; for Milton conceived the *Paradise Lost* as a whole before he executed it in portions; We have his own authority also for the muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song." And let this be an answer to those who would allege the fifty-six various readings of the first line of the *Orlando Furioso*. Compositions so produced are to poetry what mosaic is to painting. This instinct and intuition of the poetical faculty, is still more observable in the plastic and pictorial arts; a great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb; and the very mind which directs the hands in formation is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations, or the media of the process.

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression; so that even in the desire and regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only, as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship, is essentially linked with such emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and

most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke, all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes: its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

All things exist as they are perceived; at least in relation to the percipient. "The mind is its own place, and of itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." But poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. And whether it spreads its own figured curtain, or withdraws life's dark veil from before the scene of things, it equally creates for us a being within our being. It makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. It reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. It justifies the bold and true words of Tasso: *Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta*.

A poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men. As

to his glory, let time be challenged to declare whether the fame of any other institutor of human life be comparable to that of a poet. That he is the wisest, the happiest, and the best, inasmuch as he is a poet, is equally incontrovertible: the greatest poets have been men of the most spotless virtue, of the most consummate prudence, and, if we would look into the interior of their lives, the most fortunate of men: and the exceptions, as they regard those who possessed the poetic faculty in a high yet inferior degree, will be found on consideration to confine rather than destroy the rule. Let us for a moment stoop to the arbitration of popular breath, and usurping and uniting in our own persons the incompatible characters of accuser, witness, judge, and executioner, let us decide without trial, testimony, or form, that certain motives of those who are "there sitting where we dare not soar," are reprehensible. Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso a madman, that Lord Bacon was a peculator, that Raphael was a libertine, that Spenser was a poet laureate. It is inconsistent with this division of our subject to cite living poets, but posterity has done ample justice to the great names now referred to. Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins "were as scarlet, they are now white as snow"; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time. Observe in what a ludicrous chaos the imputation of real or fictitious crime have been confused in the contemporary calumnies against poetry and poets; consider how little is, as it appears—or appears, as it is; look to your own motives, and judge not, lest ye be judged.

Poetry, as has been said, differs in this respect from logic, that it is not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence have no necessary connexion with the consciousness or will. It is presumptuous to determine that these are the necessary conditions of all mental causation, when mental effects are experienced unsusceptible of being referred to them. The frequent recurrence of the poetical power, it is obvious to suppose, may produce in the mind a habit of order and harmony correlative with its own nature and its effects upon

other minds. But in the intervals of inspiration, and they may be frequent without being durable, a poet becomes a man, and is abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influences under which others habitually live. But as he is more delicately organized than other men, and sensible to pain and pleasure, both his own and that of others, in a degree unknown to them, he will avoid the one and pursue the other with an ardour proportioned to this difference. And he renders himself obnoxious to calumny, when he neglects to observe the circumstances under which these objects of universal pursuit and flight have disguised themselves in one another's garments.

But there is nothing necessarily evil in this error, and thus cruelty, envy, revenge, avarice, and the passions purely evil, have never formed any portion of the popular imputations on the lives of poets.

25

I have thought it most favourable to the cause of truth to set down these remarks according to the order in which they were suggested to my mind, by a consideration of the subject itself, instead of observing the formality of a polemical reply; but if the view which they contain be just, they will be found to involve a refutation of the arguers against poetry, so far at least as regards the first division of the subject. I can readily conjecture what should have moved the gall of some learned and intelligent writers who quarrel with certain versifiers; I confess myself, like them, unwilling to be stunned, by the *Theseids* of the hoarse Codri of the day. Bavius and Maevius undoubtedly are, as they ever were, insufferable persons. But it belongs to a philosophical critic to distinguish rather than confound.

The first part of these remarks has related to poetry in its elements and principles; and it has been shown, as well as the narrow limits assigned them would permit, that what is called poetry, in a restricted sense, has a common source with all other forms of order and of beauty, according to which the materials of human life are susceptible of being arranged, and which is poetry in a universal sense.

The second part will have for its object an application of these principles to the present state of the cultivation of poetry, and a

defence of the attempt to idealize the modern forms of manners and opinions, and compel them into a subordination to the imaginative and creative faculty. For the literature of England, an energetic development of which has ever preceded or accompanied a great and free development of the national will, has arisen as it were from a new birth. In spite of the low-thoughted envy which would undervalue contemporary merit, our own will be a memorable age in intellectual achievements, and we live among such philosophers and poets as surpass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty. The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age. Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

John Keats (1795-1821)

Selected Poems

British

Romanticism

The epitaph on John Keats' grave in Italy reads: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." The words on his tombstone signify the short, tragic life of this Romantic poetic genius. Keats, like many of the Romantic poets before him, was influenced by Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. When describing the genius of Shakespeare in a letter to his brother, Keats coined the phrase "negative capability," or the ability to accept the transcendence of mystery without the need of rational explanation. Keats used this ability, as well as his understanding and empathy for human suffering, to create some of the period's greatest poetry.

Keats' own story is one of tremendous loss, a story only surpassed by the beauty he finds in nature and relates in his powerful verse. His father died when he was young, leaving a wife and four children financially insecure. His mother left home, abandoning the children to the care of grandparents. When Keats' mother returned, she was dying of tuberculosis. A few years later, Keats' brother Tom would succumb to the same disease. When Keats began coughing up blood, he knew from experience what his limited life would be like. Never financially able to marry, Keats nevertheless enjoyed a brief engagement with Fanny Brawne before his death at the age of twenty-five.

From the depth of his suffering, we inherit some of most sublime lines in English poetry:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

—ENDYMION

The haunting lines of "Ode to a Nightingale" reflect the impending mortality of the poet, who has been "half in love with easeful Death," and the ending lines of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" proclaim, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Consider while reading:

1. Discuss the immortality of the nightingale.
2. Discuss the immortality of the lovers on the Grecian urn.
3. What is Keats' greatest fear?

Written by Karen Dodson

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

License: Public Domain

John Keats

When I have fears that I may cease to be Before my pen has gleaned my
teeming brain, Before high-pilèd books, in charactery, Hold like rich
garners the full ripened grain; When I behold, upon the night's starred
face, Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance, And think that I may
never live to trace Their shadows with the magic hand of chance; And
when I feel, fair creature of an hour, That I shall never look upon thee
more, Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore Of the wide world I stand alone,
and think Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

License: Public Domain

John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains My sense, as though of hemlock I
had drunk, Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains One minute past, and
Lethe-wards had sunk: 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, But being too
happy in thine happiness,— That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees In some
melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, Singest of summer in full-throated
ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved
earth, Tasting of Flora and the country green, Dance, and Provençal song, and
sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, With beaded bubbles winking at the
brim, And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, And with thee fade away into
the forest dim: Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget What thou among
the leaves hast never known, The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan; Where palsy shakes a few, sad,
last gray hairs, Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies; Where
but to think is to be full of sorrow And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, Or new Love pine at them beyond
to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee, Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, But on
the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards: Already with thee! tender is the
night, And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne, Cluster'd around by all
her starry Fays; But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown Through verdurous glooms
and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
boughs, But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet Wherewith the
seasonable month endows The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; White
hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine; Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine, The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme, To take into the air my quiet
breath; Now more than ever seems it rich to die, To cease upon the midnight
with no pain, While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain— To thy high requiem become a
sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down; The voice I hear this passing night was
heard In ancient days by emperor and clown: Perhaps the self-same song
that found a path Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, She
stood in tears amid the alien corn; The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam Of perilous seas, in faery lands
forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well

As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades Past the near meadows, over the still
stream, Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

License: Public Domain

John Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, Thou foster-child of silence and slow
time, Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme: What leaf-fring'd legend haunts
about thy shape Of deities or mortals, or of both, In Tempe or the dales of
Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes,
play on; Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd, Pipe to the spirit ditties of
no tone: Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave Thy song, nor ever
can those trees be bare; Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss, Though
winning near the goal yet, do not grieve; She cannot fade, though thou hast not
thy bliss, For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring
adieu; And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new; More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd, For ever panting, and for ever young; All
breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd, A burning forehead, and a
parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest, Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the
skies, And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel, Is emptied of this folk, this pious
morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore Will silent be; and not a soul to tell Why
thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed; Thou, silent form, dost tease us out
of thought As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste, Thou shalt remain, in midst of other
woe Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st, "Beauty is truth, truth
beauty,—that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Mary Shelley (1797-1851)

Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus

British

Romanticism

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is best known for her novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818, revised 1831). As the daughter of political philosopher William Godwin and early feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft, the expectations for Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin were high. Her mother died shortly after her birth, and her father gave her an unconventional education. Mary grew up listening to her father's guests, who ranged from scientists and philosophers to literary figures such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Mary was sixteen when she fell in love with one of her father's admirers, the young poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (who was estranged from his wife), and ran away with him. The two of them married, several years later, after the death of Shelley's first wife. In the summer of 1816, Mary and Percy became the neighbors of Lord Byron, with whom they developed a close friendship while vacationing on the shores of Lake Geneva. During a stretch of bad weather, Byron suggested that each of them should write a ghost story. Mary's initial idea, which resulted from a nightmare she had, quickly evolved into *Frankenstein*.

The story of Victor Frankenstein is a cautionary tale of what happens when Romantic ambition and Enlightenment ideals of science and progress are taken too far. This theme also appears in the story of the narrator, the unlucky explorer Robert Walton, who encounters Victor and hears his story. Victor's most important failure is his abandonment of his Creature, who never receives a name. Victor leaves his initially innocent "child" to survive on his own simply because of his appearance. Although Victor questions whether he himself is to blame for everything that follows, he continues to be repulsed by the Creature's looks. The impassioned speeches that Mary Shelley writes for the Creature implicitly criticize society for rejecting someone for the wrong reasons. In the end, it is left to the reader to decide whether Victor, the Creature, and/or society in general is the most monstrous.

Consider while reading:

1. In *Frankenstein*, characters objectify the Creature, judging him based on appearance rather than substance. Many scholars believe that Mary Shelley saw the Creature as a metaphor for women in society. What evidence is there in the story that supports this interpretation?
2. In some ways, Victor Frankenstein ultimately appears to be the "monster," rather than the Creature. Compare the similarities between Victor's Romantic attitudes and the portrayal of Romanticism in the works of Percy Shelley and Lord Byron. What similarities exist? In what ways might Mary Shelley be critical of those views?

Written by Laura Getty

FRANKENSTEIN, OR THE MODERN PROMETHEUS

License: Public Domain

Mary Shelley

Letter 1

St. Petersburg, Dec. 11th, 17—.

TO Mrs. Saville, England

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday, and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London, and as I walk in the streets of Petersburg, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is forever visible, its broad disk just skirting the horizon and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There—for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators—there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle and may regulate a thousand celestial observations that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent forever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man.

These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind, to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven, for nothing contributes so much to tranquillize the mind as a steady purpose—a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good Uncle Thomas' library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness, so valuable did he consider my services. And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury, but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage, the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when theirs are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stagecoach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapped in furs—a dress which I have already adopted, for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburg and Archangel. I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the

whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June; and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never. Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother,
R. Walton

Letter 2

Archangel, 28th March, 17—.
To Mrs. Saville, England

How slowly the time passes here, encompassed as I am by frost and snow! Yet a second step is taken towards my enterprise. I have hired a vessel and am occupied in collecting my sailors; those whom I have already engaged appear to be men on whom I can depend and are certainly possessed of dauntless courage.

But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy, and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most severe evil, I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection. I shall commit my thoughts to paper, it is true; but that is a poor medium for the communication of feeling. I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me, whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend. I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans. How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother! I am too ardent in execution and too impatient of difficulties. But it is a still greater evil to me that I am self-educated: for the first fourteen years of my life I ran wild on a common and read nothing but our Uncle Thomas' books

of voyages. At that age I became acquainted with the celebrated poets of our own country; but it was only when it had ceased to be in my power to derive its most important benefits from such a conviction that I perceived the necessity of becoming acquainted with more languages than that of my native country. Now I am twenty-eight and am in reality more illiterate than many schoolboys of fifteen. It is true that I have thought more and that my daydreams are more extended and magnificent, but they want (as the painters call it) KEEPING; and I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind. Well, these are useless complaints; I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen. Yet some feelings, unallied to the dross of human nature, beat even in these rugged bosoms. My lieutenant, for instance, is a man of wonderful courage and enterprise; he is madly desirous of glory, or rather, to word my phrase more characteristically, of advancement in his profession. He is an Englishman, and in the midst of national and professional prejudices, unsoftened by cultivation, retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity. I first became acquainted with him on board a whale vessel; finding that he was unemployed in this city, I easily engaged him to assist in my enterprise. The master is a person of an excellent disposition and is remarkable in the ship for his gentleness and the mildness of his discipline. This circumstance, added to his well-known integrity and dauntless courage, made me very desirous to engage him. A youth passed in solitude, my best years spent under your gentle and feminine fosterage, has so refined the groundwork of my character that I cannot overcome an intense distaste to the usual brutality exercised on board ship: I have never believed it to be necessary, and when I heard of a mariner equally noted for his kindness of heart and the respect and obedience paid to him by his crew, I felt myself peculiarly fortunate in being able to secure his services. I heard of him first in rather a romantic manner, from a lady who owes to him the happiness of her life. This, briefly, is his story. Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady of moderate fortune, and having

amassed a considerable sum in prize-money, the father of the girl consented to the match. He saw his mistress once before the destined ceremony; but she was bathed in tears, and throwing herself at his feet, entreated him to spare her, confessing at the same time that she loved another, but that he was poor, and that her father would never consent to the union. My generous friend reassured the suppliant, and on being informed of the name of her lover, instantly abandoned his pursuit. He had already bought a farm with his money, on which he had designed to pass the remainder of his life; but he bestowed the whole on his rival, together with the remains of his prize-money to purchase stock, and then himself solicited the young woman's father to consent to her marriage with her lover. But the old man decidedly refused, thinking himself bound in honour to my friend, who, when he found the father inexorable, quitted his country, nor returned until he heard that his former mistress was married according to her inclinations. "What a noble fellow!" you will exclaim. He is so; but then he is wholly uneducated: he is as silent as a Turk, and a kind of ignorant carelessness attends him, which, while it renders his conduct the more astonishing, detracts from the interest and sympathy which otherwise he would command.

Yet do not suppose, because I complain a little or because I can conceive a consolation for my toils which I may never know, that I am wavering in my resolutions. Those are as fixed as fate, and my voyage is only now delayed until the weather shall permit my embarkation. The winter has been dreadfully severe, but the spring promises well, and it is considered as a remarkably early season, so that perhaps I may sail sooner than I expected. I shall do nothing rashly: you know me sufficiently to confide in my prudence and considerateness whenever the safety of others is committed to my care.

I cannot describe to you my sensations on the near prospect of my undertaking. It is impossible to communicate to you a conception of the trembling sensation, half pleasurable and half fearful, with which I am preparing to depart. I am going to unexplored regions, to "the land of mist and snow," but I shall kill no albatross; therefore do not be alarmed for my safety or if I

should come back to you as worn and woeful as the "Ancient Mariner." You will smile at my allusion, but I will disclose a secret. I have often attributed my attachment to, my passionate enthusiasm for, the dangerous mysteries of ocean to that production of the most imaginative of modern poets. There is something at work in my soul which I do not understand. I am practically industrious—painstaking, a workman to execute with perseverance and labour—but besides this there is a love for the marvellous, a belief in the marvellous, intertwined in all my projects, which hurries me out of the common pathways of men, even to the wild sea and unvisited regions I am about to explore. But to return to dearer considerations. Shall I meet you again, after having traversed immense seas, and returned by the most southern cape of Africa or America? I dare not expect such success, yet I cannot bear to look on the reverse of the picture. Continue for the present to write to me by every opportunity: I may receive your letters on some occasions when I need them most to support my spirits. I love you very tenderly. Remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again.

Your affectionate brother,
Robert Walton

Letter 3

July 7th, 17—.
To Mrs. Saville, England

MY DEAR SISTER,

I write a few lines in haste to say that I am safe—and well advanced on my voyage. This letter will reach England by a merchantman now on its homeward voyage from Archangel; more fortunate than I, who may not see my native land, perhaps, for many years. I am, however, in good spirits: my men are bold and apparently firm of purpose, nor do the floating sheets of ice that continually pass us, indicating the dangers of the region towards which we are advancing, appear to dismay them. We

have already reached a very high latitude; but it is the height of summer, and although not so warm as in England, the southern gales, which blow us speedily towards those shores which I so ardently desire to attain, breathe a degree of renovating warmth which I had not expected.

No incidents have hitherto befallen us that would make a figure in a letter. One or two stiff gales and the springing of a leak are accidents which experienced navigators scarcely remember to record, and I shall be well content if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage.

Adieu, my dear Margaret. Be assured that for my own sake, as well as yours, I will not rashly encounter danger. I will be cool, persevering, and prudent.

But success SHALL crown my endeavours. Wherefore not? Thus far I have gone, tracing a secure way over the pathless seas, the very stars themselves being witnesses and testimonies of my triumph. Why not still proceed over the untamed yet obedient element? What can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man?

My swelling heart involuntarily pours itself out thus. But I must finish. Heaven bless my beloved sister!

15

R.W.

Letter 4

August 5th, 17—.

To Mrs. Saville, England

So strange an accident has happened to us that I cannot forbear recording it, although it is very probable that you will see me before these papers can come into your possession.

Last Monday (July 31st) we were nearly surrounded by ice, which closed in the ship on all sides, scarcely leaving her the sea-room in which she floated. Our situation was somewhat dangerous, especially as we were compassed round by a very thick fog. We accordingly lay to, hoping that some change would take place in the atmosphere and weather.

About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention and diverted our solicitude from our own situation. We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile; a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge and guided the dogs. We watched the rapid progress of the traveller with our telescopes until he was lost among the distant inequalities of the ice. This appearance excited our unqualified wonder. We were, as we believed, many hundred miles from any land; but this apparition seemed to denote that it was not, in reality, so distant as we had supposed. Shut in, however, by ice, it was impossible to follow his track, which we had observed with the greatest attention. About two hours after this occurrence we heard the ground sea, and before night the ice broke and freed our ship. We, however, lay to until the morning, fearing to encounter in the dark those large loose masses which float about after the breaking up of the ice. I profited of this time to rest for a few hours.

In the morning, however, as soon as it was light, I went upon deck and found all the sailors busy on one side of the vessel, apparently talking to someone in the sea. It was, in fact, a sledge, like that we had seen before, which had drifted towards us in the night on a large fragment of ice. Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it whom the sailors were persuading to enter the vessel. He was not, as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but a European. When I appeared on deck the master said, "Here is our captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea."

On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. "Before I come on board your vessel," said he, "will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?"

You may conceive my astonishment on hearing such a question addressed to me from a man on the brink of destruction and to whom I should have supposed that my vessel would have been a resource which he would not have exchanged for the most precious wealth the earth can afford. I replied, however, that we were on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole.

Upon hearing this he appeared satisfied and consented to come on board. Good God! Margaret, if you had seen the man who thus capitulated for his safety, your surprise would have been boundless. His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition. We attempted to carry him into the cabin, but as soon as he had quitted the fresh air he fainted. We accordingly brought him back to the deck and restored him to animation by rubbing him with brandy and forcing him to swallow a small quantity. As soon as he showed signs of life we wrapped him up in blankets and placed him near the chimney of the kitchen stove. By slow degrees he recovered and ate a little soup, which restored him wonderfully.

Two days passed in this manner before he was able to speak, and I often feared that his sufferings had deprived him of understanding. When he had in some measure recovered, I removed him to my own cabin and attended on him as much as my duty would permit. I never saw a more interesting creature: his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness, but there are moments when, if anyone performs an act of kindness towards him or does him any the most trifling service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equalled. But he is generally melancholy and despairing, and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him.

When my guest was a little recovered I had great trouble to keep off the men, who wished to ask him a thousand questions; but I would not allow him to be tormented by their idle curiosity, in a state of body and mind whose restoration evidently depended upon entire repose. Once, however, the lieutenant asked why he had come so far upon the ice in so strange a vehicle.

His countenance instantly assumed an aspect of the deepest gloom, and he replied, "To seek one who fled from me."

25

"And did the man whom you pursued travel in the same fashion?"

"Yes."

"Then I fancy we have seen him, for the day before we picked you up we saw some dogs drawing a sledge, with a man in it, across the ice."

This aroused the stranger's attention, and he asked a multitude of questions concerning the route which the demon, as he called him, had pursued. Soon after, when he was alone with me, he said, "I have, doubtless, excited your curiosity, as well as that of these good people; but you are too considerate to make inquiries."

"Certainly; it would indeed be very impertinent and inhuman in me to trouble you with any inquisitiveness of mine."

30

"And yet you rescued me from a strange and perilous situation; you have benevolently restored me to life."

Soon after this he inquired if I thought that the breaking up of the ice had destroyed the other sledge. I replied that I could not answer with any degree of certainty, for the ice had not broken until near midnight, and the traveller might have arrived at a place of safety before that time; but of this I could not judge. From this time a new spirit of life animated the decaying frame of the stranger. He manifested the greatest eagerness to be upon deck to watch for the sledge which had before appeared; but I have persuaded him to remain in the cabin, for he is far too weak to sustain the rawness of the atmosphere. I have promised that someone should watch for him and give him instant notice if any new object should appear in sight.

Such is my journal of what relates to this strange occurrence up to the present day. The stranger has gradually improved in health but is very silent and appears uneasy when anyone except myself enters his cabin. Yet his manners are so conciliating and gentle that the sailors are all interested in him, although they have had very little communication with him. For my own part, I begin to love him as a brother, and his constant and deep grief fills me with sympathy and compassion. He must have been a noble

creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable. I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart.

I shall continue my journal concerning the stranger at intervals, should I have any fresh incidents to record.

August 13th, 17—.

My affection for my guest increases every day. He excites at once my admiration and my pity to an astonishing degree. How can I see so noble a creature destroyed by misery without feeling the most poignant grief? He is so gentle, yet so wise; his mind is so cultivated, and when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence. He is now much recovered from his illness and is continually on the deck, apparently watching for the sledge that preceded his own. Yet, although unhappy, he is not so utterly occupied by his own misery but that he interests himself deeply in the projects of others. He has frequently conversed with me on mine, which I have communicated to him without disguise. He entered attentively into all my arguments in favour of my eventual success and into every minute detail of the measures I had taken to secure it. I was easily led by the sympathy which he evinced to use the language of my heart, to give utterance to the burning ardour of my soul and to say, with all the fervour that warmed me, how gladly I would sacrifice my fortune, my existence, my every hope, to the furtherance of my enterprise. One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought, for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race. As I spoke, a dark gloom spread over my listener's countenance. At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion; he placed his hands before his eyes, and my voice quivered and failed me as I beheld tears trickle fast from between his fingers; a groan burst from his heaving breast. I paused; at length he spoke, in broken accents:

"Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!"

Such words, you may imagine, strongly excited my curiosity; but the paroxysm of grief that had seized the stranger overcame his weakened powers, and many hours of repose and tranquil conversation were necessary to restore his composure. Having conquered the violence of his feelings, he appeared to despise himself for being the slave of passion; and quelling the dark tyranny of despair, he led me again to converse concerning myself personally. He asked me the history of my earlier years. The tale was quickly told, but it awakened various trains of reflection. I spoke of my desire of finding a friend, of my thirst for a more intimate sympathy with a fellow mind than had ever fallen to my lot, and expressed my conviction that a man could boast of little happiness who did not enjoy this blessing. "I agree with you," replied the stranger; "we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be—do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship. You have hope, and the world before you, and have no cause for despair. But I—I have lost everything and cannot begin life anew."

As he said this his countenance became expressive of a calm, settled grief that touched me to the heart. But he was silent and presently retired to his cabin.

Even broken in spirit as he is, no one can feel more deeply than he does the beauties of nature. The starry sky, the sea, and every sight afforded by these wonderful regions seem still to have the power of elevating his soul from earth. Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery and be overwhelmed by disappointments, yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures.

Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not if you saw him. You have been

tutored and refined by books and retirement from the world, and you are therefore somewhat fastidious; but this only renders you the more fit to appreciate the extraordinary merits of this wonderful man. Sometimes I have endeavoured to discover what quality it is which he possesses that elevates him so immeasurably above any other person I ever knew. I believe it to be an intuitive discernment, a quick but never-failing power of judgment, a penetration into the causes of things, unequalled for clearness and precision; add to this a facility of expression and a voice whose varied intonations are soul-subduing music.

August 19, 17—.

Yesterday the stranger said to me, "You may easily perceive, Captain Walton, that I have suffered great and unparalleled misfortunes. I had determined at one time that the memory of these evils should die with me, but you have won me to alter my determination. You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my disasters will be useful to you; yet, when I reflect that you are pursuing the same course, exposing yourself to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am, I imagine that you may deduce an apt moral from my tale, one that may direct you if you succeed in your undertaking and console you in case of failure. Prepare to hear of occurrences which are usually deemed marvellous. Were we among the tamer scenes of nature I might fear to encounter your unbelief, perhaps your ridicule; but many things will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions which would provoke the laughter of those unacquainted with the ever-varied powers of nature; nor can I doubt but that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed."

You may easily imagine that I was much gratified by the offered communication, yet I could not endure that he should renew his grief by a recital of his misfortunes. I felt the greatest eagerness to hear the promised narrative, partly from curiosity

and partly from a strong desire to ameliorate his fate if it were in my power. I expressed these feelings in my answer.

"I thank you," he replied, "for your sympathy, but it is useless; my fate is nearly fulfilled. I wait but for one event, and then I shall repose in peace. I understand your feeling," continued he, perceiving that I wished to interrupt him; "but you are mistaken, my friend, if thus you will allow me to name you; nothing can alter my destiny; listen to my history, and you will perceive how irrevocably it is determined."

He then told me that he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure. This promise drew from me the warmest thanks. I have resolved every night, when I am not imperatively occupied by my duties, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure; but to me, who know him, and who hear it from his own lips—with what interest and sympathy shall I read it in some future day! Even now, as I commence my task, his full-toned voice swells in my ears; his lustrous eyes dwell on me with all their melancholy sweetness; I see his thin hand raised in animation, while the lineaments of his face are irradiated by the soul within.

Strange and harrowing must be his story, frightful the storm which embraced the gallant vessel on its course and wrecked it—thus!

Chapter 1

I am by birth a Genevese, and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics, and my father had filled several public situations with honour and reputation. He was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business. He passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; a variety of circumstances had prevented his marrying early, nor was it until the decline of life that he became a husband and the father of a family.

As the circumstances of his marriage illustrate his character, I cannot refrain from relating them. One of his most intimate friends was a merchant who, from a flourishing state, fell, through numerous mischances, into poverty. This man, whose name was Beaufort, was of a proud and unbending disposition and could not bear to live in poverty and oblivion in the same country where he had formerly been distinguished for his rank and magnificence. Having paid his debts, therefore, in the most honourable manner, he retreated with his daughter to the town of Lucerne, where he lived unknown and in wretchedness. My father loved Beaufort with the truest friendship and was deeply grieved by his retreat in these unfortunate circumstances. He bitterly deplored the false pride which led his friend to a conduct so little worthy of the affection that united them. He lost no time in endeavouring to seek him out, with the hope of persuading him to begin the world again through his credit and assistance.

Beaufort had taken effectual measures to conceal himself, and it was ten months before my father discovered his abode. Overjoyed at this discovery, he hastened to the house, which was situated in a mean street near the Reuss. But when he entered, misery and despair alone welcomed him. Beaufort had saved but a very small sum of money from the wreck of his fortunes, but it was sufficient to provide him with sustenance for some months, and in the meantime he hoped to procure some respectable employment in a merchant's house. The interval was, consequently, spent in inaction; his grief only became more deep and rankling when he had leisure for reflection, and at length it took so fast hold of his mind that at the end of three months he lay on a bed of sickness, incapable of any exertion.

His daughter attended him with the greatest tenderness, but she saw with despair that their little fund was rapidly decreasing and that there was no other prospect of support. But Caroline Beaufort possessed a mind of an uncommon mould, and her courage rose to support her in her adversity. She procured plain work; she plaited straw and by various means contrived to earn a pittance scarcely sufficient to support life.

Several months passed in this manner. Her father grew worse; her time was more entirely occupied in attending him; her means of subsistence decreased; and in the tenth month her father died in her arms, leaving her an orphan and a beggar. This last blow overcame her, and she knelt by Beaufort's coffin weeping bitterly, when my father entered the chamber. He came like a protecting spirit to the poor girl, who committed herself to his care; and after the interment of his friend he conducted her to Geneva and placed her under the protection of a relation. Two years after this event Caroline became his wife.

There was a considerable difference between the ages of my parents, but this circumstance seemed to unite them only closer in bonds of devoted affection. There was a sense of justice in my father's upright mind which rendered it necessary that he should approve highly to love strongly. Perhaps during former years he had suffered from the late-discovered unworthiness of one beloved and so was disposed to set a greater value on tried worth. There was a show of gratitude and worship in his attachment to my mother, differing wholly from the doting fondness of age, for it was inspired by reverence for her virtues and a desire to be the means of, in some degree, recompensing her for the sorrows she had endured, but which gave inexpressible grace to his behaviour to her. Everything was made to yield to her wishes and her convenience. He strove to shelter her, as a fair exotic is sheltered by the gardener, from every rougher wind and to surround her with all that could tend to excite pleasurable emotion in her soft and benevolent mind. Her health, and even the tranquillity of her hitherto constant spirit, had been shaken by what she had gone through. During the two years that had elapsed previous to their marriage my father had gradually relinquished all his public functions; and immediately after their union they sought the pleasant climate of Italy, and the change of scene and interest attendant on a tour through that land of wonders, as a restorative for her weakened frame.

From Italy they visited Germany and France. I, their eldest child, was born at Naples, and as an infant accompanied them in their rambles. I remained for several years their only child. Much

as they were attached to each other, they seemed to draw inexhaustible stores of affection from a very mine of love to bestow them upon me. My mother's tender caresses and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me are my first recollections. I was their plaything and their idol, and something better—their child, the innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me. With this deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life, added to the active spirit of tenderness that animated both, it may be imagined that while during every hour of my infant life I received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self-control, I was so guided by a silken cord that all seemed but one train of enjoyment to me. For a long time I was their only care. My mother had much desired to have a daughter, but I continued their single offspring. When I was about five years old, while making an excursion beyond the frontiers of Italy, they passed a week on the shores of the Lake of Como. Their benevolent disposition often made them enter the cottages of the poor. This, to my mother, was more than a duty; it was a necessity, a passion—remembering what she had suffered, and how she had been relieved—for her to act in her turn the guardian angel to the afflicted. During one of their walks a poor cot in the foldings of a vale attracted their notice as being singularly disconsolate, while the number of half-clothed children gathered about it spoke of penury in its worst shape. One day, when my father had gone by himself to Milan, my mother, accompanied by me, visited this abode. She found a peasant and his wife, hard working, bent down by care and labour, distributing a scanty meal to five hungry babes. Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above all the rest. She appeared of a different stock. The four others were dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants; this child was thin and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face

so expressive of sensibility and sweetness that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features. The peasant woman, perceiving that my mother fixed eyes of wonder and admiration on this lovely girl, eagerly communicated her history. She was not her child, but the daughter of a Milanese nobleman. Her mother was a German and had died on giving her birth. The infant had been placed with these good people to nurse: they were better off then. They had not been long married, and their eldest child was but just born. The father of their charge was one of those Italians nursed in the memory of the antique glory of Italy—one among the *schiavi ognor frementi*, who exerted himself to obtain the liberty of his country. He became the victim of its weakness. Whether he had died or still lingered in the dungeons of Austria was not known. His property was confiscated; his child became an orphan and a beggar. She continued with her foster parents and bloomed in their rude abode, fairer than a garden rose among dark-leaved brambles. When my father returned from Milan, he found playing with me in the hall of our villa a child fairer than pictured cherub—a creature who seemed to shed radiance from her looks and whose form and motions were lighter than the chamois of the hills. The apparition was soon explained. With his permission my mother prevailed on her rustic guardians to yield their charge to her. They were fond of the sweet orphan. Her presence had seemed a blessing to them, but it would be unfair to her to keep her in poverty and want when Providence afforded her such powerful protection. They consulted their village priest, and the result was that Elizabeth Lavenza became the inmate of my parents' house—my more than sister—the beautiful and adored companion of all my occupations and my pleasures.

Everyone loved Elizabeth. The passionate and almost reverential attachment with which all regarded her became, while I shared it, my pride and my delight. On the evening previous to her being brought to my home, my mother had said playfully, "I have a pretty present for my Victor—tomorrow he shall have it." And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her

promised gift, I, with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally and looked upon Elizabeth as mine—mine to protect, love, and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me—my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only.

Chapter 2

We were brought up together; there was not quite a year difference in our ages. I need not say that we were strangers to any species of disunion or dispute. Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together. Elizabeth was of a calmer and more concentrated disposition; but, with all my ardour, I was capable of a more intense application and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home—the sublime shapes of the mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers—she found ample scope for admiration and delight. While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember.

On the birth of a second son, my junior by seven years, my parents gave up entirely their wandering life and fixed themselves in their native country. We possessed a house in Geneva, and a campagne on Belrive, the eastern shore of the lake, at the distance of rather more than a league from the city. We resided principally in the latter, and the lives of my parents were passed in considerable seclusion. It was my temper to avoid a crowd and to

attach myself fervently to a few. I was indifferent, therefore, to my school-fellows in general; but I united myself in the bonds of the closest friendship to one among them. Henry Clerval was the son of a merchant of Geneva. He was a boy of singular talent and fancy. He loved enterprise, hardship, and even danger for its own sake. He was deeply read in books of chivalry and romance. He composed heroic songs and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. He tried to make us act plays and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes of Roncesvalles, of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous train who shed their blood to redeem the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels.

No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself. My parents were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence. We felt that they were not the tyrants to rule our lot according to their caprice, but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed. When I mingled with other families I distinctly discerned how peculiarly fortunate my lot was, and gratitude assisted the development of filial love.

55

My temper was sometimes violent, and my passions vehement; but by some law in my temperature they were turned not towards childish pursuits but to an eager desire to learn, and not to learn all things indiscriminately. I confess that neither the structure of languages, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states possessed attractions for me. It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world.

Meanwhile Clerval occupied himself, so to speak, with the moral relations of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species. The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp in our peaceful home. Her sympathy was ours; her

smile, her soft voice, the sweet glance of her celestial eyes, were ever there to bless and animate us. She was the living spirit of love to soften and attract; I might have become sullen in my study, rough through the ardour of my nature, but that she was there to subdue me to a semblance of her own gentleness. And Clerval—could aught ill entrench on the noble spirit of Clerval? Yet he might not have been so perfectly humane, so thoughtful in his generosity, so full of kindness and tenderness amidst his passion for adventurous exploit, had she not unfolded to him the real loveliness of beneficence and made the doing good the end and aim of his soaring ambition.

I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood, before misfortune had tainted my mind and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self. Besides, in drawing the picture of my early days, I also record those events which led, by insensible steps, to my after tale of misery, for when I would account to myself for the birth of that passion which afterwards ruled my destiny I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys. Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire, therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science. When I was thirteen years of age we all went on a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon; the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa. I opened it with apathy; the theory which he attempts to demonstrate and the wonderful facts which he relates soon changed this feeling into enthusiasm. A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind, and bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, "Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash."

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded and that a modern system of science had been

introduced which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical, under such circumstances I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside and have contented my imagination, warmed as it was, by returning with greater ardour to my former studies. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents, and I continued to read with the greatest avidity. When I returned home my first care was to procure the whole works of this author, and afterwards of Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus. I read and studied the wild fancies of these writers with delight; they appeared to me treasures known to few besides myself. I have described myself as always having been imbued with a fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature. In spite of the intense labour and wonderful discoveries of modern philosophers, I always came from my studies discontented and unsatisfied. Sir Isaac Newton is said to have avowed that he felt like a child picking up shells beside the great and unexplored ocean of truth. Those of his successors in each branch of natural philosophy with whom I was acquainted appeared even to my boy's apprehensions as tyros engaged in the same pursuit.

The untaught peasant beheld the elements around him and was acquainted with their practical uses. The most learned philosopher knew little more. He had partially unveiled the face of Nature, but her immortal lineaments were still a wonder and a mystery. He might dissect, anatomize, and give names; but, not to speak of a final cause, causes in their secondary and tertiary grades were utterly unknown to him. I had gazed upon the fortifications and impediments that seemed to keep human beings from entering the citadel of nature, and rashly and ignorantly I had repined.

But here were books, and here were men who had penetrated deeper and knew more. I took their word for all that they averred, and I became their disciple. It may appear strange that such should arise in the eighteenth century; but while I followed the routine of education in the schools of Geneva, I was, to a great

degree, self-taught with regard to my favourite studies. My father was not scientific, and I was left to struggle with a child's blindness, added to a student's thirst for knowledge. Under the guidance of my new preceptors I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life; but the latter soon obtained my undivided attention. Wealth was an inferior object, but what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death! Nor were these my only visions. The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfilment of which I most eagerly sought; and if my incantations were always unsuccessful, I attributed the failure rather to my own inexperience and mistake than to a want of skill or fidelity in my instructors. And thus for a time I was occupied by exploded systems, mingling, like an unadept, a thousand contradictory theories and floundering desperately in a very slough of multifarious knowledge, guided by an ardent imagination and childish reasoning, till an accident again changed the current of my ideas. When I was about fifteen years old we had retired to our house near Belrive, when we witnessed a most violent and terrible thunderstorm. It advanced from behind the mountains of Jura, and the thunder burst at once with frightful loudness from various quarters of the heavens. I remained, while the storm lasted, watching its progress with curiosity and delight. As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. When we visited it the next morning, we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed.

Before this I was not unacquainted with the more obvious laws of electricity. On this occasion a man of great research in natural philosophy was with us, and excited by this catastrophe, he entered on the explanation of a theory which he had formed on

the subject of electricity and galvanism, which was at once new and astonishing to me. All that he said threw greatly into the shade Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paracelsus, the lords of my imagination; but by some fatality the overthrow of these men disinclined me to pursue my accustomed studies. It seemed to me as if nothing would or could ever be known. All that had so long engaged my attention suddenly grew despicable. By one of those caprices of the mind which we are perhaps most subject to in early youth, I at once gave up my former occupations, set down natural history and all its progeny as a deformed and abortive creation, and entertained the greatest disdain for a would-be science which could never even step within the threshold of real knowledge. In this mood of mind I betook myself to the mathematics and the branches of study appertaining to that science as being built upon secure foundations, and so worthy of my consideration.

Thus strangely are our souls constructed, and by such slight ligaments are we bound to prosperity or ruin. When I look back, it seems to me as if this almost miraculous change of inclination and will was the immediate suggestion of the guardian angel of my life—the last effort made by the spirit of preservation to avert the storm that was even then hanging in the stars and ready to envelop me. Her victory was announced by an unusual tranquillity and gladness of soul which followed the relinquishing of my ancient and latterly tormenting studies. It was thus that I was to be taught to associate evil with their prosecution, happiness with their disregard.

It was a strong effort of the spirit of good, but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.

Chapter 3

When I had attained the age of seventeen my parents resolved that I should become a student at the university of Ingolstadt. I had hitherto attended the schools of Geneva, but my father thought it necessary for the completion of my education that I

should be made acquainted with other customs than those of my native country. My departure was therefore fixed at an early date, but before the day resolved upon could arrive, the first misfortune of my life occurred—an omen, as it were, of my future misery. Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; her illness was severe, and she was in the greatest danger. During her illness many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her. She had at first yielded to our entreaties, but when she heard that the life of her favourite was menaced, she could no longer control her anxiety. She attended her sickbed; her watchful attentions triumphed over the malignity of the distemper—Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal to her preserver. On the third day my mother sickened; her fever was accompanied by the most alarming symptoms, and the looks of her medical attendants prognosticated the worst event. On her deathbed the fortitude and benignity of this best of women did not desert her. She joined the hands of Elizabeth and myself. "My children," she said, "my firmest hopes of future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union. This expectation will now be the consolation of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to my younger children. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world."

She died calmly, and her countenance expressed affection even in death. I need not describe the feelings of those whose dearest ties are rent by that most irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and the despair that is exhibited on the countenance. It is so long before the mind can persuade itself that she whom we saw every day and whose very existence appeared a part of our own can have departed forever—that the brightness of a beloved eye can have been extinguished and the sound of a voice so familiar and dear to the ear can be hushed, never more to be heard. These are the reflections of the first days; but when the lapse of time proves the reality of the evil, then the actual bitterness of grief commences. Yet from whom has not that rude

hand rent away some dear connection? And why should I describe a sorrow which all have felt, and must feel? The time at length arrives when grief is rather an indulgence than a necessity; and the smile that plays upon the lips, although it may be deemed a sacrilege, is not banished. My mother was dead, but we had still duties which we ought to perform; we must continue our course with the rest and learn to think ourselves fortunate whilst one remains whom the spoiler has not seized.

My departure for Ingolstadt, which had been deferred by these events, was now again determined upon. I obtained from my father a respite of some weeks. It appeared to me sacrilege so soon to leave the repose, akin to death, of the house of mourning and to rush into the thick of life. I was new to sorrow, but it did not the less alarm me. I was unwilling to quit the sight of those that remained to me, and above all, I desired to see my sweet Elizabeth in some degree consoled.

She indeed veiled her grief and strove to act the comforter to us all. She looked steadily on life and assumed its duties with courage and zeal. She devoted herself to those whom she had been taught to call her uncle and cousins. Never was she so enchanting as at this time, when she recalled the sunshine of her smiles and spent them upon us. She forgot even her own regret in her endeavours to make us forget.

The day of my departure at length arrived. Clerval spent the last evening with us. He had endeavoured to persuade his father to permit him to accompany me and to become my fellow student, but in vain. His father was a narrow-minded trader and saw idleness and ruin in the aspirations and ambition of his son. Henry deeply felt the misfortune of being debarred from a liberal education. He said little, but when he spoke I read in his kindling eye and in his animated glance a restrained but firm resolve not to be chained to the miserable details of commerce.

We sat late. We could not tear ourselves away from each other nor persuade ourselves to say the word "Farewell!" It was said, and we retired under the pretence of seeking repose, each fancying that the other was deceived; but when at morning's dawn I descended to the carriage which was to convey me away, they

were all there—my father again to bless me, Clerval to press my hand once more, my Elizabeth to renew her entreaties that I would write often and to bestow the last feminine attentions on her playmate and friend.

I threw myself into the chaise that was to convey me away and indulged in the most melancholy reflections. I, who had ever been surrounded by amiable companions, continually engaged in endeavouring to bestow mutual pleasure—I was now alone. In the university whither I was going I must form my own friends and be my own protector. My life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic, and this had given me invincible repugnance to new countenances. I loved my brothers, Elizabeth, and Clerval; these were "old familiar faces," but I believed myself totally unfitted for the company of strangers. Such were my reflections as I commenced my journey; but as I proceeded, my spirits and hopes rose. I ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge. I had often, when at home, thought it hard to remain during my youth cooped up in one place and had longed to enter the world and take my station among other human beings. Now my desires were complied with, and it would, indeed, have been folly to repent.

I had sufficient leisure for these and many other reflections during my journey to Ingolstadt, which was long and fatiguing. At length the high white steeple of the town met my eyes. I alighted and was conducted to my solitary apartment to spend the evening as I pleased.

The next morning I delivered my letters of introduction and paid a visit to some of the principal professors. Chance—or rather the evil influence, the Angel of Destruction, which asserted omnipotent sway over me from the moment I turned my reluctant steps from my father's door—led me first to M. Krempe, professor of natural philosophy. He was an uncouth man, but deeply imbued in the secrets of his science. He asked me several questions concerning my progress in the different branches of science appertaining to natural philosophy. I replied carelessly, and partly in contempt, mentioned the names of my alchemists as

the principal authors I had studied. The professor stared. "Have you," he said, "really spent your time in studying such nonsense?"

I replied in the affirmative. "Every minute," continued M. Krempe with warmth, "every instant that you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost. You have burdened your memory with exploded systems and useless names. Good God! In what desert land have you lived, where no one was kind enough to inform you that these fancies which you have so greedily imbibed are a thousand years old and as musty as they are ancient? I little expected, in this enlightened and scientific age, to find a disciple of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus. My dear sir, you must begin your studies entirely anew."

So saying, he stepped aside and wrote down a list of several books treating of natural philosophy which he desired me to procure, and dismissed me after mentioning that in the beginning of the following week he intended to commence a course of lectures upon natural philosophy in its general relations, and that M. Waldman, a fellow professor, would lecture upon chemistry the alternate days that he omitted.

I returned home not disappointed, for I have said that I had long considered those authors useless whom the professor reprobated; but I returned not at all the more inclined to recur to these studies in any shape. M. Krempe was a little squat man with a gruff voice and a repulsive countenance; the teacher, therefore, did not prepossess me in favour of his pursuits. In rather a too philosophical and connected a strain, perhaps, I have given an account of the conclusions I had come to concerning them in my early years. As a child I had not been content with the results promised by the modern professors of natural science. With a confusion of ideas only to be accounted for by my extreme youth and my want of a guide on such matters, I had retraced the steps of knowledge along the paths of time and exchanged the discoveries of recent inquirers for the dreams of forgotten alchemists. Besides, I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand; but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the

inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth.

Such were my reflections during the first two or three days of my residence at Ingolstadt, which were chiefly spent in becoming acquainted with the localities and the principal residents in my new abode. But as the ensuing week commenced, I thought of the information which M. Krempe had given me concerning the lectures. And although I could not consent to go and hear that little conceited fellow deliver sentences out of a pulpit, I recollected what he had said of M. Waldman, whom I had never seen, as he had hitherto been out of town.

Partly from curiosity and partly from idleness, I went into the lecturing room, which M. Waldman entered shortly after. This professor was very unlike his colleague. He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of the greatest benevolence; a few grey hairs covered his temples, but those at the back of his head were nearly black. His person was short but remarkably erect and his voice the sweetest I had ever heard. He began his lecture by a recapitulation of the history of chemistry and the various improvements made by different men of learning, pronouncing with fervour the names of the most distinguished discoverers. He then took a cursory view of the present state of the science and explained many of its elementary terms. After having made a few preparatory experiments, he concluded with a panegyric upon modern chemistry, the terms of which I shall never forget: "The ancient teachers of this science," said he, "promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; they know that metals cannot be transmuted and that the elixir of life is a chimera but these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and

almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows."

Such were the professor's words—rather let me say such the words of the fate—enounced to destroy me. As he went on I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being; chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein—more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.

I closed not my eyes that night. My internal being was in a state of insurrection and turmoil; I felt that order would thence arise, but I had no power to produce it. By degrees, after the morning's dawn, sleep came. I awoke, and my yesternight's thoughts were as a dream. There only remained a resolution to return to my ancient studies and to devote myself to a science for which I believed myself to possess a natural talent. On the same day I paid M. Waldman a visit. His manners in private were even more mild and attractive than in public, for there was a certain dignity in his mien during his lecture which in his own house was replaced by the greatest affability and kindness. I gave him pretty nearly the same account of my former pursuits as I had given to his fellow professor. He heard with attention the little narration concerning my studies and smiled at the names of Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, but without the contempt that M. Krempe had exhibited. He said that "These were men to whose indefatigable zeal modern philosophers were indebted for most of the foundations of their knowledge. They had left to us, as an easier task, to give new names and arrange in connected classifications the facts which they in a great degree had been the instruments of bringing to light. The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind." I listened to his statement, which was delivered without any presumption or

affectation, and then added that his lecture had removed my prejudices against modern chemists; I expressed myself in measured terms, with the modesty and deference due from a youth to his instructor, without letting escape (inexperience in life would have made me ashamed) any of the enthusiasm which stimulated my intended labours. I requested his advice concerning the books I ought to procure.

"I am happy," said M. Waldman, "to have gained a disciple; and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success. Chemistry is that branch of natural philosophy in which the greatest improvements have been and may be made; it is on that account that I have made it my peculiar study; but at the same time, I have not neglected the other branches of science. A man would make but a very sorry chemist if he attended to that department of human knowledge alone. If your wish is to become really a man of science and not merely a petty experimentalist, I should advise you to apply to every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics." He then took me into his laboratory and explained to me the uses of his various machines, instructing me as to what I ought to procure and promising me the use of his own when I should have advanced far enough in the science not to derange their mechanism. He also gave me the list of books which I had requested, and I took my leave.

Thus ended a day memorable to me; it decided my future destiny.

Chapter 4

From this day natural philosophy, and particularly chemistry, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, became nearly my sole occupation. I read with ardour those works, so full of genius and discrimination, which modern inquirers have written on these subjects. I attended the lectures and cultivated the acquaintance of the men of science of the university, and I found even in M. Krempe a great deal of sound sense and real information, combined, it is true, with a repulsive physiognomy and manners, but not on that account the less valuable. In M. Waldman I found

a true friend. His gentleness was never tinged by dogmatism, and his instructions were given with an air of frankness and good nature that banished every idea of pedantry. In a thousand ways he smoothed for me the path of knowledge and made the most abstruse inquiries clear and facile to my apprehension. My application was at first fluctuating and uncertain; it gained strength as I proceeded and soon became so ardent and eager that the stars often disappeared in the light of morning whilst I was yet engaged in my laboratory.

As I applied so closely, it may be easily conceived that my progress was rapid. My ardour was indeed the astonishment of the students, and my proficiency that of the masters. Professor Krempe often asked me, with a sly smile, how Cornelius Agrippa went on, whilst M. Waldman expressed the most heartfelt exultation in my progress. Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science. In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder. A mind of moderate capacity which closely pursues one study must infallibly arrive at great proficiency in that study; and I, who continually sought the attainment of one object of pursuit and was solely wrapped up in this, improved so rapidly that at the end of two years I made some discoveries in the improvement of some chemical instruments, which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university. When I had arrived at this point and had become as well acquainted with the theory and practice of natural philosophy as depended on the lessons of any of the professors at Ingolstadt, my residence there being no longer conducive to my improvements, I thought of returning to my friends and my native town, when an incident happened that protracted my stay.

One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the

principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries. I revolved these circumstances in my mind and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology. Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. I paused, examining and analysing all the minutiae of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me—a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius who had directed their inquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret.

Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the

stages of the discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture. After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires was the most gratifying consummation of my toils. But this discovery was so great and overwhelming that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world was now within my grasp. Not that, like a magic scene, it all opened upon me at once: the information I had obtained was of a nature rather to direct my endeavours so soon as I should point them towards the object of my search than to exhibit that object already accomplished. I was like the Arabian who had been buried with the dead and found a passage to life, aided only by one glimmering and seemingly ineffectual light.

I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted

by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man. The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking, but I doubted not that I should ultimately succeed. I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses; my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect, yet when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. Nor could I consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as any argument of its impracticability. It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being. As the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large. After having formed this determination and having spent some months in successfully collecting and arranging my materials, I began.

No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unrelenting ardour. My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness,

I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.

The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage, but my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. And the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them, and I well remembered the words of my father: "I know that while you are pleased with yourself you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected."

I knew well therefore what would be my father's feelings, but I could not tear my thoughts from my employment, loathsome in itself, but which had taken an irresistible hold of my imagination. I wished, as it were, to procrastinate all that related to my feelings

of affection until the great object, which swallowed up every habit of my nature, should be completed.

I then thought that my father would be unjust if he ascribed my neglect to vice or faultiness on my part, but I am now convinced that he was justified in conceiving that I should not be altogether free from blame. A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix, then that study is certainly unlawful, that is to say, not befitting the human mind. If this rule were always observed; if no man allowed any pursuit whatsoever to interfere with the tranquillity of his domestic affections, Greece had not been enslaved, Caesar would have spared his country, America would have been discovered more gradually, and the empires of Mexico and Peru had not been destroyed.

But I forget that I am moralizing in the most interesting part of my tale, and your looks remind me to proceed. My father made no reproach in his letters and only took notice of my silence by inquiring into my occupations more particularly than before. Winter, spring, and summer passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves—sights which before always yielded me supreme delight—so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. The leaves of that year had withered before my work drew near to a close, and now every day showed me more plainly how well I had succeeded. But my enthusiasm was checked by my anxiety, and I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a most painful degree; the fall of a leaf startled me, and I shunned my fellow creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime. Sometimes I grew alarmed at the wreck I perceived that I had become; the energy of my purpose alone sustained me: my labours would soon end, and I believed that exercise and amusement would then drive

away incipient disease; and I promised myself both of these when my creation should be complete.

Chapter 5

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams.

I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, its white

steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring by bodily exercise to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the streets without any clear conception of where I was or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear, and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:

Like one who, on a lonely road,
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

—COLERIDGE'S "ANCIENT MARINER"

Continuing thus, I came at length opposite to the inn at which the various diligences and carriages usually stopped. Here I paused, I knew not why; but I remained some minutes with my eyes fixed on a coach that was coming towards me from the other end of the street. As it drew nearer I observed that it was the Swiss diligence; it stopped just where I was standing, and on the door being opened, I perceived Henry Clerval, who, on seeing me, instantly sprung out. "My dear Frankenstein," exclaimed he, "how glad I am to see you! How fortunate that you should be here at the very moment of my alighting!"

Nothing could equal my delight on seeing Clerval; his presence brought back to my thoughts my father, Elizabeth, and all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection. I grasped his hand, and in a moment forgot my horror and misfortune; I felt suddenly, and for the first time during many months, calm and

serene joy. I welcomed my friend, therefore, in the most cordial manner, and we walked towards my college. Clerval continued talking for some time about our mutual friends and his own good fortune in being permitted to come to Ingolstadt. "You may easily believe," said he, "how great was the difficulty to persuade my father that all necessary knowledge was not comprised in the noble art of book-keeping; and, indeed, I believe I left him incredulous to the last, for his constant answer to my unwearied entreaties was the same as that of the Dutch schoolmaster in *The Vicar of Wakefield*: 'I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek, I eat heartily without Greek.' But his affection for me at length overcame his dislike of learning, and he has permitted me to undertake a voyage of discovery to the land of knowledge."

"It gives me the greatest delight to see you; but tell me how you left my father, brothers, and Elizabeth."

105

"Very well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that they hear from you so seldom. By the by, I mean to lecture you a little upon their account myself. But, my dear Frankenstein," continued he, stopping short and gazing full in my face, "I did not before remark how very ill you appear; so thin and pale; you look as if you had been watching for several nights."

"You have guessed right; I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest, as you see; but I hope, I sincerely hope, that all these employments are now at an end and that I am at length free."

I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster, but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself. I then paused, and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the

other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty, and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me, but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy and ran down to Clerval.

We ascended into my room, and the servant presently brought breakfast; but I was unable to contain myself. It was not joy only that possessed me; I felt my flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and my pulse beat rapidly. I was unable to remain for a single instant in the same place; I jumped over the chairs, clapped my hands, and laughed aloud. Clerval at first attributed my unusual spirits to joy on his arrival, but when he observed me more attentively, he saw a wildness in my eyes for which he could not account, and my loud, unrestrained, heartless laughter frightened and astonished him.

"My dear Victor," cried he, "what, for God's sake, is the matter? Do not laugh in that manner. How ill you are! What is the cause of all this?"

110

"Do not ask me," cried I, putting my hands before my eyes, for I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room; "HE can tell. Oh, save me! Save me!" I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously and fell down in a fit.

Poor Clerval! What must have been his feelings? A meeting, which he anticipated with such joy, so strangely turned to bitterness. But I was not the witness of his grief, for I was lifeless and did not recover my senses for a long, long time.

This was the commencement of a nervous fever which confined me for several months. During all that time Henry was my only nurse. I afterwards learned that, knowing my father's advanced age and unfitness for so long a journey, and how wretched my sickness would make Elizabeth, he spared them this grief by concealing the extent of my disorder. He knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself; and, firm in the hope he felt of my recovery, he did not doubt that, instead of doing harm, he performed the kindest action that he could towards them.

But I was in reality very ill, and surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life. The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was forever before my eyes, and I raved incessantly concerning him. Doubtless my words surprised Henry; he at first believed them to be the wanderings of my disturbed imagination, but the pertinacity with which I continually recurred to the same subject persuaded him that my disorder indeed owed its origin to some uncommon and terrible event.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring, and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence. I felt also sentiments of joy and affection revive in my bosom; my gloom disappeared, and in a short time I became as cheerful as before I was attacked by the fatal passion.

115

"Dearest Clerval," exclaimed I, "how kind, how very good you are to me. This whole winter, instead of being spent in study, as you promised yourself, has been consumed in my sick room. How shall I ever repay you? I feel the greatest remorse for the disappointment of which I have been the occasion, but you will forgive me."

"You will repay me entirely if you do not discompose yourself, but get well as fast as you can; and since you appear in such good spirits, I may speak to you on one subject, may I not?"

I trembled. One subject! What could it be? Could he allude to an object on whom I dared not even think? "Compose yourself," said Clerval, who observed my change of colour, "I will not mention it if it agitates you; but your father and cousin would be very happy if they received a letter from you in your own handwriting. They hardly know how ill you have been and are uneasy at your long silence."

"Is that all, my dear Henry? How could you suppose that my first thought would not fly towards those dear, dear friends whom I love and who are so deserving of my love?"

"If this is your present temper, my friend, you will perhaps be glad to see a letter that has been lying here some days for you; it is from your cousin, I believe."

120

Chapter 6

Clerval then put the following letter into my hands. It was from my own Elizabeth:

My dearest Cousin,

You have been ill, very ill, and even the constant letters of dear kind Henry are not sufficient to reassure me on your account. You are forbidden to write—to hold a pen; yet one word from you, dear Victor, is necessary to calm our apprehensions. For a long time I have thought that each post would bring this line, and my persuasions have restrained my uncle from undertaking a journey to Ingolstadt. I have prevented his encountering the inconveniences and perhaps dangers of so long a journey, yet how often have I regretted not being able to perform it myself! I figure to myself that the task of attending on your sickbed has devolved on some mercenary old nurse, who could never guess your wishes nor minister to them with the care and affection of your poor cousin. Yet that is over now: Clerval writes that indeed you are getting better. I eagerly hope that you will confirm this intelligence soon in your own handwriting.

Get well—and return to us. You will find a happy, cheerful home and friends who love you dearly. Your father's health is vigorous, and he asks but to see you, but to be assured that you are well; and not a care will ever cloud his benevolent countenance. How pleased you would be to remark the improvement of our Ernest! He is now sixteen and full of activity and spirit. He is desirous to be a true Swiss and to enter into foreign service, but we cannot part with him, at least until his elder brother returns to us. My uncle is not pleased with the idea of a military career in a distant country, but Ernest never had your powers of application. He looks upon study as an odious fetter; his time is spent in the open air, climbing the hills or rowing on the lake. I fear that he will become an idler unless we yield the point and permit him to enter on the profession which he has selected.

Little alteration, except the growth of our dear children, has taken place since you left us. The blue lake and snow-clad mountains—they never change; and I think our placid home and our contented hearts are regulated by the same immutable laws. My trifling occupations take up my time and amuse me, and I am rewarded for any exertions by seeing none but happy, kind faces around me. Since you left us, but one change has taken place in our little household. Do you remember on what occasion Justine Moritz entered our family? Probably you do not; I will relate her history, therefore in a few words. Madame Moritz, her mother, was a

widow with four children, of whom Justine was the third. This girl had always been the favourite of her father, but through a strange perversity, her mother could not endure her, and after the death of M. Moritz, treated her very ill. My aunt observed this, and when Justine was twelve years of age, prevailed on her mother to allow her to live at our house. The republican institutions of our country have produced simpler and happier manners than those which prevail in the great monarchies that surround it. Hence there is less distinction between the several classes of its inhabitants; and the lower orders, being neither so poor nor so despised, their manners are more refined and moral. A servant in Geneva does not mean the same thing as a servant in France and England. Justine, thus received in our family, learned the duties of a servant, a condition which, in our fortunate country, does not include the idea of ignorance and a sacrifice of the dignity of a human being.

Justine, you may remember, was a great favourite of yours; and I recollect you once remarked that if you were in an ill humour, one glance from Justine could dissipate it, for the same reason that Ariosto gives concerning the beauty of Angelica—she looked so frank-hearted and happy. My aunt conceived a great attachment for her, by which she was induced to give her an education superior to that which she had at first intended. This benefit was fully repaid; Justine was the most grateful little creature in the world: I do not mean that she made any professions I never heard one pass her lips, but you could see by her eyes that she almost adored her protectress. Although her disposition was gay and in many respects inconsiderate, yet she paid the greatest attention to every gesture of my aunt. She thought her the model of all excellence and endeavoured to imitate her phraseology and manners, so that even now she often reminds me of her.

When my dearest aunt died every one was too much occupied in their own grief to notice poor Justine, who had attended her during her illness with the most anxious affection. Poor Justine was very ill; but other trials were reserved for her.

One by one, her brothers and sister died; and her mother, with the exception of her neglected daughter, was left childless. The conscience of the woman was troubled; she began to think that the deaths of her favourites was a judgement from heaven to chastise her partiality. She was a Roman Catholic; and I believe her confessor confirmed the idea which she had conceived. Accordingly, a few months after your departure for Ingolstadt, Justine was called home by her repentant mother. Poor girl! She wept when she quitted our house; she was much altered since the death of my aunt; grief had given softness and a winning mildness to her manners, which had before been remarkable for vivacity. Nor was her residence at her mother's house of a nature to restore her gaiety. The poor woman was very vacillating in her repentance. She sometimes begged Justine to forgive her unkindness, but much oftener accused her of having caused the deaths of her brothers and sister. Perpetual fretting at length threw Madame Moritz into a decline, which at first increased her irritability, but she is now at peace for ever. She died on the first approach of cold weather, at the beginning of this last winter. Justine has just returned to us; and I assure you I love her tenderly. She is very clever and gentle, and extremely pretty; as I mentioned before, her mien and her expression continually remind me of my dear aunt.

I must say also a few words to you, my dear cousin, of little darling William. I

wish you could see him; he is very tall of his age, with sweet laughing blue eyes, dark eyelashes, and curling hair. When he smiles, two little dimples appear on each cheek, which are rosy with health. He has already had one or two little WIVES, but Louisa Biron is his favourite, a pretty little girl of five years of age.

Now, dear Victor, I dare say you wish to be indulged in a little gossip concerning the good people of Geneva. The pretty Miss Mansfield has already received the congratulatory visits on her approaching marriage with a young Englishman, John Melbourne, Esq. Her ugly sister, Manon, married M. Duvillard, the rich banker, last autumn. Your favourite schoolfellow, Louis Manoir, has suffered several misfortunes since the departure of Clerval from Geneva. But he has already recovered his spirits, and is reported to be on the point of marrying a lively pretty Frenchwoman, Madame Tavernier. She is a widow, and much older than Manoir; but she is very much admired, and a favourite with everybody.

I have written myself into better spirits, dear cousin; but my anxiety returns upon me as I conclude. Write, dearest Victor,—one line—one word will be a blessing to us. Ten thousand thanks to Henry for his kindness, his affection, and his many letters; we are sincerely grateful. Adieu! my cousin; take care of your self; and, I entreat you, write!

Elizabeth Lavenza.
Geneva, March 18, 17—.

"Dear, dear Elizabeth!" I exclaimed, when I had read her letter: "I will write instantly and relieve them from the anxiety they must feel." I wrote, and this exertion greatly fatigued me; but my convalescence had commenced, and proceeded regularly. In another fortnight I was able to leave my chamber.

One of my first duties on my recovery was to introduce Clerval to the several professors of the university. In doing this, I underwent a kind of rough usage, ill befitting the wounds that my mind had sustained. Ever since the fatal night, the end of my labours, and the beginning of my misfortunes, I had conceived a violent antipathy even to the name of natural philosophy. When I was otherwise quite restored to health, the sight of a chemical instrument would renew all the agony of my nervous symptoms. Henry saw this, and had removed all my apparatus from my view. He had also changed my apartment; for he perceived that I had acquired a dislike for the room which had previously been my laboratory. But these cares of Clerval were made of no avail when I visited the professors. M. Waldman inflicted torture when he praised, with kindness and warmth, the astonishing progress I had

made in the sciences. He soon perceived that I disliked the subject; but not guessing the real cause, he attributed my feelings to modesty, and changed the subject from my improvement, to the science itself, with a desire, as I evidently saw, of drawing me out. What could I do? He meant to please, and he tormented me. I felt as if he had placed carefully, one by one, in my view those instruments which were to be afterwards used in putting me to a slow and cruel death. I writhed under his words, yet dared not exhibit the pain I felt. Clerval, whose eyes and feelings were always quick in discerning the sensations of others, declined the subject, alleging, in excuse, his total ignorance; and the conversation took a more general turn. I thanked my friend from my heart, but I did not speak. I saw plainly that he was surprised, but he never attempted to draw my secret from me; and although I loved him with a mixture of affection and reverence that knew no bounds, yet I could never persuade myself to confide in him that event which was so often present to my recollection, but which I feared the detail to another would only impress more deeply.

M. Krempe was not equally docile; and in my condition at that time, of almost insupportable sensitiveness, his harsh blunt encomiums gave me even more pain than the benevolent approbation of M. Waldman. "D—n the fellow!" cried he; "why, M. Clerval, I assure you he has outstript us all. Ay, stare if you please; but it is nevertheless true. A youngster who, but a few years ago, believed in Cornelius Agrippa as firmly as in the gospel, has now set himself at the head of the university; and if he is not soon pulled down, we shall all be out of countenance.—Ay, ay," continued he, observing my face expressive of suffering, "M. Frankenstein is modest; an excellent quality in a young man. Young men should be diffident of themselves, you know, M. Clerval: I was myself when young; but that wears out in a very short time."

M. Krempe had now commenced an eulogy on himself, which happily turned the conversation from a subject that was so annoying to me.

Clerval had never sympathized in my tastes for natural science; and his literary pursuits differed wholly from those

which had occupied me. He came to the university with the design of making himself complete master of the oriental languages, and thus he should open a field for the plan of life he had marked out for himself. Resolved to pursue no inglorious career, he turned his eyes toward the East, as affording scope for his spirit of enterprise. The Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit languages engaged his attention, and I was easily induced to enter on the same studies. Idleness had ever been irksome to me, and now that I wished to fly from reflection, and hated my former studies, I felt great relief in being the fellow-pupil with my friend, and found not only instruction but consolation in the works of the orientalists. I did not, like him, attempt a critical knowledge of their dialects, for I did not contemplate making any other use of them than temporary amusement. I read merely to understand their meaning, and they well repaid my labours. Their melancholy is soothing, and their joy elevating, to a degree I never experienced in studying the authors of any other country. When you read their writings, life appears to consist in a warm sun and a garden of roses,—in the smiles and frowns of a fair enemy, and the fire that consumes your own heart. How different from the manly and heroical poetry of Greece and Rome!

Summer passed away in these occupations, and my return to Geneva was fixed for the latter end of autumn; but being delayed by several accidents, winter and snow arrived, the roads were deemed impassable, and my journey was retarded until the ensuing spring. I felt this delay very bitterly; for I longed to see my native town and my beloved friends. My return had only been delayed so long, from an unwillingness to leave Clerval in a strange place, before he had become acquainted with any of its inhabitants. The winter, however, was spent cheerfully; and although the spring was uncommonly late, when it came its beauty compensated for its dilatoriness.

The month of May had already commenced, and I expected the letter daily which was to fix the date of my departure, when Henry proposed a pedestrian tour in the environs of Ingolstadt, that I might bid a personal farewell to the country I had so long inhabited. I acceded with pleasure to this proposition: I was fond

of exercise, and Clerval had always been my favourite companion in the ramble of this nature that I had taken among the scenes of my native country.

We passed a fortnight in these perambulations: my health and spirits had long been restored, and they gained additional strength from the salubrious air I breathed, the natural incidents of our progress, and the conversation of my friend. Study had before secluded me from the intercourse of my fellow-creatures, and rendered me unsocial; but Clerval called forth the better feelings of my heart; he again taught me to love the aspect of nature, and the cheerful faces of children. Excellent friend! how sincerely you did love me, and endeavour to elevate my mind until it was on a level with your own. A selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me, until your gentleness and affection warmed and opened my senses; I became the same happy creature who, a few years ago, loved and beloved by all, had no sorrow or care. When happy, inanimate nature had the power of bestowing on me the most delightful sensations. A serene sky and verdant fields filled me with ecstasy. The present season was indeed divine; the flowers of spring bloomed in the hedges, while those of summer were already in bud. I was undisturbed by thoughts which during the preceding year had pressed upon me, notwithstanding my endeavours to throw them off, with an invincible burden.

Henry rejoiced in my gaiety, and sincerely sympathised in my feelings: he exerted himself to amuse me, while he expressed the sensations that filled his soul. The resources of his mind on this occasion were truly astonishing: his conversation was full of imagination; and very often, in imitation of the Persian and Arabic writers, he invented tales of wonderful fancy and passion. At other times he repeated my favourite poems, or drew me out into arguments, which he supported with great ingenuity. We returned to our college on a Sunday afternoon: the peasants were dancing, and every one we met appeared gay and happy. My own spirits were high, and I bounded along with feelings of unbridled joy and hilarity.

130

On my return, I found the following letter from my father:—

My dear Victor,

You have probably waited impatiently for a letter to fix the date of your return to us; and I was at first tempted to write only a few lines, merely mentioning the day on which I should expect you. But that would be a cruel kindness, and I dare not do it. What would be your surprise, my son, when you expected a happy and glad welcome, to behold, on the contrary, tears and wretchedness? And how, Victor, can I relate our misfortune? Absence cannot have rendered you callous to our joys and griefs; and how shall I inflict pain on my long absent son? I wish to prepare you for the woeful news, but I know it is impossible; even now your eye skims over the page to seek the words which are to convey to you the horrible tidings.

William is dead!—that sweet child, whose smiles delighted and warmed my heart, who was so gentle, yet so gay! Victor, he is murdered!

I will not attempt to console you; but will simply relate the circumstances of the transaction.

Last Thursday (May 7th), I, my niece, and your two brothers, went to walk in Plainpalais. The evening was warm and serene, and we prolonged our walk farther than usual. It was already dusk before we thought of returning; and then we discovered that William and Ernest, who had gone on before, were not to be found. We accordingly rested on a seat until they should return. Presently Ernest came, and enquired if we had seen his brother; he said, that he had been playing with him, that William had run away to hide himself, and that he vainly sought for him, and afterwards waited for a long time, but that he did not return.

This account rather alarmed us, and we continued to search for him until night fell, when Elizabeth conjectured that he might have returned to the house. He was not there. We returned again, with torches; for I could not rest, when I thought that my sweet boy had lost himself, and was exposed to all the damps and dews of night; Elizabeth also suffered extreme anguish. About five in the morning I discovered my lovely boy, whom the night before I had seen blooming and active in health, stretched on the grass livid and motionless; the print of the murderer's finger was on his neck.

He was conveyed home, and the anguish that was visible in my countenance betrayed the secret to Elizabeth. She was very earnest to see the corpse. At first I attempted to prevent her but she persisted, and entering the room where it lay, hastily examined the neck of the victim, and clasping her hands exclaimed, 'O God! I have murdered my darling child!'

She fainted, and was restored with extreme difficulty. When she again lived, it was only to weep and sigh. She told me, that that same evening William had teased her to let him wear a very valuable miniature that she possessed of your mother. This picture is gone, and was doubtless the temptation which urged the murderer to the deed. We have no trace of him at present, although our exertions to discover him are unremitted; but they will not restore my beloved William!

Come, dearest Victor; you alone can console Elizabeth. She weeps continually, and accuses herself unjustly as the cause of his death; her words pierce my heart. We are all unhappy; but will not that be an additional motive for you, my son, to return and be our comforter? Your dear mother! Alas, Victor! I now say, Thank God she did not live to witness the cruel, miserable death of her youngest darling!

Come, Victor; not brooding thoughts of vengeance against the assassin, but with feelings of peace and gentleness, that will heal, instead of festering, the wounds of our minds. Enter the house of mourning, my friend, but with kindness and affection for those who love you, and not with hatred for your enemies.

Your affectionate and afflicted father,
Alphonse Frankenstein.
Geneva, May 12th, 17—.

Clerval, who had watched my countenance as I read this letter, was surprised to observe the despair that succeeded the joy I at first expressed on receiving news from my friends. I threw the letter on the table, and covered my face with my hands.

"My dear Frankenstein," exclaimed Henry, when he perceived me weep with bitterness, "are you always to be unhappy? My dear friend, what has happened?"

I motioned him to take up the letter, while I walked up and down the room in the extremest agitation. Tears also gushed from the eyes of Clerval, as he read the account of my misfortune.

"I can offer you no consolation, my friend," said he; "your disaster is irreparable. What do you intend to do?"

"To go instantly to Geneva: come with me, Henry, to order the horses."

During our walk, Clerval endeavoured to say a few words of consolation; he could only express his heartfelt sympathy. "Poor William!" said he, "dear lovely child, he now sleeps with his angel mother! Who that had seen him bright and joyous in his young beauty, but must weep over his untimely loss! To die so miserably; to feel the murderer's grasp! How much more a murdered that could destroy radiant innocence! Poor little fellow! one only consolation have we; his friends mourn and weep, but he is at rest. The pang is over, his sufferings are at an end for ever. A sod covers his gentle form, and he knows no pain. He can no

longer be a subject for pity; we must reserve that for his miserable survivors."

Clerval spoke thus as we hurried through the streets; the words impressed themselves on my mind and I remembered them afterwards in solitude. But now, as soon as the horses arrived, I hurried into a cabriolet, and bade farewell to my friend.

My journey was very melancholy. At first I wished to hurry on, for I longed to console and sympathise with my loved and sorrowing friends; but when I drew near my native town, I slackened my progress. I could hardly sustain the multitude of feelings that crowded into my mind. I passed through scenes familiar to my youth, but which I had not seen for nearly six years. How altered every thing might be during that time! One sudden and desolating change had taken place; but a thousand little circumstances might have by degrees worked other alterations, which, although they were done more tranquilly, might not be the less decisive. Fear overcame me; I dared no advance, dreading a thousand nameless evils that made me tremble, although I was unable to define them. I remained two days at Lausanne, in this painful state of mind. I contemplated the lake: the waters were placid; all around was calm; and the snowy mountains, 'the palaces of nature,' were not changed. By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva.

The road ran by the side of the lake, which became narrower as I approached my native town. I discovered more distinctly the black sides of Jura, and the bright summit of Mont Blanc. I wept like a child. "Dear mountains! my own beautiful lake! how do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid. Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?"

I fear, my friend, that I shall render myself tedious by dwelling on these preliminary circumstances; but they were days of comparative happiness, and I think of them with pleasure. My country, my beloved country! who but a native can tell the delight I took in again beholding thy streams, thy mountains, and, more than all, thy lovely lake!

Yet, as I drew nearer home, grief and fear again overcame me. Night also closed around; and when I could hardly see the dark mountains, I felt still more gloomily. The picture appeared a vast and dim scene of evil, and I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings. Alas! I prophesied truly, and failed only in one single circumstance, that in all the misery I imagined and dreaded, I did not conceive the hundredth part of the anguish I was destined to endure. It was completely dark when I arrived in the environs of Geneva; the gates of the town were already shut; and I was obliged to pass the night at Secheron, a village at the distance of half a league from the city. The sky was serene; and, as I was unable to rest, I resolved to visit the spot where my poor William had been murdered. As I could not pass through the town, I was obliged to cross the lake in a boat to arrive at Plainpalais. During this short voyage I saw the lightning playing on the summit of Mont Blanc in the most beautiful figures. The storm appeared to approach rapidly, and, on landing, I ascended a low hill, that I might observe its progress. It advanced; the heavens were clouded, and I soon felt the rain coming slowly in large drops, but its violence quickly increased.

I quitted my seat, and walked on, although the darkness and storm increased every minute, and the thunder burst with a terrific crash over my head. It was echoed from Saleve, the Juras, and the Alps of Savoy; vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant every thing seemed of a pitchy darkness, until the eye recovered itself from the preceding flash. The storm, as is often the case in Switzerland, appeared at once in various parts of the heavens. The most violent storm hung exactly north of the town, over the part of the lake which lies between the promontory of Belrive and the village of Copet. Another storm enlightened Jura with faint flashes; and another darkened and sometimes disclosed the Mole, a peaked mountain to the east of the lake.

While I watched the tempest, so beautiful yet terrific, I wandered on with a hasty step. This noble war in the sky elevated my spirits; I clasped my hands, and exclaimed aloud, "William, dear angel! this is thy funeral, this thy dirge!" As I said these

words, I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon, to whom I had given life. What did he there? Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother? No sooner did that idea cross my imagination, than I became convinced of its truth; my teeth chattered, and I was forced to lean against a tree for support. The figure passed me quickly, and I lost it in the gloom.

Nothing in human shape could have destroyed the fair child. HE was the murderer! I could not doubt it. The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact. I thought of pursuing the devil; but it would have been in vain, for another flash discovered him to me hanging among the rocks of the nearly perpendicular ascent of Mont Saleve, a hill that bounds Plainpalais on the south. He soon reached the summit, and disappeared.

145

I remained motionless. The thunder ceased; but the rain still continued, and the scene was enveloped in an impenetrable darkness. I revolved in my mind the events which I had until now sought to forget: the whole train of my progress toward the creation; the appearance of the works of my own hands at my bedside; its departure. Two years had now nearly elapsed since the night on which he first received life; and was this his first crime? Alas! I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery; had he not murdered my brother?

No one can conceive the anguish I suffered during the remainder of the night, which I spent, cold and wet, in the open air. But I did not feel the inconvenience of the weather; my imagination was busy in scenes of evil and despair. I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, such as the deed which he had now done, nearly in the light of my own vampire,

my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me.

Day dawned; and I directed my steps towards the town. The gates were open, and I hastened to my father's house. My first thought was to discover what I knew of the murderer, and cause instant pursuit to be made. But I paused when I reflected on the story that I had to tell. A being whom I myself had formed, and endued with life, had met me at midnight among the precipices of an inaccessible mountain. I remembered also the nervous fever with which I had been seized just at the time that I dated my creation, and which would give an air of delirium to a tale otherwise so utterly improbable. I well knew that if any other had communicated such a relation to me, I should have looked upon it as the ravings of insanity. Besides, the strange nature of the animal would elude all pursuit, even if I were so far credited as to persuade my relatives to commence it. And then of what use would be pursuit? Who could arrest a creature capable of scaling the overhanging sides of Mont Saleve? These reflections determined me, and I resolved to remain silent.

It was about five in the morning when I entered my father's house. I told the servants not to disturb the family, and went into the library to attend their usual hour of rising.

Six years had elapsed, passed in a dream but for one indelible trace, and I stood in the same place where I had last embraced my father before my departure for Ingolstadt. Beloved and venerable parent! He still remained to me. I gazed on the picture of my mother, which stood over the mantel-piece. It was an historical subject, painted at my father's desire, and represented Caroline Beaufort in an agony of despair, kneeling by the coffin of her dead father. Her garb was rustic, and her cheek pale; but there was an air of dignity and beauty, that hardly permitted the sentiment of pity. Below this picture was a miniature of William; and my tears flowed when I looked upon it. While I was thus engaged, Ernest entered: he had heard me arrive, and hastened to welcome me: "Welcome, my dearest Victor," said he. "Ah! I wish you had come three months ago, and then you would have found us all joyous and delighted. You come to us now to share a misery

which nothing can alleviate; yet your presence will, I hope, revive our father, who seems sinking under his misfortune; and your persuasions will induce poor Elizabeth to cease her vain and tormenting self-accusations.—Poor William! he was our darling and our pride!"

Tears, unrestrained, fell from my brother's eyes; a sense of mortal agony crept over my frame. Before, I had only imagined the wretchedness of my desolated home; the reality came on me as a new, and a not less terrible, disaster. I tried to calm Ernest; I enquired more minutely concerning my father, and here I named my cousin.

"She most of all," said Ernest, "requires consolation; she accused herself of having caused the death of my brother, and that made her very wretched. But since the murderer has been discovered—"

"The murderer discovered! Good God! how can that be? who could attempt to pursue him? It is impossible; one might as well try to overtake the winds, or confine a mountain-stream with a straw. I saw him too; he was free last night!"

"I do not know what you mean," replied my brother, in accents of wonder, "but to us the discovery we have made completes our misery. No one would believe it at first; and even now Elizabeth will not be convinced, notwithstanding all the evidence. Indeed, who would credit that Justine Moritz, who was so amiable, and fond of all the family, could suddenly become so capable of so frightful, so appalling a crime?"

"Justine Moritz! Poor, poor girl, is she the accused? But it is wrongfully; every one knows that; no one believes it, surely, Ernest?"

"No one did at first; but several circumstances came out, that have almost forced conviction upon us; and her own behaviour has been so confused, as to add to the evidence of facts a weight that, I fear, leaves no hope for doubt. But she will be tried today, and you will then hear all."

He then related that, the morning on which the murder of poor William had been discovered, Justine had been taken ill, and confined to her bed for several days. During this interval, one of

the servants, happening to examine the apparel she had worn on the night of the murder, had discovered in her pocket the picture of my mother, which had been judged to be the temptation of the murderer. The servant instantly showed it to one of the others, who, without saying a word to any of the family, went to a magistrate; and, upon their deposition, Justine was apprehended. On being charged with the fact, the poor girl confirmed the suspicion in a great measure by her extreme confusion of manner.

This was a strange tale, but it did not shake my faith; and I replied earnestly, "You are all mistaken; I know the murderer. Justine, poor, good Justine, is innocent."

At that instant my father entered. I saw unhappiness deeply impressed on his countenance, but he endeavoured to welcome me cheerfully; and, after we had exchanged our mournful greeting, would have introduced some other topic than that of our disaster, had not Ernest exclaimed, "Good God, papa! Victor says that he knows who was the murderer of poor William."

"We do also, unfortunately," replied my father, "for indeed I had rather have been for ever ignorant than have discovered so much depravity and ungratitude in one I valued so highly."

"My dear father, you are mistaken; Justine is innocent."

"If she is, God forbid that she should suffer as guilty. She is to be tried today, and I hope, I sincerely hope, that she will be acquitted."

This speech calmed me. I was firmly convinced in my own mind that Justine, and indeed every human being, was guiltless of this murder. I had no fear, therefore, that any circumstantial evidence could be brought forward strong enough to convict her. My tale was not one to announce publicly; its astounding horror would be looked upon as madness by the vulgar. Did any one indeed exist, except I, the creator, who would believe, unless his senses convinced him, in the existence of the living monument of presumption and rash ignorance which I had let loose upon the world?

We were soon joined by Elizabeth. Time had altered her since I last beheld her; it had endowed her with loveliness surpassing the beauty of her childish years. There was the same candour, the

same vivacity, but it was allied to an expression more full of sensibility and intellect. She welcomed me with the greatest affection. "Your arrival, my dear cousin," said she, "fills me with hope. You perhaps will find some means to justify my poor guiltless Justine. Alas! who is safe, if she be convicted of crime? I rely on her innocence as certainly as I do upon my own. Our misfortune is doubly hard to us; we have not only lost that lovely darling boy, but this poor girl, whom I sincerely love, is to be torn away by even a worse fate. If she is condemned, I never shall know joy more. But she will not, I am sure she will not; and then I shall be happy again, even after the sad death of my little William."

"She is innocent, my Elizabeth," said I, "and that shall be proved; fear nothing, but let your spirits be cheered by the assurance of her acquittal."

165

"How kind and generous you are! every one else believes in her guilt, and that made me wretched, for I knew that it was impossible: and to see every one else prejudiced in so deadly a manner rendered me hopeless and despairing." She wept.

"Dearest niece," said my father, "dry your tears. If she is, as you believe, innocent, rely on the justice of our laws, and the activity with which I shall prevent the slightest shadow of partiality."

Chapter 8

We passed a few sad hours until eleven o'clock, when the trial was to commence. My father and the rest of the family being obliged to attend as witnesses, I accompanied them to the court. During the whole of this wretched mockery of justice I suffered living torture. It was to be decided whether the result of my curiosity and lawless devices would cause the death of two of my fellow beings: one a smiling babe full of innocence and joy, the other far more dreadfully murdered, with every aggravation of infamy that could make the murder memorable in horror. Justine also was a girl of merit and possessed qualities which promised to render her life happy; now all was to be obliterated in an

ignominious grave, and I the cause! A thousand times rather would I have confessed myself guilty of the crime ascribed to Justine, but I was absent when it was committed, and such a declaration would have been considered as the ravings of a madman and would not have exculpated her who suffered through me.

The appearance of Justine was calm. She was dressed in mourning, and her countenance, always engaging, was rendered, by the solemnity of her feelings, exquisitely beautiful. Yet she appeared confident in innocence and did not tremble, although gazed on and execrated by thousands, for all the kindness which her beauty might otherwise have excited was obliterated in the minds of the spectators by the imagination of the enormity she was supposed to have committed. She was tranquil, yet her tranquillity was evidently constrained; and as her confusion had before been adduced as a proof of her guilt, she worked up her mind to an appearance of courage. When she entered the court she threw her eyes round it and quickly discovered where we were seated. A tear seemed to dim her eye when she saw us, but she quickly recovered herself, and a look of sorrowful affection seemed to attest her utter guiltlessness.

The trial began, and after the advocate against her had stated the charge, several witnesses were called. Several strange facts combined against her, which might have staggered anyone who had not such proof of her innocence as I had. She had been out the whole of the night on which the murder had been committed and towards morning had been perceived by a market-woman not far from the spot where the body of the murdered child had been afterwards found. The woman asked her what she did there, but she looked very strangely and only returned a confused and unintelligible answer. She returned to the house about eight o'clock, and when one inquired where she had passed the night, she replied that she had been looking for the child and demanded earnestly if anything had been heard concerning him. When shown the body, she fell into violent hysterics and kept her bed for several days. The picture was then produced which the servant had found in her pocket; and when Elizabeth, in a faltering voice,

proved that it was the same which, an hour before the child had been missed, she had placed round his neck, a murmur of horror and indignation filled the court.

Justine was called on for her defence. As the trial had proceeded, her countenance had altered. Surprise, horror, and misery were strongly expressed. Sometimes she struggled with her tears, but when she was desired to plead, she collected her powers and spoke in an audible although variable voice.

"God knows," she said, "how entirely I am innocent. But I do not pretend that my protestations should acquit me; I rest my innocence on a plain and simple explanation of the facts which have been adduced against me, and I hope the character I have always borne will incline my judges to a favourable interpretation where any circumstance appears doubtful or suspicious."

She then related that, by the permission of Elizabeth, she had passed the evening of the night on which the murder had been committed at the house of an aunt at Chene, a village situated at about a league from Geneva. On her return, at about nine o'clock, she met a man who asked her if she had seen anything of the child who was lost. She was alarmed by this account and passed several hours in looking for him, when the gates of Geneva were shut, and she was forced to remain several hours of the night in a barn belonging to a cottage, being unwilling to call up the inhabitants, to whom she was well known. Most of the night she spent here watching; towards morning she believed that she slept for a few minutes; some steps disturbed her, and she awoke. It was dawn, and she quitted her asylum, that she might again endeavour to find my brother. If she had gone near the spot where his body lay, it was without her knowledge. That she had been bewildered when questioned by the market-woman was not surprising, since she had passed a sleepless night and the fate of poor William was yet uncertain. Concerning the picture she could give no account.

"I know," continued the unhappy victim, "how heavily and fatally this one circumstance weighs against me, but I have no power of explaining it; and when I have expressed my utter ignorance, I am only left to conjecture concerning the probabilities by which it might have been placed in my pocket.

But here also I am checked. I believe that I have no enemy on earth, and none surely would have been so wicked as to destroy me wantonly. Did the murderer place it there? I know of no opportunity afforded him for so doing; or, if I had, why should he have stolen the jewel, to part with it again so soon?

"I commit my cause to the justice of my judges, yet I see no room for hope. I beg permission to have a few witnesses examined concerning my character, and if their testimony shall not overweigh my supposed guilt, I must be condemned, although I would pledge my salvation on my innocence."

175

Several witnesses were called who had known her for many years, and they spoke well of her; but fear and hatred of the crime of which they supposed her guilty rendered them timorous and unwilling to come forward. Elizabeth saw even this last resource, her excellent dispositions and irreproachable conduct, about to fail the accused, when, although violently agitated, she desired permission to address the court.

"I am," said she, "the cousin of the unhappy child who was murdered, or rather his sister, for I was educated by and have lived with his parents ever since and even long before his birth. It may therefore be judged indecent in me to come forward on this occasion, but when I see a fellow creature about to perish through the cowardice of her pretended friends, I wish to be allowed to speak, that I may say what I know of her character. I am well acquainted with the accused. I have lived in the same house with her, at one time for five and at another for nearly two years. During all that period she appeared to me the most amiable and benevolent of human creatures. She nursed Madame Frankenstein, my aunt, in her last illness, with the greatest affection and care and afterwards attended her own mother during a tedious illness, in a manner that excited the admiration of all who knew her, after which she again lived in my uncle's house, where she was beloved by all the family. She was warmly attached to the child who is now dead and acted towards him like a most affectionate mother. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say that, notwithstanding all the evidence produced against her, I believe and rely on her perfect innocence. She had no temptation

for such an action; as to the bauble on which the chief proof rests, if she had earnestly desired it, I should have willingly given it to her, so much do I esteem and value her."

A murmur of approbation followed Elizabeth's simple and powerful appeal, but it was excited by her generous interference, and not in favour of poor Justine, on whom the public indignation was turned with renewed violence, charging her with the blackest ingratitude. She herself wept as Elizabeth spoke, but she did not answer. My own agitation and anguish was extreme during the whole trial. I believed in her innocence; I knew it. Could the demon who had (I did not for a minute doubt) murdered my brother also in his hellish sport have betrayed the innocent to death and ignominy? I could not sustain the horror of my situation, and when I perceived that the popular voice and the countenances of the judges had already condemned my unhappy victim, I rushed out of the court in agony. The tortures of the accused did not equal mine; she was sustained by innocence, but the fangs of remorse tore my bosom and would not forgo their hold.

I passed a night of unmingled wretchedness. In the morning I went to the court; my lips and throat were parched. I dared not ask the fatal question, but I was known, and the officer guessed the cause of my visit. The ballots had been thrown; they were all black, and Justine was condemned.

I cannot pretend to describe what I then felt. I had before experienced sensations of horror, and I have endeavoured to bestow upon them adequate expressions, but words cannot convey an idea of the heart-sickening despair that I then endured. The person to whom I addressed myself added that Justine had already confessed her guilt. "That evidence," he observed, "was hardly required in so glaring a case, but I am glad of it, and, indeed, none of our judges like to condemn a criminal upon circumstantial evidence, be it ever so decisive."

This was strange and unexpected intelligence; what could it mean? Had my eyes deceived me? And was I really as mad as the whole world would believe me to be if I disclosed the object of

my suspicions? I hastened to return home, and Elizabeth eagerly demanded the result.

"My cousin," replied I, "it is decided as you may have expected; all judges had rather that ten innocent should suffer than that one guilty should escape. But she has confessed."

This was a dire blow to poor Elizabeth, who had relied with firmness upon Justine's innocence. "Alas!" said she. "How shall I ever again believe in human goodness? Justine, whom I loved and esteemed as my sister, how could she put on those smiles of innocence only to betray? Her mild eyes seemed incapable of any severity or guile, and yet she has committed a murder."

Soon after we heard that the poor victim had expressed a desire to see my cousin. My father wished her not to go but said that he left it to her own judgment and feelings to decide. "Yes," said Elizabeth, "I will go, although she is guilty; and you, Victor, shall accompany me; I cannot go alone." The idea of this visit was torture to me, yet I could not refuse. We entered the gloomy prison chamber and beheld Justine sitting on some straw at the farther end; her hands were manacled, and her head rested on her knees. She rose on seeing us enter, and when we were left alone with her, she threw herself at the feet of Elizabeth, weeping bitterly. My cousin wept also.

"Oh, Justine!" said she. "Why did you rob me of my last consolation? I relied on your innocence, and although I was then very wretched, I was not so miserable as I am now."

185

"And do you also believe that I am so very, very wicked? Do you also join with my enemies to crush me, to condemn me as a murderer?" Her voice was suffocated with sobs.

"Rise, my poor girl," said Elizabeth; "why do you kneel, if you are innocent? I am not one of your enemies, I believed you guiltless, notwithstanding every evidence, until I heard that you had yourself declared your guilt. That report, you say, is false; and be assured, dear Justine, that nothing can shake my confidence in you for a moment, but your own confession."

"I did confess, but I confessed a lie. I confessed, that I might obtain absolution; but now that falsehood lies heavier at my heart than all my other sins. The God of heaven forgive me! Ever since

I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced, until I almost began to think that I was the monster that he said I was. He threatened excommunication and hell fire in my last moments if I continued obdurate. Dear lady, I had none to support me; all looked on me as a wretch doomed to ignominy and perdition. What could I do? In an evil hour I subscribed to a lie; and now only am I truly miserable."

She paused, weeping, and then continued, "I thought with horror, my sweet lady, that you should believe your Justine, whom your blessed aunt had so highly honoured, and whom you loved, was a creature capable of a crime which none but the devil himself could have perpetrated. Dear William! dearest blessed child! I soon shall see you again in heaven, where we shall all be happy; and that consoles me, going as I am to suffer ignominy and death."

"Oh, Justine! Forgive me for having for one moment distrusted you. Why did you confess? But do not mourn, dear girl. Do not fear. I will proclaim, I will prove your innocence. I will melt the stony hearts of your enemies by my tears and prayers. You shall not die! You, my playfellow, my companion, my sister, perish on the scaffold! No! No! I never could survive so horrible a misfortune."

190

Justine shook her head mournfully. "I do not fear to die," she said; "that pang is past. God raises my weakness and gives me courage to endure the worst. I leave a sad and bitter world; and if you remember me and think of me as of one unjustly condemned, I am resigned to the fate awaiting me. Learn from me, dear lady, to submit in patience to the will of heaven!"

During this conversation I had retired to a corner of the prison room, where I could conceal the horrid anguish that possessed me. Despair! Who dared talk of that? The poor victim, who on the morrow was to pass the awful boundary between life and death, felt not, as I did, such deep and bitter agony. I gnashed my teeth and ground them together, uttering a groan that came from my inmost soul. Justine started. When she saw who it was, she approached me and said, "Dear sir, you are very kind to visit me; you, I hope, do not believe that I am guilty?"

I could not answer. "No, Justine," said Elizabeth; "he is more convinced of your innocence than I was, for even when he heard that you had confessed, he did not credit it."

"I truly thank him. In these last moments I feel the sincerest gratitude towards those who think of me with kindness. How sweet is the affection of others to such a wretch as I am! It removes more than half my misfortune, and I feel as if I could die in peace now that my innocence is acknowledged by you, dear lady, and your cousin."

Thus the poor sufferer tried to comfort others and herself. She indeed gained the resignation she desired. But I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom, which allowed of no hope or consolation. Elizabeth also wept and was unhappy, but hers also was the misery of innocence, which, like a cloud that passes over the fair moon, for a while hides but cannot tarnish its brightness. Anguish and despair had penetrated into the core of my heart; I bore a hell within me which nothing could extinguish. We stayed several hours with Justine, and it was with great difficulty that Elizabeth could tear herself away. "I wish," cried she, "that I were to die with you; I cannot live in this world of misery."

Justine assumed an air of cheerfulness, while she with difficulty repressed her bitter tears. She embraced Elizabeth and said in a voice of half-suppressed emotion, "Farewell, sweet lady, dearest Elizabeth, my beloved and only friend; may heaven, in its bounty, bless and preserve you; may this be the last misfortune that you will ever suffer! Live, and be happy, and make others so."

And on the morrow Justine died. Elizabeth's heart-rending eloquence failed to move the judges from their settled conviction in the criminality of the saintly sufferer. My passionate and indignant appeals were lost upon them. And when I received their cold answers and heard the harsh, unfeeling reasoning of these men, my purposed avowal died away on my lips. Thus I might proclaim myself a madman, but not revoke the sentence passed upon my wretched victim. She perished on the scaffold as a murderess!

From the tortures of my own heart, I turned to contemplate the deep and voiceless grief of my Elizabeth. This also was my doing! And my father's woe, and the desolation of that late so smiling home all was the work of my thrice-accursed hands! Ye weep, unhappy ones, but these are not your last tears! Again shall you raise the funeral wail, and the sound of your lamentations shall again and again be heard! Frankenstein, your son, your kinsman, your early, much-loved friend; he who would spend each vital drop of blood for your sakes, who has no thought nor sense of joy except as it is mirrored also in your dear countenances, who would fill the air with blessings and spend his life in serving you—he bids you weep, to shed countless tears; happy beyond his hopes, if thus inexorable fate be satisfied, and if the destruction pause before the peace of the grave have succeeded to your sad torments!

Thus spoke my prophetic soul, as, torn by remorse, horror, and despair, I beheld those I loved spend vain sorrow upon the graves of William and Justine, the first hapless victims to my unhallowed arts.

Chapter 9

Nothing is more painful to the human mind than, after the feelings have been worked up by a quick succession of events, the dead calmness of inaction and certainty which follows and deprives the soul both of hope and fear. Justine died, she rested, and I was alive. The blood flowed freely in my veins, but a weight of despair and remorse pressed on my heart which nothing could remove. Sleep fled from my eyes; I wandered like an evil spirit, for I had committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible, and more, much more (I persuaded myself) was yet behind. Yet my heart overflowed with kindness and the love of virtue. I had begun life with benevolent intentions and thirsted for the moment when I should put them in practice and make myself useful to my fellow beings. Now all was blasted; instead of that serenity of conscience which allowed me to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction, and from thence to gather promise of

new hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures such as no language can describe.

This state of mind preyed upon my health, which had perhaps never entirely recovered from the first shock it had sustained. I shunned the face of man; all sound of joy or complacency was torture to me; solitude was my only consolation—deep, dark, deathlike solitude.

My father observed with pain the alteration perceptible in my disposition and habits and endeavoured by arguments deduced from the feelings of his serene conscience and guiltless life to inspire me with fortitude and awaken in me the courage to dispel the dark cloud which brooded over me. "Do you think, Victor," said he, "that I do not suffer also? No one could love a child more than I loved your brother"—tears came into his eyes as he spoke—"but is it not a duty to the survivors that we should refrain from augmenting their unhappiness by an appearance of immoderate grief? It is also a duty owed to yourself, for excessive sorrow prevents improvement or enjoyment, or even the discharge of daily usefulness, without which no man is fit for society."

This advice, although good, was totally inapplicable to my case; I should have been the first to hide my grief and console my friends if remorse had not mingled its bitterness, and terror its alarm, with my other sensations. Now I could only answer my father with a look of despair and endeavour to hide myself from his view.

About this time we retired to our house at Belrive. This change was particularly agreeable to me. The shutting of the gates regularly at ten o'clock and the impossibility of remaining on the lake after that hour had rendered our residence within the walls of Geneva very irksome to me. I was now free. Often, after the rest of the family had retired for the night, I took the boat and passed many hours upon the water. Sometimes, with my sails set, I was carried by the wind; and sometimes, after rowing into the middle of the lake, I left the boat to pursue its own course and gave way to my own miserable reflections. I was often tempted, when all was at peace around me, and I the only unquiet thing that

wandered restless in a scene so beautiful and heavenly—if I except some bat, or the frogs, whose harsh and interrupted croaking was heard only when I approached the shore—often, I say, I was tempted to plunge into the silent lake, that the waters might close over me and my calamities forever. But I was restrained, when I thought of the heroic and suffering Elizabeth, whom I tenderly loved, and whose existence was bound up in mine. I thought also of my father and surviving brother; should I by my base desertion leave them exposed and unprotected to the malice of the fiend whom I had let loose among them?

At these moments I wept bitterly and wished that peace would revisit my mind only that I might afford them consolation and happiness. But that could not be. Remorse extinguished every hope. I had been the author of unalterable evils, and I lived in daily fear lest the monster whom I had created should perpetrate some new wickedness. I had an obscure feeling that all was not over and that he would still commit some signal crime, which by its enormity should almost efface the recollection of the past. There was always scope for fear so long as anything I loved remained behind. My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. When I thought of him I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed. When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and revenge burst all bounds of moderation. I would have made a pilgrimage to the highest peak of the Andes, could I when there have precipitated him to their base. I wished to see him again, that I might wreak the utmost extent of abhorrence on his head and avenge the deaths of William and Justine. Our house was the house of mourning. My father's health was deeply shaken by the horror of the recent events. Elizabeth was sad and desponding; she no longer took delight in her ordinary occupations; all pleasure seemed to her sacrilege toward the dead; eternal woe and tears she then thought was the just tribute she should pay to innocence so blasted and destroyed. She was no longer that happy creature who in earlier youth wandered with me on the banks of the lake and talked with ecstasy of our future prospects. The first of those sorrows which

are sent to wean us from the earth had visited her, and its dimming influence quenched her dearest smiles.

"When I reflect, my dear cousin," said she, "on the miserable death of Justine Moritz, I no longer see the world and its works as they before appeared to me. Before, I looked upon the accounts of vice and injustice that I read in books or heard from others as tales of ancient days or imaginary evils; at least they were remote and more familiar to reason than to the imagination; but now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood. Yet I am certainly unjust. Everybody believed that poor girl to be guilty; and if she could have committed the crime for which she suffered, assuredly she would have been the most depraved of human creatures. For the sake of a few jewels, to have murdered the son of her benefactor and friend, a child whom she had nursed from its birth, and appeared to love as if it had been her own! I could not consent to the death of any human being, but certainly I should have thought such a creature unfit to remain in the society of men. But she was innocent. I know, I feel she was innocent; you are of the same opinion, and that confirms me. Alas! Victor, when falsehood can look so like the truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness? I feel as if I were walking on the edge of a precipice, towards which thousands are crowding and endeavouring to plunge me into the abyss. William and Justine were assassinated, and the murderer escapes; he walks about the world free, and perhaps respected. But even if I were condemned to suffer on the scaffold for the same crimes, I would not change places with such a wretch."

I listened to this discourse with the extremest agony. I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer. Elizabeth read my anguish in my countenance, and kindly taking my hand, said, "My dearest friend, you must calm yourself. These events have affected me, God knows how deeply; but I am not so wretched as you are. There is an expression of despair, and sometimes of revenge, in your countenance that makes me tremble. Dear Victor, banish these dark passions. Remember the friends around you, who centre all their hopes in you. Have we lost the power of

rendering you happy? Ah! While we love, while we are true to each other, here in this land of peace and beauty, your native country, we may reap every tranquil blessing—what can disturb our peace?"

And could not such words from her whom I fondly prized before every other gift of fortune suffice to chase away the fiend that lurked in my heart? Even as she spoke I drew near to her, as if in terror, lest at that very moment the destroyer had been near to rob me of her.

Thus not the tenderness of friendship, nor the beauty of earth, nor of heaven, could redeem my soul from woe; the very accents of love were ineffectual. I was encompassed by a cloud which no beneficial influence could penetrate. The wounded deer dragging its fainting limbs to some untrodden brake, there to gaze upon the arrow which had pierced it, and to die, was but a type of me.

Sometimes I could cope with the sullen despair that overwhelmed me, but sometimes the whirlwind passions of my soul drove me to seek, by bodily exercise and by change of place, some relief from my intolerable sensations. It was during an access of this kind that I suddenly left my home, and bending my steps towards the near Alpine valleys, sought in the magnificence, the eternity of such scenes, to forget myself and my ephemeral, because human, sorrows. My wanderings were directed towards the valley of Chamounix. I had visited it frequently during my boyhood. Six years had passed since then: I was a wreck, but nought had changed in those savage and enduring scenes.

210

I performed the first part of my journey on horseback. I afterwards hired a mule, as the more sure-footed and least liable to receive injury on these rugged roads. The weather was fine; it was about the middle of the month of August, nearly two months after the death of Justine, that miserable epoch from which I dated all my woe. The weight upon my spirit was sensibly lightened as I plunged yet deeper in the ravine of Arve. The immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side, the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around spoke of a power mighty as Omnipotence—and I ceased to fear or to bend before any being less almighty than that which

had created and ruled the elements, here displayed in their most terrific guise. Still, as I ascended higher, the valley assumed a more magnificent and astonishing character. Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny mountains, the impetuous Arve, and cottages every here and there peeping forth from among the trees formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings.

I passed the bridge of Pelissier, where the ravine, which the river forms, opened before me, and I began to ascend the mountain that overhangs it. Soon after, I entered the valley of Chamounix. This valley is more wonderful and sublime, but not so beautiful and picturesque as that of Servox, through which I had just passed. The high and snowy mountains were its immediate boundaries, but I saw no more ruined castles and fertile fields. Immense glaciers approached the road; I heard the rumbling thunder of the falling avalanche and marked the smoke of its passage. Mont Blanc, the supreme and magnificent Mont Blanc, raised itself from the surrounding aiguilles, and its tremendous dome overlooked the valley.

A tingling long-lost sense of pleasure often came across me during this journey. Some turn in the road, some new object suddenly perceived and recognized, reminded me of days gone by, and were associated with the lighthearted gaiety of boyhood. The very winds whispered in soothing accents, and maternal Nature bade me weep no more. Then again the kindly influence ceased to act—I found myself fettered again to grief and indulging in all the misery of reflection. Then I spurred on my animal, striving so to forget the world, my fears, and more than all, myself—or, in a more desperate fashion, I alighted and threw myself on the grass, weighed down by horror and despair.

At length I arrived at the village of Chamounix. Exhaustion succeeded to the extreme fatigue both of body and of mind which I had endured. For a short space of time I remained at the window watching the pallid lightnings that played above Mont Blanc and listening to the rushing of the Arve, which pursued its noisy way

beneath. The same lulling sounds acted as a lullaby to my too keen sensations; when I placed my head upon my pillow, sleep crept over me; I felt it as it came and blessed the giver of oblivion.

Chapter 10

I spent the following day roaming through the valley. I stood beside the sources of the Arveiron, which take their rise in a glacier, that with slow pace is advancing down from the summit of the hills to barricade the valley. The abrupt sides of vast mountains were before me; the icy wall of the glacier overhung me; a few shattered pines were scattered around; and the solemn silence of this glorious presence-chamber of imperial nature was broken only by the brawling waves or the fall of some vast fragment, the thunder sound of the avalanche or the cracking, reverberated along the mountains, of the accumulated ice, which, through the silent working of immutable laws, was ever and anon rent and torn, as if it had been but a plaything in their hands. These sublime and magnificent scenes afforded me the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving. They elevated me from all littleness of feeling, and although they did not remove my grief, they subdued and tranquillized it. In some degree, also, they diverted my mind from the thoughts over which it had brooded for the last month. I retired to rest at night; my slumbers, as it were, waited on and ministered to by the assemblance of grand shapes which I had contemplated during the day. They congregated round me; the unstained snowy mountain-top, the glittering pinnacle, the pine woods, and ragged bare ravine, the eagle, soaring amidst the clouds—they all gathered round me and bade me be at peace.

Where had they fled when the next morning I awoke? All of soul-inspiring fled with sleep, and dark melancholy clouded every thought. The rain was pouring in torrents, and thick mists hid the summits of the mountains, so that I even saw not the faces of those mighty friends. Still I would penetrate their misty veil and seek them in their cloudy retreats. What were rain and storm

to me? My mule was brought to the door, and I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. I determined to go without a guide, for I was well acquainted with the path, and the presence of another would destroy the solitary grandeur of the scene.

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand spots the traces of the winter avalanche may be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground, some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which stones continually roll from above; one of them is particularly dangerous, as the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, produces a concussion of air sufficient to draw destruction upon the head of the speaker. The pines are not tall or luxuriant, but they are sombre and add an air of severity to the scene. I looked on the valley beneath; vast mists were rising from the rivers which ran through it and curling in thick wreaths around the opposite mountains, whose summits were hid in the uniform clouds, while rain poured from the dark sky and added to the melancholy impression I received from the objects around me. Alas! Why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows and a chance word or scene that that word may convey to us.

We rest; a dream has power to poison sleep.
We rise; one wand'ring thought pollutes the day.
We feel, conceive, or reason; laugh or weep,
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away;
It is the same: for, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free.
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but mutability!

It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent. For some time I sat upon the rock that overlooks the sea of ice. A mist covered both that and the surrounding mountains. Presently a breeze dissipated the cloud, and I descended upon the glacier. The surface is very uneven, rising like the waves of a troubled sea, descending low, and interspersed by rifts that sink deep. The field of ice is almost a league in width, but I spent nearly two hours in crossing it. The opposite mountain is a bare perpendicular rock. From the side where I now stood Montanvert was exactly opposite, at the distance of a league; and above it rose Mont Blanc, in awful majesty. I remained in a recess of the rock, gazing on this wonderful and stupendous scene. The sea, or rather the vast river of ice, wound among its dependent mountains, whose aerial summits hung over its recesses. Their icy and glittering peaks shone in the sunlight over the clouds. My heart, which was before sorrowful, now swelled with something like joy; I exclaimed, "Wandering spirits, if indeed ye wander, and do not rest in your narrow beds, allow me this faint happiness, or take me, as your companion, away from the joys of life."

As I said this I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature, also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled; a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me, but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. I perceived, as the shape came nearer (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach and then close with him in mortal combat. He

approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. But I scarcely observed this; rage and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt.

"Devil," I exclaimed, "do you dare approach me? And do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! Or rather, stay, that I may trample you to dust! And, oh! That I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!"

220

"I expected this reception," said the daemon. "All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends."

"Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! The tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! You reproach me with your creation, come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed."

My rage was without bounds; I sprang on him, impelled by all the feelings which can arm one being against the existence of another.

He easily eluded me and said,

"Be calm! I entreat you to hear me before you give vent to your hatred on my devoted head. Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery? Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it. Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple. But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature,

225

and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me. Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous."

"Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall."

"How can I move thee? Will no entreaties cause thee to turn a favourable eye upon thy creature, who implores thy goodness and compassion? Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow beings. If the multitude of mankind knew of my existence, they would do as you do, and arm themselves for my destruction. Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable, and they shall share my wretchedness. Yet it is in your power to recompense me, and deliver them from an evil which it only remains for you to make so great, that not only you and your family, but thousands of others, shall be swallowed up in the whirlwinds of its rage. Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale; when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder, and yet you would,

with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare me; listen to me, and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands."

"Why do you call to my remembrance," I rejoined, "circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author? Cursed be the day, abhorred devil, in which you first saw light! Cursed (although I curse myself) be the hands that formed you! You have made me wretched beyond expression. You have left me no power to consider whether I am just to you or not. Begone! Relieve me from the sight of your detested form."

"Thus I relieve thee, my creator," he said, and placed his hated hands before my eyes, which I flung from me with violence; "thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain. The sun is yet high in the heavens; before it descends to hide itself behind your snowy precipices and illuminate another world, you will have heard my story and can decide. On you it rests, whether I quit forever the neighbourhood of man and lead a harmless life, or become the scourge of your fellow creatures and the author of your own speedy ruin."

As he said this he led the way across the ice; I followed. My heart was full, and I did not answer him, but as I proceeded, I weighed the various arguments that he had used and determined at least to listen to his tale. I was partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed my resolution. I had hitherto supposed him to be the murderer of my brother, and I eagerly sought a confirmation or denial of this opinion. For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness. These motives urged me to comply with his demand. We crossed the ice, therefore, and ascended the opposite rock. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend; we entered

the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen, and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.

Chapter 11

"It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being; all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. By degrees, I remember, a stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over me and troubled me, but hardly had I felt this when, by opening my eyes, as I now suppose, the light poured in upon me again. I walked and, I believe, descended, but I presently found a great alteration in my sensations. Before, dark and opaque bodies had surrounded me, impervious to my touch or sight; but I now found that I could wander on at liberty, with no obstacles which I could not either surmount or avoid. The light became more and more oppressive to me, and the heat wearying me as I walked, I sought a place where I could receive shade. This was the forest near Ingolstadt; and here I lay by the side of a brook resting from my fatigue, until I felt tormented by hunger and thirst. This roused me from my nearly dormant state, and I ate some berries which I found hanging on the trees or lying on the ground. I slaked my thirst at the brook, and then lying down, was overcome by sleep.

"It was dark when I awoke; I felt cold also, and half frightened, as it were, instinctively, finding myself so desolate. Before I had quitted your apartment, on a sensation of cold, I had covered myself with some clothes, but these were insufficient to secure me from the dews of night. I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept.

"Soon a gentle light stole over the heavens and gave me a sensation of pleasure. I started up and beheld a radiant form rise from among the trees. [The moon] I gazed with a kind of wonder. It moved slowly, but it enlightened my path, and I again went out in search of berries. I was still cold when under one of the trees I found a huge cloak, with which I covered myself, and sat down upon the ground. No distinct ideas occupied my mind; all was confused. I felt light, and hunger, and thirst, and darkness; innumerable sounds rang in my ears, and on all sides various scents saluted me; the only object that I could distinguish was the bright moon, and I fixed my eyes on that with pleasure.

"Several changes of day and night passed, and the orb of night had greatly lessened, when I began to distinguish my sensations from each other. I gradually saw plainly the clear stream that supplied me with drink and the trees that shaded me with their foliage. I was delighted when I first discovered that a pleasant sound, which often saluted my ears, proceeded from the throats of the little winged animals who had often intercepted the light from my eyes. I began also to observe, with greater accuracy, the forms that surrounded me and to perceive the boundaries of the radiant roof of light which canopied me. Sometimes I tried to imitate the pleasant songs of the birds but was unable. Sometimes I wished to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again.

"The moon had disappeared from the night, and again, with a lessened form, showed itself, while I still remained in the forest. My sensations had by this time become distinct, and my mind received every day additional ideas. My eyes became accustomed to the light and to perceive objects in their right forms; I distinguished the insect from the herb, and by degrees, one herb from another. I found that the sparrow uttered none but harsh notes, whilst those of the blackbird and thrush were sweet and enticing.

"One day, when I was oppressed by cold, I found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars, and was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it. In my joy I

thrust my hand into the live embers, but quickly drew it out again with a cry of pain. How strange, I thought, that the same cause should produce such opposite effects! I examined the materials of the fire, and to my joy found it to be composed of wood. I quickly collected some branches, but they were wet and would not burn. I was pained at this and sat still watching the operation of the fire. The wet wood which I had placed near the heat dried and itself became inflamed. I reflected on this, and by touching the various branches, I discovered the cause and busied myself in collecting a great quantity of wood, that I might dry it and have a plentiful supply of fire. When night came on and brought sleep with it, I was in the greatest fear lest my fire should be extinguished. I covered it carefully with dry wood and leaves and placed wet branches upon it; and then, spreading my cloak, I lay on the ground and sank into sleep.

"It was morning when I awoke, and my first care was to visit the fire. I uncovered it, and a gentle breeze quickly fanned it into a flame. I observed this also and contrived a fan of branches, which roused the embers when they were nearly extinguished. When night came again I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food, for I found some of the offals that the travellers had left had been roasted, and tasted much more savoury than the berries I gathered from the trees. I tried, therefore, to dress my food in the same manner, placing it on the live embers. I found that the berries were spoiled by this operation, and the nuts and roots much improved.

"Food, however, became scarce, and I often spent the whole day searching in vain for a few acorns to assuage the pangs of hunger. When I found this, I resolved to quit the place that I had hitherto inhabited, to seek for one where the few wants I experienced would be more easily satisfied. In this emigration I exceedingly lamented the loss of the fire which I had obtained through accident and knew not how to reproduce it. I gave several hours to the serious consideration of this difficulty, but I was obliged to relinquish all attempt to supply it, and wrapping myself up in my cloak, I struck across the wood towards the setting sun. I

passed three days in these rambles and at length discovered the open country. A great fall of snow had taken place the night before, and the fields were of one uniform white; the appearance was disconsolate, and I found my feet chilled by the cold damp substance that covered the ground.

"It was about seven in the morning, and I longed to obtain food and shelter; at length I perceived a small hut, on a rising ground, which had doubtless been built for the convenience of some shepherd. This was a new sight to me, and I examined the structure with great curiosity. Finding the door open, I entered. An old man sat in it, near a fire, over which he was preparing his breakfast. He turned on hearing a noise, and perceiving me, shrieked loudly, and quitting the hut, ran across the fields with a speed of which his debilitated form hardly appeared capable. His appearance, different from any I had ever before seen, and his flight somewhat surprised me. But I was enchanted by the appearance of the hut; here the snow and rain could not penetrate; the ground was dry; and it presented to me then as exquisite and divine a retreat as Pandemonium appeared to the demons of hell after their sufferings in the lake of fire. I greedily devoured the remnants of the shepherd's breakfast, which consisted of bread, cheese, milk, and wine; the latter, however, I did not like. Then, overcome by fatigue, I lay down among some straw and fell asleep.

"It was noon when I awoke, and allured by the warmth of the sun, which shone brightly on the white ground, I determined to recommence my travels; and, depositing the remains of the peasant's breakfast in a wallet I found, I proceeded across the fields for several hours, until at sunset I arrived at a village. How miraculous did this appear! The huts, the neater cottages, and stately houses engaged my admiration by turns. The vegetables in the gardens, the milk and cheese that I saw placed at the windows of some of the cottages, allured my appetite. One of the best of these I entered, but I had hardly placed my foot within the door before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile

weapons, I escaped to the open country and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village. This hovel however, joined a cottage of a neat and pleasant appearance, but after my late dearly bought experience, I dared not enter it. My place of refuge was constructed of wood, but so low that I could with difficulty sit upright in it. No wood, however, was placed on the earth, which formed the floor, but it was dry; and although the wind entered it by innumerable chinks, I found it an agreeable asylum from the snow and rain.

"Here, then, I retreated and lay down happy to have found a shelter, however miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still more from the barbarity of man. As soon as morning dawned I crept from my kennel, that I might view the adjacent cottage and discover if I could remain in the habitation I had found. It was situated against the back of the cottage and surrounded on the sides which were exposed by a pig sty and a clear pool of water. One part was open, and by that I had crept in; but now I covered every crevice by which I might be perceived with stones and wood, yet in such a manner that I might move them on occasion to pass out; all the light I enjoyed came through the sty, and that was sufficient for me.

"Having thus arranged my dwelling and carpeted it with clean straw, I retired, for I saw the figure of a man at a distance, and I remembered too well my treatment the night before to trust myself in his power. I had first, however, provided for my sustenance for that day by a loaf of coarse bread, which I purloined, and a cup with which I could drink more conveniently than from my hand of the pure water which flowed by my retreat. The floor was a little raised, so that it was kept perfectly dry, and by its vicinity to the chimney of the cottage it was tolerably warm.

"Being thus provided, I resolved to reside in this hovel until something should occur which might alter my determination. It was indeed a paradise compared to the bleak forest, my former residence, the rain-dropping branches, and dank earth. I ate my breakfast with pleasure and was about to remove a plank to

procure myself a little water when I heard a step, and looking through a small chink, I beheld a young creature, with a pail on her head, passing before my hovel. The girl was young and of gentle demeanour, unlike what I have since found cottagers and farmhouse servants to be. Yet she was meanly dressed, a coarse blue petticoat and a linen jacket being her only garb; her fair hair was plaited but not adorned: she looked patient yet sad. I lost sight of her, and in about a quarter of an hour she returned bearing the pail, which was now partly filled with milk. As she walked along, seemingly incommoded by the burden, a young man met her, whose countenance expressed a deeper despondence. Uttering a few sounds with an air of melancholy, he took the pail from her head and bore it to the cottage himself. She followed, and they disappeared. Presently I saw the young man again, with some tools in his hand, cross the field behind the cottage; and the girl was also busied, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the yard.

"On examining my dwelling, I found that one of the windows of the cottage had formerly occupied a part of it, but the panes had been filled up with wood. In one of these was a small and almost imperceptible chink through which the eye could just penetrate. Through this crevice a small room was visible, whitewashed and clean but very bare of furniture. In one corner, near a small fire, sat an old man, leaning his head on his hands in a disconsolate attitude. The young girl was occupied in arranging the cottage; but presently she took something out of a drawer, which employed her hands, and she sat down beside the old man, who, taking up an instrument, began to play and to produce sounds sweeter than the voice of the thrush or the nightingale. It was a lovely sight, even to me, poor wretch who had never beheld aught beautiful before. The silver hair and benevolent countenance of the aged cottager won my reverence, while the gentle manners of the girl enticed my love. He played a sweet mournful air which I perceived drew tears from the eyes of his amiable companion, of which the old man took no notice, until she sobbed audibly; he then pronounced a few sounds, and the fair creature, leaving her work, knelt at his feet. He raised her and

smiled with such kindness and affection that I felt sensations of a peculiar and overpowering nature; they were a mixture of pain and pleasure, such as I had never before experienced, either from hunger or cold, warmth or food; and I withdrew from the window, unable to bear these emotions.

"Soon after this the young man returned, bearing on his shoulders a load of wood. The girl met him at the door, helped to relieve him of his burden, and taking some of the fuel into the cottage, placed it on the fire; then she and the youth went apart into a nook of the cottage, and he showed her a large loaf and a piece of cheese. She seemed pleased and went into the garden for some roots and plants, which she placed in water, and then upon the fire. She afterwards continued her work, whilst the young man went into the garden and appeared busily employed in digging and pulling up roots. After he had been employed thus about an hour, the young woman joined him and they entered the cottage together.

"The old man had, in the meantime, been pensive, but on the appearance of his companions he assumed a more cheerful air, and they sat down to eat. The meal was quickly dispatched. The young woman was again occupied in arranging the cottage, the old man walked before the cottage in the sun for a few minutes, leaning on the arm of the youth. Nothing could exceed in beauty the contrast between these two excellent creatures. One was old, with silver hairs and a countenance beaming with benevolence and love; the younger was slight and graceful in his figure, and his features were moulded with the finest symmetry, yet his eyes and attitude expressed the utmost sadness and despondency. The old man returned to the cottage, and the youth, with tools different from those he had used in the morning, directed his steps across the fields.

"Night quickly shut in, but to my extreme wonder, I found that the cottagers had a means of prolonging light by the use of tapers, and was delighted to find that the setting of the sun did not put an end to the pleasure I experienced in watching my human neighbours. In the evening the young girl and her companion were employed in various occupations which I did not

understand; and the old man again took up the instrument which produced the divine sounds that had enchanted me in the morning. So soon as he had finished, the youth began, not to play, but to utter sounds that were monotonous, and neither resembling the harmony of the old man's instrument nor the songs of the birds; I since found that he read aloud, but at that time I knew nothing of the science of words or letters.

"The family, after having been thus occupied for a short time, extinguished their lights and retired, as I conjectured, to rest."

Chapter 12

"I lay on my straw, but I could not sleep. I thought of the occurrences of the day. What chiefly struck me was the gentle manners of these people, and I longed to join them, but dared not. I remembered too well the treatment I had suffered the night before from the barbarous villagers, and resolved, whatever course of conduct I might hereafter think it right to pursue, that for the present I would remain quietly in my hovel, watching and endeavouring to discover the motives which influenced their actions.

"The cottagers arose the next morning before the sun. The young woman arranged the cottage and prepared the food, and the youth departed after the first meal.

250

"This day was passed in the same routine as that which preceded it. The young man was constantly employed out of doors, and the girl in various laborious occupations within. The old man, whom I soon perceived to be blind, employed his leisure hours on his instrument or in contemplation. Nothing could exceed the love and respect which the younger cottagers exhibited towards their venerable companion. They performed towards him every little office of affection and duty with gentleness, and he rewarded them by his benevolent smiles.

"They were not entirely happy. The young man and his companion often went apart and appeared to weep. I saw no cause for their unhappiness, but I was deeply affected by it. If such lovely creatures were miserable, it was less strange that I, an

imperfect and solitary being, should be wretched. Yet why were these gentle beings unhappy? They possessed a delightful house (for such it was in my eyes) and every luxury; they had a fire to warm them when chill and delicious viands when hungry; they were dressed in excellent clothes; and, still more, they enjoyed one another's company and speech, interchanging each day looks of affection and kindness. What did their tears imply? Did they really express pain? I was at first unable to solve these questions, but perpetual attention and time explained to me many appearances which were at first enigmatic.

"A considerable period elapsed before I discovered one of the causes of the uneasiness of this amiable family: it was poverty, and they suffered that evil in a very distressing degree. Their nourishment consisted entirely of the vegetables of their garden and the milk of one cow, which gave very little during the winter, when its masters could scarcely procure food to support it. They often, I believe, suffered the pangs of hunger very poignantly, especially the two younger cottagers, for several times they placed food before the old man when they reserved none for themselves.

"This trait of kindness moved me sensibly. I had been accustomed, during the night, to steal a part of their store for my own consumption, but when I found that in doing this I inflicted pain on the cottagers, I abstained and satisfied myself with berries, nuts, and roots which I gathered from a neighbouring wood.

"I discovered also another means through which I was enabled to assist their labours. I found that the youth spent a great part of each day in collecting wood for the family fire, and during the night I often took his tools, the use of which I quickly discovered, and brought home firing sufficient for the consumption of several days.

"I remember, the first time that I did this, the young woman, when she opened the door in the morning, appeared greatly astonished on seeing a great pile of wood on the outside. She uttered some words in a loud voice, and the youth joined her, who also expressed surprise. I observed, with pleasure, that he did not

go to the forest that day, but spent it in repairing the cottage and cultivating the garden.

"By degrees I made a discovery of still greater moment. I found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experience and feelings to one another by articulate sounds. I perceived that the words they spoke sometimes produced pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers. This was indeed a godlike science, and I ardently desired to become acquainted with it. But I was baffled in every attempt I made for this purpose. Their pronunciation was quick, and the words they uttered, not having any apparent connection with visible objects, I was unable to discover any clue by which I could unravel the mystery of their reference. By great application, however, and after having remained during the space of several revolutions of the moon in my hovel, I discovered the names that were given to some of the most familiar objects of discourse; I learned and applied the words, 'fire,' 'milk,' 'bread,' and 'wood.' I learned also the names of the cottagers themselves. The youth and his companion had each of them several names, but the old man had only one, which was 'father.' The girl was called 'sister' or 'Agatha,' and the youth 'Felix,' 'brother,' or 'son.' I cannot describe the delight I felt when I learned the ideas appropriated to each of these sounds and was able to pronounce them. I distinguished several other words without being able as yet to understand or apply them, such as 'good,' 'dearest,' 'unhappy.'

"I spent the winter in this manner. The gentle manners and beauty of the cottagers greatly endeared them to me; when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys. I saw few human beings besides them, and if any other happened to enter the cottage, their harsh manners and rude gait only enhanced to me the superior accomplishments of my friends. The old man, I could perceive, often endeavoured to encourage his children, as sometimes I found that he called them, to cast off their melancholy. He would talk in a cheerful accent, with an expression of goodness that bestowed pleasure even upon me. Agatha listened with respect, her eyes sometimes filled with

tears, which she endeavoured to wipe away unperceived; but I generally found that her countenance and tone were more cheerful after having listened to the exhortations of her father. It was not thus with Felix. He was always the saddest of the group, and even to my unpractised senses, he appeared to have suffered more deeply than his friends. But if his countenance was more sorrowful, his voice was more cheerful than that of his sister, especially when he addressed the old man.

"I could mention innumerable instances which, although slight, marked the dispositions of these amiable cottagers. In the midst of poverty and want, Felix carried with pleasure to his sister the first little white flower that peeped out from beneath the snowy ground. Early in the morning, before she had risen, he cleared away the snow that obstructed her path to the milk-house, drew water from the well, and brought the wood from the outhouse, where, to his perpetual astonishment, he found his store always replenished by an invisible hand. In the day, I believe, he worked sometimes for a neighbouring farmer, because he often went forth and did not return until dinner, yet brought no wood with him. At other times he worked in the garden, but as there was little to do in the frosty season, he read to the old man and Agatha.

"This reading had puzzled me extremely at first, but by degrees I discovered that he uttered many of the same sounds when he read as when he talked. I conjectured, therefore, that he found on the paper signs for speech which he understood, and I ardently longed to comprehend these also; but how was that possible when I did not even understand the sounds for which they stood as signs? I improved, however, sensibly in this science, but not sufficiently to follow up any kind of conversation, although I applied my whole mind to the endeavour, for I easily perceived that, although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language, which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure, for with this also the contrast perpetually presented to my eyes had made me acquainted.

"I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers—their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions; but how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity.

"As the sun became warmer and the light of day longer, the snow vanished, and I beheld the bare trees and the black earth. From this time Felix was more employed, and the heart-moving indications of impending famine disappeared. Their food, as I afterwards found, was coarse, but it was wholesome; and they procured a sufficiency of it. Several new kinds of plants sprang up in the garden, which they dressed; and these signs of comfort increased daily as the season advanced.

"The old man, leaning on his son, walked each day at noon, when it did not rain, as I found it was called when the heavens poured forth its waters. This frequently took place, but a high wind quickly dried the earth, and the season became far more pleasant than it had been.

"My mode of life in my hovel was uniform. During the morning I attended the motions of the cottagers, and when they were dispersed in various occupations, I slept; the remainder of the day was spent in observing my friends. When they had retired to rest, if there was any moon or the night was star-light, I went into the woods and collected my own food and fuel for the cottage. When I returned, as often as it was necessary, I cleared their path from the snow and performed those offices that I had seen done by Felix. I afterwards found that these labours, performed by an invisible hand, greatly astonished them; and once or twice I heard them, on these occasions, utter the words 'good spirit,' 'wonderful'; but I did not then understand the signification of these terms.

"My thoughts now became more active, and I longed to discover the motives and feelings of these lovely creatures; I was inquisitive to know why Felix appeared so miserable and Agatha

so sad. I thought (foolish wretch!) that it might be in my power to restore happiness to these deserving people. When I slept or was absent, the forms of the venerable blind father, the gentle Agatha, and the excellent Felix flitted before me. I looked upon them as superior beings who would be the arbiters of my future destiny. I formed in my imagination a thousand pictures of presenting myself to them, and their reception of me. I imagined that they would be disgusted, until, by my gentle demeanour and conciliating words, I should first win their favour and afterwards their love.

"These thoughts exhilarated me and led me to apply with fresh ardour to the acquiring the art of language. My organs were indeed harsh, but supple; and although my voice was very unlike the soft music of their tones, yet I pronounced such words as I understood with tolerable ease. It was as the ass and the lap-dog; yet surely the gentle ass whose intentions were affectionate, although his manners were rude, deserved better treatment than blows and execration.

"The pleasant showers and genial warmth of spring greatly altered the aspect of the earth. Men who before this change seemed to have been hid in caves dispersed themselves and were employed in various arts of cultivation. The birds sang in more cheerful notes, and the leaves began to bud forth on the trees. Happy, happy earth! Fit habitation for gods, which, so short a time before, was bleak, damp, and unwholesome. My spirits were elevated by the enchanting appearance of nature; the past was blotted from my memory, the present was tranquil, and the future gilded by bright rays of hope and anticipations of joy."

Chapter 13

"I now hasten to the more moving part of my story. I shall relate events that impressed me with feelings which, from what I had been, have made me what I am.

"Spring advanced rapidly; the weather became fine and the skies cloudless. It surprised me that what before was desert and gloomy should now bloom with the most beautiful flowers and

verdure. My senses were gratified and refreshed by a thousand scents of delight and a thousand sights of beauty.

"It was on one of these days, when my cottagers periodically rested from labour—the old man played on his guitar, and the children listened to him—that I observed the countenance of Felix was melancholy beyond expression; he sighed frequently, and once his father paused in his music, and I conjectured by his manner that he inquired the cause of his son's sorrow. Felix replied in a cheerful accent, and the old man was recommencing his music when someone tapped at the door.

270

"It was a lady on horseback, accompanied by a country-man as a guide. The lady was dressed in a dark suit and covered with a thick black veil. Agatha asked a question, to which the stranger only replied by pronouncing, in a sweet accent, the name of Felix. Her voice was musical but unlike that of either of my friends. On hearing this word, Felix came up hastily to the lady, who, when she saw him, threw up her veil, and I beheld a countenance of angelic beauty and expression. Her hair of a shining raven black, and curiously braided; her eyes were dark, but gentle, although animated; her features of a regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink.

"Felix seemed ravished with delight when he saw her, every trait of sorrow vanished from his face, and it instantly expressed a degree of ecstatic joy, of which I could hardly have believed it capable; his eyes sparkled, as his cheek flushed with pleasure; and at that moment I thought him as beautiful as the stranger. She appeared affected by different feelings; wiping a few tears from her lovely eyes, she held out her hand to Felix, who kissed it rapturously and called her, as well as I could distinguish, his sweet Arabian. She did not appear to understand him, but smiled. He assisted her to dismount, and dismissing her guide, conducted her into the cottage. Some conversation took place between him and his father, and the young stranger knelt at the old man's feet and would have kissed his hand, but he raised her and embraced her affectionately.

"I soon perceived that although the stranger uttered articulate sounds and appeared to have a language of her own, she was neither understood by nor herself understood the cottagers. They made many signs which I did not comprehend, but I saw that her presence diffused gladness through the cottage, dispelling their sorrow as the sun dissipates the morning mists. Felix seemed peculiarly happy and with smiles of delight welcomed his Arabian. Agatha, the ever-gentle Agatha, kissed the hands of the lovely stranger, and pointing to her brother, made signs which appeared to me to mean that he had been sorrowful until she came. Some hours passed thus, while they, by their countenances, expressed joy, the cause of which I did not comprehend. Presently I found, by the frequent recurrence of some sound which the stranger repeated after them, that she was endeavouring to learn their language; and the idea instantly occurred to me that I should make use of the same instructions to the same end. The stranger learned about twenty words at the first lesson; most of them, indeed, were those which I had before understood, but I profited by the others.

"As night came on, Agatha and the Arabian retired early. When they separated Felix kissed the hand of the stranger and said, 'Good night sweet Safie.' He sat up much longer, conversing with his father, and by the frequent repetition of her name I conjectured that their lovely guest was the subject of their conversation. I ardently desired to understand them, and bent every faculty towards that purpose, but found it utterly impossible.

"The next morning Felix went out to his work, and after the usual occupations of Agatha were finished, the Arabian sat at the feet of the old man, and taking his guitar, played some airs so entrancingly beautiful that they at once drew tears of sorrow and delight from my eyes. She sang, and her voice flowed in a rich cadence, swelling or dying away like a nightingale of the woods.

"When she had finished, she gave the guitar to Agatha, who at first declined it. She played a simple air, and her voice accompanied it in sweet accents, but unlike the wondrous strain of the stranger. The old man appeared enraptured and said some

words which Agatha endeavoured to explain to Safie, and by which he appeared to wish to express that she bestowed on him the greatest delight by her music.

"The days now passed as peaceably as before, with the sole alteration that joy had taken place of sadness in the countenances of my friends. Safie was always gay and happy; she and I improved rapidly in the knowledge of language, so that in two months I began to comprehend most of the words uttered by my protectors.

"In the meanwhile also the black ground was covered with herbage, and the green banks interspersed with innumerable flowers, sweet to the scent and the eyes, stars of pale radiance among the moonlight woods; the sun became warmer, the nights clear and balmy; and my nocturnal rambles were an extreme pleasure to me, although they were considerably shortened by the late setting and early rising of the sun, for I never ventured abroad during daylight, fearful of meeting with the same treatment I had formerly endured in the first village which I entered.

"My days were spent in close attention, that I might more speedily master the language; and I may boast that I improved more rapidly than the Arabian, who understood very little and conversed in broken accents, whilst I comprehended and could imitate almost every word that was spoken.

"While I improved in speech, I also learned the science of letters as it was taught to the stranger, and this opened before me a wide field for wonder and delight.

"The book from which Felix instructed Safie was Volney's *Ruins of Empires*. I should not have understood the purport of this book had not Felix, in reading it, given very minute explanations. He had chosen this work, he said, because the declamatory style was framed in imitation of the Eastern authors. Through this work I obtained a cursory knowledge of history and a view of the several empires at present existing in the world; it gave me an insight into the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth. I heard of the slothful Asiatics, of the stupendous genius and mental activity of the Grecians, of the wars and wonderful virtue of the early Romans—

of their subsequent degenerating—of the decline of that mighty empire, of chivalry, Christianity, and kings. I heard of the discovery of the American hemisphere and wept with Safie over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants.

"These wonderful narrations inspired me with strange feelings. Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle and at another as all that can be conceived of noble and godlike. To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than that of the blind mole or harmless worm. For a long time I could not conceive how one man could go forth to murder his fellow, or even why there were laws and governments; but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed, my wonder ceased and I turned away with disgust and loathing.

"Every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders to me. While I listened to the instructions which Felix bestowed upon the Arabian, the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty, of rank, descent, and noble blood.

"The words induced me to turn towards myself. I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages, but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few! And what was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant, but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endued with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. When I looked around I saw and heard of none like me. Was I, then, a monster, a

blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?

"I cannot describe to you the agony that these reflections inflicted upon me; I tried to dispel them, but sorrow only increased with knowledge. Oh, that I had forever remained in my native wood, nor known nor felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat!

285

"Of what a strange nature is knowledge! It clings to the mind when it has once seized on it like a lichen on the rock. I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling, but I learned that there was but one means to overcome the sensation of pain, and that was death—a state which I feared yet did not understand. I admired virtue and good feelings and loved the gentle manners and amiable qualities of my cottagers, but I was shut out from intercourse with them, except through means which I obtained by stealth, when I was unseen and unknown, and which rather increased than satisfied the desire I had of becoming one among my fellows. The gentle words of Agatha and the animated smiles of the charming Arabian were not for me. The mild exhortations of the old man and the lively conversation of the loved Felix were not for me. Miserable, unhappy wretch!

"Other lessons were impressed upon me even more deeply. I heard of the difference of sexes, and the birth and growth of children, how the father doted on the smiles of the infant, and the lively sallies of the older child, how all the life and cares of the mother were wrapped up in the precious charge, how the mind of youth expanded and gained knowledge, of brother, sister, and all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds.

"But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing. From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I? The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans.

"I will soon explain to what these feelings tended, but allow me now to return to the cottagers, whose story excited in me such various feelings of indignation, delight, and wonder, but which all terminated in additional love and reverence for my protectors (for so I loved, in an innocent, half-painful self-deceit, to call them)."

Chapter 14

"Some time elapsed before I learned the history of my friends. It was one which could not fail to impress itself deeply on my mind, unfolding as it did a number of circumstances, each interesting and wonderful to one so utterly inexperienced as I was.

290

"The name of the old man was De Lacey. He was descended from a good family in France, where he had lived for many years in affluence, respected by his superiors and beloved by his equals. His son was bred in the service of his country, and Agatha had ranked with ladies of the highest distinction. A few months before my arrival they had lived in a large and luxurious city called Paris, surrounded by friends and possessed of every enjoyment which virtue, refinement of intellect, or taste, accompanied by a moderate fortune, could afford.

"The father of Safie had been the cause of their ruin. He was a Turkish merchant and had inhabited Paris for many years, when, for some reason which I could not learn, he became obnoxious to the government. He was seized and cast into prison the very day that Safie arrived from Constantinople to join him. He was tried and condemned to death. The injustice of his sentence was very flagrant; all Paris was indignant; and it was judged that his religion and wealth rather than the crime alleged against him had been the cause of his condemnation.

"Felix had accidentally been present at the trial; his horror and indignation were uncontrollable when he heard the decision of the court. He made, at that moment, a solemn vow to deliver him and then looked around for the means. After many fruitless attempts to gain admittance to the prison, he found a strongly grated window in an unguarded part of the building, which lighted the

dungeon of the unfortunate Muhammadan, who, loaded with chains, waited in despair the execution of the barbarous sentence. Felix visited the grate at night and made known to the prisoner his intentions in his favour. The Turk, amazed and delighted, endeavoured to kindle the zeal of his deliverer by promises of reward and wealth. Felix rejected his offers with contempt, yet when he saw the lovely Safie, who was allowed to visit her father and who by her gestures expressed her lively gratitude, the youth could not help owing to his own mind that the captive possessed a treasure which would fully reward his toil and hazard.

"The Turk quickly perceived the impression that his daughter had made on the heart of Felix and endeavoured to secure him more entirely in his interests by the promise of her hand in marriage so soon as he should be conveyed to a place of safety. Felix was too delicate to accept this offer, yet he looked forward to the probability of the event as to the consummation of his happiness.

"During the ensuing days, while the preparations were going forward for the escape of the merchant, the zeal of Felix was warmed by several letters that he received from this lovely girl, who found means to express her thoughts in the language of her lover by the aid of an old man, a servant of her father who understood French. She thanked him in the most ardent terms for his intended services towards her parent, and at the same time she gently deplored her own fate.

"I have copies of these letters, for I found means, during my residence in the hovel, to procure the implements of writing; and the letters were often in the hands of Felix or Agatha. Before I depart I will give them to you; they will prove the truth of my tale; but at present, as the sun is already far declined, I shall only have time to repeat the substance of them to you.

"Safie related that her mother was a Christian Arab, seized and made a slave by the Turks; recommended by her beauty, she had won the heart of the father of Safie, who married her. The young girl spoke in high and enthusiastic terms of her mother, who, born in freedom, spurned the bondage to which she was now reduced. She instructed her daughter in the tenets of her religion and taught

her to aspire to higher powers of intellect and an independence of spirit forbidden to the female followers of Muhammad. This lady died, but her lessons were indelibly impressed on the mind of Safie, who sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia and being immured within the walls of a harem, allowed only to occupy herself with infantile amusements, ill-suited to the temper of her soul, now accustomed to grand ideas and a noble emulation for virtue. The prospect of marrying a Christian and remaining in a country where women were allowed to take a rank in society was enchanting to her.

"The day for the execution of the Turk was fixed, but on the night previous to it he quitted his prison and before morning was distant many leagues from Paris. Felix had procured passports in the name of his father, sister, and himself. He had previously communicated his plan to the former, who aided the deceit by quitting his house, under the pretence of a journey and concealed himself, with his daughter, in an obscure part of Paris.

"Felix conducted the fugitives through France to Lyons and across Mont Cenis to Leghorn, where the merchant had decided to wait a favourable opportunity of passing into some part of the Turkish dominions.

"Safie resolved to remain with her father until the moment of his departure, before which time the Turk renewed his promise that she should be united to his deliverer; and Felix remained with them in expectation of that event; and in the meantime he enjoyed the society of the Arabian, who exhibited towards him the simplest and tenderest affection. They conversed with one another through the means of an interpreter, and sometimes with the interpretation of looks; and Safie sang to him the divine airs of her native country.

"The Turk allowed this intimacy to take place and encouraged the hopes of the youthful lovers, while in his heart he had formed far other plans. He loathed the idea that his daughter should be united to a Christian, but he feared the resentment of Felix if he should appear lukewarm, for he knew that he was still in the power of his deliverer if he should choose to betray him to the Italian state which they inhabited. He revolved a thousand plans

by which he should be enabled to prolong the deceit until it might be no longer necessary, and secretly to take his daughter with him when he departed. His plans were facilitated by the news which arrived from Paris.

"The government of France were greatly enraged at the escape of their victim and spared no pains to detect and punish his deliverer. The plot of Felix was quickly discovered, and De Lacey and Agatha were thrown into prison. The news reached Felix and roused him from his dream of pleasure. His blind and aged father and his gentle sister lay in a noisome dungeon while he enjoyed the free air and the society of her whom he loved. This idea was torture to him. He quickly arranged with the Turk that if the latter should find a favourable opportunity for escape before Felix could return to Italy, Safie should remain as a boarder at a convent at Leghorn; and then, quitting the lovely Arabian, he hastened to Paris and delivered himself up to the vengeance of the law, hoping to free De Lacey and Agatha by this proceeding.

"He did not succeed. They remained confined for five months before the trial took place, the result of which deprived them of their fortune and condemned them to a perpetual exile from their native country.

"They found a miserable asylum in the cottage in Germany, where I discovered them. Felix soon learned that the treacherous Turk, for whom he and his family endured such unheard-of oppression, on discovering that his deliverer was thus reduced to poverty and ruin, became a traitor to good feeling and honour and had quitted Italy with his daughter, insultingly sending Felix a pittance of money to aid him, as he said, in some plan of future maintenance.

"Such were the events that preyed on the heart of Felix and rendered him, when I first saw him, the most miserable of his family. He could have endured poverty, and while this distress had been the meed of his virtue, he gloried in it; but the ingratitude of the Turk and the loss of his beloved Safie were misfortunes more bitter and irreparable. The arrival of the Arabian now infused new life into his soul.

"When the news reached Leghorn that Felix was deprived of his wealth and rank, the merchant commanded his daughter to think no more of her lover, but to prepare to return to her native country. The generous nature of Safie was outraged by this command; she attempted to expostulate with her father, but he left her angrily, reiterating his tyrannical mandate.

"A few days after, the Turk entered his daughter's apartment and told her hastily that he had reason to believe that his residence at Leghorn had been divulged and that he should speedily be delivered up to the French government; he had consequently hired a vessel to convey him to Constantinople, for which city he should sail in a few hours. He intended to leave his daughter under the care of a confidential servant, to follow at her leisure with the greater part of his property, which had not yet arrived at Leghorn.

"When alone, Safie resolved in her own mind the plan of conduct that it would become her to pursue in this emergency. A residence in Turkey was abhorrent to her; her religion and her feelings were alike averse to it. By some papers of her father which fell into her hands she heard of the exile of her lover and learnt the name of the spot where he then resided. She hesitated some time, but at length she formed her determination. Taking with her some jewels that belonged to her and a sum of money, she quitted Italy with an attendant, a native of Leghorn, but who understood the common language of Turkey, and departed for Germany.

"She arrived in safety at a town about twenty leagues from the cottage of De Lacey, when her attendant fell dangerously ill. Safie nursed her with the most devoted affection, but the poor girl died, and the Arabian was left alone, unacquainted with the language of the country and utterly ignorant of the customs of the world. She fell, however, into good hands. The Italian had mentioned the name of the spot for which they were bound, and after her death the woman of the house in which they had lived took care that Safie should arrive in safety at the cottage of her lover."

"Such was the history of my beloved cottagers. It impressed me deeply. I learned, from the views of social life which it developed, to admire their virtues and to deprecate the vices of mankind.

"As yet I looked upon crime as a distant evil, benevolence and generosity were ever present before me, inciting within me a desire to become an actor in the busy scene where so many admirable qualities were called forth and displayed. But in giving an account of the progress of my intellect, I must not omit a circumstance which occurred in the beginning of the month of August of the same year.

"One night during my accustomed visit to the neighbouring wood where I collected my own food and brought home firing for my protectors, I found on the ground a leathern portmanteau containing several articles of dress and some books. I eagerly seized the prize and returned with it to my hovel. Fortunately the books were written in the language, the elements of which I had acquired at the cottage; they consisted of *Paradise Lost*, a volume of *Plutarch's Lives*, and the *Sorrows of Werter*. The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight; I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories, whilst my friends were employed in their ordinary occupations.

"I can hardly describe to you the effect of these books. They produced in me an infinity of new images and feelings, that sometimes raised me to ecstasy, but more frequently sunk me into the lowest dejection. In the *Sorrows of Werter*, besides the interest of its simple and affecting story, so many opinions are canvassed and so many lights thrown upon what had hitherto been to me obscure subjects that I found in it a never-ending source of speculation and astonishment. The gentle and domestic manners it described, combined with lofty sentiments and feelings, which had for their object something out of self, accorded well with my experience among my protectors and with the wants which were forever alive in my own bosom. But I thought *Werter* himself a more divine being than I had ever beheld or imagined; his character contained no pretension, but it sank deep. The disquisitions upon death and suicide were calculated to fill me

with wonder. I did not pretend to enter into the merits of the case, yet I inclined towards the opinions of the hero, whose extinction I wept, without precisely understanding it.

"As I read, however, I applied much personally to my own feelings and condition. I found myself similar yet at the same time strangely unlike to the beings concerning whom I read and to whose conversation I was a listener. I sympathized with and partly understood them, but I was unformed in mind; I was dependent on none and related to none. 'The path of my departure was free,' and there was none to lament my annihilation. My person was hideous and my stature gigantic. What did this mean? Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination? These questions continually recurred, but I was unable to solve them.

"The volume of Plutarch's Lives which I possessed contained the histories of the first founders of the ancient republics. This book had a far different effect upon me from the Sorrows of Werter. I learned from Werter's imaginations despondency and gloom, but Plutarch taught me high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages. Many things I read surpassed my understanding and experience. I had a very confused knowledge of kingdoms, wide extents of country, mighty rivers, and boundless seas. But I was perfectly unacquainted with towns and large assemblages of men. The cottage of my protectors had been the only school in which I had studied human nature, but this book developed new and mightier scenes of action. I read of men concerned in public affairs, governing or massacring their species. I felt the greatest ardour for virtue rise within me, and abhorrence for vice, as far as I understood the signification of those terms, relative as they were, as I applied them, to pleasure and pain alone. Induced by these feelings, I was of course led to admire peaceable lawgivers, Numa, Solon, and Lycurgus, in preference to Romulus and Theseus. The patriarchal lives of my protectors caused these impressions to take a firm hold on my mind; perhaps, if my first introduction to humanity had been made by a

young soldier, burning for glory and slaughter, I should have been imbued with different sensations.

"But *Paradise Lost* excited different and far deeper emotions. I read it, as I had read the other volumes which had fallen into my hands, as a true history. It moved every feeling of wonder and awe that the picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures was capable of exciting. I often referred the several situations, as their similarity struck me, to my own. Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition, for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me.

"Another circumstance strengthened and confirmed these feelings. Soon after my arrival in the hovel I discovered some papers in the pocket of the dress which I had taken from your laboratory. At first I had neglected them, but now that I was able to decipher the characters in which they were written, I began to study them with diligence. It was your journal of the four months that preceded my creation. You minutely described in these papers every step you took in the progress of your work; this history was mingled with accounts of domestic occurrences. You doubtless recollect these papers. Here they are. Everything is related in them which bears reference to my accursed origin; the whole detail of that series of disgusting circumstances which produced it is set in view; the minutest description of my odious and loathsome person is given, in language which painted your own horrors and rendered mine indelible. I sickened as I read. 'Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even YOU turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance.

Satan had his companions, fellow devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred.'

"These were the reflections of my hours of despondency and solitude; but when I contemplated the virtues of the cottagers, their amiable and benevolent dispositions, I persuaded myself that when they should become acquainted with my admiration of their virtues they would compassionate me and overlook my personal deformity. Could they turn from their door one, however monstrous, who solicited their compassion and friendship? I resolved, at least, not to despair, but in every way to fit myself for an interview with them which would decide my fate. I postponed this attempt for some months longer, for the importance attached to its success inspired me with a dread lest I should fail. Besides, I found that my understanding improved so much with every day's experience that I was unwilling to commence this undertaking until a few more months should have added to my sagacity.

"Several changes, in the meantime, took place in the cottage. The presence of Safie diffused happiness among its inhabitants, and I also found that a greater degree of plenty reigned there. Felix and Agatha spent more time in amusement and conversation, and were assisted in their labours by servants. They did not appear rich, but they were contented and happy; their feelings were serene and peaceful, while mine became every day more tumultuous. Increase of knowledge only discovered to me more clearly what a wretched outcast I was. I cherished hope, it is true, but it vanished when I beheld my person reflected in water or my shadow in the moonshine, even as that frail image and that inconstant shade.

"I endeavoured to crush these fears and to fortify myself for the trial which in a few months I resolved to undergo; and sometimes I allowed my thoughts, unchecked by reason, to ramble in the fields of Paradise, and dared to fancy amiable and lovely creatures sympathizing with my feelings and cheering my gloom; their angelic countenances breathed smiles of consolation. But it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his

Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him.

"Autumn passed thus. I saw, with surprise and grief, the leaves decay and fall, and nature again assume the barren and bleak appearance it had worn when I first beheld the woods and the lovely moon. Yet I did not heed the bleakness of the weather; I was better fitted by my conformation for the endurance of cold than heat. But my chief delights were the sight of the flowers, the birds, and all the gay apparel of summer; when those deserted me, I turned with more attention towards the cottagers. Their happiness was not decreased by the absence of summer. They loved and sympathized with one another; and their joys, depending on each other, were not interrupted by the casualties that took place around them. The more I saw of them, the greater became my desire to claim their protection and kindness; my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures; to see their sweet looks directed towards me with affection was the utmost limit of my ambition. I dared not think that they would turn them from me with disdain and horror. The poor that stopped at their door were never driven away. I asked, it is true, for greater treasures than a little food or rest: I required kindness and sympathy; but I did not believe myself utterly unworthy of it.

"The winter advanced, and an entire revolution of the seasons had taken place since I awoke into life. My attention at this time was solely directed towards my plan of introducing myself into the cottage of my protectors. I revolved many projects, but that on which I finally fixed was to enter the dwelling when the blind old man should be alone. I had sagacity enough to discover that the unnatural hideousness of my person was the chief object of horror with those who had formerly beheld me. My voice, although harsh, had nothing terrible in it; I thought, therefore, that if in the absence of his children I could gain the good will and mediation of the old De Lacey, I might by his means be tolerated by my younger protectors.

"One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves that strewed the ground and diffused cheerfulness, although it denied warmth, Safie, Agatha, and Felix departed on a long country walk, and the

old man, at his own desire, was left alone in the cottage. When his children had departed, he took up his guitar and played several mournful but sweet airs, more sweet and mournful than I had ever heard him play before. At first his countenance was illuminated with pleasure, but as he continued, thoughtfulness and sadness succeeded; at length, laying aside the instrument, he sat absorbed in reflection.

"My heart beat quick; this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide my hopes or realize my fears. The servants were gone to a neighbouring fair. All was silent in and around the cottage; it was an excellent opportunity; yet, when I proceeded to execute my plan, my limbs failed me and I sank to the ground. Again I rose, and exerting all the firmness of which I was master, removed the planks which I had placed before my hovel to conceal my retreat. The fresh air revived me, and with renewed determination I approached the door of their cottage.

"I knocked. 'Who is there?' said the old man. 'Come in.'

325

"I entered. 'Pardon this intrusion,' said I; 'I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.'

"'Enter,' said De Lacey, 'and I will try in what manner I can to relieve your wants; but, unfortunately, my children are from home, and as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to procure food for you.'

"'Do not trouble yourself, my kind host; I have food; it is warmth and rest only that I need.'

"I sat down, and a silence ensued. I knew that every minute was precious to me, yet I remained irresolute in what manner to commence the interview, when the old man addressed me. 'By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman; are you French?'

"'No; but I was educated by a French family and understand that language only. I am now going to claim the protection of some friends, whom I sincerely love, and of whose favour I have some hopes.'

330

"'Are they Germans?'

"No, they are French. But let us change the subject. I am an unfortunate and deserted creature, I look around and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These amiable people to whom I go have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail there, I am an outcast in the world forever.'

"Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate, but the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not despair.'

"They are kind—they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless and in some degree beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.'

"That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?"

335

"I am about to undertake that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many overwhelming terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.'

"Where do these friends reside?"

"Near this spot.'

"The old man paused and then continued, 'If you will unreservedly confide to me the particulars of your tale, I perhaps may be of use in undeceiving them. I am blind and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere. I am poor and an exile, but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature.'

"Excellent man! I thank you and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures.'

340

"Heaven forbid! Even if you were really criminal, for that can only drive you to desperation, and not instigate you to virtue. I also am unfortunate; I and my family have been condemned, although innocent; judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes.'

"How can I thank you, my best and only benefactor? From your lips first have I heard the voice of kindness directed towards me; I shall be forever grateful; and your present humanity assures me of success with those friends whom I am on the point of meeting.'

"May I know the names and residence of those friends?"

"I paused. This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of or bestow happiness on me forever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair and sobbed aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors. I had not a moment to lose, but seizing the hand of the old man, I cried, 'Now is the time! Save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!'

"Great God!" exclaimed the old man. 'Who are you?"

345

"At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung, in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and anguish, I quitted the cottage, and in the general tumult escaped unperceived to my hovel."

"Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed? I know not; despair had not yet taken possession of me; my feelings were those of rage and revenge. I could with pleasure have destroyed the cottage and its inhabitants and have glutted myself with their shrieks and misery.

"When night came I quitted my retreat and wandered in the wood; and now, no longer restrained by the fear of discovery, I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast that had broken the toils, destroying the objects that obstructed me and ranging through the wood with a stag-like swiftness. Oh! What a miserable night I passed! The cold stars shone in mockery, and the bare trees waved their branches above me; now and then the sweet voice of a bird burst forth amidst the universal stillness. All, save I, were at rest or in enjoyment; I, like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me, and finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin.

"But this was a luxury of sensation that could not endure; I became fatigued with excess of bodily exertion and sank on the damp grass in the sick impotence of despair. There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No; from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and more than all, against him who had formed me and sent me forth to this insupportable misery.

"The sun rose; I heard the voices of men and knew that it was impossible to return to my retreat during that day. Accordingly I hid myself in some thick underwood, determining to devote the ensuing hours to reflection on my situation.

"The pleasant sunshine and the pure air of day restored me to some degree of tranquillity; and when I considered what had passed at the cottage, I could not help believing that I had been too hasty in my conclusions. I had certainly acted imprudently. It was apparent that my conversation had interested the father in my behalf, and I was a fool in having exposed my person to the

horror of his children. I ought to have familiarized the old De Lacey to me, and by degrees to have discovered myself to the rest of his family, when they should have been prepared for my approach. But I did not believe my errors to be irretrievable, and after much consideration I resolved to return to the cottage, seek the old man, and by my representations win him to my party.

"These thoughts calmed me, and in the afternoon I sank into a profound sleep; but the fever of my blood did not allow me to be visited by peaceful dreams. The horrible scene of the preceding day was forever acting before my eyes; the females were flying and the enraged Felix tearing me from his father's feet. I awoke exhausted, and finding that it was already night, I crept forth from my hiding-place, and went in search of food.

"When my hunger was appeased, I directed my steps towards the well-known path that conducted to the cottage. All there was at peace. I crept into my hovel and remained in silent expectation of the accustomed hour when the family arose. That hour passed, the sun mounted high in the heavens, but the cottagers did not appear. I trembled violently, apprehending some dreadful misfortune. The inside of the cottage was dark, and I heard no motion; I cannot describe the agony of this suspense.

"Presently two countrymen passed by, but pausing near the cottage, they entered into conversation, using violent gesticulations; but I did not understand what they said, as they spoke the language of the country, which differed from that of my protectors. Soon after, however, Felix approached with another man; I was surprised, as I knew that he had not quitted the cottage that morning, and waited anxiously to discover from his discourse the meaning of these unusual appearances.

"'Do you consider,' said his companion to him, 'that you will be obliged to pay three months' rent and to lose the produce of your garden? I do not wish to take any unfair advantage, and I beg therefore that you will take some days to consider of your determination.'

355

"'It is utterly useless,' replied Felix; 'we can never again inhabit your cottage. The life of my father is in the greatest danger, owing to the dreadful circumstance that I have related. My wife and my

sister will never recover from their horror. I entreat you not to reason with me any more. Take possession of your tenement and let me fly from this place.'

"Felix trembled violently as he said this. He and his companion entered the cottage, in which they remained for a few minutes, and then departed. I never saw any of the family of De Lacey more.

"I continued for the remainder of the day in my hovel in a state of utter and stupid despair. My protectors had departed and had broken the only link that held me to the world. For the first time the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosom, and I did not strive to control them, but allowing myself to be borne away by the stream, I bent my mind towards injury and death. When I thought of my friends, of the mild voice of De Lacey, the gentle eyes of Agatha, and the exquisite beauty of the Arabian, these thoughts vanished and a gush of tears somewhat soothed me. But again when I reflected that they had spurned and deserted me, anger returned, a rage of anger, and unable to injure anything human, I turned my fury towards inanimate objects. As night advanced I placed a variety of combustibles around the cottage, and after having destroyed every vestige of cultivation in the garden, I waited with forced impatience until the moon had sunk to commence my operations.

"As the night advanced, a fierce wind arose from the woods and quickly dispersed the clouds that had loitered in the heavens; the blast tore along like a mighty avalanche and produced a kind of insanity in my spirits that burst all bounds of reason and reflection. I lighted the dry branch of a tree and danced with fury around the devoted cottage, my eyes still fixed on the western horizon, the edge of which the moon nearly touched. A part of its orb was at length hid, and I waved my brand; it sank, and with a loud scream I fired the straw, and heath, and bushes, which I had collected. The wind fanned the fire, and the cottage was quickly enveloped by the flames, which clung to it and licked it with their forked and destroying tongues.

"As soon as I was convinced that no assistance could save any part of the habitation, I quitted the scene and sought for refuge in

the woods.

"And now, with the world before me, whither should I bend my steps? I resolved to fly far from the scene of my misfortunes; but to me, hated and despised, every country must be equally horrible. At length the thought of you crossed my mind. I learned from your papers that you were my father, my creator; and to whom could I apply with more fitness than to him who had given me life? Among the lessons that Felix had bestowed upon Safie, geography had not been omitted; I had learned from these the relative situations of the different countries of the earth. You had mentioned Geneva as the name of your native town, and towards this place I resolved to proceed.

"But how was I to direct myself? I knew that I must travel in a southwesterly direction to reach my destination, but the sun was my only guide. I did not know the names of the towns that I was to pass through, nor could I ask information from a single human being; but I did not despair. From you only could I hope for succour, although towards you I felt no sentiment but that of hatred. Unfeeling, heartless creator! You had endowed me with perceptions and passions and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind. But on you only had I any claim for pity and redress, and from you I determined to seek that justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being that wore the human form.

"My travels were long and the sufferings I endured intense. It was late in autumn when I quitted the district where I had so long resided. I travelled only at night, fearful of encountering the visage of a human being. Nature decayed around me, and the sun became heatless; rain and snow poured around me; mighty rivers were frozen; the surface of the earth was hard and chill, and bare, and I found no shelter. Oh, earth! How often did I imprecate curses on the cause of my being! The mildness of my nature had fled, and all within me was turned to gall and bitterness. The nearer I approached to your habitation, the more deeply did I feel the spirit of revenge enkindled in my heart. Snow fell, and the waters were hardened, but I rested not. A few incidents now and then directed me, and I possessed a map of the country; but I

often wandered wide from my path. The agony of my feelings allowed me no respite; no incident occurred from which my rage and misery could not extract its food; but a circumstance that happened when I arrived on the confines of Switzerland, when the sun had recovered its warmth and the earth again began to look green, confirmed in an especial manner the bitterness and horror of my feelings.

"I generally rested during the day and travelled only when I was secured by night from the view of man. One morning, however, finding that my path lay through a deep wood, I ventured to continue my journey after the sun had risen; the day, which was one of the first of spring, cheered even me by the loveliness of its sunshine and the balminess of the air. I felt emotions of gentleness and pleasure, that had long appeared dead, revive within me. Half surprised by the novelty of these sensations, I allowed myself to be borne away by them, and forgetting my solitude and deformity, dared to be happy. Soft tears again bedewed my cheeks, and I even raised my humid eyes with thankfulness towards the blessed sun, which bestowed such joy upon me.

"I continued to wind among the paths of the wood, until I came to its boundary, which was skirted by a deep and rapid river, into which many of the trees bent their branches, now budding with the fresh spring. Here I paused, not exactly knowing what path to pursue, when I heard the sound of voices, that induced me to conceal myself under the shade of a cypress. I was scarcely hid when a young girl came running towards the spot where I was concealed, laughing, as if she ran from someone in sport. She continued her course along the precipitous sides of the river, when suddenly her foot slipped, and she fell into the rapid stream. I rushed from my hiding-place and with extreme labour, from the force of the current, saved her and dragged her to shore. She was senseless, and I endeavoured by every means in my power to restore animation, when I was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a rustic, who was probably the person from whom she had playfully fled. On seeing me, he darted towards me, and tearing the girl from my arms, hastened towards the deeper parts

of the wood. I followed speedily, I hardly knew why; but when the man saw me draw near, he aimed a gun, which he carried, at my body and fired. I sank to the ground, and my injurer, with increased swiftness, escaped into the wood.

"This was then the reward of my benevolence! I had saved a human being from destruction, and as a recompense I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound which shattered the flesh and bone. The feelings of kindness and gentleness which I had entertained but a few moments before gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind. But the agony of my wound overcame me; my pulses paused, and I fainted.

"For some weeks I led a miserable life in the woods, endeavouring to cure the wound which I had received. The ball had entered my shoulder, and I knew not whether it had remained there or passed through; at any rate I had no means of extracting it. My sufferings were augmented also by the oppressive sense of the injustice and ingratitude of their infliction. My daily vows rose for revenge—a deep and deadly revenge, such as would alone compensate for the outrages and anguish I had endured.

"After some weeks my wound healed, and I continued my journey. The labours I endured were no longer to be alleviated by the bright sun or gentle breezes of spring; all joy was but a mockery which insulted my desolate state and made me feel more painfully that I was not made for the enjoyment of pleasure.

"But my toils now drew near a close, and in two months from this time I reached the environs of Geneva.

"It was evening when I arrived, and I retired to a hiding-place among the fields that surround it to meditate in what manner I should apply to you. I was oppressed by fatigue and hunger and far too unhappy to enjoy the gentle breezes of evening or the prospect of the sun setting behind the stupendous mountains of Jura.

"At this time a slight sleep relieved me from the pain of reflection, which was disturbed by the approach of a beautiful child, who came running into the recess I had chosen, with all the sportiveness of infancy. Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea

seized me that this little creature was unprejudiced and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity. If, therefore, I could seize him and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth.

"Urged by this impulse, I seized on the boy as he passed and drew him towards me. As soon as he beheld my form, he placed his hands before his eyes and uttered a shrill scream; I drew his hand forcibly from his face and said, 'Child, what is the meaning of this? I do not intend to hurt you; listen to me.'

"He struggled violently. 'Let me go,' he cried; 'monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to eat me and tear me to pieces. You are an ogre. Let me go, or I will tell my papa.'

"'Boy, you will never see your father again; you must come with me.'

"'Hideous monster! Let me go. My papa is a syndic—he is M. Frankenstein—he will punish you. You dare not keep me.'

375

"'Frankenstein! you belong then to my enemy—to him towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge; you shall be my first victim.'

"The child still struggled and loaded me with epithets which carried despair to my heart; I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet.

"I gazed on my victim, and my heart swelled with exultation and hellish triumph; clapping my hands, I exclaimed, 'I too can create desolation; my enemy is not invulnerable; this death will carry despair to him, and a thousand other miseries shall torment and destroy him.'

"As I fixed my eyes on the child, I saw something glittering on his breast. I took it; it was a portrait of a most lovely woman. In spite of my malignity, it softened and attracted me. For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips; but presently my rage returned; I remembered that I was forever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow and that she whose resemblance I contemplated would, in regarding me, have changed that air of divine benignity to one expressive of disgust and affright.

"Can you wonder that such thoughts transported me with rage? I only wonder that at that moment, instead of venting my

380

sensations in exclamations and agony, I did not rush among mankind and perish in the attempt to destroy them.

"While I was overcome by these feelings, I left the spot where I had committed the murder, and seeking a more secluded hiding-place, I entered a barn which had appeared to me to be empty. A woman was sleeping on some straw; she was young, not indeed so beautiful as her whose portrait I held, but of an agreeable aspect and blooming in the loveliness of youth and health. Here, I thought, is one of those whose joy-imparting smiles are bestowed on all but me. And then I bent over her and whispered, 'Awake, fairest, thy lover is near—he who would give his life but to obtain one look of affection from thine eyes; my beloved, awake!'

"The sleeper stirred; a thrill of terror ran through me. Should she indeed awake, and see me, and curse me, and denounce the murderer? Thus would she assuredly act if her darkened eyes opened and she beheld me. The thought was madness; it stirred the fiend within me—not I, but she, shall suffer; the murder I have committed because I am forever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime had its source in her; be hers the punishment! Thanks to the lessons of Felix and the sanguinary laws of man, I had learned now to work mischief. I bent over her and placed the portrait securely in one of the folds of her dress. She moved again, and I fled.

"For some days I haunted the spot where these scenes had taken place, sometimes wishing to see you, sometimes resolved to quit the world and its miseries forever. At length I wandered towards these mountains, and have ranged through their immense recesses, consumed by a burning passion which you alone can gratify. We may not part until you have promised to comply with my requisition. I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. This being you must create."

The being finished speaking and fixed his looks upon me in the expectation of a reply. But I was bewildered, perplexed, and unable to arrange my ideas sufficiently to understand the full extent of his proposition. He continued,

"You must create a female for me with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. This you alone can do, and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse to concede."

The latter part of his tale had kindled anew in me the anger that had died away while he narrated his peaceful life among the cottagers, and as he said this I could no longer suppress the rage that burned within me.

"I do refuse it," I replied; "and no torture shall ever extort a consent from me. You may render me the most miserable of men, but you shall never make me base in my own eyes. Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world. Begone! I have answered you; you may torture me, but I will never consent."

"You are in the wrong," replied the fiend; "and instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you. I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You, my creator, would tear me to pieces and triumph; remember that, and tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me? You would not call it murder if you could precipitate me into one of those ice-rifts and destroy my frame, the work of your own hands. Shall I respect man when he condemns me? Let him live with me in the interchange of kindness, and instead of injury I would bestow every benefit upon him with tears of gratitude at his acceptance. But that cannot be; the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union. Yet mine shall not be the submission of abject slavery. I will revenge my injuries; if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth."

A fiendish rage animated him as he said this; his face was wrinkled into contortions too horrible for human eyes to behold; but presently he calmed himself and proceeded—

"I intended to reason. This passion is detrimental to me, for you do not reflect that YOU are the cause of its excess. If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred and a hundredfold; for that one creature's sake I would make peace with the whole kind! But I now indulge in dreams of bliss that cannot be realized. What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself; the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! My creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!"

390

I was moved. I shuddered when I thought of the possible consequences of my consent, but I felt that there was some justice in his argument. His tale and the feelings he now expressed proved him to be a creature of fine sensations, and did I not as his maker owe him all the portion of happiness that it was in my power to bestow? He saw my change of feeling and continued,

"If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again; I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human, and you must feel that you could deny it only in the wantonness of power and cruelty. Pitiless as you have been towards me, I now see compassion in your eyes; let me seize the favourable moment and persuade you to promise what I so ardently desire."

"You propose," replied I, "to fly from the habitations of man, to dwell in those wilds where the beasts of the field will be your only companions. How can you, who long for the love and sympathy of man, persevere in this exile? You will return and again seek their kindness, and you will meet with their detestation; your evil passions will be renewed, and you will then have a companion to aid you in the task of destruction. This may not be; cease to argue the point, for I cannot consent."

"How inconstant are your feelings! But a moment ago you were moved by my representations, and why do you again harden yourself to my complaints? I swear to you, by the earth which I inhabit, and by you that made me, that with the companion you bestow I will quit the neighbourhood of man and dwell, as it may chance, in the most savage of places. My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy! My life will flow quietly away, and in my dying moments I shall not curse my maker."

His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated him and sometimes felt a wish to console him, but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred. I tried to stifle these sensations; I thought that as I could not sympathize with him, I had no right to withhold from him the small portion of happiness which was yet in my power to bestow.

"You swear," I said, "to be harmless; but have you not already shown a degree of malice that should reasonably make me distrust you? May not even this be a feint that will increase your triumph by affording a wider scope for your revenge?"

"How is this? I must not be trifled with, and I demand an answer. If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing of whose existence everyone will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor, and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being and become linked to the chain of existence and events from which I am now excluded."

I paused some time to reflect on all he had related and the various arguments which he had employed. I thought of the promise of virtues which he had displayed on the opening of his existence and the subsequent blight of all kindly feeling by the loathing and scorn which his protectors had manifested towards him. His power and threats were not omitted in my calculations; a creature who could exist in the ice caves of the glaciers and hide himself from pursuit among the ridges of inaccessible precipices was a being possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with. After a long pause of reflection I concluded that the justice due both to him and my fellow creatures demanded of me that I should comply with his request. Turning to him, therefore, I said,

"I consent to your demand, on your solemn oath to quit Europe forever, and every other place in the neighbourhood of man, as soon as I shall deliver into your hands a female who will accompany you in your exile."

"I swear," he cried, "by the sun, and by the blue sky of heaven, and by the fire of love that burns my heart, that if you grant my prayer, while they exist you shall never behold me again. Depart to your home and commence your labours; I shall watch their progress with unutterable anxiety; and fear not but that when you are ready I shall appear."

Saying this, he suddenly quitted me, fearful, perhaps, of any change in my sentiments. I saw him descend the mountain with greater speed than the flight of an eagle, and quickly lost among the undulations of the sea of ice.

His tale had occupied the whole day, and the sun was upon the verge of the horizon when he departed. I knew that I ought to hasten my descent towards the valley, as I should soon be encompassed in darkness; but my heart was heavy, and my steps slow. The labour of winding among the little paths of the mountain and fixing my feet firmly as I advanced perplexed me, occupied as I was by the emotions which the occurrences of the day had produced. Night was far advanced when I came to the halfway resting-place and seated myself beside the fountain. The stars shone at intervals as the clouds passed from over them; the dark pines rose before me, and every here and there a broken tree

lay on the ground; it was a scene of wonderful solemnity and stirred strange thoughts within me. I wept bitterly, and clasping my hands in agony, I exclaimed, "Oh! Stars and clouds and winds, ye are all about to mock me; if ye really pity me, crush sensation and memory; let me become as nought; but if not, depart, depart, and leave me in darkness."

These were wild and miserable thoughts, but I cannot describe to you how the eternal twinkling of the stars weighed upon me and how I listened to every blast of wind as if it were a dull ugly siroc on its way to consume me.

Morning dawned before I arrived at the village of Chamounix; I took no rest, but returned immediately to Geneva. Even in my own heart I could give no expression to my sensations—they weighed on me with a mountain's weight and their excess destroyed my agony beneath them. Thus I returned home, and entering the house, presented myself to the family. My haggard and wild appearance awoke intense alarm, but I answered no question, scarcely did I speak. I felt as if I were placed under a ban—as if I had no right to claim their sympathies—as if never more might I enjoy companionship with them. Yet even thus I loved them to adoration; and to save them, I resolved to dedicate myself to my most abhorred task. The prospect of such an occupation made every other circumstance of existence pass before me like a dream, and that thought only had to me the reality of life.

Chapter 18

Day after day, week after week, passed away on my return to Geneva; and I could not collect the courage to recommence my work. I feared the vengeance of the disappointed fiend, yet I was unable to overcome my repugnance to the task which was enjoined me. I found that I could not compose a female without again devoting several months to profound study and laborious disquisition. I had heard of some discoveries having been made by an English philosopher, the knowledge of which was material to my success, and I sometimes thought of obtaining my father's

consent to visit England for this purpose; but I clung to every pretence of delay and shrank from taking the first step in an undertaking whose immediate necessity began to appear less absolute to me. A change indeed had taken place in me; my health, which had hitherto declined, was now much restored; and my spirits, when unchecked by the memory of my unhappy promise, rose proportionably. My father saw this change with pleasure, and he turned his thoughts towards the best method of eradicating the remains of my melancholy, which every now and then would return by fits, and with a devouring blackness overcast the approaching sunshine. At these moments I took refuge in the most perfect solitude. I passed whole days on the lake alone in a little boat, watching the clouds and listening to the rippling of the waves, silent and listless. But the fresh air and bright sun seldom failed to restore me to some degree of composure, and on my return I met the salutations of my friends with a readier smile and a more cheerful heart.

It was after my return from one of these rambles that my father, calling me aside, thus addressed me,

"I am happy to remark, my dear son, that you have resumed your former pleasures and seem to be returning to yourself. And yet you are still unhappy and still avoid our society. For some time I was lost in conjecture as to the cause of this, but yesterday an idea struck me, and if it is well founded, I conjure you to avow it. Reserve on such a point would be not only useless, but draw down treble misery on us all."

I trembled violently at his exordium, and my father continued—"I confess, my son, that I have always looked forward to your marriage with our dear Elizabeth as the tie of our domestic comfort and the stay of my declining years. You were attached to each other from your earliest infancy; you studied together, and appeared, in dispositions and tastes, entirely suited to one another. But so blind is the experience of man that what I conceived to be the best assistants to my plan may have entirely destroyed it. You, perhaps, regard her as your sister, without any wish that she might become your wife. Nay, you may have met with another whom you may love; and considering yourself as bound in honour to

Elizabeth, this struggle may occasion the poignant misery which you appear to feel."

"My dear father, reassure yourself. I love my cousin tenderly and sincerely. I never saw any woman who excited, as Elizabeth does, my warmest admiration and affection. My future hopes and prospects are entirely bound up in the expectation of our union."

"The expression of your sentiments of this subject, my dear Victor, gives me more pleasure than I have for some time experienced. If you feel thus, we shall assuredly be happy, however present events may cast a gloom over us. But it is this gloom which appears to have taken so strong a hold of your mind that I wish to dissipate. Tell me, therefore, whether you object to an immediate solemnization of the marriage. We have been unfortunate, and recent events have drawn us from that everyday tranquillity befitting my years and infirmities. You are younger; yet I do not suppose, possessed as you are of a competent fortune, that an early marriage would at all interfere with any future plans of honour and utility that you may have formed. Do not suppose, however, that I wish to dictate happiness to you or that a delay on your part would cause me any serious uneasiness. Interpret my words with candour and answer me, I conjure you, with confidence and sincerity."

410

I listened to my father in silence and remained for some time incapable of offering any reply. I revolved rapidly in my mind a multitude of thoughts and endeavoured to arrive at some conclusion. Alas! To me the idea of an immediate union with my Elizabeth was one of horror and dismay. I was bound by a solemn promise which I had not yet fulfilled and dared not break, or if I did, what manifold miseries might not impend over me and my devoted family! Could I enter into a festival with this deadly weight yet hanging round my neck and bowing me to the ground? I must perform my engagement and let the monster depart with his mate before I allowed myself to enjoy the delight of a union from which I expected peace.

I remembered also the necessity imposed upon me of either journeying to England or entering into a long correspondence with those philosophers of that country whose knowledge and

discoveries were of indispensable use to me in my present undertaking. The latter method of obtaining the desired intelligence was dilatory and unsatisfactory; besides, I had an insurmountable aversion to the idea of engaging myself in my loathsome task in my father's house while in habits of familiar intercourse with those I loved. I knew that a thousand fearful accidents might occur, the slightest of which would disclose a tale to thrill all connected with me with horror. I was aware also that I should often lose all self-command, all capacity of hiding the harrowing sensations that would possess me during the progress of my unearthly occupation. I must absent myself from all I loved while thus employed. Once commenced, it would quickly be achieved, and I might be restored to my family in peace and happiness. My promise fulfilled, the monster would depart forever. Or (so my fond fancy imaged) some accident might meanwhile occur to destroy him and put an end to my slavery forever.

These feelings dictated my answer to my father. I expressed a wish to visit England, but concealing the true reasons of this request, I clothed my desires under a guise which excited no suspicion, while I urged my desire with an earnestness that easily induced my father to comply. After so long a period of an absorbing melancholy that resembled madness in its intensity and effects, he was glad to find that I was capable of taking pleasure in the idea of such a journey, and he hoped that change of scene and varied amusement would, before my return, have restored me entirely to myself.

The duration of my absence was left to my own choice; a few months, or at most a year, was the period contemplated. One paternal kind precaution he had taken to ensure my having a companion. Without previously communicating with me, he had, in concert with Elizabeth, arranged that Clerval should join me at Strasbourg. This interfered with the solitude I coveted for the prosecution of my task; yet at the commencement of my journey the presence of my friend could in no way be an impediment, and truly I rejoiced that thus I should be saved many hours of lonely, maddening reflection. Nay, Henry might stand between me and

the intrusion of my foe. If I were alone, would he not at times force his abhorred presence on me to remind me of my task or to contemplate its progress?

To England, therefore, I was bound, and it was understood that my union with Elizabeth should take place immediately on my return. My father's age rendered him extremely averse to delay. For myself, there was one reward I promised myself from my detested toils—one consolation for my unparalleled sufferings; it was the prospect of that day when, enfranchised from my miserable slavery, I might claim Elizabeth and forget the past in my union with her.

415

I now made arrangements for my journey, but one feeling haunted me which filled me with fear and agitation. During my absence I should leave my friends unconscious of the existence of their enemy and unprotected from his attacks, exasperated as he might be by my departure. But he had promised to follow me wherever I might go, and would he not accompany me to England? This imagination was dreadful in itself, but soothing inasmuch as it supposed the safety of my friends. I was agonized with the idea of the possibility that the reverse of this might happen. But through the whole period during which I was the slave of my creature I allowed myself to be governed by the impulses of the moment; and my present sensations strongly intimated that the fiend would follow me and exempt my family from the danger of his machinations.

It was in the latter end of September that I again quitted my native country. My journey had been my own suggestion, and Elizabeth therefore acquiesced, but she was filled with disquiet at the idea of my suffering, away from her, the inroads of misery and grief. It had been her care which provided me a companion in Clerval—and yet a man is blind to a thousand minute circumstances which call forth a woman's sedulous attention. She longed to bid me hasten my return; a thousand conflicting emotions rendered her mute as she bade me a tearful, silent farewell.

I threw myself into the carriage that was to convey me away, hardly knowing whither I was going, and careless of what was

passing around. I remembered only, and it was with a bitter anguish that I reflected on it, to order that my chemical instruments should be packed to go with me. Filled with dreary imaginations, I passed through many beautiful and majestic scenes, but my eyes were fixed and unobserving. I could only think of the bourne of my travels and the work which was to occupy me whilst they endured.

After some days spent in listless indolence, during which I traversed many leagues, I arrived at Strasbourg, where I waited two days for Clerval. He came. Alas, how great was the contrast between us! He was alive to every new scene, joyful when he saw the beauties of the setting sun, and more happy when he beheld it rise and recommence a new day. He pointed out to me the shifting colours of the landscape and the appearances of the sky. "This is what it is to live," he cried; "how I enjoy existence! But you, my dear Frankenstein, wherefore are you desponding and sorrowful!" In truth, I was occupied by gloomy thoughts and neither saw the descent of the evening star nor the golden sunrise reflected in the Rhine. And you, my friend, would be far more amused with the journal of Clerval, who observed the scenery with an eye of feeling and delight, than in listening to my reflections. I, a miserable wretch, haunted by a curse that shut up every avenue to enjoyment.

We had agreed to descend the Rhine in a boat from Strasbourg to Rotterdam, whence we might take shipping for London. During this voyage we passed many willowy islands and saw several beautiful towns. We stayed a day at Mannheim, and on the fifth from our departure from Strasbourg, arrived at Mainz. The course of the Rhine below Mainz becomes much more picturesque. The river descends rapidly and winds between hills, not high, but steep, and of beautiful forms. We saw many ruined castles standing on the edges of precipices, surrounded by black woods, high and inaccessible. This part of the Rhine, indeed, presents a singularly variegated landscape. In one spot you view rugged hills, ruined castles overlooking tremendous precipices, with the dark Rhine rushing beneath; and on the sudden turn of a

promontory, flourishing vineyards with green sloping banks and a meandering river and populous towns occupy the scene.

We travelled at the time of the vintage and heard the song of the labourers as we glided down the stream. Even I, depressed in mind, and my spirits continually agitated by gloomy feelings, even I was pleased. I lay at the bottom of the boat, and as I gazed on the cloudless blue sky, I seemed to drink in a tranquillity to which I had long been a stranger. And if these were my sensations, who can describe those of Henry? He felt as if he had been transported to fairy-land and enjoyed a happiness seldom tasted by man. "I have seen," he said, "the most beautiful scenes of my own country; I have visited the lakes of Lucerne and Uri, where the snowy mountains descend almost perpendicularly to the water, casting black and impenetrable shades, which would cause a gloomy and mournful appearance were it not for the most verdant islands that belie the eye by their gay appearance; I have seen this lake agitated by a tempest, when the wind tore up whirlwinds of water and gave you an idea of what the water-spout must be on the great ocean; and the waves dash with fury the base of the mountain, where the priest and his mistress were overwhelmed by an avalanche and where their dying voices are still said to be heard amid the pauses of the nightly wind; I have seen the mountains of La Valais, and the Pays de Vaud; but this country, Victor, pleases me more than all those wonders. The mountains of Switzerland are more majestic and strange, but there is a charm in the banks of this divine river that I never before saw equalled. Look at that castle which overhangs yon precipice; and that also on the island, almost concealed amongst the foliage of those lovely trees; and now that group of labourers coming from among their vines; and that village half hid in the recess of the mountain. Oh, surely the spirit that inhabits and guards this place has a soul more in harmony with man than those who pile the glacier or retire to the inaccessible peaks of the mountains of our own country." Clerval! Beloved friend! Even now it delights me to record your words and to dwell on the praise of which you are so eminently deserving. He was a being formed in the "very poetry of nature." His wild and enthusiastic imagination was

chastened by the sensibility of his heart. His soul overflowed with ardent affections, and his friendship was of that devoted and wondrous nature that the world-minded teach us to look for only in the imagination. But even human sympathies were not sufficient to satisfy his eager mind. The scenery of external nature, which others regard only with admiration, he loved with ardour:—

The sounding cataract
Haunted *him* like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to him
An appetite; a feeling, and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrow'd from the eye.

—WORDSWORTH'S "TINTERN ABBEY"

And where does he now exist? Is this gentle and lovely being lost forever? Has this mind, so replete with ideas, imaginations fanciful and magnificent, which formed a world, whose existence depended on the life of its creator;—has this mind perished? Does it now only exist in my memory? No, it is not thus; your form so divinely wrought, and beaming with beauty, has decayed, but your spirit still visits and consoles your unhappy friend.

Pardon this gush of sorrow; these ineffectual words are but a slight tribute to the unexampled worth of Henry, but they soothe my heart, overflowing with the anguish which his remembrance creates. I will proceed with my tale.

Beyond Cologne we descended to the plains of Holland; and we resolved to post the remainder of our way, for the wind was contrary and the stream of the river was too gentle to aid us. Our journey here lost the interest arising from beautiful scenery, but we arrived in a few days at Rotterdam, whence we proceeded by sea to England. It was on a clear morning, in the latter days of December, that I first saw the white cliffs of Britain. The banks of the Thames presented a new scene; they were flat but fertile, and almost every town was marked by the remembrance of some

story. We saw Tilbury Fort and remembered the Spanish Armada, Gravesend, Woolwich, and Greenwich—places which I had heard of even in my country.

At length we saw the numerous steeples of London, St. Paul's towering above all, and the Tower famed in English history.

425

Chapter 19

London was our present point of rest; we determined to remain several months in this wonderful and celebrated city. Clerval desired the intercourse of the men of genius and talent who flourished at this time, but this was with me a secondary object; I was principally occupied with the means of obtaining the information necessary for the completion of my promise and quickly availed myself of the letters of introduction that I had brought with me, addressed to the most distinguished natural philosophers.

If this journey had taken place during my days of study and happiness, it would have afforded me inexpressible pleasure. But a blight had come over my existence, and I only visited these people for the sake of the information they might give me on the subject in which my interest was so terribly profound. Company was irksome to me; when alone, I could fill my mind with the sights of heaven and earth; the voice of Henry soothed me, and I could thus cheat myself into a transitory peace. But busy, uninteresting, joyous faces brought back despair to my heart. I saw an insurmountable barrier placed between me and my fellow men; this barrier was sealed with the blood of William and Justine, and to reflect on the events connected with those names filled my soul with anguish.

But in Clerval I saw the image of my former self; he was inquisitive and anxious to gain experience and instruction. The difference of manners which he observed was to him an inexhaustible source of instruction and amusement. He was also pursuing an object he had long had in view. His design was to visit India, in the belief that he had in his knowledge of its various languages, and in the views he had taken of its society, the means

of materially assisting the progress of European colonization and trade. In Britain only could he further the execution of his plan. He was forever busy, and the only check to his enjoyments was my sorrowful and dejected mind. I tried to conceal this as much as possible, that I might not debar him from the pleasures natural to one who was entering on a new scene of life, undisturbed by any care or bitter recollection. I often refused to accompany him, alleging another engagement, that I might remain alone. I now also began to collect the materials necessary for my new creation, and this was to me like the torture of single drops of water continually falling on the head. Every thought that was devoted to it was an extreme anguish, and every word that I spoke in allusion to it caused my lips to quiver, and my heart to palpitate.

After passing some months in London, we received a letter from a person in Scotland who had formerly been our visitor at Geneva. He mentioned the beauties of his native country and asked us if those were not sufficient allurements to induce us to prolong our journey as far north as Perth, where he resided. Clerval eagerly desired to accept this invitation, and I, although I abhorred society, wished to view again mountains and streams and all the wondrous works with which Nature adorns her chosen dwelling-places. We had arrived in England at the beginning of October, and it was now February. We accordingly determined to commence our journey towards the north at the expiration of another month. In this expedition we did not intend to follow the great road to Edinburgh, but to visit Windsor, Oxford, Matlock, and the Cumberland lakes, resolving to arrive at the completion of this tour about the end of July. I packed up my chemical instruments and the materials I had collected, resolving to finish my labours in some obscure nook in the northern highlands of Scotland.

We quitted London on the 27th of March and remained a few days at Windsor, rambling in its beautiful forest. This was a new scene to us mountaineers; the majestic oaks, the quantity of game, and the herds of stately deer were all novelties to us.

From thence we proceeded to Oxford. As we entered this city our minds were filled with the remembrance of the events that

had been transacted there more than a century and a half before. It was here that Charles I. had collected his forces. This city had remained faithful to him, after the whole nation had forsaken his cause to join the standard of Parliament and liberty. The memory of that unfortunate king and his companions, the amiable Falkland, the insolent Goring, his queen, and son, gave a peculiar interest to every part of the city which they might be supposed to have inhabited. The spirit of elder days found a dwelling here, and we delighted to trace its footsteps. If these feelings had not found an imaginary gratification, the appearance of the city had yet in itself sufficient beauty to obtain our admiration. The colleges are ancient and picturesque; the streets are almost magnificent; and the lovely Isis, which flows beside it through meadows of exquisite verdure, is spread forth into a placid expanse of waters, which reflects its majestic assemblage of towers, and spires, and domes, embosomed among aged trees.

I enjoyed this scene, and yet my enjoyment was embittered both by the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future. I was formed for peaceful happiness. During my youthful days discontent never visited my mind, and if I was ever overcome by ennui, the sight of what is beautiful in nature or the study of what is excellent and sublime in the productions of man could always interest my heart and communicate elasticity to my spirits. But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul; and I felt then that I should survive to exhibit what I shall soon cease to be—a miserable spectacle of wrecked humanity, pitiable to others and intolerable to myself.

We passed a considerable period at Oxford, rambling among its environs and endeavouring to identify every spot which might relate to the most animating epoch of English history. Our little voyages of discovery were often prolonged by the successive objects that presented themselves. We visited the tomb of the illustrious Hampden and the field on which that patriot fell. For a moment my soul was elevated from its debasing and miserable fears to contemplate the divine ideas of liberty and self sacrifice of which these sights were the monuments and the remembrancers. For an instant I dared to shake off my chains and

look around me with a free and lofty spirit, but the iron had eaten into my flesh, and I sank again, trembling and hopeless, into my miserable self.

We left Oxford with regret and proceeded to Matlock, which was our next place of rest. The country in the neighbourhood of this village resembled, to a greater degree, the scenery of Switzerland; but everything is on a lower scale, and the green hills want the crown of distant white Alps which always attend on the piny mountains of my native country. We visited the wondrous cave and the little cabinets of natural history, where the curiosities are disposed in the same manner as in the collections at Servox and Chamounix. The latter name made me tremble when pronounced by Henry, and I hastened to quit Matlock, with which that terrible scene was thus associated.

From Derby, still journeying northwards, we passed two months in Cumberland and Westmorland. I could now almost fancy myself among the Swiss mountains. The little patches of snow which yet lingered on the northern sides of the mountains, the lakes, and the dashing of the rocky streams were all familiar and dear sights to me. Here also we made some acquaintances, who almost contrived to cheat me into happiness. The delight of Clerval was proportionably greater than mine; his mind expanded in the company of men of talent, and he found in his own nature greater capacities and resources than he could have imagined himself to have possessed while he associated with his inferiors. "I could pass my life here," said he to me; "and among these mountains I should scarcely regret Switzerland and the Rhine."

435

But he found that a traveller's life is one that includes much pain amidst its enjoyments. His feelings are forever on the stretch; and when he begins to sink into repose, he finds himself obliged to quit that on which he rests in pleasure for something new, which again engages his attention, and which also he forsakes for other novelties.

We had scarcely visited the various lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland and conceived an affection for some of the inhabitants when the period of our appointment with our Scotch friend approached, and we left them to travel on. For my own part

I was not sorry. I had now neglected my promise for some time, and I feared the effects of the daemon's disappointment. He might remain in Switzerland and wreak his vengeance on my relatives. This idea pursued me and tormented me at every moment from which I might otherwise have snatched repose and peace. I waited for my letters with feverish impatience; if they were delayed I was miserable and overcome by a thousand fears; and when they arrived and I saw the superscription of Elizabeth or my father, I hardly dared to read and ascertain my fate. Sometimes I thought that the fiend followed me and might expedite my remissness by murdering my companion. When these thoughts possessed me, I would not quit Henry for a moment, but followed him as his shadow, to protect him from the fancied rage of his destroyer. I felt as if I had committed some great crime, the consciousness of which haunted me. I was guiltless, but I had indeed drawn down a horrible curse upon my head, as mortal as that of crime.

I visited Edinburgh with languid eyes and mind; and yet that city might have interested the most unfortunate being. Clerval did not like it so well as Oxford, for the antiquity of the latter city was more pleasing to him. But the beauty and regularity of the new town of Edinburgh, its romantic castle and its environs, the most delightful in the world, Arthur's Seat, St. Bernard's Well, and the Pentland Hills compensated him for the change and filled him with cheerfulness and admiration. But I was impatient to arrive at the termination of my journey.

We left Edinburgh in a week, passing through Coupar, St. Andrew's, and along the banks of the Tay, to Perth, where our friend expected us. But I was in no mood to laugh and talk with strangers or enter into their feelings or plans with the good humour expected from a guest; and accordingly I told Clerval that I wished to make the tour of Scotland alone. "Do you," said I, "enjoy yourself, and let this be our rendezvous. I may be absent a month or two; but do not interfere with my motions, I entreat you; leave me to peace and solitude for a short time; and when I return, I hope it will be with a lighter heart, more congenial to your own temper."

Henry wished to dissuade me, but seeing me bent on this plan, ceased to remonstrate. He entreated me to write often. "I had rather be with you," he said, "in your solitary rambles, than with these Scotch people, whom I do not know; hasten, then, my dear friend, to return, that I may again feel myself somewhat at home, which I cannot do in your absence."

Having parted from my friend, I determined to visit some remote spot of Scotland and finish my work in solitude. I did not doubt but that the monster followed me and would discover himself to me when I should have finished, that he might receive his companion. With this resolution I traversed the northern highlands and fixed on one of the remotest of the Orkneys as the scene of my labours. It was a place fitted for such a work, being hardly more than a rock whose high sides were continually beaten upon by the waves. The soil was barren, scarcely affording pasture for a few miserable cows, and oatmeal for its inhabitants, which consisted of five persons, whose gaunt and scraggy limbs gave tokens of their miserable fare. Vegetables and bread, when they indulged in such luxuries, and even fresh water, was to be procured from the mainland, which was about five miles distant.

On the whole island there were but three miserable huts, and one of these was vacant when I arrived. This I hired. It contained but two rooms, and these exhibited all the squalidness of the most miserable penury. The thatch had fallen in, the walls were unplastered, and the door was off its hinges. I ordered it to be repaired, bought some furniture, and took possession, an incident which would doubtless have occasioned some surprise had not all the senses of the cottagers been benumbed by want and squalid poverty. As it was, I lived ungazed at and unmolested, hardly thanked for the pittance of food and clothes which I gave, so much does suffering blunt even the coarsest sensations of men.

In this retreat I devoted the morning to labour; but in the evening, when the weather permitted, I walked on the stony beach of the sea to listen to the waves as they roared and dashed at my feet. It was a monotonous yet ever-changing scene. I thought of Switzerland; it was far different from this desolate and appalling landscape. Its hills are covered with vines, and its cottages are

scattered thickly in the plains. Its fair lakes reflect a blue and gentle sky, and when troubled by the winds, their tumult is but as the play of a lively infant when compared to the roarings of the giant ocean.

In this manner I distributed my occupations when I first arrived, but as I proceeded in my labour, it became every day more horrible and irksome to me. Sometimes I could not prevail on myself to enter my laboratory for several days, and at other times I toiled day and night in order to complete my work. It was, indeed, a filthy process in which I was engaged. During my first experiment, a kind of enthusiastic frenzy had blinded me to the horror of my employment; my mind was intently fixed on the consummation of my labour, and my eyes were shut to the horror of my proceedings. But now I went to it in cold blood, and my heart often sickened at the work of my hands.

Thus situated, employed in the most detestable occupation, immersed in a solitude where nothing could for an instant call my attention from the actual scene in which I was engaged, my spirits became unequal; I grew restless and nervous. Every moment I feared to meet my persecutor. Sometimes I sat with my eyes fixed on the ground, fearing to raise them lest they should encounter the object which I so much dreaded to behold. I feared to wander from the sight of my fellow creatures lest when alone he should come to claim his companion.

445

In the mean time I worked on, and my labour was already considerably advanced. I looked towards its completion with a tremulous and eager hope, which I dared not trust myself to question but which was intermixed with obscure forebodings of evil that made my heart sicken in my bosom.

Chapter 20

I sat one evening in my laboratory; the sun had set, and the moon was just rising from the sea; I had not sufficient light for my employment, and I remained idle, in a pause of consideration of whether I should leave my labour for the night or hasten its conclusion by an unremitting attention to it. As I sat, a train of

reflection occurred to me which led me to consider the effects of what I was now doing. Three years before, I was engaged in the same manner and had created a fiend whose unparalleled barbarity had desolated my heart and filled it forever with the bitterest remorse. I was now about to form another being of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man and hide himself in deserts, but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not conceive a greater abhorrence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species. Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? I had before been moved by the sophisms of the being I had created; I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats; but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race.

I trembled and my heart failed within me, when, on looking up, I saw by the light of the moon the daemon at the casement. A ghastly grin wrinkled his lips as he gazed on me, where I sat fulfilling the task which he had allotted to me. Yes, he had followed me in my travels; he had loitered in forests, hid himself in caves, or taken refuge in wide and desert heaths; and he now

came to mark my progress and claim the fulfilment of my promise.

As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew.

I left the room, and locking the door, made a solemn vow in my own heart never to resume my labours; and then, with trembling steps, I sought my own apartment. I was alone; none were near me to dissipate the gloom and relieve me from the sickening oppression of the most terrible reveries.

Several hours passed, and I remained near my window gazing on the sea; it was almost motionless, for the winds were hushed, and all nature reposed under the eye of the quiet moon. A few fishing vessels alone specked the water, and now and then the gentle breeze wafted the sound of voices as the fishermen called to one another. I felt the silence, although I was hardly conscious of its extreme profundity, until my ear was suddenly arrested by the paddling of oars near the shore, and a person landed close to my house.

In a few minutes after, I heard the creaking of my door, as if some one endeavoured to open it softly. I trembled from head to foot; I felt a presentiment of who it was and wished to rouse one of the peasants who dwelt in a cottage not far from mine; but I was overcome by the sensation of helplessness, so often felt in frightful dreams, when you in vain endeavour to fly from an impending danger, and was rooted to the spot. Presently I heard the sound of footsteps along the passage; the door opened, and the wretch whom I dreaded appeared.

Shutting the door, he approached me and said in a smothered voice, "You have destroyed the work which you began; what is it that you intend? Do you dare to break your promise? I have endured toil and misery; I left Switzerland with you; I crept along the shores of the Rhine, among its willow islands and over the

summits of its hills. I have dwelt many months in the heaths of England and among the deserts of Scotland. I have endured incalculable fatigue, and cold, and hunger; do you dare destroy my hopes?"

"Begone! I do break my promise; never will I create another like yourself, equal in deformity and wickedness."

"Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!"

455

"The hour of my irresolution is past, and the period of your power is arrived. Your threats cannot move me to do an act of wickedness; but they confirm me in a determination of not creating you a companion in vice. Shall I, in cool blood, set loose upon the earth a daemon whose delight is in death and wretchedness? Begone! I am firm, and your words will only exasperate my rage."

The monster saw my determination in my face and gnashed his teeth in the impotence of anger. "Shall each man," cried he, "find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man! You may hate, but beware! Your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness forever. Are you to be happy while I grovel in the intensity of my wretchedness? You can blast my other passions, but revenge remains—revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die, but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery. Beware, for I am fearless and therefore powerful. I will watch with the wiliness of a snake, that I may sting with its venom. Man, you shall repent of the injuries you inflict."

"Devil, cease; and do not poison the air with these sounds of malice. I have declared my resolution to you, and I am no coward to bend beneath words. Leave me; I am inexorable."

"It is well. I go; but remember, I shall be with you on your wedding-night."

I started forward and exclaimed, "Villain! Before you sign my death-warrant, be sure that you are yourself safe."

I would have seized him, but he eluded me and quitted the house with precipitation. In a few moments I saw him in his boat, which shot across the waters with an arrowy swiftness and was soon lost amidst the waves.

All was again silent, but his words rang in my ears. I burned with rage to pursue the murderer of my peace and precipitate him into the ocean. I walked up and down my room hastily and perturbed, while my imagination conjured up a thousand images to torment and sting me. Why had I not followed him and closed with him in mortal strife? But I had suffered him to depart, and he had directed his course towards the mainland. I shuddered to think who might be the next victim sacrificed to his insatiate revenge. And then I thought again of his words—"I WILL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING-NIGHT." That, then, was the period fixed for the fulfilment of my destiny. In that hour I should die and at once satisfy and extinguish his malice. The prospect did not move me to fear; yet when I thought of my beloved Elizabeth, of her tears and endless sorrow, when she should find her lover so barbarously snatched from her, tears, the first I had shed for many months, streamed from my eyes, and I resolved not to fall before my enemy without a bitter struggle.

The night passed away, and the sun rose from the ocean; my feelings became calmer, if it may be called calmness when the violence of rage sinks into the depths of despair. I left the house, the horrid scene of the last night's contention, and walked on the beach of the sea, which I almost regarded as an insuperable barrier between me and my fellow creatures; nay, a wish that such should prove the fact stole across me.

I desired that I might pass my life on that barren rock, wearily, it is true, but uninterrupted by any sudden shock of misery. If I returned, it was to be sacrificed or to see those whom I most loved die under the grasp of a daemon whom I had myself created.

I walked about the isle like a restless spectre, separated from all it loved and miserable in the separation. When it became noon,

and the sun rose higher, I lay down on the grass and was overpowered by a deep sleep. I had been awake the whole of the preceding night, my nerves were agitated, and my eyes inflamed by watching and misery. The sleep into which I now sank refreshed me; and when I awoke, I again felt as if I belonged to a race of human beings like myself, and I began to reflect upon what had passed with greater composure; yet still the words of the fiend rang in my ears like a death-knell; they appeared like a dream, yet distinct and oppressive as a reality.

The sun had far descended, and I still sat on the shore, satisfying my appetite, which had become ravenous, with an oaten cake, when I saw a fishing-boat land close to me, and one of the men brought me a packet; it contained letters from Geneva, and one from Clerval entreating me to join him. He said that he was wearing away his time fruitlessly where he was, that letters from the friends he had formed in London desired his return to complete the negotiation they had entered into for his Indian enterprise. He could not any longer delay his departure; but as his journey to London might be followed, even sooner than he now conjectured, by his longer voyage, he entreated me to bestow as much of my society on him as I could spare. He besought me, therefore, to leave my solitary isle and to meet him at Perth, that we might proceed southwards together. This letter in a degree recalled me to life, and I determined to quit my island at the expiration of two days. Yet, before I departed, there was a task to perform, on which I shuddered to reflect; I must pack up my chemical instruments, and for that purpose I must enter the room which had been the scene of my odious work, and I must handle those utensils the sight of which was sickening to me. The next morning, at daybreak, I summoned sufficient courage and unlocked the door of my laboratory. The remains of the half-finished creature, whom I had destroyed, lay scattered on the floor, and I almost felt as if I had mangled the living flesh of a human being. I paused to collect myself and then entered the chamber. With trembling hand I conveyed the instruments out of the room, but I reflected that I ought not to leave the relics of my work to excite the horror and suspicion of the peasants; and I

accordingly put them into a basket, with a great quantity of stones, and laying them up, determined to throw them into the sea that very night; and in the meantime I sat upon the beach, employed in cleaning and arranging my chemical apparatus.

Nothing could be more complete than the alteration that had taken place in my feelings since the night of the appearance of the daemon. I had before regarded my promise with a gloomy despair as a thing that, with whatever consequences, must be fulfilled; but I now felt as if a film had been taken from before my eyes and that I for the first time saw clearly. The idea of renewing my labours did not for one instant occur to me; the threat I had heard weighed on my thoughts, but I did not reflect that a voluntary act of mine could avert it. I had resolved in my own mind that to create another like the fiend I had first made would be an act of the basest and most atrocious selfishness, and I banished from my mind every thought that could lead to a different conclusion.

Between two and three in the morning the moon rose; and I then, putting my basket aboard a little skiff, sailed out about four miles from the shore. The scene was perfectly solitary; a few boats were returning towards land, but I sailed away from them. I felt as if I was about the commission of a dreadful crime and avoided with shuddering anxiety any encounter with my fellow creatures. At one time the moon, which had before been clear, was suddenly overspread by a thick cloud, and I took advantage of the moment of darkness and cast my basket into the sea; I listened to the gurgling sound as it sank and then sailed away from the spot. The sky became clouded, but the air was pure, although chilled by the northeast breeze that was then rising. But it refreshed me and filled me with such agreeable sensations that I resolved to prolong my stay on the water, and fixing the rudder in a direct position, stretched myself at the bottom of the boat. Clouds hid the moon, everything was obscure, and I heard only the sound of the boat as its keel cut through the waves; the murmur lulled me, and in a short time I slept soundly. I do not know how long I remained in this situation, but when I awoke I found that the sun had already mounted considerably. The wind was high, and the waves continually threatened the safety of my

little skiff. I found that the wind was northeast and must have driven me far from the coast from which I had embarked. I endeavoured to change my course but quickly found that if I again made the attempt the boat would be instantly filled with water. Thus situated, my only resource was to drive before the wind. I confess that I felt a few sensations of terror. I had no compass with me and was so slenderly acquainted with the geography of this part of the world that the sun was of little benefit to me. I might be driven into the wide Atlantic and feel all the tortures of starvation or be swallowed up in the immeasurable waters that roared and buffeted around me. I had already been out many hours and felt the torment of a burning thirst, a prelude to my other sufferings. I looked on the heavens, which were covered by clouds that flew before the wind, only to be replaced by others; I looked upon the sea; it was to be my grave. "Fiend," I exclaimed, "your task is already fulfilled!" I thought of Elizabeth, of my father, and of Clerval—all left behind, on whom the monster might satisfy his sanguinary and merciless passions. This idea plunged me into a reverie so despairing and frightful that even now, when the scene is on the point of closing before me forever, I shudder to reflect on it.

Some hours passed thus; but by degrees, as the sun declined towards the horizon, the wind died away into a gentle breeze and the sea became free from breakers. But these gave place to a heavy swell; I felt sick and hardly able to hold the rudder, when suddenly I saw a line of high land towards the south.

Almost spent, as I was, by fatigue and the dreadful suspense I endured for several hours, this sudden certainty of life rushed like a flood of warm joy to my heart, and tears gushed from my eyes.

How mutable are our feelings, and how strange is that clinging love we have of life even in the excess of misery! I constructed another sail with a part of my dress and eagerly steered my course towards the land. It had a wild and rocky appearance, but as I approached nearer I easily perceived the traces of cultivation. I saw vessels near the shore and found myself suddenly transported back to the neighbourhood of civilized man. I carefully traced the windings of the land and hailed a steeple which I at length saw

issuing from behind a small promontory. As I was in a state of extreme debility, I resolved to sail directly towards the town, as a place where I could most easily procure nourishment. Fortunately I had money with me.

As I turned the promontory I perceived a small neat town and a good harbour, which I entered, my heart bounding with joy at my unexpected escape.

As I was occupied in fixing the boat and arranging the sails, several people crowded towards the spot. They seemed much surprised at my appearance, but instead of offering me any assistance, whispered together with gestures that at any other time might have produced in me a slight sensation of alarm. As it was, I merely remarked that they spoke English, and I therefore addressed them in that language. "My good friends," said I, "will you be so kind as to tell me the name of this town and inform me where I am?"

"You will know that soon enough," replied a man with a hoarse voice. "Maybe you are come to a place that will not prove much to your taste, but you will not be consulted as to your quarters, I promise you."

I was exceedingly surprised on receiving so rude an answer from a stranger, and I was also disconcerted on perceiving the frowning and angry countenances of his companions. "Why do you answer me so roughly?" I replied. "Surely it is not the custom of Englishmen to receive strangers so inhospitably."

475

"I do not know," said the man, "what the custom of the English may be, but it is the custom of the Irish to hate villains." While this strange dialogue continued, I perceived the crowd rapidly increase. Their faces expressed a mixture of curiosity and anger, which annoyed and in some degree alarmed me.

I inquired the way to the inn, but no one replied. I then moved forward, and a murmuring sound arose from the crowd as they followed and surrounded me, when an ill-looking man approaching tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Come, sir, you must follow me to Mr. Kirwin's to give an account of yourself."

"Who is Mr. Kirwin? Why am I to give an account of myself? Is not this a free country?"

"Ay, sir, free enough for honest folks. Mr. Kirwin is a magistrate, and you are to give an account of the death of a gentleman who was found murdered here last night."

This answer startled me, but I presently recovered myself. I was innocent; that could easily be proved; accordingly I followed my conductor in silence and was led to one of the best houses in the town. I was ready to sink from fatigue and hunger, but being surrounded by a crowd, I thought it politic to rouse all my strength, that no physical debility might be construed into apprehension or conscious guilt. Little did I then expect the calamity that was in a few moments to overwhelm me and extinguish in horror and despair all fear of ignominy or death. I must pause here, for it requires all my fortitude to recall the memory of the frightful events which I am about to relate, in proper detail, to my recollection.

480

Chapter 21

I was soon introduced into the presence of the magistrate, an old benevolent man with calm and mild manners. He looked upon me, however, with some degree of severity, and then, turning towards my conductors, he asked who appeared as witnesses on this occasion.

About half a dozen men came forward; and, one being selected by the magistrate, he deposed that he had been out fishing the night before with his son and brother-in-law, Daniel Nugent, when, about ten o'clock, they observed a strong northerly blast rising, and they accordingly put in for port. It was a very dark night, as the moon had not yet risen; they did not land at the harbour, but, as they had been accustomed, at a creek about two miles below. He walked on first, carrying a part of the fishing tackle, and his companions followed him at some distance.

As he was proceeding along the sands, he struck his foot against something and fell at his length on the ground. His companions came up to assist him, and by the light of their lantern they found that he had fallen on the body of a man, who was to all appearance dead. Their first supposition was that it was

the corpse of some person who had been drowned and was thrown on shore by the waves, but on examination they found that the clothes were not wet and even that the body was not then cold. They instantly carried it to the cottage of an old woman near the spot and endeavoured, but in vain, to restore it to life. It appeared to be a handsome young man, about five and twenty years of age. He had apparently been strangled, for there was no sign of any violence except the black mark of fingers on his neck.

The first part of this deposition did not in the least interest me, but when the mark of the fingers was mentioned I remembered the murder of my brother and felt myself extremely agitated; my limbs trembled, and a mist came over my eyes, which obliged me to lean on a chair for support. The magistrate observed me with a keen eye and of course drew an unfavourable augury from my manner.

The son confirmed his father's account, but when Daniel Nugent was called he swore positively that just before the fall of his companion, he saw a boat, with a single man in it, at a short distance from the shore; and as far as he could judge by the light of a few stars, it was the same boat in which I had just landed. A woman deposed that she lived near the beach and was standing at the door of her cottage, waiting for the return of the fishermen, about an hour before she heard of the discovery of the body, when she saw a boat with only one man in it push off from that part of the shore where the corpse was afterwards found.

Another woman confirmed the account of the fishermen having brought the body into her house; it was not cold. They put it into a bed and rubbed it, and Daniel went to the town for an apothecary, but life was quite gone.

Several other men were examined concerning my landing, and they agreed that, with the strong north wind that had arisen during the night, it was very probable that I had beaten about for many hours and had been obliged to return nearly to the same spot from which I had departed. Besides, they observed that it appeared that I had brought the body from another place, and it was likely that as I did not appear to know the shore, I might have put into the

harbour ignorant of the distance of the town of —— from the place where I had deposited the corpse.

Mr. Kirwin, on hearing this evidence, desired that I should be taken into the room where the body lay for interment, that it might be observed what effect the sight of it would produce upon me. This idea was probably suggested by the extreme agitation I had exhibited when the mode of the murder had been described. I was accordingly conducted, by the magistrate and several other persons, to the inn. I could not help being struck by the strange coincidences that had taken place during this eventful night; but, knowing that I had been conversing with several persons in the island I had inhabited about the time that the body had been found, I was perfectly tranquil as to the consequences of the affair. I entered the room where the corpse lay and was led up to the coffin. How can I describe my sensations on beholding it? I feel yet parched with horror, nor can I reflect on that terrible moment without shuddering and agony. The examination, the presence of the magistrate and witnesses, passed like a dream from my memory when I saw the lifeless form of Henry Clerval stretched before me. I gasped for breath, and throwing myself on the body, I exclaimed, "Have my murderous machinations deprived you also, my dearest Henry, of life? Two I have already destroyed; other victims await their destiny; but you, Clerval, my friend, my benefactor—"

The human frame could no longer support the agonies that I endured, and I was carried out of the room in strong convulsions. A fever succeeded to this. I lay for two months on the point of death; my ravings, as I afterwards heard, were frightful; I called myself the murderer of William, of Justine, and of Clerval. Sometimes I entreated my attendants to assist me in the destruction of the fiend by whom I was tormented; and at others I felt the fingers of the monster already grasping my neck, and screamed aloud with agony and terror. Fortunately, as I spoke my native language, Mr. Kirwin alone understood me; but my gestures and bitter cries were sufficient to affright the other witnesses. Why did I not die? More miserable than man ever was before, why did I not sink into forgetfulness and rest? Death

snatches away many blooming children, the only hopes of their doting parents; how many brides and youthful lovers have been one day in the bloom of health and hope, and the next a prey for worms and the decay of the tomb! Of what materials was I made that I could thus resist so many shocks, which, like the turning of the wheel, continually renewed the torture?

But I was doomed to live and in two months found myself as awaking from a dream, in a prison, stretched on a wretched bed, surrounded by jailers, turnkeys, bolts, and all the miserable apparatus of a dungeon. It was morning, I remember, when I thus awoke to understanding; I had forgotten the particulars of what had happened and only felt as if some great misfortune had suddenly overwhelmed me; but when I looked around and saw the barred windows and the squalidness of the room in which I was, all flashed across my memory and I groaned bitterly.

This sound disturbed an old woman who was sleeping in a chair beside me. She was a hired nurse, the wife of one of the turnkeys, and her countenance expressed all those bad qualities which often characterize that class. The lines of her face were hard and rude, like that of persons accustomed to see without sympathizing in sights of misery. Her tone expressed her entire indifference; she addressed me in English, and the voice struck me as one that I had heard during my sufferings. "Are you better now, sir?" said she.

I replied in the same language, with a feeble voice, "I believe I am; but if it be all true, if indeed I did not dream, I am sorry that I am still alive to feel this misery and horror."

"For that matter," replied the old woman, "if you mean about the gentleman you murdered, I believe that it were better for you if you were dead, for I fancy it will go hard with you! However, that's none of my business; I am sent to nurse you and get you well; I do my duty with a safe conscience; it were well if everybody did the same."

I turned with loathing from the woman who could utter so unfeeling a speech to a person just saved, on the very edge of death; but I felt languid and unable to reflect on all that had passed. The whole series of my life appeared to me as a dream; I

sometimes doubted if indeed it were all true, for it never presented itself to my mind with the force of reality.

As the images that floated before me became more distinct, I grew feverish; a darkness pressed around me; no one was near me who soothed me with the gentle voice of love; no dear hand supported me. The physician came and prescribed medicines, and the old woman prepared them for me; but utter carelessness was visible in the first, and the expression of brutality was strongly marked in the visage of the second. Who could be interested in the fate of a murderer but the hangman who would gain his fee?

These were my first reflections, but I soon learned that Mr. Kirwin had shown me extreme kindness. He had caused the best room in the prison to be prepared for me (wretched indeed was the best); and it was he who had provided a physician and a nurse. It is true, he seldom came to see me, for although he ardently desired to relieve the sufferings of every human creature, he did not wish to be present at the agonies and miserable ravings of a murderer. He came, therefore, sometimes to see that I was not neglected, but his visits were short and with long intervals. One day, while I was gradually recovering, I was seated in a chair, my eyes half open and my cheeks livid like those in death. I was overcome by gloom and misery and often reflected I had better seek death than desire to remain in a world which to me was replete with wretchedness. At one time I considered whether I should not declare myself guilty and suffer the penalty of the law, less innocent than poor Justine had been. Such were my thoughts when the door of my apartment was opened and Mr. Kirwin entered. His countenance expressed sympathy and compassion; he drew a chair close to mine and addressed me in French, "I fear that this place is very shocking to you; can I do anything to make you more comfortable?"

"I thank you, but all that you mention is nothing to me; on the whole earth there is no comfort which I am capable of receiving."

"I know that the sympathy of a stranger can be but of little relief to one borne down as you are by so strange a misfortune. But you will, I hope, soon quit this melancholy abode, for

doubtless evidence can easily be brought to free you from the criminal charge."

"That is my least concern; I am, by a course of strange events, become the most miserable of mortals. Persecuted and tortured as I am and have been, can death be any evil to me?"

"Nothing indeed could be more unfortunate and agonizing than the strange chances that have lately occurred. You were thrown, by some surprising accident, on this shore, renowned for its hospitality, seized immediately, and charged with murder. The first sight that was presented to your eyes was the body of your friend, murdered in so unaccountable a manner and placed, as it were, by some fiend across your path."

500

As Mr. Kirwin said this, notwithstanding the agitation I endured on this retrospect of my sufferings, I also felt considerable surprise at the knowledge he seemed to possess concerning me. I suppose some astonishment was exhibited in my countenance, for Mr. Kirwin hastened to say, "Immediately upon your being taken ill, all the papers that were on your person were brought me, and I examined them that I might discover some trace by which I could send to your relations an account of your misfortune and illness. I found several letters, and, among others, one which I discovered from its commencement to be from your father. I instantly wrote to Geneva; nearly two months have elapsed since the departure of my letter. But you are ill; even now you tremble; you are unfit for agitation of any kind."

"This suspense is a thousand times worse than the most horrible event; tell me what new scene of death has been acted, and whose murder I am now to lament?"

"Your family is perfectly well," said Mr. Kirwin with gentleness; "and someone, a friend, is come to visit you."

I know not by what chain of thought the idea presented itself, but it instantly darted into my mind that the murderer had come to mock at my misery and taunt me with the death of Clerval, as a new incitement for me to comply with his hellish desires. I put my hand before my eyes, and cried out in agony, "Oh! Take him away! I cannot see him; for God's sake, do not let him enter!"

Mr. Kirwin regarded me with a troubled countenance. He could not help regarding my exclamation as a presumption of my guilt and said in rather a severe tone, "I should have thought, young man, that the presence of your father would have been welcome instead of inspiring such violent repugnance."

"My father!" cried I, while every feature and every muscle was relaxed from anguish to pleasure. "Is my father indeed come? How kind, how very kind! But where is he, why does he not hasten to me?"

My change of manner surprised and pleased the magistrate; perhaps he thought that my former exclamation was a momentary return of delirium, and now he instantly resumed his former benevolence. He rose and quitted the room with my nurse, and in a moment my father entered it.

Nothing, at this moment, could have given me greater pleasure than the arrival of my father. I stretched out my hand to him and cried, "Are you, then, safe—and Elizabeth—and Ernest?" My father calmed me with assurances of their welfare and endeavoured, by dwelling on these subjects so interesting to my heart, to raise my desponding spirits; but he soon felt that a prison cannot be the abode of cheerfulness.

"What a place is this that you inhabit, my son!" said he, looking mournfully at the barred windows and wretched appearance of the room. "You travelled to seek happiness, but a fatality seems to pursue you. And poor Clerval—"

The name of my unfortunate and murdered friend was an agitation too great to be endured in my weak state; I shed tears. "Alas! Yes, my father," replied I; "some destiny of the most horrible kind hangs over me, and I must live to fulfil it, or surely I should have died on the coffin of Henry."

We were not allowed to converse for any length of time, for the precarious state of my health rendered every precaution necessary that could ensure tranquillity. Mr. Kirwin came in and insisted that my strength should not be exhausted by too much exertion. But the appearance of my father was to me like that of my good angel, and I gradually recovered my health.

As my sickness quitted me, I was absorbed by a gloomy and black melancholy that nothing could dissipate. The image of Clerval was forever before me, ghastly and murdered. More than once the agitation into which these reflections threw me made my friends dread a dangerous relapse. Alas! Why did they preserve so miserable and detested a life? It was surely that I might fulfil my destiny, which is now drawing to a close. Soon, oh, very soon, will death extinguish these throbbings and relieve me from the mighty weight of anguish that bears me to the dust; and, in executing the award of justice, I shall also sink to rest. Then the appearance of death was distant, although the wish was ever present to my thoughts; and I often sat for hours motionless and speechless, wishing for some mighty revolution that might bury me and my destroyer in its ruins.

The season of the assizes approached. I had already been three months in prison, and although I was still weak and in continual danger of a relapse, I was obliged to travel nearly a hundred miles to the country town where the court was held. Mr. Kirwin charged himself with every care of collecting witnesses and arranging my defence. I was spared the disgrace of appearing publicly as a criminal, as the case was not brought before the court that decides on life and death. The grand jury rejected the bill, on its being proved that I was on the Orkney Islands at the hour the body of my friend was found; and a fortnight after my removal I was liberated from prison.

My father was enraptured on finding me freed from the vexations of a criminal charge, that I was again allowed to breathe the fresh atmosphere and permitted to return to my native country. I did not participate in these feelings, for to me the walls of a dungeon or a palace were alike hateful. The cup of life was poisoned forever, and although the sun shone upon me, as upon the happy and gay of heart, I saw around me nothing but a dense and frightful darkness, penetrated by no light but the glimmer of two eyes that glared upon me. Sometimes they were the expressive eyes of Henry, languishing in death, the dark orbs nearly covered by the lids and the long black lashes that fringed

them; sometimes it was the watery, clouded eyes of the monster, as I first saw them in my chamber at Ingolstadt.

My father tried to awaken in me the feelings of affection. He talked of Geneva, which I should soon visit, of Elizabeth and Ernest; but these words only drew deep groans from me. Sometimes, indeed, I felt a wish for happiness and thought with melancholy delight of my beloved cousin or longed, with a devouring *maladie du pays*, to see once more the blue lake and rapid Rhone, that had been so dear to me in early childhood; but my general state of feeling was a torpor in which a prison was as welcome a residence as the divinest scene in nature; and these fits were seldom interrupted but by paroxysms of anguish and despair. At these moments I often endeavoured to put an end to the existence I loathed, and it required unceasing attendance and vigilance to restrain me from committing some dreadful act of violence.

Yet one duty remained to me, the recollection of which finally triumphed over my selfish despair. It was necessary that I should return without delay to Geneva, there to watch over the lives of those I so fondly loved and to lie in wait for the murderer, that if any chance led me to the place of his concealment, or if he dared again to blast me by his presence, I might, with unfailing aim, put an end to the existence of the monstrous image which I had endued with the mockery of a soul still more monstrous. My father still desired to delay our departure, fearful that I could not sustain the fatigues of a journey, for I was a shattered wreck—the shadow of a human being. My strength was gone. I was a mere skeleton, and fever night and day preyed upon my wasted frame. Still, as I urged our leaving Ireland with such inquietude and impatience, my father thought it best to yield. We took our passage on board a vessel bound for Havre-de-Grace and sailed with a fair wind from the Irish shores. It was midnight. I lay on the deck looking at the stars and listening to the dashing of the waves. I hailed the darkness that shut Ireland from my sight, and my pulse beat with a feverish joy when I reflected that I should soon see Geneva. The past appeared to me in the light of a frightful dream; yet the vessel in which I was, the wind that blew

me from the detested shore of Ireland, and the sea which surrounded me told me too forcibly that I was deceived by no vision and that Clerval, my friend and dearest companion, had fallen a victim to me and the monster of my creation. I repassed, in my memory, my whole life—my quiet happiness while residing with my family in Geneva, the death of my mother, and my departure for Ingolstadt. I remembered, shuddering, the mad enthusiasm that hurried me on to the creation of my hideous enemy, and I called to mind the night in which he first lived. I was unable to pursue the train of thought; a thousand feelings pressed upon me, and I wept bitterly. Ever since my recovery from the fever I had been in the custom of taking every night a small quantity of laudanum, for it was by means of this drug only that I was enabled to gain the rest necessary for the preservation of life. Oppressed by the recollection of my various misfortunes, I now swallowed double my usual quantity and soon slept profoundly. But sleep did not afford me respite from thought and misery; my dreams presented a thousand objects that scared me. Towards morning I was possessed by a kind of nightmare; I felt the fiend's grasp in my neck and could not free myself from it; groans and cries rang in my ears. My father, who was watching over me, perceiving my restlessness, awoke me; the dashing waves were around, the cloudy sky above, the fiend was not here: a sense of security, a feeling that a truce was established between the present hour and the irresistible, disastrous future imparted to me a kind of calm forgetfulness, of which the human mind is by its structure peculiarly susceptible.

Chapter 22

The voyage came to an end. We landed, and proceeded to Paris. I soon found that I had overtaxed my strength and that I must repose before I could continue my journey. My father's care and attentions were indefatigable, but he did not know the origin of my sufferings and sought erroneous methods to remedy the incurable ill. He wished me to seek amusement in society. I abhorred the face of man. Oh, not abhorred! They were my

brethren, my fellow beings, and I felt attracted even to the most repulsive among them, as to creatures of an angelic nature and celestial mechanism. But I felt that I had no right to share their intercourse. I had unchained an enemy among them whose joy it was to shed their blood and to revel in their groans. How they would, each and all, abhor me and hunt me from the world did they know my unhallowed acts and the crimes which had their source in me!

My father yielded at length to my desire to avoid society and strove by various arguments to banish my despair. Sometimes he thought that I felt deeply the degradation of being obliged to answer a charge of murder, and he endeavoured to prove to me the futility of pride.

"Alas! My father," said I, "how little do you know me. Human beings, their feelings and passions, would indeed be degraded if such a wretch as I felt pride. Justine, poor unhappy Justine, was as innocent as I, and she suffered the same charge; she died for it; and I am the cause of this—I murdered her. William, Justine, and Henry—they all died by my hands."

My father had often, during my imprisonment, heard me make the same assertion; when I thus accused myself, he sometimes seemed to desire an explanation, and at others he appeared to consider it as the offspring of delirium, and that, during my illness, some idea of this kind had presented itself to my imagination, the remembrance of which I preserved in my convalescence.

I avoided explanation and maintained a continual silence concerning the wretch I had created. I had a persuasion that I should be supposed mad, and this in itself would forever have chained my tongue. But, besides, I could not bring myself to disclose a secret which would fill my hearer with consternation and make fear and unnatural horror the inmates of his breast. I checked, therefore, my impatient thirst for sympathy and was silent when I would have given the world to have confided the fatal secret. Yet, still, words like those I have recorded would burst uncontrollably from me. I could offer no explanation of them, but their truth in part relieved the burden of my mysterious

woe. Upon this occasion my father said, with an expression of unbounded wonder, "My dearest Victor, what infatuation is this? My dear son, I entreat you never to make such an assertion again."

"I am not mad," I cried energetically; "the sun and the heavens, who have viewed my operations, can bear witness of my truth. I am the assassin of those most innocent victims; they died by my machinations. A thousand times would I have shed my own blood, drop by drop, to have saved their lives; but I could not, my father, indeed I could not sacrifice the whole human race."

The conclusion of this speech convinced my father that my ideas were deranged, and he instantly changed the subject of our conversation and endeavoured to alter the course of my thoughts. He wished as much as possible to obliterate the memory of the scenes that had taken place in Ireland and never alluded to them or suffered me to speak of my misfortunes.

As time passed away I became more calm; misery had her dwelling in my heart, but I no longer talked in the same incoherent manner of my own crimes; sufficient for me was the consciousness of them. By the utmost self-violence I curbed the imperious voice of wretchedness, which sometimes desired to declare itself to the whole world, and my manners were calmer and more composed than they had ever been since my journey to the sea of ice. A few days before we left Paris on our way to Switzerland, I received the following letter from Elizabeth:

My dear Friend,

It gave me the greatest pleasure to receive a letter from my uncle dated at Paris; you are no longer at a formidable distance, and I may hope to see you in less than a fortnight. My poor cousin, how much you must have suffered! I expect to see you looking even more ill than when you quitted Geneva. This winter has been passed most miserably, tortured as I have been by anxious suspense; yet I hope to see peace in your countenance and to find that your heart is not totally void of comfort and tranquillity.

Yet I fear that the same feelings now exist that made you so miserable a year ago, even perhaps augmented by time. I would not disturb you at this period, when so many misfortunes weigh upon you, but a conversation that I had with my uncle previous to his departure renders some explanation necessary before we meet. Explanation! You may possibly say, What can Elizabeth have to explain? If you really say this, my questions are answered and all my doubts satisfied. But you

are distant from me, and it is possible that you may dread and yet be pleased with this explanation; and in a probability of this being the case, I dare not any longer postpone writing what, during your absence, I have often wished to express to you but have never had the courage to begin.

You well know, Victor, that our union had been the favourite plan of your parents ever since our infancy. We were told this when young, and taught to look forward to it as an event that would certainly take place. We were affectionate playfellows during childhood, and, I believe, dear and valued friends to one another as we grew older. But as brother and sister often entertain a lively affection towards each other without desiring a more intimate union, may not such also be our case? Tell me, dearest Victor. Answer me, I conjure you by our mutual happiness, with simple truth—Do you not love another?

You have travelled; you have spent several years of your life at Ingolstadt; and I confess to you, my friend, that when I saw you last autumn so unhappy, flying to solitude from the society of every creature, I could not help supposing that you might regret our connection and believe yourself bound in honour to fulfil the wishes of your parents, although they opposed themselves to your inclinations. But this is false reasoning. I confess to you, my friend, that I love you and that in my airy dreams of futurity you have been my constant friend and companion. But it is your happiness I desire as well as my own when I declare to you that our marriage would render me eternally miserable unless it were the dictate of your own free choice. Even now I weep to think that, borne down as you are by the cruellest misfortunes, you may stifle, by the word 'honour,' all hope of that love and happiness which would alone restore you to yourself. I, who have so disinterested an affection for you, may increase your miseries tenfold by being an obstacle to your wishes. Ah! Victor, be assured that your cousin and playmate has too sincere a love for you not to be made miserable by this supposition. Be happy, my friend; and if you obey me in this one request, remain satisfied that nothing on earth will have the power to interrupt my tranquillity.

Do not let this letter disturb you; do not answer tomorrow, or the next day, or even until you come, if it will give you pain. My uncle will send me news of your health, and if I see but one smile on your lips when we meet, occasioned by this or any other exertion of mine, I shall need no other happiness.

Elizabeth Lavenza
Geneva, May 18th, 17—.

This letter revived in my memory what I had before forgotten, the threat of the fiend—"I WILL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING-NIGHT!" Such was my sentence, and on that night would the daemon employ every art to destroy me and tear me from the glimpse of happiness which promised partly to console my sufferings. On that night he had determined to consummate his crimes by my death. Well, be it so; a deadly struggle would

then assuredly take place, in which if he were victorious I should be at peace and his power over me be at an end. If he were vanquished, I should be a free man. Alas! What freedom? Such as the peasant enjoys when his family have been massacred before his eyes, his cottage burnt, his lands laid waste, and he is turned adrift, homeless, penniless, and alone, but free. Such would be my liberty except that in my Elizabeth I possessed a treasure, alas, balanced by those horrors of remorse and guilt which would pursue me until death.

Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! I read and reread her letter, and some softened feelings stole into my heart and dared to whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy; but the apple was already eaten, and the angel's arm bared to drive me from all hope. Yet I would die to make her happy. If the monster executed his threat, death was inevitable; yet, again, I considered whether my marriage would hasten my fate. My destruction might indeed arrive a few months sooner, but if my torturer should suspect that I postponed it, influenced by his menaces, he would surely find other and perhaps more dreadful means of revenge.

He had vowed TO BE WITH ME ON MY WEDDING-NIGHT, yet he did not consider that threat as binding him to peace in the meantime, for as if to show me that he was not yet satiated with blood, he had murdered Clerval immediately after the enunciation of his threats. I resolved, therefore, that if my immediate union with my cousin would conduce either to hers or my father's happiness, my adversary's designs against my life should not retard it a single hour.

In this state of mind I wrote to Elizabeth. My letter was calm and affectionate. "I fear, my beloved girl," I said, "little happiness remains for us on earth; yet all that I may one day enjoy is centred in you. Chase away your idle fears; to you alone do I consecrate my life and my endeavours for contentment. I have one secret, Elizabeth, a dreadful one; when revealed to you, it will chill your frame with horror, and then, far from being surprised at my misery, you will only wonder that I survive what I have endured. I will confide this tale of misery and terror to you the day after our marriage shall take place, for, my sweet cousin, there must be

perfect confidence between us. But until then, I conjure you, do not mention or allude to it. This I most earnestly entreat, and I know you will comply."

In about a week after the arrival of Elizabeth's letter we returned to Geneva. The sweet girl welcomed me with warm affection, yet tears were in her eyes as she beheld my emaciated frame and feverish cheeks. I saw a change in her also. She was thinner and had lost much of that heavenly vivacity that had before charmed me; but her gentleness and soft looks of compassion made her a more fit companion for one blasted and miserable as I was. The tranquillity which I now enjoyed did not endure. Memory brought madness with it, and when I thought of what had passed, a real insanity possessed me; sometimes I was furious and burnt with rage, sometimes low and despondent. I neither spoke nor looked at anyone, but sat motionless, bewildered by the multitude of miseries that overcame me.

Elizabeth alone had the power to draw me from these fits; her gentle voice would soothe me when transported by passion and inspire me with human feelings when sunk in torpor. She wept with me and for me. When reason returned, she would remonstrate and endeavour to inspire me with resignation. Ah! It is well for the unfortunate to be resigned, but for the guilty there is no peace. The agonies of remorse poison the luxury there is otherwise sometimes found in indulging the excess of grief. Soon after my arrival my father spoke of my immediate marriage with Elizabeth. I remained silent.

"Have you, then, some other attachment?"

"None on earth. I love Elizabeth and look forward to our union with delight. Let the day therefore be fixed; and on it I will consecrate myself, in life or death, to the happiness of my cousin."

"My dear Victor, do not speak thus. Heavy misfortunes have befallen us, but let us only cling closer to what remains and transfer our love for those whom we have lost to those who yet live. Our circle will be small but bound close by the ties of affection and mutual misfortune. And when time shall have

softened your despair, new and dear objects of care will be born to replace those of whom we have been so cruelly deprived."

Such were the lessons of my father. But to me the remembrance of the threat returned; nor can you wonder that, omnipotent as the fiend had yet been in his deeds of blood, I should almost regard him as invincible, and that when he had pronounced the words "I SHALL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING-NIGHT," I should regard the threatened fate as unavoidable. But death was no evil to me if the loss of Elizabeth were balanced with it, and I therefore, with a contented and even cheerful countenance, agreed with my father that if my cousin would consent, the ceremony should take place in ten days, and thus put, as I imagined, the seal to my fate.

Great God! If for one instant I had thought what might be the hellish intention of my fiendish adversary, I would rather have banished myself forever from my native country and wandered a friendless outcast over the earth than have consented to this miserable marriage. But, as if possessed of magic powers, the monster had blinded me to his real intentions; and when I thought that I had prepared only my own death, I hastened that of a far dearer victim.

535

As the period fixed for our marriage drew nearer, whether from cowardice or a prophetic feeling, I felt my heart sink within me. But I concealed my feelings by an appearance of hilarity that brought smiles and joy to the countenance of my father, but hardly deceived the ever-watchful and nicer eye of Elizabeth. She looked forward to our union with placid contentment, not unmingled with a little fear, which past misfortunes had impressed, that what now appeared certain and tangible happiness might soon dissipate into an airy dream and leave no trace but deep and everlasting regret. Preparations were made for the event, congratulatory visits were received, and all wore a smiling appearance. I shut up, as well as I could, in my own heart the anxiety that preyed there and entered with seeming earnestness into the plans of my father, although they might only serve as the decorations of my tragedy. Through my father's exertions a part of the inheritance of Elizabeth had been restored to her by the

Austrian government. A small possession on the shores of Como belonged to her. It was agreed that, immediately after our union, we should proceed to Villa Lavenza and spend our first days of happiness beside the beautiful lake near which it stood.

In the meantime I took every precaution to defend my person in case the fiend should openly attack me. I carried pistols and a dagger constantly about me and was ever on the watch to prevent artifice, and by these means gained a greater degree of tranquillity. Indeed, as the period approached, the threat appeared more as a delusion, not to be regarded as worthy to disturb my peace, while the happiness I hoped for in my marriage wore a greater appearance of certainty as the day fixed for its solemnization drew nearer and I heard it continually spoken of as an occurrence which no accident could possibly prevent.

Elizabeth seemed happy; my tranquil demeanour contributed greatly to calm her mind. But on the day that was to fulfil my wishes and my destiny, she was melancholy, and a presentiment of evil pervaded her; and perhaps also she thought of the dreadful secret which I had promised to reveal to her on the following day. My father was in the meantime overjoyed and in the bustle of preparation only recognized in the melancholy of his niece the diffidence of a bride.

After the ceremony was performed a large party assembled at my father's, but it was agreed that Elizabeth and I should commence our journey by water, sleeping that night at Evian and continuing our voyage on the following day. The day was fair, the wind favourable; all smiled on our nuptial embarkation.

Those were the last moments of my life during which I enjoyed the feeling of happiness. We passed rapidly along; the sun was hot, but we were sheltered from its rays by a kind of canopy while we enjoyed the beauty of the scene, sometimes on one side of the lake, where we saw Mont Saleve, the pleasant banks of Montalegre, and at a distance, surmounting all, the beautiful Mont Blanc and the assemblage of snowy mountains that in vain endeavour to emulate her; sometimes coasting the opposite banks, we saw the mighty Jura opposing its dark side to the ambition that would quit its native country, and an almost

insurmountable barrier to the invader who should wish to enslave it.

I took the hand of Elizabeth. "You are sorrowful, my love. Ah! If you knew what I have suffered and what I may yet endure, you would endeavour to let me taste the quiet and freedom from despair that this one day at least permits me to enjoy."

"Be happy, my dear Victor," replied Elizabeth; "there is, I hope, nothing to distress you; and be assured that if a lively joy is not painted in my face, my heart is contented. Something whispers to me not to depend too much on the prospect that is opened before us, but I will not listen to such a sinister voice. Observe how fast we move along and how the clouds, which sometimes obscure and sometimes rise above the dome of Mont Blanc, render this scene of beauty still more interesting. Look also at the innumerable fish that are swimming in the clear waters, where we can distinguish every pebble that lies at the bottom. What a divine day! How happy and serene all nature appears!"

Thus Elizabeth endeavoured to divert her thoughts and mine from all reflection upon melancholy subjects. But her temper was fluctuating; joy for a few instants shone in her eyes, but it continually gave place to distraction and reverie.

The sun sank lower in the heavens; we passed the river Drance and observed its path through the chasms of the higher and the glens of the lower hills. The Alps here come closer to the lake, and we approached the amphitheatre of mountains which forms its eastern boundary. The spire of Evian shone under the woods that surrounded it and the range of mountain above mountain by which it was overhung.

The wind, which had hitherto carried us along with amazing rapidity, sank at sunset to a light breeze; the soft air just ruffled the water and caused a pleasant motion among the trees as we approached the shore, from which it wafted the most delightful scent of flowers and hay. The sun sank beneath the horizon as we landed, and as I touched the shore I felt those cares and fears revive which soon were to clasp me and cling to me forever.

Chapter 23

It was eight o'clock when we landed; we walked for a short time on the shore, enjoying the transitory light, and then retired to the inn and contemplated the lovely scene of waters, woods, and mountains, obscured in darkness, yet still displaying their black outlines.

The wind, which had fallen in the south, now rose with great violence in the west. The moon had reached her summit in the heavens and was beginning to descend; the clouds swept across it swifter than the flight of the vulture and dimmed her rays, while the lake reflected the scene of the busy heavens, rendered still busier by the restless waves that were beginning to rise. Suddenly a heavy storm of rain descended.

I had been calm during the day, but so soon as night obscured the shapes of objects, a thousand fears arose in my mind. I was anxious and watchful, while my right hand grasped a pistol which was hidden in my bosom; every sound terrified me, but I resolved that I would sell my life dearly and not shrink from the conflict until my own life or that of my adversary was extinguished. Elizabeth observed my agitation for some time in timid and fearful silence, but there was something in my glance which communicated terror to her, and trembling, she asked, "What is it that agitates you, my dear Victor? What is it you fear?"

"Oh! Peace, peace, my love," replied I; "this night, and all will be safe; but this night is dreadful, very dreadful."

I passed an hour in this state of mind, when suddenly I reflected how fearful the combat which I momentarily expected would be to my wife, and I earnestly entreated her to retire, resolving not to join her until I had obtained some knowledge as to the situation of my enemy.

She left me, and I continued some time walking up and down the passages of the house and inspecting every corner that might afford a retreat to my adversary. But I discovered no trace of him and was beginning to conjecture that some fortunate chance had intervened to prevent the execution of his menaces when suddenly I heard a shrill and dreadful scream. It came from the

room into which Elizabeth had retired. As I heard it, the whole truth rushed into my mind, my arms dropped, the motion of every muscle and fibre was suspended; I could feel the blood trickling in my veins and tingling in the extremities of my limbs. This state lasted but for an instant; the scream was repeated, and I rushed into the room. Great God! Why did I not then expire! Why am I here to relate the destruction of the best hope and the purest creature on earth? She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair. Everywhere I turn I see the same figure—her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier. Could I behold this and live? Alas! Life is obstinate and clings closest where it is most hated. For a moment only did I lose recollection; I fell senseless on the ground.

When I recovered I found myself surrounded by the people of the inn; their countenances expressed a breathless terror, but the horror of others appeared only as a mockery, a shadow of the feelings that oppressed me. I escaped from them to the room where lay the body of Elizabeth, my love, my wife, so lately living, so dear, so worthy. She had been moved from the posture in which I had first beheld her, and now, as she lay, her head upon her arm and a handkerchief thrown across her face and neck, I might have supposed her asleep. I rushed towards her and embraced her with ardour, but the deadly languor and coldness of the limbs told me that what I now held in my arms had ceased to be the Elizabeth whom I had loved and cherished. The murderous mark of the fiend's grasp was on her neck, and the breath had ceased to issue from her lips. While I still hung over her in the agony of despair, I happened to look up. The windows of the room had before been darkened, and I felt a kind of panic on seeing the pale yellow light of the moon illuminate the chamber. The shutters had been thrown back, and with a sensation of horror not to be described, I saw at the open window a figure the most hideous and abhorred. A grin was on the face of the monster; he seemed to jeer, as with his fiendish finger he pointed towards the corpse of my wife. I rushed towards the window, and drawing a

pistol from my bosom, fired; but he eluded me, leaped from his station, and running with the swiftness of lightning, plunged into the lake.

The report of the pistol brought a crowd into the room. I pointed to the spot where he had disappeared, and we followed the track with boats; nets were cast, but in vain. After passing several hours, we returned hopeless, most of my companions believing it to have been a form conjured up by my fancy. After having landed, they proceeded to search the country, parties going in different directions among the woods and vines.

I attempted to accompany them and proceeded a short distance from the house, but my head whirled round, my steps were like those of a drunken man, I fell at last in a state of utter exhaustion; a film covered my eyes, and my skin was parched with the heat of fever. In this state I was carried back and placed on a bed, hardly conscious of what had happened; my eyes wandered round the room as if to seek something that I had lost.

After an interval I arose, and as if by instinct, crawled into the room where the corpse of my beloved lay. There were women weeping around; I hung over it and joined my sad tears to theirs; all this time no distinct idea presented itself to my mind, but my thoughts rambled to various subjects, reflecting confusedly on my misfortunes and their cause. I was bewildered, in a cloud of wonder and horror. The death of William, the execution of Justine, the murder of Clerval, and lastly of my wife; even at that moment I knew not that my only remaining friends were safe from the malignity of the fiend; my father even now might be writhing under his grasp, and Ernest might be dead at his feet. This idea made me shudder and recalled me to action. I started up and resolved to return to Geneva with all possible speed.

There were no horses to be procured, and I must return by the lake; but the wind was unfavourable, and the rain fell in torrents. However, it was hardly morning, and I might reasonably hope to arrive by night. I hired men to row and took an oar myself, for I had always experienced relief from mental torment in bodily exercise. But the overflowing misery I now felt, and the excess of agitation that I endured rendered me incapable of any exertion. I

threw down the oar, and leaning my head upon my hands, gave way to every gloomy idea that arose. If I looked up, I saw scenes which were familiar to me in my happier time and which I had contemplated but the day before in the company of her who was now but a shadow and a recollection. Tears streamed from my eyes. The rain had ceased for a moment, and I saw the fish play in the waters as they had done a few hours before; they had then been observed by Elizabeth. Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change. The sun might shine or the clouds might lower, but nothing could appear to me as it had done the day before. A fiend had snatched from me every hope of future happiness; no creature had ever been so miserable as I was; so frightful an event is single in the history of man. But why should I dwell upon the incidents that followed this last overwhelming event? Mine has been a tale of horrors; I have reached their acme, and what I must now relate can but be tedious to you. Know that, one by one, my friends were snatched away; I was left desolate. My own strength is exhausted, and I must tell, in a few words, what remains of my hideous narration. I arrived at Geneva. My father and Ernest yet lived, but the former sunk under the tidings that I bore. I see him now, excellent and venerable old man! His eyes wandered in vacancy, for they had lost their charm and their delight—his Elizabeth, his more than daughter, whom he doted on with all that affection which a man feels, who in the decline of life, having few affections, clings more earnestly to those that remain. Cursed, cursed be the fiend that brought misery on his grey hairs and doomed him to waste in wretchedness! He could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him; the springs of existence suddenly gave way; he was unable to rise from his bed, and in a few days he died in my arms.

What then became of me? I know not; I lost sensation, and chains and darkness were the only objects that pressed upon me. Sometimes, indeed, I dreamt that I wandered in flowery meadows and pleasant vales with the friends of my youth, but I awoke and found myself in a dungeon. Melancholy followed, but by degrees I gained a clear conception of my miseries and situation and was

then released from my prison. For they had called me mad, and during many months, as I understood, a solitary cell had been my habitation.

Liberty, however, had been a useless gift to me, had I not, as I awakened to reason, at the same time awakened to revenge. As the memory of past misfortunes pressed upon me, I began to reflect on their cause—the monster whom I had created, the miserable daemon whom I had sent abroad into the world for my destruction. I was possessed by a maddening rage when I thought of him, and desired and ardently prayed that I might have him within my grasp to wreak a great and signal revenge on his cursed head.

Nor did my hate long confine itself to useless wishes; I began to reflect on the best means of securing him; and for this purpose, about a month after my release, I repaired to a criminal judge in the town and told him that I had an accusation to make, that I knew the destroyer of my family, and that I required him to exert his whole authority for the apprehension of the murderer. The magistrate listened to me with attention and kindness.

"Be assured, sir," said he, "no pains or exertions on my part shall be spared to discover the villain."

560

"I thank you," replied I; "listen, therefore, to the deposition that I have to make. It is indeed a tale so strange that I should fear you would not credit it were there not something in truth which, however wonderful, forces conviction. The story is too connected to be mistaken for a dream, and I have no motive for falsehood." My manner as I thus addressed him was impressive but calm; I had formed in my own heart a resolution to pursue my destroyer to death, and this purpose quieted my agony and for an interval reconciled me to life. I now related my history briefly but with firmness and precision, marking the dates with accuracy and never deviating into invective or exclamation.

The magistrate appeared at first perfectly incredulous, but as I continued he became more attentive and interested; I saw him sometimes shudder with horror; at others a lively surprise, unmingled with disbelief, was painted on his countenance. When I had concluded my narration I said, "This is the being whom I

accuse and for whose seizure and punishment I call upon you to exert your whole power. It is your duty as a magistrate, and I believe and hope that your feelings as a man will not revolt from the execution of those functions on this occasion." This address caused a considerable change in the physiognomy of my own auditor. He had heard my story with that half kind of belief that is given to a tale of spirits and supernatural events; but when he was called upon to act officially in consequence, the whole tide of his incredulity returned. He, however, answered mildly, "I would willingly afford you every aid in your pursuit, but the creature of whom you speak appears to have powers which would put all my exertions to defiance. Who can follow an animal which can traverse the sea of ice and inhabit caves and dens where no man would venture to intrude? Besides, some months have elapsed since the commission of his crimes, and no one can conjecture to what place he has wandered or what region he may now inhabit."

"I do not doubt that he hovers near the spot which I inhabit, and if he has indeed taken refuge in the Alps, he may be hunted like the chamois and destroyed as a beast of prey. But I perceive your thoughts; you do not credit my narrative and do not intend to pursue my enemy with the punishment which is his desert." As I spoke, rage sparkled in my eyes; the magistrate was intimidated. "You are mistaken," said he. "I will exert myself, and if it is in my power to seize the monster, be assured that he shall suffer punishment proportionate to his crimes. But I fear, from what you have yourself described to be his properties, that this will prove impracticable; and thus, while every proper measure is pursued, you should make up your mind to disappointment."

"That cannot be; but all that I can say will be of little avail. My revenge is of no moment to you; yet, while I allow it to be a vice, I confess that it is the devouring and only passion of my soul. My rage is unspeakable when I reflect that the murderer, whom I have turned loose upon society, still exists. You refuse my just demand; I have but one resource, and I devote myself, either in my life or death, to his destruction."

I trembled with excess of agitation as I said this; there was a frenzy in my manner, and something, I doubt not, of that haughty

fierceness which the martyrs of old are said to have possessed. But to a Genevan magistrate, whose mind was occupied by far other ideas than those of devotion and heroism, this elevation of mind had much the appearance of madness. He endeavoured to soothe me as a nurse does a child and reverted to my tale as the effects of delirium.

"Man," I cried, "how ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom! Cease; you know not what it is you say."

I broke from the house angry and disturbed and retired to meditate on some other mode of action.

Chapter 24

My present situation was one in which all voluntary thought was swallowed up and lost. I was hurried away by fury; revenge alone endowed me with strength and composure; it moulded my feelings and allowed me to be calculating and calm at periods when otherwise delirium or death would have been my portion.

My first resolution was to quit Geneva forever; my country, which, when I was happy and beloved, was dear to me, now, in my adversity, became hateful. I provided myself with a sum of money, together with a few jewels which had belonged to my mother, and departed. And now my wanderings began which are to cease but with life. I have traversed a vast portion of the earth and have endured all the hardships which travellers in deserts and barbarous countries are wont to meet. How I have lived I hardly know; many times have I stretched my failing limbs upon the sandy plain and prayed for death. But revenge kept me alive; I dared not die and leave my adversary in being.

When I quitted Geneva my first labour was to gain some clue by which I might trace the steps of my fiendish enemy. But my plan was unsettled, and I wandered many hours round the confines of the town, uncertain what path I should pursue. As night approached I found myself at the entrance of the cemetery where William, Elizabeth, and my father reposed. I entered it and approached the tomb which marked their graves. Everything was silent except the leaves of the trees, which were gently agitated by

the wind; the night was nearly dark, and the scene would have been solemn and affecting even to an uninterested observer. The spirits of the departed seemed to flit around and to cast a shadow, which was felt but not seen, around the head of the mourner.

The deep grief which this scene had at first excited quickly gave way to rage and despair. They were dead, and I lived; their murderer also lived, and to destroy him I must drag out my weary existence. I knelt on the grass and kissed the earth and with quivering lips exclaimed, "By the sacred earth on which I kneel, by the shades that wander near me, by the deep and eternal grief that I feel, I swear; and by thee, O Night, and the spirits that preside over thee, to pursue the daemon who caused this misery, until he or I shall perish in mortal conflict. For this purpose I will preserve my life; to execute this dear revenge will I again behold the sun and tread the green herbage of earth, which otherwise should vanish from my eyes forever. And I call on you, spirits of the dead, and on you, wandering ministers of vengeance, to aid and conduct me in my work. Let the cursed and hellish monster drink deep of agony; let him feel the despair that now torments me." I had begun my adjuration with solemnity and an awe which almost assured me that the shades of my murdered friends heard and approved my devotion, but the furies possessed me as I concluded, and rage choked my utterance.

I was answered through the stillness of night by a loud and fiendish laugh. It rang on my ears long and heavily; the mountains re-echoed it, and I felt as if all hell surrounded me with mockery and laughter. Surely in that moment I should have been possessed by frenzy and have destroyed my miserable existence but that my vow was heard and that I was reserved for vengeance. The laughter died away, when a well-known and abhorred voice, apparently close to my ear, addressed me in an audible whisper, "I am satisfied, miserable wretch! You have determined to live, and I am satisfied."

I darted towards the spot from which the sound proceeded, but the devil eluded my grasp. Suddenly the broad disk of the moon arose and shone full upon his ghastly and distorted shape as he fled with more than mortal speed.

I pursued him, and for many months this has been my task. Guided by a slight clue, I followed the windings of the Rhone, but vainly. The blue Mediterranean appeared, and by a strange chance, I saw the fiend enter by night and hide himself in a vessel bound for the Black Sea. I took my passage in the same ship, but he escaped, I know not how.

Amidst the wilds of Tartary and Russia, although he still evaded me, I have ever followed in his track. Sometimes the peasants, scared by this horrid apparition, informed me of his path; sometimes he himself, who feared that if I lost all trace of him I should despair and die, left some mark to guide me. The snows descended on my head, and I saw the print of his huge step on the white plain. To you first entering on life, to whom care is new and agony unknown, how can you understand what I have felt and still feel? Cold, want, and fatigue were the least pains which I was destined to endure; I was cursed by some devil and carried about with me my eternal hell; yet still a spirit of good followed and directed my steps and when I most murmured would suddenly extricate me from seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Sometimes, when nature, overcome by hunger, sank under the exhaustion, a repast was prepared for me in the desert that restored and inspirited me. The fare was, indeed, coarse, such as the peasants of the country ate, but I will not doubt that it was set there by the spirits that I had invoked to aid me. Often, when all was dry, the heavens cloudless, and I was parched by thirst, a slight cloud would bedim the sky, shed the few drops that revived me, and vanish.

I followed, when I could, the courses of the rivers; but the daemon generally avoided these, as it was here that the population of the country chiefly collected. In other places human beings were seldom seen, and I generally subsisted on the wild animals that crossed my path. I had money with me and gained the friendship of the villagers by distributing it; or I brought with me some food that I had killed, which, after taking a small part, I always presented to those who had provided me with fire and utensils for cooking.

My life, as it passed thus, was indeed hateful to me, and it was during sleep alone that I could taste joy. O blessed sleep! Often, when most miserable, I sank to repose, and my dreams lulled me even to rapture. The spirits that guarded me had provided these moments, or rather hours, of happiness that I might retain strength to fulfil my pilgrimage. Deprived of this respite, I should have sunk under my hardships. During the day I was sustained and inspirited by the hope of night, for in sleep I saw my friends, my wife, and my beloved country; again I saw the benevolent countenance of my father, heard the silver tones of my Elizabeth's voice, and beheld Clerval enjoying health and youth. Often, when wearied by a toilsome march, I persuaded myself that I was dreaming until night should come and that I should then enjoy reality in the arms of my dearest friends. What agonizing fondness did I feel for them! How did I cling to their dear forms, as sometimes they haunted even my waking hours, and persuade myself that they still lived! At such moments vengeance, that burned within me, died in my heart, and I pursued my path towards the destruction of the daemon more as a task enjoined by heaven, as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious, than as the ardent desire of my soul. What his feelings were whom I pursued I cannot know. Sometimes, indeed, he left marks in writing on the barks of the trees or cut in stone that guided me and instigated my fury. "My reign is not yet over"—these words were legible in one of these inscriptions—"you live, and my power is complete. Follow me; I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost, to which I am impassive. You will find near this place, if you follow not too tardily, a dead hare; eat and be refreshed. Come on, my enemy; we have yet to wrestle for our lives, but many hard and miserable hours must you endure until that period shall arrive."

Scoffing devil! Again do I vow vengeance; again do I devote thee, miserable fiend, to torture and death. Never will I give up my search until he or I perish; and then with what ecstasy shall I join my Elizabeth and my departed friends, who even now

prepare for me the reward of my tedious toil and horrible pilgrimage!

As I still pursued my journey to the northward, the snows thickened and the cold increased in a degree almost too severe to support. The peasants were shut up in their hovels, and only a few of the most hardy ventured forth to seize the animals whom starvation had forced from their hiding-places to seek for prey. The rivers were covered with ice, and no fish could be procured; and thus I was cut off from my chief article of maintenance. The triumph of my enemy increased with the difficulty of my labours. One inscription that he left was in these words: "Prepare! Your toils only begin; wrap yourself in furs and provide food, for we shall soon enter upon a journey where your sufferings will satisfy my everlasting hatred."

My courage and perseverance were invigorated by these scoffing words; I resolved not to fail in my purpose, and calling on heaven to support me, I continued with unabated fervour to traverse immense deserts, until the ocean appeared at a distance and formed the utmost boundary of the horizon. Oh! How unlike it was to the blue seasons of the south! Covered with ice, it was only to be distinguished from land by its superior wildness and ruggedness. The Greeks wept for joy when they beheld the Mediterranean from the hills of Asia, and hailed with rapture the boundary of their toils. I did not weep, but I knelt down and with a full heart thanked my guiding spirit for conducting me in safety to the place where I hoped, notwithstanding my adversary's gibe, to meet and grapple with him.

Some weeks before this period I had procured a sledge and dogs and thus traversed the snows with inconceivable speed. I know not whether the fiend possessed the same advantages, but I found that, as before I had daily lost ground in the pursuit, I now gained on him, so much so that when I first saw the ocean he was but one day's journey in advance, and I hoped to intercept him before he should reach the beach. With new courage, therefore, I pressed on, and in two days arrived at a wretched hamlet on the seashore. I inquired of the inhabitants concerning the fiend and gained accurate information. A gigantic monster, they said, had

arrived the night before, armed with a gun and many pistols, putting to flight the inhabitants of a solitary cottage through fear of his terrific appearance. He had carried off their store of winter food, and placing it in a sledge, to draw which he had seized on a numerous drove of trained dogs, he had harnessed them, and the same night, to the joy of the horror-struck villagers, had pursued his journey across the sea in a direction that led to no land; and they conjectured that he must speedily be destroyed by the breaking of the ice or frozen by the eternal frosts.

On hearing this information I suffered a temporary access of despair. He had escaped me, and I must commence a destructive and almost endless journey across the mountainous ices of the ocean, amidst cold that few of the inhabitants could long endure and which I, the native of a genial and sunny climate, could not hope to survive. Yet at the idea that the fiend should live and be triumphant, my rage and vengeance returned, and like a mighty tide, overwhelmed every other feeling. After a slight repose, during which the spirits of the dead hovered round and instigated me to toil and revenge, I prepared for my journey. I exchanged my land-sledge for one fashioned for the inequalities of the frozen ocean, and purchasing a plentiful stock of provisions, I departed from land.

I cannot guess how many days have passed since then, but I have endured misery which nothing but the eternal sentiment of a just retribution burning within my heart could have enabled me to support. Immense and rugged mountains of ice often barred up my passage, and I often heard the thunder of the ground sea, which threatened my destruction. But again the frost came and made the paths of the sea secure.

By the quantity of provision which I had consumed, I should guess that I had passed three weeks in this journey; and the continual protraction of hope, returning back upon the heart, often wrung bitter drops of despondency and grief from my eyes. Despair had indeed almost secured her prey, and I should soon have sunk beneath this misery. Once, after the poor animals that conveyed me had with incredible toil gained the summit of a sloping ice mountain, and one, sinking under his fatigue, died, I

viewed the expanse before me with anguish, when suddenly my eye caught a dark speck upon the dusky plain. I strained my sight to discover what it could be and uttered a wild cry of ecstasy when I distinguished a sledge and the distorted proportions of a well-known form within. Oh! With what a burning gush did hope revisit my heart! Warm tears filled my eyes, which I hastily wiped away, that they might not intercept the view I had of the daemon; but still my sight was dimmed by the burning drops, until, giving way to the emotions that oppressed me, I wept aloud.

But this was not the time for delay; I disencumbered the dogs of their dead companion, gave them a plentiful portion of food, and after an hour's rest, which was absolutely necessary, and yet which was bitterly irksome to me, I continued my route. The sledge was still visible, nor did I again lose sight of it except at the moments when for a short time some ice-rock concealed it with its intervening crags. I indeed perceptibly gained on it, and when, after nearly two days' journey, I beheld my enemy at no more than a mile distant, my heart bounded within me.

But now, when I appeared almost within grasp of my foe, my hopes were suddenly extinguished, and I lost all trace of him more utterly than I had ever done before. A ground sea was heard; the thunder of its progress, as the waters rolled and swelled beneath me, became every moment more ominous and terrific. I pressed on, but in vain. The wind arose; the sea roared; and, as with the mighty shock of an earthquake, it split and cracked with a tremendous and overwhelming sound. The work was soon finished; in a few minutes a tumultuous sea rolled between me and my enemy, and I was left drifting on a scattered piece of ice that was continually lessening and thus preparing for me a hideous death. In this manner many appalling hours passed; several of my dogs died, and I myself was about to sink under the accumulation of distress when I saw your vessel riding at anchor and holding forth to me hopes of succour and life. I had no conception that vessels ever came so far north and was astounded at the sight. I quickly destroyed part of my sledge to construct oars, and by these means was enabled, with infinite fatigue, to move my ice raft in the direction of your ship. I had determined,

if you were going southwards, still to trust myself to the mercy of the seas rather than abandon my purpose. I hoped to induce you to grant me a boat with which I could pursue my enemy. But your direction was northwards. You took me on board when my vigour was exhausted, and I should soon have sunk under my multiplied hardships into a death which I still dread, for my task is unfulfilled.

Oh! When will my guiding spirit, in conducting me to the daemon, allow me the rest I so much desire; or must I die, and he yet live? If I do, swear to me, Walton, that he shall not escape, that you will seek him and satisfy my vengeance in his death. And do I dare to ask of you to undertake my pilgrimage, to endure the hardships that I have undergone? No; I am not so selfish. Yet, when I am dead, if he should appear, if the ministers of vengeance should conduct him to you, swear that he shall not live—swear that he shall not triumph over my accumulated woes and survive to add to the list of his dark crimes. He is eloquent and persuasive, and once his words had even power over my heart; but trust him not. His soul is as hellish as his form, full of treachery and fiend-like malice. Hear him not; call on the names of William, Justine, Clerval, Elizabeth, my father, and of the wretched Victor, and thrust your sword into his heart. I will hover near and direct the steel aright.

Walton, in continuation.

August 26th, 17—.

You have read this strange and terrific story, Margaret; and do you not feel your blood congeal with horror, like that which even now curdles mine? Sometimes, seized with sudden agony, he could not continue his tale; at others, his voice broken, yet piercing, uttered with difficulty the words so replete with anguish. His fine and lovely eyes were now lighted up with indignation, now subdued to downcast sorrow and quenched in infinite wretchedness. Sometimes he commanded his countenance and tones and related the most horrible incidents with a tranquil voice,

suppressing every mark of agitation; then, like a volcano bursting forth, his face would suddenly change to an expression of the wildest rage as he shrieked out imprecations on his persecutor.

His tale is connected and told with an appearance of the simplest truth, yet I own to you that the letters of Felix and Safie, which he showed me, and the apparition of the monster seen from our ship, brought to me a greater conviction of the truth of his narrative than his asseverations, however earnest and connected. Such a monster has, then, really existence! I cannot doubt it, yet I am lost in surprise and admiration. Sometimes I endeavoured to gain from Frankenstein the particulars of his creature's formation, but on this point he was impenetrable. "Are you mad, my friend?" said he. "Or whither does your senseless curiosity lead you? Would you also create for yourself and the world a demoniacal enemy? Peace, peace! Learn my miseries and do not seek to increase your own." Frankenstein discovered that I made notes concerning his history; he asked to see them and then himself corrected and augmented them in many places, but principally in giving the life and spirit to the conversations he held with his enemy. "Since you have preserved my narration," said he, "I would not that a mutilated one should go down to posterity."

Thus has a week passed away, while I have listened to the strangest tale that ever imagination formed. My thoughts and every feeling of my soul have been drunk up by the interest for my guest which this tale and his own elevated and gentle manners have created. I wish to soothe him, yet can I counsel one so infinitely miserable, so destitute of every hope of consolation, to live? Oh, no! The only joy that he can now know will be when he composes his shattered spirit to peace and death. Yet he enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium; he believes that when in dreams he holds converse with his friends and derives from that communion consolation for his miseries or excitements to his vengeance, that they are not the creations of his fancy, but the beings themselves who visit him from the regions of a remote world. This faith gives a solemnity to his reveries that render them to me almost as imposing and interesting as truth.

Our conversations are not always confined to his own history and misfortunes. On every point of general literature he displays unbounded knowledge and a quick and piercing apprehension. His eloquence is forcible and touching; nor can I hear him, when he relates a pathetic incident or endeavours to move the passions of pity or love, without tears. What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin! He seems to feel his own worth and the greatness of his fall.

"When younger," said he, "I believed myself destined for some great enterprise. My feelings are profound, but I possessed a coolness of judgment that fitted me for illustrious achievements. This sentiment of the worth of my nature supported me when others would have been oppressed, for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow creatures. When I reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this thought, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. All my speculations and hopes are as nothing, and like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell. My imagination was vivid, yet my powers of analysis and application were intense; by the union of these qualities I conceived the idea and executed the creation of a man. Even now I cannot recollect without passion my reveries while the work was incomplete. I trod heaven in my thoughts, now exulting in my powers, now burning with the idea of their effects. From my infancy I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but how am I sunk! Oh! My friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognize me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise." Must I then lose this admirable being? I have longed for a friend; I have sought one who would sympathize with and love me. Behold, on these desert seas I have found such a one, but I fear I

have gained him only to know his value and lose him. I would reconcile him to life, but he repulses the idea.

"I thank you, Walton," he said, "for your kind intentions towards so miserable a wretch; but when you speak of new ties and fresh affections, think you that any can replace those who are gone? Can any man be to me as Clerval was, or any woman another Elizabeth? Even where the affections are not strongly moved by any superior excellence, the companions of our childhood always possess a certain power over our minds which hardly any later friend can obtain. They know our infantine dispositions, which, however they may be afterwards modified, are never eradicated; and they can judge of our actions with more certain conclusions as to the integrity of our motives. A sister or a brother can never, unless indeed such symptoms have been shown early, suspect the other of fraud or false dealing, when another friend, however strongly he may be attached, may, in spite of himself, be contemplated with suspicion. But I enjoyed friends, dear not only through habit and association, but from their own merits; and wherever I am, the soothing voice of my Elizabeth and the conversation of Clerval will be ever whispered in my ear. They are dead, and but one feeling in such a solitude can persuade me to preserve my life. If I were engaged in any high undertaking or design, fraught with extensive utility to my fellow creatures, then could I live to fulfil it. But such is not my destiny; I must pursue and destroy the being to whom I gave existence; then my lot on earth will be fulfilled and I may die."

September 2nd

MY BELOVED SISTER,

I write to you, encompassed by peril and ignorant whether I am ever doomed to see again dear England and the dearer friends that inhabit it. I am surrounded by mountains of ice which admit of no escape and threaten every moment to crush my vessel. The brave fellows whom I have persuaded to be my companions look towards me for aid, but I have none to bestow. There is something

terribly appalling in our situation, yet my courage and hopes do not desert me. Yet it is terrible to reflect that the lives of all these men are endangered through me. If we are lost, my mad schemes are the cause.

And what, Margaret, will be the state of your mind? You will not hear of my destruction, and you will anxiously await my return. Years will pass, and you will have visitings of despair and yet be tortured by hope. Oh! My beloved sister, the sickening failing of your heart-felt expectations is, in prospect, more terrible to me than my own death.

595

But you have a husband and lovely children; you may be happy. Heaven bless you and make you so!

My unfortunate guest regards me with the tenderest compassion. He endeavours to fill me with hope and talks as if life were a possession which he valued. He reminds me how often the same accidents have happened to other navigators who have attempted this sea, and in spite of myself, he fills me with cheerful auguries. Even the sailors feel the power of his eloquence; when he speaks, they no longer despair; he rouses their energies, and while they hear his voice they believe these vast mountains of ice are mole-hills which will vanish before the resolutions of man. These feelings are transitory; each day of expectation delayed fills them with fear, and I almost dread a mutiny caused by this despair.

September 5th

A scene has just passed of such uncommon interest that, although it is highly probable that these papers may never reach you, yet I cannot forbear recording it.

We are still surrounded by mountains of ice, still in imminent danger of being crushed in their conflict. The cold is excessive, and many of my unfortunate comrades have already found a grave amidst this scene of desolation. Frankenstein has daily declined in health; a feverish fire still glimmers in his eyes, but he is exhausted, and when suddenly roused to any exertion, he speedily sinks again into apparent lifelessness.

I mentioned in my last letter the fears I entertained of a mutiny. This morning, as I sat watching the wan countenance of my friend—his eyes half closed and his limbs hanging listlessly—I was roused by half a dozen of the sailors, who demanded admission into the cabin. They entered, and their leader addressed me. He told me that he and his companions had been chosen by the other sailors to come in deputation to me to make me a requisition which, in justice, I could not refuse. We were immured in ice and should probably never escape, but they feared that if, as was possible, the ice should dissipate and a free passage be opened, I should be rash enough to continue my voyage and lead them into fresh dangers, after they might happily have surmounted this. They insisted, therefore, that I should engage with a solemn promise that if the vessel should be freed I would instantly direct my course southwards.

This speech troubled me. I had not despaired, nor had I yet conceived the idea of returning if set free. Yet could I, in justice, or even in possibility, refuse this demand? I hesitated before I answered, when Frankenstein, who had at first been silent, and indeed appeared hardly to have force enough to attend, now roused himself; his eyes sparkled, and his cheeks flushed with momentary vigour. Turning towards the men, he said, "What do you mean? What do you demand of your captain? Are you, then, so easily turned from your design? Did you not call this a glorious expedition?"

"And wherefore was it glorious? Not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea, but because it was full of dangers and terror, because at every new incident your fortitude was to be called forth and your courage exhibited, because danger and death surrounded it, and these you were to brave and overcome. For this was it a glorious, for this was it an honourable undertaking. You were hereafter to be hailed as the benefactors of your species, your names adored as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honour and the benefit of mankind. And now, behold, with the first imagination of danger, or, if you will, the first mighty and terrific trial of your courage, you shrink away and are content to be handed down as men who had not strength

enough to endure cold and peril; and so, poor souls, they were chilly and returned to their warm firesides. Why, that requires not this preparation; ye need not have come thus far and dragged your captain to the shame of a defeat merely to prove yourselves cowards. Oh! Be men, or be more than men. Be steady to your purposes and firm as a rock. This ice is not made of such stuff as your hearts may be; it is mutable and cannot withstand you if you say that it shall not. Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows. Return as heroes who have fought and conquered and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe." He spoke this with a voice so modulated to the different feelings expressed in his speech, with an eye so full of lofty design and heroism, that can you wonder that these men were moved? They looked at one another and were unable to reply. I spoke; I told them to retire and consider of what had been said, that I would not lead them farther north if they strenuously desired the contrary, but that I hoped that, with reflection, their courage would return. They retired and I turned towards my friend, but he was sunk in languor and almost deprived of life.

How all this will terminate, I know not, but I had rather die than return shamefully, my purpose unfulfilled. Yet I fear such will be my fate; the men, unsupported by ideas of glory and honour, can never willingly continue to endure their present hardships.

September 7th

The die is cast; I have consented to return if we are not destroyed. Thus are my hopes blasted by cowardice and indecision; I come back ignorant and disappointed. It requires more philosophy than I possess to bear this injustice with patience.

September 12th

It is past; I am returning to England. I have lost my hopes of utility and glory; I have lost my friend. But I will endeavour to detail these bitter circumstances to you, my dear sister; and while

I am wafted towards England and towards you, I will not despond.

September 9th, the ice began to move, and roarings like thunder were heard at a distance as the islands split and cracked in every direction. We were in the most imminent peril, but as we could only remain passive, my chief attention was occupied by my unfortunate guest whose illness increased in such a degree that he was entirely confined to his bed. The ice cracked behind us and was driven with force towards the north; a breeze sprang from the west, and on the 11th the passage towards the south became perfectly free. When the sailors saw this and that their return to their native country was apparently assured, a shout of tumultuous joy broke from them, loud and long-continued. Frankenstein, who was dozing, awoke and asked the cause of the tumult. "They shout," I said, "because they will soon return to England."

"Do you, then, really return?"

"Alas! Yes; I cannot withstand their demands. I cannot lead them unwillingly to danger, and I must return."

"Do so, if you will; but I will not. You may give up your purpose, but mine is assigned to me by heaven, and I dare not. I am weak, but surely the spirits who assist my vengeance will endow me with sufficient strength." Saying this, he endeavoured to spring from the bed, but the exertion was too great for him; he fell back and fainted.

It was long before he was restored, and I often thought that life was entirely extinct. At length he opened his eyes; he breathed with difficulty and was unable to speak. The surgeon gave him a composing draught and ordered us to leave him undisturbed. In the meantime he told me that my friend had certainly not many hours to live.

His sentence was pronounced, and I could only grieve and be patient. I sat by his bed, watching him; his eyes were closed, and I thought he slept; but presently he called to me in a feeble voice, and bidding me come near, said, "Alas! The strength I relied on is gone; I feel that I shall soon die, and he, my enemy and persecutor, may still be in being. Think not, Walton, that in the

last moments of my existence I feel that burning hatred and ardent desire of revenge I once expressed; but I feel myself justified in desiring the death of my adversary. During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blamable. In a fit of enthusiastic madness I created a rational creature and was bound towards him to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being.

"This was my duty, but there was another still paramount to that. My duties towards the beings of my own species had greater claims to my attention because they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery. Urged by this view, I refused, and I did right in refusing, to create a companion for the first creature. He showed unparalleled malignity and selfishness in evil; he destroyed my friends; he devoted to destruction beings who possessed exquisite sensations, happiness, and wisdom; nor do I know where this thirst for vengeance may end. Miserable himself that he may render no other wretched, he ought to die. The task of his destruction was mine, but I have failed. When actuated by selfish and vicious motives, I asked you to undertake my unfinished work, and I renew this request now, when I am only induced by reason and virtue.

"Yet I cannot ask you to renounce your country and friends to fulfil this task; and now that you are returning to England, you will have little chance of meeting with him. But the consideration of these points, and the well balancing of what you may esteem your duties, I leave to you; my judgment and ideas are already disturbed by the near approach of death. I dare not ask you to do what I think right, for I may still be misled by passion.

"That he should live to be an instrument of mischief disturbs me; in other respects, this hour, when I momentarily expect my release, is the only happy one which I have enjoyed for several years. The forms of the beloved dead flit before me, and I hasten to their arms. Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed."

His voice became fainter as he spoke, and at length, exhausted by his effort, he sank into silence. About half an hour afterwards he attempted again to speak but was unable; he pressed my hand feebly, and his eyes closed forever, while the irradiation of a gentle smile passed away from his lips.

Margaret, what comment can I make on the untimely extinction of this glorious spirit? What can I say that will enable you to understand the depth of my sorrow? All that I should express would be inadequate and feeble. My tears flow; my mind is overshadowed by a cloud of disappointment. But I journey towards England, and I may there find consolation.

I am interrupted. What do these sounds portend? It is midnight; the breeze blows fairly, and the watch on deck scarcely stir. Again there is a sound as of a human voice, but hoarser; it comes from the cabin where the remains of Frankenstein still lie. I must arise and examine. Good night, my sister.

Great God! what a scene has just taken place! I am yet dizzy with the remembrance of it. I hardly know whether I shall have the power to detail it; yet the tale which I have recorded would be incomplete without this final and wonderful catastrophe. I entered the cabin where lay the remains of my ill-fated and admirable friend. Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe—gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy. When he heard the sound of my approach, he ceased to utter exclamations of grief and horror and sprung towards the window. Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome yet appalling hideousness. I shut my eyes involuntarily and endeavoured to recollect what were my duties with regard to this destroyer. I called on him to stay.

He paused, looking on me with wonder, and again turning towards the lifeless form of his creator, he seemed to forget my presence, and every feature and gesture seemed instigated by the wildest rage of some uncontrollable passion.

"That is also my victim!" he exclaimed. "In his murder my crimes are consummated; the miserable series of my being is wound to its close! Oh, Frankenstein! Generous and self-devoted being! What does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irretrievably destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst. Alas! He is cold, he cannot answer me." His voice seemed suffocated, and my first impulses, which had suggested to me the duty of obeying the dying request of my friend in destroying his enemy, were now suspended by a mixture of curiosity and compassion. I approached this tremendous being; I dared not again raise my eyes to his face, there was something so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness. I attempted to speak, but the words died away on my lips. The monster continued to utter wild and incoherent self-reproaches. At length I gathered resolution to address him in a pause of the tempest of his passion.

"Your repentance," I said, "is now superfluous. If you had listened to the voice of conscience and heeded the stings of remorse before you had urged your diabolical vengeance to this extremity, Frankenstein would yet have lived."

"And do you dream?" said the daemon. "Do you think that I was then dead to agony and remorse? He," he continued, pointing to the corpse, "he suffered not in the consummation of the deed. Oh! Not the ten-thousandth portion of the anguish that was mine during the lingering detail of its execution. A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. Think you that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy, and when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot even imagine.

"After the murder of Clerval I returned to Switzerland, heart-broken and overcome. I pitied Frankenstein; my pity amounted to horror; I abhorred myself. But when I discovered that he, the author at once of my existence and of its unspeakable torments, dared to hope for happiness, that while he accumulated wretchedness and despair upon me he sought his own enjoyment in feelings and passions from the indulgence of which I was

forever barred, then impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. I recollected my threat and resolved that it should be accomplished. I knew that I was preparing for myself a deadly torture, but I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested yet could not disobey. Yet when she died! Nay, then I was not miserable. I had cast off all feeling, subdued all anguish, to riot in the excess of my despair. Evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen. The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion. And now it is ended; there is my last victim!"

I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery; yet, when I called to mind what Frankenstein had said of his powers of eloquence and persuasion, and when I again cast my eyes on the lifeless form of my friend, indignation was rekindled within me. "Wretch!" I said. "It is well that you come here to whine over the desolation that you have made. You throw a torch into a pile of buildings, and when they are consumed, you sit among the ruins and lament the fall. Hypocritical fiend! If he whom you mourn still lived, still would he be the object, again would he become the prey, of your accursed vengeance. It is not pity that you feel; you lament only because the victim of your malignity is withdrawn from your power."

"Oh, it is not thus—not thus," interrupted the being. "Yet such must be the impression conveyed to you by what appears to be the purport of my actions. Yet I seek not a fellow feeling in my misery. No sympathy may I ever find. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter and loathing despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? I am content to suffer alone while my sufferings shall endure; when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory. Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the

excellent qualities which I was capable of unfolding. I was nourished with high thoughts of honour and devotion. But now crime has degraded me beneath the meanest animal. No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I run over the frightful catalogue of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone.

"You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my crimes and his misfortunes. But in the detail which he gave you of them he could not sum up the hours and months of misery which I endured wasting in impotent passions. For while I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were forever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no injustice in this? Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all humankind sinned against me? Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely? Why do you not execrate the rustic who sought to destroy the saviour of his child? Nay, these are virtuous and immaculate beings! I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. Even now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice.

"But it is true that I am a wretch. I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing. I have devoted my creator, the select specimen of all that is worthy of love and admiration among men, to misery; I have pursued him even to that irremediable ruin.

"There he lies, white and cold in death. You hate me, but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself. I look on the hands which executed the deed; I think on the heart in which the imagination of it was conceived and long for the moment when these hands will meet my eyes, when that imagination will haunt my thoughts no more.

"Fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. My work is nearly complete. Neither yours nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being and accomplish that which must be done, but it requires my own. Do not think that I shall be slow to perform this sacrifice. I shall quit your vessel on the ice raft which brought me thither and shall seek the most northern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch who would create such another as I have been. I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched. He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish. I shall no longer see the sun or stars or feel the winds play on my cheeks.

"Light, feeling, and sense will pass away; and in this condition must I find my happiness. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me, when I felt the cheering warmth of summer and heard the rustling of the leaves and the warbling of the birds, and these were all to me, I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation. Polluted by crimes and torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death?

630

"Farewell! I leave you, and in you the last of humankind whom these eyes will ever behold. Farewell, Frankenstein! If thou wert yet alive and yet cherished a desire of revenge against me, it would be better satiated in my life than in my destruction. But it was not so; thou didst seek my extinction, that I might not cause greater wretchedness; and if yet, in some mode unknown to me, thou hadst not ceased to think and feel, thou wouldst not desire against me a vengeance greater than that which I feel. Blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine, for the bitter sting of remorse will not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them forever.

"But soon," he cried with sad and solemn enthusiasm, "I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile

triumphantly and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace, or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus. Farewell."

He sprang from the cabin window as he said this, upon the ice raft which lay close to the vessel. He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance.

MATHILDA

License: Public Domain

Mary Shelley

Chapter I

Florence. Nov. 9th 1819

It is only four o'clock; but it is winter and the sun has already set: there are no clouds in the clear, frosty sky to reflect its slant beams, but the air itself is tinged with a slight roseate colour which is again reflected on the snow that covers the ground. I live in a lone cottage on a solitary, wide heath: no voice of life reaches me. I see the desolate plain covered with white, save a few black patches that the noonday sun has made at the top of those sharp pointed hillocks from which the snow, sliding as it fell, lay thinner than on the plain ground: a few birds are pecking at the hard ice that covers the pools—for the frost has been of long continuance.

I am in a strange state of mind. I am alone—quite alone—in the world—the blight of misfortune has passed over me and withered me; I know that I am about to die and I feel happy—joyous.—I feel my pulse; it beats fast: I place my thin hand on my cheek; it burns: there is a slight, quick spirit within me which is now emitting its last sparks. I shall never see the snows of another winter—I do believe that I shall never again feel the vivifying warmth of another summer sun; and it is in this persuasion that I begin to write my tragic history. Perhaps a history such as mine had better die with me, but a feeling that I cannot define leads me on and I am too weak both in body and mind to resist the slightest impulse. While life was strong within me I thought indeed that there was a sacred horror in my tale that rendered it unfit for utterance, and now about to die I pollute its mystic terrors. It is as the wood of the Eumenides none but the dying may enter; and Oedipus is about to die.

What am I writing?—I must collect my thoughts. I do not know that any will peruse these pages except you, my friend, who will receive them at my death. I do not address them to you alone

because it will give me pleasure to dwell upon our friendship in a way that would be needless if you alone read what I shall write. I shall relate my tale therefore as if I wrote for strangers. You have often asked me the cause of my solitary life; my tears; and above all of my impenetrable and unkind silence. In life I dared not; in death I unveil the mystery. Others will toss these pages lightly over: to you, Woodville, kind, affectionate friend, they will be dear—the precious memorials of a heart-broken girl who, dying, is still warmed by gratitude towards you: your tears will fall on the words that record my misfortunes; I know they will—and while I have life I thank you for your sympathy.

But enough of this. I will begin my tale: it is my last task, and I hope I have strength sufficient to fulfill it. I record no crimes; my faults may easily be pardoned; for they proceeded not from evil motive but from want of judgement; and I believe few would say that they could, by a different conduct and superior wisdom, have avoided the misfortunes to which I am the victim. My fate has been governed by necessity, a hideous necessity. It required hands stronger than mine; stronger I do believe than any human force to break the thick, adamant chain that has bound me, once breathing nothing but joy, ever possessed by a warm love & delight in goodness,—to misery only to be ended, and now about to be ended, in death. But I forget myself, my tale is yet untold. I will pause a few moments, wipe my dim eyes, and endeavour to lose the present obscure but heavy feeling of unhappiness in the more acute emotions of the past.

I was born in England. My father was a man of rank: he had lost his father early, and was educated by a weak mother with all the indulgence she thought due to a nobleman of wealth. He was sent to Eton and afterwards to college; & allowed from childhood the free use of large sums of money; thus enjoying from his earliest youth the independance which a boy with these advantages, always acquires at a public school.

Under the influence of these circumstances his passions found a deep soil wherein they might strike their roots and flourish either as flowers or weeds as was their nature. By being always allowed to act for himself his character became strongly and early

marked and exhibited a various surface on which a quick sighted observer might see the seeds of virtues and of misfortunes. His careless extravagance, which made him squander immense sums of money to satisfy passing whims, which from their apparent energy he dignified with the name of passions, often displayed itself in unbounded generosity. Yet while he earnestly occupied himself about the wants of others his own desires were gratified to their fullest extent. He gave his money, but none of his own wishes were sacrificed to his gifts; he gave his time, which he did not value, and his affections which he was happy in any manner to have called into action.

I do not say that if his own desires had been put in competition with those of others that he would have displayed undue selfishness, but this trial was never made. He was nurtured in prosperity and attended by all its advantages; every one loved him and wished to gratify him. He was ever employed in promoting the pleasures of his companions—but their pleasures were his; and if he bestowed more attention upon the feelings of others than is usual with schoolboys it was because his social temper could never enjoy itself if every brow was not as free from care as his own.

While at school, emulation and his own natural abilities made him hold a conspicuous rank in the forms among his equals; at college he discarded books; he believed that he had other lessons to learn than those which they could teach him. He was now to enter into life and he was still young enough to consider study as a school-boy shackle, employed merely to keep the unruly out of mischief but as having no real connexion with life—whose wisdom of riding—gaming &c. he considered with far deeper interest—So he quickly entered into all college follies although his heart was too well moulded to be contaminated by them—it might be light but it was never cold. He was a sincere and sympathizing friend—but he had met with none who superior or equal to himself could aid him in unfolding his mind, or make him seek for fresh stores of thought by exhausting the old ones. He felt himself superior in quickness of judgement to those around him: his talents, his rank and wealth made him the chief of

his party, and in that station he rested not only contented but glorying, conceiving it to be the only ambition worthy for him to aim at in the world.

By a strange narrowness of ideas he viewed all the world in connexion only as it was or was not related to his little society. He considered queer and out of fashion all opinions that were exploded by his circle of intimates, and he became at the same time dogmatic and yet fearful of not coinciding with the only sentiments he could consider orthodox. To the generality of spectators he appeared careless of censure, and with high disdain to throw aside all dependance on public prejudices; but at the same time that he strode with a triumphant stride over the rest of the world, he cowered, with self disguised lowliness, to his own party, and although its [chi]ef never dared express an opinion or a feeling until he was assured that it would meet with the approbation of his companions.

Yet he had one secret hidden from these dear friends; a secret he had nurtured from his earliest years, and although he loved his fellow collegiates he would not trust it to the delicacy or sympathy of any one among them. He loved. He feared that the intensity of his passion might become the subject of their ridicule; and he could not bear that they should blaspheme it by considering that trivial and transitory which he felt was the life of his life.

10

There was a gentleman of small fortune who lived near his family mansion who had three lovely daughters. The eldest was far the most beautiful, but her beauty was only an addition to her other qualities—her understanding was clear & strong and her disposition angelically gentle. She and my father had been playmates from infancy: Diana, even in her childhood had been a favourite with his mother; this partiality encreased with the years of this beautiful and lively girl and thus during his school & college vacations they were perpetually together. Novels and all the various methods by which youth in civilized life are led to a knowledge of the existence of passions before they really feel them, had produced a strong effect on him who was so peculiarly susceptible of every impression. At eleven years of age Diana was

his favourite playmate but he already talked the language of love. Although she was elder than he by nearly two years the nature of her education made her more childish at least in the knowledge and expression of feeling; she received his warm protestations with innocence, and returned them unknowing of what they meant. She had read no novels and associated only with her younger sisters, what could she know of the difference between love and friendship? And when the development of her understanding disclosed the true nature of this intercourse to her, her affections were already engaged to her friend, and all she feared was lest other attractions and fickleness might make him break his infant vows.

But they became every day more ardent and tender. It was a passion that had grown with his growth; it had become entwined with every faculty and every sentiment and only to be lost with life. None knew of their love except their own two hearts; yet although in all things else, and even in this he dreaded the censure of his companions, for thus truly loving one inferior to him in fortune, nothing was ever able for a moment to shake his purpose of uniting himself to her as soon as he could muster courage sufficient to meet those difficulties he was determined to surmount.

Diana was fully worthy of his deepest affection. There were few who could boast of so pure a heart, and so much real humbleness of soul joined to a firm reliance on her own integrity and a belief in that of others. She had from her birth lived a retired life. She had lost her mother when very young, but her father had devoted himself to the care of her education—He had many peculiar ideas which influenced the system he had adopted with regard to her—She was well acquainted with the heroes of Greece and Rome or with those of England who had lived some hundred years ago, while she was nearly ignorant of the passing events of the day: she had read few authors who had written during at least the last fifty years but her reading with this exception was very extensive. Thus although she appeared to be less initiated in the mysteries of life and society than he her knowledge was of a deeper kind and laid on firmer foundations;

and if even her beauty and sweetness had not fascinated him her understanding would ever have held him in thrall. He looked up to her as his guide, and such was his adoration that he delighted to augment to his own mind the sense of inferiority with which she sometimes impressed him.

When he was nineteen his mother died. He left college on this event and shaking off for a while his old friends he retired to the neighbourhood of his Diana and received all his consolation from her sweet voice and dearer caresses. This short separation from his companions gave him courage to assert his independence. He had a feeling that however they might express ridicule of his intended marriage they would not dare display it when it had taken place; therefore seeking the consent of his guardian which with some difficulty he obtained, and of the father of his mistress which was more easily given, without acquainting any one else of his intention, by the time he had attained his twentieth birthday he had become the husband of Diana.

He loved her with passion and her tenderness had a charm for him that would not permit him to think of aught but her. He invited some of his college friends to see him but their frivolity disgusted him. Diana had torn the veil which had before kept him in his boyhood: he was become a man and he was surprised how he could ever have joined in the cant words and ideas of his fellow collegiates or how for a moment he had feared the censure of such as these. He discarded his old friendships not from fickleness but because they were indeed unworthy of him. Diana filled up all his heart: he felt as if by his union with her he had received a new and better soul. She was his mistress as he learned what were the true ends of life. It was through her beloved lessons that he cast off his old pursuits and gradually formed himself to become one among his fellow men; a distinguished member of society, a Patriot; and an enlightened lover of truth and virtue.—He loved her for her beauty and for her amiable disposition but he seemed to love her more for what he considered her superior wisdom. They studied, they rode together; they were never separate and seldom admitted a third to their society.

Thus my father, born in affluence, and always prosperous, clombe without the difficulty and various disappointments that all human beings seem destined to encounter, to the very topmost pinnacle of happiness: Around him was sunshine, and clouds whose shapes of beauty made the prospect divine concealed from him the barren reality which lay hidden below them. From this dizzy point he was dashed at once as he unawares congratulated himself on his felicity. Fifteen months after their marriage I was born, and my mother died a few days after my birth.

A sister of my father was with him at this period. She was nearly fifteen years older than he, and was the offspring of a former marriage of his father. When the latter died this sister was taken by her maternal relations: they had seldom seen one another, and were quite unlike in disposition. This aunt, to whose care I was afterwards consigned, has often related to me the effect that this catastrophe had on my father's strong and susceptible character. From the moment of my mother's death untill his departure she never heard him utter a single word: buried in the deepest melancholy he took no notice of any one; often for hours his eyes streamed tears or a more fearful gloom overpowered him. All outward things seemed to have lost their existence relatively to him and only one circumstance could in any degree recall him from his motionless and mute despair: he would never see me. He seemed insensible to the presence of any one else, but if, as a trial to awaken his sensibility, my aunt brought me into the room he would instantly rush out with every symptom of fury and distraction. At the end of a month he suddenly quitted his house and, unattended [*sic*] by any servant, departed from that part of the country without by word or writing informing any one of his intentions. My aunt was only relieved of her anxiety concerning his fate by a letter from him dated Hamburgh.

How often have I wept over that letter which untill I was sixteen was the only relick I had to remind me of my parents. "Pardon me," it said, "for the uneasiness I have unavoidably given you: but while in that unhappy island, where every thing breathes *her* spirit whom I have lost for ever, a spell held me. It is broken: I have quitted England for many years, perhaps for ever. But to

convince you that selfish feeling does not entirely engross me I shall remain in this town untill you have made by letter every arrangement that you judge necessary. When I leave this place do not expect to hear from me: I must break all ties that at present exist. I shall become a wanderer, a miserable outcast—alone! alone!"—In another part of the letter he mentioned me—"As for that unhappy little being whom I could not see, and hardly dare mention, I leave her under your protection. Take care of her and cherish her: one day I may claim her at your hands; but futurity is dark, make the present happy to her."

My father remained three months at Hamburgh; when he quitted it he changed his name, my aunt could never discover that which he adopted and only by faint hints, could conjecture that he had taken the road of Germany and Hungary to Turkey.

Thus this towering spirit who had excited interest and high expectation in all who knew and could value him became at once, as it were, extinct. He existed from this moment for himself only. His friends remembered him as a brilliant vision which would never again return to them. The memory of what he had been faded away as years passed; and he who before had been as a part of themselves and of their hopes was now no longer counted among the living.

20

Chapter II

I now come to my own story. During the early part of my life there is little to relate, and I will be brief; but I must be allowed to dwell a little on the years of my childhood that it may be apparent how when one hope failed all life was to be a blank; and how when the only affection I was permitted to cherish was blasted my existence was extinguished with it.

I have said that my aunt was very unlike my father. I believe that without the slightest tinge of a bad heart she had the coldest that ever filled a human breast: it was totally incapable of any affection. She took me under her protection because she considered it her duty; but she had too long lived alone and undisturbed by the noise and prattle of children to allow that I

should disturb her quiet. She had never been married; and for the last five years had lived perfectly alone on an estate, that had descended to her through her mother, on the shores of Loch Lomond in Scotland. My father had expressed a wish in his letters that she should reside with me at his family mansion which was situated in a beautiful country near Richmond in Yorkshire. She would not consent to this proposition, but as soon as she had arranged the affairs which her brother's departure had caused to fall to her care, she quitted England and took me with her to her scotch estate.

The care of me while a baby, and afterwards untill I had reached my eighth year devolved on a servant of my mother's, who had accompanied us in our retirement for that purpose. I was placed in a remote part of the house, and only saw my aunt at stated hours. These occurred twice a day; once about noon she came to my nursery, and once after her dinner I was taken to her. She never caressed me, and seemed all the time I staid in the room to fear that I should annoy her by some childish freak. My good nurse always schooled me with the greatest care before she ventured into the parlour—and the awe my aunt's cold looks and few constrained words inspired was so great that I seldom disgraced her lessons or was betrayed from the exemplary stillness which I was taught to observe during these short visits.

Under my good nurse's care I ran wild about our park and the neighbouring fields. The offspring of the deepest love I displayed from my earliest years the greatest sensibility of disposition. I cannot say with what passion I loved every thing even the inanimate objects that surrounded me. I believe that I bore an individual attachment to every tree in our park; every animal that inhabited it knew me and I loved them. Their occasional deaths filled my infant heart with anguish. I cannot number the birds that I have saved during the long and severe winters of that climate; or the hares and rabbits that I have defended from the attacks of our dogs, or have nursed when accidentally wounded.

When I was seven years of age my nurse left me. I now forget the cause of her departure if indeed I ever knew it. She returned to England, and the bitter tears she shed at parting were the last I

saw flow for love of me for many years. My grief was terrible: I had no friend but her in the whole world. By degrees I became reconciled to solitude but no one supplied her place in my affections. I lived in a desolate country where

——— there were none to praise
And very few to love.

—WORDSWORTH

It is true that I now saw a little more of my aunt, but she was in every way an unsocial being; and to a timid child she was as a plant beneath a thick covering of ice; I should cut my hands in endeavouring to get at it. So I was entirely thrown upon my own resources. The neighbouring minister was engaged to give me lessons in reading, writing and french, but he was without family and his manners even to me were always perfectly characteristic of the profession in the exercise of whose functions he chiefly shone, that of a schoolmaster. I sometimes strove to form friendships with the most attractive of the girls who inhabited the neighbouring village; but I believe I should never have succeeded [even] had not my aunt interposed her authority to prevent all intercourse between me and the peasantry; for she was fearful lest I should acquire the scotch accent and dialect; a little of it I had, although great pains was taken that my tongue should not disgrace my English origin.

As I grew older my liberty encreased with my desires, and my wanderings extended from our park to the neighbouring country. Our house was situated on the shores of the lake and the lawn came down to the water's edge. I rambled amidst the wild scenery of this lovely country and became a complete mountaineer: I passed hours on the steep brow of a mountain that overhung a waterfall or rowed myself in a little skiff to some one of the islands. I wandered for ever about these lovely solitudes, gathering flower after flower

Ond' era pinta tutta la mia via

—DANTE

singing as I might the wild melodies of the country, or occupied by pleasant day dreams. My greatest pleasure was the enjoyment of a serene sky amidst these verdant woods: yet I loved all the changes of Nature; and rain, and storm, and the beautiful clouds of heaven brought their delights with them. When rocked by the waves of the lake my spirits rose in triumph as a horseman feels with pride the motions of his high fed steed.

But my pleasures arose from the contemplation of nature alone, I had no companion: my warm affections finding no return from any other human heart were forced to run waste on inanimate objects. Sometimes indeed I wept when my aunt received my caresses with repulsive coldness, and when I looked round and found none to love; but I quickly dried my tears. As I grew older books in some degree supplied the place of human intercourse: the library of my aunt was very small; Shakespear, Milton, Pope and Cowper were the stranglely [*sic*] assorted poets of her collection; and among the prose authors a translation of Livy and Rollin's ancient history were my chief favourites although as I emerged from childhood I found others highly interesting which I had before neglected as dull.

When I was twelve years old it occurred to my aunt that I ought to learn music; she herself played upon the harp. It was with great hesitation that she persuaded herself to undertake my instruction; yet believing this accomplishment a necessary part of my education, and balancing the evils of this measure or of having some one in the house to instruct me she submitted to the inconvenience. A harp was sent for that my playing might not interfere with hers, and I began: she found me a docile and when I had conquered the first rudiments a very apt scholar. I had acquired in my harp a companion in rainy days; a sweet soother of my feelings when any untoward accident ruffled them: I often addressed it as my only friend; I could pour forth to it my hopes

and loves, and I fancied that its sweet accents answered me. I have now mentioned all my studies.

I was a solitary being, and from my infant years, ever since my dear nurse left me, I had been a dreamer. I brought Rosalind and Miranda and the lady of Comus to life to be my companions, or on my isle acted over their parts imagining myself to be in their situations. Then I wandered from the fancies of others and formed affections and intimacies with the aerial creations of my own brain—but still clinging to reality I gave a name to these conceptions and nursed them in the hope of realization. I clung to the memory of my parents; my mother I should never see, she was dead: but the idea of [my] unhappy, wandering father was the idol of my imagination. I bestowed on him all my affections; there was a miniature of him that I gazed on continually; I copied his last letter and read it again and again. Sometimes it made me weep; and at other [times] I repeated with transport those words,—"One day I may claim her at your hands." I was to be his consoler, his companion in after years. My favourite vision was that when I grew up I would leave my aunt, whose coldness lulled my conscience, and disguised like a boy I would seek my father through the world. My imagination hung upon the scene of recognition; his miniature, which I should continually wear exposed on my breast, would be the means and I imaged the moment to my mind a thousand and a thousand times, perpetually varying the circumstances. Sometimes it would be in a desert; in a populous city; at a ball; we should perhaps meet in a vessel; and his first words constantly were, "My daughter, I love thee"! What extactic moments have I passed in these dreams! How many tears I have shed; how often have I laughed aloud.

This was my life for sixteen years. At fourteen and fifteen I often thought that the time was come when I should commence my pilgrimage, which I had cheated my own mind into believing was my imperious duty: but a reluctance to quit my Aunt; a remorse for the grief which, I could not conceal from myself, I should occasion her for ever withheld me. Sometimes when I had planned the next morning for my escape a word of more than usual affection from her lips made me postpone my resolution. I

reproached myself bitterly for what I called a culpable weakness; but this weakness returned upon me whenever the critical moment approached, and I never found courage to depart.

Chapter III

It was on my sixteenth birthday that my aunt received a letter from my father. I cannot describe the tumult of emotions that arose within me as I read it. It was dated from London; he had returned! I could only relieve my transports by tears, tears of unmingled joy. He had returned, and he wrote to know whether my aunt would come to London or whether he should visit her in Scotland. How delicious to me were the words of his letter that concerned me: "I cannot tell you," it said, "how ardently I desire to see my Mathilda. I look on her as the creature who will form the happiness of my future life: she is all that exists on earth that interests me. I can hardly prevent myself from hastening immediately to you but I am necessarily detained a week and I write because if you come here I may see you somewhat sooner." I read these words with devouring eyes; I kissed them, wept over them and exclaimed, "He will love me!"—

My aunt would not undertake so long a journey, and in a fortnight we had another letter from my father, it was dated Edinburgh: he wrote that he should be with us in three days. "As he approached his desire of seeing me," he said, "became more and more ardent, and he felt that the moment when he should first clasp me in his arms would be the happiest of his life."

How irksome were these three days to me! All sleep and appetite fled from me; I could only read and re-read his letter, and in the solitude of the woods imagine the moment of our meeting. On the eve of the third day I retired early to my room; I could not sleep but paced all night about my chamber and, as you may in Scotland at midsummer, watched the crimson track of the sun as it almost skirted the northern horizon. At day break I hastened to the woods; the hours past on while I indulged in wild dreams that gave wings to the slothful steps of time, and beguiled my eager impatience. My father was expected at noon but when I wished to

return to me[e]t him I found that I had lost my way: it seemed that in every attempt to find it I only became more involved in the intricacies of the woods, and the trees hid all trace by I grew impatient, I wept; [sic] and wrung my hands but still I could not discover my path.

It was past two o'clock when by a sudden turn I found myself close to the lake near a cove where a little skiff was moored—It was not far from our house and I saw my father and aunt walking on the lawn. I jumped into the boat, and well accustomed to such feats, I pushed it from shore, and exerted all my strength to row swiftly across. As I came, dressed in white, covered only by my tartan *rachan*, my hair streaming on my shoulders, and shooting across with greater speed than it could be supposed I could give to my boat, my father has often told me that I looked more like a spirit than a human maid. I approached the shore, my father held the boat, I leapt lightly out, and in a moment was in his arms.

And now I began to live. All around me was changed from a dull uniformity to the brightest scene of joy and delight. The happiness I enjoyed in the company of my father far exceeded my sanguine expectations. We were for ever together; and the subjects of our conversations were inexhaustible. He had passed the sixteen years of absence among nations nearly unknown to Europe; he had wandered through Persia, Arabia and the north of India and had penetrated among the habitations of the natives with a freedom permitted to few Europeans. His relations of their manners, his anecdotes and descriptions of scenery whiled away delicious hours, when we were tired of talking of our own plans of future life.

The voice of affection was so new to me that I hung with delight upon his words when he told me what he had felt concerning me during these long years of apparent forgetfulness. "At first"—said he, "I could not bear to think of my poor little girl; but afterwards as grief wore off and hope again revisited me I could only turn to her, and amidst cities and deserts her little fairy form, such as I imagined it, for ever flitted before me. The northern breeze as it refreshed me was sweeter and more balmy for it seemed to carry some of your spirit along with it. I often

thought that I would instantly return and take you along with me to some fertile island where we should live at peace for ever. As I returned my fervent hopes were dashed by so many fears; my impatience became in the highest degree painful. I dared not think that the sun should shine and the moon rise not on your living form but on your grave. But, no, it is not so; I have my Mathilda, my consolation, and my hope."—

My father was very little changed from what he described himself to be before his misfortunes. It is intercourse with civilized society; it is the disappointment of cherished hopes, the falsehood of friends, or the perpetual clash of mean passions that changes the heart and damps the ardour of youthful feelings; lonely wanderings in a wild country among people of simple or savage manners may inure the body but will not tame the soul, or extinguish the ardour and freshness of feeling incident to youth. The burning sun of India, and the freedom from all restraint had rather encreased the energy of his character: before he bowed under, now he was impatient of any censure except that of his own mind. He had seen so many customs and witnessed so great a variety of moral creeds that he had been obliged to form an independant one for himself which had no relation to the peculiar notions of any one country: his early prejudices of course influenced his judgement in the formation of his principles, and some raw colledge ideas were strangely mingled with the deepest deductions of his penetrating mind.

The vacuity his heart endured of any deep interest in life during his long absence from his native country had had a singular effect upon his ideas. There was a curious feeling of unreality attached by him to his foreign life in comparison with the years of his youth. All the time he had passed out of England was as a dream, and all the interest of his soul[,] all his affections belonged to events which had happened and persons who had existed sixteen years before. It was strange when you heard him talk to see how he passed over this lapse of time as a night of visions; while the remembrances of his youth standing separte as they did from his after life had lost none of their vigour. He talked of my Mother as if she had lived but a few weeks before; not that

he expressed poignant grief, but his description of her person, and his relation of all anecdotes connected with her was thus fervent and vivid.

In all this there was a strangeness that attracted and enchanted me. He was, as it were, now awakened from his long, visionary sleep, and he felt some what like one of the seven sleepers, or like Nourjahad, in that sweet imitation of an eastern tale: Diana was gone; his friends were changed or dead, and now on his awakening I was all that he had to love on earth.

How dear to me were the waters, and mountains, and woods of Loch Lomond now that I had so beloved a companion for my rambles. I visited with my father every delightful spot, either on the islands, or by the side of the tree-sheltered waterfalls; every shady path, or dingle entangled with underwood and fern. My ideas were enlarged by his conversation. I felt as if I were recreated and had about me all the freshness and life of a new being: I was, as it were, transported since his arrival from a narrow spot of earth into a universe boundless to the imagination and the understanding. My life had been before as a pleasing country rill, never destined to leave its native fields, but when its task was fulfilled quietly to be absorbed, and leave no trace. Now it seemed to me to be as a various river flowing through a fertile and lovely landscape, ever changing and ever beautiful. Alas! I knew not the desert it was about to reach; the rocks that would tear its waters, and the hideous scene that would be reflected in a more distorted manner in its waves. Life was then brilliant; I began to learn to hope and what brings a more bitter despair to the heart than hope destroyed?

Is it not strange that grief should quickly follow so divine a happiness? I drank of an enchanted cup but gall was at the bottom of its long drawn sweetness. My heart was full of deep affection, but it was calm from its very depth and fulness. I had no idea that misery could arise from love, and this lesson that all at last must learn was taught me in a manner few are obliged to receive it. I lament now, I must ever lament, those few short months of Paradisaical bliss; I disobeyed no command, I ate no apple, and yet I was ruthlessly driven from it. Alas! my companion did, and I

was precipitated in his fall. But I wander from my relation—let woe come at its appointed time; I may at this stage of my story still talk of happiness.

Three months passed away in this delightful intercourse, when my aunt fell ill. I passed a whole month in her chamber nursing her, but her disease was mortal and she died, leaving me for some time inconsolable, Death is so dreadful to the living; the chains of habit are so strong even when affection does not link them that the heart must be agonized when they break. But my father was beside me to console me and to drive away bitter memories by bright hopes: methought that it was sweet to grieve that he might dry my tears.

Then again he distracted my thoughts from my sorrow by comparing it with his despair when he lost my mother. Even at that time I shuddered at the picture he drew of his passions: he had the imagination of a poet, and when he described the whirlwind that then tore his feelings he gave his words the impress of life so vividly that I believed while I trembled. I wondered how he could ever again have entered into the offices of life after his wild thoughts seemed to have given him affinity with the unearthly; while he spoke so tremendous were the ideas which he conveyed that it appeared as if the human heart were far too bounded for their conception. His feelings seemed better fitted for a spirit whose habitation is the earthquake and the volcano than for one confined to a mortal body and human lineaments. But these were merely memories; he was changed since then. He was now all love, all softness; and when I raised my eyes in wonder at him as he spoke the smile on his lips told me that his heart was possessed by the gentlest passions.

45

Two months after my aunt's death we removed to London where I was led by my father to attend to deeper studies than had before occupied me. My improvement was his delight; he was with me during all my studies and assisted or joined with me in every lesson. We saw a great deal of society, and no day passed that my father did not endeavour to embellish by some new enjoyment. The tender attachment that he bore me, and the love and veneration with which I returned it cast a charm over every

moment. The hours were slow for each minute was employed; we lived more in one week than many do in the course of several months and the variety and novelty of our pleasures gave zest to each.

We perpetually made excursions together. And whether it were to visit beautiful scenery, or to see fine pictures, or sometimes for no object but to seek amusement as it might chance to arise, I was always happy when near my father. It was a subject of regret to me whenever we were joined by a third person, yet if I turned with a disturbed look towards my father, his eyes fixed on me and beaming with tenderness instantly restored joy to my heart. O, hours of intense delight! Short as ye were ye are made as long to me as a whole life when looked back upon through the mist of grief that rose immediately after as if to shut ye from my view. Alas! ye were the last of happiness that I ever enjoyed; a few, a very few weeks and all was destroyed. Like Psyche I lived for awhile in an enchanted palace, amidst odours, and music, and every luxurious delight; when suddenly I was left on a barren rock; a wide ocean of despair rolled around me: above all was black, and my eyes closed while I still inhabited a universal death. Still I would not hurry on; I would pause for ever on the recollections of these happy weeks; I would repeat every word, and how many do I remember, record every enchantment of the faery habitation. But, no, my tale must not pause; it must be as rapid as was my fate,—I can only describe in short although strong expressions my precipitate and irremediable change from happiness to despair.

Chapter IV

Among our most assiduous visitors was a young man of rank, well informed, and agreeable in his person. After we had spent a few weeks in London his attentions towards me became marked and his visits more frequent. I was too much taken up by my own occupations and feelings to attend much to this, and then indeed I hardly noticed more than the bare surface of events as they passed around me; but I now remember that my father was restless and

uneasy whenever this person visited us, and when we talked together watched us with the greatest apparent anxiety although he himself maintained a profound silence. At length these obnoxious visits suddenly ceased altogether, but from that moment I must date the change of my father: a change that to remember makes me shudder and then filled me with the deepest grief. There were no degrees which could break my fall from happiness to misery; it was as the stroke of lightning—sudden and entire. Alas! I now met frowns where before I had been welcomed only with smiles: he, my beloved father, shunned me, and either treated me with harshness or a more heart-breaking coldness. We took no more sweet counsel together; and when I tried to win him again to me, his anger, and the terrible emotions that he exhibited drove me to silence and tears.

And this was sudden. The day before we had passed alone together in the country; I remember we had talked of future travels that we should undertake together—. There was an eager delight in our tones and gestures that could only spring from deep & mutual love joined to the most unrestrained confidence[;] and now the next day, the next hour, I saw his brows contracted, his eyes fixed in sullen fierceness on the ground, and his voice so gentle and so dear made me shiver when he addressed me. Often, when my wandering fancy brought by its various images now consolation and now aggravation of grief to my heart, I have compared myself to Proserpine who was gaily and heedlessly gathering flowers on the sweet plain of Enna, when the King of Hell snatched her away to the abodes of death and misery. Alas! I who so lately knew of nought but the joy of life; who had slept only to dream sweet dreams and awoke to incomparable happiness, I now passed my days and nights in tears. I who sought and had found joy in the love-breathing countenance of my father now when I dared fix on him a supplicating look it was ever answered by an angry frown. I dared not speak to him; and when sometimes I had worked up courage to meet him and to ask an explanation one glance at his face where a chaos of mighty passion seemed for ever struggling made me tremble and shrink to silence. I was dashed down from heaven to earth as a silly

sparrow when pounced on by a hawk; my eyes swam and my head was bewildered by the sudden apparition of grief. Day after day passed marked only by my complaints and my tears; often I lifted my soul in vain prayer for a softer descent from joy to woe, or if that were denied me that I might be allowed to die, and fade for ever under the cruel blast that swept over me,

——— for what should I do here,
Like a decaying flower, still withering
Under his bitter words, whose kindly heat
Should give my poor heart life?

—FLETCHER'S COMEDY OF THE CAPTAIN

Sometimes I said to myself, this is an enchantment, and I must strive against it. My father is blinded by some malignant vision which I must remove. And then, like David, I would try music to win the evil spirit from him; and once while singing I lifted my eyes towards him and saw his fixed on me and filled with tears; all his muscles seemed relaxed to softness. I sprung towards him with a cry of joy and would have thrown myself into his arms, but he pushed me roughly from him and left me. And even from this slight incident he contracted fresh gloom and an additional severity of manner.

50

There are many incidents that I might relate which shewed the diseased yet incomprehensible state of his mind; but I will mention one that occurred while we were in company with several other persons. On this occasion I chanced to say that I thought *Myrrha* the best of Alfieri's tragedies; as I said this I chanced to cast my eyes on my father and met his: for the first time the expression of those beloved eyes displeased me, and I saw with affright that his whole frame shook with some concealed emotion that in spite of his efforts half conquered him: as this tempest faded from his soul he became melancholy and silent. Every day some new scene occurred and displayed in him a mind working as [it] were with an unknown horror that now he could master but which at times threatened to overturn his reason, and to throw the bright seat of his intelligence into a perpetual chaos.

I will not dwell longer than I need on these disastrous circumstances. I might waste days in describing how anxiously I watched every change of fleeting circumstance that promised better days, and with what despair I found that each effort of mine aggravated his seeming madness. To tell all my grief I might as well attempt to count the tears that have fallen from these eyes, or every sign that has torn my heart. I will be brief for there is in all this a horror that will not bear many words, and I sink almost a second time to death while I recall these sad scenes to my memory. Oh, my beloved father! Indeed you made me miserable beyond all words, but how truly did I even then forgive you, and how entirely did you possess my whole heart while I endeavoured, as a rainbow gleams upon a cataract [Shelley's footnote: Lord Byron], to soften thy tremendous sorrows.

Thus did this change come about. I seem perhaps to have dashed too suddenly into the description, but thus suddenly did it happen. In one sentence I have passed from the idea of unspeakable happiness to that of unspeakable grief but they were thus closely linked together. We had remained five months in London three of joy and two of sorrow. My father and I were now seldom alone or if we were he generally kept silence with his eyes fixed on the ground—the dark full orbs in which before I delighted to read all sweet and gentle feeling shadowed from my sight by their lids and the long lashes that fringed them. When we were in company he affected gaiety but I wept to hear his hollow laugh—begun by an empty smile and often ending in a bitter sneer such as never before this fatal period had wrinkled his lips. When others were there he often spoke to me and his eyes perpetually followed my slightest motion. His accents whenever he addressed me were cold and constrained although his voice would tremble when he perceived that my full heart choked the answer to words proffered with a mien yet new to me.

But days of peaceful melancholy were of rare occurrence[:] they were often broken in upon by gusts of passion that drove me as a weak boat on a stormy sea to seek a cove for shelter; but the winds blew from my native harbour and I was cast far, far out untill shattered I perished when the tempest had passed and the

sea was apparently calm. I do not know that I can describe his emotions: sometimes he only betrayed them by a word or gesture, and then retired to his chamber and I crept as near it as I dared and listened with fear to every sound, yet still more dreading a sudden silence—dreading I knew not what, but ever full of fear.

It was after one tremendous day when his eyes had glared on me like lightning—and his voice sharp and broken seemed unable to express the extent of his emotion that in the evening when I was alone he joined me with a calm countenance, and not noticing my tears which I quickly dried when he approached, told me that in three days that [*sic*] he intended to remove with me to his estate in Yorkshire, and bidding me prepare left me hastily as if afraid of being questioned.

This determination on his part indeed surprised me. This estate was that which he had inhabited in childhood and near which my mother resided while a girl; this was the scene of their youthful loves and where they had lived after their marriage; in happier days my father had often told me that however he might appear weaned from his widow sorrow, and free from bitter recollections elsewhere, yet he would never dare visit the spot where he had enjoyed her society or trust himself to see the rooms that so many years ago they had inhabited together; her favourite walks and the gardens the flowers of which she had delighted to cultivate. And now while he suffered intense misery he determined to plunge into still more intense, and strove for greater emotion than that which already tore him. I was perplexed, and most anxious to know what this portended; ah, what could it po[r]tend but ruin!

I saw little of my father during this interval, but he appeared calmer although not less unhappy than before. On the morning of the third day he informed me that he had determined to go to Yorkshire first alone, and that I should follow him in a fortnight unless I heard any thing from him in the mean time that should contradict this command. He departed the same day, and four days afterwards I received a letter from his steward telling me in his name to join him with as little delay as possible. After travelling day and night I arrived with an anxious, yet a hoping heart, for why should he send for me if it were only to avoid me

and to treat me with the apparent aversion that he had in London. I met him at the distance of thirty miles from our mansion. His demeanour was sad; for a moment he appeared glad to see me and then he checked himself as if unwilling to betray his feelings. He was silent during our ride, yet his manner was kinder than before and I thought I beheld a softness in his eyes that gave me hope.

When we arrived, after a little rest, he led me over the house and pointed out to me the rooms which my mother had inhabited. Although more than sixteen years had passed since her death nothing had been changed; her work box, her writing desk were still there and in her room a book lay open on the table as she had left it. My father pointed out these circumstances with a serious and unaltered mien, only now and then fixing his deep and liquid eyes upon me; there was something strange and awful in his look that overcame me, and in spite of myself I wept, nor did he attempt to console me, but I saw his lips quiver and the muscles of his countenance seemed convulsed.

We walked together in the gardens and in the evening when I would have retired he asked me to stay and read to him; and first said, "When I was last here your mother read Dante to me; you shall go on where she left off." And then in a moment he said, "No, that must not be; you must not read Dante. Do you choose a book." I took up Spencer and read the descent of Sir Guyon to the halls of Avarice; while he listened his eyes fixed on me in sad profound silence.

I heard the next morning from the steward that upon his arrival he had been in a most terrible state of mind: he had passed the first night in the garden lying on the damp grass; he did not sleep but groaned perpetually. "Alas!" said the old man[,] who gave me this account with tears in his eyes, "it wrings my heart to see my lord in this state: when I heard that he was coming down here with you, my young lady, I thought we should have the happy days over again that we enjoyed during the short life of my lady your mother—But that would be too much happiness for us poor creatures born to tears—and that was why she was taken from us so soon; [s]he was too beautiful and good for us[.] It was a happy day as we all thought it when my lord married her: I knew her

when she was a child and many a good turn has she done for me in my old lady's time—You are like her although there is more of my lord in you—But has he been thus ever since his return? All my joy turned to sorrow when I first beheld him with that melancholy countenance enter these doors as it were the day after my lady's funeral—He seemed to recover himself a little after he had bidden me write to you—but still it is a woful thing to see him so unhappy." These were the feelings of an old, faithful servant: what must be those of an affectionate daughter. Alas! Even then my heart was almost broken.

We spent two months together in this house. My father spent the greater part of his time with me; he accompanied me in my walks, listened to my music, and leant over me as I read or painted. When he conversed with me his manner was cold and constrained; his eyes only seemed to speak, and as he turned their black, full lustre towards me they expressed a living sadness. There was something in those dark deep orbs so liquid, and intense that even in happiness I could never meet their full gaze that mine did not overflow. Yet it was with sweet tears; now there was a depth of affliction in their gentle appeal that rent my heart with sympathy; they seemed to desire peace for me; for himself a heart patient to suffer; a craving for sympathy, yet a perpetual self denial. It was only when he was absent from me that his passion subdued him,—that he clinched his hands—knit his brows—and with haggard looks called for death to his despair, raving wildly, untill exhausted he sank down nor was revived untill I joined him.

While we were in London there was a harshness and sullenness in his sorrow which had now entirely disappeared. There I shrunk and fled from him, now I only wished to be with him that I might soothe him to peace. When he was silent I tried to divert him, and when sometimes I stole to him during the energy of his passion I wept but did not desire to leave him. Yet he suffered fearful agony; during the day he was more calm, but at night when I could not be with him he seemed to give the reins to his grief: he often passed his nights either on the floor in my mother's room, or in the garden; and when in the morning he saw me view with poignant grief his exhausted frame, and his person languid almost

to death with watching he wept; but during all this time he spoke no word by which I might guess the cause of his unhappiness[.] If I ventured to enquire he would either leave me or press his finger on his lips, and with a deprecating look that I could not resist, turn away. If I wept he would gaze on me in silence but he was no longer harsh and although he repulsed every caress yet it was with gentleness.

He seemed to cherish a mild grief and softer emotions although sad as a relief from despair—He contrived in many ways to nurse his melancholy as an antidote to wilder passion[.] He perpetually frequented the walks that had been favourites with him when he and my mother wandered together talking of love and happiness; he collected every relick that remained of her and always sat opposite her picture which hung in the room fixing on it a look of sad despair—and all this was done in a mystic and awful silence. If his passion subdued him he locked himself in his room; and at night when he wandered restlessly about the house, it was when every other creature slept.

It may easily be imagined that I wearied myself with conjecture to guess the cause of his sorrow. The solution that seemed to me the most probable was that during his residence in London he had fallen in love with some unworthy person, and that his passion mastered him although he would not gratify it: he loved me too well to sacrifice me to this inclination, and that he had now visited this house that by reviving the memory of my mother whom he so passionately adored he might weaken the present impression. This was possible; but it was a mere conjecture unfounded on any fact. Could there be guilt in it? He was too upright and noble to *do* aught that his conscience would not approve; I did not yet know of the crime there may be in involuntary feeling and therefore ascribed his tumultuous starts and gloomy looks wholly to the struggles of his mind and not any as they were partly due to the worst fiend of all—Remorse.

But still do I flatter myself that this would have passed away. His paroxisms of passion were terrific but his soul bore him through them triumphant, though almost destroyed by victory; but the day would finally have been won had not I, foolish and

presumptuous wretch! hurried him on untill there was no recall, no hope. My rashness gave the victory in this dreadful fight to the enemy who triumphed over him as he lay fallen and vanquished. I! I alone was the cause of his defeat and justly did I pay the fearful penalty. I said to myself, let him receive sympathy and these struggles will cease. Let him confide his misery to another heart and half the weight of it will be lightened. I will win him to me; he shall not deny his grief to me and when I know his secret then will I pour a balm into his soul and again I shall enjoy the ravishing delight of beholding his smile, and of again seeing his eyes beam if not with pleasure at least with gentle love and thankfulness. This will I do, I said. Half I accomplished; I gained his secret and we were both lost for ever.

Chapter V

Nearly a year had past since my father's return, and the seasons had almost finished their round—It was now the end of May; the woods were clothed in their freshest verdure, and the sweet smell of the new mown grass was in the fields. I thought that the balmy air and the lovely face of Nature might aid me in inspiring him with mild sensations, and give him gentle feelings of peace and love preparatory to the confidence I determined to win from him.

I chose therefore the evening of one of these days for my attempt. I invited him to walk with me, and led him to a neighbouring wood of beech trees whose light shade shielded us from the slant and dazzling beams of the descending sun—After walking for some time in silence I seated my self with him on a mossy hillock—It is strange but even now I seem to see the spot—the slim and smooth trunks were many of them wound round by ivy whose shining leaves of the darkest green contrasted with the white bark and the light leaves of the young sprouts of beech that grew from their parent trunks—the short grass was mingled with moss and was partly covered by the dead leaves of the last autumn that driven by the winds had here and there collected in little hillocks—there were a few moss grown stumps about—The leaves were gently moved by the breeze and through their green

canopy you could see the bright blue sky—As evening came on the distant trunks were reddened by the sun and the wind died entirely away while a few birds flew past us to their evening rest.

Well it was here we sat together, and when you hear all that past—all that of terrible tore our souls even in this placid spot, which but for strange passions might have been a paradise to us, you will not wonder that I remember it as I looked on it that its calm might give me calm, and inspire me not only with courage but with persuasive words. I saw all these things and in a vacant manner noted them in my mind while I endeavoured to arrange my thoughts in fitting order for my attempt. My heart beat fast as I worked myself up to speak to him, for I was determined not to be repulsed but I trembled to imagine what effect my words might have on him; at length, with much hesitation I began:

"Your kindness to me, my dearest father, and the affection—the excessive affection—that you had for me when you first returned will I hope excuse me in your eyes that I dare speak to you, although with the tender affection of a daughter, yet also with the freedom of a friend and equal. But pardon me, I entreat you and listen to me: do not turn away from me; do not be impatient; you may easily intimidate me into silence, but my heart is bursting, nor can I willingly consent to endure for one moment longer the agony of uncertainty which for the last four months has been my portion.

"Listen to me, dearest friend, and permit me to gain your confidence. Are the happy days of mutual love which have passed to be to me as a dream never to return? Alas! You have a secret grief that destroys us both: but you must permit me to win this secret from you. Tell me, can I do nothing? You well know that on the whole earth there is no sacrifice that I would not make, no labour that I would not undergo with the mere hope that I might bring you ease. But if no endeavour on my part can contribute to your happiness, let me at least know your sorrow, and surely my earnest love and deep sympathy must soothe your despair.

"I fear that I speak in a constrained manner: my heart is overflowing with the ardent desire I have of bringing calm once more to your thoughts and looks; but I fear to aggravate your

grief, or to raise that in you which is death to me, anger and distaste. Do not then continue to fix your eyes on the earth; raise them on me for I can read your soul in them: speak to me to me [*sic*], and pardon my presumption. Alas! I am a most unhappy creature!"

I was breathless with emotion, and I paused fixing my earnest eyes on my father, after I had dashed away the intrusive tears that dimmed them. He did not raise his, but after a short silence he replied to me in a low voice: "You are indeed presumptuous, Mathilda, presumptuous and very rash. In the heart of one like me there are secret thoughts working, and secret tortures which you ought not to seek to discover. I cannot tell you how it adds to my grief to know that I am the cause of uneasiness to you; but this will pass away, and I hope that soon we shall be as we were a few months ago. Restrain your impatience or you may mar what you attempt to alleviate. Do not again speak to me in this strain; but wait in submissive patience the event of what is passing around you."

"Oh, yes!" I passionately replied, "I will be very patient; I will not be rash or presumptuous: I will see the agonies, and tears, and despair of my father, my only friend, my hope, my shelter, I will see it all with folded arms and downcast eyes. You do not treat me with candour; it is not true what you say; this will not soon pass away, it will last forever if you deign not to speak to me; to admit my consolations.

"Dearest, dearest father, pity me and pardon me: I entreat you do not drive me to despair; indeed I must not be repulsed; there is one thing that which [*sic*] although it may torture me to know, yet that you must tell me. I demand, and most solemnly I demand if in any way I am the cause of your unhappiness. Do you not see my tears which I in vain strive against—You hear unmoved my voice broken by sobs—Feel how my hand trembles: my whole heart is in the words I speak and you must not endeavour to silence me by mere words barren of meaning: the agony of my doubt hurries me on, and you must reply. I beseech you; by your former love for me now lost, I adjure you to answer that one question. Am I the cause of your grief?"

He raised his eyes from the ground, but still turning them away from me, said: "Besought by that plea I will answer your rash question. Yes, you are the sole, the agonizing cause of all I suffer, of all I must suffer untill I die. Now, beware! Be silent! Do not urge me to your destruction. I am struck by the storm, rooted up, laid waste: but you can stand against it; you are young and your passions are at peace. One word I might speak and then you would be implicated in my destruction; yet that word is hovering on my lips. Oh! There is a fearful chasm; but I adjure you to beware!"

"Ah, dearest friend!" I cried, "do not fear! Speak that word; it will bring peace, not death. If there is a chasm our mutual love will give us wings to pass it, and we shall find flowers, and verdure, and delight on the other side." I threw myself at his feet, and took his hand, "Yes, speak, and we shall be happy; there will no longer be doubt, no dreadful uncertainty; trust me, my affection will soothe your sorrow; speak that word and all danger will be past, and we shall love each other as before, and for ever."

He snatched his hand from me, and rose in violent disorder: "What do you mean? You know not what you mean. Why do you bring me out, and torture me, and tempt me, and kill me—Much happier would [it] be for you and for me if in your frantic curiosity you tore my heart from my breast and tried to read its secrets in it as its life's blood was dropping from it. Thus you may console me by reducing me to nothing—but your words I cannot bear; soon they will make me mad, quite mad, and then I shall utter strange words, and you will believe them, and we shall be both lost for ever. I tell you I am on the very verge of insanity; why, cruel girl, do you drive me on: you will repent and I shall die."

When I repeat his words I wonder at my pertinacious folly; I hardly know what feelings resis[t]lessly impelled me. I believe it was that coming out with a determination not to be repulsed I went right forward to my object without well weighing his replies: I was led by passion and drew him with frantic heedlessness into the abyss that he so fearfully avoided—I replied to his terrific words: "You fill me with affright it is true, dearest

father, but you only confirm my resolution to put an end to this state of doubt. I will not be put off thus: do you think that I can live thus fearfully from day to day—the sword in my bosom yet kept from its mortal wound by a hair—a word!—I demand that dreadful word; though it be as a flash of lightning to destroy me, speak it.

"Alas! Alas! What am I become? But a few months have elapsed since I believed that I was all the world to you; and that there was no happiness or grief for you on earth unshared by your Mathilda—your child: that happy time is no longer, and what I most dreaded in this world is come upon me. In the despair of my heart I see what you cannot conceal: you no longer love me. I adjure you, my father, has not an unnatural passion seized upon your heart? Am I not the most miserable worm that crawls? Do I not embrace your knees, and you most cruelly repulse me? I know it—I see it—you hate me!"

I was transported by violent emotion, and rising from his feet, at which I had thrown myself, I leant against a tree, wildly raising my eyes to heaven. He began to answer with violence: "Yes, yes, I hate you! You are my bane, my poison, my disgust! Oh! No[!]" And then his manner changed, and fixing his eyes on me with an expression that convulsed every nerve and member of my frame—"you are none of all these; you are my light, my only one, my life.—My daughter, I love you!" The last words died away in a hoarse whisper, but I heard them and sunk on the ground, covering my face and almost dead with excess of sickness and fear: a cold perspiration covered my forehead and I shivered in every limb—But he continued, clasping his hands with a frantic gesture:

"Now I have dashed from the top of the rock to the bottom! Now I have precipitated myself down the fearful chasm! The danger is over; she is alive! Oh, Mathilda, lift up those dear eyes in the light of which I live. Let me hear the sweet tones of your beloved voice in peace and calm. Monster as I am, you are still, as you ever were, lovely, beautiful beyond expression. What I have become since this last moment I know not; perhaps I am changed in mien as the fallen archangel. I do believe I am for I

have surely a new soul within me, and my blood riots through my veins: I am burnt up with fever. But these are precious moments; devil as I am become, yet that is my Mathilda before me whom I love as one was never before loved: and she knows it now; she listens to these words which I thought, fool as I was, would blast her to death. Come, come, the worst is past: no more grief, tears or despair; were not those the words you uttered?—We have leapt the chasm I told you of, and now, mark me, Mathilda, we are to find flowers, and verdure and delight, or is it hell, and fire, and tortures? Oh! Beloved One, I am borne away; I can no longer sustain myself; surely this is death that is coming. Let me lay my head near your heart; let me die in your arms!"—He sunk to the earth fainting, while I, nearly as lifeless, gazed on him in despair.

Yes it was despair I felt; for the first time that phantom seized me; the first and only time for it has never since left me—After the first moments of speechless agony I felt her fangs on my heart: I tore my hair; I raved aloud; at one moment in pity for his sufferings I would have clasped my father in my arms; and then starting back with horror I spurned him with my foot; I felt as if stung by a serpent, as if scourged by a whip of scorpions which drove me—Ah! Whither—Whither?

Well, this could not last. One idea rushed on my mind; never, never may I speak to him again. As this terrible conviction came upon *him* [*me?*] it melted my soul to tenderness and love—I gazed on him as to take my last farewell—he lay insensible—his eyes closed as [*and?*] his cheeks deathly pale. Above, the leaves of the beech wood cast a flickering shadow on his face, and waved in mournful melody over him—I saw all these things and said, "Aye, this is his grave!" And then I wept aloud, and raised my eyes to heaven to entreat for a respite to my despair and an alleviation for his unnatural suffering—the tears that gushed in a warm & healing stream from my eyes relieved the burthen that oppressed my heart almost to madness. I wept for a long time untill I saw him about to revive, when horror and misery again recurred, and the tide of my sensations rolled back to their former channel: with a terror I could not restrain—I sprung up and fled, with winged speed, along the paths of the wood and across the

fields untill nearly dead I reached our house and just ordering the servants to seek my father at the spot I indicated, I shut myself up in my own room[.]

Chapter VI

My chamber was in a retired part of the house, and looked upon the garden so that no sound of the other inhabitants could reach it; and here in perfect solitude I wept for several hours. When a servant came to ask me if I would take food I learnt from him that my father had returned, and was apparently well and this relieved me from a load of anxiety, yet I did not cease to weep bitterly. As [At] first, as the memory of former happiness contrasted to my present despair came across me, I gave relief to the oppression of heart that I felt by words, and groans, and heart rending sighs: but nature became wearied, and this more violent grief gave place to a passionate but mute flood of tears: my whole soul seemed to dissolve [in] them. I did not wring my hands, or tear my hair, or utter wild exclamations, but as Boccacio describes the intense and quiet grief [of] Sigismunda over the heart of Guiscardo, I sat with my hands folded, silently letting fall a perpetual stream from my eyes. Such was the depth of my emotion that I had no feeling of what caused my distress, my thoughts even wandered to many indifferent objects; but still neither moving limb or feature my tears fell untill, as if the fountains were exhausted, they gradually subsided, and I awoke to life as from a dream.

When I had ceased to weep reason and memory returned upon me, and I began to reflect with greater calmness on what had happened, and how it became me to act—A few hours only had passed but a mighty revolution had taken place with regard to me—the natural work of years had been transacted since the morning: my father was as dead to me, and I felt for a moment as if he with white hairs were laid in his coffin and I—youth vanished in approaching age, were weeping at his timely dissolution. But it was not so, I was yet young, Oh! far too young, nor was he dead to others; but I, most miserable, must never see

or speak to him again. I must fly from him with more earnestness than from my greatest enemy: in solitude or in cities I must never more behold him. That consideration made me breathless with anguish, and impressing itself on my imagination I was unable for a time to follow up any train of ideas. Ever after this, I thought, I would live in the most dreary seclusion. I would retire to the Continent and become a nun; not for religion's sake, for I was not a Catholic, but that I might be for ever shut out from the world. I should there find solitude where I might weep, and the voices of life might never reach me.

But my father; my beloved and most wretched father? Would he die? Would he never overcome the fierce passion that now held pitiless dominion over him? Might he not many, many years hence, when age had quenched the burning sensations that he now experienced, might he not then be again a father to me? This reflection unwrinkled my brow, and I could feel (and I wept to feel it) a half melancholy smile draw from my lips their expression of suffering: I dared indulge better hopes for my future life; years must pass but they would speed lightly away winged by hope, or if they passed heavily, still they would pass and I had not lost my father for ever. Let him spend another sixteen years of desolate wandering: let him once more utter his wild complaints to the vast woods and the tremendous cataracts of another clime: let him again undergo fearful danger and soul-quelling hardships: let the hot sun of the south again burn his passion worn cheeks and the cold night rains fall on him and chill his blood.

To this life, miserable father, I devote thee!—Go!—Be thy days passed with savages, and thy nights under the cope of heaven! Be thy limbs worn and thy heart chilled, and all youth be dead within thee! Let thy hairs be as snow; thy walk trembling and thy voice have lost its mellow tones! Let the liquid lustre of thine eyes be quenched; and then return to me, return to thy Mathilda, thy child, who may then be clasped in thy loved arms, while thy heart beats with sinless emotion. Go, Devoted One, and return thus!—This is my curse, a daughter's curse: go, and return pure to thy child, who will never love aught but thee.

These were my thoughts; and with trembling hands I prepared to begin a letter to my unhappy parent. I had now spent many hours in tears and mournful meditation; it was past twelve o'clock; all was at peace in the house, and the gentle air that stole in at my window did not rustle the leaves of the twining plants that shadowed it. I felt the entire tranquillity of the hour when my own breath and involuntary sobs were all the sounds that struck upon the air. On a sudden I heard a gentle step ascending the stairs; I paused breathless, and as it approached glided into an obscure corner of the room; the steps paused at my door, but after a few moments they again receded[,] descended the stairs and I heard no more.

This slight incident gave rise in me to the most painful reflections; nor do I now dare express the emotions I felt. That he should be restless I understood; that he should wander as an unlaidd ghost and find no quiet from the burning hell that consumed his heart. But why approach my chamber? Was not that sacred? I felt almost ready to faint while he had stood there, but I had not betrayed my wakefulness by the slightest motion, although I had heard my own heart beat with violent fear. He had withdrawn. Oh, never, never, may I see him again! Tomorrow night the same roof may not cover us; he or I must depart. The mutual link of our destinies is broken; we must be divided by seas—by land. The stars and the sun must not rise at the same period to us: he must not say, looking at the setting crescent of the moon, "Mathilda now watches its fall."—No, all must be changed. Be it light with him when it is darkness with me! Let him feel the sun of summer while I am chilled by the snows of winter! Let there be the distance of the antipodes between us!

At length the east began to brighten, and the comfortable light of morning streamed into my room. I was weary with watching and for some time I had combated with the heavy sleep that weighed down my eyelids: but now, no longer fearful, I threw myself on my bed. I sought for repose although I did not hope for forgetfulness; I knew I should be pursued by dreams, but did not dread the frightful one that I really had. I thought that I had risen and went to seek my father to inform him of my determination to

separate myself from him. I sought him in the house, in the park, and then in the fields and the woods, but I could not find him. At length I saw him at some distance, seated under a tree, and when he perceived me he waved his hand several times, beckoning me to approach; there was something unearthly in his mien that awed and chilled me, but I drew near. When at [a] short distance from him I saw that he was deathly [*sic*] pale, and clothed in flowing garments of white. Suddenly he started up and fled from me; I pursued him: we sped over the fields, and by the skirts of woods, and on the banks of rivers; he flew fast and I followed. We came at last, methought, to the brow of a huge cliff that overhung the sea which, troubled by the winds, dashed against its base at a distance. I heard the roar of the waters: he held his course right on towards the brink and I became breathless with fear lest he should plunge down the dreadful precipice; I tried to augment my speed, but my knees failed beneath me, yet I had just reached him; just caught a part of his flowing robe, when he leapt down and I awoke with a violent scream. I was trembling and my pillow was wet with my tears; for a few moments my heart beat hard, but the bright beams of the sun and the chirping of the birds quickly restored me to myself, and I rose with a languid spirit, yet wondering what events the day would bring forth. Some time passed before I summoned courage to ring the bell for my servant, and when she came I still dared not utter my father's name. I ordered her to bring my breakfast to my room, and was again left alone—yet still I could make no resolve, but only thought that I might write a note to my father to beg his permission to pay a visit to a relation who lived about thirty miles off, and who had before invited me to her house, but I had refused for then I could not quit my suffering father. When the servant came back she gave me a letter.

"From whom is this letter[?]" I asked trembling.

"Your father left it, madam, with his servant, to be given to you when you should rise."

"My father left it! Where is he? Is he not here?"

"No; he quitted the house before four this morning."

"Good God! He is gone! But tell how this was; speak quick!"

Her relation was short. He had gone in the carriage to the nearest town where he took a post chaise and horses with orders for the London road. He dismissed his servants there, only telling them that he had a sudden call of business and that they were to obey me as their mistress until his return.

Chapter VII

With a beating heart and fearful, I knew not why, I dismissed the servant and locking my door, sat down to read my father's letter. These are the words that it contained.

My dear Child

I have betrayed your confidence; I have endeavoured to pollute your mind, and have made your innocent heart acquainted with the looks and language of unlawful and monstrous passion. I must expiate these crimes, and must endeavour in some degree to proportionate my punishment to my guilt. You are I doubt not prepared for what I am about to announce; we must separate and be divided for ever.

I deprive you of your parent and only friend. You are cast out shelterless on the world: your hopes are blasted; the peace and security of your pure mind destroyed; memory will bring to you frightful images of guilt, and the anguish of innocent love betrayed. Yet I who draw down all this misery upon you; I who cast you forth and remorselessly have set the seal of distrust and agony on the heart and brow of my own child, who with devilish levity have endeavoured to steal away her loveliness to place in its stead the foul deformity of sin; I, in the overflowing anguish of my heart, supplicate you to forgive me.

I do not ask your pity; you must and do abhor me: but pardon me, Mathilda, and let not your thoughts follow me in my banishment with unrelenting anger. I must never more behold you; never more hear your voice; but the soft whisperings of your forgiveness will reach me and cool the burning of my disordered brain and heart; I am sure I should feel it even in my grave. And I dare enforce this request by relating how miserably I was betrayed into this net of fiery anguish and all my struggles to release myself: indeed if your soul were less pure and bright I would not attempt to exculpate myself to you; I should fear that if I led you to regard me with less abhorrence you might hate vice less: but in addressing you I feel as if I appealed to an angelic judge. I cannot depart without your forgiveness and I must endeavour to gain it, or I I conjure you therefore to listen to my words, and if with the good guilt may be in any degree extenuated by sharp agony, and remorse that rends the brain as madness perhaps you may think, though I dare not, that I have some claim to your compassion.

I entreat you to call to your remembrance our first happy life on the shores of Loch Lomond. I had arrived from a weary wandering of sixteen years, during which, although I had gone through many dangers and misfortunes, my

affections had been an entire blank. If I grieved it was for your mother, if I loved it was your image; these sole emotions filled my heart in quietness. The human creatures around me excited in me no sympathy and I thought that the mighty change that the death of your mother had wrought within me had rendered me callous to any future impression. I saw the lovely and I did not love, I imagined therefore that all warmth was extinguished in my heart except that which led me ever to dwell on your then infantine image.

It is a strange link in my fate that without having seen you I should passionately love you. During my wanderings I never slept without first calling down gentle dreams on your head. If I saw a lovely woman, I thought, does my Mathilda resemble her? All delightful things, sublime scenery, soft breezes, exquisite music seemed to me associated with you and only through you to be pleasant to me. At length I saw you. You appeared as the deity of a lovely region, the ministering Angel of a Paradise to which of all human kind you admitted only me. I dared hardly consider you as my daughter; your beauty, artlessness and untaught wisdom seemed to belong to a higher order of beings; your voice breathed forth only words of love: if there was aught of earthly in you it was only what you derived from the beauty of the world; you seemed to have gained a grace from the mountain breezes—the waterfalls and the lake; and this was all of earthly except your affections that you had; there was no dross, no bad feeling in the composition. You yet even have not seen enough of the world to know the stupendous difference that exists between the women we meet in daily life and a nymph of the woods such as you were, in whose eyes alone mankind may study for centuries & grow wiser & purer. Those divine lights which shone on me as did those of Beatrice upon Dante, and well might I say with him yet with what different feelings

E quasi mi perdei gli occhi chini.

Can you wonder, Mathilda, that I dwelt on your looks, your words, your motions, & drank in unmixed delight?

But I am afraid that I wander from my purpose. I must be more brief for night draws on apace and all my hours in this house are counted. Well, we removed to London, and still I felt only the peace of sinless passion. You were ever with me, and I desired no more than to gaze on your countenance, and to know that I was all the world to you; I was lapped in a fool's paradise of enjoyment and security. Was my love blamable? If it was I was ignorant of it; I desired only that which I possessed, and if I enjoyed from your looks, and words, and most innocent caresses a rapture usually excluded from the feelings of a parent towards his child, yet no uneasiness, no wish, no casual idea awoke me to a sense of guilt. I loved you as a human father might be supposed to love a daughter borne to him by a heavenly mother; as Anchises might have regarded the child of Venus if the sex had been changed; love mingled with respect and adoration. Perhaps also my passion was lulled to content by the deep and exclusive affection you felt for me.

But when I saw you become the object of another's love; when I imagined that you might be loved otherwise than as a sacred type and image of loveliness and excellence; or that you might love another with a more ardent affection than that

excellence, or that you might love another with a more ardent affection than that which you bore to me, then the fiend awoke within me; I dismissed your lover; and from that moment I have known no peace. I have sought in vain for sleep and rest; my lids refused to close, and my blood was for ever in a tumult. I awoke to a new life as one who dies in hope might wake in Hell. I will not sully your imagination by recounting my combats, my self-anger and my despair. Let a veil be drawn over the unimaginable sensations of a guilty father; the secrets of so agonized a heart may not be made vulgar. All was uproar, crime, remorse and hate, yet still the tenderest love; and what first awoke me to the firm resolve of conquering my passion and of restoring her father to my child was the sight of your bitter and sympathizing sorrows. It was this that led me here: I thought that if I could again awaken in my heart the grief I had felt at the loss of your mother, and the many associations with her memory which had been laid to sleep for seventeen years, that all love for her child would become extinct. In a fit of heroism I determined to go alone; to quit you, the life of my life, and not to see you again untill I might guiltlessly. But it would not do: I rated my fortitude too high, or my love too low. I should certainly have died if you had not hastened to me. Would that I had been indeed extinguished!

And now, Mathilda I must make you my last confession. I have been miserably mistaken in imagining that I could conquer my love for you; I never can. The sight of this house, these fields and woods which my first love inhabited seems to have encreased it: in my madness I dared say to myself—Diana died to give her birth; her mother's spirit was transferred into her frame, and she ought to be as Diana to me. With every effort to cast it off, this love clings closer, this guilty love more unnatural than hate, that withers your hopes and destroys me for ever.

Better have loved despair, & safer kissed her.

No time or space can tear from my soul that which makes a part of it. Since my arrival here I have not for a moment ceased to feel the hell of passion which has been implanted in me to burn untill all be cold, and stiff, and dead. Yet I will not die; alas! how dare I go where I may meet Diana, when I have disobeyed her last request; her last words said in a faint voice when all feeling but love, which survives all things else was already dead, she then bade me make her child happy: that thought alone gives a double sting to death. I will wander away from you, away from all life—in the solitude I shall seek I alone shall breathe of human kind. I must endure life; and as it is my duty so I shall untill the grave dreaded yet desired, receive me free from pain: for while I feel it will be pain that must make up the whole sum of my sensations. Is not this a fearful curse that I labour under? Do I not look forward to a miserable future? My child, if after this life I am permitted to see you again, if pain can purify the heart, mine will be pure: if remorse may expiate guilt, I shall be guiltless.

I have been at the door of your chamber: every thing is silent. You sleep. Do you indeed sleep, Mathilda? Spirits of Good, behold the tears of my earnest prayer! Bless my child! Protect her from the selfish among her fellow creatures: protect her from the agonies of passion, and the despair of disappointment! Peace, Hope and Love be thy guardians, oh, thou soul of my soul: thou in whom I breathe!

I dare not read my letter over for I have no time to write another, and yet I fear that some expressions in it might displease me. Since I last saw you I have been constantly employed in writing letters, and have several more to write; for I do not intend that any one shall hear of me after I depart. I need not conjure you to look upon me as one of whom all links that once existed between us are broken. Your own delicacy will not allow you, I am convinced, to attempt to trace me. It is far better for your peace that you should be ignorant of my destination. You will not follow me, for when I bannish myself would you nourish guilt by obtruding yourself upon me? You will not do this, I know you will not. You must forget me and all the evil that I have taught you. Cast off the only gift that I have bestowed upon you, your grief, and rise from under my blighting influence as no flower so sweet ever did rise from beneath so much evil.

You will never hear from me again: receive these then as the last words of mine that will ever reach you; and although I have forfeited your filial love, yet regard them I conjure you as a father's command. Resolutely shake off the wretchedness that this first misfortune in early life must occasion you. Bear boldly up against the storm: continue wise and mild, but believe it, and indeed it is, your duty to be happy. You are very young; let not this check for more than a moment retard your glorious course; hold on, beloved one. The sun of youth is not set for you; it will restore vigour and life to you; do not resist with obstinate grief its beneficent influence, oh, my child! bless me with the hope that I have not utterly destroyed you.

Farewell, Mathilda. I go with the belief that I have your pardon. Your gentle nature would not permit you to hate your greatest enemy and though I be he, although I have rent happiness from your grasp; though I have passed over your young love and hopes as the angel of destruction, finding beauty and joy, and leaving blight and despair, yet you will forgive me, and with eyes overflowing with tears I thank you; my beloved one, I accept your pardon with a gratitude that will never die, and that will, indeed it will, outlive guilt and remorse.

"Farewell for ever!"

The moment I finished this letter I ordered the carriage and prepared to follow my father. The words of his letter by which he had dissuaded me from this step were those that determined me. Why did he write them? He must know that if I believed that his intention was merely to absent himself from me that instead of opposing him it would be that which I should myself require—or if he thought that any lurking feeling, yet he could not think that, should lead me to him would he endeavour to overthrow the only hope he could have of ever seeing me again; a lover, there was madness in the thought, yet he was my lover, would not act thus. No, he had determined to die, and he wished to spare me the misery of knowing it. The few ineffectual words he had said

concerning his duty were to me a further proof—and the more I studied the letter the more did I perceive a thousand slight expressions that could only indicate a knowledge that life was now over for him. He was about to die! My blood froze at the thought: a sickening feeling of horror came over me that allowed not of tears. As I waited for the carriage I walked up and down with a quick pace; then kneeling and passionately clasping my hands I tried to pray but my voice was choked by convulsive sobs—Oh the sun shone[,] the air was balmy—he must yet live for if he were dead all would surely be black as night to me!

The motion of the carriage knowing that it carried me towards him and that I might perhaps find him alive somewhat revived my courage: yet I had a dreadful ride. Hope only supported me, the hope that I should not be too late[,] I did not weep, but I wiped the perspiration from my brow, and tried to still my brain and heart beating almost to madness. Oh! I must not be mad when I see him; or perhaps it were as well that I should be, my distraction might calm his, and recall him to the endurance of life. Yet untill I find him I must force reason to keep her seat, and I pressed my forehead hard with my hands—Oh do not leave me; or I shall forget what I am about—instead of driving on as we ought with the speed of lightning they will attend to me, and we shall be too late. Oh! God help me! Let him be alive! It is all dark; in my abject misery I demand no more: no hope, no good: only passion, and guilt, and horror; but alive! Alive! My sensations choked me—No tears fell yet I sobbed, and breathed short and hard; one only thought possessed me, and I could only utter one word, that half screaming was perpetually on my lips; Alive! Alive!—

I had taken the steward with me for he, much better than I[,] could make the requisite enquiries—the poor old man could not restrain his tears as he saw my deep distress and knew the cause—he sometimes uttered a few broken words of consolation: in moments like these the mistress and servant become in a manner equals and when I saw his old dim eyes wet with sympathizing tears; his gray hair thinly scattered on an age-wrinkled brow I

thought oh if my father were as he is—decrepid & hoary—then I should be spared this pain—

When I had arrived at the nearest town I took post horses and followed the road my father had taken. At every inn where we changed horses we heard of him, and I was possessed by alternate hope and fear. A length I found that he had altered his route; at first he had followed the London road; but now he changed it, and upon enquiry I found that the one which he now pursued led *towards the sea*. My dream recurred to my thoughts; I was not usually superstitious but in wretchedness every one is so. The sea was fifty miles off, yet it was towards it that he fled. The idea was terrible to my half crazed imagination, and almost over-turned the little self possession that still remained to me. I journied all day; every moment my misery encreased and the fever of my blood became intolerable. The summer sun shone in an unclouded sky; the air was close but all was cool to me except my own scorching skin. Towards evening dark thunder clouds arose above the horrizon and I heard its distant roll—after sunset they darkened the whole sky and it began to rain[,] the lightning lighted up the whole country and the thunder drowned the noise of our carriage. At the next inn my father had not taken horses; he had left a box there saying he would return, and had walked over the fields to the town of —— a seacost town eight miles off.

For a moment I was almost paralyzed by fear; but my energy returned and I demanded a guide to accompany me in following his steps. The night was tempestuous but my bribe was high and I easily procured a countryman. We passed through many lanes and over fields and wild downs; the rain poured down in torrents; and the loud thunder broke in terrible crashes over our heads. Oh! What a night it was! And I passed on with quick steps among the high, dank grass amid the rain and tempest. My dream was for ever in my thoughts, and with a kind of half insanity that often possesses the mind in despair, I said aloud; "Courage! We are not near the sea; we are yet several miles from the ocean"—Yet it was towards the sea that our direction lay and that heightened the confusion of my ideas. Once, overcome by fatigue, I sunk on the wet earth; about two hundred yards distant, alone in a large

meadow stood a magnificent oak; the lightnings shewed its myriad boughs torn by the storm. A strange idea seized me; a person must have felt all the agonies of doubt concerning the life and death of one who is the whole world to them before they can enter into my feelings—for in that state, the mind working unrestrained by the will makes strange and fanciful combinations with outward circumstances and weaves the chances and changes of nature into an immediate connexion with the event they dread. It was with this feeling that I turned to the old Steward who stood pale and trembling beside me; "Mark, Gaspar, if the next flash of lightning rend not that oak my father will be alive."

I had scarcely uttered these words than a flash instantly followed by a tremendous peal of thunder descended on it; and when my eyes recovered their sight after the dazzling light, the oak no longer stood in the meadow—The old man uttered a wild exclamation of horror when he saw so sudden an interpretation given to my prophesy. I started up, my strength returned; [*sic*] with my terror; I cried, "Oh, God! Is this thy decree? Yet perhaps I shall not be too late."

Although still several miles distant we continued to approach the sea. We came at last to the road that led to the town of—— and at an inn there we heard that my father had passed by somewhat before sunset; he had observed the approaching storm and had hired a horse for the next town which was situated a mile from the sea that he might arrive there before it should commence: this town was five miles off. We hired a chaise here, and with four horses drove with speed through the storm. My garments were wet and clung around me, and my hair hung in straight locks on my neck when not blown aside by the wind. I shivered, yet my pulse was high with fever. Great God! What agony I endured. I shed no tears but my eyes wild and inflamed were starting from my head; I could hardly support the weight that pressed upon my brain. We arrived at the town of —— in a little more than half an hour. When my father had arrived the storm had already begun, but he had refused to stop and leaving his horse there he walked on—*towards the sea*. Alas! it was

double cruelty in him to have chosen the sea for his fatal resolve; it was adding madness to my despair.

The poor old servant who was with me endeavoured to persuade me to remain here and to let him go alone—I shook my head silently and sadly; sick almost to death I leant upon his arm, and as there was no road for a chaise dragged my weary steps across the desolate downs to meet my fate, now too certain for the agony of doubt. Almost fainting I slowly approached the fatal waters; when we had quitted the town we heard their roaring[.] I whispered to myself in a muttering voice—"The sound is the same as that which I heard in my dream. It is the knell of my father which I hear."

105

The rain had ceased; there was no more thunder and lightning; the wind had paused. My heart no longer beat wildly; I did not feel any fever: but I was chilled; my knees sunk under me—I almost slept as I walked with excess of weariness; every limb trembled. I was silent: all was silent except the roaring of the sea which became louder and more dreadful. Yet we advanced slowly: sometimes I thought that we should never arrive; that the sound of waves would still allure us, and that we should walk on for ever and ever: field succeeding field, never would our weary journey cease, nor night nor day; but still we should hear the dashing of the sea, and to all this there would be no end. Wild beyond the imagination of the happy are the thoughts bred by misery and despair.

At length we reached the overhanging beach; a cottage stood beside the path; we knocked at the door and it was opened: the bed within instantly caught my eye; something stiff and straight lay on it, covered by a sheet; the cottagers looked aghast. The first words that they uttered confirmed what I before knew. I did not feel shocked or overcome: I believe that I asked one or two questions and listened to the answers. I hardly know, but in a few moments I sank lifeless to the ground; and so would that then all had been at an end!

Chapter VIII

I was carried to the next town: fever succeeded to convulsions and faintings, & for some weeks my unhappy spirit hovered on the very verge of death. But life was yet strong within me; I recovered: nor did it a little aid my returning health that my recollections were at first vague, and that I was too weak to feel any violent emotion. I often said to myself, my father is dead. He loved me with a guilty passion, and stung by remorse and despair he killed himself. Why is it that I feel no horror? Are these circumstances not dreadful? Is it not enough that I shall never more meet the eyes of my beloved father; never more hear his voice; no caress, no look? All cold, and stiff, and dead! Alas! I am quite callous: the night I was out in was fearful and the cold rain that fell about my heart has acted like the waters of the cavern of Antiparos and has changed it to stone. I do not weep or sigh; but I must reason with myself, and force myself to feel sorrow and despair. This is not resignation that I feel, for I am dead to all regret.

I communed in this manner with myself, but I was silent to all around me. I hardly replied to the slightest question, and was uneasy when I saw a human creature near me. I was surrounded by my female relations, but they were all of them nearly strangers to me: I did not listen to their consolations; and so little did they work their designed effect that they seemed to me to be spoken in an unknown tongue. I found if sorrow was dead within me, so was love and desire of sympathy. Yet sorrow only slept to revive more fierce, but love never woke again—its ghost, ever hovering over my father's grave, alone survived—since his death all the world was to me a blank except where woe had stamp'd its burning words telling me to smile no more—the living were not fit companions for me, and I was ever meditating by what means I might shake them all off, and never be heard of again.

My convalescence rapidly advanced, yet this was the thought that haunted me, and I was for ever forming plans how I might hereafter contrive to escape the tortures that were prepared for me when I should mix in society, and to find that solitude which alone could suit one whom an untold grief separated from her fellow creatures. Who can be more solitary even in a crowd than

one whose history and the never ending feelings and remembrances arising from it is [*sic*] known to no living soul. There was too deep a horror in my tale for confidence; I was on earth the sole depository of my own secret. I might tell it to the winds and to the desert heaths but I must never among my fellow creatures, either by word or look give allowance to the smallest conjecture of the dread reality: I must shrink before the eye of man lest he should read my father's guilt in my glazed eyes: I must be silent lest my faltering voice should betray unimagined horrors. Over the deep grave of my secret I must heap an impenetrable heap of false smiles and words: cunning frauds, treacherous laughter and a mixture of all light deceits would form a mist to blind others and be as the poisonous simoon to me. I, the offspring of love, the child of the woods, the nursling of Nature's bright self was to submit to this? I dared not.

How must I escape? I was rich and young, and had a guardian appointed for me; and all about me would act as if I were one of their great society, while I must keep the secret that I really was cut off from them for ever. If I fled I should be pursued; in life there was no escape for me: why then I must die. I shuddered; I dared not die even though the cold grave held all I loved; although I might say with Job

Where is now my hope? For my hope who shall see it?
They shall go down together to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust—

Yes my hope was corruption and dust and all to which death brings us.—Or after life—No, no, I will not persuade myself to die, I may not, dare not. And then I wept; yes, warm tears once more struggled into my eyes soothing yet bitter; and after I had wept much and called with unavailing anguish, with outstretched arms, for my cruel father; after my weak frame was exhausted by all variety of plaint I sank once more into reverie, and once more reflected on how I might find that which I most desired; dear to me if aught were dear, a death-like solitude.

I dared not die, but I might feign death, and thus escape from my comforters: they will believe me united to my father, and so

indeed I shall be. For alone, when no voice can disturb my dream, and no cold eye meet mine to check its fire, then I may commune with his spirit; on a lone heath, at noon or at midnight, still I should be near him. His last injunction to me was that I should be happy; perhaps he did not mean the shadowy happiness that I promised myself, yet it was that alone which I could taste. He did not conceive that ever [qu. *never?*] again I could make one of the smiling hunters that go coursing after bubbles that break to nothing when caught, and then after a new one with brighter colours; my hope also had proved a bubble, but it had been so lovely, so adorned that I saw none that could attract me after it; besides I was wearied with the pursuit, nearly dead with weariness.

I would feign to die; my contented heirs would seize upon my wealth, and I should purchase freedom. But then my plan must be laid with art; I would not be left destitute, I must secure some money. Alas! to what loathsome shifts must I be driven? Yet a whole life of falsehood was otherwise my portion: and when remorse at being the contriver of any cheat made me shrink from my design I was irresistably led back and confirmed in it by the visit of some aunt or cousin, who would tell me that death was the end of all men. And then say that my father had surely lost his wits ever since my mother's death; that he was mad and that I was fortunate, for in one of his fits he might have killed me instead of destroying his own crazed being. And all this, to be sure, was delicately put; not in broad words for my feelings might be hurt but

Whispered so and so
In dark hint soft and low

—COLERIDGE'S "FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER"

with downcast eyes, and sympathizing smiles or whimpers; and I listened with quiet countenance while every nerve trembled; I that dared not utter aye or no to all this blasphemy. Oh, this was a delicious life quite void of guile! I with my dove's look and fox's heart: for indeed I felt only the degradation of falsehood, and not any sacred sentiment of conscious innocence that might

redeem it. I who had before clothed myself in the bright garb of sincerity must now borrow one of divers colours: it might sit awkwardly at first, but use would enable me to place it in elegant folds, to lie with grace. Aye, I might die my soul with falsehood untill I had quite hid its native colour. Oh, beloved father! Accept the pure heart of your unhappy daughter; permit me to join you unspotted as I was or you will not recognize my altered semblance. As grief might change Constance so would deceit change me untill in heaven you would say, "This is not my child"—My father, to be happy both now and when again we meet I must fly from all this life which is mockery to one like me. In solitude only shall I be myself; in solitude I shall be thine.

Alas! I even now look back with disgust at my artifices and contrivances by which, after many painful struggles, I effected my retreat. I might enter into a long detail of the means I used, first to secure myself a slight maintenance for the remainder of my life, and afterwards to ensure the conviction of my death: I might, but I will not. I even now blush at the falsehoods I uttered; my heart sickens: I will leave this complication of what I hope I may in a manner call innocent deceit to be imagined by the reader. The remembrance haunts me like a crime—I know that if I were to endeavour to relate it my tale would at length remain unfinished. I was led to London, and had to endure for some weeks cold looks, cold words and colder consolations: but I escaped; they tried to bind me with fetters that they thought silken, yet which weighed on me like iron, although I broke them more easily than a girth formed of a single straw and fled to freedom.

The few weeks that I spent in London were the most miserable of my life: a great city is a frightful habitation to one sorrowing. The sunset and the gentle moon, the blessed motion of the leaves and the murmuring of waters are all sweet physicians to a distempered mind. The soul is expanded and drinks in quiet, a lulling medicine—to me it was as the sight of the lovely water snakes to the bewitched mariner—in loving and blessing Nature I unawares, called down a blessing on my own soul. But in a city all is closed shut like a prison, a wiry prison from which you can

peep at the sky only. I can not describe to you what were [sic] the frantic nature of my sensations while I resided there; I was often on the verge of madness. Nay, when I look back on many of my wild thoughts, thoughts with which actions sometimes endeavoured to keep pace; when I tossed my hands high calling down the cope of heaven to fall on me and bury me; when I tore my hair and throwing it to the winds cried, "Ye are free, go seek my father!" And then, like the unfortunate Constance, catching at them again and tying them up, that nought might find him if I might not. How, on my knees I have fancied myself close to my father's grave and struck the ground in anger that it should cover him from me. Oft when I have listened with gasping attention for the sound of the ocean mingled with my father's groans; and then wept untill my strength was gone and I was calm and faint, when I have recollected all this I have asked myself if this were not madness. While in London these and many other dreadful thoughts too harrowing for words were my portion: I lost all this suffering when I was free; when I saw the wild heath around me, and the evening star in the west, then I could weep, gently weep, and be at peace.

Do not mistake me; I never was really mad. I was always conscious of my state when my wild thoughts seemed to drive me to insanity, and never betrayed them to aught but silence and solitude. The people around me saw nothing of all this. They only saw a poor girl broken in spirit, who spoke in a low and gentle voice, and from underneath whose downcast lids tears would sometimes steal which she strove to hide. One who loved to be alone, and shrunk from observation; who never smiled; oh, no! I never smiled—and that was all.

Well, I escaped. I left my guardian's house and I was never heard of again; it was believed from the letters that I left and other circumstances that I planned that I had destroyed myself. I was sought after therefore with less care than would otherwise have been the case; and soon all trace and memory of me was lost. I left London in a small vessel bound for a port in the north of England. And now having succeeded in my attempt, and being quite alone peace returned to me. The sea was calm and the vessel

moved gently onwards, I sat upon deck under the open canopy of heaven and methought I was an altered creature. Not the wild, raving & most miserable Mathilda but a youthful Hermitess dedicated to seclusion and whose bosom she must strive to keep free from all tumult and unholy despair—The fanciful nunlike dress that I had adopted; the knowledge that my very existence was a secret known only to myself; the solitude to which I was for ever hereafter destined nursed gentle thoughts in my wounded heart. The breeze that played in my hair revived me, and I watched with quiet eyes the sunbeams that glittered on the waves, and the birds that coursed each other over the waters just brushing them with their plumes. I slept too undisturbed by dreams; and awoke refreshed to again enjoy my tranquil freedom.

In four days we arrived at the harbour to which we were bound. I would not remain on the sea coast, but proceeded immediately inland. I had already planned the situation where I would live. It should be a solitary house on a wide plain near no other habitation: where I could behold the whole horizon, and wander far without molestation from the sight of my fellow creatures. I was not mysanthropic, but I felt that the gentle current of my feelings depended upon my being alone. I fixed myself on a wide solitude. On a dreary heath bestrewn with stones, among which short grass grew; and here and there a few rushes beside a little pool. Not far from my cottage was a small cluster of pines the only trees to be seen for many miles: I had a path cut through the furze from my door to this little wood, from whose topmost branches the birds saluted the rising sun and awoke me to my daily meditation. My view was bounded only by the horizon except on one side where a distant wood made a black spot on the heath, that every where else stretched out its faint hues as far as the eye could reach, wide and very desolate. Here I could mark the net work of the clouds as they wove themselves into thick masses: I could watch the slow rise of the heavy thunder clouds and could see the rack as it was driven across the heavens, or under the pine trees I could enjoy the stillness of the azure sky.

My life was very peaceful. I had one female servant who spent the greater part of the day at a village two miles off. My

amusements were simple and very innocent; I fed the birds who built on the pines or among the ivy that covered the wall of my little garden, and they soon knew me: the bolder ones pecked the crumbs from my hands and perched on my fingers to sing their thankfulness. When I had lived here some time other animals visited me and a fox came every day for a portion of food appropriated for him & would suffer me to pat his head. I had besides many books and a harp with which when despairing I could soothe my spirits, and raise myself to sympathy and love.

Love! What had I to love? Oh many things: there was the moonshine, and the bright stars; the breezes and the refreshing rains; there was the whole earth and the sky that covers it: all lovely forms that visited my imagination[,] all memories of heroism and virtue. Yet this was very unlike my early life although as then I was confined to Nature and books. Then I bounded across the fields; my spirit often seemed to ride upon the winds, and to mingle in joyful sympathy with the ambient air. Then if I wandered slowly I cheered myself with a sweet song or sweeter day dreams. I felt a holy rapture spring from all I saw. I drank in joy with life; my steps were light; my eyes, clear from the love that animated them, sought the heavens, and with my long hair loosened to the winds I gave my body and my mind to sympathy and delight. But now my walk was slow—My eyes were seldom raised and often filled with tears; no song; no smiles; no careless motion that might bespeak a mind intent on what surrounded it—I was gathered up into myself—a selfish solitary creature ever pondering on my regrets and faded hopes.

Mine was an idle, useless life; it was so; but say not to the lily laid prostrate by the storm arise, and bloom as before. My heart was bleeding from its death's wound; I could live no otherwise—Often amid apparent calm I was visited by despair and melancholy; gloom that nought could dissipate or overcome; a hatred of life; a carelessness of beauty; all these would by fits hold me nearly annihilated by their powers. Never for one moment when most placid did I cease to pray for death. I could be found in no state of mind which I would not willingly have exchanged for nothingness. And morning and evening my tearful

eyes raised to heaven, my hands clasped tight in the energy of prayer, I have repeated with the poet—

Before I see another day
Oh, let this body die away!

Let me not be reproached then with inutility; I believed that by suicide I should violate a divine law of nature, and I thought that I sufficiently fulfilled my part in submitting to the hard task of enduring the crawling hours & minutes—in bearing the load of time that weighed miserably upon me and that in abstaining from what I in my calm moments considered a crime, I deserved the reward of virtue. There were periods, dreadful ones, during which I despaired—& doubted the existence of all duty & the reality of crime—but I shudder, and turn from the remembrance.

Chapter IX

Thus I passed two years. Day after day so many hundreds wore on; they brought no outward changes with them, but some few slowly operated on my mind as I glided on towards death. I began to study more; to sympathize more in the thoughts of others as expressed in books; to read history, and to lose my individuality among the crowd that had existed before me. Thus perhaps as the sensation of immediate suffering wore off, I became more human. Solitude also lost to me some of its charms: I began again to wish for sympathy; not that I was ever tempted to seek the crowd, but I wished for one friend to love me. You will say perhaps that I gradually became fitted to return to society. I do not think so. For the sympathy that I desired must be so pure, so divested of influence from outward circumstances that in the world I could not fail of being balked by the gross materials that perpetually mingle even with its best feelings. Believe me, I was then less fitted for any communion with my fellow creatures than before. When I left them they had tormented me but it was in the same way as pain and sickness may torment; something extraneous to the mind that galled it, and that I wished to cast aside. But now I

should have desired sympathy; I should wish to knit my soul to some one of theirs, and should have prepared for myself plentiful draughts of disappointment and suffering; for I was tender as the sensitive plant, all nerve. I did not desire sympathy and aid in ambition or wisdom, but sweet and mutual affection; smiles to cheer me and gentle words of comfort. I wished for one heart in which I could pour unrestrained my complaints, and by the heavenly nature of the soil blessed fruit might spring from such bad seed. Yet how could I find this? The love that is the soul of friendship is a soft spirit seldom found except when two amiable creatures are knit from early youth, or when bound by mutual suffering and pursuits; it comes to some of the elect unsought and unaware; it descends as gentle dew on chosen spots which however barren they were before become under its benign influence fertile in all sweet plants; but when desired it flies; it scoffs at the prayers of its votaries; it will bestow, but not be sought.

I knew all this and did not go to seek sympathy; but there on my solitary heath, under my lowly roof where all around was desert, it came to me as a sun beam in winter to adorn while it helps to dissolve the drifted snow.—Alas the sun shone on blighted fruit; I did not revive under its radiance for I was too utterly undone to feel its kindly power. My father had been and his memory was the life of my life. I might feel gratitude to another but I never more could love or hope as I had done; it was all suffering; even my pleasures were endured, not enjoyed. I was as a solitary spot among mountains shut in on all sides by steep black precipices; where no ray of heat could penetrate; and from which there was no outlet to sunnier fields. And thus it was that although the spirit of friendship soothed me for a while it could not restore me. It came as some gentle visitation; it went and I hardly felt the loss. The spirit of existence was dead within me; be not surprised therefore that when it came I welcomed not more gladly, or when it departed I lamented not more bitterly the best gift of heaven—a friend.

The name of my friend was Woodville. I will briefly relate his history that you may judge how cold my heart must have been not to be warmed by his eloquent words and tender sympathy; and

how he also being most unhappy we were well fitted to be a mutual consolation to each other, if I had not been hardened to stone by the Medusa head of Misery. The misfortunes of Woodville were not of the hearts core like mine; his was a natural grief, not to destroy but to purify the heart and from which he might, when its shadow had passed from over him, shine forth brighter and happier than before.

Woodville was the son of a poor clergyman and had received a classical education. He was one of those very few whom fortune favours from their birth; on whom she bestows all gifts of intellect and person with a profusion that knew no bounds, and whom under her peculiar protection, no imperfection however slight, or disappointment however transitory has leave to touch. She seemed to have formed his mind of that excellence which no dross can tarnish, and his understanding was such that no error could pervert. His genius was transcendant, and when it rose as a bright star in the east all eyes were turned towards it in admiration. He was a Poet. That name has so often been degraded that it will not convey the idea of all that he was. He was like a poet of old whom the muses had crowned in his cradle, and on whose lips bees had fed. As he walked among other men he seemed encompassed with a heavenly halo that divided him from and lifted him above them. It was his surpassing beauty, the dazzling fire of his eyes, and his words whose rich accents wrapt the listener in mute and extactic wonder, that made him transcend all others so that before him they appeared only formed to minister to his superior excellence.

He was glorious from his youth. Every one loved him; no shadow of envy or hate cast even from the meanest mind ever fell upon him. He was, as one the peculiar delight of the Gods, railed and fenced in by his own divinity, so that nought but love and admiration could approach him. His heart was simple like a child, unstained by arrogance or vanity. He mingled in society unknowing of his superiority over his companions, not because he undervalued himself but because he did not perceive the inferiority of others. He seemed incapable of conceiving of the full extent of the power that selfishness & vice possesses in the

world: when I knew him, although he had suffered disappointment in his dearest hopes, he had not experienced any that arose from the meanness and self love of men: his station was too high to allow of his suffering through their hardheartedness; and too low for him to have experienced ingratitude and encroaching selfishness: it is one of the blessings of a moderate fortune, that by preventing the possessor from conferring pecuniary favours it prevents him also from diving into the arcana of human weakness or malice—To bestow on your fellow men is a Godlike attribute—So indeed it is and as such not one fit for mortality;—the giver like Adam and Prometheus, must pay the penalty of rising above his nature by being the martyr to his own excellence. Woodville was free from all these evils; and if slight examples did come across him he did not notice them but passed on in his course as an angel with winged feet might glide along the earth unimpeded by all those little obstacles over which we of earthly origin stumble. He was a believer in the divinity of genius and always opposed a stern disbelief to the objections of those petty cavillers and minor critics who wish to reduce all men to their own miserable level—"I will make a scientific simile" he would say, "[i]n the manner, if you will, of Dr. Darwin—I consider the alledged errors of a man of genius as the aberrations of the fixed stars. It is our distance from them and our imperfect means of communication that makes them appear to move; in truth they always remain stationary, a glorious centre, giving us a fine lesson of modesty if we would thus receive it."

I have said that he was a poet: when he was three and twenty years of age he first published a poem, and it was hailed by the whole nation with enthusiasm and delight. His good star perpetually shone upon him; a reputation had never before been made so rapidly: it was universal. The multitude extolled the same poems that formed the wonder of the sage in his closet: there was not one dissentient voice.

It was at this time, in the height of his glory, that he became acquainted with Elinor. She was a young heiress of exquisite beauty who lived under the care of her guardian: from the moment they were seen together they appeared formed for each

other. Elinor had not the genius of Woodville but she was generous and noble, and exalted by her youth and the love that she every where excited above the knowledge of aught but virtue and excellence. She was lovely; her manners were frank and simple; her deep blue eyes swam in a lustre which could only be given by sensibility joined to wisdom.

They were formed for one another and they soon loved. Woodville for the first time felt the delight of love; and Elinor was enraptured in possessing the heart of one so beautiful and glorious among his fellow men. Could any thing but unmixed joy flow from such a union?

Woodville was a Poet—he was sought for by every society and all eyes were turned on him alone when he appeared; but he was the son of a poor clergyman and Elinor was a rich heiress. Her guardian was not displeased with their mutual affection: the merit of Woodville was too eminent to admit of cavil on account of his inferior wealth; but the dying will of her father did not allow her to marry before she was of age and her fortune depended upon her obeying this injunction. She had just entered her twentieth year, and she and her lover were obliged to submit to this delay. But they were ever together and their happiness seemed that of Paradise: they studied together: formed plans of future occupations, and drinking in love and joy from each other's eyes and words they hardly repined at the delay to their entire union. Woodville for ever rose in glory; and Elinor become more lovely and wise under the lessons of her accomplished lover.

In two months Elinor would be twenty one: every thing was prepared for their union. How shall I relate the catastrophe to so much joy; but the earth would not be the earth it is covered with blight and sorrow if one such pair as these angelic creatures had been suffered to exist for one another: search through the world and you will not find the perfect happiness which their marriage would have caused them to enjoy; there must have been a revolution in the order of things as established among us miserable earth-dwellers to have admitted of such consummate joy. The chain of necessity ever bringing misery must have been broken and the malignant fate that presides over it would not

permit this breach of her eternal laws. But why should I repine at this? Misery was my element, and nothing but what was miserable could approach me; if Woodville had been happy I should never have known him. And can I who for many years was fed by tears, and nourished under the dew of grief, can I pause to relate a tale of woe and death?

Woodville was obliged to make a journey into the country and was detained from day to day in irksome absence from his lovely bride. He received a letter from her to say that she was slightly ill, but telling him to hasten to her, that from his eyes she would receive health and that his company would be her surest medicine. He was detained three days longer and then he hastened to her. His heart, he knew not why prognosticated misfortune; he had not heard from her again; he feared she might be worse and this fear made him impatient and restless for the moment of beholding her once more stand before him arrayed in health and beauty; for a sinister voice seemed always to whisper to him, "You will never more behold her as she was."

135

When he arrived at her habitation all was silent in it: he made his way through several rooms; in one he saw a servant weeping bitterly: he was faint with fear and could hardly ask, "Is she dead?" and just listened to the dreadful answer, "Not yet." These astounding words came on him as of less fearful import than those which he had expected; and to learn that she was still in being, and that he might still hope was an alleviation to him. He remembered the words of her letter and he indulged the wild idea that his kisses breathing warm love and life would infuse new spirit into her, and that with him near her she could not die; that his presence was the talisman of her life.

He hastened to her sick room; she lay, her cheeks burning with fever, yet her eyes were closed and she was seemingly senseless. He wrapt her in his arms; he imprinted breathless kisses on her burning lips; he called to her in a voice of subdued anguish by the tenderest names; "Return Elinor; I am with you; your life, your love. Return; dearest one, you promised me this boon, that I should bring you health. Let your sweet spirit revive; you cannot die near me: What is death? To see you no more? To part with

what is a part of myself; without whom I have no memory and no futurity? Elinor die! This is frenzy and the most miserable despair: you cannot die while I am near."

And again he kissed her eyes and lips, and hung over her inanimate form in agony, gazing on her countenance still lovely although changed, watching every slight convulsion, and varying colour which denoted life still lingering although about to depart. Once for a moment she revived and recognized his voice; a smile, a last lovely smile, played upon her lips. He watched beside her for twelve hours and then she died.

Chapter X

It was six months after this miserable conclusion to his long nursed hopes that I first saw him. He had retired to a part of the country where he was not known that he might peacefully indulge his grief. All the world, by the death of his beloved Elinor, was changed to him, and he could no longer remain in any spot where he had seen her or where her image mingled with the most rapturous hopes had brightened all around with a light of joy which would now be transformed to a darkness blacker than midnight since she, the sun of his life, was set for ever.

He lived for some time never looking on the light of heaven but shrouding his eyes in a perpetual darkness far from all that could remind him of what he had been; but as time softened his grief like a true child of Nature he sought in the enjoyment of her beauties for a consolation in his unhappiness. He came to a part of the country where he was entirely unknown and where in the deepest solitude he could converse only with his own heart. He found a relief to his impatient grief in the breezes of heaven and in the sound of waters and woods. He became fond of riding; this exercise distracted his mind and elevated his spirits; on a swift horse he could for a moment gain respite from the image that else for ever followed him; Elinor on her death bed, her sweet features changed, and the soft spirit that animated her gradually waning into extinction. For many months Woodville had in vain endeavoured to cast off this terrible remembrance; it still hung on

him until memory was too great a burthen for his loaded soul, but when on horseback the spell that seemingly held him to this idea was snapt; then if he thought of his lost bride he pictured her radiant in beauty; he could hear her voice, and fancy her "a sylvan Huntress by his side," while his eyes brightened as he thought he gazed on her cherished form. I had several times seen him ride across the heath and felt angry that my solitude should be disturbed. It was so long [since] I had spoken to any but peasants that I felt a disagreeable sensation at being gazed on by one of superior rank. I feared also that it might be some one who had seen me before: I might be recognized, my impostures discovered and I dragged back to a life of worse torture than that I had before endured. These were dreadful fears and they even haunted my dreams.

I was one day seated on the verge of the clump of pines when Woodville rode past. As soon as I perceived him I suddenly rose to escape from his observation by entering among the trees. My rising startled his horse; he reared and plunged and the Rider was at length thrown. The horse then galloped swiftly across the heath and the stranger remained on the ground stunned by his fall. He was not materially hurt, a little fresh water soon recovered him. I was struck by his exceeding beauty, and as he spoke to thank me the sweet but melancholy cadence of his voice brought tears into my eyes.

A short conversation passed between us, but the next day he again stopped at my cottage and by degrees an intimacy grew between us. It was strange to him to see a female in extreme youth, I was not yet twenty, evidently belonging to the first classes of society & possessing every accomplishment an excellent education could bestow, living alone on a desolate health [sic]—One on whose forehead the impress of grief was strongly marked, and whose words and motions betrayed that her thoughts did not follow them but were intent on far other ideas; bitter and overwhelming miseries. I was dressed also in a whimsical nunlike habit which denoted that I did not retire to solitude from necessity, but that I might indulge in a luxury of grief, and fanciful seclusion.

He soon took great interest in me, and sometimes forgot his own grief to sit beside me and endeavour to cheer me. He could not fail to interest even one who had shut herself from the whole world, whose hope was death, and who lived only with the departed. His personal beauty; his conversation which glowed with imagination and sensibility; the poetry that seemed to hang upon his lips and to make the very air mute to listen to him were charms that no one could resist. He was younger, less worn, more passionless than my father and in no degree reminded me of him: he suffered under immediate grief yet its gentle influence instead of calling feelings otherwise dormant into action, seemed only to veil that which otherwise would have been too dazzling for me. When we were together I spoke little yet my selfish mind was sometimes borne away by the rapid course of his ideas; I would lift my eyes with momentary brilliancy until memories that never died and seldom slept would recur, and a tear would dim them.

Woodville for ever tried to lead me to the contemplation of what is beautiful and happy in the world. His own mind was constitutionally [*sic*] bent to a former belief in good [rather] than in evil and this feeling which must even exhilarate the hopeless ever shone forth in his words. He would talk of the wonderful powers of man, of their present state and of their hopes: of what they had been and what they were, and when reason could no longer guide him, his imagination as if inspired shed light on the obscurity that veils the past and the future. He loved to dwell on what might have been the state of the earth before man lived on it, and how he first arose and gradually became the strange, complicated, but as he said, the glorious creature he now is. Covering the earth with their creations and forming by the power of their minds another world more lovely than the visible frame of things, even all the world that we find in their writings. A beautiful creation, he would say, which may claim this superiority to its model, that good and evil is more easily separated[:] the good rewarded in the way they themselves desire; the evil punished as all things evil ought to be punished, not by pain which is revolting to all philanthropy to consider but by quiet obscurity, which simply

deprives them of their harmful qualities; why kill the serpent when you have extracted his fangs?

The poetry of his language and ideas which my words ill convey held me enchained to his discourses. It was a melancholy pleasure to me to listen to his inspired words; to catch for a moment the light of his eyes[;] to feel a transient sympathy and then to awaken from the delusion, again to know that all this was nothing,—a dream—a shadow for that there was no reality for me; my father had for ever deserted me, leaving me only memories which set an eternal barrier between me and my fellow creatures. I was indeed fellow to none. He—Woodville, mourned the loss of his bride: others wept the various forms of misery as they visited them: but infamy and guilt was mingled with my portion; unlawful and detestable passion had poured its poison into my ears and changed all my blood, so that it was no longer the kindly stream that supports life but a cold fountain of bitterness corrupted in its very source. It must be the excess of madness that could make me imagine that I could ever be aught but one alone; struck off from humanity; bearing no affinity to man or woman; a wretch on whom Nature had set her ban.

Sometimes Woodville talked to me of himself. He related his history brief in happiness and woe and dwelt with passion on his and Elinor's mutual love. "She was[!]", he said, "the brightest vision that ever came upon the earth: there was something in her frank countenance, in her voice, and in every motion of her graceful form that overpowered me, as if it were a celestial creature that deigned to mingle with me in intercourse more sweet than man had ever before enjoyed. Sorrow fled before her; and her smile seemed to possess an influence like light to irradiate all mental darkness. It was not like a human loveliness that these gentle smiles went and came; but as a sunbeam on a lake, now light and now obscure, flitting before as you strove to catch them, and fold them for ever to your heart. I saw this smile fade for ever. Alas! I could never have believed that it was indeed Elinor that died if once when I spoke she had not lifted her almost benighted eyes, and for one moment like nought beside on earth, more lovely than a sunbeam, slighter, quicker than the waving

plumage of a bird, dazzling as lightning and like it giving day to night, yet mild and faint, that smile came; it went, and then there was an end of all joy to me."

Thus his own sorrows, or the shapes copied from nature that dwelt in his mind with beauty greater than their own, occupied our talk while I railed in my own griefs with cautious secrecy. If for a moment he shewed curiosity, my eyes fell, my voice died away and my evident suffering made him quickly endeavour to banish the ideas he had awakened; yet he for ever mingled consolation in his talk, and tried to soften my despair by demonstrations of deep sympathy and compassion. "We are both unhappy—" he would say to me; "I have told you my melancholy tale and we have wept together the loss of that lovely spirit that has so cruelly deserted me; but you hide your griefs: I do not ask you to disclose them, but tell me if I may not console you. It seems to me a wild adventure to find in this desert one like you quite solitary: you are young and lovely; your manners are refined and attractive; yet there is in your settled melancholy, and something, I know not what, in your expressive eyes that seems to separate you from your kind: you shudder; pardon me, I entreat you but I cannot help expressing this once at least the lively interest I feel in your destiny.

"You never smile: your voice is low, and you utter your words as if you were afraid of the slight sound they would produce: the expression of awful and intense sorrow never for a moment fades from your countenance. I have lost for ever the loveliest companion that any man could ever have possessed, one who rather appears to have been a superior spirit who by some strange accident wandered among us earthly creatures, than as belonging to our kind. Yet I smile, and sometimes I speak almost forgetful of the change I have endured. But your sad mien never alters; your pulses beat and you breathe, yet you seem already to belong to another world; and sometimes, pray pardon my wild thoughts, when you touch my hand I am surprised to find your hand warm when all the fire of life seems extinct within you.

"When I look upon you, the tears you shed, the soft deprecating look with which you withstand enquiry; the deep

sympathy your voice expresses when I speak of my lesser sorrows add to my interest for you. You stand here shelterless[.] You have cast yourself from among us and you wither on this wild plain fo[r]lorn and helpless: some dreadful calamity must have befallen you. Do not turn from me; I do not ask you to reveal it: I only entreat you to listen to me and to become familiar with the voice of consolation and kindness. If pity, and admiration, and gentle affection can wean you from despair let me attempt the task. I cannot see your look of deep grief without endeavouring to restore you to happier feelings. Unbend your brow; relax the stern melancholy of your regard; permit a friend, a sincere, affectionate friend, I will be one, to convey some relief, some momentary pause to your sufferings.

"Do not think that I would intrude upon your confidence: I only ask your patience. Do not for ever look sorrow and never speak it; utter one word of bitter complaint and I will reprove it with gentle exhortation and pour on you the balm of compassion. You must not shut me from all communion with you: do not tell me why you grieve but only say the words, "I am unhappy," and you will feel relieved as if for some time excluded from all intercourse by some magic spell you should suddenly enter again the pale of human sympathy. I entreat you to believe in my most sincere professions and to treat me as an old and tried friend: promise me never to forget me, never causelessly to banish me; but try to love me as one who would devote all his energies to make you happy. Give me the name of friend; I will fulfill its duties; and if for a moment complaint and sorrow would shape themselves into words let me be near to speak peace to your vexed soul."

150

I repeat his persuasions in faint terms and cannot give you at the same time the tone and gesture that animated them. Like a refreshing shower on an arid soil they revived me, and although I still kept their cause secret he led me to pour forth my bitter complaints and to clothe my woe in words of gall and fire. With all the energy of desperate grief I told him how I had fallen at once from bliss to misery; how that for me there was no joy, no hope; that death however bitter would be the welcome seal to all

my pangs; death the skeleton was to be beautiful as love. I know not why but I found it sweet to utter these words to human ears; and though I derided all consolation yet I was pleased to see it offered me with gentleness and kindness. I listened quietly, and when he paused would again pour out my misery in expressions that shewed how far too deep my wounds were for any cure.

But now also I began to reap the fruits of my perfect solitude. I had become unfit for any intercourse, even with Woodville the most gentle and sympathizing creature that existed. I had become captious and unreasonable: my temper was utterly spoilt. I called him my friend but I viewed all he did with jealous eyes. If he did not visit me at the appointed hour I was angry, very angry, and told him that if indeed he did feel interest in me it was cold, and could not be fitted for me, a poor worn creature, whose deep unhappiness demanded much more than his worldly heart could give. When for a moment I imagined that his manner was cold I would fretfully say to him—"I was at peace before you came; why have you disturbed me? You have given me new wants and now your trifle with me as if my heart were as whole as yours, as if I were not in truth a shorn lamb thrust out on the bleak hill side, tortured by every blast. I wished for no friend, no sympathy[.] I avoided you, you know I did, but you forced yourself upon me and gave me those wants which you see with triumph[h] give you power over me. Oh the brave power of the bitter north wind which freezes the tears it has caused to shed! But I will not bear this; go: the sun will rise and set as before you came, and I shall sit among the pines or wander on the heath weeping and complaining without wishing for you to listen. You are cruel, very cruel, to treat me who bleed at every pore in this rough manner."

And then, when in answer to my peevish words, I saw his countenance bent with living pity on me[,] when I saw him

*Gli occhi drizzo ver me con quel semblante
Che madre fa sopra figlioul deliro*

—*PARADISO. C 1.*

I wept and said, "Oh, pardon me! You are good and kind but I am not fit for life. Why am I obliged to live? To drag hour after hour, to see the trees wave their branches restlessly, to feel the air, & to suffer in all I feel keenest agony. My frame is strong, but my soul sinks beneath this endurance of living anguish. Death is the goal that I would attain, but, alas! I do not even see the end of the course. Do you, my compassionate friend, tell me how to die peacefully and innocently and I will bless you: all that I, poor wretch, can desire is a painless death."

But Woodville's words had magic in them, when beginning with the sweetest pity, he would raise me by degrees out of myself and my sorrows until I wondered at my own selfishness: but he left me and despair returned; the work of consolation was ever to begin anew. I often desired his entire absence; for I found that I was grown out of the ways of life and that by long seclusion, although I could support my accustomed grief, and drink the bitter daily draught with some degree of patience, yet I had become unfit for the slightest novelty of feeling. Expectation, and hopes, and affection were all too much for me. I knew this, but at other times I was unreasonable and laid the blame upon him, who was most blameless, and peevishly thought that if his gentle soul were more gentle, if his intense sympathy were more intense, he could drive the fiend from my soul and make me more human. I am, I thought, a tragedy; a character that he comes to see act: now and then he gives me my cue that I may make a speech more to his purpose: perhaps he is already planning a poem in which I am to figure. I am a farce and play to him, but to me this is all dreary reality: he takes all the profit and I bear all the burthen.

155

Chapter XI

It is a strange circumstance but it often occurs that blessings by their use turn to curses; and that I who in solitude had desired sympathy as the only relief I could enjoy should now find it an additional torture to me. During my father's life time I had always been of an affectionate and forbearing disposition, but since those

days of joy alas! I was much changed. I had become arrogant, peevish, and above all suspicious. Although the real interest of my narration is now ended and I ought quickly to wind up its melancholy catastrophe, yet I will relate one instance of my sad suspicion and despair and how Woodville with the goodness and almost the power of an angel, softened my rugged feelings and led me back to gentleness.

He had promised to spend some hours with me one afternoon but a violent and continual rain prevented him. I was alone the whole evening. I had passed two whole years alone unrepining, but now I was miserable. He could not really care for me, I thought, for if he did the storm would rather have made him come even if I had not expected him, than, as it did, prevent a promised visit. He would well know that this drear sky and gloomy rain would load my spirit almost to madness: if the weather had been fine I should not have regretted his absence as heavily as I necessarily must shut up in this miserable cottage with no companions but my own wretched thoughts. If he were truly my friend he would have calculated all this; and let me now calculate this boasted friendship, and discover its real worth. He got over his grief for Elinor, and the country became dull to him, so he was glad to find even me for amusement; and when he does not know what else to do he passes his lazy hours here, and calls this friendship—It is true that his presence is a consolation to me, and that his words are sweet, and, when he will he can pour forth thoughts that win me from despair. His words are sweet,—and so, truly, is the honey of the bee, but the bee has a sting, and unkindness is a worse smart than that received from an insect's venom. I will put him to the proof. He says all hope is dead to him, and I know that it is dead to me, so we are both equally fitted for death. Let me try if he will die with me; and as I fear to die alone, if he will accompany [me] to cheer me, and thus he can shew himself my friend in the only manner my misery will permit.

It was madness I believe, but I so worked myself up to this idea that I could think of nothing else. If he dies with me it is well, and there will be an end of two miserable beings; and if he

will not, then will I scoff at his friendship and drink the poison before him to shame his cowardice. I planned the whole scene with an earnest heart and frantically set my soul on this project. I procured Laudanum and placing it in two glasses on the table, filled my room with flowers and decorated the last scene of my tragedy with the nicest care. As the hour for his coming approached my heart softened and I wept; not that I gave up my plan, but even when resolved the mind must undergo several revolutions of feeling before it can drink its death.

Now all was ready and Woodville came. I received him at the door of my cottage and leading him solemnly into the room, I said: "My friend, I wish to die. I am quite weary of enduring the misery which hourly I do endure, and I will throw it off. What slave will not, if he may, escape from his chains? Look, I weep: for more than two years I have never enjoyed one moment free from anguish. I have often desired to die; but I am a very coward. It is hard for one so young who was once so happy as I was; [*sic*] voluntarily to divest themselves of all sensation and to go alone to the dreary grave; I dare not. I must die, yet my fear chills me; I pause and shudder and then for months I endure my excess of wretchedness. But now the time is come when I may quit life, I have a friend who will not refuse to accompany me in this dark journey; such is my request: earnestly do I entreat and implore you to die with me. Then we shall find Elinor and what I have lost. Look, I am prepared; there is the death draught, let us drink it together and willingly & joyfully quit this hated round of daily life[.]

"You turn from me; yet before you deny me reflect, Woodville, how sweet it were to cast off the load of tears and misery under which we now labour: and surely we shall find light after we have passed the dark valley. That drink will plunge us in a sweet slumber, and when we awaken what joy will be ours to find all our sorrows and fears past. *A little patience, and all will be over;* aye, a very little patience; for, look, there is the key of our prison; we hold it in our own hands, and are we more debased than slaves to cast it away and give ourselves up to voluntary bondage? Even now if we had courage we might be free. Behold, my cheek is

flushed with pleasure at the imagination of death; all that we love are dead. Come, give me your hand, one look of joyous sympathy and we will go together and seek them; a lulling journey; where our arrival will bring bliss and our waking be that of angels. Do you delay? Are you a coward, Woodville? Oh fie! Cast off this blank look of human melancholy. Oh! that I had words to express the luxury of death that I might win you. I tell you we are no longer miserable mortals; we are about to become Gods; spirits free and happy as gods. What fool on a bleak shore, seeing a flowery isle on the other side with his lost love beckoning to him from it would pause because the wave is dark and turbid?

What if some little payne the passage have
That makes frayle flesh to fear the bitter wave?
Is not short payne well borne that brings long ease,
And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave?

—SPENCER'S *FAERY QUEEN*, BOOK 1, CANTO 9

"Do you mark my words; I have learned the language of despair: I have it all by heart, for I am Despair; and a strange being am I, joyous, triumphant Despair. But those words are false, for the wave may be dark but it is not bitter. We lie down, and close our eyes with a gentle good night, and when we wake, we are free. Come then, no more delay, thou tardy one! Behold the pleasant potion! Look, I am a spirit of good, and not a human maid that invites thee, and with winning accents, (oh, that they would win thee!) says, Come and drink."

As I spoke I fixed my eyes upon his countenance, and his exquisite beauty, the heavenly compassion that beamed from his eyes, his gentle yet earnest look of deprecation and wonder even before he spoke wrought a change in my high strained feelings taking from me all the sternness of despair and filling me only with the softest grief. I saw his eyes humid also as he took both my hands in his; and sitting down near me, he said:

"This is a sad deed to which you would lead me, dearest friend, and your woe must indeed be deep that could fill you with these unhappy thoughts. You long for death and yet you fear it

and wish me to be your companion. But I have less courage than you and even thus accompanied I dare not die. Listen to me, and then reflect if you ought to win me to your project, even if with the over-bearing eloquence of despair you could make black death so inviting that the fair heaven should appear darkness. Listen I entreat you to the words of one who has himself nurtured desperate thoughts, and longed with impatient desire for death, but who has at length trampled the phantom under foot, and crushed his sting. Come, as you have played Despair with me I will play the part of Una with you and bring you hurtless from his dark cavern. Listen to me, and let yourself be softened by words in which no selfish passion lingers.

"We know not what all this wide world means; its strange mixture of good and evil. But we have been placed here and bid live and hope. I know not what we are to hope; but there is some good beyond us that we must seek; and that is our earthly task. If misfortune come against us we must fight with her; we must cast her aside, and still go on to find out that which it is our nature to desire. Whether this prospect of future good be the preparation for another existence I know not; or whether that it is merely that we, as workmen in God's vineyard, must lend a hand to smooth the way for our posterity. If it indeed be that; if the efforts of the virtuous now, are to make the future inhabitants of this fair world more happy; if the labours of those who cast aside selfishness, and try to know the truth of things, are to free the men of ages, now far distant but which will one day come, from the burthen under which those who now live groan, and like you weep bitterly; if they free them but from one of what are now the necessary evils of life, truly I will not fail but will with my whole soul aid the work. From my youth I have said, I will be virtuous; I will dedicate my life for the good of others; I will do my best to extirpate evil and if the spirit who protects ill should so influence circumstances that I should suffer through my endeavour, yet while there is hope and hope there ever must be, of success, cheerfully do I gird myself to my task.

"I have powers; my countrymen think well of them. Do you think I sow my seed in the barren air, & have no end in what I do?

Believe me, I will never desert life untill this last hope is torn from my bosom, that in some way my labours may form a link in the chain of gold with which we ought all to strive to drag Happiness from where she sits enthroned above the clouds, now far beyond our reach, to inhabit the earth with us. Let us suppose that Socrates, or Shakespear, or Rousseau had been seized with despair and died in youth when they were as young as I am; do you think that we and all the world should not have lost incalculable improvement in our good feelings and our happiness thro' their destruction. I am not like one of these; they influenced millions: but if I can influence but a hundred, but ten, but one solitary individual, so as in any way to lead him from ill to good, that will be a joy to repay me for all my sufferings, though they were a million times multiplied; and that hope will support me to bear them[.]

"And those who do not work for posterity; or working, as may be my case, will not be known by it; yet they, believe me, have also their duties. You grieve because you are unhappy[;] it is happiness you seek but you despair of obtaining it. But if you can bestow happiness on another; if you can give one other person only one hour of joy ought you not to live to do it? And every one has it in their power to do that. The inhabitants of this world suffer so much pain. In crowded cities, among cultivated plains, or on the desert mountains, pain is thickly sown, and if we can tear up but one of these noxious weeds, or more, if in its stead we can sow one seed of corn, or plant one fair flower, let that be motive sufficient against suicide. Let us not desert our task while there is the slightest hope that we may in a future day do this.

"Indeed I dare not die. I have a mother whose support and hope I am. I have a friend who loves me as his life, and in whose breast I should infix a mortal sting if I ungratefully left him. So I will not die. Nor shall you, my friend; cheer up; cease to weep, I entreat you. Are you not young, and fair, and good? Why should you despair? Or if you must for yourself, why for others? If you can never be happy, can you never bestow happiness[?] Oh! believe me, if you beheld on lips pale with grief one smile of joy and gratitude, and knew that you were parent of that smile, and

that without you it had never been, you would feel so pure and warm a happiness that you would wish to live for ever again and again to enjoy the same pleasure[.]

"Come, I see that you have already cast aside the sad thoughts you before frantically indulged. Look in that mirror; when I came your brow was contracted, your eyes deep sunk in your head, your lips quivering; your hands trembled violently when I took them; but now all is tranquil and soft. You are grieved and there is grief in the expression of your countenance but it is gentle and sweet. You allow me to throw away this cursed drink; you smile; oh, Congratulate me, hope is triumphant, and I have done some good."

These words are shadowy as I repeat them but they were indeed words of fire and produced a warm hope in me (I, miserable wretch, to hope!) that tingled like pleasure in my veins. He did not leave me for many hours; not until he had improved the spark that he had kindled, and with an angelic hand fostered the return of something that seemed like joy. He left me but I still was calm, and after I had saluted the starry sky and dewy earth with eyes of love and a contented good night, I slept sweetly, visited by dreams, the first of pleasure I had had for many long months.

But this was only a momentary relief and my old habits of feeling returned; for I was doomed while in life to grieve, and to the natural sorrow of my father's death and its most terrific cause, imagination added a tenfold weight of woe. I believed myself to be polluted by the unnatural love I had inspired, and that I was a creature cursed and set apart by nature. I thought that like another Cain, I had a mark set on my forehead to shew mankind that there was a barrier between me and they [*sic*]. Woodville had told me that there was in my countenance an expression as if I belonged to another world; so he had seen that sign: and there it lay a gloomy mark to tell the world that there was that within my soul that no silence could render sufficiently obscure. Why when fate drove me to become this outcast from human feeling; this monster with whom none might mingle in converse and love; why had she not from that fatal and most accursed moment,

shrouded me in thick mists and placed real darkness between me and my fellows so that I might never more be seen?, [sic] and as I passed, like a murky cloud loaded with blight, they might only perceive me by the cold chill I should cast upon them; telling them, how truly, that something unholy was near? Then I should have lived upon this dreary heath unvisited, and blasting none by my unhallowed gaze. Alas! I verily believe that if the near prospect of death did not dull and soften my bitter [fe]elings, if for a few months longer I had continued to live as I then lived, strong in body, but my soul corrupted to its core by a deadly cancer[,] if day after day I had dwelt on these dreadful sentiments I should have become mad, and should have fancied myself a living pestilence: so horrible to my own solitary thoughts did this form, this voice, and all this wretched self appear; for had it not been the source of guilt that wants a name?

This was superstition. I did not feel thus frantically when first I knew that the holy name of father was become a curse to me: but my lonely life inspired me with wild thoughts; and then when I saw Woodville & day after day he tried to win my confidence and I never dared give words to my dark tale, I was impressed more strongly with the withering fear that I was in truth a marked creature, a pariah, only fit for death.

Chapter XII

As I was perpetually haunted by these ideas, you may imagine that the influence of Woodville's words was very temporary; and that although I did not again accuse him of unkindness, yet I soon became as unhappy as before. Soon after this incident we parted. He heard that his mother was ill, and he hastened to her. He came to take leave of me, and we walked together on the heath for the last time. He promised that he would come and see me again; and bade me take cheer, and to encourage what happy thoughts I could, untill time and fortitude should overcome my misery, and I could again mingle in society.

"Above all other admonition on my part," he said, "cherish and follow this one: do not despair. That is the most dangerous gulph

on which you perpetually totter; but you must reassure your steps, and take hope to guide you. Hope, and your wounds will be already half healed: but if you obstinately despair, there never more will be comfort for you. Believe me, my dearest friend, that there is a joy that the sun and earth and all its beauties can bestow that you will one day feel. The refreshing bliss of Love will again visit your heart, and undo the spell that binds you to woe, untill you wonder how your eyes could be closed in the long night that burthens you. I dare not hope that I have inspired you with sufficient interest that the thought of me, and the affection that I shall ever bear you, will soften your melancholy and decrease the bitterness of your tears. But if my friendship can make you look on life with less disgust, beware how you injure it with suspicion. Love is a delicate sprite and easily hurt by rough jealousy. Guard, I entreat you, a firm persuasion of my sincerity in the inmost recesses of your heart out of the reach of the casual winds that may disturb its surface. Your temper is made unequal by suffering, and the tenor of your mind is, I fear, sometimes shaken by unworthy causes; but let your confidence in my sympathy and love be deeper far, and incapable of being reached by these agitations that come and go, and if they touch not your affections leave you uninjured."

These were some of Woodville's last lessons. I wept as I listened to him; and after we had taken an affectionate farewell, I followed him far with my eyes until they saw the last of my earthly comforter. I had insisted on accompanying him across the heath towards the town where he dwelt: the sun was yet high when he left me, and I turned my steps towards my cottage. It was at the latter end of the month of September when the nights have become chill. But the weather was serene, and as I walked on I fell into no unpleasing reveries. I thought of Woodville with gratitude and kindness and did not, I know not why, regret his departure with any bitterness. It seemed that after one great shock all other change was trivial to me; and I walked on wondering when the time would come when we should all four, my dearest father restored to me, meet in some sweet Paradise[.] I pictured to

myself a lovely river such as that on whose banks Dante describes
Mathilda gathering flowers, which ever flows

— *bruna, bruna,*
Sotto l'ombra perpetua, che mai
Raggiar non lascia sole ivi, nè Luna.

And then I repeated to myself all that lovely passage that relates the entrance of Dante into the terrestrial Paradise; and thought it would be sweet when I wandered on those lovely banks to see the car of light descend with my long lost parent to be restored to me. As I waited there in expectation of that moment, I thought how, of the lovely flowers that grew there, I would wind myself a chaplet and crown myself for joy: I would sing *sul margine d'un rio*, my father's favourite song, and that my voice gliding through the windless air would announce to him in whatever bower he sat expecting the moment of our union, that his daughter was come. Then the mark of misery would have faded from my brow, and I should raise my eyes fearlessly to meet his, which ever beamed with the soft lustre of innocent love. When I reflected on the magic look of those deep eyes I wept, but gently, lest my sobs should disturb the fairy scene.

175

I was so entirely wrapt in this reverie that I wandered on, taking no heed of my steps until I actually stooped down to gather a flower for my wreath on that bleak plain where no flower grew, when I awoke from my day dream and found myself I knew not where.

The sun had set and the roseate hue which the clouds had caught from him in his descent had nearly died away. A wind swept across the plain, I looked around me and saw no object that told me where I was; I had lost myself, and in vain attempted to find my path. I wandered on, and the coming darkness made every trace indistinct by which I might be guided. At length all was veiled in the deep obscurity of blackest night; I became weary and knowing that my servant was to sleep that night at the neighbouring village, so that my absence would alarm no one; and that I was safe in this wild spot from every intruder, I

resolved to spend the night where I was. Indeed I was too weary to walk further: the air was chill but I was careless of bodily inconvenience, and I thought that I was well inured to the weather during my two years of solitude, when no change of seasons prevented my perpetual wanderings.

I lay upon the grass surrounded by a darkness which not the slightest beam of light penetrated—There was no sound for the deep night had laid to sleep the insects, the only creatures that lived on the lone spot where no tree or shrub could afford shelter to aught else—There was a wondrous silence in the air that calmed my senses yet which enlivened my soul, my mind hurried from image to image and seemed to grasp an eternity. All in my heart was shadowy yet calm, until my ideas became confused and at length died away in sleep.

When I awoke it rained: I was already quite wet, and my limbs were stiff and my head giddy with the chill of night. It was a drizzling, penetrating shower; as my dank hair clung to my neck and partly covered my face, I had hardly strength to part with my fingers, the long strait locks that fell before my eyes. The darkness was much dissipated and in the east where the clouds were least dense the moon was visible behind the thin grey cloud

The moon is behind, and at the full
And yet she looks both small and dull.

Its presence gave me a hope that by its means I might find my home. But I was languid and many hours passed before I could reach the cottage, dragging as I did my slow steps, and often resting on the wet earth unable to proceed.

I particularly mark this night, for it was that which has hurried on the last scene of my tragedy, which else might have dwindled on through long years of listless sorrow. I was very ill when I arrived and quite incapable of taking off my wet clothes that clung about me. In the morning, on her return, my servant found me almost lifeless, while possessed by a high fever I was lying on the floor of my room.

I was very ill for a long time, and when I recovered from the immediate danger of fever, every symptom of a rapid consumption declared itself. I was for some time ignorant of this and thought that my excessive weakness was the consequence of the fever; [sic] But my strength became less and less; as winter came on I had a cough; and my sunken cheek, before pale, burned with a hectic fever. One by one these symptoms struck me; & I became convinced that the moment I had so much desired was about to arrive and that I was dying. I was sitting by my fire, the physician who had attended me ever since my fever had just left me, and I looked over his prescription in which digitalis was the prominent medicine. "Yes," I said, "I see how this is, and it is strange that I should have deceived myself so long; I am about to die an innocent death, and it will be sweeter even than that which the opium promised."

I rose and walked slowly to the window; the wide heath was covered by snow which sparkled under the beams of the sun that shone brightly thro' the pure, frosty air: a few birds were pecking some crumbs under my window. I smiled with quiet joy; and in my thoughts, which through long habit would for ever connect themselves into one train, as if I shaped them into words, I thus addressed the scene before me:

"I salute thee, beautiful Sun, and thou, white Earth, fair and cold! Perhaps I shall never see thee again covered with green, and the sweet flowers of the coming spring will blossom on my grave. I am about to leave thee; soon this living spirit which is ever busy among strange shapes and ideas, which belong not to thee, soon it will have flown to other regions and this emaciated body will rest insensate on thy bosom

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

"For it will be the same with thee, who art called our Universal Mother, when I am gone. I have loved thee; and in my days both of happiness and sorrow I have peopled your solitudes with wild fancies of my own creation. The woods, and lakes, and mountains

which I have loved, have for me a thousand associations; and thou, oh, Sun! hast smiled upon, and borne your part in many imaginations that sprung to life in my soul alone, and which will die with me. Your solitudes, sweet land, your trees and waters will still exist, moved by your winds, or still beneath the eye of noon, though [w]hat I have felt about ye, and all my dreams which have often strangely deformed thee, will die with me. You will exist to reflect other images in other minds, and ever will remain the same, although your reflected semblance vary in a thousand ways, changeable as the hearts of those who view thee. One of these fragile mirrors, that ever doted on thine image, is about to be broken, crumbled to dust. But everteeming Nature will create another and another, and thou wilt loose nought by my destruction.

"Thou wilt ever be the same. Recieve then the grateful farewell of a fleeting shadow who is about to disappear, who joyfully leaves thee, yet with a last look of affectionate thankfulness. Farewell! Sky, and fields and woods; the lovely flowers that grow on thee; thy mountains & thy rivers; to the balmy air and the strong wind of the north, to all, a last farewell. I shall shed no more tears for my task is almost fulfilled, and I am about to be rewarded for long and most burthensome suffering. Bless thy child even even [*sic*] in death, as I bless thee; and let me sleep at peace in my quiet grave."

I feel death to be near at hand and I am calm. I no longer despair, but look on all around me with placid affection. I find it sweet to watch the progressive decay of my strength, and to repeat to myself, another day and yet another, but again I shall not see the red leaves of autumn; before that time I shall be with my father. I am glad Woodville is not with me for perhaps he would grieve, and I desire to see smiles alone during the last scene of my life; when I last wrote to him I told him of my ill health but not of its mortal tendency, lest he should conceive it to be his duty to come to me for I fear lest the tears of friendship should destroy the blessed calm of my mind. I take pleasure in arranging all the little details which will occur when I shall no longer be. In truth I am in love with death; no maiden ever took more pleasure in the

contemplation of her bridal attire than I in fancying my limbs already enwrapt in their shroud: is it not my marriage dress? Alone it will unite me to my father when in an eternal mental union we shall never part.

I will not dwell on the last changes that I feel in the final decay of nature. It is rapid but without pain: I feel a strange pleasure in it. For long years these are the first days of peace that have visited me. I no longer exhaust my miserable heart by bitter tears and frantic complaints; I no longer the [sic] reproach the sun, the earth, the air, for pain and wretchedness. I wait in quiet expectation for the closing hours of a life which has been to me most sweet & bitter. I do not die not having enjoyed life; for sixteen years I was happy: during the first months of my father's return I had enjoyed ages of pleasure: now indeed I am grown old in grief; my steps are feeble like those of age; I have become peevish and unfit for life; so having passed little more than twenty years upon the earth I am more fit for my narrow grave than many are when they reach the natural term of their lives.

Again and again I have passed over in my remembrance the different scenes of my short life: if the world is a stage and I merely an actor on it my part has been strange, and, alas! tragical. Almost from infancy I was deprived of all the testimonies of affection which children generally receive; I was thrown entirely upon my own resources, and I enjoyed what I may almost call unnatural pleasures, for they were dreams and not realities. The earth was to me a magic lantern and I [a] gazer, and a listener but no actor; but then came the transporting and soul-reviving era of my existence: my father returned and I could pour my warm affections on a human heart; there was a new sun and a new earth created to me; the waters of existence sparkled: joy! joy! but, alas! what grief! My bliss was more rapid than the progress of a sunbeam on a mountain, which discloses its glades & woods, and then leaves it dark & blank; to my happiness followed madness and agony, closed by despair.

This was the drama of my life which I have now depicted upon paper. During three months I have been employed in this task. The memory of sorrow has brought tears; the memory of

happiness a warm glow the lively shadow of that joy. Now my tears are dried; the glow has faded from my cheeks, and with a few words of farewell to you, Woodville, I close my work: the last that I shall perform.

Farewell, my only living friend; you are the sole tie that binds me to existence, and now I break it[.] It gives me no pain to leave you; nor can our separation give you much. You never regarded me as one of this world, but rather as a being, who for some penance was sent from the Kingdom of Shadows; and she passed a few days weeping on the earth and longing to return to her native soil. You will weep but they will be tears of gentleness. I would, if I thought that it would lessen your regret, tell you to smile and congratulate me on my departure from the misery you beheld me endure. I would say; Woodville, rejoice with your friend, I triumph now and am most happy. But I check these expressions; these may not be the consolations of the living; they weep for their own misery, and not for that of the being they have lost. No; shed a few natural tears due to my memory: and if you ever visit my grave, pluck from thence a flower, and lay it to your heart; for your heart is the only tomb in which my memory will be entered.

My death is rapidly approaching and you are not near to watch the flitting and vanishing of my spirit. Do not regret this; for death is a too terrible an *[sic]* object for the living. It is one of those adversities which hurt instead of purifying the heart; for it is so intense a misery that it hardens & dulls the feelings. Dreadful as the time was when I pursued my father towards the ocean, & found their *[sic]* only his lifeless corpse; yet for my own sake I should prefer that to the watching one by one his senses fade; his pulse weaken—and sleeplessly as it were devour his life in gazing. To see life in his limbs & to know that soon life would no longer be there; to see the warm breath issue from his lips and to know they would soon be chill—I will not continue to trace this frightful picture; you suffered this torture once; I never did. And the remembrance fills your heart sometimes with bitter despair when otherwise your feelings would have melted into soft sorrow.

So day by day I become weaker, and life flickers in my wasting form, as a lamp about to lose its vivifying oil. I now behold the glad sun of May. It was May, four years ago, that I first saw my beloved father; it was in May, three years ago that my folly destroyed the only being I was doomed to love. May is returned, and I die. Three days ago, the anniversary of our meeting; and, alas! of our eternal separation, after a day of killing emotion, I caused myself to be led once more to behold the face of nature. I caused myself to be carried to some meadows some miles distant from my cottage; the grass was being mowed, and there was the scent of hay in the fields; all the earth looked fresh and its inhabitants happy. Evening approached and I beheld the sun set. Three years ago and on that day and hour it shone through the branches and leaves of the beech wood and its beams flickered upon the countenance of him whom I then beheld for the last time. I now saw that divine orb, gilding all the clouds with unwonted splendour, sink behind the horizon; it disappeared from a world where he whom I would seek exists not; it approached a world where he exists not[.] Why do I weep so bitterly? Why my [*sic*] does my heart heave with vain endeavour to cast aside the bitter anguish that covers it "as the waters cover the sea." I go from this world where he is no longer and soon I shall meet him in another.

Farewell, Woodville, the turf will soon be green on my grave; and the violets will bloom on it. *There* is my hope and my expectation; yours are in this world; may they be fulfilled.

THE LAST MAN

License: Public Domain

Mary Shelley

Volume I

Introduction

I visited Naples in the year 1818. On the 8th of December of that year, my companion and I crossed the Bay, to visit the antiquities which are scattered on the shores of Baiae. The translucent and shining waters of the calm sea covered fragments of old Roman villas, which were interlaced by sea-weed, and received diamond tints from the chequering of the sun-beams; the blue and pellucid element was such as Galatea might have skimmed in her car of mother of pearl; or Cleopatra, more fitly than the Nile, have chosen as the path of her magic ship. Though it was winter, the atmosphere seemed more appropriate to early spring; and its genial warmth contributed to inspire those sensations of placid delight, which are the portion of every traveller, as he lingers, loath to quit the tranquil bays and radiant promontories of Baiae.

We visited the so called Elysian Fields and Avernus: and wandered through various ruined temples, baths, and classic spots; at length we entered the gloomy cavern of the Cumaean Sibyl. Our Lazzeroni bore flaring torches, which shone red, and almost dusky, in the murky subterranean passages, whose darkness thirstily surrounding them, seemed eager to imbibe more and more of the element of light. We passed by a natural archway, leading to a second gallery, and enquired, if we could not enter there also. The guides pointed to the reflection of their torches on the water that paved it, leaving us to form our own conclusion; but adding it was a pity, for it led to the Sibyl's Cave. Our curiosity and enthusiasm were excited by this circumstance, and we insisted upon attempting the passage. As is usually the case in the prosecution of such enterprizes, the difficulties decreased on examination. We found, on each side of the humid pathway, "dry land for the sole of the foot."

At length we arrived at a large, desert, dark cavern, which the Lazzeroni assured us was the Sibyl's Cave. We were sufficiently disappointed—Yet we examined it with care, as if its blank, rocky walls could still bear trace of celestial visitant. On one side was a small opening. Whither does this lead? we asked: can we enter here?—"Questo poi, no,"—said the wild looking savage, who held the torch; "you can advance but a short distance, and nobody visits it."

"Nevertheless, I will try it," said my companion; "it may lead to the real cavern. Shall I go alone, or will you accompany me?"

I signified my readiness to proceed, but our guides protested against such a measure. With great volubility, in their native Neapolitan dialect, with which we were not very familiar, they told us that there were spectres, that the roof would fall in, that it was too narrow to admit us, that there was a deep hole within, filled with water, and we might be drowned. My friend shortened the harangue, by taking the man's torch from him; and we proceeded alone.

5

The passage, which at first scarcely admitted us, quickly grew narrower and lower; we were almost bent double; yet still we persisted in making our way through it. At length we entered a wider space, and the low roof heightened; but, as we congratulated ourselves on this change, our torch was extinguished by a current of air, and we were left in utter darkness. The guides bring with them materials for renewing the light, but we had none—our only resource was to return as we came. We groped round the widened space to find the entrance, and after a time fancied that we had succeeded. This proved however to be a second passage, which evidently ascended. It terminated like the former; though something approaching to a ray, we could not tell whence, shed a very doubtful twilight in the space. By degrees, our eyes grew somewhat accustomed to this dimness, and we perceived that there was no direct passage leading us further; but that it was possible to climb one side of the cavern to a low arch at top, which promised a more easy path, from whence we now discovered that this light proceeded. With considerable difficulty we scrambled up, and came to another

passage with still more of illumination, and this led to another ascent like the former.

After a succession of these, which our resolution alone permitted us to surmount, we arrived at a wide cavern with an arched dome-like roof. An aperture in the midst let in the light of heaven; but this was overgrown with brambles and underwood, which acted as a veil, obscuring the day, and giving a solemn religious hue to the apartment. It was spacious, and nearly circular, with a raised seat of stone, about the size of a Grecian couch, at one end. The only sign that life had been here, was the perfect snow-white skeleton of a goat, which had probably not perceived the opening as it grazed on the hill above, and had fallen headlong. Ages perhaps had elapsed since this catastrophe; and the ruin it had made above, had been repaired by the growth of vegetation during many hundred summers.

The rest of the furniture of the cavern consisted of piles of leaves, fragments of bark, and a white filmy substance, resembling the inner part of the green hood which shelters the grain of the unripe Indian corn. We were fatigued by our struggles to attain this point, and seated ourselves on the rocky couch, while the sounds of tinkling sheep-bells, and shout of shepherd-boy, reached us from above.

At length my friend, who had taken up some of the leaves strewed about, exclaimed, "This is the Sibyl's cave; these are Sibylline leaves." On examination, we found that all the leaves, bark, and other substances, were traced with written characters. What appeared to us more astonishing, was that these writings were expressed in various languages: some unknown to my companion, ancient Chaldee, and Egyptian hieroglyphics, old as the Pyramids. Stranger still, some were in modern dialects, English and Italian. We could make out little by the dim light, but they seemed to contain prophecies, detailed relations of events but lately passed; names, now well known, but of modern date; and often exclamations of exultation or woe, of victory or defeat, were traced on their thin scant pages. This was certainly the Sibyl's Cave; not indeed exactly as Virgil describes it, but the whole of this land had been so convulsed by earthquake and

volcano, that the change was not wonderful, though the traces of ruin were effaced by time; and we probably owed the preservation of these leaves, to the accident which had closed the mouth of the cavern, and the swift-growing vegetation which had rendered its sole opening impervious to the storm. We made a hasty selection of such of the leaves, whose writing one at least of us could understand; and then, laden with our treasure, we bade adieu to the dim hypaethric cavern, and after much difficulty succeeded in rejoining our guides.

During our stay at Naples, we often returned to this cave, sometimes alone, skimming the sun-lit sea, and each time added to our store. Since that period, whenever the world's circumstance has not imperiously called me away, or the temper of my mind impeded such study, I have been employed in deciphering these sacred remains. Their meaning, wondrous and eloquent, has often repaid my toil, soothing me in sorrow, and exciting my imagination to daring flights, through the immensity of nature and the mind of man. For awhile my labours were not solitary; but that time is gone; and, with the selected and matchless companion of my toils, their dearest reward is also lost to me—

10

*Di mie tenere frondi altro lavoro
Credea mostrarte; e qual fero pianeta
Ne' nvidio insieme, o mio nobil tesoro?*

I present the public with my latest discoveries in the slight Sibylline pages. Scattered and unconnected as they were, I have been obliged to add links, and model the work into a consistent form. But the main substance rests on the truths contained in these poetic rhapsodies, and the divine intuition which the Cumaean damsel obtained from heaven.

I have often wondered at the subject of her verses, and at the English dress of the Latin poet. Sometimes I have thought, that, obscure and chaotic as they are, they owe their present form to me, their decipherer. As if we should give to another artist, the painted fragments which form the mosaic copy of Raphael's Transfiguration in St. Peter's; he would put them together in a

form, whose mode would be fashioned by his own peculiar mind and talent. Doubtless the leaves of the Cumaean Sibyl have suffered distortion and diminution of interest and excellence in my hands. My only excuse for thus transforming them, is that they were unintelligible in their pristine condition.

My labours have cheered long hours of solitude, and taken me out of a world, which has averted its once benignant face from me, to one glowing with imagination and power. Will my readers ask how I could find solace from the narration of misery and woeful change? This is one of the mysteries of our nature, which holds full sway over me, and from whose influence I cannot escape. I confess, that I have not been unmoved by the development of the tale; and that I have been depressed, nay, agonized, at some parts of the recital, which I have faithfully transcribed from my materials. Yet such is human nature, that the excitement of mind was dear to me, and that the imagination, painter of tempest and earthquake, or, worse, the stormy and ruin-fraught passions of man, softened my real sorrows and endless regrets, by clothing these fictitious ones in that ideality, which takes the mortal sting from pain.

I hardly know whether this apology is necessary. For the merits of my adaptation and translation must decide how far I have well bestowed my time and imperfect powers, in giving form and substance to the frail and attenuated Leaves of the Sibyl.

Chapter I

I am the native of a sea-surrounded nook, a cloud-enshadowed land, which, when the surface of the globe, with its shoreless ocean and trackless continents, presents itself to my mind, appears only as an inconsiderable speck in the immense whole; and yet, when balanced in the scale of mental power, far outweighed countries of larger extent and more numerous population. So true it is, that man's mind alone was the creator of all that was good or great to man, and that Nature herself was only his first minister. England, seated far north in the turbid sea, now visits my dreams in the semblance of a vast and well-manned

ship, which mastered the winds and rode proudly over the waves. In my boyish days she was the universe to me. When I stood on my native hills, and saw plain and mountain stretch out to the utmost limits of my vision, speckled by the dwellings of my countrymen, and subdued to fertility by their labours, the earth's very centre was fixed for me in that spot, and the rest of her orb was as a fable, to have forgotten which would have cost neither my imagination nor understanding an effort.

My fortunes have been, from the beginning, an exemplification of the power that mutability may possess over the varied tenor of man's life. With regard to myself, this came almost by inheritance. My father was one of those men on whom nature had bestowed to prodigality the envied gifts of wit and imagination, and then left his bark of life to be impelled by these winds, without adding reason as the rudder, or judgment as the pilot for the voyage. His extraction was obscure; but circumstances brought him early into public notice, and his small paternal property was soon dissipated in the splendid scene of fashion and luxury in which he was an actor. During the short years of thoughtless youth, he was adored by the high-bred triflers of the day, nor least by the youthful sovereign, who escaped from the intrigues of party, and the arduous duties of kingly business, to find never-failing amusement and exhilaration of spirit in his society. My father's impulses, never under his own controul, perpetually led him into difficulties from which his ingenuity alone could extricate him; and the accumulating pile of debts of honour and of trade, which would have bent to earth any other, was supported by him with a light spirit and tameless hilarity; while his company was so necessary at the tables and assemblies of the rich, that his derelictions were considered venial, and he himself received with intoxicating flattery.

This kind of popularity, like every other, is evanescent: and the difficulties of every kind with which he had to contend, increased in a frightful ratio compared with his small means of extricating himself. At such times the king, in his enthusiasm for him, would come to his relief, and then kindly take his friend to task; my father gave the best promises for amendment, but his social

disposition, his craving for the usual diet of admiration, and more than all, the fiend of gambling, which fully possessed him, made his good resolutions transient, his promises vain. With the quick sensibility peculiar to his temperament, he perceived his power in the brilliant circle to be on the wane. The king married; and the haughty princess of Austria, who became, as queen of England, the head of fashion, looked with harsh eyes on his defects, and with contempt on the affection her royal husband entertained for him. My father felt that his fall was near; but so far from profiting by this last calm before the storm to save himself, he sought to forget anticipated evil by making still greater sacrifices to the deity of pleasure, deceitful and cruel arbiter of his destiny.

The king, who was a man of excellent dispositions, but easily led, had now become a willing disciple of his imperious consort. He was induced to look with extreme disapprobation, and at last with distaste, on my father's imprudence and follies. It is true that his presence dissipated these clouds; his warm-hearted frankness, brilliant sallies, and confiding demeanour were irresistible: it was only when at a distance, while still renewed tales of his errors were poured into his royal friend's ear, that he lost his influence. The queen's dextrous management was employed to prolong these absences, and gather together accusations. At length the king was brought to see in him a source of perpetual disquiet, knowing that he should pay for the short-lived pleasure of his society by tedious homilies, and more painful narrations of excesses, the truth of which he could not disprove. The result was, that he would make one more attempt to reclaim him, and in case of ill success, cast him off for ever.

Such a scene must have been one of deepest interest and high-wrought passion. A powerful king, conspicuous for a goodness which had heretofore made him meek, and now lofty in his admonitions, with alternate entreaty and reproof, besought his friend to attend to his real interests, resolutely to avoid those fascinations which in fact were fast deserting him, and to spend his great powers on a worthy field, in which he, his sovereign, would be his prop, his stay, and his pioneer. My father felt this kindness; for a moment ambitious dreams floated before him; and

he thought that it would be well to exchange his present pursuits for nobler duties. With sincerity and fervour he gave the required promise: as a pledge of continued favour, he received from his royal master a sum of money to defray pressing debts, and enable him to enter under good auspices his new career. That very night, while yet full of gratitude and good resolves, this whole sum, and its amount doubled, was lost at the gaming-table. In his desire to repair his first losses, my father risked double stakes, and thus incurred a debt of honour he was wholly unable to pay. Ashamed to apply again to the king, he turned his back upon London, its false delights and clinging miseries; and, with poverty for his sole companion, buried himself in solitude among the hills and lakes of Cumberland. His wit, his bon mots, the record of his personal attractions, fascinating manners, and social talents, were long remembered and repeated from mouth to mouth. Ask where now was this favourite of fashion, this companion of the noble, this excelling beam, which gilt with alien splendour the assemblies of the courtly and the gay—you heard that he was under a cloud, a lost man; not one thought it belonged to him to repay pleasure by real services, or that his long reign of brilliant wit deserved a pension on retiring. The king lamented his absence; he loved to repeat his sayings, relate the adventures they had had together, and exalt his talents—but here ended his reminiscence.

Meanwhile my father, forgotten, could not forget. He repined for the loss of what was more necessary to him than air or food—the excitements of pleasure, the admiration of the noble, the luxurious and polished living of the great. A nervous fever was the consequence; during which he was nursed by the daughter of a poor cottager, under whose roof he lodged. She was lovely, gentle, and, above all, kind to him; nor can it afford astonishment, that the late idol of high-bred beauty should, even in a fallen state, appear a being of an elevated and wondrous nature to the lowly cottage-girl. The attachment between them led to the ill-fated marriage, of which I was the offspring. Notwithstanding the tenderness and sweetness of my mother, her husband still deplored his degraded state. Unaccustomed to industry, he knew not in what way to contribute to the support of his increasing

family. Sometimes he thought of applying to the king; pride and shame for a while withheld him; and, before his necessities became so imperious as to compel him to some kind of exertion, he died. For one brief interval before this catastrophe, he looked forward to the future, and contemplated with anguish the desolate situation in which his wife and children would be left. His last effort was a letter to the king, full of touching eloquence, and of occasional flashes of that brilliant spirit which was an integral part of him. He bequeathed his widow and orphans to the friendship of his royal master, and felt satisfied that, by this means, their prosperity was better assured in his death than in his life. This letter was enclosed to the care of a nobleman, who, he did not doubt, would perform the last and inexpensive office of placing it in the king's own hand.

He died in debt, and his little property was seized immediately by his creditors. My mother, penniless and burthened with two children, waited week after week, and month after month, in sickening expectation of a reply, which never came. She had no experience beyond her father's cottage; and the mansion of the lord of the manor was the chiefest type of grandeur she could conceive. During my father's life, she had been made familiar with the name of royalty and the courtly circle; but such things, ill according with her personal experience, appeared, after the loss of him who gave substance and reality to them, vague and fantastical. If, under any circumstances, she could have acquired sufficient courage to address the noble persons mentioned by her husband, the ill success of his own application caused her to banish the idea. She saw therefore no escape from dire penury: perpetual care, joined to sorrow for the loss of the wondrous being, whom she continued to contemplate with ardent admiration, hard labour, and naturally delicate health, at length released her from the sad continuity of want and misery.

The condition of her orphan children was peculiarly desolate. Her own father had been an emigrant from another part of the country, and had died long since: they had no one relation to take them by the hand; they were outcasts, paupers, unfriended beings, to whom the most scanty pittance was a matter of favour, and

who were treated merely as children of peasants, yet poorer than the poorest, who, dying, had left them, a thankless bequest, to the close-handed charity of the land.

I, the elder of the two, was five years old when my mother died. A remembrance of the discourses of my parents, and the communications which my mother endeavoured to impress upon me concerning my father's friends, in slight hope that I might one day derive benefit from the knowledge, floated like an indistinct dream through my brain. I conceived that I was different and superior to my protectors and companions, but I knew not how or wherefore. The sense of injury, associated with the name of king and noble, clung to me; but I could draw no conclusions from such feelings, to serve as a guide to action. My first real knowledge of myself was as an unprotected orphan among the valleys and fells of Cumberland. I was in the service of a farmer; and with crook in hand, my dog at my side, I shepherded a numerous flock on the near uplands. I cannot say much in praise of such a life; and its pains far exceeded its pleasures. There was freedom in it, a companionship with nature, and a reckless loneliness; but these, romantic as they were, did not accord with the love of action and desire of human sympathy, characteristic of youth. Neither the care of my flock, nor the change of seasons, were sufficient to tame my eager spirit; my out-door life and unemployed time were the temptations that led me early into lawless habits. I associated with others friendless like myself; I formed them into a band, I was their chief and captain. All shepherd-boys alike, while our flocks were spread over the pastures, we schemed and executed many a mischievous prank, which drew on us the anger and revenge of the rustics. I was the leader and protector of my comrades, and as I became distinguished among them, their misdeeds were usually visited upon me. But while I endured punishment and pain in their defence with the spirit of an hero, I claimed as my reward their praise and obedience.

In such a school my disposition became rugged, but firm. The appetite for admiration and small capacity for self-controul which I inherited from my father, nursed by adversity, made me daring

and reckless. I was rough as the elements, and unlearned as the animals I tended. I often compared myself to them, and finding that my chief superiority consisted in power, I soon persuaded myself that it was in power only that I was inferior to the chiefest potentates of the earth. Thus untaught in refined philosophy, and pursued by a restless feeling of degradation from my true station in society, I wandered among the hills of civilized England as uncouth a savage as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome. I owned but one law, it was that of the strongest, and my greatest deed of virtue was never to submit.

Yet let me a little retract from this sentence I have passed on myself. My mother, when dying, had, in addition to her other half-forgotten and misapplied lessons, committed, with solemn exhortation, her other child to my fraternal guardianship; and this one duty I performed to the best of my ability, with all the zeal and affection of which my nature was capable. My sister was three years younger than myself; I had nursed her as an infant, and when the difference of our sexes, by giving us various occupations, in a great measure divided us, yet she continued to be the object of my careful love. Orphans, in the fullest sense of the term, we were poorest among the poor, and despised among the unhonoured. If my daring and courage obtained for me a kind of respectful aversion, her youth and sex, since they did not excite tenderness, by proving her to be weak, were the causes of numberless mortifications to her; and her own disposition was not so constituted as to diminish the evil effects of her lowly station.

She was a singular being, and, like me, inherited much of the peculiar disposition of our father. Her countenance was all expression; her eyes were not dark, but impenetrably deep; you seemed to discover space after space in their intellectual glance, and to feel that the soul which was their soul, comprehended an universe of thought in its ken. She was pale and fair, and her golden hair clustered on her temples, contrasting its rich hue with the living marble beneath. Her coarse peasant-dress, little consonant apparently with the refinement of feeling which her face expressed, yet in a strange manner accorded with it. She was like one of Guido's saints, with heaven in her heart and in her

look, so that when you saw her you only thought of that within, and costume and even feature were secondary to the mind that beamed in her countenance.

Yet though lovely and full of noble feeling, my poor Perdita (for this was the fanciful name my sister had received from her dying parent), was not altogether saintly in her disposition. Her manners were cold and repulsive. If she had been nurtured by those who had regarded her with affection, she might have been different; but unloved and neglected, she repaid want of kindness with distrust and silence. She was submissive to those who held authority over her, but a perpetual cloud dwelt on her brow; she looked as if she expected enmity from every one who approached her, and her actions were instigated by the same feeling. All the time she could command she spent in solitude. She would ramble to the most unfrequented places, and scale dangerous heights, that in those unvisited spots she might wrap herself in loneliness. Often she passed whole hours walking up and down the paths of the woods; she wove garlands of flowers and ivy, or watched the flickering of the shadows and glancing of the leaves; sometimes she sat beside a stream, and as her thoughts paused, threw flowers or pebbles into the waters, watching how those swam and these sank; or she would set afloat boats formed of bark of trees or leaves, with a feather for a sail, and intensely watch the navigation of her craft among the rapids and shallows of the brook. Meanwhile her active fancy wove a thousand combinations; she dreamt "of moving accidents by flood and field"—she lost herself delightedly in these self-created wanderings, and returned with unwilling spirit to the dull detail of common life. Poverty was the cloud that veiled her excellencies, and all that was good in her seemed about to perish from want of the genial dew of affection. She had not even the same advantage as I in the recollection of her parents; she clung to me, her brother, as her only friend, but her alliance with me completed the distaste that her protectors felt for her; and every error was magnified by them into crimes. If she had been bred in that sphere of life to which by inheritance the delicate framework of her mind and person was adapted, she would have been the object almost

of adoration, for her virtues were as eminent as her defects. All the genius that ennobled the blood of her father illustrated hers; a generous tide flowed in her veins; artifice, envy, or meanness, were at the antipodes of her nature; her countenance, when enlightened by amiable feeling, might have belonged to a queen of nations; her eyes were bright; her look fearless.

Although by our situation and dispositions we were almost equally cut off from the usual forms of social intercourse, we formed a strong contrast to each other. I always required the stimulants of companionship and applause. Perdita was all-sufficient to herself. Notwithstanding my lawless habits, my disposition was sociable, hers recluse. My life was spent among tangible realities, hers was a dream. I might be said even to love my enemies, since by exciting me they in a sort bestowed happiness upon me; Perdita almost disliked her friends, for they interfered with her visionary moods. All my feelings, even of exultation and triumph, were changed to bitterness, if unparticipated; Perdita, even in joy, fled to loneliness, and could go on from day to day, neither expressing her emotions, nor seeking a fellow-feeling in another mind. Nay, she could love and dwell with tenderness on the look and voice of her friend, while her demeanour expressed the coldest reserve. A sensation with her became a sentiment, and she never spoke until she had mingled her perceptions of outward objects with others which were the native growth of her own mind. She was like a fruitful soil that imbibed the airs and dews of heaven, and gave them forth again to light in loveliest forms of fruits and flowers; but then she was often dark and rugged as that soil, raked up, and new sown with unseen seed.

She dwelt in a cottage whose trim grass-plat sloped down to the waters of the lake of Ulswater; a beech wood stretched up the hill behind, and a purling brook gently falling from the acclivity ran through poplar-shaded banks into the lake. I lived with a farmer whose house was built higher up among the hills: a dark crag rose behind it, and, exposed to the north, the snow lay in its crevices the summer through. Before dawn I led my flock to the sheep-walks, and guarded them through the day. It was a life of

toil; for rain and cold were more frequent than sunshine; but it was my pride to condemn the elements. My trusty dog watched the sheep as I slipped away to the rendezvous of my comrades, and thence to the accomplishment of our schemes. At noon we met again, and we threw away in contempt our peasant fare, as we built our fire-place and kindled the cheering blaze destined to cook the game stolen from the neighbouring preserves. Then came the tale of hair-breadth escapes, combats with dogs, ambush and flight, as gipsy-like we encompassed our pot. The search after a stray lamb, or the devices by which we elude or endeavoured to elude punishment, filled up the hours of afternoon; in the evening my flock went to its fold, and I to my sister.

It was seldom indeed that we escaped, to use an old-fashioned phrase, scot free. Our dainty fare was often exchanged for blows and imprisonment. Once, when thirteen years of age, I was sent for a month to the county jail. I came out, my morals unimproved, my hatred to my oppressors encreased tenfold. Bread and water did not tame my blood, nor solitary confinement inspire me with gentle thoughts. I was angry, impatient, miserable; my only happy hours were those during which I devised schemes of revenge; these were perfected in my forced solitude, so that during the whole of the following season, and I was freed early in September, I never failed to provide excellent and plenteous fare for myself and my comrades. This was a glorious winter. The sharp frost and heavy snows tamed the animals, and kept the country gentlemen by their firesides; we got more game than we could eat, and my faithful dog grew sleek upon our refuse.

Thus years passed on; and years only added fresh love of freedom, and contempt for all that was not as wild and rude as myself. At the age of sixteen I had shot up in appearance to man's estate; I was tall and athletic; I was practised to feats of strength, and inured to the inclemency of the elements. My skin was embrowned by the sun; my step was firm with conscious power. I feared no man, and loved none. In after life I looked back with wonder to what I then was; how utterly worthless I should have become if I had pursued my lawless career. My life was like that

of an animal, and my mind was in danger of degenerating into that which informs brute nature. Until now, my savage habits had done me no radical mischief; my physical powers had grown up and flourished under their influence, and my mind, undergoing the same discipline, was imbued with all the hardy virtues. But now my boasted independence was daily instigating me to acts of tyranny, and freedom was becoming licentiousness. I stood on the brink of manhood; passions, strong as the trees of a forest, had already taken root within me, and were about to shadow with their noxious overgrowth, my path of life.

I panted for enterprises beyond my childish exploits, and formed distempered dreams of future action. I avoided my ancient comrades, and I soon lost them. They arrived at the age when they were sent to fulfil their destined situations in life; while I, an outcast, with none to lead or drive me forward, paused. The old began to point at me as an example, the young to wonder at me as a being distinct from themselves; I hated them, and began, last and worst degradation, to hate myself. I clung to my ferocious habits, yet half despised them; I continued my war against civilization, and yet entertained a wish to belong to it.

I revolved again and again all that I remembered my mother to have told me of my father's former life; I contemplated the few relics I possessed belonging to him, which spoke of greater refinement than could be found among the mountain cottages; but nothing in all this served as a guide to lead me to another and pleasanter way of life. My father had been connected with nobles, but all I knew of such connection was subsequent neglect. The name of the king,—he to whom my dying father had addressed his latest prayers, and who had barbarously slighted them, was associated only with the ideas of unkindness, injustice, and consequent resentment. I was born for something greater than I was—and greater I would become; but greatness, at least to my distorted perceptions, was no necessary associate of goodness, and my wild thoughts were unchecked by moral considerations when they rioted in dreams of distinction. Thus I stood upon a pinnacle, a sea of evil rolled at my feet; I was about to precipitate myself into it, and rush like a torrent over all obstructions to the

object of my wishes— when a stranger influence came over the current of my fortunes, and changed their boisterous course to what was in comparison like the gentle meanderings of a meadow-encircling streamlet.

Chapter II

I lived far from the busy haunts of men, and the rumour of wars or political changes came worn to a mere sound, to our mountain abodes. England had been the scene of momentous struggles, during my early boyhood. In the year 2073, the last of its kings, the ancient friend of my father, had abdicated in compliance with the gentle force of the remonstrances of his subjects, and a republic was instituted. Large estates were secured to the dethroned monarch and his family; he received the title of Earl of Windsor, and Windsor Castle, an ancient royalty, with its wide demesnes were a part of his allotted wealth. He died soon after, leaving two children, a son and a daughter.

The ex-queen, a princess of the house of Austria, had long impelled her husband to withstand the necessity of the times. She was haughty and fearless; she cherished a love of power, and a bitter contempt for him who had despoiled himself of a kingdom. For her children's sake alone she consented to remain, shorn of regality, a member of the English republic. When she became a widow, she turned all her thoughts to the educating her son Adrian, second Earl of Windsor, so as to accomplish her ambitious ends; and with his mother's milk he imbibed, and was intended to grow up in the steady purpose of re-acquiring his lost crown. Adrian was now fifteen years of age. He was addicted to study, and imbued beyond his years with learning and talent: report said that he had already begun to thwart his mother's views, and to entertain republican principles. However this might be, the haughty Countess entrusted none with the secrets of her family-tuition. Adrian was bred up in solitude, and kept apart from the natural companions of his age and rank. Some unknown circumstance now induced his mother to send him from under her immediate tutelage; and we heard that he was about to visit

Cumberland. A thousand tales were rife, explanatory of the Countess of Windsor's conduct; none true probably; but each day it became more certain that we should have the noble scion of the late regal house of England among us.

There was a large estate with a mansion attached to it, belonging to this family, at Ulswater. A large park was one of its appendages, laid out with great taste, and plentifully stocked with game. I had often made depredations on these preserves; and the neglected state of the property facilitated my incursions. When it was decided that the young Earl of Windsor should visit Cumberland, workmen arrived to put the house and grounds in order for his reception. The apartments were restored to their pristine splendour, and the park, all disrepairs restored, was guarded with unusual care.

I was beyond measure disturbed by this intelligence. It roused all my dormant recollections, my suspended sentiments of injury, and gave rise to the new one of revenge. I could no longer attend to my occupations; all my plans and devices were forgotten; I seemed about to begin life anew, and that under no good auspices. The tug of war, I thought, was now to begin. He would come triumphantly to the district to which my parent had fled broken-hearted; he would find the ill-fated offspring, bequeathed with such vain confidence to his royal father, miserable paupers. That he should know of our existence, and treat us, near at hand, with the same contumely which his father had practised in distance and absence, appeared to me the certain consequence of all that had gone before. Thus then I should meet this titled stripling—the son of my father's friend. He would be hedged in by servants; nobles, and the sons of nobles, were his companions; all England rang with his name; and his coming, like a thunderstorm, was heard from far: while I, unlettered and unfashioned, should, if I came in contact with him, in the judgment of his courtly followers, bear evidence in my very person to the propriety of that ingratitude which had made me the degraded being I appeared.

With my mind fully occupied by these ideas, I might be said as if fascinated, to haunt the destined abode of the young Earl. I watched the progress of the improvements, and stood by the

unlading waggons, as various articles of luxury, brought from London, were taken forth and conveyed into the mansion. It was part of the Ex-Queen's plan, to surround her son with princely magnificence. I beheld rich carpets and silken hangings, ornaments of gold, richly embossed metals, emblazoned furniture, and all the appendages of high rank arranged, so that nothing but what was regal in splendour should reach the eye of one of royal descent. I looked on these; I turned my gaze to my own mean dress.—Whence sprung this difference? Whence but from ingratitude, from falsehood, from a dereliction on the part of the prince's father, of all noble sympathy and generous feeling. Doubtless, he also, whose blood received a mingling tide from his proud mother—he, the acknowledged focus of the kingdom's wealth and nobility, had been taught to repeat my father's name with disdain, and to scoff at my just claims to protection. I strove to think that all this grandeur was but more glaring infamy, and that, by planting his gold-enwoven flag beside my tarnished and tattered banner, he proclaimed not his superiority, but his debasement. Yet I envied him. His stud of beautiful horses, his arms of costly workmanship, the praise that attended him, the adoration, ready servitor, high place and high esteem,—I considered them as forcibly wrenched from me, and envied them all with novel and tormenting bitterness.

To crown my vexation of spirit, Perdita, the visionary Perdita, seemed to awake to real life with transport, when she told me that the Earl of Windsor was about to arrive.

"And this pleases you?" I observed, moodily.

40

"Indeed it does, Lionel," she replied; "I quite long to see him; he is the descendant of our kings, the first noble of the land: every one admires and loves him, and they say that his rank is his least merit; he is generous, brave, and affable."

"You have learnt a pretty lesson, Perdita," said I, "and repeat it so literally, that you forget the while the proofs we have of the Earl's virtues; his generosity to us is manifest in our plenty, his bravery in the protection he affords us, his affability in the notice he takes of us. His rank his least merit, do you say? Why, all his virtues are derived from his station only; because he is rich, he is

called generous; because he is powerful, brave; because he is well served, he is affable. Let them call him so, let all England believe him to be thus—we know him—he is our enemy—our penurious, dastardly, arrogant enemy; if he were gifted with one particle of the virtues you call his, he would do justly by us, if it were only to shew, that if he must strike, it should not be a fallen foe. His father injured my father—his father, unassailable on his throne, dared despise him who only stooped beneath himself, when he deigned to associate with the royal ingrate. We, descendants from the one and the other, must be enemies also. He shall find that I can feel my injuries; he shall learn to dread my revenge!"

A few days after he arrived. Every inhabitant of the most miserable cottage, went to swell the stream of population that poured forth to meet him: even Perdita, in spite of my late philippic, crept near the highway, to behold this idol of all hearts. I, driven half mad, as I met party after party of the country people, in their holiday best, descending the hills, escaped to their cloud-veiled summits, and looking on the sterile rocks about me, exclaimed—"They do not cry, long live the Earl!" Nor, when night came, accompanied by drizzling rain and cold, would I return home; for I knew that each cottage rang with the praises of Adrian; as I felt my limbs grow numb and chill, my pain served as food for my insane aversion; nay, I almost triumphed in it, since it seemed to afford me reason and excuse for my hatred of my unheeding adversary. All was attributed to him, for I confounded so entirely the idea of father and son, that I forgot that the latter might be wholly unconscious of his parent's neglect of us; and as I struck my aching head with my hand, I cried: "He shall hear of this! I will be revenged! I will not suffer like a spaniel! He shall know, beggar and friendless as I am, that I will not tamely submit to injury!" Each day, each hour added to these exaggerated wrongs. His praises were so many adder's stings infixed in my vulnerable breast. If I saw him at a distance, riding a beautiful horse, my blood boiled with rage; the air seemed poisoned by his presence, and my very native English was changed to a vile jargon, since every phrase I heard was coupled with his name and honour. I panted to relieve this painful heart-

burning by some misdeed that should rouse him to a sense of my antipathy. It was the height of his offending, that he should occasion in me such intolerable sensations, and not deign himself to afford any demonstration that he was aware that I even lived to feel them.

It soon became known that Adrian took great delight in his park and preserves. He never sported, but spent hours in watching the tribes of lovely and almost tame animals with which it was stocked, and ordered that greater care should be taken of them than ever. Here was an opening for my plans of offence, and I made use of it with all the brute impetuosity I derived from my active mode of life. I proposed the enterprize of poaching on his demesne to my few remaining comrades, who were the most determined and lawless of the crew; but they all shrunk from the peril; so I was left to achieve my revenge myself. At first my exploits were unperceived; I increased in daring; footsteps on the dewy grass, torn boughs, and marks of slaughter, at length betrayed me to the game-keepers. They kept better watch; I was taken, and sent to prison. I entered its gloomy walls in a fit of triumphant extasy: "He feels me now," I cried, "and shall, again and again!"—I passed but one day in confinement; in the evening I was liberated, as I was told, by the order of the Earl himself. This news precipitated me from my self-raised pinnacle of honour. He despises me, I thought; but he shall learn that I despise him, and hold in equal contempt his punishments and his clemency. On the second night after my release, I was again taken by the gamekeepers—again imprisoned, and again released; and again, such was my pertinacity, did the fourth night find me in the forbidden park. The gamekeepers were more enraged than their lord by my obstinacy. They had received orders that if I were again taken, I should be brought to the Earl; and his lenity made them expect a conclusion which they considered ill befitting my crime. One of them, who had been from the first the leader among those who had seized me, resolved to satisfy his own resentment, before he made me over to the higher powers.

The late setting of the moon, and the extreme caution I was obliged to use in this my third expedition, consumed so much

time, that something like a qualm of fear came over me when I perceived dark night yield to twilight. I crept along by the fern, on my hands and knees, seeking the shadowy coverts of the underwood, while the birds awoke with unwelcome song above, and the fresh morning wind, playing among the boughs, made me suspect a footfall at each turn. My heart beat quick as I approached the palings; my hand was on one of them, a leap would take me to the other side, when two keepers sprang from an ambush upon me: one knocked me down, and proceeded to inflict a severe horse-whipping. I started up—a knife was in my grasp; I made a plunge at his raised right arm, and inflicted a deep, wide wound in his hand. The rage and yells of the wounded man, the howling execrations of his comrade, which I answered with equal bitterness and fury, echoed through the dell; morning broke more and more, ill accordant in its celestial beauty with our brute and noisy contest. I and my enemy were still struggling, when the wounded man exclaimed, "The Earl!" I sprang out of the herculean hold of the keeper, panting from my exertions; I cast furious glances on my persecutors, and placing myself with my back to a tree, resolved to defend myself to the last. My garments were torn, and they, as well as my hands, were stained with the blood of the man I had wounded; one hand grasped the dead birds—my hard-earned prey, the other held the knife; my hair was matted; my face besmeared with the same guilty signs that bore witness against me on the dripping instrument I clenched; my whole appearance was haggard and squalid. Tall and muscular as I was in form, I must have looked like, what indeed I was, the merest ruffian that ever trod the earth.

The name of the Earl startled me, and caused all the indignant blood that warmed my heart to rush into my cheeks; I had never seen him before; I figured to myself a haughty, assuming youth, who would take me to task, if he deigned to speak to me, with all the arrogance of superiority. My reply was ready; a reproach I deemed calculated to sting his very heart. He came up the while; and his appearance blew aside, with gentle western breath, my cloudy wrath: a tall, slim, fair boy, with a physiognomy expressive of the excess of sensibility and refinement stood

before me; the morning sunbeams tinged with gold his silken hair, and spread light and glory over his beaming countenance. "How is this?" he cried. The men eagerly began their defence; he put them aside, saying, "Two of you at once on a mere lad— for shame!" He came up to me: "Verney," he cried, "Lionel Verney, do we meet thus for the first time? We were born to be friends to each other; and though ill fortune has divided us, will you not acknowledge the hereditary bond of friendship which I trust will hereafter unite us?"

As he spoke, his earnest eyes, fixed on me, seemed to read my very soul: my heart, my savage revengeful heart, felt the influence of sweet benignity sink upon it; while his thrilling voice, like sweetest melody, awoke a mute echo within me, stirring to its depths the life-blood in my frame. I desired to reply, to acknowledge his goodness, accept his proffered friendship; but words, fitting words, were not afforded to the rough mountaineer; I would have held out my hand, but its guilty stain restrained me. Adrian took pity on my faltering mien: "Come with me," he said, "I have much to say to you; come home with me—you know who I am?"

"Yes," I exclaimed, "I do believe that I now know you, and that you will pardon my mistakes—my crime."

Adrian smiled gently; and after giving his orders to the gamekeepers, he came up to me; putting his arm in mine, we walked together to the mansion.

It was not his rank—after all that I have said, surely it will not be suspected that it was Adrian's rank, that, from the first, subdued my heart of hearts, and laid my entire spirit prostrate before him. Nor was it I alone who felt thus intimately his perfections. His sensibility and courtesy fascinated every one. His vivacity, intelligence, and active spirit of benevolence, completed the conquest. Even at this early age, he was deep read and imbued with the spirit of high philosophy. This spirit gave a tone of irresistible persuasion to his intercourse with others, so that he seemed like an inspired musician, who struck, with unerring skill, the "lyre of mind," and produced thence divine harmony. In person, he hardly appeared of this world; his slight frame was

overinformed by the soul that dwelt within; he was all mind; "Man but a rush against" his breast, and it would have conquered his strength; but the might of his smile would have tamed an hungry lion, or caused a legion of armed men to lay their weapons at his feet.

I spent the day with him. At first he did not recur to the past, or indeed to any personal occurrences. He wished probably to inspire me with confidence, and give me time to gather together my scattered thoughts. He talked of general subjects, and gave me ideas I had never before conceived. We sat in his library, and he spoke of the old Greek sages, and of the power which they had acquired over the minds of men, through the force of love and wisdom only. The room was decorated with the busts of many of them, and he described their characters to me. As he spoke, I felt subject to him; and all my boasted pride and strength were subdued by the honeyed accents of this blue-eyed boy. The trim and paled demesne of civilization, which I had before regarded from my wild jungle as inaccessible, had its wicket opened by him; I stepped within, and felt, as I entered, that I trod my native soil.

As evening came on, he reverted to the past. "I have a tale to relate," he said, "and much explanation to give concerning the past; perhaps you can assist me to curtail it. Do you remember your father? I had never the happiness of seeing him, but his name is one of my earliest recollections: he stands written in my mind's tablets as the type of all that was gallant, amiable, and fascinating in man. His wit was not more conspicuous than the overflowing goodness of his heart, which he poured in such full measure on his friends, as to leave, alas! small remnant for himself."

Encouraged by this encomium, I proceeded, in answer to his inquiries, to relate what I remembered of my parent; and he gave an account of those circumstances which had brought about a neglect of my father's testamentary letter. When, in after times, Adrian's father, then king of England, felt his situation become more perilous, his line of conduct more embarrassed, again and again he wished for his early friend, who might stand a mound

against the impetuous anger of his queen, a mediator between him and the parliament. From the time that he had quitted London, on the fatal night of his defeat at the gaming-table, the king had received no tidings concerning him; and when, after the lapse of years, he exerted himself to discover him, every trace was lost. With fonder regret than ever, he clung to his memory; and gave it in charge to his son, if ever he should meet this valued friend, in his name to bestow every succour, and to assure him that, to the last, his attachment survived separation and silence.

A short time before Adrian's visit to Cumberland, the heir of the nobleman to whom my father had confided his last appeal to his royal master, put this letter, its seal unbroken, into the young Earl's hands. It had been found cast aside with a mass of papers of old date, and accident alone brought it to light. Adrian read it with deep interest; and found there that living spirit of genius and wit he had so often heard commemorated. He discovered the name of the spot whither my father had retreated, and where he died; he learnt the existence of his orphan children; and during the short interval between his arrival at Ulswater and our meeting in the park, he had been occupied in making inquiries concerning us, and arranging a variety of plans for our benefit, preliminary to his introducing himself to our notice.

The mode in which he spoke of my father was gratifying to my vanity; the veil which he delicately cast over his benevolence, in alledging a duteous fulfilment of the king's latest will, was soothing to my pride. Other feelings, less ambiguous, were called into play by his conciliating manner and the generous warmth of his expressions, respect rarely before experienced, admiration, and love—he had touched my rocky heart with his magic power, and the stream of affection gushed forth, imperishable and pure. In the evening we parted; he pressed my hand: "We shall meet again; come to me to-morrow." I clasped that kind hand; I tried to answer; a fervent "God bless you!" was all my ignorance could frame of speech, and I darted away, oppressed by my new emotions.

I could not rest. I sought the hills; a west wind swept them, and the stars glittered above. I ran on, careless of outward objects, but

trying to master the struggling spirit within me by means of bodily fatigue. "This," I thought, "is power! Not to be strong of limb, hard of heart, ferocious, and daring; but kind compassionate and soft."—Stopping short, I clasped my hands, and with the fervour of a new proselyte, cried, "Doubt me not, Adrian, I also will become wise and good!" and then quite overcome, I wept aloud.

As this gust of passion passed from me, I felt more composed. I lay on the ground, and giving the reins to my thoughts, repassed in my mind my former life; and began, fold by fold, to unwind the many errors of my heart, and to discover how brutish, savage, and worthless I had hitherto been. I could not however at that time feel remorse, for methought I was born anew; my soul threw off the burthen of past sin, to commence a new career in innocence and love. Nothing harsh or rough remained to jar with the soft feelings which the transactions of the day had inspired; I was as a child lisping its devotions after its mother, and my plastic soul was remoulded by a master hand, which I neither desired nor was able to resist.

This was the first commencement of my friendship with Adrian, and I must commemorate this day as the most fortunate of my life. I now began to be human. I was admitted within that sacred boundary which divides the intellectual and moral nature of man from that which characterizes animals. My best feelings were called into play to give fitting responses to the generosity, wisdom, and amenity of my new friend. He, with a noble goodness all his own, took infinite delight in bestowing to prodigality the treasures of his mind and fortune on the long-neglected son of his father's friend, the offspring of that gifted being whose excellencies and talents he had heard commemorated from infancy.

After his abdication the late king had retreated from the sphere of politics, yet his domestic circle afforded him small content. The ex-queen had none of the virtues of domestic life, and those of courage and daring which she possessed were rendered null by the secession of her husband: she despised him, and did not care to conceal her sentiments. The king had, in compliance with her

exactions, cast off his old friends, but he had acquired no new ones under her guidance. In this dearth of sympathy, he had recourse to his almost infant son; and the early development of talent and sensibility rendered Adrian no unfitting depository of his father's confidence. He was never weary of listening to the latter's often repeated accounts of old times, in which my father had played a distinguished part; his keen remarks were repeated to the boy, and remembered by him; his wit, his fascinations, his very faults were hallowed by the regret of affection; his loss was sincerely deplored. Even the queen's dislike of the favourite was ineffectual to deprive him of his son's admiration: it was bitter, sarcastic, contemptuous—but as she bestowed her heavy censure alike on his virtues as his errors, on his devoted friendship and his ill-bestowed loves, on his disinterestedness and his prodigality, on his pre-possessing grace of manner, and the facility with which he yielded to temptation, her double shot proved too heavy, and fell short of the mark. Nor did her angry dislike prevent Adrian from imaging my father, as he had said, the type of all that was gallant, amiable, and fascinating in man. It was not strange therefore, that when he heard of the existence of the offspring of this celebrated person, he should have formed the plan of bestowing on them all the advantages his rank made him rich to afford. When he found me a vagabond shepherd of the hills, a poacher, an unlettered savage, still his kindness did not fail. In addition to the opinion he entertained that his father was to a degree culpable of neglect towards us, and that he was bound to every possible reparation, he was pleased to say that under all my ruggedness there glimmered forth an elevation of spirit, which could be distinguished from mere animal courage, and that I inherited a similarity of countenance to my father, which gave proof that all his virtues and talents had not died with him. Whatever those might be which descended to me, my noble young friend resolved should not be lost for want of culture.

Acting upon this plan in our subsequent intercourse, he led me to wish to participate in that cultivation which graced his own intellect. My active mind, when once it seized upon this new idea, fastened on it with extreme avidity. At first it was the great object

of my ambition to rival the merits of my father, and render myself worthy of the friendship of Adrian. But curiosity soon awoke, and an earnest love of knowledge, which caused me to pass days and nights in reading and study. I was already well acquainted with what I may term the panorama of nature, the change of seasons, and the various appearances of heaven and earth. But I was at once startled and enchanted by my sudden extension of vision, when the curtain, which had been drawn before the intellectual world, was withdrawn, and I saw the universe, not only as it presented itself to my outward senses, but as it had appeared to the wisest among men. Poetry and its creations, philosophy and its researches and classifications, alike awoke the sleeping ideas in my mind, and gave me new ones.

I felt as the sailor, who from the topmast first discovered the shore of America; and like him I hastened to tell my companions of my discoveries in unknown regions. But I was unable to excite in any breast the same craving appetite for knowledge that existed in mine. Even Perdita was unable to understand me. I had lived in what is generally called the world of reality, and it was awakening to a new country to find that there was a deeper meaning in all I saw, besides that which my eyes conveyed to me. The visionary Perdita beheld in all this only a new gloss upon an old reading, and her own was sufficiently inexhaustible to content her. She listened to me as she had done to the narration of my adventures, and sometimes took an interest in this species of information; but she did not, as I did, look on it as an integral part of her being, which having obtained, I could no more put off than the universal sense of touch.

We both agreed in loving Adrian: although she not having yet escaped from childhood could not appreciate as I did the extent of his merits, or feel the same sympathy in his pursuits and opinions. I was for ever with him. There was a sensibility and sweetness in his disposition, that gave a tender and unearthly tone to our converse. Then he was gay as a lark carolling from its skiey tower, soaring in thought as an eagle, innocent as the mild-eyed dove. He could dispel the seriousness of Perdita, and take the sting from the torturing activity of my nature. I looked back to my

restless desires and painful struggles with my fellow beings as to a troubled dream, and felt myself as much changed as if I had transmigrated into another form, whose fresh sensorium and mechanism of nerves had altered the reflection of the apparent universe in the mirror of mind. But it was not so; I was the same in strength, in earnest craving for sympathy, in my yearning for active exertion. My manly virtues did not desert me, for the witch Urania spared the locks of Sampson, while he reposed at her feet; but all was softened and humanized. Nor did Adrian instruct me only in the cold truths of history and philosophy. At the same time that he taught me by their means to subdue my own reckless and uncultured spirit, he opened to my view the living page of his own heart, and gave me to feel and understand its wondrous character.

The ex-queen of England had, even during infancy, endeavoured to implant daring and ambitious designs in the mind of her son. She saw that he was endowed with genius and surpassing talent; these she cultivated for the sake of afterwards using them for the furtherance of her own views. She encouraged his craving for knowledge and his impetuous courage; she even tolerated his tameless love of freedom, under the hope that this would, as is too often the case, lead to a passion for command. She endeavoured to bring him up in a sense of resentment towards, and a desire to revenge himself upon, those who had been instrumental in bringing about his father's abdication. In this she did not succeed. The accounts furnished him, however distorted, of a great and wise nation asserting its right to govern itself, excited his admiration: in early days he became a republican from principle. Still his mother did not despair. To the love of rule and haughty pride of birth she added determined ambition, patience, and self-control. She devoted herself to the study of her son's disposition. By the application of praise, censure, and exhortation, she tried to seek and strike the fitting chords; and though the melody that followed her touch seemed discord to her, she built her hopes on his talents, and felt sure that she would at last win him. The kind of banishment he now experienced arose from other causes.

The ex-queen had also a daughter, now twelve years of age; his fairy sister, Adrian was wont to call her; a lovely, animated, little thing, all sensibility and truth. With these, her children, the noble widow constantly resided at Windsor; and admitted no visitors, except her own partizans, travellers from her native Germany, and a few of the foreign ministers. Among these, and highly distinguished by her, was Prince Zaimi, ambassador to England from the free States of Greece; and his daughter, the young Princess Evadne, passed much of her time at Windsor Castle. In company with this sprightly and clever Greek girl, the Countess would relax from her usual state. Her views with regard to her own children, placed all her words and actions relative to them under restraint: but Evadne was a plaything she could in no way fear; nor were her talents and vivacity slight alleviations to the monotony of the Countess's life.

Evadne was eighteen years of age. Although they spent much time together at Windsor, the extreme youth of Adrian prevented any suspicion as to the nature of their intercourse. But he was ardent and tender of heart beyond the common nature of man, and had already learnt to love, while the beauteous Greek smiled benignantly on the boy. It was strange to me, who, though older than Adrian, had never loved, to witness the whole heart's sacrifice of my friend. There was neither jealousy, inquietude, or mistrust in his sentiment; it was devotion and faith. His life was swallowed up in the existence of his beloved; and his heart beat only in unison with the pulsations that vivified hers. This was the secret law of his life—he loved and was beloved. The universe was to him a dwelling, to inhabit with his chosen one; and not either a scheme of society or an enchainment of events, that could impart to him either happiness or misery. What, though life and the system of social intercourse were a wilderness, a tiger-haunted jungle! Through the midst of its errors, in the depths of its savage recesses, there was a disentangled and flowery pathway, through which they might journey in safety and delight. Their track would be like the passage of the Red Sea, which they might traverse with unwet feet, though a wall of destruction were impending on either side.

Alas! why must I record the hapless delusion of this matchless specimen of humanity? What is there in our nature that is for ever urging us on towards pain and misery? We are not formed for enjoyment; and, however we may be attuned to the reception of pleasureable emotion, disappointment is the never-failing pilot of our life's bark, and ruthlessly carries us on to the shoals. Who was better framed than this highly-gifted youth to love and be beloved, and to reap unalienable joy from an unblamed passion? If his heart had slept but a few years longer, he might have been saved; but it awoke in its infancy; it had power, but no knowledge; and it was ruined, even as a too early-blowing bud is nipt by the killing frost.

I did not accuse Evadne of hypocrisy or a wish to deceive her lover; but the first letter that I saw of hers convinced me that she did not love him; it was written with elegance, and, foreigner as she was, with great command of language. The hand-writing itself was exquisitely beautiful; there was something in her very paper and its folds, which even I, who did not love, and was withal unskilled in such matters, could discern as being tasteful. There was much kindness, gratitude, and sweetness in her expression, but no love. Evadne was two years older than Adrian; and who, at eighteen, ever loved one so much their junior? I compared her placid epistles with the burning ones of Adrian. His soul seemed to distil itself into the words he wrote; and they breathed on the paper, bearing with them a portion of the life of love, which was his life. The very writing used to exhaust him; and he would weep over them, merely from the excess of emotion they awakened in his heart.

Adrian's soul was painted in his countenance, and concealment or deceit were at the antipodes to the dreadless frankness of his nature. Evadne made it her earnest request that the tale of their loves should not be revealed to his mother; and after for a while contesting the point, he yielded it to her. A vain concession; his demeanour quickly betrayed his secret to the quick eyes of the ex-queen. With the same wary prudence that characterized her whole conduct, she concealed her discovery, but hastened to remove her son from the sphere of the attractive Greek. He was sent to

Cumberland; but the plan of correspondence between the lovers, arranged by Evadne, was effectually hidden from her. Thus the absence of Adrian, concerted for the purpose of separating, united them in firmer bonds than ever. To me he discoursed ceaselessly of his beloved Ionian. Her country, its ancient annals, its late memorable struggles, were all made to partake in her glory and excellence. He submitted to be away from her, because she commanded this submission; but for her influence, he would have declared his attachment before all England, and resisted, with unshaken constancy, his mother's opposition. Evadne's feminine prudence perceived how useless any assertion of his resolves would be, till added years gave weight to his power. Perhaps there was besides a lurking dislike to bind herself in the face of the world to one whom she did not love—not love, at least, with that passionate enthusiasm which her heart told her she might one day feel towards another. He obeyed her injunctions, and passed a year in exile in Cumberland.

Chapter III

Happy, thrice happy, were the months, and weeks, and hours of that year. Friendship, hand in hand with admiration, tenderness and respect, built a bower of delight in my heart, late rough as an untrod wild in America, as the homeless wind or herbless sea. Insatiate thirst for knowledge, and boundless affection for Adrian, combined to keep both my heart and understanding occupied, and I was consequently happy. What happiness is so true and unclouded, as the overflowing and talkative delight of young people. In our boat, upon my native lake, beside the streams and the pale bordering poplars—in valley and over hill, my crook thrown aside, a nobler flock to tend than silly sheep, even a flock of new-born ideas, I read or listened to Adrian; and his discourse, whether it concerned his love or his theories for the improvement of man, alike entranced me. Sometimes my lawless mood would return, my love of peril, my resistance to authority; but this was in his absence; under the mild sway of his dear eyes, I was obedient

and good as a boy of five years old, who does his mother's bidding.

After a residence of about a year at Ulswater, Adrian visited London, and came back full of plans for our benefit. You must begin life, he said: you are seventeen, and longer delay would render the necessary apprenticeship more and more irksome. He foresaw that his own life would be one of struggle, and I must partake his labours with him. The better to fit me for this task, we must now separate. He found my name a good passport to preferment, and he had procured for me the situation of private secretary to the Ambassador at Vienna, where I should enter on my career under the best auspices. In two years, I should return to my country, with a name well known and a reputation already founded.

And Perdita?—Perdita was to become the pupil, friend and younger sister of Evadne. With his usual thoughtfulness, he had provided for her independence in this situation. How refuse the offers of this generous friend?—I did not wish to refuse them; but in my heart of hearts, I made a vow to devote life, knowledge, and power, all of which, in as much as they were of any value, he had bestowed on me—all, all my capacities and hopes, to him alone I would devote.

Thus I promised myself, as I journeyed towards my destination with roused and ardent expectation: expectation of the fulfilment of all that in boyhood we promise ourselves of power and enjoyment in maturity. Methought the time was now arrived, when, childish occupations laid aside, I should enter into life. Even in the Elysian fields, Virgil describes the souls of the happy as eager to drink of the wave which was to restore them to this mortal coil. The young are seldom in Elysium, for their desires, outstripping possibility, leave them as poor as a moneyless debtor. We are told by the wisest philosophers of the dangers of the world, the deceits of men, and the treason of our own hearts: but not the less fearlessly does each put off his frail bark from the port, spread the sail, and strain his oar, to attain the multitudinous streams of the sea of life. How few in youth's prime, moor their vessels on the "golden sands," and collect the painted shells that

strew them. But all at close of day, with riven planks and rent canvas make for shore, and are either wrecked ere they reach it, or find some wave-beaten haven, some desert strand, whereon to cast themselves and die unmourned.

A truce to philosophy!—Life is before me, and I rush into possession. Hope, glory, love, and blameless ambition are my guides, and my soul knows no dread. What has been, though sweet, is gone; the present is good only because it is about to change, and the to come is all my own. Do I fear, that my heart palpitates? high aspirations cause the flow of my blood; my eyes seem to penetrate the cloudy midnight of time, and to discern within the depths of its darkness, the fruition of all my soul desires.

Now pause!—During my journey I might dream, and with buoyant wings reach the summit of life's high edifice. Now that I am arrived at its base, my pinions are furled, the mighty stairs are before me, and step by step I must ascend the wondrous fane—

Speak!—What door is opened?

Behold me in a new capacity. A diplomatist: one among the pleasure-seeking society of a gay city; a youth of promise; favourite of the Ambassador. All was strange and admirable to the shepherd of Cumberland. With breathless amaze I entered on the gay scene, whose actors were

75

—the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin.

Soon, too soon, I entered the giddy whirl; forgetting my studious hours, and the companionship of Adrian. Passionate desire of sympathy, and ardent pursuit for a wished-for object still characterized me. The sight of beauty entranced me, and attractive manners in man or woman won my entire confidence. I called it rapture, when a smile made my heart beat; and I felt the life's blood tingle in my frame, when I approached the idol which for awhile I worshipped. The mere flow of animal spirits was

Paradise, and at night's close I only desired a renewal of the intoxicating delusion. The dazzling light of ornamented rooms; lovely forms arrayed in splendid dresses; the motions of a dance, the voluptuous tones of exquisite music, cradled my senses in one delightful dream.

And is not this in its kind happiness? I appeal to moralists and sages. I ask if in the calm of their measured reveries, if in the deep meditations which fill their hours, they feel the extasy of a youthful tyro in the school of pleasure? Can the calm beams of their heaven-seeking eyes equal the flashes of mingling passion which blind his, or does the influence of cold philosophy steep their soul in a joy equal to his, engaged

In this dear work of youthful revelry.

But in truth, neither the lonely meditations of the hermit, nor the tumultuous raptures of the reveller, are capable of satisfying man's heart. From the one we gather unquiet speculation, from the other satiety. The mind flags beneath the weight of thought, and droops in the heartless intercourse of those whose sole aim is amusement. There is no fruition in their vacant kindness, and sharp rocks lurk beneath the smiling ripples of these shallow waters.

Thus I felt, when disappointment, weariness, and solitude drove me back upon my heart, to gather thence the joy of which it had become barren. My flagging spirits asked for something to speak to the affections; and not finding it, I drooped. Thus, notwithstanding the thoughtless delight that waited on its commencement, the impression I have of my life at Vienna is melancholy. Goethe has said, that in youth we cannot be happy unless we love. I did not love; but I was devoured by a restless wish to be something to others. I became the victim of ingratitude and cold coquetry—then I desponded, and imagined that my discontent gave me a right to hate the world. I receded to solitude; I had recourse to my books, and my desire again to enjoy the society of Adrian became a burning thirst.

Emulation, that in its excess almost assumed the venomous properties of envy, gave a sting to these feelings. At this period the name and exploits of one of my countrymen filled the world with admiration. Relations of what he had done, conjectures concerning his future actions, were the never-failing topics of the hour. I was not angry on my own account, but I felt as if the praises which this idol received were leaves torn from laurels destined for Adrian. But I must enter into some account of this darling of fame—this favourite of the wonder-loving world.

Lord Raymond was the sole remnant of a noble but impoverished family. From early youth he had considered his pedigree with complacency, and bitterly lamented his want of wealth. His first wish was aggrandisement; and the means that led towards this end were secondary considerations. Haughty, yet trembling to every demonstration of respect; ambitious, but too proud to shew his ambition; willing to achieve honour, yet a votary of pleasure,— he entered upon life. He was met on the threshold by some insult, real or imaginary; some repulse, where he least expected it; some disappointment, hard for his pride to bear. He writhed beneath an injury he was unable to revenge; and he quitted England with a vow not to return, till the good time should arrive, when she might feel the power of him she now despised.

He became an adventurer in the Greek wars. His reckless courage and comprehensive genius brought him into notice. He became the darling hero of this rising people. His foreign birth, and he refused to throw off his allegiance to his native country, alone prevented him from filling the first offices in the state. But, though others might rank higher in title and ceremony, Lord Raymond held a station above and beyond all this. He led the Greek armies to victory; their triumphs were all his own. When he appeared, whole towns poured forth their population to meet him; new songs were adapted to their national airs, whose themes were his glory, valour, and munificence. A truce was concluded between the Greeks and Turks. At the same time, Lord Raymond, by some unlooked-for chance, became the possessor of an immense fortune in England, whither he returned, crowned with

glory, to receive the meed of honour and distinction before denied to his pretensions. His proud heart rebelled against this change. In what was the despised Raymond not the same? If the acquisition of power in the shape of wealth caused this alteration, that power should they feel as an iron yoke. Power therefore was the aim of all his endeavours; aggrandizement the mark at which he for ever shot. In open ambition or close intrigue, his end was the same—to attain the first station in his own country.

This account filled me with curiosity. The events that in succession followed his return to England, gave me keener feelings. Among his other advantages, Lord Raymond was supremely handsome; every one admired him; of women he was the idol. He was courteous, honey-tongued—an adept in fascinating arts. What could not this man achieve in the busy English world? Change succeeded to change; the entire history did not reach me; for Adrian had ceased to write, and Perdita was a laconic correspondent. The rumour went that Adrian had become—how write the fatal word—mad: that Lord Raymond was the favourite of the ex-queen, her daughter's destined husband. Nay, more, that this aspiring noble revived the claim of the house of Windsor to the crown, and that, on the event of Adrian's incurable disorder and his marriage with the sister, the brow of the ambitious Raymond might be encircled with the magic ring of regality.

Such a tale filled the trumpet of many voiced fame; such a tale rendered my longer stay at Vienna, away from the friend of my youth, intolerable. Now I must fulfil my vow; now range myself at his side, and be his ally and support till death. Farewell to courtly pleasure; to politic intrigue; to the maze of passion and folly! All hail, England! Native England, receive thy child! thou art the scene of all my hopes, the mighty theatre on which is acted the only drama that can, heart and soul, bear me along with it in its development. A voice most irresistible, a power omnipotent, drew me thither. After an absence of two years I landed on its shores, not daring to make any inquiries, fearful of every remark. My first visit would be to my sister, who inhabited a little cottage, a part of Adrian's gift, on the borders of Windsor Forest. From her

I should learn the truth concerning our protector; I should hear why she had withdrawn from the protection of the Princess Evadne, and be instructed as to the influence which this overtopping and towering Raymond exercised over the fortunes of my friend.

I had never before been in the neighbourhood of Windsor; the fertility and beauty of the country around now struck me with admiration, which encreased as I approached the antique wood. The ruins of majestic oaks which had grown, flourished, and decayed during the progress of centuries, marked where the limits of the forest once reached, while the shattered palings and neglected underwood shewed that this part was deserted for the younger plantations, which owed their birth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and now stood in the pride of maturity. Perdita's humble dwelling was situated on the skirts of the most ancient portion; before it was stretched Bishopgate Heath, which towards the east appeared interminable, and was bounded to the west by Chapel Wood and the grove of Virginia Water. Behind, the cottage was shadowed by the venerable fathers of the forest, under which the deer came to graze, and which for the most part hollow and decayed, formed fantastic groups that contrasted with the regular beauty of the younger trees. These, the offspring of a later period, stood erect and seemed ready to advance fearlessly into coming time; while those out worn stragglers, blasted and broke, clung to each other, their weak boughs sighing as the wind buffeted them—a weather-beaten crew.

A light railing surrounded the garden of the cottage, which, low-roofed, seemed to submit to the majesty of nature, and cower amidst the venerable remains of forgotten time. Flowers, the children of the spring, adorned her garden and casements; in the midst of lowliness there was an air of elegance which spoke the graceful taste of the inmate. With a beating heart I entered the enclosure; as I stood at the entrance, I heard her voice, melodious as it had ever been, which before I saw her assured me of her welfare.

A moment more and Perdita appeared; she stood before me in the fresh bloom of youthful womanhood, different from and yet

the same as the mountain girl I had left. Her eyes could not be deeper than they were in childhood, nor her countenance more expressive; but the expression was changed and improved; intelligence sat on her brow; when she smiled her face was embellished by the softest sensibility, and her low, modulated voice seemed tuned by love. Her person was formed in the most feminine proportions; she was not tall, but her mountain life had given freedom to her motions, so that her light step scarce made her foot-fall heard as she tript across the hall to meet me. When we had parted, I had clasped her to my bosom with unrestrained warmth; we met again, and new feelings were awakened; when each beheld the other, childhood passed, as full grown actors on this changeful scene. The pause was but for a moment; the flood of association and natural feeling which had been checked, again rushed in full tide upon our hearts, and with tenderest emotion we were swiftly locked in each other's embrace.

This burst of passionate feeling over, with calmed thoughts we sat together, talking of the past and present. I alluded to the coldness of her letters; but the few minutes we had spent together sufficiently explained the origin of this. New feelings had arisen within her, which she was unable to express in writing to one whom she had only known in childhood; but we saw each other again, and our intimacy was renewed as if nothing had intervened to check it. I detailed the incidents of my sojourn abroad, and then questioned her as to the changes that had taken place at home, the causes of Adrian's absence, and her secluded life.

The tears that suffused my sister's eyes when I mentioned our friend, and her heightened colour seemed to vouch for the truth of the reports that had reached me. But their import was too terrible for me to give instant credit to my suspicion. Was there indeed anarchy in the sublime universe of Adrian's thoughts, did madness scatter the well-appointed legions, and was he no longer the lord of his own soul? Beloved friend, this ill world was no clime for your gentle spirit; you delivered up its governance to false humanity, which stript it of its leaves ere winter-time, and laid bare its quivering life to the evil ministration of roughest winds. Have those gentle eyes, those "channels of the soul" lost

their meaning, or do they only in their glare disclose the horrible tale of its aberrations? Does that voice no longer "discourse excellent music?" Horrible, most horrible! I veil my eyes in terror of the change, and gushing tears bear witness to my sympathy for this unimaginable ruin.

In obedience to my request Perdita detailed the melancholy circumstances that led to this event.

90

The frank and unsuspecting mind of Adrian, gifted as it was by every natural grace, endowed with transcendent powers of intellect, unblemished by the shadow of defect (unless his dreadless independence of thought was to be construed into one), was devoted, even as a victim to sacrifice, to his love for Evadne. He entrusted to her keeping the treasures of his soul, his aspirations after excellence, and his plans for the improvement of mankind. As manhood dawned upon him, his schemes and theories, far from being changed by personal and prudential motives, acquired new strength from the powers he felt arise within him; and his love for Evadne became deep-rooted, as he each day became more certain that the path he pursued was full of difficulty, and that he must seek his reward, not in the applause or gratitude of his fellow creatures, hardly in the success of his plans, but in the approbation of his own heart, and in her love and sympathy, which was to lighten every toil and recompense every sacrifice.

In solitude, and through many wanderings afar from the haunts of men, he matured his views for the reform of the English government, and the improvement of the people. It would have been well if he had concealed his sentiments, until he had come into possession of the power which would secure their practical development. But he was impatient of the years that must intervene, he was frank of heart and fearless. He gave not only a brief denial to his mother's schemes, but published his intention of using his influence to diminish the power of the aristocracy, to effect a greater equalization of wealth and privilege, and to introduce a perfect system of republican government into England. At first his mother treated his theories as the wild ravings of inexperience. But they were so systematically

arranged, and his arguments so well supported, that though still in appearance incredulous, she began to fear him. She tried to reason with him, and finding him inflexible, learned to hate him.

Strange to say, this feeling was infectious. His enthusiasm for good which did not exist; his contempt for the sacredness of authority; his ardour and imprudence were all at the antipodes of the usual routine of life; the worldly feared him; the young and inexperienced did not understand the lofty severity of his moral views, and disliked him as a being different from themselves. Evadne entered but coldly into his systems. She thought he did well to assert his own will, but she wished that will to have been more intelligible to the multitude. She had none of the spirit of a martyr, and did not incline to share the shame and defeat of a fallen patriot. She was aware of the purity of his motives, the generosity of his disposition, his true and ardent attachment to her; and she entertained a great affection for him. He repaid this spirit of kindness with the fondest gratitude, and made her the treasure-house of all his hopes.

At this time Lord Raymond returned from Greece. No two persons could be more opposite than Adrian and he. With all the incongruities of his character, Raymond was emphatically a man of the world. His passions were violent; as these often obtained the mastery over him, he could not always square his conduct to the obvious line of self-interest, but self-gratification at least was the paramount object with him. He looked on the structure of society as but a part of the machinery which supported the web on which his life was traced. The earth was spread out as an highway for him; the heavens built up as a canopy for him.

Adrian felt that he made a part of a great whole. He owned affinity not only with mankind, but all nature was akin to him; the mountains and sky were his friends; the winds of heaven and the offspring of earth his playmates; while he the focus only of this mighty mirror, felt his life mingle with the universe of existence. His soul was sympathy, and dedicated to the worship of beauty and excellence. Adrian and Raymond now came into contact, and a spirit of aversion rose between them. Adrian despised the

narrow views of the politician, and Raymond held in supreme contempt the benevolent visions of the philanthropist.

With the coming of Raymond was formed the storm that laid waste at one fell blow the gardens of delight and sheltered paths which Adrian fancied that he had secured to himself, as a refuge from defeat and contumely. Raymond, the deliverer of Greece, the graceful soldier, who bore in his mien a tinge of all that, peculiar to her native clime, Evadne cherished as most dear— Raymond was loved by Evadne. Overpowered by her new sensations, she did not pause to examine them, or to regulate her conduct by any sentiments except the tyrannical one which suddenly usurped the empire of her heart. She yielded to its influence, and the too natural consequence in a mind unattuned to soft emotions was, that the attentions of Adrian became distasteful to her. She grew capricious; her gentle conduct towards him was exchanged for asperity and repulsive coldness. When she perceived the wild or pathetic appeal of his expressive countenance, she would relent, and for a while resume her ancient kindness. But these fluctuations shook to its depths the soul of the sensitive youth; he no longer deemed the world subject to him, because he possessed Evadne's love; he felt in every nerve that the dire storms of the mental universe were about to attack his fragile being, which quivered at the expectation of its advent.

Perdita, who then resided with Evadne, saw the torture that Adrian endured. She loved him as a kind elder brother; a relation to guide, protect, and instruct her, without the too frequent tyranny of parental authority. She adored his virtues, and with mixed contempt and indignation she saw Evadne pile drear sorrow on his head, for the sake of one who hardly marked her. In his solitary despair Adrian would often seek my sister, and in covered terms express his misery, while fortitude and agony divided the throne of his mind. Soon, alas! was one to conquer. Anger made no part of his emotion. With whom should he be angry? Not with Raymond, who was unconscious of the misery he occasioned; not with Evadne, for her his soul wept tears of blood—poor, mistaken girl, slave not tyrant was she, and amidst his own anguish he grieved for her future destiny. Once a writing

of his fell into Perdita's hands; it was blotted with tears—well might any blot it with the like—

"Life"—it began thus—"is not the thing romance writers describe it; going through the measures of a dance, and after various evolutions arriving at a conclusion, when the dancers may sit down and repose. While there is life there is action and change. We go on, each thought linked to the one which was its parent, each act to a previous act. No joy or sorrow dies barren of progeny, which for ever generated and generating, weaves the chain that make our life:

*Un dia llama a otro dia
y ass i llama, y encadena
llanto a llanto, y pena a pena.*

Truly disappointment is the guardian deity of human life; she sits at the threshold of unborn time, and marshals the events as they come forth. Once my heart sat lightly in my bosom; all the beauty of the world was doubly beautiful, irradiated by the sunlight shed from my own soul. O wherefore are love and ruin for ever joined in this our mortal dream? So that when we make our hearts a lair for that gently seeming beast, its companion enters with it, and pitilessly lays waste what might have been an home and a shelter."

By degrees his health was shaken by his misery, and then his intellect yielded to the same tyranny. His manners grew wild; he was sometimes ferocious, sometimes absorbed in speechless melancholy. Suddenly Evadne quitted London for Paris; he followed, and overtook her when the vessel was about to sail; none knew what passed between them, but Perdita had never seen him since; he lived in seclusion, no one knew where, attended by such persons as his mother selected for that purpose.

100

Chapter IV

The next day Lord Raymond called at Perdita's cottage, on his way to Windsor Castle. My sister's heightened colour and sparkling eyes half revealed her secret to me. He was perfectly

self-possessed; he accosted us both with courtesy, seemed immediately to enter into our feelings, and to make one with us. I scanned his physiognomy, which varied as he spoke, yet was beautiful in every change. The usual expression of his eyes was soft, though at times he could make them even glare with ferocity; his complexion was colourless; and every trait spoke predominate self-will; his smile was pleasing, though disdain too often curled his lips—lips which to female eyes were the very throne of beauty and love. His voice, usually gentle, often startled you by a sharp discordant note, which shewed that his usual low tone was rather the work of study than nature. Thus full of contradictions, unbending yet haughty, gentle yet fierce, tender and again neglectful, he by some strange art found easy entrance to the admiration and affection of women; now caressing and now tyrannizing over them according to his mood, but in every change a despot.

At the present time Raymond evidently wished to appear amiable. Wit, hilarity, and deep observation were mingled in his talk, rendering every sentence that he uttered as a flash of light. He soon conquered my latent distaste; I endeavoured to watch him and Perdita, and to keep in mind every thing I had heard to his disadvantage. But all appeared so ingenuous, and all was so fascinating, that I forgot everything except the pleasure his society afforded me. Under the idea of initiating me in the scene of English politics and society, of which I was soon to become a part, he narrated a number of anecdotes, and sketched many characters; his discourse, rich and varied, flowed on, pervading all my senses with pleasure. But for one thing he would have been completely triumphant. He alluded to Adrian, and spoke of him with that disparagement that the worldly wise always attach to enthusiasm. He perceived the cloud gathering, and tried to dissipate it; but the strength of my feelings would not permit me to pass thus lightly over this sacred subject; so I said emphatically, "Permit me to remark, that I am devotedly attached to the Earl of Windsor; he is my best friend and benefactor. I reverence his goodness, I accord with his opinions, and bitterly lament his present, and I trust temporary, illness. That illness,

from its peculiarity, makes it painful to me beyond words to hear him mentioned, unless in terms of respect and affection."

Raymond replied; but there was nothing conciliatory in his reply. I saw that in his heart he despised those dedicated to any but worldly idols. "Every man," he said, "dreams about something, love, honour, and pleasure; you dream of friendship, and devote yourself to a maniac; well, if that be your vocation, doubtless you are in the right to follow it."—

Some reflection seemed to sting him, and the spasm of pain that for a moment convulsed his countenance, checked my indignation. "Happy are dreamers," he continued, "so that they be not awakened! Would I could dream! but 'broad and garish day' is the element in which I live; the dazzling glare of reality inverts the scene for me. Even the ghost of friendship has departed, and love"——He broke off; nor could I guess whether the disdain that curled his lip was directed against the passion, or against himself for being its slave.

This account may be taken as a sample of my intercourse with Lord Raymond. I became intimate with him, and each day afforded me occasion to admire more and more his powerful and versatile talents, that together with his eloquence, which was graceful and witty, and his wealth now immense, caused him to be feared, loved, and hated beyond any other man in England.

My descent, which claimed interest, if not respect, my former connection with Adrian, the favour of the ambassador, whose secretary I had been, and now my intimacy with Lord Raymond, gave me easy access to the fashionable and political circles of England. To my inexperience we at first appeared on the eve of a civil war; each party was violent, acrimonious, and unyielding. Parliament was divided by three factions, aristocrats, democrats, and royalists. After Adrian's declared predilection to the republican form of government, the latter party had nearly died away, chiefless, guideless; but, when Lord Raymond came forward as its leader, it revived with redoubled force. Some were royalists from prejudice and ancient affection, and there were many moderately inclined who feared alike the capricious tyranny of the popular party, and the unbending despotism of the

aristocrats. More than a third of the members ranged themselves under Raymond, and their number was perpetually encreasing. The aristocrats built their hopes on their preponderant wealth and influence; the reformers on the force of the nation itself; the debates were violent, more violent the discourses held by each knot of politicians as they assembled to arrange their measures. Opprobrious epithets were bandied about, resistance even to the death threatened; meetings of the populace disturbed the quiet order of the country; except in war, how could all this end? Even as the destructive flames were ready to break forth, I saw them shrink back; allayed by the absence of the military, by the aversion entertained by every one to any violence, save that of speech, and by the cordial politeness and even friendship of the hostile leaders when they met in private society. I was from a thousand motives induced to attend minutely to the course of events, and watch each turn with intense anxiety.

I could not but perceive that Perdita loved Raymond; methought also that he regarded the fair daughter of Verney with admiration and tenderness. Yet I knew that he was urging forward his marriage with the presumptive heiress of the Earldom of Windsor, with keen expectation of the advantages that would thence accrue to him. All the ex-queen's friends were his friends; no week passed that he did not hold consultations with her at Windsor.

I had never seen the sister of Adrian. I had heard that she was lovely, amiable, and fascinating. Wherefore should I see her? There are times when we have an indefinable sentiment of impending change for better or for worse, to arise from an event; and, be it for better or for worse, we fear the change, and shun the event. For this reason I avoided this high-born damsel. To me she was everything and nothing; her very name mentioned by another made me start and tremble; the endless discussion concerning her union with Lord Raymond was real agony to me. Methought that, Adrian withdrawn from active life, and this beauteous Idris, a victim probably to her mother's ambitious schemes, I ought to come forward to protect her from undue influence, guard her from unhappiness, and secure to her freedom of choice, the right of

every human being. Yet how was I to do this? She herself would disdain my interference. Since then I must be an object of indifference or contempt to her, better, far better avoid her, nor expose myself before her and the scornful world to the chance of playing the mad game of a fond, foolish Icarus. One day, several months after my return to England, I quitted London to visit my sister. Her society was my chief solace and delight; and my spirits always rose at the expectation of seeing her. Her conversation was full of pointed remark and discernment; in her pleasant alcove, redolent with sweetest flowers, adorned by magnificent casts, antique vases, and copies of the finest pictures of Raphael, Correggio, and Claude, painted by herself, I fancied myself in a fairy retreat untainted by and inaccessible to the noisy contentions of politicians and the frivolous pursuits of fashion. On this occasion, my sister was not alone; nor could I fail to recognise her companion: it was Idris, the till now unseen object of my mad idolatry.

In what fitting terms of wonder and delight, in what choice expression and soft flow of language, can I usher in the loveliest, wisest, best? How in poor assemblage of words convey the halo of glory that surrounded her, the thousand graces that waited unwearied on her. The first thing that struck you on beholding that charming countenance was its perfect goodness and frankness; candour sat upon her brow, simplicity in her eyes, heavenly benignity in her smile. Her tall slim figure bent gracefully as a poplar to the breezy west, and her gait, goddess-like, was as that of a winged angel new alit from heaven's high floor; the pearly fairness of her complexion was stained by a pure suffusion; her voice resembled the low, subdued tenor of a flute. It is easiest perhaps to describe by contrast. I have detailed the perfections of my sister; and yet she was utterly unlike Idris. Perdita, even where she loved, was reserved and timid; Idris was frank and confiding. The one recoiled to solitude, that she might there entrench herself from disappointment and injury; the other walked forth in open day, believing that none would harm her. Wordsworth has compared a beloved female to two fair objects in

nature; but his lines always appeared to me rather a contrast than a similitude:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye,
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.

Such a violet was sweet Perdita, trembling to entrust herself to the very air, cowering from observation, yet betrayed by her excellences; and repaying with a thousand graces the labour of those who sought her in her lonely bye-path. Idris was as the star, set in single splendour in the dim anadem of balmy evening; ready to enlighten and delight the subject world, shielded herself from every taint by her unimagined distance from all that was not like herself akin to heaven.

110

I found this vision of beauty in Perdita's alcove, in earnest conversation with its inmate. When my sister saw me, she rose, and taking my hand, said, "He is here, even at our wish; this is Lionel, my brother." Idris arose also, and bent on me her eyes of celestial blue, and with grace peculiar said—"You hardly need an introduction; we have a picture, highly valued by my father, which declares at once your name. Verney, you will acknowledge this tie, and as my brother's friend, I feel that I may trust you."

Then, with lids humid with a tear and trembling voice, she continued—"Dear friends, do not think it strange that now, visiting you for the first time, I ask your assistance, and confide my wishes and fears to you. To you alone do I dare speak; I have heard you commended by impartial spectators; you are my brother's friends, therefore you must be mine. What can I say? if you refuse to aid me, I am lost indeed!" She cast up her eyes, while wonder held her auditors mute; then, as if carried away by her feelings, she cried—"My brother! beloved, ill-fated Adrian! how speak of your misfortunes? Doubtless you have both heard the current tale; perhaps believe the slander; but he is not mad! Were an angel from the foot of God's throne to assert it, never, never would I believe it. He is wronged, betrayed, imprisoned—save him! Verney, you must do this; seek him out in whatever part

of the island he is immured; find him, rescue him from his persecutors, restore him to himself, to me—on the wide earth I have none to love but only him!"

Her earnest appeal, so sweetly and passionately expressed, filled me with wonder and sympathy; and, when she added, with thrilling voice and look, "Do you consent to undertake this enterprize?" I vowed, with energy and truth, to devote myself in life and death to the restoration and welfare of Adrian. We then conversed on the plan I should pursue, and discussed the probable means of discovering his residence. While we were in earnest discourse, Lord Raymond entered unannounced: I saw Perdita tremble and grow deadly pale, and the cheeks of Idris glow with purest blushes. He must have been astonished at our conclave, disturbed by it I should have thought; but nothing of this appeared; he saluted my companions, and addressed me with a cordial greeting. Idris appeared suspended for a moment, and then with extreme sweetness, she said, "Lord Raymond, I confide in your goodness and honour."

Smiling haughtily, he bent his head, and replied, with emphasis, "Do you indeed confide, Lady Idris?"

She endeavoured to read his thought, and then answered with dignity, "As you please. It is certainly best not to compromise oneself by any concealment."

115

"Pardon me," he replied, "if I have offended. Whether you trust me or not, rely on my doing my utmost to further your wishes, whatever they may be."

Idris smiled her thanks, and rose to take leave. Lord Raymond requested permission to accompany her to Windsor Castle, to which she consented, and they quitted the cottage together. My sister and I were left—truly like two fools, who fancied that they had obtained a golden treasure, till daylight shewed it to be lead—two silly, luckless flies, who had played in sunbeams and were caught in a spider's web. I leaned against the casement, and watched those two glorious creatures, till they disappeared in the forest-glades; and then I turned. Perdita had not moved; her eyes fixed on the ground, her cheeks pale, her very lips white, motionless and rigid, every feature stamped by woe, she sat. Half

frightened, I would have taken her hand; but she shudderingly withdrew it, and strove to collect herself. I entreated her to speak to me: "Not now," she replied, "nor do you speak to me, my dear Lionel; you can say nothing, for you know nothing. I will see you to-morrow; in the meantime, adieu!" She rose, and walked from the room; but pausing at the door, and leaning against it, as if her over-busy thoughts had taken from her the power of supporting herself, she said, "Lord Raymond will probably return. Will you tell him that he must excuse me to-day, for I am not well. I will see him to-morrow if he wishes it, and you also. You had better return to London with him; you can there make the enquiries agreed upon, concerning the Earl of Windsor and visit me again to-morrow, before you proceed on your journey—till then, farewell!"

She spoke falteringly, and concluded with a heavy sigh. I gave my assent to her request; and she left me. I felt as if, from the order of the systematic world, I had plunged into chaos, obscure, contrary, unintelligible. That Raymond should marry Idris was more than ever intolerable; yet my passion, though a giant from its birth, was too strange, wild, and impracticable, for me to feel at once the misery I perceived in Perdita. How should I act? She had not confided in me; I could not demand an explanation from Raymond without the hazard of betraying what was perhaps her most treasured secret. I would obtain the truth from her the following day—in the mean time—But, while I was occupied by multiplying reflections, Lord Raymond returned. He asked for my sister; and I delivered her message. After musing on it for a moment, he asked me if I were about to return to London, and if I would accompany him: I consented. He was full of thought, and remained silent during a considerable part of our ride; at length he said, "I must apologize to you for my abstraction; the truth is, Ryland's motion comes on to-night, and I am considering my reply."

Ryland was the leader of the popular party, a hard-headed man, and in his way eloquent; he had obtained leave to bring in a bill making it treason to endeavour to change the present state of the English government and the standing laws of the republic. This

attack was directed against Raymond and his machinations for the restoration of the monarchy.

Raymond asked me if I would accompany him to the House that evening. I remembered my pursuit for intelligence concerning Adrian; and, knowing that my time would be fully occupied, I excused myself. "Nay," said my companion, "I can free you from your present impediment. You are going to make enquiries concerning the Earl of Windsor. I can answer them at once, he is at the Duke of Athol's seat at Dunkeld. On the first approach of his disorder, he travelled about from one place to another; until, arriving at that romantic seclusion he refused to quit it, and we made arrangements with the Duke for his continuing there."

120

I was hurt by the careless tone with which he conveyed this information, and replied coldly: "I am obliged to you for your intelligence, and will avail myself of it."

"You shall, Verney," said he, "and if you continue of the same mind, I will facilitate your views. But first witness, I beseech you, the result of this night's contest, and the triumph I am about to achieve, if I may so call it, while I fear that victory is to me defeat. What can I do? My dearest hopes appear to be near their fulfilment. The ex-queen gives me Idris; Adrian is totally unfitted to succeed to the earldom, and that earldom in my hands becomes a kingdom. By the reigning God it is true; the paltry earldom of Windsor shall no longer content him, who will inherit the rights which must for ever appertain to the person who possesses it. The Countess can never forget that she has been a queen, and she disdains to leave a diminished inheritance to her children; her power and my wit will rebuild the throne, and this brow will be clasped by a kingly diadem.—I can do this—I can marry Idris."—

He stopped abruptly, his countenance darkened, and its expression changed again and again under the influence of internal passion. I asked, "Does Lady Idris love you?"

"What a question," replied he laughing. "She will of course, as I shall her, when we are married."

"You begin late," said I, ironically, "marriage is usually considered the grave, and not the cradle of love. So you are about to love her, but do not already?" 125

"Do not catechise me, Lionel; I will do my duty by her, be assured. Love! I must steel my heart against that; expel it from its tower of strength, barricade it out: the fountain of love must cease to play, its waters be dried up, and all passionate thoughts attendant on it die—that is to say, the love which would rule me, not that which I rule. Idris is a gentle, pretty, sweet little girl; it is impossible not to have an affection for her, and I have a very sincere one; only do not speak of love—love, the tyrant and the tyrant-queller; love, until now my conqueror, now my slave; the hungry fire, the untameable beast, the fanged snake—no—no—I will have nothing to do with that love. Tell me, Lionel, do you consent that I should marry this young lady?"

He bent his keen eyes upon me, and my uncontrollable heart swelled in my bosom. I replied in a calm voice—but how far from calm was the thought imaged by my still words—"Never! I can never consent that Lady Idris should be united to one who does not love her."

"Because you love her yourself."

"Your Lordship might have spared that taunt; I do not, dare not love her."

"At least," he continued haughtily, "she does not love you. I would not marry a reigning sovereign, were I not sure that her heart was free. But, O, Lionel! a kingdom is a word of might, and gently sounding are the terms that compose the style of royalty. Were not the mightiest men of the olden times kings? Alexander was a king; Solomon, the wisest of men, was a king; Napoleon was a king; Caesar died in his attempt to become one, and Cromwell, the puritan and king-killer, aspired to regality. The father of Adrian yielded up the already broken sceptre of England; but I will rear the fallen plant, join its dismembered frame, and exalt it above all the flowers of the field. 130

"You need not wonder that I freely discover Adrian's abode. Do not suppose that I am wicked or foolish enough to found my purposed sovereignty on a fraud, and one so easily discovered as

the truth or falsehood of the Earl's insanity. I am just come from him. Before I decided on my marriage with Idris, I resolved to see him myself again, and to judge of the probability of his recovery.—He is irrecoverably mad."

I gasped for breath—

"I will not detail to you," continued Raymond, "the melancholy particulars. You shall see him, and judge for yourself; although I fear this visit, useless to him, will be insufferably painful to you. It has weighed on my spirits ever since. Excellent and gentle as he is even in the downfall of his reason, I do not worship him as you do, but I would give all my hopes of a crown and my right hand to boot, to see him restored to himself."

His voice expressed the deepest compassion: "Thou most unaccountable being," I cried, "whither will thy actions tend, in all this maze of purpose in which thou seemest lost?"

"Whither indeed? To a crown, a golden be-gemmed crown, I hope; and yet I dare not trust and though I dream of a crown and wake for one, ever and anon a busy devil whispers to me, that it is but a fool's cap that I seek, and that were I wise, I should trample on it, and take in its stead, that which is worth all the crowns of the east and presidentships of the west."

"And what is that?"

"If I do make it my choice, then you shall know; at present I dare not speak, even think of it."

Again he was silent, and after a pause turned to me laughingly. When scorn did not inspire his mirth, when it was genuine gaiety that painted his features with a joyous expression, his beauty became super-eminent, divine. "Verney," said he, "my first act when I become King of England, will be to unite with the Greeks, take Constantinople, and subdue all Asia. I intend to be a warrior, a conqueror; Napoleon's name shall vail to mine; and enthusiasts, instead of visiting his rocky grave, and exalting the merits of the fallen, shall adore my majesty, and magnify my illustrious achievements."

I listened to Raymond with intense interest. Could I be other than all ear, to one who seemed to govern the whole earth in his grasping imagination, and who only quailed when he attempted to

rule himself. Then on his word and will depended my own happiness—the fate of all dear to me. I endeavoured to divine the concealed meaning of his words. Perdita's name was not mentioned; yet I could not doubt that love for her caused the vacillation of purpose that he exhibited. And who was so worthy of love as my noble-minded sister? Who deserved the hand of this self-exalted king more than she whose glance belonged to a queen of nations? who loved him, as he did her; notwithstanding that disappointment quelled her passion, and ambition held strong combat with his.

We went together to the House in the evening. Raymond, while he knew that his plans and prospects were to be discussed and decided during the expected debate, was gay and careless. An hum, like that of ten thousand hives of swarming bees, stunned us as we entered the coffee-room. Knots of politicians were assembled with anxious brows and loud or deep voices. The aristocratical party, the richest and most influential men in England, appeared less agitated than the others, for the question was to be discussed without their interference. Near the fire was Ryland and his supporters. Ryland was a man of obscure birth and of immense wealth, inherited from his father, who had been a manufacturer. He had witnessed, when a young man, the abdication of the king, and the amalgamation of the two houses of Lords and Commons; he had sympathized with these popular encroachments, and it had been the business of his life to consolidate and encrease them. Since then, the influence of the landed proprietors had augmented; and at first Ryland was not sorry to observe the machinations of Lord Raymond, which drew off many of his opponent's partizans. But the thing was now going too far. The poorer nobility hailed the return of sovereignty, as an event which would restore them to their power and rights, now lost. The half extinct spirit of royalty roused itself in the minds of men; and they, willing slaves, self-constituted subjects, were ready to bend their necks to the yoke. Some erect and manly spirits still remained, pillars of state; but the word republic had grown stale to the vulgar ear; and many—the event would prove whether it was a majority—pined for the tinsel and show of

royalty. Ryland was roused to resistance; he asserted that his sufferance alone had permitted the encrease of this party; but the time for indulgence was passed, and with one motion of his arm he would sweep away the cobwebs that blinded his countrymen.

When Raymond entered the coffee-room, his presence was hailed by his friends almost with a shout. They gathered round him, counted their numbers, and detailed the reasons why they were now to receive an addition of such and such members, who had not yet declared themselves. Some trifling business of the House having been gone through, the leaders took their seats in the chamber; the clamour of voices continued, till Ryland arose to speak, and then the slightest whispered observation was audible. All eyes were fixed upon him as he stood—ponderous of frame, sonorous of voice, and with a manner which, though not graceful, was impressive. I turned from his marked, iron countenance to Raymond, whose face, veiled by a smile, would not betray his care; yet his lips quivered somewhat, and his hand clasped the bench on which he sat, with a convulsive strength that made the muscles start again.

Ryland began by praising the present state of the British empire. He recalled past years to their memory; the miserable contentions which in the time of our fathers arose almost to civil war, the abdication of the late king, and the foundation of the republic. He described this republic; shewed how it gave privilege to each individual in the state, to rise to consequence, and even to temporary sovereignty. He compared the royal and republican spirit; shewed how the one tended to enslave the minds of men; while all the institutions of the other served to raise even the meanest among us to something great and good. He shewed how England had become powerful, and its inhabitants valiant and wise, by means of the freedom they enjoyed. As he spoke, every heart swelled with pride, and every cheek glowed with delight to remember, that each one there was English, and that each supported and contributed to the happy state of things now commemorated. Ryland's fervour increased—his eyes lighted up—his voice assumed the tone of passion. There was one man, he continued, who wished to alter all this, and bring us back to our

days of impotence and contention:—one man, who would dare arrogate the honour which was due to all who claimed England as their birthplace, and set his name and style above the name and style of his country. I saw at this juncture that Raymond changed colour; his eyes were withdrawn from the orator, and cast on the ground; the listeners turned from one to the other; but in the meantime the speaker's voice filled their ears—the thunder of his denunciations influenced their senses. The very boldness of his language gave him weight; each knew that he spoke truth—a truth known, but not acknowledged. He tore from reality the mask with which she had been clothed; and the purposes of Raymond, which before had crept around, ensnaring by stealth, now stood a hunted stag—even at bay—as all perceived who watched the irrepressible changes of his countenance. Ryland ended by moving, that any attempt to re-erect the kingly power should be declared treason, and he a traitor who should endeavour to change the present form of government. Cheers and loud acclamations followed the close of his speech.

After his motion had been seconded, Lord Raymond rose,—his countenance bland, his voice softly melodious, his manner soothing, his grace and sweetness came like the mild breathing of a flute, after the loud, organ-like voice of his adversary. He rose, he said, to speak in favour of the honourable member's motion, with one slight amendment subjoined. He was ready to go back to old times, and commemorate the contests of our fathers, and the monarch's abdication. Nobly and greatly, he said, had the illustrious and last sovereign of England sacrificed himself to the apparent good of his country, and divested himself of a power which could only be maintained by the blood of his subjects—these subjects named so no more, these, his friends and equals, had in gratitude conferred certain favours and distinctions on him and his family for ever. An ample estate was allotted to them, and they took the first rank among the peers of Great Britain. Yet it might be conjectured that they had not forgotten their ancient heritage; and it was hard that his heir should suffer alike with any other pretender, if he attempted to regain what by ancient right and inheritance belonged to him. He did not say that he should

favour such an attempt; but he did say that such an attempt would be venial; and, if the aspirant did not go so far as to declare war, and erect a standard in the kingdom, his fault ought to be regarded with an indulgent eye. In his amendment he proposed, that an exception should be made in the bill in favour of any person who claimed the sovereign power in right of the earls of Windsor. Nor did Raymond make an end without drawing in vivid and glowing colours, the splendour of a kingdom, in opposition to the commercial spirit of republicanism. He asserted, that each individual under the English monarchy, was then as now, capable of attaining high rank and power—with one only exception, that of the function of chief magistrate; higher and nobler rank, than a bartering, timorous commonwealth could afford. And for this one exception, to what did it amount? The nature of riches and influence forcibly confined the list of candidates to a few of the wealthiest; and it was much to be feared, that the ill-humour and contention generated by this triennial struggle, would counterbalance its advantages in impartial eyes. I can ill record the flow of language and graceful turns of expression, the wit and easy raillery that gave vigour and influence to his speech. His manner, timid at first, became firm—his changeful face was lit up to superhuman brilliancy; his voice, various as music, was like that enchanting.

It were useless to record the debate that followed this harangue. Party speeches were delivered, which clothed the question in cant, and veiled its simple meaning in a woven wind of words. The motion was lost; Ryland withdrew in rage and despair; and Raymond, gay and exulting, retired to dream of his future kingdom.

Chapter IV

Is there such a feeling as love at first sight? And if there be, in what does its nature differ from love founded in long observation and slow growth? Perhaps its effects are not so permanent; but they are, while they last, as violent and intense. We walk the pathless mazes of society, vacant of joy, till we hold this clue,

leading us through that labyrinth to paradise. Our nature dim, like to an unlighted torch, sleeps in formless blank till the fire attain it; this life of life, this light to moon, and glory to the sun. What does it matter, whether the fire be struck from flint and steel, nourished with care into a flame, slowly communicated to the dark wick, or whether swiftly the radiant power of light and warmth passes from a kindred power, and shines at once the beacon and the hope. In the deepest fountain of my heart the pulses were stirred; around, above, beneath, the clinging Memory as a cloak enwrapped me. In no one moment of coming time did I feel as I had done in time gone by. The spirit of Idris hovered in the air I breathed; her eyes were ever and for ever bent on mine; her remembered smile blinded my faint gaze, and caused me to walk as one, not in eclipse, not in darkness and vacancy—but in a new and brilliant light, too novel, too dazzling for my human senses. On every leaf, on every small division of the universe, (as on the hyacinth ai is engraved) was imprinted the talisman of my existence—SHE LIVES! SHE IS! —I had not time yet to analyze my feeling, to take myself to task, and leash in the tameless passion; all was one idea, one feeling, one knowledge —it was my life!

But the die was cast—Raymond would marry Idris. The merry marriage bells rung in my ears; I heard the nation's gratulation which followed the union; the ambitious noble uprose with swift eagle-flight, from the lowly ground to regal supremacy—and to the love of Idris. Yet, not so! She did not love him; she had called me her friend; she had smiled on me; to me she had entrusted her heart's dearest hope, the welfare of Adrian. This reflection thawed my congealing blood, and again the tide of life and love flowed impetuously onward, again to ebb as my busy thoughts changed.

The debate had ended at three in the morning. My soul was in tumults; I traversed the streets with eager rapidity. Truly, I was mad that night— love—which I have named a giant from its birth, wrestled with despair! My heart, the field of combat, was wounded by the iron heel of the one, watered by the gushing tears of the other. Day, hateful to me, dawned; I retreated to my lodgings—I threw myself on a couch—I slept—was it sleep?—

for thought was still alive—love and despair struggled still, and I writhed with unendurable pain.

I awoke half stupefied; I felt a heavy oppression on me, but knew not wherefore; I entered, as it were, the council-chamber of my brain, and questioned the various ministers of thought therein assembled; too soon I remembered all; too soon my limbs quivered beneath the tormenting power; soon, too soon, I knew myself a slave!

Suddenly, unannounced, Lord Raymond entered my apartment. He came in gaily, singing the Tyrolese song of liberty; noticed me with a gracious nod, and threw himself on a sofa opposite the copy of a bust of the Apollo Belvidere. After one or two trivial remarks, to which I sullenly replied, he suddenly cried, looking at the bust, "I am called like that victor! Not a bad idea; the head will serve for my new coinage, and be an omen to all dutiful subjects of my future success."

He said this in his most gay, yet benevolent manner, and smiled, not disdainfully, but in playful mockery of himself. Then his countenance suddenly darkened, and in that shrill tone peculiar to himself, he cried, "I fought a good battle last night; higher conquest the plains of Greece never saw me achieve. Now I am the first man in the state, burthen of every ballad, and object of old women's mumbled devotions. What are your meditations? You, who fancy that you can read the human soul, as your native lake reads each crevice and folding of its surrounding hills—say what you think of me; king-expectant, angel or devil, which?"

This ironical tone was discord to my bursting, over-boiling-heart; I was nettled by his insolence, and replied with bitterness; "There is a spirit, neither angel or devil, damned to limbo merely." I saw his cheeks become pale, and his lips whiten and quiver; his anger served but to enkindle mine, and I answered with a determined look his eyes which glared on me; suddenly they were withdrawn, cast down, a tear, I thought, wetted the dark lashes; I was softened, and with involuntary emotion added, "Not that you are such, my dear lord."

I paused, even awed by the agitation he evinced; "Yes," he said at length, rising and biting his lip, as he strove to curb his passion;

"Such am I! You do not know me, Verney; neither you, nor our audience of last night, nor does universal England know aught of me. I stand here, it would seem, an elected king; this hand is about to grasp a sceptre; these brows feel in each nerve the coming diadem. I appear to have strength, power, victory; standing as a dome-supporting column stands; and I am—a reed! I have ambition, and that attains its aim; my nightly dreams are realized, my waking hopes fulfilled; a kingdom awaits my acceptance, my enemies are overthrown. But here," and he struck his heart with violence, "here is the rebel, here the stumbling-block; this over-ruling heart, which I may drain of its living blood; but, while one fluttering pulsation remains, I am its slave."

He spoke with a broken voice, then bowed his head, and, hiding his face in his hands, wept. I was still smarting from my own disappointment; yet this scene oppressed me even to terror, nor could I interrupt his access of passion. It subsided at length; and, throwing himself on the couch, he remained silent and motionless, except that his changeful features shewed a strong internal conflict. At last he rose, and said in his usual tone of voice, "The time grows on us, Verney, I must away. Let me not forget my chiefest errand here. Will you accompany me to Windsor to-morrow? You will not be dishonoured by my society, and as this is probably the last service, or disservice you can do me, will you grant my request?"

He held out his hand with almost a bashful air. Swiftly I thought—Yes, I will witness the last scene of the drama. Beside which, his mien conquered me, and an affectionate sentiment towards him, again filled my heart—I bade him command me. "Aye, that I will," said he gaily, "that's my cue now; be with me to-morrow morning by seven; be secret and faithful; and you shall be groom of the stole ere long."

So saying, he hastened away, vaulted on his horse, and with a gesture as if he gave me his hand to kiss, bade me another laughing adieu. Left to myself, I strove with painful intensity to divine the motive of his request and foresee the events of the coming day. The hours passed on unperceived; my head ached with thought, the nerves seemed teeming with the over full

fraught—I clasped my burning brow, as if my fevered hand could medicine its pain. I was punctual to the appointed hour on the following day, and found Lord Raymond waiting for me. We got into his carriage, and proceeded towards Windsor. I had tutored myself, and was resolved by no outward sign to disclose my internal agitation.

"What a mistake Ryland made," said Raymond, "when he thought to overpower me the other night. He spoke well, very well; such an harangue would have succeeded better addressed to me singly, than to the fools and knaves assembled yonder. Had I been alone, I should have listened to him with a wish to hear reason, but when he endeavoured to vanquish me in my own territory, with my own weapons, he put me on my mettle, and the event was such as all might have expected."

I smiled incredulously, and replied: "I am of Ryland's way of thinking, and will, if you please, repeat all his arguments; we shall see how far you will be induced by them, to change the royal for the patriotic style."

"The repetition would be useless," said Raymond, "since I well remember them, and have many others, self-suggested, which speak with unanswerable persuasion."

He did not explain himself, nor did I make any remark on his reply. Our silence endured for some miles, till the country with open fields, or shady woods and parks, presented pleasant objects to our view. After some observations on the scenery and seats, Raymond said: "Philosophers have called man a microcosm of nature, and find a reflection in the internal mind for all this machinery visibly at work around us. This theory has often been a source of amusement to me; and many an idle hour have I spent, exercising my ingenuity in finding resemblances. Does not Lord Bacon say that, 'the falling from a discord to a concord, which maketh great sweetness in music, hath an agreement with the affections, which are re-integrated to the better after some dislikes?' What a sea is the tide of passion, whose fountains are in our own nature! Our virtues are the quick-sands, which shew themselves at calm and low water; but let the waves arise and the winds buffet them, and the poor devil whose hope was in their

durability, finds them sink from under him. The fashions of the world, its exigencies, educations and pursuits, are winds to drive our wills, like clouds all one way; but let a thunderstorm arise in the shape of love, hate, or ambition, and the rack goes backward, stemming the opposing air in triumph."

"Yet," replied I, "nature always presents to our eyes the appearance of a patient: while there is an active principle in man which is capable of ruling fortune, and at least of tacking against the gale, till it in some mode conquers it."

160

"There is more of what is specious than true in your distinction," said my companion. "Did we form ourselves, choosing our dispositions, and our powers? I find myself, for one, as a stringed instrument with chords and stops—but I have no power to turn the pegs, or pitch my thoughts to a higher or lower key."

"Other men," I observed, "may be better musicians."

"I talk not of others, but myself," replied Raymond, "and I am as fair an example to go by as another. I cannot set my heart to a particular tune, or run voluntary changes on my will. We are born; we choose neither our parents, nor our station; we are educated by others, or by the world's circumstance, and this cultivation, mingling with our innate disposition, is the soil in which our desires, passions, and motives grow."

"There is much truth in what you say," said I, "and yet no man ever acts upon this theory. Who, when he makes a choice, says, Thus I choose, because I am necessitated? Does he not on the contrary feel a freedom of will within him, which, though you may call it fallacious, still actuates him as he decides?"

"Exactly so," replied Raymond, "another link of the breakless chain. Were I now to commit an act which would annihilate my hopes, and pluck the regal garment from my mortal limbs, to clothe them in ordinary weeds, would this, think you, be an act of free-will on my part?"

165

As we talked thus, I perceived that we were not going the ordinary road to Windsor, but through Englefield Green, towards Bishopgate Heath. I began to divine that Idris was not the object of our journey, but that I was brought to witness the scene that

was to decide the fate of Raymond—and of Perdita. Raymond had evidently vacillated during his journey, and irresolution was marked in every gesture as we entered Perdita's cottage. I watched him curiously, determined that, if this hesitation should continue, I would assist Perdita to overcome herself, and teach her to disdain the wavering love of him, who balanced between the possession of a crown, and of her, whose excellence and affection transcended the worth of a kingdom.

We found her in her flower-adorned alcove; she was reading the newspaper report of the debate in parliament, that apparently doomed her to hopelessness. That heart-sinking feeling was painted in her sunk eyes and spiritless attitude; a cloud was on her beauty, and frequent sighs were tokens of her distress. This sight had an instantaneous effect on Raymond; his eyes beamed with tenderness, and remorse clothed his manners with earnestness and truth. He sat beside her; and, taking the paper from her hand, said, "Not a word more shall my sweet Perdita read of this contention of madmen and fools. I must not permit you to be acquainted with the extent of my delusion, lest you despise me; although, believe me, a wish to appear before you, not vanquished, but as a conqueror, inspired me during my wordy war."

Perdita looked at him like one amazed; her expressive countenance shone for a moment with tenderness; to see him only was happiness. But a bitter thought swiftly shadowed her joy; she bent her eyes on the ground, endeavouring to master the passion of tears that threatened to overwhelm her. Raymond continued, "I will not act a part with you, dear girl, or appear other than what I am, weak and unworthy, more fit to excite your disdain than your love. Yet you do love me; I feel and know that you do, and thence I draw my most cherished hopes. If pride guided you, or even reason, you might well reject me. Do so; if your high heart, incapable of my infirmity of purpose, refuses to bend to the lowness of mine. Turn from me, if you will,—if you can. If your whole soul does not urge you to forgive me—if your entire heart does not open wide its door to admit me to its very centre, forsake me, never speak to me again. I, though sinning against you almost

beyond remission, I also am proud; there must be no reserve in your pardon—no drawback to the gift of your affection."

Perdita looked down, confused, yet pleased. My presence embarrassed her; so that she dared not turn to meet her lover's eye, or trust her voice to assure him of her affection; while a blush mantled her cheek, and her disconsolate air was exchanged for one expressive of deep-felt joy. Raymond encircled her waist with his arm, and continued, "I do not deny that I have balanced between you and the highest hope that mortal men can entertain; but I do so no longer. Take me—mould me to your will, possess my heart and soul to all eternity. If you refuse to contribute to my happiness, I quit England to-night, and will never set foot in it again.

"Lionel, you hear: witness for me: persuade your sister to forgive the injury I have done her; persuade her to be mine."

170

"There needs no persuasion," said the blushing Perdita, "except your own dear promises, and my ready heart, which whispers to me that they are true."

That same evening we all three walked together in the forest, and, with the garrulity which happiness inspires, they detailed to me the history of their loves. It was pleasant to see the haughty Raymond and reserved Perdita changed through happy love into prattling, playful children, both losing their characteristic dignity in the fulness of mutual contentment. A night or two ago Lord Raymond, with a brow of care, and a heart oppressed with thought, bent all his energies to silence or persuade the legislators of England that a sceptre was not too weighty for his hand, while visions of dominion, war, and triumph floated before him; now, frolicsome as a lively boy sporting under his mother's approving eye, the hopes of his ambition were complete, when he pressed the small fair hand of Perdita to his lips; while she, radiant with delight, looked on the still pool, not truly admiring herself, but drinking in with rapture the reflection there made of the form of herself and her lover, shewn for the first time in dear conjunction.

I rambled away from them. If the rapture of assured sympathy was theirs, I enjoyed that of restored hope. I looked on the regal towers of Windsor. High is the wall and strong the barrier that

separate me from my Star of Beauty. But not impassible. She will not be his. A few more years dwell in thy native garden, sweet flower, till I by toil and time acquire a right to gather thee. Despair not, nor bid me despair! What must I do now? First I must seek Adrian, and restore him to her. Patience, gentleness, and untired affection, shall recall him, if it be true, as Raymond says, that he is mad; energy and courage shall rescue him, if he be unjustly imprisoned.

After the lovers again joined me, we supped together in the alcove. Truly it was a fairy's supper; for though the air was perfumed by the scent of fruits and wine, we none of us either ate or drank—even the beauty of the night was unobserved; their extasy could not be increased by outward objects, and I was wrapt in reverie. At about midnight Raymond and I took leave of my sister, to return to town. He was all gaiety; scraps of songs fell from his lips; every thought of his mind—every object about us, gleamed under the sunshine of his mirth. He accused me of melancholy, of ill-humour and envy.

"Not so," said I, "though I confess that my thoughts are not occupied as pleasantly as yours are. You promised to facilitate my visit to Adrian; I conjure you to perform your promise. I cannot linger here; I long to soothe —perhaps to cure the malady of my first and best friend. I shall immediately depart for Dunkeld."

175

"Thou bird of night," replied Raymond, "what an eclipse do you throw across my bright thoughts, forcing me to call to mind that melancholy ruin, which stands in mental desolation, more irreparable than a fragment of a carved column in a weed-grown field. You dream that you can restore him? Daedalus never wound so inextricable an error round Minotaur, as madness has woven about his imprisoned reason. Nor you, nor any other Theseus, can thread the labyrinth, to which perhaps some unkind Ariadne has the clue."

"You allude to Evadne Zaimi: but she is not in England."

"And were she," said Raymond, "I would not advise her seeing him. Better to decay in absolute delirium, than to be the victim of the methodical unreason of ill-bestowed love. The long duration of his malady has probably erased from his mind all vestige of

her; and it were well that it should never again be imprinted. You will find him at Dunkeld; gentle and tractable he wanders up the hills, and through the wood, or sits listening beside the waterfall. You may see him—his hair stuck with wild flowers —his eyes full of untraceable meaning—his voice broken—his person wasted to a shadow. He plucks flowers and weeds, and weaves chaplets of them, or sails yellow leaves and bits of bark on the stream, rejoicing in their safety, or weeping at their wreck. The very memory half unmans me. By Heaven! the first tears I have shed since boyhood rushed scalding into my eyes when I saw him."

It needed not this last account to spur me on to visit him. I only doubted whether or not I should endeavour to see Idris again, before I departed. This doubt was decided on the following day. Early in the morning Raymond came to me; intelligence had arrived that Adrian was dangerously ill, and it appeared impossible that his failing strength should surmount the disorder. "To-morrow," said Raymond, "his mother and sister set out for Scotland to see him once again."

"And I go to-day," I cried; "this very hour I will engage a sailing balloon; I shall be there in forty-eight hours at furthest, perhaps in less, if the wind is fair. Farewell, Raymond; be happy in having chosen the better part in life. This turn of fortune revives me. I feared madness, not sickness—I have a presentiment that Adrian will not die; perhaps this illness is a crisis, and he may recover."

Everything favoured my journey. The balloon rose about half a mile from the earth, and with a favourable wind it hurried through the air, its feathered vans cleaving the unopposing atmosphere. Notwithstanding the melancholy object of my journey, my spirits were exhilarated by reviving hope, by the swift motion of the airy pinnacle, and the balmy visitation of the sunny air. The pilot hardly moved the plumed steerage, and the slender mechanism of the wings, wide unfurled, gave forth a murmuring noise, soothing to the sense. Plain and hill, stream and corn-field, were discernible below, while we unimpeded sped on swift and secure, as a wild swan in his spring-tide flight. The machine obeyed the

slightest motion of the helm; and, the wind blowing steadily, there was no let or obstacle to our course. Such was the power of man over the elements; a power long sought, and lately won; yet foretold in by-gone time by the prince of poets, whose verses I quoted much to the astonishment of my pilot, when I told him how many hundred years ago they had been written:—

Oh! human wit, thou can'st invent much ill,
Thou searchest strange arts: who would think by skill,
An heavy man like a light bird should stray,
And through the empty heavens find a way?

I alighted at Perth; and, though much fatigued by a constant exposure to the air for many hours, I would not rest, but merely altering my mode of conveyance, I went by land instead of air, to Dunkeld. The sun was rising as I entered the opening of the hills. After the revolution of ages Birnam hill was again covered with a young forest, while more aged pines, planted at the very commencement of the nineteenth century by the then Duke of Athol, gave solemnity and beauty to the scene. The rising sun first tinged the pine tops; and my mind, rendered through my mountain education deeply susceptible of the graces of nature, and now on the eve of again beholding my beloved and perhaps dying friend, was strangely influenced by the sight of those distant beams: surely they were ominous, and as such I regarded them, good omens for Adrian, on whose life my happiness depended.

Poor fellow! he lay stretched on a bed of sickness, his cheeks glowing with the hues of fever, his eyes half closed, his breath irregular and difficult. Yet it was less painful to see him thus, than to find him fulfilling the animal functions uninterruptedly, his mind sick the while. I established myself at his bedside; I never quitted it day or night. Bitter task was it, to behold his spirit waver between death and life: to see his warm cheek, and know that the very fire which burned too fiercely there, was consuming the vital fuel; to hear his moaning voice, which might never again articulate words of love and wisdom; to witness the ineffectual motions of his limbs, soon to be wrapt in their mortal shroud.

Such for three days and nights appeared the consummation which fate had decreed for my labours, and I became haggard and spectre-like, through anxiety and watching. At length his eyes unclosed faintly, yet with a look of returning life; he became pale and weak; but the rigidity of his features was softened by approaching convalescence. He knew me. What a brimful cup of joyful agony it was, when his face first gleamed with the glance of recognition—when he pressed my hand, now more fevered than his own, and when he pronounced my name! No trace of his past insanity remained, to dash my joy with sorrow.

This same evening his mother and sister arrived. The Countess of Windsor was by nature full of energetic feeling; but she had very seldom in her life permitted the concentrated emotions of her heart to shew themselves on her features. The studied immovability of her countenance; her slow, equable manner, and soft but unmelodious voice, were a mask, hiding her fiery passions, and the impatience of her disposition. She did not in the least resemble either of her children; her black and sparkling eye, lit up by pride, was totally unlike the blue lustre, and frank, benignant expression of either Adrian or Idris. There was something grand and majestic in her motions, but nothing persuasive, nothing amiable. Tall, thin, and strait, her face still handsome, her raven hair hardly tinged with grey, her forehead arched and beautiful, had not the eye-brows been somewhat scattered—it was impossible not to be struck by her, almost to fear her. Idris appeared to be the only being who could resist her mother, notwithstanding the extreme mildness of her character. But there was a fearlessness and frankness about her, which said that she would not encroach on another's liberty, but held her own sacred and unassailable.

The Countess cast no look of kindness on my worn-out frame, though afterwards she thanked me coldly for my attentions. Not so Idris; her first glance was for her brother; she took his hand, she kissed his eye-lids, and hung over him with looks of compassion and love. Her eyes glistened with tears when she thanked me, and the grace of her expressions was enhanced, not diminished, by the fervour, which caused her almost to falter as

she spoke. Her mother, all eyes and ears, soon interrupted us; and I saw, that she wished to dismiss me quietly, as one whose services, now that his relatives had arrived, were of no use to her son. I was harassed and ill, resolved not to give up my post, yet doubting in what way I should assert it; when Adrian called me, and clasping my hand, bade me not leave him. His mother, apparently inattentive, at once understood what was meant, and seeing the hold we had upon her, yielded the point to us.

The days that followed were full of pain to me; so that I sometimes regretted that I had not yielded at once to the haughty lady, who watched all my motions, and turned my beloved task of nursing my friend to a work of pain and irritation. Never did any woman appear so entirely made of mind, as the Countess of Windsor. Her passions had subdued her appetites, even her natural wants; she slept little, and hardly ate at all; her body was evidently considered by her as a mere machine, whose health was necessary for the accomplishment of her schemes, but whose senses formed no part of her enjoyment. There is something fearful in one who can thus conquer the animal part of our nature, if the victory be not the effect of consummate virtue; nor was it without a mixture of this feeling, that I beheld the figure of the Countess awake when others slept, fasting when I, abstemious naturally, and rendered so by the fever that preyed on me, was forced to recruit myself with food. She resolved to prevent or diminish my opportunities of acquiring influence over her children, and circumvented my plans by a hard, quiet, stubborn resolution, that seemed not to belong to flesh and blood. War was at last tacitly acknowledged between us. We had many pitched battles, during which no word was spoken, hardly a look was interchanged, but in which each resolved not to submit to the other. The Countess had the advantage of position; so I was vanquished, though I would not yield.

I became sick at heart. My countenance was painted with the hues of ill health and vexation. Adrian and Idris saw this; they attributed it to my long watching and anxiety; they urged me to rest, and take care of myself, while I most truly assured them, that my best medicine was their good wishes; those, and the assured

convalescence of my friend, now daily more apparent. The faint rose again blushed on his cheek; his brow and lips lost the ashy paleness of threatened dissolution; such was the dear reward of my unremitting attention—and bounteous heaven added overflowing recompence, when it gave me also the thanks and smiles of Idris.

After the lapse of a few weeks, we left Dunkeld. Idris and her mother returned immediately to Windsor, while Adrian and I followed by slow journies and frequent stoppages, occasioned by his continued weakness. As we traversed the various counties of fertile England, all wore an exhilarating appearance to my companion, who had been so long secluded by disease from the enjoyments of weather and scenery. We passed through busy towns and cultivated plains. The husbandmen were getting in their plenteous harvests, and the women and children, occupied by light rustic toils, formed groupes of happy, healthful persons, the very sight of whom carried cheerfulness to the heart. One evening, quitting our inn, we strolled down a shady lane, then up a grassy slope, till we came to an eminence, that commanded an extensive view of hill and dale, meandering rivers, dark woods, and shining villages. The sun was setting; and the clouds, straying, like new-shorn sheep, through the vast fields of sky, received the golden colour of his parting beams; the distant uplands shone out, and the busy hum of evening came, harmonized by distance, on our ear. Adrian, who felt all the fresh spirit infused by returning health, clasped his hands in delight, and exclaimed with transport:

"O happy earth, and happy inhabitants of earth! A stately palace has God built for you, O man! and worthy are you of your dwelling! Behold the verdant carpet spread at our feet, and the azure canopy above; the fields of earth which generate and nurture all things, and the track of heaven, which contains and clasps all things. Now, at this evening hour, at the period of repose and refection, methinks all hearts breathe one hymn of love and thanksgiving, and we, like priests of old on the mountain-tops, give a voice to their sentiment.

"Assuredly a most benignant power built up the majestic fabric we inhabit, and framed the laws by which it endures. If mere existence, and not happiness, had been the final end of our being, what need of the profuse luxuries which we enjoy? Why should our dwelling place be so lovely, and why should the instincts of nature minister pleasurable sensations? The very sustaining of our animal machine is made delightful; and our sustenance, the fruits of the field, is painted with transcendent hues, endued with grateful odours, and palatable to our taste. Why should this be, if HE were not good? We need houses to protect us from the seasons, and behold the materials with which we are provided; the growth of trees with their adornment of leaves; while rocks of stone piled above the plains variegate the prospect with their pleasant irregularity.

"Nor are outward objects alone the receptacles of the Spirit of Good. Look into the mind of man, where wisdom reigns enthroned; where imagination, the painter, sits, with his pencil dipt in hues lovelier than those of sunset, adorning familiar life with glowing tints. What a noble boon, worthy the giver, is the imagination! it takes from reality its leaden hue: it envelopes all thought and sensation in a radiant veil, and with an hand of beauty beckons us from the sterile seas of life, to her gardens, and bowers, and glades of bliss. And is not love a gift of the divinity? Love, and her child, Hope, which can bestow wealth on poverty, strength on the weak, and happiness on the sorrowing.

"My lot has not been fortunate. I have consorted long with grief, entered the gloomy labyrinth of madness, and emerged, but half alive. Yet I thank God that I have lived! I thank God, that I have beheld his throne, the heavens, and earth, his footstool. I am glad that I have seen the changes of his day; to behold the sun, fountain of light, and the gentle pilgrim moon; to have seen the fire bearing flowers of the sky, and the flowery stars of earth; to have witnessed the sowing and the harvest. I am glad that I have loved, and have experienced sympathetic joy and sorrow with my fellow-creatures. I am glad now to feel the current of thought flow through my mind, as the blood through the articulations of my frame; mere existence is pleasure; and I thank God that I live!

"And all ye happy nurslings of mother-earth, do ye not echo my words? Ye who are linked by the affectionate ties of nature, companions, friends, lovers! fathers, who toil with joy for their offspring; women, who while gazing on the living forms of their children, forget the pains of maternity; children, who neither toil nor spin, but love and are loved!

"Oh, that death and sickness were banished from our earthly home! that hatred, tyranny, and fear could no longer make their lair in the human heart! that each man might find a brother in his fellow, and a nest of repose amid the wide plains of his inheritance! that the source of tears were dry, and that lips might no longer form expressions of sorrow. Sleeping thus under the beneficent eye of heaven, can evil visit thee, O Earth, or grief cradle to their graves thy luckless children? Whisper it not, let the demons hear and rejoice! The choice is with us; let us will it, and our habitation becomes a paradise. For the will of man is omnipotent, blunting the arrows of death, soothing the bed of disease, and wiping away the tears of agony. And what is each human being worth, if he do not put forth his strength to aid his fellow-creatures? My soul is a fading spark, my nature frail as a spent wave; but I dedicate all of intellect and strength that remains to me, to that one work, and take upon me the task, as far as I am able, of bestowing blessings on my fellow-men!"

His voice trembled, his eyes were cast up, his hands clasped, and his fragile person was bent, as it were, with excess of emotion. The spirit of life seemed to linger in his form, as a dying flame on an altar flickers on the embers of an accepted sacrifice.

195

Chapter V

When we arrived at Windsor, I found that Raymond and Perdita had departed for the continent. I took possession of my sister's cottage, and blessed myself that I lived within view of Windsor Castle. It was a curious fact, that at this period, when by the marriage of Perdita I was allied to one of the richest individuals in England, and was bound by the most intimate friendship to its chiefest noble, I experienced the greatest excess

of poverty that I had ever known. My knowledge of the worldly principles of Lord Raymond, would have ever prevented me from applying to him, however deep my distress might have been. It was in vain that I repeated to myself with regard to Adrian, that his purse was open to me; that one in soul, as we were, our fortunes ought also to be common. I could never, while with him, think of his bounty as a remedy to my poverty; and I even put aside hastily his offers of supplies, assuring him of a falsehood, that I needed them not. How could I say to this generous being, "Maintain me in idleness. You who have dedicated your powers of mind and fortune to the benefit of your species, shall you so misdirect your exertions, as to support in uselessness the strong, healthy, and capable?"

And yet I dared not request him to use his influence that I might obtain an honourable provision for myself—for then I should have been obliged to leave Windsor. I hovered for ever around the walls of its Castle, beneath its enshadowing thickets; my sole companions were my books and my loving thoughts. I studied the wisdom of the ancients, and gazed on the happy walls that sheltered the beloved of my soul. My mind was nevertheless idle. I pored over the poetry of old times; I studied the metaphysics of Plato and Berkeley. I read the histories of Greece and Rome, and of England's former periods, and I watched the movements of the lady of my heart. At night I could see her shadow on the walls of her apartment; by day I viewed her in her flower-garden, or riding in the park with her usual companions. Methought the charm would be broken if I were seen, but I heard the music of her voice and was happy. I gave to each heroine of whom I read, her beauty and matchless excellences—such was Antigone, when she guided the blind Oedipus to the grove of the Eumenides, and discharged the funeral rites of Polynices; such was Miranda in the unvisited cave of Prospero; such Haidee, on the sands of the Ionian island. I was mad with excess of passionate devotion; but pride, tameless as fire, invested my nature, and prevented me from betraying myself by word or look.

In the mean time, while I thus pampered myself with rich mental repasts, a peasant would have disdained my scanty fare,

which I sometimes robbed from the squirrels of the forest. I was, I own, often tempted to recur to the lawless feats of my boy-hood, and knock down the almost tame pheasants that perched upon the trees, and bent their bright eyes on me. But they were the property of Adrian, the nurslings of Idris; and so, although my imagination rendered sensual by privation, made me think that they would better become the spit in my kitchen, than the green leaves of the forest,

Nathelesse,
I checked my haughty will, and did not eat;

but supped upon sentiment, and dreamt vainly of "such morsels sweet," as I might not waking attain.

But, at this period, the whole scheme of my existence was about to change. The orphan and neglected son of Verney, was on the eve of being linked to the mechanism of society by a golden chain, and to enter into all the duties and affections of life. Miracles were to be wrought in my favour, the machine of social life pushed with vast effort backward. Attend, O reader! while I narrate this tale of wonders!

200

One day as Adrian and Idris were riding through the forest, with their mother and accustomed companions, Idris, drawing her brother aside from the rest of the cavalcade, suddenly asked him, "What had become of his friend, Lionel Verney?"

"Even from this spot," replied Adrian, pointing to my sister's cottage, "you can see his dwelling."

"Indeed!" said Idris, "and why, if he be so near, does he not come to see us, and make one of our society?"

"I often visit him," replied Adrian; "but you may easily guess the motives, which prevent him from coming where his presence may annoy any one among us."

"I do guess them," said Idris, "and such as they are, I would not venture to combat them. Tell me, however, in what way he passes his time; what he is doing and thinking in his cottage retreat?"

205

"Nay, my sweet sister," replied Adrian, "you ask me more than I can well answer; but if you feel interest in him, why not visit him? He will feel highly honoured, and thus you may repay a part of the obligation I owe him, and compensate for the injuries fortune has done him."

"I will most readily accompany you to his abode," said the lady, "not that I wish that either of us should unburthen ourselves of our debt, which, being no less than your life, must remain unpayable ever. But let us go; to-morrow we will arrange to ride out together, and proceeding towards that part of the forest, call upon him."

The next evening therefore, though the autumnal change had brought on cold and rain, Adrian and Idris entered my cottage. They found me Curius-like, feasting on sorry fruits for supper; but they brought gifts richer than the golden bribes of the Sabines, nor could I refuse the invaluable store of friendship and delight which they bestowed. Surely the glorious twins of Latona were not more welcome, when, in the infancy of the world, they were brought forth to beautify and enlighten this "sterile promontory," than were this angelic pair to my lowly dwelling and grateful heart. We sat like one family round my hearth. Our talk was on subjects, unconnected with the emotions that evidently occupied each; but we each divined the other's thought, and as our voices spoke of indifferent matters, our eyes, in mute language, told a thousand things no tongue could have uttered.

They left me in an hour's time. They left me happy—how unspeakably happy. It did not require the measured sounds of human language to syllable the story of my extasy. Idris had visited me; Idris I should again and again see—my imagination did not wander beyond the completeness of this knowledge. I trod air; no doubt, no fear, no hope even, disturbed me; I clasped with my soul the fulness of contentment, satisfied, undesiring, beatified.

For many days Adrian and Idris continued to visit me thus. In this dear intercourse, love, in the guise of enthusiastic friendship, infused more and more of his omnipotent spirit. Idris felt it. Yes, divinity of the world, I read your characters in her looks and

gesture; I heard your melodious voice echoed by her—you prepared for us a soft and flowery path, all gentle thoughts adorned it—your name, O Love, was not spoken, but you stood the Genius of the Hour, veiled, and time, but no mortal hand, might raise the curtain. Organs of articulate sound did not proclaim the union of our hearts; for untoward circumstance allowed no opportunity for the expression that hovered on our lips. Oh my pen! haste thou to write what was, before the thought of what is, arrests the hand that guides thee. If I lift up my eyes and see the desart earth, and feel that those dear eyes have spent their mortal lustre, and that those beauteous lips are silent, their "crimson leaves" faded, for ever I am mute!

But you live, my Idris, even now you move before me! There was a glade, O reader! a grassy opening in the wood; the retiring trees left its velvet expanse as a temple for love; the silver Thames bounded it on one side, and a willow bending down dipt in the water its Naiad hair, dishevelled by the wind's viewless hand. The oaks around were the home of a tribe of nightingales—there am I now; Idris, in youth's dear prime, is by my side — remember, I am just twenty-two, and seventeen summers have scarcely passed over the beloved of my heart. The river swollen by autumnal rains, deluged the low lands, and Adrian in his favourite boat is employed in the dangerous pastime of plucking the topmost bough from a submerged oak. Are you weary of life, O Adrian, that you thus play with danger?—

He has obtained his prize, and he pilots his boat through the flood; our eyes were fixed on him fearfully, but the stream carried him away from us; he was forced to land far lower down, and to make a considerable circuit before he could join us. "He is safe!" said Idris, as he leapt on shore, and waved the bough over his head in token of success; "we will wait for him here."

We were alone together; the sun had set; the song of the nightingales began; the evening star shone distinct in the flood of light, which was yet unfaded in the west. The blue eyes of my angelic girl were fixed on this sweet emblem of herself: "How the light palpitates," she said, "which is that star's life. Its vacillating

effulgence seems to say that its state, even like ours upon earth, is wavering and inconstant; it fears, methinks, and it loves."

"Gaze not on the star, dear, generous friend," I cried, "read not love in its trembling rays; look not upon distant worlds; speak not of the mere imagination of a sentiment. I have long been silent; long even to sickness have I desired to speak to you, and submit my soul, my life, my entire being to you. Look not on the star, dear love, or do, and let that eternal spark plead for me; let it be my witness and my advocate, silent as it shines—love is to me as light to the star; even so long as that is uneclipsed by annihilation, so long shall I love you."

Veiled for ever to the world's callous eye must be the transport of that moment. Still do I feel her graceful form press against my full-fraught heart—still does sight, and pulse, and breath sicken and fail, at the remembrance of that first kiss. Slowly and silently we went to meet Adrian, whom we heard approaching.

215

I entreated Adrian to return to me after he had conducted his sister home. And that same evening, walking among the moon-lit forest paths, I poured forth my whole heart, its transport and its hope, to my friend. For a moment he looked disturbed—"I might have foreseen this," he said, "what strife will now ensue! Pardon me, Lionel, nor wonder that the expectation of contest with my mother should jar me, when else I should delightedly confess that my best hopes are fulfilled, in confiding my sister to your protection. If you do not already know it, you will soon learn the deep hate my mother bears to the name Verney. I will converse with Idris; then all that a friend can do, I will do; to her it must belong to play the lover's part, if she be capable of it."

While the brother and sister were still hesitating in what manner they could best attempt to bring their mother over to their party, she, suspecting our meetings, taxed her children with them; taxed her fair daughter with deceit, and an unbecoming attachment for one whose only merit was being the son of the profligate favourite of her imprudent father; and who was doubtless as worthless as he from whom he boasted his descent. The eyes of Idris flashed at this accusation; she replied, "I do not

deny that I love Verney; prove to me that he is worthless; and I will never see him more."

"Dear Madam," said Adrian, "let me entreat you to see him, to cultivate his friendship. You will wonder then, as I do, at the extent of his accomplishments, and the brilliancy of his talents." (Pardon me, gentle reader, this is not futile vanity;—not futile, since to know that Adrian felt thus, brings joy even now to my lone heart).

"Mad and foolish boy!" exclaimed the angry lady, "you have chosen with dreams and theories to overthrow my schemes for your own aggrandizement; but you shall not do the same by those I have formed for your sister. I but too well understand the fascination you both labour under; since I had the same struggle with your father, to make him cast off the parent of this youth, who hid his evil propensities with the smoothness and subtlety of a viper. In those days how often did I hear of his attractions, his wide spread conquests, his wit, his refined manners. It is well when flies only are caught by such spiders' webs; but is it for the high-born and powerful to bow their necks to the flimsy yoke of these unmeaning pretensions? Were your sister indeed the insignificant person she deserves to be, I would willingly leave her to the fate, the wretched fate, of the wife of a man, whose very person, resembling as it does his wretched father, ought to remind you of the folly and vice it typifies—but remember, Lady Idris, it is not alone the once royal blood of England that colours your veins, you are a Princess of Austria, and every life-drop is akin to emperors and kings. Are you then a fit mate for an uneducated shepherd-boy, whose only inheritance is his father's tarnished name?"

"I can make but one defence," replied Idris, "the same offered by my brother; see Lionel, converse with my shepherd-boy"—The Countess interrupted her indignantly—"Yours!"—she cried: and then, smoothing her impassioned features to a disdainful smile, she continued—"We will talk of this another time. All I now ask, all your mother, Idris, requests is, that you will not see this upstart during the interval of one month."

"I dare not comply," said Idris, "it would pain him too much. I have no right to play with his feelings, to accept his proffered love, and then sting him with neglect."

"This is going too far," her mother answered, with quivering lips, and eyes again instinct by anger.

"Nay, Madam," said Adrian, "unless my sister consent never to see him again, it is surely an useless torment to separate them for a month."

"Certainly," replied the ex-queen, with bitter scorn, "his love, and her love, and both their childish flutterings, are to be put in fit comparison with my years of hope and anxiety, with the duties of the offspring of kings, with the high and dignified conduct which one of her descent ought to pursue. But it is unworthy of me to argue and complain. Perhaps you will have the goodness to promise me not to marry during that interval?"

This was asked only half ironically; and Idris wondered why her mother should extort from her a solemn vow not to do, what she had never dreamed of doing—but the promise was required and given.

225

All went on cheerfully now; we met as usual, and talked without dread of our future plans. The Countess was so gentle, and even beyond her wont, amiable with her children, that they began to entertain hopes of her ultimate consent. She was too unlike them, too utterly alien to their tastes, for them to find delight in her society, or in the prospect of its continuance, but it gave them pleasure to see her conciliating and kind. Once even, Adrian ventured to propose her receiving me. She refused with a smile, reminding him that for the present his sister had promised to be patient.

One day, after the lapse of nearly a month, Adrian received a letter from a friend in London, requesting his immediate presence for the furtherance of some important object. Guileless himself, Adrian feared no deceit. I rode with him as far as Staines: he was in high spirits; and, since I could not see Idris during his absence, he promised a speedy return. His gaiety, which was extreme, had the strange effect of awakening in me contrary feelings; a presentiment of evil hung over me; I loitered on my return; I

counted the hours that must elapse before I saw Idris again. Wherefore should this be? What evil might not happen in the mean time? Might not her mother take advantage of Adrian's absence to urge her beyond her sufferance, perhaps to entrap her? I resolved, let what would befall, to see and converse with her the following day. This determination soothed me. To-morrow, loveliest and best, hope and joy of my life, to-morrow I will see thee—Fool, to dream of a moment's delay!

I went to rest. At past midnight I was awaked by a violent knocking. It was now deep winter; it had snowed, and was still snowing; the wind whistled in the leafless trees, despoiling them of the white flakes as they fell; its drear moaning, and the continued knocking, mingled wildly with my dreams—at length I was wide awake; hastily dressing myself, I hurried to discover the cause of this disturbance, and to open my door to the unexpected visitor. Pale as the snow that showered about her, with clasped hands, Idris stood before me. "Save me!" she exclaimed, and would have sunk to the ground had I not supported her. In a moment however she revived, and, with energy, almost with violence, entreated me to saddle horses, to take her away, away to London—to her brother—at least to save her. I had no horses—she wrung her hands. "What can I do?" she cried, "I am lost—we are both for ever lost! But come—come with me, Lionel; here I must not stay,—we can get a chaise at the nearest post-house; yet perhaps we have time! come, O come with me to save and protect me!"

When I heard her piteous demands, while with disordered dress, dishevelled hair, and aghast looks, she wrung her hands—the idea shot across me is she also mad?—"Sweet one," and I folded her to my heart, "better repose than wander further;—rest—my beloved, I will make a fire—you are chill."

"Rest!" she cried, "repose! you rave, Lionel! If you delay we are lost; come, I pray you, unless you would cast me off for ever."

That Idris, the princely born, nursling of wealth and luxury, should have come through the tempestuous winter-night from her regal abode, and standing at my lowly door, conjure me to fly with her through darkness and storm—was surely a dream—again

her plaintive tones, the sight of her loveliness assured me that it was no vision. Looking timidly around, as if she feared to be overheard, she whispered: "I have discovered—to-morrow—that is, to-day—already the to-morrow is come—before dawn, foreigners, Austrians, my mother's hirelings, are to carry me off to Germany, to prison, to marriage—to anything, except you and my brother—take me away, or soon they will be here!"

I was frightened by her vehemence, and imagined some mistake in her incoherent tale; but I no longer hesitated to obey her. She had come by herself from the Castle, three long miles, at midnight, through the heavy snow; we must reach Englefield Green, a mile and a half further, before we could obtain a chaise. She told me, that she had kept up her strength and courage till her arrival at my cottage, and then both failed. Now she could hardly walk. Supporting her as I did, still she lagged: and at the distance of half a mile, after many stoppages, shivering fits, and half faintings, she slipt from my supporting arm on the snow, and with a torrent of tears averred that she must be taken, for that she could not proceed. I lifted her up in my arms; her light form rested on my breast.—I felt no burthen, except the internal one of contrary and contending emotions. Brimming delight now invested me. Again her chill limbs touched me as a torpedo; and I shuddered in sympathy with her pain and fright. Her head lay on my shoulder, her breath waved my hair, her heart beat near mine, transport made me tremble, blinded me, annihilated me—till a suppressed groan, bursting from her lips, the chattering of her teeth, which she strove vainly to subdue, and all the signs of suffering she evinced, recalled me to the necessity of speed and succour. At last I said to her, "There is Englefield Green; there the inn. But, if you are seen thus strangely circumstanced, dear Idris, even now your enemies may learn your flight too soon: were it not better that I hired the chaise alone? I will put you in safety meanwhile, and return to you immediately."

She answered that I was right, and might do with her as I pleased. I observed the door of a small out-house ajar. I pushed it open; and, with some hay strewed about, I formed a couch for her, placing her exhausted frame on it, and covering her with my

cloak. I feared to leave her, she looked so wan and faint—but in a moment she re-acquired animation, and, with that, fear; and again she implored me not to delay. To call up the people of the inn, and obtain a conveyance and horses, even though I harnessed them myself, was the work of many minutes; minutes, each freighted with the weight of ages. I caused the chaise to advance a little, waited till the people of the inn had retired, and then made the post-boy draw up the carriage to the spot where Idris, impatient, and now somewhat recovered, stood waiting for me. I lifted her into the chaise; I assured her that with our four horses we should arrive in London before five o'clock, the hour when she would be sought and missed. I besought her to calm herself; a kindly shower of tears relieved her, and by degrees she related her tale of fear and peril.

That same night after Adrian's departure, her mother had warmly expostulated with her on the subject of her attachment to me. Every motive, every threat, every angry taunt was urged in vain. She seemed to consider that through me she had lost Raymond; I was the evil influence of her life; I was even accused of encreasing and confirming the mad and base apostacy of Adrian from all views of advancement and grandeur; and now this miserable mountaineer was to steal her daughter. Never, Idris related, did the angry lady deign to recur to gentleness and persuasion; if she had, the task of resistance would have been exquisitely painful. As it was, the sweet girl's generous nature was roused to defend, and ally herself with, my despised cause. Her mother ended with a look of contempt and covert triumph, which for a moment awakened the suspicions of Idris. When they parted for the night, the Countess said, "To-morrow I trust your tone will be changed: be composed; I have agitated you; go to rest; and I will send you a medicine I always take when unduly restless—it will give you a quiet night."

By the time that she had with uneasy thoughts laid her fair cheek upon her pillow, her mother's servant brought a draught; a suspicion again crossed her at this novel proceeding, sufficiently alarming to determine her not to take the potion; but dislike of contention, and a wish to discover whether there was any just

foundation for her conjectures, made her, she said, almost instinctively, and in contradiction to her usual frankness, pretend to swallow the medicine. Then, agitated as she had been by her mother's violence, and now by unaccustomed fears, she lay unable to sleep, starting at every sound. Soon her door opened softly, and on her springing up, she heard a whisper, "Not asleep yet," and the door again closed. With a beating heart she expected another visit, and when after an interval her chamber was again invaded, having first assured herself that the intruders were her mother and an attendant, she composed herself to feigned sleep. A step approached her bed, she dared not move, she strove to calm her palpitations, which became more violent, when she heard her mother say mutteringly, "Pretty simpleton, little do you think that your game is already at an end for ever."

For a moment the poor girl fancied that her mother believed that she had drank poison: she was on the point of springing up; when the Countess, already at a distance from the bed, spoke in a low voice to her companion, and again Idris listened: "Hasten," said she, "there is no time to lose—it is long past eleven; they will be here at five; take merely the clothes necessary for her journey, and her jewel-casket." The servant obeyed; few words were spoken on either side; but those were caught at with avidity by the intended victim. She heard the name of her own maid mentioned;—"No, no," replied her mother, "she does not go with us; Lady Idris must forget England, and all belonging to it." And again she heard, "She will not wake till late to-morrow, and we shall then be at sea."—"All is ready," at length the woman announced. The Countess again came to her daughter's bedside: "In Austria at least," she said, "you will obey. In Austria, where obedience can be enforced, and no choice left but between an honourable prison and a fitting marriage."

Both then withdrew; though, as she went, the Countess said, "Softly; all sleep; though all have not been prepared for sleep, like her. I would not have any one suspect, or she might be roused to resistance, and perhaps escape. Come with me to my room; we will remain there till the hour agreed upon." They went. Idris, panic-struck, but animated and strengthened even by her

excessive fear, dressed herself hurriedly, and going down a flight of back-stairs, avoiding the vicinity of her mother's apartment, she contrived to escape from the castle by a low window, and came through snow, wind, and obscurity to my cottage; nor lost her courage, until she arrived, and, depositing her fate in my hands, gave herself up to the desperation and weariness that overwhelmed her.

I comforted her as well as I might. Joy and exultation, were mine, to possess, and to save her. Yet not to excite fresh agitation in her, "*per non turbar quel bel viso sereno*," I curbed my delight. I strove to quiet the eager dancing of my heart; I turned from her my eyes, beaming with too much tenderness, and proudly, to dark night, and the inclement atmosphere, murmured the expressions of my transport. We reached London, methought, all too soon; and yet I could not regret our speedy arrival, when I witnessed the extasy with which my beloved girl found herself in her brother's arms, safe from every evil, under his unblamed protection.

Adrian wrote a brief note to his mother, informing her that Idris was under his care and guardianship. Several days elapsed, and at last an answer came, dated from Cologne. "It was useless," the haughty and disappointed lady wrote, "for the Earl of Windsor and his sister to address again the injured parent, whose only expectation of tranquillity must be derived from oblivion of their existence. Her desires had been blasted, her schemes overthrown. She did not complain; in her brother's court she would find, not compensation for their disobedience (filial unkindness admitted of none), but such a state of things and mode of life, as might best reconcile her to her fate. Under such circumstances, she positively declined any communication with them."

Such were the strange and incredible events, that finally brought about my union with the sister of my best friend, with my adored Idris. With simplicity and courage she set aside the prejudices and opposition which were obstacles to my happiness, nor scrupled to give her hand, where she had given her heart. To be worthy of her, to raise myself to her height through the exertion of talents and virtue, to repay her love with devoted,

unwearied tenderness, were the only thanks I could offer for the matchless gift.

Chapter VI

And now let the reader, passing over some short period of time, be introduced to our happy circle. Adrian, Idris and I, were established in Windsor Castle; Lord Raymond and my sister, inhabited a house which the former had built on the borders of the Great Park, near Perdita's cottage, as was still named the low-roofed abode, where we two, poor even in hope, had each received the assurance of our felicity. We had our separate occupations and our common amusements. Sometimes we passed whole days under the leafy covert of the forest with our books and music. This occurred during those rare days in this country, when the sun mounts his ethereal throne in unclouded majesty, and the windless atmosphere is as a bath of pellucid and grateful water, wrapping the senses in tranquillity. When the clouds veiled the sky, and the wind scattered them there and here, rending their woof, and strewing its fragments through the aerial plains—then we rode out, and sought new spots of beauty and repose. When the frequent rains shut us within doors, evening recreation followed morning study, ushered in by music and song. Idris had a natural musical talent; and her voice, which had been carefully cultivated, was full and sweet. Raymond and I made a part of the concert, and Adrian and Perdita were devout listeners. Then we were as gay as summer insects, playful as children; we ever met one another with smiles, and read content and joy in each other's countenances. Our prime festivals were held in Perdita's cottage; nor were we ever weary of talking of the past or dreaming of the future. Jealousy and disquiet were unknown among us; nor did a fear or hope of change ever disturb our tranquillity. Others said, We might be happy—we said—We are.

When any separation took place between us, it generally so happened, that Idris and Perdita would ramble away together, and we remained to discuss the affairs of nations, and the philosophy of life. The very difference of our dispositions gave zest to these

conversations. Adrian had the superiority in learning and eloquence; but Raymond possessed a quick penetration, and a practical knowledge of life, which usually displayed itself in opposition to Adrian, and thus kept up the ball of discussion. At other times we made excursions of many days' duration, and crossed the country to visit any spot noted for beauty or historical association. Sometimes we went up to London, and entered into the amusements of the busy throng; sometimes our retreat was invaded by visitors from among them. This change made us only the more sensible to the delights of the intimate intercourse of our own circle, the tranquillity of our divine forest, and our happy evenings in the halls of our beloved Castle.

The disposition of Idris was peculiarly frank, soft, and affectionate. Her temper was unalterably sweet; and although firm and resolute on any point that touched her heart, she was yielding to those she loved. The nature of Perdita was less perfect; but tenderness and happiness improved her temper, and softened her natural reserve. Her understanding was clear and comprehensive, her imagination vivid; she was sincere, generous, and reasonable. Adrian, the matchless brother of my soul, the sensitive and excellent Adrian, loving all, and beloved by all, yet seemed destined not to find the half of himself, which was to complete his happiness. He often left us, and wandered by himself in the woods, or sailed in his little skiff, his books his only companions. He was often the gayest of our party, at the same time that he was the only one visited by fits of despondency; his slender frame seemed overcharged with the weight of life, and his soul appeared rather to inhabit his body than unite with it. I was hardly more devoted to my Idris than to her brother, and she loved him as her teacher, her friend, the benefactor who had secured to her the fulfilment of her dearest wishes. Raymond, the ambitious, restless Raymond, reposed midway on the great high-road of life, and was content to give up all his schemes of sovereignty and fame, to make one of us, the flowers of the field. His kingdom was the heart of Perdita, his subjects her thoughts; by her he was loved, respected as a superior being, obeyed, waited on. No office, no devotion, no watching was irksome to her, as it regarded him. She

would sit apart from us and watch him; she would weep for joy to think that he was hers. She erected a temple for him in the depth of her being, and each faculty was a priestess vowed to his service. Sometimes she might be wayward and capricious; but her repentance was bitter, her return entire, and even this inequality of temper suited him who was not formed by nature to float idly down the stream of life.

During the first year of their marriage, Perdita presented Raymond with a lovely girl. It was curious to trace in this miniature model the very traits of its father. The same half-disdainful lips and smile of triumph, the same intelligent eyes, the same brow and chestnut hair; her very hands and taper fingers resembled his. How very dear she was to Perdita! In progress of time, I also became a father, and our little darlings, our playthings and delights, called forth a thousand new and delicious feelings.

Years passed thus,—even years. Each month brought forth its successor, each year one like to that gone by; truly, our lives were a living comment on that beautiful sentiment of Plutarch, that "our souls have a natural inclination to love, being born as much to love, as to feel, to reason, to understand and remember." We talked of change and active pursuits, but still remained at Windsor, incapable of violating the charm that attached us to our secluded life.

245

*Pareamo aver qui tutto il ben raccolto
Che fra mortali in piu parte si rimembra.*

Now also that our children gave us occupation, we found excuses for our idleness, in the idea of bringing them up to a more splendid career. At length our tranquillity was disturbed, and the course of events, which for five years had flowed on in hushing tranquillity, was broken by breakers and obstacles, that woke us from our pleasant dream.

A new Lord Protector of England was to be chosen; and, at Raymond's request, we removed to London, to witness, and even take a part in the election. If Raymond had been united to Idris, this post had been his stepping-stone to higher dignity; and his

desire for power and fame had been crowned with fullest measure. He had exchanged a sceptre for a lute, a kingdom for Perdita.

Did he think of this as we journeyed up to town? I watched him, but could make but little of him. He was particularly gay, playing with his child, and turning to sport every word that was uttered. Perhaps he did this because he saw a cloud upon Perdita's brow. She tried to rouse herself, but her eyes every now and then filled with tears, and she looked wistfully on Raymond and her girl, as if fearful that some evil would betide them. And so she felt. A presentiment of ill hung over her. She leaned from the window looking on the forest, and the turrets of the Castle, and as these became hid by intervening objects, she passionately exclaimed—"Scenes of happiness! scenes sacred to devoted love, when shall I see you again! and when I see ye, shall I be still the beloved and joyous Perdita, or shall I, heart-broken and lost, wander among your groves, the ghost of what I am!"

"Why, silly one," cried Raymond, "what is your little head pondering upon, that of a sudden you have become so sublimely dismal? Cheer up, or I shall make you over to Idris, and call Adrian into the carriage, who, I see by his gesture, sympathizes with my good spirits."

Adrian was on horseback; he rode up to the carriage, and his gaiety, in addition to that of Raymond, dispelled my sister's melancholy. We entered London in the evening, and went to our several abodes near Hyde Park.

250

The following morning Lord Raymond visited me early. "I come to you," he said, "only half assured that you will assist me in my project, but resolved to go through with it, whether you concur with me or not. Promise me secrecy however; for if you will not contribute to my success, at least you must not baffle me."

"Well, I promise. And now——"

"And now, my dear fellow, for what are we come to London? To be present at the election of a Protector, and to give our yea or nay for his shuffling Grace of——? or for that noisy Ryland? Do you believe, Verney, that I brought you to town for that? No, we

will have a Protector of our own. We will set up a candidate, and ensure his success. We will nominate Adrian, and do our best to bestow on him the power to which he is entitled by his birth, and which he merits through his virtues.

"Do not answer; I know all your objections, and will reply to them in order. First, Whether he will or will not consent to become a great man? Leave the task of persuasion on that point to me; I do not ask you to assist me there. Secondly, Whether he ought to exchange his employment of plucking blackberries, and nursing wounded partridges in the forest, for the command of a nation? My dear Lionel, we are married men, and find employment sufficient in amusing our wives, and dancing our children. But Adrian is alone, wifeless, childless, unoccupied. I have long observed him. He pines for want of some interest in life. His heart, exhausted by his early sufferings, reposes like a new-healed limb, and shrinks from all excitement. But his understanding, his charity, his virtues, want a field for exercise and display; and we will procure it for him. Besides, is it not a shame, that the genius of Adrian should fade from the earth like a flower in an untrod mountain-path, fruitless? Do you think Nature composed his surpassing machine for no purpose? Believe me, he was destined to be the author of infinite good to his native England. Has she not bestowed on him every gift in prodigality?—birth, wealth, talent, goodness? Does not every one love and admire him? and does he not delight singly in such efforts as manifest his love to all? Come, I see that you are already persuaded, and will second me when I propose him to-night in parliament."

"You have got up all your arguments in excellent order," I replied; "and, if Adrian consent, they are unanswerable. One only condition I would make, —that you do nothing without his concurrence."

"I believe you are in the right," said Raymond; "although I had thought at first to arrange the affair differently. Be it so. I will go instantly to Adrian; and, if he inclines to consent, you will not destroy my labour by persuading him to return, and turn squirrel

again in Windsor Forest. Idris, you will not act the traitor towards me?"

"Trust me," replied she, "I will preserve a strict neutrality."

"For my part," said I, "I am too well convinced of the worth of our friend, and the rich harvest of benefits that all England would reap from his Protectorship, to deprive my countrymen of such a blessing, if he consent to bestow it on them."

In the evening Adrian visited us.—"Do you cabal also against me," said he, laughing; "and will you make common cause with Raymond, in dragging a poor visionary from the clouds to surround him with the fire-works and blasts of earthly grandeur, instead of heavenly rays and airs? I thought you knew me better."

"I do know you better," I replied "than to think that you would be happy in such a situation; but the good you would do to others may be an inducement, since the time is probably arrived when you can put your theories into practice, and you may bring about such reformation and change, as will conduce to that perfect system of government which you delight to portray."

260

"You speak of an almost-forgotten dream," said Adrian, his countenance slightly clouding as he spoke; "the visions of my boyhood have long since faded in the light of reality; I know now that I am not a man fitted to govern nations; sufficient for me, if I keep in wholesome rule the little kingdom of my own mortality."

"But do not you see, Lionel, the drift of our noble friend; a drift, perhaps, unknown to himself, but apparent to me. Lord Raymond was never born to be a drone in the hive, and to find content in our pastoral life. He thinks, that he ought to be satisfied; he imagines, that his present situation precludes the possibility of aggrandisement; he does not therefore, even in his own heart, plan change for himself. But do you not see, that, under the idea of exalting me, he is chalking out a new path for himself; a path of action from which he has long wandered?"

"Let us assist him. He, the noble, the warlike, the great in every quality that can adorn the mind and person of man; he is fitted to be the Protector of England. If I—that is, if we propose him, he will assuredly be elected, and will find, in the functions of that high office, scope for the towering powers of his mind. Even

Perdita will rejoice. Perdita, in whom ambition was a covered fire until she married Raymond, which event was for a time the fulfilment of her hopes; Perdita will rejoice in the glory and advancement of her lord—and, coyly and prettily, not be discontented with her share. In the mean time, we, the wise of the land, will return to our Castle, and, Cincinnatus-like, take to our usual labours, until our friend shall require our presence and assistance here."

The more Adrian reasoned upon this scheme, the more feasible it appeared. His own determination never to enter into public life was insurmountable, and the delicacy of his health was a sufficient argument against it. The next step was to induce Raymond to confess his secret wishes for dignity and fame. He entered while we were speaking. The way in which Adrian had received his project for setting him up as a candidate for the Protectorship, and his replies, had already awakened in his mind, the view of the subject which we were now discussing. His countenance and manner betrayed irresolution and anxiety; but the anxiety arose from a fear that we should not prosecute, or not succeed in our idea; and his irresolution, from a doubt whether we should risk a defeat. A few words from us decided him, and hope and joy sparkled in his eyes; the idea of embarking in a career, so congenial to his early habits and cherished wishes, made him as before energetic and bold. We discussed his chances, the merits of the other candidates, and the dispositions of the voters.

After all we miscalculated. Raymond had lost much of his popularity, and was deserted by his peculiar partizans. Absence from the busy stage had caused him to be forgotten by the people; his former parliamentary supporters were principally composed of royalists, who had been willing to make an idol of him when he appeared as the heir of the Earldom of Windsor; but who were indifferent to him, when he came forward with no other attributes and distinctions than they conceived to be common to many among themselves. Still he had many friends, admirers of his transcendent talents; his presence in the house, his eloquence, address and imposing beauty, were calculated to produce an electric effect. Adrian also, notwithstanding his recluse habits and

theories, so adverse to the spirit of party, had many friends, and they were easily induced to vote for a candidate of his selection.

The Duke of——, and Mr. Ryland, Lord Raymond's old antagonist, were the other candidates. The Duke was supported by all the aristocrats of the republic, who considered him their proper representative. Ryland was the popular candidate; when Lord Raymond was first added to the list, his chance of success appeared small. We retired from the debate which had followed on his nomination: we, his nominators, mortified; he dispirited to excess. Perdita reproached us bitterly. Her expectations had been strongly excited; she had urged nothing against our project, on the contrary, she was evidently pleased by it; but its evident ill success changed the current of her ideas. She felt, that, once awakened, Raymond would never return unrepining to Windsor. His habits were unhinged; his restless mind roused from its sleep, ambition must now be his companion through life; and if he did not succeed in his present attempt, she foresaw that unhappiness and cureless discontent would follow. Perhaps her own disappointment added a sting to her thoughts and words; she did not spare us, and our own reflections added to our disquietude.

It was necessary to follow up our nomination, and to persuade Raymond to present himself to the electors on the following evening. For a long time he was obstinate. He would embark in a balloon; he would sail for a distant quarter of the world, where his name and humiliation were unknown. But this was useless; his attempt was registered; his purpose published to the world; his shame could never be erased from the memories of men. It was as well to fail at last after a struggle, as to fly now at the beginning of his enterprise.

From the moment that he adopted this idea, he was changed. His depression and anxiety fled; he became all life and activity. The smile of triumph shone on his countenance; determined to pursue his object to the uttermost, his manner and expression seem ominous of the accomplishment of his wishes. Not so Perdita. She was frightened by his gaiety, for she dreaded a greater revulsion at the end. If his appearance even inspired us with hope, it only rendered the state of her mind more painful.

She feared to lose sight of him; yet she dreaded to remark any change in the temper of his mind. She listened eagerly to him, yet tantalized herself by giving to his words a meaning foreign to their true interpretation, and adverse to her hopes. She dared not be present at the contest; yet she remained at home a prey to double solicitude. She wept over her little girl; she looked, she spoke, as if she dreaded the occurrence of some frightful calamity. She was half mad from the effects of uncontrollable agitation.

Lord Raymond presented himself to the house with fearless confidence and insinuating address. After the Duke of——and Mr. Ryland had finished their speeches, he commenced. Assuredly he had not conned his lesson; and at first he hesitated, pausing in his ideas, and in the choice of his expressions. By degrees he warmed; his words flowed with ease, his language was full of vigour, and his voice of persuasion. He reverted to his past life, his successes in Greece, his favour at home. Why should he lose this, now that added years, prudence, and the pledge which his marriage gave to his country, ought to encrease, rather than diminish his claims to confidence? He spoke of the state of England; the necessary measures to be taken to ensure its security, and confirm its prosperity. He drew a glowing picture of its present situation. As he spoke, every sound was hushed, every thought suspended by intense attention. His graceful elocution enchained the senses of his hearers. In some degree also he was fitted to reconcile all parties. His birth pleased the aristocracy; his being the candidate recommended by Adrian, a man intimately allied to the popular party, caused a number, who had no great reliance either on the Duke or Mr. Ryland, to range on his side.

The contest was keen and doubtful. Neither Adrian nor myself would have been so anxious, if our own success had depended on our exertions; but we had egged our friend on to the enterprise, and it became us to ensure his triumph. Idris, who entertained the highest opinion of his abilities, was warmly interested in the event: and my poor sister, who dared not hope, and to whom fear was misery, was plunged into a fever of disquietude.

Day after day passed while we discussed our projects for the evening, and each night was occupied by debates which offered

no conclusion. At last the crisis came: the night when parliament, which had so long delayed its choice, must decide: as the hour of twelve passed, and the new day began, it was by virtue of the constitution dissolved, its power extinct.

We assembled at Raymond's house, we and our partizans. At half past five o'clock we proceeded to the House. Idris endeavoured to calm Perdita; but the poor girl's agitation deprived her of all power of self-command. She walked up and down the room,—gazed wildly when any one entered, fancying that they might be the announcers of her doom. I must do justice to my sweet sister: it was not for herself that she was thus agonized. She alone knew the weight which Raymond attached to his success. Even to us he assumed gaiety and hope, and assumed them so well, that we did not divine the secret workings of his mind. Sometimes a nervous trembling, a sharp dissonance of voice, and momentary fits of absence revealed to Perdita the violence he did himself; but we, intent on our plans, observed only his ready laugh, his joke intruded on all occasions, the flow of his spirits which seemed incapable of ebb. Besides, Perdita was with him in his retirement; she saw the moodiness that succeeded to this forced hilarity; she marked his disturbed sleep, his painful irritability—once she had seen his tears—hers had scarce ceased to flow, since she had beheld the big drops which disappointed pride had caused to gather in his eye, but which pride was unable to dispel. What wonder then, that her feelings were wrought to this pitch! I thus accounted to myself for her agitation; but this was not all, and the sequel revealed another excuse.

One moment we seized before our departure, to take leave of our beloved girls. I had small hope of success, and entreated Idris to watch over my sister. As I approached the latter, she seized my hand, and drew me into another apartment; she threw herself into my arms, and wept and sobbed bitterly and long. I tried to soothe her; I bade her hope; I asked what tremendous consequences would ensue even on our failure. "My brother," she cried, "protector of my childhood, dear, most dear Lionel, my fate hangs by a thread. I have you all about me now—you, the companion of my infancy; Adrian, as dear to me as if bound by the ties of

blood; Idris, the sister of my heart, and her lovely offspring. This, O this may be the last time that you will surround me thus!"

Abruptly she stopped, and then cried: "What have I said?—foolish false girl that I am!" She looked wildly on me, and then suddenly calming herself, apologized for what she called her unmeaning words, saying that she must indeed be insane, for, while Raymond lived, she must be happy; and then, though she still wept, she suffered me tranquilly to depart. Raymond only took her hand when he went, and looked on her expressively; she answered by a look of intelligence and assent.

Poor girl! what she then suffered! I could never entirely forgive Raymond for the trials he imposed on her, occasioned as they were by a selfish feeling on his part. He had schemed, if he failed in his present attempt, without taking leave of any of us, to embark for Greece, and never again to revisit England. Perdita acceded to his wishes; for his contentment was the chief object of her life, the crown of her enjoyment; but to leave us all, her companions, the beloved partners of her happiest years, and in the interim to conceal this frightful determination, was a task that almost conquered her strength of mind. She had been employed in arranging for their departure; she had promised Raymond during this decisive evening, to take advantage of our absence, to go one stage of the journey, and he, after his defeat was ascertained, would slip away from us, and join her.

Although, when I was informed of this scheme, I was bitterly offended by the small attention which Raymond paid to my sister's feelings, I was led by reflection to consider, that he acted under the force of such strong excitement, as to take from him the consciousness, and, consequently, the guilt of a fault. If he had permitted us to witness his agitation, he would have been more under the guidance of reason; but his struggles for the shew of composure, acted with such violence on his nerves, as to destroy his power of self-command. I am convinced that, at the worst, he would have returned from the seashore to take leave of us, and to make us the partners of his council. But the task imposed on Perdita was not the less painful. He had extorted from her a vow of secrecy; and her part of the drama, since it was to be performed

alone, was the most agonizing that could be devised. But to return to my narrative.

The debates had hitherto been long and loud; they had often been protracted merely for the sake of delay. But now each seemed fearful lest the fatal moment should pass, while the choice was yet undecided. Unwonted silence reigned in the house, the members spoke in whispers, and the ordinary business was transacted with celerity and quietness. During the first stage of the election, the Duke of——had been thrown out; the question therefore lay between Lord Raymond and Mr. Ryland. The latter had felt secure of victory, until the appearance of Raymond; and, since his name had been inserted as a candidate, he had canvassed with eagerness. He had appeared each evening, impatience and anger marked in his looks, scowling on us from the opposite side of St. Stephen's, as if his mere frown would cast eclipse on our hopes.

Every thing in the English constitution had been regulated for the better preservation of peace. On the last day, two candidates only were allowed to remain; and to obviate, if possible, the last struggle between these, a bribe was offered to him who should voluntarily resign his pretensions; a place of great emolument and honour was given him, and his success facilitated at a future election. Strange to say however, no instance had yet occurred, where either candidate had had recourse to this expedient; in consequence the law had become obsolete, nor had been referred to by any of us in our discussions. To our extreme surprise, when it was moved that we should resolve ourselves into a committee for the election of the Lord Protector, the member who had nominated Ryland, rose and informed us that this candidate had resigned his pretensions. His information was at first received with silence; a confused murmur succeeded; and, when the chairman declared Lord Raymond duly chosen, it amounted to a shout of applause and victory. It seemed as if, far from any dread of defeat even if Mr. Ryland had not resigned, every voice would have been united in favour of our candidate. In fact, now that the idea of contest was dismissed, all hearts returned to their former respect and admiration of our accomplished friend. Each felt, that

England had never seen a Protector so capable of fulfilling the arduous duties of that high office. One voice made of many voices, resounded through the chamber; it syllabled the name of Raymond.

He entered. I was on one of the highest seats, and saw him walk up the passage to the table of the speaker. The native modesty of his disposition conquered the joy of his triumph. He looked round timidly; a mist seemed before his eyes. Adrian, who was beside me, hastened to him, and jumping down the benches, was at his side in a moment. His appearance re-animated our friend; and, when he came to speak and act, his hesitation vanished, and he shone out supreme in majesty and victory. The former Protector tendered him the oaths, and presented him with the insignia of office, performing the ceremonies of installation. The house then dissolved. The chief members of the state crowded round the new magistrate, and conducted him to the palace of government. Adrian suddenly vanished; and, by the time that Raymond's supporters were reduced to our intimate friends merely, returned leading Idris to congratulate her friend on his success.

But where was Perdita? In securing solicitously an unobserved retreat in case of failure, Raymond had forgotten to arrange the mode by which she was to hear of his success; and she had been too much agitated to revert to this circumstance. When Idris entered, so far had Raymond forgotten himself, that he asked for my sister; one word, which told of her mysterious disappearance, recalled him. Adrian it is true had already gone to seek the fugitive, imagining that her tameless anxiety had led her to the purlieus of the House, and that some sinister event detained her. But Raymond, without explaining himself, suddenly quitted us, and in another moment we heard him gallop down the street, in spite of the wind and rain that scattered tempest over the earth. We did not know how far he had to go, and soon separated, supposing that in a short time he would return to the palace with Perdita, and that they would not be sorry to find themselves alone.

Perdita had arrived with her child at Dartford, weeping and inconsolable. She directed everything to be prepared for the

continuance of their journey, and placing her lovely sleeping charge on a bed, passed several hours in acute suffering. Sometimes she observed the war of elements, thinking that they also declared against her, and listened to the pattering of the rain in gloomy despair. Sometimes she hung over her child, tracing her resemblance to the father, and fearful lest in after life she should display the same passions and uncontrollable impulses, that rendered him unhappy. Again, with a gush of pride and delight, she marked in the features of her little girl, the same smile of beauty that often irradiated Raymond's countenance. The sight of it soothed her. She thought of the treasure she possessed in the affections of her lord; of his accomplishments, surpassing those of his contemporaries, his genius, his devotion to her.—Soon she thought, that all she possessed in the world, except him, might well be spared, nay, given with delight, a propitiatory offering, to secure the supreme good she retained in him. Soon she imagined, that fate demanded this sacrifice from her, as a mark she was devoted to Raymond, and that it must be made with cheerfulness. She figured to herself their life in the Greek isle he had selected for their retreat; her task of soothing him; her cares for the beauteous Clara, her rides in his company, her dedication of herself to his consolation. The picture then presented itself to her in such glowing colours, that she feared the reverse, and a life of magnificence and power in London; where Raymond would no longer be hers only, nor she the sole source of happiness to him. So far as she merely was concerned, she began to hope for defeat; and it was only on his account that her feelings vacillated, as she heard him gallop into the court-yard of the inn. That he should come to her alone, wetted by the storm, careless of every thing except speed, what else could it mean, than that, vanquished and solitary, they were to take their way from native England, the scene of shame, and hide themselves in the myrtle groves of the Grecian isles?

In a moment she was in his arms. The knowledge of his success had become so much a part of himself, that he forgot that it was necessary to impart it to his companion. She only felt in his embrace a dear assurance that while he possessed her, he would

not despair. "This is kind," she cried; "this is noble, my own beloved! O fear not disgrace or lowly fortune, while you have your Perdita; fear not sorrow, while our child lives and smiles. Let us go even where you will; the love that accompanies us will prevent our regrets."

Locked in his embrace, she spoke thus, and cast back her head, seeking an assent to her words in his eyes—they were sparkling with ineffable delight. "Why, my little Lady Protectress," said he, playfully, "what is this you say? And what pretty scheme have you woven of exile and obscurity, while a brighter web, a goldenwoven tissue, is that which, in truth, you ought to contemplate?"

He kissed her brow—but the wayward girl, half sorry at his triumph, agitated by swift change of thought, hid her face in his bosom and wept. He comforted her; he instilled into her his own hopes and desires; and soon her countenance beamed with sympathy. How very happy were they that night! How full even to bursting was their sense of joy!

Chapter VII

Having seen our friend properly installed in his new office, we turned our eyes towards Windsor. The nearness of this place to London was such, as to take away the idea of painful separation, when we quitted Raymond and Perdita. We took leave of them in the Protectoral Palace. It was pretty enough to see my sister enter as it were into the spirit of the drama, and endeavour to fill her station with becoming dignity. Her internal pride and humility of manner were now more than ever at war. Her timidity was not artificial, but arose from that fear of not being properly appreciated, that slight estimation of the neglect of the world, which also characterized Raymond. But then Perdita thought more constantly of others than he; and part of her bashfulness arose from a wish to take from those around her a sense of inferiority; a feeling which never crossed her mind. From the circumstances of her birth and education, Idris would have been better fitted for the formulae of ceremony; but the very ease

which accompanied such actions with her, arising from habit, rendered them tedious; while, with every drawback, Perdita evidently enjoyed her situation. She was too full of new ideas to feel much pain when we departed; she took an affectionate leave of us, and promised to visit us soon; but she did not regret the circumstances that caused our separation. The spirits of Raymond were unbounded; he did not know what to do with his new got power; his head was full of plans; he had as yet decided on none — but he promised himself, his friends, and the world, that the aera of his Protectorship should be signalized by some act of surpassing glory. Thus, we talked of them, and moralized, as with diminished numbers we returned to Windsor Castle. We felt extreme delight at our escape from political turmoil, and sought our solitude with redoubled zest. We did not want for occupation; but my eager disposition was now turned to the field of intellectual exertion only; and hard study I found to be an excellent medicine to allay a fever of spirit with which in indolence, I should doubtless have been assailed. Perdita had permitted us to take Clara back with us to Windsor; and she and my two lovely infants were perpetual sources of interest and amusement.

The only circumstance that disturbed our peace, was the health of Adrian. It evidently declined, without any symptom which could lead us to suspect his disease, unless indeed his brightened eyes, animated look, and flustering cheeks, made us dread consumption; but he was without pain or fear. He betook himself to books with ardour, and reposed from study in the society he best loved, that of his sister and myself. Sometimes he went up to London to visit Raymond, and watch the progress of events. Clara often accompanied him in these excursions; partly that she might see her parents, partly because Adrian delighted in the prattle, and intelligent looks of this lovely child.

Meanwhile all went on well in London. The new elections were finished; parliament met, and Raymond was occupied in a thousand beneficial schemes. Canals, aqueducts, bridges, stately buildings, and various edifices for public utility, were entered upon; he was continually surrounded by projectors and projects,

which were to render England one scene of fertility and magnificence; the state of poverty was to be abolished; men were to be transported from place to place almost with the same facility as the Princes Houssain, Ali, and Ahmed, in the Arabian Nights. The physical state of man would soon not yield to the beatitude of angels; disease was to be banished; labour lightened of its heaviest burden. Nor did this seem extravagant. The arts of life, and the discoveries of science had augmented in a ratio which left all calculation behind; food sprung up, so to say, spontaneously—machines existed to supply with facility every want of the population. An evil direction still survived; and men were not happy, not because they could not, but because they would not rouse themselves to vanquish self-raised obstacles. Raymond was to inspire them with his beneficial will, and the mechanism of society, once systematised according to faultless rules, would never again swerve into disorder. For these hopes he abandoned his long-cherished ambition of being enregistered in the annals of nations as a successful warrior; laying aside his sword, peace and its enduring glories became his aim—the title he coveted was that of the benefactor of his country.

Among other works of art in which he was engaged, he had projected the erection of a national gallery for statues and pictures. He possessed many himself, which he designed to present to the Republic; and, as the edifice was to be the great ornament of his Protectorship, he was very fastidious in his choice of the plan on which it would be built. Hundreds were brought to him and rejected. He sent even to Italy and Greece for drawings; but, as the design was to be characterized by originality as well as by perfect beauty, his endeavours were for a time without avail. At length a drawing came, with an address where communications might be sent, and no artist's name affixed. The design was new and elegant, but faulty; so faulty, that although drawn with the hand and eye of taste, it was evidently the work of one who was not an architect. Raymond contemplated it with delight; the more he gazed, the more pleased he was; and yet the errors multiplied under inspection. He wrote to the address given, desiring to see the draughtsman, that such alterations might be

made, as should be suggested in a consultation between him and the original conceiver.

A Greek came. A middle-aged man, with some intelligence of manner, but with so common-place a physiognomy, that Raymond could scarcely believe that he was the designer. He acknowledged that he was not an architect; but the idea of the building had struck him, though he had sent it without the smallest hope of its being accepted. He was a man of few words. Raymond questioned him; but his reserved answers soon made him turn from the man to the drawing. He pointed out the errors, and the alterations that he wished to be made; he offered the Greek a pencil that he might correct the sketch on the spot; this was refused by his visitor, who said that he perfectly understood, and would work at it at home. At length Raymond suffered him to depart.

The next day he returned. The design had been re-drawn; but many defects still remained, and several of the instructions given had been misunderstood. "Come," said Raymond, "I yielded to you yesterday, now comply with my request—take the pencil."

The Greek took it, but he handled it in no artist-like way; at length he said: "I must confess to you, my Lord, that I did not make this drawing. It is impossible for you to see the real designer; your instructions must pass through me. Condescend therefore to have patience with my ignorance, and to explain your wishes to me; in time I am certain that you will be satisfied."

Raymond questioned vainly; the mysterious Greek would say no more. Would an architect be permitted to see the artist? This also was refused. Raymond repeated his instructions, and the visitor retired. Our friend resolved however not to be foiled in his wish. He suspected, that unaccustomed poverty was the cause of the mystery, and that the artist was unwilling to be seen in the garb and abode of want. Raymond was only the more excited by this consideration to discover him; impelled by the interest he took in obscure talent, he therefore ordered a person skilled in such matters, to follow the Greek the next time he came, and observe the house in which he should enter. His emissary obeyed, and brought the desired intelligence. He had traced the man to

one of the most penurious streets in the metropolis. Raymond did not wonder, that, thus situated, the artist had shrunk from notice, but he did not for this alter his resolve.

On the same evening, he went alone to the house named to him. Poverty, dirt, and squalid misery characterized its appearance. Alas! thought Raymond, I have much to do before England becomes a Paradise. He knocked; the door was opened by a string from above—the broken, wretched staircase was immediately before him, but no person appeared; he knocked again, vainly—and then, impatient of further delay, he ascended the dark, creaking stairs. His main wish, more particularly now that he witnessed the abject dwelling of the artist, was to relieve one, possessed of talent, but depressed by want. He pictured to himself a youth, whose eyes sparkled with genius, whose person was attenuated by famine. He half feared to displease him; but he trusted that his generous kindness would be administered so delicately, as not to excite repulse. What human heart is shut to kindness? and though poverty, in its excess, might render the sufferer unapt to submit to the supposed degradation of a benefit, the zeal of the benefactor must at last relax him into thankfulness. These thoughts encouraged Raymond, as he stood at the door of the highest room of the house. After trying vainly to enter the other apartments, he perceived just within the threshold of this one, a pair of small Turkish slippers; the door was ajar, but all was silent within. It was probable that the inmate was absent, but secure that he had found the right person, our adventurous Protector was tempted to enter, to leave a purse on the table, and silently depart. In pursuance of this idea, he pushed open the door gently—but the room was inhabited.

Raymond had never visited the dwellings of want, and the scene that now presented itself struck him to the heart. The floor was sunk in many places; the walls ragged and bare—the ceiling weather-stained—a tattered bed stood in the corner; there were but two chairs in the room, and a rough broken table, on which was a light in a tin candlestick;—yet in the midst of such drear and heart sickening poverty, there was an air of order and cleanliness that surprised him. The thought was fleeting; for his

attention was instantly drawn towards the inhabitant of this wretched abode. It was a female. She sat at the table; one small hand shaded her eyes from the candle; the other held a pencil; her looks were fixed on a drawing before her, which Raymond recognized as the design presented to him. Her whole appearance awakened his deepest interest. Her dark hair was braided and twined in thick knots like the head-dress of a Grecian statue; her garb was mean, but her attitude might have been selected as a model of grace. Raymond had a confused remembrance that he had seen such a form before; he walked across the room; she did not raise her eyes, merely asking in Romaic, who is there? "A friend," replied Raymond in the same dialect. She looked up wondering, and he saw that it was Evadne Zaimi. Evadne, once the idol of Adrian's affections; and who, for the sake of her present visitor, had disdained the noble youth, and then, neglected by him she loved, with crushed hopes and a stinging sense of misery, had returned to her native Greece. What revolution of fortune could have brought her to England, and housed her thus?

Raymond recognized her; and his manner changed from polite beneficence to the warmest protestations of kindness and sympathy. The sight of her, in her present situation, passed like an arrow into his soul. He sat by her, he took her hand, and said a thousand things which breathed the deepest spirit of compassion and affection. Evadne did not answer; her large dark eyes were cast down, at length a tear glimmered on the lashes. "Thus," she cried, "kindness can do, what no want, no misery ever effected; I weep." She shed indeed many tears; her head sunk unconsciously on the shoulder of Raymond; he held her hand: he kissed her sunken tear-stained cheek. He told her, that her sufferings were now over: no one possessed the art of consoling like Raymond; he did not reason or declaim, but his look shone with sympathy; he brought pleasant images before the sufferer; his caresses excited no distrust, for they arose purely from the feeling which leads a mother to kiss her wounded child; a desire to demonstrate in every possible way the truth of his feelings, and the keenness of his wish to pour balm into the lacerated mind of the unfortunate. As Evadne regained her composure, his manner became even

gay; he sported with the idea of her poverty. Something told him that it was not its real evils that lay heavily at her heart, but the debasement and disgrace attendant on it; as he talked, he divested it of these; sometimes speaking of her fortitude with energetic praise; then, alluding to her past state, he called her his Princess in disguise. He made her warm offers of service; she was too much occupied by more engrossing thoughts, either to accept or reject them; at length he left her, making a promise to repeat his visit the next day. He returned home, full of mingled feelings, of pain excited by Evadne's wretchedness, and pleasure at the prospect of relieving it. Some motive for which he did not account, even to himself, prevented him from relating his adventure to Perdita.

The next day he threw such disguise over his person as a cloak afforded, and revisited Evadne. As he went, he bought a basket of costly fruits, such as were natives of her own country, and throwing over these various beautiful flowers, bore it himself to the miserable garret of his friend. "Behold," cried he, as he entered, "what bird's food I have brought for my sparrow on the house-top."

Evadne now related the tale of her misfortunes. Her father, though of high rank, had in the end dissipated his fortune, and even destroyed his reputation and influence through a course of dissolute indulgence. His health was impaired beyond hope of cure; and it became his earnest wish, before he died, to preserve his daughter from the poverty which would be the portion of her orphan state. He therefore accepted for her, and persuaded her to accede to, a proposal of marriage, from a wealthy Greek merchant settled at Constantinople. She quitted her native Greece; her father died; by degrees she was cut off from all the companions and ties of her youth.

The war, which about a year before the present time had broken out between Greece and Turkey, brought about many reverses of fortune. Her husband became bankrupt, and then in a tumult and threatened massacre on the part of the Turks, they were obliged to fly at midnight, and reached in an open boat an English vessel under sail, which brought them immediately to this

island. The few jewels they had saved, supported them awhile. The whole strength of Evadne's mind was exerted to support the failing spirits of her husband. Loss of property, hopelessness as to his future prospects, the inoccupation to which poverty condemned him, combined to reduce him to a state bordering on insanity. Five months after their arrival in England, he committed suicide.

"You will ask me," continued Evadne, "what I have done since; why I have not applied for succour to the rich Greeks resident here; why I have not returned to my native country? My answer to these questions must needs appear to you unsatisfactory, yet they have sufficed to lead me on, day after day, enduring every wretchedness, rather than by such means to seek relief. Shall the daughter of the noble, though prodigal Zaimi, appear a beggar before her compeers or inferiors—superiors she had none. Shall I bow my head before them, and with servile gesture sell my nobility for life? Had I a child, or any tie to bind me to existence, I might descend to this—but, as it is—the world has been to me a harsh step-mother; fain would I leave the abode she seems to grudge, and in the grave forget my pride, my struggles, my despair. The time will soon come; grief and famine have already sapped the foundations of my being; a very short time, and I shall have passed away; unstained by the crime of self-destruction, unstung by the memory of degradation, my spirit will throw aside the miserable coil, and find such recompense as fortitude and resignation may deserve. This may seem madness to you, yet you also have pride and resolution; do not then wonder that my pride is tameless, my resolution unalterable."

Having thus finished her tale, and given such an account as she deemed fit, of the motives of her abstaining from all endeavour to obtain aid from her countrymen, Evadne paused; yet she seemed to have more to say, to which she was unable to give words. In the mean time Raymond was eloquent. His desire of restoring his lovely friend to her rank in society, and to her lost prosperity, animated him, and he poured forth with energy, all his wishes and intentions on that subject. But he was checked; Evadne exacted a promise, that he should conceal from all her friends her existence

in England. "The relatives of the Earl of Windsor," said she haughtily, "doubtless think that I injured him; perhaps the Earl himself would be the first to acquit me, but probably I do not deserve acquittal. I acted then, as I ever must, from impulse. This abode of penury may at least prove the disinterestedness of my conduct. No matter: I do not wish to plead my cause before any of them, not even before your Lordship, had you not first discovered me. The tenor of my actions will prove that I had rather die, than be a mark for scorn—behold the proud Evadne in her tatters! look on the beggar-princess! There is aspic venom in the thought—promise me that my secret shall not be violated by you."

Raymond promised; but then a new discussion ensued. Evadne required another engagement on his part, that he would not without her concurrence enter into any project for her benefit, nor himself offer relief. "Do not degrade me in my own eyes," she said; "poverty has long been my nurse; hard-visaged she is, but honest. If dishonour, or what I conceive to be dishonour, come near me, I am lost." Raymond adduced many arguments and fervent persuasions to overcome her feeling, but she remained unconvinced; and, agitated by the discussion, she wildly and passionately made a solemn vow, to fly and hide herself where he never could discover her, where famine would soon bring death to conclude her woes, if he persisted in his to her disgracing offers. She could support herself, she said. And then she shewed him how, by executing various designs and paintings, she earned a pittance for her support. Raymond yielded for the present. He felt assured, after he had for awhile humoured her self-will, that in the end friendship and reason would gain the day.

But the feelings that actuated Evadne were rooted in the depths of her being, and were such in their growth as he had no means of understanding. Evadne loved Raymond. He was the hero of her imagination, the image carved by love in the unchanged texture of her heart. Seven years ago, in her youthful prime, she had become attached to him; he had served her country against the Turks; he had in her own land acquired that military glory peculiarly dear to the Greeks, since they were still obliged inch by inch to fight for their security. Yet when he returned thence, and first appeared in

public life in England, her love did not purchase his, which then vacillated between Perdita and a crown. While he was yet undecided, she had quitted England; the news of his marriage reached her, and her hopes, poorly nurtured blossoms, withered and fell. The glory of life was gone for her; the roseate halo of love, which had imbued every object with its own colour, faded;—she was content to take life as it was, and to make the best of leaden-coloured reality. She married; and, carrying her restless energy of character with her into new scenes, she turned her thoughts to ambition, and aimed at the title and power of Princess of Wallachia; while her patriotic feelings were soothed by the idea of the good she might do her country, when her husband should be chief of this principality. She lived to find ambition, as unreal a delusion as love. Her intrigues with Russia for the furtherance of her object, excited the jealousy of the Porte, and the animosity of the Greek government. She was considered a traitor by both, the ruin of her husband followed; they avoided death by a timely flight, and she fell from the height of her desires to penury in England. Much of this tale she concealed from Raymond; nor did she confess, that repulse and denial, as to a criminal convicted of the worst of crimes, that of bringing the scythe of foreign despotism to cut away the new springing liberties of her country, would have followed her application to any among the Greeks.

She knew that she was the cause of her husband's utter ruin; and she strung herself to bear the consequences. The reproaches which agony extorted; or worse, cureless, uncomplaining depression, when his mind was sunk in a torpor, not the less painful because it was silent and moveless. She reproached herself with the crime of his death; guilt and its punishments appeared to surround her; in vain she endeavoured to allay remorse by the memory of her real integrity; the rest of the world, and she among them, judged of her actions, by their consequences. She prayed for her husband's soul; she conjured the Supreme to place on her head the crime of his self-destruction—she vowed to live to expiate his fault.

In the midst of such wretchedness as must soon have destroyed her, one thought only was matter of consolation. She lived in the

same country, breathed the same air as Raymond. His name as Protector was the burthen of every tongue; his achievements, projects, and magnificence, the argument of every story. Nothing is so precious to a woman's heart as the glory and excellence of him she loves; thus in every horror Evadne revelled in his fame and prosperity. While her husband lived, this feeling was regarded by her as a crime, repressed, repented of. When he died, the tide of love resumed its ancient flow, it deluged her soul with its tumultuous waves, and she gave herself up a prey to its uncontrollable power.

But never, O, never, should he see her in her degraded state. Never should he behold her fallen, as she deemed, from her pride of beauty, the poverty-stricken inhabitant of a garret, with a name which had become a reproach, and a weight of guilt on her soul. But though impenetrably veiled from him, his public office permitted her to become acquainted with all his actions, his daily course of life, even his conversation. She allowed herself one luxury, she saw the newspapers every day, and feasted on the praise and actions of the Protector. Not that this indulgence was devoid of accompanying grief. Perdita's name was for ever joined with his; their conjugal felicity was celebrated even by the authentic testimony of facts. They were continually together, nor could the unfortunate Evadne read the monosyllable that designated his name, without, at the same time, being presented with the image of her who was the faithful companion of all his labours and pleasures. They, their Excellencies, met her eyes in each line, mingling an evil potion that poisoned her very blood.

It was in the newspaper that she saw the advertisement for the design for a national gallery. Combining with taste her remembrance of the edifices which she had seen in the east, and by an effort of genius enduing them with unity of design, she executed the plan which had been sent to the Protector. She triumphed in the idea of bestowing, unknown and forgotten as she was, a benefit upon him she loved; and with enthusiastic pride looked forward to the accomplishment of a work of hers, which, immortalized in stone, would go down to posterity stamped with the name of Raymond. She awaited with eagerness the return of

her messenger from the palace; she listened insatiate to his account of each word, each look of the Protector; she felt bliss in this communication with her beloved, although he knew not to whom he addressed his instructions. The drawing itself became ineffably dear to her. He had seen it, and praised it; it was again retouched by her, each stroke of her pencil was as a chord of thrilling music, and bore to her the idea of a temple raised to celebrate the deepest and most unutterable emotions of her soul. These contemplations engaged her, when the voice of Raymond first struck her ear, a voice, once heard, never to be forgotten; she mastered her gush of feelings, and welcomed him with quiet gentleness.

Pride and tenderness now struggled, and at length made a compromise together. She would see Raymond, since destiny had led him to her, and her constancy and devotion must merit his friendship. But her rights with regard to him, and her cherished independence, should not be injured by the idea of interest, or the intervention of the complicated feelings attendant on pecuniary obligation, and the relative situations of the benefactor, and benefited. Her mind was of uncommon strength; she could subdue her sensible wants to her mental wishes, and suffer cold, hunger and misery, rather than concede to fortune a contested point. Alas! that in human nature such a pitch of mental discipline, and disdainful negligence of nature itself, should not have been allied to the extreme of moral excellence! But the resolution that permitted her to resist the pains of privation, sprung from the too great energy of her passions; and the concentrated self-will of which this was a sign, was destined to destroy even the very idol, to preserve whose respect she submitted to this detail of wretchedness.

Their intercourse continued. By degrees Evadne related to her friend the whole of her story, the stain her name had received in Greece, the weight of sin which had accrued to her from the death of her husband. When Raymond offered to clear her reputation, and demonstrate to the world her real patriotism, she declared that it was only through her present sufferings that she hoped for any relief to the stings of conscience; that, in her state of mind,

diseased as he might think it, the necessity of occupation was salutary medicine; she ended by extorting a promise that for the space of one month he would refrain from the discussion of her interests, engaging after that time to yield in part to his wishes. She could not disguise to herself that any change would separate her from him; now she saw him each day. His connection with Adrian and Perdita was never mentioned; he was to her a meteor, a companionless star, which at its appointed hour rose in her hemisphere, whose appearance brought felicity, and which, although it set, was never eclipsed. He came each day to her abode of penury, and his presence transformed it to a temple redolent with sweets, radiant with heaven's own light; he partook of her delirium. "They built a wall between them and the world"—Without, a thousand harpies raved, remorse and misery, expecting the destined moment for their invasion. Within, was the peace as of innocence, reckless blindness, deluding joy, hope, whose still anchor rested on placid but unconstant water.

Thus, while Raymond had been wrapt in visions of power and fame, while he looked forward to entire dominion over the elements and the mind of man, the territory of his own heart escaped his notice; and from that unthought of source arose the mighty torrent that overwhelmed his will, and carried to the oblivious sea, fame, hope, and happiness.

Chapter VIII

In the mean time what did Perdita?

310

During the first months of his Protectorate, Raymond and she had been inseparable; each project was discussed with her, each plan approved by her. I never beheld any one so perfectly happy as my sweet sister. Her expressive eyes were two stars whose beams were love; hope and light-heartedness sat on her cloudless brow. She fed even to tears of joy on the praise and glory of her Lord; her whole existence was one sacrifice to him, and if in the humility of her heart she felt self-complacency, it arose from the reflection that she had won the distinguished hero of the age, and had for years preserved him, even after time had taken from love

its usual nourishment. Her own feeling was as entire as at its birth. Five years had failed to destroy the dazzling unreality of passion. Most men ruthlessly destroy the sacred veil, with which the female heart is wont to adorn the idol of its affections. Not so Raymond; he was an enchanter, whose reign was for ever undiminished; a king whose power never was suspended: follow him through the details of common life, still the same charm of grace and majesty adorned him; nor could he be despoiled of the innate deification with which nature had invested him. Perdita grew in beauty and excellence under his eye; I no longer recognised my reserved abstracted sister in the fascinating and open-hearted wife of Raymond. The genius that enlightened her countenance, was now united to an expression of benevolence, which gave divine perfection to her beauty.

Happiness is in its highest degree the sister of goodness. Suffering and amiability may exist together, and writers have loved to depict their conjunction; there is a human and touching harmony in the picture. But perfect happiness is an attribute of angels; and those who possess it, appear angelic. Fear has been said to be the parent of religion: even of that religion is it the generator, which leads its votaries to sacrifice human victims at its altars; but the religion which springs from happiness is a lovelier growth; the religion which makes the heart breathe forth fervent thanksgiving, and causes us to pour out the overflowings of the soul before the author of our being; that which is the parent of the imagination and the nurse of poetry; that which bestows benevolent intelligence on the visible mechanism of the world, and makes earth a temple with heaven for its cope. Such happiness, goodness, and religion inhabited the mind of Perdita.

During the five years we had spent together, a knot of happy human beings at Windsor Castle, her blissful lot had been the frequent theme of my sister's conversation. From early habit, and natural affection, she selected me in preference to Adrian or Idris, to be the partner in her overflowings of delight; perhaps, though apparently much unlike, some secret point of resemblance, the offspring of consanguinity, induced this preference. Often at sunset, I have walked with her, in the sober, enshadowed forest

paths, and listened with joyful sympathy. Security gave dignity to her passion; the certainty of a full return, left her with no wish unfulfilled. The birth of her daughter, embryo copy of her Raymond, filled up the measure of her content, and produced a sacred and indissoluble tie between them. Sometimes she felt proud that he had preferred her to the hopes of a crown. Sometimes she remembered that she had suffered keen anguish, when he hesitated in his choice. But this memory of past discontent only served to enhance her present joy. What had been hardly won, was now, entirely possessed, doubly dear. She would look at him at a distance with the same rapture, (O, far more exuberant rapture!) that one might feel, who after the perils of a tempest, should find himself in the desired port; she would hasten towards him, to feel more certain in his arms, the reality of her bliss. This warmth of affection, added to the depth of her understanding, and the brilliancy of her imagination, made her beyond words dear to Raymond.

If a feeling of dissatisfaction ever crossed her, it arose from the idea that he was not perfectly happy. Desire of renown, and presumptuous ambition, had characterized his youth. The one he had acquired in Greece; the other he had sacrificed to love. His intellect found sufficient field for exercise in his domestic circle, whose members, all adorned by refinement and literature, were many of them, like himself, distinguished by genius. Yet active life was the genuine soil for his virtues; and he sometimes suffered tedium from the monotonous succession of events in our retirement. Pride made him recoil from complaint; and gratitude and affection to Perdita, generally acted as an opiate to all desire, save that of meriting her love. We all observed the visitation of these feelings, and none regretted them so much as Perdita. Her life consecrated to him, was a slight sacrifice to reward his choice, but was not that sufficient—Did he need any gratification that she was unable to bestow? This was the only cloud in the azure of her happiness.

His passage to power had been full of pain to both. He however attained his wish; he filled the situation for which nature seemed to have moulded him. His activity was fed in wholesome

measure, without either exhaustion or satiety; his taste and genius found worthy expression in each of the modes human beings have invented to encage and manifest the spirit of beauty; the goodness of his heart made him never weary of conducing to the well-being of his fellow-creatures; his magnificent spirit, and aspirations for the respect and love of mankind, now received fruition; true, his exaltation was temporary; perhaps it were better that it should be so. Habit would not dull his sense of the enjoyment of power; nor struggles, disappointment and defeat await the end of that which would expire at its maturity. He determined to extract and condense all of glory, power, and achievement, which might have resulted from a long reign, into the three years of his Protectorate.

Raymond was eminently social. All that he now enjoyed would have been devoid of pleasure to him, had it been unparticipated. But in Perdita he possessed all that his heart could desire. Her love gave birth to sympathy; her intelligence made her understand him at a word; her powers of intellect enabled her to assist and guide him. He felt her worth. During the early years of their union, the inequality of her temper, and yet unsubdued self-will which tarnished her character, had been a slight drawback to the fulness of his sentiment. Now that unchanged serenity, and gentle compliance were added to her other qualifications, his respect equalled his love. Years added to the strictness of their union. They did not now guess at, and totter on the pathway, divining the mode to please, hoping, yet fearing the continuance of bliss. Five years gave a sober certainty to their emotions, though it did not rob them of their ethereal nature. It had given them a child; but it had not detracted from the personal attractions of my sister. Timidity, which in her had almost amounted to awkwardness, was exchanged for a graceful decision of manner; frankness, instead of reserve, characterized her physiognomy; and her voice was attuned to thrilling softness. She was now three and twenty, in the pride of womanhood, fulfilling the precious duties of wife and mother, possessed of all her heart had ever coveted. Raymond was ten years older; to his previous beauty, noble mien, and commanding aspect, he now added gentlest benevolence,

winning tenderness, graceful and unwearied attention to the wishes of another.

The first secret that had existed between them was the visits of Raymond to Evadne. He had been struck by the fortitude and beauty of the ill-fated Greek; and, when her constant tenderness towards him unfolded itself, he asked with astonishment, by what act of his he had merited this passionate and unrequited love. She was for a while the sole object of his reveries; and Perdita became aware that his thoughts and time were bestowed on a subject unparticipated by her. My sister was by nature destitute of the common feelings of anxious, petulant jealousy. The treasure which she possessed in the affections of Raymond, was more necessary to her being, than the life-blood that animated her veins—more truly than Othello she might say,

To be once in doubt,
Is—once to be resolved.

On the present occasion she did not suspect any alienation of affection; but she conjectured that some circumstance connected with his high place, had occasioned this mystery. She was startled and pained. She began to count the long days, and months, and years which must elapse, before he would be restored to a private station, and unreservedly to her. She was not content that, even for a time, he should practice concealment with her. She often repined; but her trust in the singleness of his affection was undisturbed; and, when they were together, unchecked by fear, she opened her heart to the fullest delight.

Time went on. Raymond, stopping mid-way in his wild career, paused suddenly to think of consequences. Two results presented themselves in the view he took of the future. That his intercourse with Evadne should continue a secret to, or that finally it should be discovered by Perdita. The destitute condition, and highly wrought feelings of his friend prevented him from adverting to the possibility of exiling himself from her. In the first event he had bidden an eternal farewell to open-hearted converse, and entire sympathy with the companion of his life. The veil must be

thicker than that invented by Turkish jealousy; the wall higher than the unscaleable tower of Vathek, which should conceal from her the workings of his heart, and hide from her view the secret of his actions. This idea was intolerably painful to him. Frankness and social feelings were the essence of Raymond's nature; without them his qualities became common-place; without these to spread glory over his intercourse with Perdita, his vaunted exchange of a throne for her love, was as weak and empty as the rainbow hues which vanish when the sun is down. But there was no remedy. Genius, devotion, and courage; the adornments of his mind, and the energies of his soul, all exerted to their uttermost stretch, could not roll back one hair's breadth the wheel of time's chariot; that which had been was written with the adamant pen of reality, on the everlasting volume of the past; nor could agony and tears suffice to wash out one iota from the act fulfilled.

But this was the best side of the question. What, if circumstance should lead Perdita to suspect, and suspecting to be resolved? The fibres of his frame became relaxed, and cold dew stood on his forehead, at this idea. Many men may scoff at his dread; but he read the future; and the peace of Perdita was too dear to him, her speechless agony too certain, and too fearful, not to unman him. His course was speedily decided upon. If the worst befell; if she learnt the truth, he would neither stand her reproaches, or the anguish of her altered looks. He would forsake her, England, his friends, the scenes of his youth, the hopes of coming time, he would seek another country, and in other scenes begin life again. Having resolved on this, he became calmer. He endeavoured to guide with prudence the steeds of destiny through the devious road which he had chosen, and bent all his efforts the better to conceal what he could not alter.

The perfect confidence that subsisted between Perdita and him, rendered every communication common between them. They opened each other's letters, even as, until now, the inmost fold of the heart of each was disclosed to the other. A letter came unawares, Perdita read it. Had it contained confirmation, she must have been annihilated. As it was, trembling, cold, and pale, she sought Raymond. He was alone, examining some petitions lately

presented. She entered silently, sat on a sofa opposite to him, and gazed on him with a look of such despair, that wildest shrieks and dire moans would have been tame exhibitions of misery, compared to the living incarnation of the thing itself exhibited by her.

At first he did not take his eyes from the papers; when he raised them, he was struck by the wretchedness manifest on her altered cheek; for a moment he forgot his own acts and fears, and asked with consternation—"Dearest girl, what is the matter; what has happened?"

"Nothing," she replied at first; "and yet not so," she continued, hurrying on in her speech; "you have secrets, Raymond; where have you been lately, whom have you seen, what do you conceal from me?—why am I banished from your confidence? Yet this is not it—I do not intend to entrap you with questions—one will suffice—am I completely a wretch?"

With trembling hand she gave him the paper, and sat white and motionless looking at him while he read it. He recognised the hand-writing of Evadne, and the colour mounted in his cheeks. With lightning-speed he conceived the contents of the letter; all was now cast on one die; falsehood and artifice were trifles in comparison with the impending ruin. He would either entirely dispel Perdita's suspicions, or quit her for ever. "My dear girl," he said, "I have been to blame; but you must pardon me. I was in the wrong to commence a system of concealment; but I did it for the sake of sparing you pain; and each day has rendered it more difficult for me to alter my plan. Besides, I was instigated by delicacy towards the unhappy writer of these few lines."

Perdita gasped: "Well," she cried, "well, go on!"

325

"That is all—this paper tells all. I am placed in the most difficult circumstances. I have done my best, though perhaps I have done wrong. My love for you is inviolate."

Perdita shook her head doubtingly: "It cannot be," she cried, "I know that it is not. You would deceive me, but I will not be deceived. I have lost you, myself, my life!"

"Do you not believe me?" said Raymond haughtily.

"To believe you," she exclaimed, "I would give up all, and expire with joy, so that in death I could feel that you were true—but that cannot be!"

"Perdita," continued Raymond, "you do not see the precipice on which you stand. You may believe that I did not enter on my present line of conduct without reluctance and pain. I knew that it was possible that your suspicions might be excited; but I trusted that my simple word would cause them to disappear. I built my hope on your confidence. Do you think that I will be questioned, and my replies disdainfully set aside? Do you think that I will be suspected, perhaps watched, cross-questioned, and disbelieved? I am not yet fallen so low; my honour is not yet so tarnished. You have loved me; I adored you. But all human sentiments come to an end. Let our affection expire—but let it not be exchanged for distrust and recrimination. Heretofore we have been friends—lovers—let us not become enemies, mutual spies. I cannot live the object of suspicion—you cannot believe me—let us part!"

"Exactly so," cried Perdita, "I knew that it would come to this! Are we not already parted? Does not a stream, boundless as ocean, deep as vacuum, yawn between us?"

Raymond rose, his voice was broken, his features convulsed, his manner calm as the earthquake-cradling atmosphere, he replied: "I am rejoiced that you take my decision so philosophically. Doubtless you will play the part of the injured wife to admiration. Sometimes you may be stung with the feeling that you have wronged me, but the condolence of your relatives, the pity of the world, the complacency which the consciousness of your own immaculate innocence will bestow, will be excellent balm;—me you will never see more!"

Raymond moved towards the door. He forgot that each word he spoke was false. He personated his assumption of innocence even to self-deception. Have not actors wept, as they portrayed imagined passion? A more intense feeling of the reality of fiction possessed Raymond. He spoke with pride; he felt injured. Perdita looked up; she saw his angry glance; his hand was on the lock of the door. She started up, she threw herself on his neck, she gasped and sobbed; he took her hand, and leading her to the sofa, sat

down near her. Her head fell on his shoulder, she trembled, alternate changes of fire and ice ran through her limbs: observing her emotion he spoke with softened accents:

"The blow is given. I will not part from you in anger;—I owe you too much. I owe you six years of unalloyed happiness. But they are passed. I will not live the mark of suspicion, the object of jealousy. I love you too well. In an eternal separation only can either of us hope for dignity and propriety of action. We shall not then be degraded from our true characters. Faith and devotion have hitherto been the essence of our intercourse;—these lost, let us not cling to the seedless husk of life, the unkernelled shell. You have your child, your brother, Idris, Adrian"—

"And you," cried Perdita, "the writer of that letter."

335

Uncontrollable indignation flashed from the eyes of Raymond. He knew that this accusation at least was false. "Entertain this belief," he cried, "hug it to your heart—make it a pillow to your head, an opiate for your eyes—I am content. But, by the God that made me, hell is not more false than the word you have spoken!"

Perdita was struck by the impassioned seriousness of his asseverations. She replied with earnestness, "I do not refuse to believe you, Raymond; on the contrary I promise to put implicit faith in your simple word. Only assure me that your love and faith towards me have never been violated; and suspicion, and doubt, and jealousy will at once be dispersed. We shall continue as we have ever done, one heart, one hope, one life."

"I have already assured you of my fidelity," said Raymond with disdainful coldness, "triple assertions will avail nothing where one is despised. I will say no more; for I can add nothing to what I have already said, to what you before contemptuously set aside. This contention is unworthy of both of us; and I confess that I am weary of replying to charges at once unfounded and unkind."

Perdita tried to read his countenance, which he angrily averted. There was so much of truth and nature in his resentment, that her doubts were dispelled. Her countenance, which for years had not expressed a feeling unallied to affection, became again radiant and satisfied. She found it however no easy task to soften and

reconcile Raymond. At first he refused to stay to hear her. But she would not be put off; secure of his unaltered love, she was willing to undertake any labour, use any entreaty, to dispel his anger. She obtained an hearing, he sat in haughty silence, but he listened. She first assured him of her boundless confidence; of this he must be conscious, since but for that she would not seek to detain him. She enumerated their years of happiness; she brought before him past scenes of intimacy and happiness; she pictured their future life, she mentioned their child—tears unbidden now filled her eyes. She tried to disperse them, but they refused to be checked—her utterance was choaked. She had not wept before. Raymond could not resist these signs of distress: he felt perhaps somewhat ashamed of the part he acted of the injured man, he who was in truth the injurer. And then he devoutly loved Perdita; the bend of her head, her glossy ringlets, the turn of her form were to him subjects of deep tenderness and admiration; as she spoke, her melodious tones entered his soul; he soon softened towards her, comforting and caressing her, and endeavouring to cheat himself into the belief that he had never wronged her.

Raymond staggered forth from this scene, as a man might do, who had been just put to the torture, and looked forward to when it would be again inflicted. He had sinned against his own honour, by affirming, swearing to, a direct falsehood; true this he had palmed on a woman, and it might therefore be deemed less base—by others—not by him;—for whom had he deceived?—his own trusting, devoted, affectionate Perdita, whose generous belief galled him doubly, when he remembered the parade of innocence with which it had been exacted. The mind of Raymond was not so rough cast, nor had been so rudely handled, in the circumstance of life, as to make him proof to these considerations—on the contrary, he was all nerve; his spirit was as a pure fire, which fades and shrinks from every contagion of foul atmosphere: but now the contagion had become incorporated with its essence, and the change was the more painful. Truth and falsehood, love and hate lost their eternal boundaries, heaven rushed in to mingle with hell; while his sensitive mind, turned to a field for such battle, was stung to madness. He heartily despised himself, he was angry

with Perdita, and the idea of Evadne was attended by all that was hideous and cruel. His passions, always his masters, acquired fresh strength, from the long sleep in which love had cradled them, the clinging weight of destiny bent him down; he was goaded, tortured, fiercely impatient of that worst of miseries, the sense of remorse. This troubled state yielded by degrees, to sullen animosity, and depression of spirits. His dependants, even his equals, if in his present post he had any, were startled to find anger, derision, and bitterness in one, before distinguished for suavity and benevolence of manner. He transacted public business with distaste, and hastened from it to the solitude which was at once his bane and relief. He mounted a fiery horse, that which had borne him forward to victory in Greece; he fatigued himself with deadening exercise, losing the pangs of a troubled mind in animal sensation.

He slowly recovered himself; yet, at last, as one might from the effects of poison, he lifted his head from above the vapours of fever and passion into the still atmosphere of calm reflection. He meditated on what was best to be done. He was first struck by the space of time that had elapsed, since madness, rather than any reasonable impulse, had regulated his actions. A month had gone by, and during that time he had not seen Evadne. Her power, which was linked to few of the enduring emotions of his heart, had greatly decayed. He was no longer her slave—no longer her lover: he would never see her more, and by the completeness of his return, deserve the confidence of Perdita.

Yet, as he thus determined, fancy conjured up the miserable abode of the Greek girl. An abode, which from noble and lofty principle, she had refused to exchange for one of greater luxury. He thought of the splendour of her situation and appearance when he first knew her; he thought of her life at Constantinople, attended by every circumstance of oriental magnificence; of her present penury, her daily task of industry, her lorn state, her faded, famine-struck cheek. Compassion swelled his breast; he would see her once again; he would devise some plan for restoring her to society, and the enjoyment of her rank; their separation would then follow, as a matter of course.

Again he thought, how during this long month, he had avoided Perdita, flying from her as from the stings of his own conscience. But he was awake now; all this should be remedied; and future devotion erase the memory of this only blot on the serenity of their life. He became cheerful, as he thought of this, and soberly and resolutely marked out the line of conduct he would adopt. He remembered that he had promised Perdita to be present this very evening (the 19th of October, anniversary of his election as Protector) at a festival given in his honour. Good augury should this festival be of the happiness of future years. First, he would look in on Evadne; he would not stay; but he owed her some account, some compensation for his long and unannounced absence; and then to Perdita, to the forgotten world, to the duties of society, the splendour of rank, the enjoyment of power.

After the scene sketched in the preceding pages, Perdita had contemplated an entire change in the manners and conduct of Raymond. She expected freedom of communication, and a return to those habits of affectionate intercourse which had formed the delight of her life. But Raymond did not join her in any of her avocations. He transacted the business of the day apart from her; he went out, she knew not whither. The pain inflicted by this disappointment was tormenting and keen. She looked on it as a deceitful dream, and tried to throw off the consciousness of it; but like the shirt of Nessus, it clung to her very flesh, and ate with sharp agony into her vital principle. She possessed that (though such an assertion may appear a paradox) which belongs to few, a capacity of happiness. Her delicate organization and creative imagination rendered her peculiarly susceptible of pleasurable emotion. The overflowing warmth of her heart, by making love a plant of deep root and stately growth, had attuned her whole soul to the reception of happiness, when she found in Raymond all that could adorn love and satisfy her imagination. But if the sentiment on which the fabric of her existence was founded, became common place through participation, the endless succession of attentions and graceful action snapt by transfer, his universe of love wrested from her, happiness must depart, and then be exchanged for its opposite. The same peculiarities of character

rendered her sorrows agonies; her fancy magnified them, her sensibility made her for ever open to their renewed impression; love envenomed the heart-piercing sting. There was neither submission, patience, nor self-abandonment in her grief; she fought with it, struggled beneath it, and rendered every pang more sharp by resistance. Again and again the idea recurred, that he loved another. She did him justice; she believed that he felt a tender affection for her; but give a paltry prize to him who in some life-pending lottery has calculated on the possession of tens of thousands, and it will disappoint him more than a blank. The affection and amity of a Raymond might be inestimable; but, beyond that affection, embosomed deeper than friendship, was the indivisible treasure of love. Take the sum in its completeness, and no arithmetic can calculate its price; take from it the smallest portion, give it but the name of parts, separate it into degrees and sections, and like the magician's coin, the valueless gold of the mine, is turned to vilest substance. There is a meaning in the eye of love; a cadence in its voice, an irradiation in its smile, the talisman of whose enchantments one only can possess; its spirit is elemental, its essence single, its divinity an unit. The very heart and soul of Raymond and Perdita had mingled, even as two mountain brooks that join in their descent, and murmuring and sparkling flow over shining pebbles, beside starry flowers; but let one desert its primal course, or be dammed up by choaking obstruction, and the other shrinks in its altered banks. Perdita was sensible of the failing of the tide that fed her life. Unable to support the slow withering of her hopes, she suddenly formed a plan, resolving to terminate at once the period of misery, and to bring to an happy conclusion the late disastrous events.

The anniversary was at hand of the exaltation of Raymond to the office of Protector; and it was customary to celebrate this day by a splendid festival. A variety of feelings urged Perdita to shed double magnificence over the scene; yet, as she arrayed herself for the evening gala, she wondered herself at the pains she took, to render sumptuous the celebration of an event which appeared to her the beginning of her sufferings. Woe befall the day, she thought, woe, tears, and mourning betide the hour, that gave

Raymond another hope than love, another wish than my devotion; and thrice joyful the moment when he shall be restored to me! God knows, I put my trust in his vows, and believe his asserted faith—but for that, I would not seek what I am now resolved to attain. Shall two years more be thus passed, each day adding to our alienation, each act being another stone piled on the barrier which separates us? No, my Raymond, my only beloved, sole possession of Perdita! This night, this splendid assembly, these sumptuous apartments, and this adornment of your tearful girl, are all united to celebrate your abdication. Once for me, you relinquished the prospect of a crown. That was in days of early love, when I could only hold out the hope, not the assurance of happiness. Now you have the experience of all that I can give, the heart's devotion, taintless love, and unhesitating subjection to you. You must choose between these and your protectorate. This, proud noble, is your last night! Perdita has bestowed on it all of magnificent and dazzling that your heart best loves—but, from these gorgeous rooms, from this princely attendance, from power and elevation, you must return with to-morrow's sun to our rural abode; for I would not buy an immortality of joy, by the endurance of one more week sister to the last.

Brooding over this plan, resolved when the hour should come, to propose, and insist upon its accomplishment, secure of his consent, the heart of Perdita was lightened, or rather exalted. Her cheek was flushed by the expectation of struggle; her eyes sparkled with the hope of triumph. Having cast her fate upon a die, and feeling secure of winning, she, whom I have named as bearing the stamp of queen of nations on her noble brow, now rose superior to humanity, and seemed in calm power, to arrest with her finger, the wheel of destiny. She had never before looked so supremely lovely.

We, the Arcadian shepherds of the tale, had intended to be present at this festivity, but Perdita wrote to entreat us not to come, or to absent ourselves from Windsor; for she (though she did not reveal her scheme to us) resolved the next morning to return with Raymond to our dear circle, there to renew a course of life in which she had found entire felicity. Late in the evening she

entered the apartments appropriated to the festival. Raymond had quitted the palace the night before; he had promised to grace the assembly, but he had not yet returned. Still she felt sure that he would come at last; and the wider the breach might appear at this crisis, the more secure she was of closing it for ever.

It was as I said, the nineteenth of October; the autumn was far advanced and dreary. The wind howled; the half bare trees were despoiled of the remainder of their summer ornament; the state of the air which induced the decay of vegetation, was hostile to cheerfulness or hope. Raymond had been exalted by the determination he had made; but with the declining day his spirits declined. First he was to visit Evadne, and then to hasten to the palace of the Protectorate. As he walked through the wretched streets in the neighbourhood of the luckless Greek's abode, his heart smote him for the whole course of his conduct towards her. First, his having entered into any engagement that should permit her to remain in such a state of degradation; and then, after a short wild dream, having left her to drear solitude, anxious conjecture, and bitter, still—disappointed expectation. What had she done the while, how supported his absence and neglect? Light grew dim in these close streets, and when the well known door was opened, the staircase was shrouded in perfect night. He groped his way up, he entered the garret, he found Evadne stretched speechless, almost lifeless on her wretched bed. He called for the people of the house, but could learn nothing from them, except that they knew nothing. Her story was plain to him, plain and distinct as the remorse and horror that darted their fangs into him. When she found herself forsaken by him, she lost the heart to pursue her usual avocations; pride forbade every application to him; famine was welcomed as the kind porter to the gates of death, within whose opening folds she should now, without sin, quickly repose. No creature came near her, as her strength failed.

If she died, where could there be found on record a murderer, whose cruel act might compare with his? What fiend more wanton in his mischief, what damned soul more worthy of perdition! But he was not reserved for this agony of self-reproach. He sent for medical assistance; the hours passed, spun by

suspense into ages; the darkness of the long autumnal night yielded to day, before her life was secure. He had her then removed to a more commodious dwelling, and hovered about her, again and again to assure himself that she was safe.

In the midst of his greatest suspense and fear as to the event, he remembered the festival given in his honour, by Perdita; in his honour then, when misery and death were affixing indelible disgrace to his name, honour to him whose crimes deserved a scaffold; this was the worst mockery. Still Perdita would expect him; he wrote a few incoherent words on a scrap of paper, testifying that he was well, and bade the woman of the house take it to the palace, and deliver it into the hands of the wife of the Lord Protector. The woman, who did not know him, contemptuously asked, how he thought she should gain admittance, particularly on a festal night, to that lady's presence? Raymond gave her his ring to ensure the respect of the menials. Thus, while Perdita was entertaining her guests, and anxiously awaiting the arrival of her lord, his ring was brought her; and she was told that a poor woman had a note to deliver to her from its wearer.

The vanity of the old gossip was raised by her commission, which, after all, she did not understand, since she had no suspicion, even now that Evadne's visitor was Lord Raymond. Perdita dreaded a fall from his horse, or some similar accident—till the woman's answers woke other fears. From a feeling of cunning blindly exercised, the officious, if not malignant messenger, did not speak of Evadne's illness; but she garrulously gave an account of Raymond's frequent visits, adding to her narration such circumstances, as, while they convinced Perdita of its truth, exaggerated the unkindness and perfidy of Raymond. Worst of all, his absence now from the festival, his message wholly unaccounted for, except by the disgraceful hints of the woman, appeared the deadliest insult. Again she looked at the ring, it was a small ruby, almost heart-shaped, which she had herself given him. She looked at the hand-writing, which she could not mistake, and repeated to herself the words—"Do not, I charge you, I entreat you, permit your guests to wonder at my

absence:" the while the old crone going on with her talk, filled her ear with a strange medley of truth and falsehood. At length Perdita dismissed her.

The poor girl returned to the assembly, where her presence had not been missed. She glided into a recess somewhat obscured, and leaning against an ornamental column there placed, tried to recover herself. Her faculties were palsied. She gazed on some flowers that stood near in a carved vase: that morning she had arranged them, they were rare and lovely plants; even now all aghast as she was, she observed their brilliant colours and starry shapes.—"Divine infoliations of the spirit of beauty," she exclaimed, "Ye droop not, neither do ye mourn; the despair that clasps my heart, has not spread contagion over you!—Why am I not a partner of your insensibility, a sharer in your calm!"

She paused. "To my task," she continued mentally, "my guests must not perceive the reality, either as it regards him or me. I obey; they shall not, though I die the moment they are gone. They shall behold the antipodes of what is real—for I will appear to live—while I am—dead." It required all her self-command, to suppress the gush of tears self-pity caused at this idea. After many struggles, she succeeded, and turned to join the company.

All her efforts were now directed to the dissembling her internal conflict. She had to play the part of a courteous hostess; to attend to all; to shine the focus of enjoyment and grace. She had to do this, while in deep woe she sighed for loneliness, and would gladly have exchanged her crowded rooms for dark forest depths, or a drear, night-enshadowed heath. But she became gay. She could not keep in the medium, nor be, as was usual with her, placidly content. Every one remarked her exhilaration of spirits; as all actions appear graceful in the eye of rank, her guests surrounded her applaudingly, although there was a sharpness in her laugh, and an abruptness in her sallies, which might have betrayed her secret to an attentive observer. She went on, feeling that, if she had paused for a moment, the checked waters of misery would have deluged her soul, that her wrecked hopes would raise their wailing voices, and that those who now echoed her mirth, and provoked her repartees, would have shrunk in fear

from her convulsive despair. Her only consolation during the violence which she did herself, was to watch the motions of an illuminated clock, and internally count the moments which must elapse before she could be alone.

At length the rooms began to thin. Mocking her own desires, she rallied her guests on their early departure. One by one they left her—at length she pressed the hand of her last visitor. "How cold and damp your hand is," said her friend; "you are over fatigued, pray hasten to rest." Perdita smiled faintly—her guest left her; the carriage rolling down the street assured the final departure. Then, as if pursued by an enemy, as if wings had been at her feet, she flew to her own apartment, she dismissed her attendants, she locked the doors, she threw herself wildly on the floor, she bit her lips even to blood to suppress her shrieks, and lay long a prey to the vulture of despair, striving not to think, while multitudinous ideas made a home of her heart; and ideas, horrid as furies, cruel as vipers, and poured in with such swift succession, that they seemed to jostle and wound each other, while they worked her up to madness.

At length she rose, more composed, not less miserable. She stood before a large mirror—she gazed on her reflected image; her light and graceful dress, the jewels that studded her hair, and encircled her beauteous arms and neck, her small feet shod in satin, her profuse and glossy tresses, all were to her clouded brow and woe-begone countenance like a gorgeous frame to a dark tempest-pourtraying picture. "Vase am I," she thought, "vase brimful of despair's direst essence. Farewell, Perdita! farewell, poor girl! never again will you see yourself thus; luxury and wealth are no longer yours; in the excess of your poverty you may envy the homeless beggar; most truly am I without a home! I live on a barren desert, which, wide and interminable, brings forth neither fruit or flower; in the midst is a solitary rock, to which thou, Perdita, art chained, and thou seest the dreary level stretch far away."

She threw open her window, which looked on the palace-garden. Light and darkness were struggling together, and the orient was streaked by roseate and golden rays. One star only

trembled in the depth of the kindling atmosphere. The morning air blowing freshly over the dewy plants, rushed into the heated room. "All things go on," thought Perdita, "all things proceed, decay, and perish! When noontide has passed, and the weary day has driven her team to their western stalls, the fires of heaven rise from the East, moving in their accustomed path, they ascend and descend the skiey hill. When their course is fulfilled, the dial begins to cast westward an uncertain shadow; the eye-lids of day are opened, and birds and flowers, the startled vegetation, and fresh breeze awaken; the sun at length appears, and in majestic procession climbs the capitol of heaven. All proceeds, changes and dies, except the sense of misery in my bursting heart.

"Ay, all proceeds and changes: what wonder then, that love has journied on to its setting, and that the lord of my life has changed? We call the supernal lights fixed, yet they wander about yonder plain, and if I look again where I looked an hour ago, the face of the eternal heavens is altered. The silly moon and inconstant planets vary nightly their erratic dance; the sun itself, sovereign of the sky, ever and anon deserts his throne, and leaves his dominion to night and winter. Nature grows old, and shakes in her decaying limbs,—creation has become bankrupt! What wonder then, that eclipse and death have led to destruction the light of thy life, O Perdita!"

Chapter IX

Thus sad and disarranged were the thoughts of my poor sister, when she became assured of the infidelity of Raymond. All her virtues and all her defects tended to make the blow incurable. Her affection for me, her brother, for Adrian and Idris, was subject as it were to the reigning passion of her heart; even her maternal tenderness borrowed half its force from the delight she had in tracing Raymond's features and expression in the infant's countenance. She had been reserved and even stern in childhood; but love had softened the asperities of her character, and her union with Raymond had caused her talents and affections to unfold themselves; the one betrayed, and the other lost, she in

some degree returned to her ancient disposition. The concentrated pride of her nature, forgotten during her blissful dream, awoke, and with its adder's sting pierced her heart; her humility of spirit augmented the power of the venom; she had been exalted in her own estimation, while distinguished by his love: of what worth was she, now that he thrust her from this preferment? She had been proud of having won and preserved him—but another had won him from her, and her exultation was as cold as a water quenched ember.

We, in our retirement, remained long in ignorance of her misfortune. Soon after the festival she had sent for her child, and then she seemed to have forgotten us. Adrian observed a change during a visit that he afterward paid them; but he could not tell its extent, or divine the cause. They still appeared in public together, and lived under the same roof. Raymond was as usual courteous, though there was, on occasions, an unbidden haughtiness, or painful abruptness in his manners, which startled his gentle friend; his brow was not clouded but disdain sat on his lips, and his voice was harsh. Perdita was all kindness and attention to her lord; but she was silent, and beyond words sad. She had grown thin and pale; and her eyes often filled with tears. Sometimes she looked at Raymond, as if to say—That it should be so! At others her countenance expressed—I will still do all I can to make you happy. But Adrian read with uncertain aim the character of her face, and might mistake.—Clara was always with her, and she seemed most at ease, when, in an obscure corner, she could sit holding her child's hand, silent and lonely. Still Adrian was unable to guess the truth; he entreated them to visit us at Windsor, and they promised to come during the following month.

It was May before they arrived: the season had decked the forest trees with leaves, and its paths with a thousand flowers. We had notice of their intention the day before; and, early in the morning, Perdita arrived with her daughter. Raymond would follow soon, she said; he had been detained by business. According to Adrian's account, I had expected to find her sad; but, on the contrary, she appeared in the highest spirits: true, she had grown thin, her eyes were somewhat hollow, and her cheeks

sunk, though tinged by a bright glow. She was delighted to see us; caressed our children, praised their growth and improvement; Clara also was pleased to meet again her young friend Alfred; all kinds of childish games were entered into, in which Perdita joined. She communicated her gaiety to us, and as we amused ourselves on the Castle Terrace, it appeared that a happier, less care-worn party could not have been assembled. "This is better, Mamma," said Clara, "than being in that dismal London, where you often cry, and never laugh as you do now."—"Silence, little foolish thing," replied her mother, "and remember any one that mentions London is sent to Coventry for an hour."

Soon after, Raymond arrived. He did not join as usual in the playful spirit of the rest; but, entering into conversation with Adrian and myself, by degrees we seceded from our companions, and Idris and Perdita only remained with the children. Raymond talked of his new buildings; of his plan for an establishment for the better education of the poor; as usual Adrian and he entered into argument, and the time slipped away unperceived.

We assembled again towards evening, and Perdita insisted on our having recourse to music. She wanted, she said, to give us a specimen of her new accomplishment; for since she had been in London, she had applied herself to music, and sang, without much power, but with a great deal of sweetness. We were not permitted by her to select any but light-hearted melodies; and all the Operas of Mozart were called into service, that we might choose the most exhilarating of his airs. Among the other transcendent attributes of Mozart's music, it possesses more than any other that of appearing to come from the heart; you enter into the passions expressed by him, and are transported with grief, joy, anger, or confusion, as he, our soul's master, chooses to inspire. For some time, the spirit of hilarity was kept up; but, at length, Perdita receded from the piano, for Raymond had joined in the trio of "Taci ingiusto core," in Don Giovanni, whose arch entreaty was softened by him into tenderness, and thrilled her heart with memories of the changed past; it was the same voice, the same tone, the self-same sounds and words, which often before she had received, as the homage of love to her—no longer was it that; and

this concord of sound with its dissonance of expression penetrated her with regret and despair. Soon after Idris, who was at the harp, turned to that passionate and sorrowful air in Figaro, "Porgi, amor, qualche risforo," in which the deserted Countess laments the change of the faithless Almaviva. The soul of tender sorrow is breathed forth in this strain; and the sweet voice of Idris, sustained by the mournful chords of her instrument, added to the expression of the words. During the pathetic appeal with which it concludes, a stifled sob attracted our attention to Perdita, the cessation of the music recalled her to herself, she hastened out of the hall—I followed her. At first, she seemed to wish to shun me; and then, yielding to my earnest questioning, she threw herself on my neck, and wept aloud:—"Once more," she cried, "once more on your friendly breast, my beloved brother, can the lost Perdita pour forth her sorrows. I had imposed a law of silence on myself; and for months I have kept it. I do wrong in weeping now, and greater wrong in giving words to my grief. I will not speak! Be it enough for you to know that I am miserable—be it enough for you to know, that the painted veil of life is rent, that I sit for ever shrouded in darkness and gloom, that grief is my sister, everlasting lamentation my mate!"

I endeavoured to console her; I did not question her! but I caressed her, assured her of my deepest affection and my intense interest in the changes of her fortune:—"Dear words," she cried, "expressions of love come upon my ear, like the remembered sounds of forgotten music, that had been dear to me. They are vain, I know; how very vain in their attempt to soothe or comfort me. Dearest Lionel, you cannot guess what I have suffered during these long months. I have read of mourners in ancient days, who clothed themselves in sackcloth, scattered dust upon their heads, ate their bread mingled with ashes, and took up their abode on the bleak mountain tops, reproaching heaven and earth aloud with their misfortunes. Why this is the very luxury of sorrow! thus one might go on from day to day contriving new extravagances, revelling in the paraphernalia of woe, wedded to all the appurtenances of despair. Alas! I must for ever conceal the wretchedness that consumes me. I must weave a veil of dazzling

falsehood to hide my grief from vulgar eyes, smoothe my brow, and paint my lips in deceitful smiles—even in solitude I dare not think how lost I am, lest I become insane and rave."

The tears and agitation of my poor sister had rendered her unfit to return to the circle we had left—so I persuaded her to let me drive her through the park; and, during the ride, I induced her to confide the tale of her unhappiness to me, fancying that talking of it would lighten the burthen, and certain that, if there were a remedy, it should be found and secured to her.

Several weeks had elapsed since the festival of the anniversary, and she had been unable to calm her mind, or to subdue her thoughts to any regular train. Sometimes she reproached herself for taking too bitterly to heart, that which many would esteem an imaginary evil; but this was no subject for reason; and, ignorant as she was of the motives and true conduct of Raymond, things assumed for her even a worse appearance, than the reality warranted. He was seldom at the palace; never, but when he was assured that his public duties would prevent his remaining alone with Perdita. They seldom addressed each other, shunning explanation, each fearing any communication the other might make. Suddenly, however, the manners of Raymond changed; he appeared to desire to find opportunities of bringing about a return to kindness and intimacy with my sister. The tide of love towards her appeared to flow again; he could never forget, how once he had been devoted to her, making her the shrine and storehouse wherein to place every thought and every sentiment. Shame seemed to hold him back; yet he evidently wished to establish a renewal of confidence and affection. From the moment Perdita had sufficiently recovered herself to form any plan of action, she had laid one down, which now she prepared to follow. She received these tokens of returning love with gentleness; she did not shun his company; but she endeavoured to place a barrier in the way of familiar intercourse or painful discussion, which mingled pride and shame prevented Raymond from surmounting. He began at last to shew signs of angry impatience, and Perdita became aware that the system she had adopted could not

continue; she must explain herself to him; she could not summon courage to speak—she wrote thus:—

Read this letter with patience, I entreat you. It will contain no reproaches. Reproach is indeed an idle word: for what should I reproach you?

Allow me in some degree to explain my feeling; without that, we shall both grope in the dark, mistaking one another; erring from the path which may conduct, one of us at least, to a more eligible mode of life than that led by either during the last few weeks.

I loved you—I love you—neither anger nor pride dictates these lines; but a feeling beyond, deeper, and more unalterable than either. My affections are wounded; it is impossible to heal them:—cease then the vain endeavour, if indeed that way your endeavours tend. Forgiveness! Return! Idle words are these! I forgive the pain I endure; but the trodden path cannot be retraced.

Common affection might have been satisfied with common usages. I believed that you read my heart, and knew its devotion, its unalienable fidelity towards you. I never loved any but you. You came the embodied image of my fondest dreams. The praise of men, power and high aspirations attended your career. Love for you invested the world for me in enchanted light; it was no longer the earth I trod—the earth, common mother, yielding only trite and stale repetition of objects and circumstances old and worn out. I lived in a temple glorified by intensest sense of devotion and rapture; I walked, a consecrated being, contemplating only your power, your excellence;

For O, you stood beside me, like my youth,
Transformed for me the real to a dream,
Cloathing the palpable and familiar
With golden exhalations of the dawn.

'The bloom has vanished from my life'—there is no morning to this all investing night; no rising to the set-sun of love. In those days the rest of the world was nothing to me: all other men—I never considered nor felt what they were; nor did I look on you as one of them. Separated from them; exalted in my heart; sole possessor of my affections; single object of my hopes, the best half of myself.

Ah, Raymond, were we not happy? Did the sun shine on any, who could enjoy its light with purer and more intense bliss? It was not—it is not a common infidelity at which I repine. It is the disunion of an whole which may not have parts; it is the carelessness with which you have shaken off the mantle of election with which to me you were invested, and have become one among the many. Dream not to alter this. Is not love a divinity, because it is immortal? Did not I appear sanctified, even to myself, because this love had for its temple my heart? I have gazed on you as you slept, melted even to tears, as the idea filled my mind, that all I possessed lay cradled in those idolized, but mortal lineaments before me. Yet, even then, I have checked thick-coming fears with one thought; I would not fear death, for the emotions that linked us must be immortal.

And now I do not fear death. I should be well pleased to close my eyes, never more to open them again. And yet I fear it; even as I fear all things; for in any state of being linked by the chain of memory with this, happiness would not return—even in Paradise, I must feel that your love was less enduring than the mortal beatings of my fragile heart, every pulse of which knells audibly,

The funeral note
Of love, deep buried, without resurrection.

No—no—me miserable; for love extinct there is no resurrection!

Yet I love you. Yet, and for ever, would I contribute all I possess to your welfare. On account of a tattling world; for the sake of my—of our child, I would remain by you, Raymond, share your fortunes, partake your counsel. Shall it be thus? We are no longer lovers; nor can I call myself a friend to any; since, lost as I am, I have no thought to spare from my own wretched, engrossing self. But it will please me to see you each day! to listen to the public voice praising you; to keep up your paternal love for our girl; to hear your voice; to know that I am near you, though you are no longer mine.

If you wish to break the chains that bind us, say the word, and it shall be done—I will take all the blame on myself, of harshness or unkindness, in the world's eye.

Yet, as I have said, I should be best pleased, at least for the present, to live under the same roof with you. When the fever of my young life is spent; when placid age shall tame the vulture that devours me, friendship may come, love and hope being dead. May this be true? Can my soul, inextricably linked to this perishable frame, become lethargic and cold, even as this sensitive mechanism shall lose its youthful elasticity? Then, with lack-lustre eyes, grey hairs, and wrinkled brow, though now the words sound hollow and meaningless, then, tottering on the grave's extreme edge, I may be—your affectionate and true friend,

PERDITA.

Raymond's answer was brief. What indeed could he reply to her complaints, to her griefs which she jealously paled round, keeping out all thought of remedy. "Notwithstanding your bitter letter," he wrote, "for bitter I must call it, you are the chief person in my estimation, and it is your happiness that I would principally consult. Do that which seems best to you: and if you can receive gratification from one mode of life in preference to another, do not let me be any obstacle. I foresee that the plan which you mark out in your letter will not endure long; but you are mistress of

yourself, and it is my sincere wish to contribute as far as you will permit me to your happiness."

"Raymond has prophesied well," said Perdita, "alas, that it should be so! our present mode of life cannot continue long, yet I will not be the first to propose alteration. He beholds in me one whom he has injured even unto death; and I derive no hope from his kindness; no change can possibly be brought about even by his best intentions. As well might Cleopatra have worn as an ornament the vinegar which contained her dissolved pearl, as I be content with the love that Raymond can now offer me."

I own that I did not see her misfortune with the same eyes as Perdita. At all events methought that the wound could be healed; and, if they remained together, it would be so. I endeavoured therefore to sooth and soften her mind; and it was not until after many endeavours that I gave up the task as impracticable. Perdita listened to me impatiently, and answered with some asperity:—"Do you think that any of your arguments are new to me? or that my own burning wishes and intense anguish have not suggested them all a thousand times, with far more eagerness and subtlety than you can put into them? Lionel, you cannot understand what woman's love is. In days of happiness I have often repeated to myself, with a grateful heart and exulting spirit, all that Raymond sacrificed for me. I was a poor, uneducated, unbefriended, mountain girl, raised from nothingness by him. All that I possessed of the luxuries of life came from him. He gave me an illustrious name and noble station; the world's respect reflected from his own glory: all this joined to his own undying love, inspired me with sensations towards him, akin to those with which we regard the Giver of life. I gave him love only. I devoted myself to him: imperfect creature that I was, I took myself to task, that I might become worthy of him. I watched over my hasty temper, subdued my burning impatience of character, schooled my self-engrossing thoughts, educating myself to the best perfection I might attain, that the fruit of my exertions might be his happiness. I took no merit to myself for this. He deserved it all—all labour, all devotion, all sacrifice; I would have toiled up a scaleless Alp, to pluck a flower that would please him. I was

ready to quit you all, my beloved and gifted companions, and to live only with him, for him. I could not do otherwise, even if I had wished; for if we are said to have two souls, he was my better soul, to which the other was a perpetual slave. One only return did he owe me, even fidelity. I earned that; I deserved it. Because I was mountain bred, unallied to the noble and wealthy, shall he think to repay me by an empty name and station? Let him take them back; without his love they are nothing to me. Their only merit in my eyes was that they were his."

Thus passionately Perdita ran on. When I adverted to the question of their entire separation, she replied: "Be it so! One day the period will arrive; I know it, and feel it. But in this I am a coward. This imperfect companionship, and our masquerade of union, are strangely dear to me. It is painful, I allow, destructive, impracticable. It keeps up a perpetual fever in my veins; it frets my immedicable wound; it is instinct with poison. Yet I must cling to it; perhaps it will kill me soon, and thus perform a thankful office."

In the mean time, Raymond had remained with Adrian and Idris. He was naturally frank; the continued absence of Perdita and myself became remarkable; and Raymond soon found relief from the constraint of months, by an unreserved confidence with his two friends. He related to them the situation in which he had found Evadne. At first, from delicacy to Adrian he concealed her name; but it was divulged in the course of his narrative, and her former lover heard with the most acute agitation the history of her sufferings. Idris had shared Perdita's ill opinion of the Greek; but Raymond's account softened and interested her. Evadne's constancy, fortitude, even her ill-fated and ill-regulated love, were matter of admiration and pity; especially when, from the detail of the events of the nineteenth of October, it was apparent that she preferred suffering and death to any in her eyes degrading application for the pity and assistance of her lover. Her subsequent conduct did not diminish this interest. At first, relieved from famine and the grave, watched over by Raymond with the tenderest assiduity, with that feeling of repose peculiar to convalescence, Evadne gave herself up to rapturous gratitude and

love. But reflection returned with health. She questioned him with regard to the motives which had occasioned his critical absence. She framed her enquiries with Greek subtlety; she formed her conclusions with the decision and firmness peculiar to her disposition. She could not divine, that the breach which she had occasioned between Raymond and Perdita was already irreparable: but she knew, that under the present system it would be widened each day, and that its result must be to destroy her lover's happiness, and to implant the fangs of remorse in his heart. From the moment that she perceived the right line of conduct, she resolved to adopt it, and to part from Raymond for ever. Conflicting passions, long-cherished love, and self-inflicted disappointment, made her regard death alone as sufficient refuge for her woe. But the same feelings and opinions which had before restrained her, acted with redoubled force; for she knew that the reflection that he had occasioned her death, would pursue Raymond through life, poisoning every enjoyment, clouding every prospect. Besides, though the violence of her anguish made life hateful, it had not yet produced that monotonous, lethargic sense of changeless misery which for the most part produces suicide. Her energy of character induced her still to combat with the ills of life; even those attendant on hopeless love presented themselves, rather in the shape of an adversary to be overcome, than of a victor to whom she must submit. Besides, she had memories of past tenderness to cherish, smiles, words, and even tears, to con over, which, though remembered in desertion and sorrow, were to be preferred to the forgetfulness of the grave. It was impossible to guess at the whole of her plan. Her letter to Raymond gave no clue for discovery; it assured him, that she was in no danger of wanting the means of life; she promised in it to preserve herself, and some future day perhaps to present herself to him in a station not unworthy of her. She then bade him, with the eloquence of despair and of unalterable love, a last farewell.

All these circumstances were now related to Adrian and Idris. Raymond then lamented the cureless evil of his situation with Perdita. He declared, notwithstanding her harshness, he even called it coldness, that he loved her. He had been ready once with

the humility of a penitent, and the duty of a vassal, to surrender himself to her; giving up his very soul to her tutelage, to become her pupil, her slave, her bondsman. She had rejected these advances; and the time for such exuberant submission, which must be founded on love and nourished by it, was now passed. Still all his wishes and endeavours were directed towards her peace, and his chief discomfort arose from the perception that he exerted himself in vain. If she were to continue inflexible in the line of conduct she now pursued, they must part. The combinations and occurrences of this senseless mode of intercourse were maddening to him. Yet he would not propose the separation. He was haunted by the fear of causing the death of one or other of the beings implicated in these events; and he could not persuade himself to undertake to direct the course of events, lest, ignorant of the land he traversed, he should lead those attached to the car into irremediable ruin.

After a discussion on this subject, which lasted for several hours, he took leave of his friends, and returned to town, unwilling to meet Perdita before us, conscious, as we all must be, of the thoughts uppermost in the minds of both. Perdita prepared to follow him with her child. Idris endeavoured to persuade her to remain. My poor sister looked at the counsellor with affright. She knew that Raymond had conversed with her; had he instigated this request?—was this to be the prelude to their eternal separation?—I have said, that the defects of her character awoke and acquired vigour from her unnatural position. She regarded with suspicion the invitation of Idris; she embraced me, as if she were about to be deprived of my affection also: calling me her more than brother, her only friend, her last hope, she pathetically conjured me not to cease to love her; and with increased anxiety she departed for London, the scene and cause of all her misery.

The scenes that followed, convinced her that she had not yet fathomed the obscure gulph into which she had plunged. Her unhappiness assumed every day a new shape; every day some unexpected event seemed to close, while in fact it led onward, the train of calamities which now befell her.

The selected passion of the soul of Raymond was ambition. Readiness of talent, a capacity of entering into, and leading the dispositions of men; earnest desire of distinction were the awakers and nurses of his ambition. But other ingredients mingled with these, and prevented him from becoming the calculating, determined character, which alone forms a successful hero. He was obstinate, but not firm; benevolent in his first movements; harsh and reckless when provoked. Above all, he was remorseless and unyielding in the pursuit of any object of desire, however lawless. Love of pleasure, and the softer sensibilities of our nature, made a prominent part of his character, conquering the conqueror; holding him in at the moment of acquisition; sweeping away ambition's web; making him forget the toil of weeks, for the sake of one moment's indulgence of the new and actual object of his wishes. Obeying these impulses, he had become the husband of Perdita: egged on by them, he found himself the lover of Evadne. He had now lost both. He had neither the ennobling self-gratulation, which constancy inspires, to console him, nor the voluptuous sense of abandonment to a forbidden, but intoxicating passion. His heart was exhausted by the recent events; his enjoyment of life was destroyed by the resentment of Perdita, and the flight of Evadne; and the inflexibility of the former, set the last seal upon the annihilation of his hopes. As long as their disunion remained a secret, he cherished an expectation of re-awakening past tenderness in her bosom; now that we were all made acquainted with these occurrences, and that Perdita, by declaring her resolves to others, in a manner pledged herself to their accomplishment, he gave up the idea of re-union as futile, and sought only, since he was unable to influence her to change, to reconcile himself to the present state of things. He made a vow against love and its train of struggles, disappointment and remorse, and sought in mere sensual enjoyment, a remedy for the injurious inroads of passion.

Debasement of character is the certain follower of such pursuits. Yet this consequence would not have been immediately remarkable, if Raymond had continued to apply himself to the execution of his plans for the public benefit, and the fulfilling his

duties as Protector. But, extreme in all things, given up to immediate impressions, he entered with ardour into this new pursuit of pleasure, and followed up the incongruous intimacies occasioned by it without reflection or foresight. The council-chamber was deserted; the crowds which attended on him as agents to his various projects were neglected. Festivity, and even libertinism, became the order of the day.

Perdita beheld with affright the encreasing disorder. For a moment she thought that she could stem the torrent, and that Raymond could be induced to hear reason from her.—Vain hope! The moment of her influence was passed. He listened with haughtiness, replied disdainfully; and, if in truth, she succeeded in awakening his conscience, the sole effect was that he sought an opiate for the pang in oblivious riot. With the energy natural to her, Perdita then endeavoured to supply his place. Their still apparent union permitted her to do much; but no woman could, in the end, present a remedy to the encreasing negligence of the Protector; who, as if seized with a paroxysm of insanity, trampled on all ceremony, all order, all duty, and gave himself up to license.

Reports of these strange proceedings reached us, and we were undecided what method to adopt to restore our friend to himself and his country, when Perdita suddenly appeared among us. She detailed the progress of the mournful change, and entreated Adrian and myself to go up to London, and endeavour to remedy the encreasing evil:—"Tell him," she cried, "tell Lord Raymond, that my presence shall no longer annoy him. That he need not plunge into this destructive dissipation for the sake of disgusting me, and causing me to fly. This purpose is now accomplished; he will never see me more. But let me, it is my last entreaty, let me in the praises of his countrymen and the prosperity of England, find the choice of my youth justified."

During our ride up to town, Adrian and I discussed and argued upon Raymond's conduct, and his falling off from the hopes of permanent excellence on his part, which he had before given us cause to entertain. My friend and I had both been educated in one school, or rather I was his pupil in the opinion, that steady

adherence to principle was the only road to honour; a ceaseless observance of the laws of general utility, the only conscientious aim of human ambition. But though we both entertained these ideas, we differed in their application. Resentment added also a sting to my censure; and I reprobated Raymond's conduct in severe terms. Adrian was more benign, more considerate. He admitted that the principles that I laid down were the best; but he denied that they were the only ones. Quoting the text, there are many mansions in my father's house, he insisted that the modes of becoming good or great, varied as much as the dispositions of men, of whom it might be said, as of the leaves of the forest, there were no two alike.

We arrived in London at about eleven at night. We conjectured, notwithstanding what we had heard, that we should find Raymond in St. Stephen's: thither we sped. The chamber was full—but there was no Protector; and there was an austere discontent manifest on the countenances of the leaders, and a whispering and busy tattle among the underlings, not less ominous. We hastened to the palace of the Protectorate. We found Raymond in his dining room with six others: the bottle was being pushed about merrily, and had made considerable inroads on the understanding of one or two. He who sat near Raymond was telling a story, which convulsed the rest with laughter.

Raymond sat among them, though while he entered into the spirit of the hour, his natural dignity never forsook him. He was gay, playful, fascinating—but never did he overstep the modesty of nature, or the respect due to himself, in his wildest sallies. Yet I own, that considering the task which Raymond had taken on himself as Protector of England, and the cares to which it became him to attend, I was exceedingly provoked to observe the worthless fellows on whom his time was wasted, and the jovial if not drunken spirit which seemed on the point of robbing him of his better self. I stood watching the scene, while Adrian flitted like a shadow in among them, and, by a word and look of sobriety, endeavoured to restore order in the assembly. Raymond expressed himself delighted to see him, declaring that he should make one in the festivity of the night.

This action of Adrian provoked me. I was indignant that he should sit at the same table with the companions of Raymond—men of abandoned characters, or rather without any, the refuse of high-bred luxury, the disgrace of their country. "Let me entreat Adrian," I cried, "not to comply: rather join with me in endeavouring to withdraw Lord Raymond from this scene, and restore him to other society."

"My good fellow," said Raymond, "this is neither the time nor place for the delivery of a moral lecture: take my word for it that my amusements and society are not so bad as you imagine. We are neither hypocrites or fools—for the rest, 'Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?'"

I turned angrily away: "Verney," said Adrian, "you are very cynical: sit down; or if you will not, perhaps, as you are not a frequent visitor, Lord Raymond will humour you, and accompany us, as we had previously agreed upon, to parliament."

Raymond looked keenly at him; he could read benignity only in his gentle lineaments; he turned to me, observing with scorn my moody and stern demeanour. "Come," said Adrian, "I have promised for you, enable me to keep my engagement. Come with us."—Raymond made an uneasy movement, and laconically replied—"I won't!"

The party in the mean time had broken up. They looked at the pictures, strolled into the other apartments, talked of billiards, and one by one vanished. Raymond strode angrily up and down the room. I stood ready to receive and reply to his reproaches. Adrian leaned against the wall. "This is infinitely ridiculous," he cried, "if you were school-boys, you could not conduct yourselves more unreasonably."

"You do not understand," said Raymond. "This is only part of a system:—a scheme of tyranny to which I will never submit. Because I am Protector of England, am I to be the only slave in its empire? My privacy invaded, my actions censured, my friends insulted? But I will get rid of the whole together.—Be you witnesses," and he took the star, insignia of office, from his breast, and threw it on the table. "I renounce my office, I abdicate my power—assume it who will!"—

"Let him assume it," exclaimed Adrian, "who can pronounce himself, or whom the world will pronounce to be your superior. There does not exist the man in England with adequate presumption. Know yourself, Raymond, and your indignation will cease; your complacency return. A few months ago, whenever we prayed for the prosperity of our country, or our own, we at the same time prayed for the life and welfare of the Protector, as indissolubly linked to it. Your hours were devoted to our benefit, your ambition was to obtain our commendation. You decorated our towns with edifices, you bestowed on us useful establishments, you gifted the soil with abundant fertility. The powerful and unjust cowered at the steps of your judgment-seat, and the poor and oppressed arose like morn-awakened flowers under the sunshine of your protection.

"Can you wonder that we are all aghast and mourn, when this appears changed? But, come, this splenetic fit is already passed; resume your functions; your partizans will hail you; your enemies be silenced; our love, honour, and duty will again be manifested towards you. Master yourself, Raymond, and the world is subject to you."

"All this would be very good sense, if addressed to another," replied Raymond, moodily, "con the lesson yourself, and you, the first peer of the land, may become its sovereign. You the good, the wise, the just, may rule all hearts. But I perceive, too soon for my own happiness, too late for England's good, that I undertook a task to which I am unequal. I cannot rule myself. My passions are my masters; my smallest impulse my tyrant. Do you think that I renounced the Protectorate (and I have renounced it) in a fit of spleen? By the God that lives, I swear never to take up that bauble again; never again to burthen myself with the weight of care and misery, of which that is the visible sign.

"Once I desired to be a king. It was in the hey-day of youth, in the pride of boyish folly. I knew myself when I renounced it. I renounced it to gain —no matter what—for that also I have lost. For many months I have submitted to this mock majesty—this solemn jest. I am its dupe no longer. I will be free.

"I have lost that which adorned and dignified my life; that which linked me to other men. Again I am a solitary man; and I will become again, as in my early years, a wanderer, a soldier of fortune. My friends, for Verney, I feel that you are my friend, do not endeavour to shake my resolve. Perdita, wedded to an imagination, careless of what is behind the veil, whose character is in truth faulty and vile, Perdita has renounced me. With her it was pretty enough to play a sovereign's part; and, as in the recesses of your beloved forest we acted masques, and imagined ourselves Arcadian shepherds, to please the fancy of the moment—so was I content, more for Perdita's sake than my own, to take on me the character of one of the great ones of the earth; to lead her behind the scenes of grandeur, to vary her life with a short act of magnificence and power. This was to be the colour; love and confidence the substance of our existence. But we must live, and not act our lives; pursuing the shadow, I lost the reality—now I renounce both.

"Adrian, I am about to return to Greece, to become again a soldier, perhaps a conqueror. Will you accompany me? You will behold new scenes; see a new people; witness the mighty struggle there going forward between civilization and barbarism; behold, and perhaps direct the efforts of a young and vigorous population, for liberty and order. Come with me. I have expected you. I waited for this moment; all is prepared;—will you accompany me?"

"I will," replied Adrian. "Immediately?"

"To-morrow if you will."

"Reflect!" I cried.

"Wherefore?" asked Raymond—"My dear fellow, I have done nothing else than reflect on this step the live-long summer; and be assured that Adrian has condensed an age of reflection into this little moment. Do not talk of reflection; from this moment I abjure it; this is my only happy moment during a long interval of time. I must go, Lionel—the Gods will it; and I must. Do not endeavour to deprive me of my companion, the out-cast's friend.

"One word more concerning unkind, unjust Perdita. For a time, I thought that, by watching a complying moment, fostering the

still warm ashes, I might relume in her the flame of love. It is more cold within her, than a fire left by gypsies in winter-time, the spent embers crowned by a pyramid of snow. Then, in endeavouring to do violence to my own disposition, I made all worse than before. Still I think, that time, and even absence, may restore her to me. Remember, that I love her still, that my dearest hope is that she will again be mine. I know, though she does not, how false the veil is which she has spread over the reality—do not endeavour to rend this deceptive covering, but by degrees withdraw it. Present her with a mirror, in which she may know herself; and, when she is an adept in that necessary but difficult science, she will wonder at her present mistake, and hasten to restore to me, what is by right mine, her forgiveness, her kind thoughts, her love."

Chapter X

After these events, it was long before we were able to attain any degree of composure. A moral tempest had wrecked our richly freighted vessel, and we, remnants of the diminished crew, were aghast at the losses and changes which we had undergone. Idris passionately loved her brother, and could ill brook an absence whose duration was uncertain; his society was dear and necessary to me—I had followed up my chosen literary occupations with delight under his tutorship and assistance; his mild philosophy, unerring reason, and enthusiastic friendship were the best ingredient, the exalted spirit of our circle; even the children bitterly regretted the loss of their kind playfellow. Deeper grief oppressed Perdita. In spite of resentment, by day and night she figured to herself the toils and dangers of the wanderers. Raymond absent, struggling with difficulties, lost to the power and rank of the Protectorate, exposed to the perils of war, became an object of anxious interest; not that she felt any inclination to recall him, if recall must imply a return to their former union. Such return she felt to be impossible; and while she believed it to be thus, and with anguish regretted that so it should be, she continued angry and impatient with him, who occasioned her

misery. These perplexities and regrets caused her to bathe her pillow with nightly tears, and to reduce her in person and in mind to the shadow of what she had been. She sought solitude, and avoided us when in gaiety and unrestrained affection we met in a family circle. Lonely musings, interminable wanderings, and solemn music were her only pastimes. She neglected even her child; shutting her heart against all tenderness, she grew reserved towards me, her first and fast friend.

I could not see her thus lost, without exerting myself to remedy the evil—remediless I knew, if I could not in the end bring her to reconcile herself to Raymond. Before he went I used every argument, every persuasion to induce her to stop his journey. She answered the one with a gush of tears—telling me that to be persuaded—life and the goods of life were a cheap exchange. It was not will that she wanted, but the capacity; again and again she declared, it were as easy to enchain the sea, to put reins on the wind's viewless courses, as for her to take truth for falsehood, deceit for honesty, heartless communion for sincere, confiding love. She answered my reasonings more briefly, declaring with disdain, that the reason was hers; and, until I could persuade her that the past could be unacted, that maturity could go back to the cradle, and that all that was could become as though it had never been, it was useless to assure her that no real change had taken place in her fate. And thus with stern pride she suffered him to go, though her very heart-strings cracked at the fulfilling of the act, which rent from her all that made life valuable.

To change the scene for her, and even for ourselves, all unhinged by the cloud that had come over us, I persuaded my two remaining companions that it were better that we should absent ourselves for a time from Windsor. We visited the north of England, my native Ulswater, and lingered in scenes dear from a thousand associations. We lengthened our tour into Scotland, that we might see Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond; thence we crossed to Ireland, and passed several weeks in the neighbourhood of Killarney. The change of scene operated to a great degree as I expected; after a year's absence, Perdita returned in gentler and more docile mood to Windsor. The first sight of this place for a

time unhinged her. Here every spot was distinct with associations now grown bitter. The forest glades, the ferny dells, and lawny uplands, the cultivated and cheerful country spread around the silver pathway of ancient Thames, all earth, air, and wave, took up one choral voice, inspired by memory, instinct with plaintive regret.

But my essay towards bringing her to a saner view of her own situation, did not end here. Perdita was still to a great degree uneducated. When first she left her peasant life, and resided with the elegant and cultivated Evadne, the only accomplishment she brought to any perfection was that of painting, for which she had a taste almost amounting to genius. This had occupied her in her lonely cottage, when she quitted her Greek friend's protection. Her pallet and easel were now thrown aside; did she try to paint, thronging recollections made her hand tremble, her eyes fill with tears. With this occupation she gave up almost every other; and her mind preyed upon itself almost to madness.

For my own part, since Adrian had first withdrawn me from my selvatic wilderness to his own paradise of order and beauty, I had been wedded to literature. I felt convinced that however it might have been in former times, in the present stage of the world, no man's faculties could be developed, no man's moral principle be enlarged and liberal, without an extensive acquaintance with books. To me they stood in the place of an active career, of ambition, and those palpable excitements necessary to the multitude. The collation of philosophical opinions, the study of historical facts, the acquirement of languages, were at once my recreation, and the serious aim of my life. I turned author myself. My productions however were sufficiently unpretending; they were confined to the biography of favourite historical characters, especially those whom I believed to have been traduced, or about whom clung obscurity and doubt.

As my authorship increased, I acquired new sympathies and pleasures. I found another and a valuable link to enchain me to my fellow-creatures; my point of sight was extended, and the inclinations and capacities of all human beings became deeply interesting to me. Kings have been called the fathers of their

people. Suddenly I became as it were the father of all mankind. Posterity became my heirs. My thoughts were gems to enrich the treasure house of man's intellectual possessions; each sentiment was a precious gift I bestowed on them. Let not these aspirations be attributed to vanity. They were not expressed in words, nor even reduced to form in my own mind; but they filled my soul, exalting my thoughts, raising a glow of enthusiasm, and led me out of the obscure path in which I before walked, into the bright noon-enlightened highway of mankind, making me, citizen of the world, a candidate for immortal honors, an eager aspirant to the praise and sympathy of my fellow men.

No one certainly ever enjoyed the pleasures of composition more intensely than I. If I left the woods, the solemn music of the waving branches, and the majestic temple of nature, I sought the vast halls of the Castle, and looked over wide, fertile England, spread beneath our regal mount, and listened the while to inspiring strains of music. At such times solemn harmonies or spirit-stirring airs gave wings to my lagging thoughts, permitting them, methought, to penetrate the last veil of nature and her God, and to display the highest beauty in visible expression to the understandings of men. As the music went on, my ideas seemed to quit their mortal dwelling house; they shook their pinions and began a flight, sailing on the placid current of thought, filling the creation with new glory, and rousing sublime imagery that else had slept voiceless. Then I would hasten to my desk, weave the new-found web of mind in firm texture and brilliant colours, leaving the fashioning of the material to a calmer moment.

But this account, which might as properly belong to a former period of my life as to the present moment, leads me far afield. It was the pleasure I took in literature, the discipline of mind I found arise from it, that made me eager to lead Perdita to the same pursuits. I began with light hand and gentle allurements; first exciting her curiosity, and then satisfying it in such a way as might occasion her, at the same time that she half forgot her sorrows in occupation, to find in the hours that succeeded a reaction of benevolence and toleration.

Intellectual activity, though not directed towards books, had always been my sister's characteristic. It had been displayed early in life, leading her out to solitary musing among her native mountains, causing her to form innumerable combinations from common objects, giving strength to her perceptions, and swiftness to their arrangement. Love had come, as the rod of the master-prophet, to swallow up every minor propensity. Love had doubled all her excellencies, and placed a diadem on her genius. Was she to cease to love? Take the colours and odour from the rose, change the sweet nutriment of mother's milk to gall and poison; as easily might you wean Perdita from love. She grieved for the loss of Raymond with an anguish, that exiled all smile from her lips, and trenched sad lines on her brow of beauty. But each day seemed to change the nature of her suffering, and every succeeding hour forced her to alter (if so I may style it) the fashion of her soul's mourning garb. For a time music was able to satisfy the cravings of her mental hunger, and her melancholy thoughts renewed themselves in each change of key, and varied with every alteration in the strain. My schooling first impelled her towards books; and, if music had been the food of sorrow, the productions of the wise became its medicine. The acquisition of unknown languages was too tedious an occupation, for one who referred every expression to the universe within, and read not, as many do, for the mere sake of filling up time; but who was still questioning herself and her author, moulding every idea in a thousand ways, ardently desirous for the discovery of truth in every sentence. She sought to improve her understanding; mechanically her heart and dispositions became soft and gentle under this benign discipline. After awhile she discovered, that amidst all her newly acquired knowledge, her own character, which formerly she fancied that she thoroughly understood, became the first in rank among the *terrae incognitae*, the pathless wilds of a country that had no chart. Erringly and strangely she began the task of self-examination with self-condemnation. And then again she became aware of her own excellencies, and began to balance with juster scales the shades of good and evil. I, who longed beyond words, to restore her to the happiness it was still in

her power to enjoy, watched with anxiety the result of these internal proceedings.

But man is a strange animal. We cannot calculate on his forces like that of an engine; and, though an impulse draw with a forty-horse power at what appears willing to yield to one, yet in contempt of calculation the movement is not effected. Neither grief, philosophy, nor love could make Perdita think with mildness of the dereliction of Raymond. She now took pleasure in my society; towards Idris she felt and displayed a full and affectionate sense of her worth—she restored to her child in abundant measure her tenderness and care. But I could discover, amidst all her repinings, deep resentment towards Raymond, and an unfading sense of injury, that plucked from me my hope, when I appeared nearest to its fulfilment. Among other painful restrictions, she has occasioned it to become a law among us, never to mention Raymond's name before her. She refused to read any communications from Greece, desiring me only to mention when any arrived, and whether the wanderers were well. It was curious that even little Clara observed this law towards her mother. This lovely child was nearly eight years of age. Formerly she had been a light-hearted infant, fanciful, but gay and childish. After the departure of her father, thought became impressed on her young brow. Children, unadepts in language, seldom find words to express their thoughts, nor could we tell in what manner the late events had impressed themselves on her mind. But certainly she had made deep observations while she noted in silence the changes that passed around her. She never mentioned her father to Perdita, she appeared half afraid when she spoke of him to me, and though I tried to draw her out on the subject, and to dispel the gloom that hung about her ideas concerning him, I could not succeed. Yet each foreign post-day she watched for the arrival of letters—knew the post mark, and watched me as I read. I found her often poring over the article of Greek intelligence in the newspaper.

There is no more painful sight than that of untimely care in children, and it was particularly observable in one whose disposition had heretofore been mirthful. Yet there was so much

sweetness and docility about Clara, that your admiration was excited; and if the moods of mind are calculated to paint the cheek with beauty, and endow motions with grace, surely her contemplations must have been celestial; since every lineament was moulded into loveliness, and her motions were more harmonious than the elegant boundings of the fawns of her native forest. I sometimes expostulated with Perdita on the subject of her reserve; but she rejected my counsels, while her daughter's sensibility excited in her a tenderness still more passionate.

After the lapse of more than a year, Adrian returned from Greece.

410

When our exiles had first arrived, a truce was in existence between the Turks and Greeks; a truce that was as sleep to the mortal frame, signal of renewed activity on waking. With the numerous soldiers of Asia, with all of warlike stores, ships, and military engines, that wealth and power could command, the Turks at once resolved to crush an enemy, which creeping on by degrees, had from their stronghold in the Morea, acquired Thrace and Macedonia, and had led their armies even to the gates of Constantinople, while their extensive commercial relations gave every European nation an interest in their success. Greece prepared for a vigorous resistance; it rose to a man; and the women, sacrificing their costly ornaments, accoutred their sons for the war, and bade them conquer or die with the spirit of the Spartan mother. The talents and courage of Raymond were highly esteemed among the Greeks. Born at Athens, that city claimed him for her own, and by giving him the command of her peculiar division in the army, the commander-in-chief only possessed superior power. He was numbered among her citizens, his name was added to the list of Grecian heroes. His judgment, activity, and consummate bravery, justified their choice. The Earl of Windsor became a volunteer under his friend.

"It is well," said Adrian, "to prate of war in these pleasant shades, and with much ill-spent oil make a show of joy, because many thousand of our fellow-creatures leave with pain this sweet air and natal earth. I shall not be suspected of being averse to the Greek cause; I know and feel its necessity; it is beyond every

other a good cause. I have defended it with my sword, and was willing that my spirit should be breathed out in its defence; freedom is of more worth than life, and the Greeks do well to defend their privilege unto death. But let us not deceive ourselves. The Turks are men; each fibre, each limb is as feeling as our own, and every spasm, be it mental or bodily, is as truly felt in a Turk's heart or brain, as in a Greek's. The last action at which I was present was the taking of ——. The Turks resisted to the last, the garrison perished on the ramparts, and we entered by assault. Every breathing creature within the walls was massacred. Think you, amidst the shrieks of violated innocence and helpless infancy, I did not feel in every nerve the cry of a fellow being? They were men and women, the sufferers, before they were Mahometans, and when they rise turbanless from the grave, in what except their good or evil actions will they be the better or worse than we? Two soldiers contended for a girl, whose rich dress and extreme beauty excited the brutal appetites of these wretches, who, perhaps good men among their families, were changed by the fury of the moment into incarnated evils. An old man, with a silver beard, decrepid and bald, he might be her grandfather, interposed to save her; the battle axe of one of them clove his skull. I rushed to her defence, but rage made them blind and deaf; they did not distinguish my Christian garb or heed my words—words were blunt weapons then, for while war cried "havoc," and murder gave fit echo, how could I—

Turn back the tide of ills, relieving wrong
With mild accost of soothing eloquence?

One of the fellows, enraged at my interference, struck me with his bayonet in the side, and I fell senseless.

"This wound will probably shorten my life, having shattered a frame, weak of itself. But I am content to die. I have learnt in Greece that one man, more or less, is of small import, while human bodies remain to fill up the thinned ranks of the soldiery; and that the identity of an individual may be overlooked, so that the muster roll contain its full numbers. All this has a different

effect upon Raymond. He is able to contemplate the ideal of war, while I am sensible only to its realities. He is a soldier, a general. He can influence the blood-thirsty war-dogs, while I resist their propensities vainly. The cause is simple. Burke has said that, 'in all bodies those who would lead, must also, in a considerable degree, follow.' —I cannot follow; for I do not sympathize in their dreams of massacre and glory—to follow and to lead in such a career, is the natural bent of Raymond's mind. He is always successful, and bids fair, at the same time that he acquires high name and station for himself, to secure liberty, probably extended empire, to the Greeks."

Perdita's mind was not softened by this account. He, she thought, can be great and happy without me. Would that I also had a career! Would that I could freight some untried bark with all my hopes, energies, and desires, and launch it forth into the ocean of life—bound for some attainable point, with ambition or pleasure at the helm! But adverse winds detain me on shore; like Ulysses, I sit at the water's edge and weep. But my nerveless hands can neither fell the trees, nor smooth the planks. Under the influence of these melancholy thoughts, she became more than ever in love with sorrow. Yet Adrian's presence did some good; he at once broke through the law of silence observed concerning Raymond. At first she started from the unaccustomed sound; soon she got used to it and to love it, and she listened with avidity to the account of his achievements. Clara got rid also of her restraint; Adrian and she had been old playfellows; and now, as they walked or rode together, he yielded to her earnest entreaty, and repeated, for the hundredth time, some tale of her father's bravery, munificence, or justice.

Each vessel in the mean time brought exhilarating tidings from Greece. The presence of a friend in its armies and councils made us enter into the details with enthusiasm; and a short letter now and then from Raymond told us how he was engrossed by the interests of his adopted country. The Greeks were strongly attached to their commercial pursuits, and would have been satisfied with their present acquisitions, had not the Turks roused them by invasion. The patriots were victorious; a spirit of

conquest was instilled; and already they looked on Constantinople as their own. Raymond rose perpetually in their estimation; but one man held a superior command to him in their armies. He was conspicuous for his conduct and choice of position in a battle fought in the plains of Thrace, on the banks of the Hebrus, which was to decide the fate of Islam. The Mahometans were defeated, and driven entirely from the country west of this river. The battle was sanguinary, the loss of the Turks apparently irreparable; the Greeks, in losing one man, forgot the nameless crowd strewn upon the bloody field, and they ceased to value themselves on a victory, which cost them— Raymond.

At the battle of Makri he had led the charge of cavalry, and pursued the fugitives even to the banks of the Hebrus. His favourite horse was found grazing by the margin of the tranquil river. It became a question whether he had fallen among the unrecognized; but no broken ornament or stained trapping betrayed his fate. It was suspected that the Turks, finding themselves possessed of so illustrious a captive, resolved to satisfy their cruelty rather than their avarice, and fearful of the interference of England, had come to the determination of concealing for ever the cold-blooded murder of the soldier they most hated and feared in the squadrons of their enemy.

Raymond was not forgotten in England. His abdication of the Protectorate had caused an unexampled sensation; and, when his magnificent and manly system was contrasted with the narrow views of succeeding politicians, the period of his elevation was referred to with sorrow. The perpetual recurrence of his name, joined to most honourable testimonials, in the Greek gazettes, kept up the interest he had excited. He seemed the favourite child of fortune, and his untimely loss eclipsed the world, and shewed forth the remnant of mankind with diminished lustre. They clung with eagerness to the hope held out that he might yet be alive. Their minister at Constantinople was urged to make the necessary perquisitions, and should his existence be ascertained, to demand his release. It was to be hoped that their efforts would succeed, and that though now a prisoner, the sport of cruelty and the mark

of hate, he would be rescued from danger and restored to the happiness, power, and honour which he deserved.

The effect of this intelligence upon my sister was striking. She never for a moment credited the story of his death; she resolved instantly to go to Greece. Reasoning and persuasion were thrown away upon her; she would endure no hindrance, no delay. It may be advanced for a truth, that, if argument or entreaty can turn any one from a desperate purpose, whose motive and end depends on the strength of the affections only, then it is right so to turn them, since their docility shews, that neither the motive nor the end were of sufficient force to bear them through the obstacles attendant on their undertaking. If, on the contrary, they are proof against expostulation, this very steadiness is an omen of success; and it becomes the duty of those who love them, to assist in smoothing the obstructions in their path. Such sentiments actuated our little circle. Finding Perdita immoveable, we consulted as to the best means of furthering her purpose. She could not go alone to a country where she had no friends, where she might arrive only to hear the dreadful news, which must overwhelm her with grief and remorse. Adrian, whose health had always been weak, now suffered considerable aggravation of suffering from the effects of his wound. Idris could not endure to leave him in this state; nor was it right either to quit or take with us a young family for a journey of this description. I resolved at length to accompany Perdita. The separation from my Idris was painful—but necessity reconciled us to it in some degree: necessity and the hope of saving Raymond, and restoring him again to happiness and Perdita. No delay was to ensue. Two days after we came to our determination, we set out for Portsmouth, and embarked. The season was May, the weather stormless; we were promised a prosperous voyage. Cherishing the most fervent hopes, embarked on the waste ocean, we saw with delight the receding shore of Britain, and on the wings of desire outspeeded our well filled sails towards the South. The light curling waves bore us onward, and old ocean smiled at the freight of love and hope committed to his charge; it stroked gently its tempestuous plains, and the path was smoothed for us. Day and night the wind right aft, gave steady

impulse to our keel—nor did rough gale, or treacherous sand, or destructive rock interpose an obstacle between my sister and the land which was to restore her to her first beloved,

Her dear heart's confessor—a heart within that heart.

Volume II

Chapter I

During this voyage, when on calm evenings we conversed on deck, watching the glancing of the waves and the changeful appearances of the sky, I discovered the total revolution that the disasters of Raymond had wrought in the mind of my sister. Were they the same waters of love, which, lately cold and cutting as ice, repelling as that, now loosened from their frozen chains, flowed through the regions of her soul in gushing and grateful exuberance? She did not believe that he was dead, but she knew that he was in danger, and the hope of assisting in his liberation, and the idea of soothing by tenderness the ills that he might have undergone, elevated and harmonized the late jarring element of her being. I was not so sanguine as she as to the result of our voyage. She was not sanguine, but secure; and the expectation of seeing the lover she had banished, the husband, friend, heart's companion from whom she had long been alienated, wrapt her senses in delight, her mind in placidity. It was beginning life again; it was leaving barren sands for an abode of fertile beauty; it was a harbour after a tempest, an opiate after sleepless nights, a happy waking from a terrible dream.

420

Little Clara accompanied us; the poor child did not well understand what was going forward. She heard that we were bound for Greece, that she would see her father, and now, for the first time, she prattled of him to her mother.

On landing at Athens we found difficulties encrease upon us: nor could the storied earth or balmy atmosphere inspire us with enthusiasm or pleasure, while the fate of Raymond was in jeopardy. No man had ever excited so strong an interest in the

public mind; this was apparent even among the phlegmatic English, from whom he had long been absent. The Athenians had expected their hero to return in triumph; the women had taught their children to lisp his name joined to thanksgiving; his manly beauty, his courage, his devotion to their cause, made him appear in their eyes almost as one of the ancient deities of the soil descended from their native Olympus to defend them. When they spoke of his probable death and certain captivity, tears streamed from their eyes; even as the women of Syria sorrowed for Adonis, did the wives and mothers of Greece lament our English Raymond—Athens was a city of mourning.

All these shews of despair struck Perdita with affright. With that sanguine but confused expectation, which desire engendered while she was at a distance from reality, she had formed an image in her mind of instantaneous change, when she should set her foot on Grecian shores. She fancied that Raymond would already be free, and that her tender attentions would come to entirely obliterate even the memory of his mischance. But his fate was still uncertain; she began to fear the worst, and to feel that her soul's hope was cast on a chance that might prove a blank. The wife and lovely child of Lord Raymond became objects of intense interest in Athens. The gates of their abode were besieged, audible prayers were breathed for his restoration; all these circumstances added to the dismay and fears of Perdita.

My exertions were unremitted: after a time I left Athens, and joined the army stationed at Kishan in Thrace. Bribery, threats, and intrigue, soon discovered the secret that Raymond was alive, a prisoner, suffering the most rigorous confinement and wanton cruelties. We put in movement every impulse of policy and money to redeem him from their hands.

The impatience of my sister's disposition now returned on her, awakened by repentance, sharpened by remorse. The very beauty of the Grecian climate, during the season of spring, added torture to her sensations. The unexampled loveliness of the flower-clad earth—the genial sunshine and grateful shade—the melody of the birds—the majesty of the woods—the splendour of the marble ruins—the clear effulgence of the stars by night—the combination

of all that was exciting and voluptuous in this transcending land, by inspiring a quicker spirit of life and an added sensitiveness to every articulation of her frame, only gave edge to the poignancy of her grief. Each long hour was counted, and "He suffers" was the burthen of all her thoughts. She abstained from food; she lay on the bare earth, and, by such mimicry of his enforced torments, endeavoured to hold communion with his distant pain. I remembered in one of her harshest moments a quotation of mine had roused her to anger and disdain. "Perdita," I had said, "some day you will discover that you have done wrong in again casting Raymond on the thorns of life. When disappointment has sullied his beauty, when a soldier's hardships have bent his manly form, and loneliness made even triumph bitter to him, then you will repent; and regret for the irreparable change

"will move
In hearts all rocky now, the late remorse of love."

—LORD BYRON'S FOURTH CANTO OF CHILDE HAROLDE

The stinging "remorse of love" now pierced her heart. She accused herself of his journey to Greece—his dangers—his imprisonment. She pictured to herself the anguish of his solitude; she remembered with what eager delight he had in former days made her the partner of his joyful hopes— with what grateful affection he received her sympathy in his cares. She called to mind how often he had declared that solitude was to him the greatest of all evils, and how death itself was to him more full of fear and pain when he pictured to himself a lonely grave. "My best girl," he had said, "relieves me from these phantasies. United to her, cherished in her dear heart, never again shall I know the misery of finding myself alone. Even if I die before you, my Perdita, treasure up my ashes till yours may mingle with mine. It is a foolish sentiment for one who is not a materialist, yet, methinks, even in that dark cell, I may feel that my inanimate dust mingles with yours, and thus have a companion in decay." In her resentful mood, these expressions had been remembered with

acrimony and disdain; they visited her in her softened hour, taking sleep from her eyes, all hope of rest from her uneasy mind.

Two months passed thus, when at last we obtained a promise of Raymond's release. Confinement and hardship had undermined his health; the Turks feared an accomplishment of the threats of the English government, if he died under their hands; they looked upon his recovery as impossible; they delivered him up as a dying man, willingly making over to us the rites of burial.

He came by sea from Constantinople to Athens. The wind, favourable to him, blew so strongly in shore, that we were unable, as we had at first intended, to meet him on his watery road. The watchtower of Athens was besieged by inquirers, each sail eagerly looked out for; till on the first of May the gallant frigate bore in sight, freighted with treasure more invaluable than the wealth which, piloted from Mexico, the vexed Pacific swallowed, or that was conveyed over its tranquil bosom to enrich the crown of Spain. At early dawn the vessel was discovered bearing in shore; it was conjectured that it would cast anchor about five miles from land. The news spread through Athens, and the whole city poured out at the gate of the Piraeus, down the roads, through the vineyards, the olive woods and plantations of fig-trees, towards the harbour. The noisy joy of the populace, the gaudy colours of their dress, the tumult of carriages and horses, the march of soldiers intermixed, the waving of banners and sound of martial music added to the high excitement of the scene; while round us reposed in solemn majesty the relics of antient time. To our right the Acropolis rose high, spectatress of a thousand changes, of ancient glory, Turkish slavery, and the restoration of dear-bought liberty; tombs and cenotaphs were strewn thick around, adorned by ever renewing vegetation; the mighty dead hovered over their monuments, and beheld in our enthusiasm and congregated numbers a renewal of the scenes in which they had been the actors. Perdita and Clara rode in a close carriage; I attended them on horseback. At length we arrived at the harbour; it was agitated by the outward swell of the sea; the beach, as far could be discerned, was covered by a moving multitude, which, urged by those behind toward the sea, again rushed back as the

heavy waves with sullen roar burst close to them. I applied my glass, and could discern that the frigate had already cast anchor, fearful of the danger of approaching nearer to a lee shore: a boat was lowered; with a pang I saw that Raymond was unable to descend the vessel's side; he was let down in a chair, and lay wrapt in cloaks at the bottom of the boat.

I dismounted, and called to some sailors who were rowing about the harbour to pull up, and take me into their skiff; Perdita at the same moment alighted from her carriage—she seized my arm—"Take me with you," she cried; she was trembling and pale; Clara clung to her—"You must not," I said, "the sea is rough—he will soon be here—do you not see his boat?" The little bark to which I had beckoned had now pulled up; before I could stop her, Perdita, assisted by the sailors was in it—Clara followed her mother—a loud shout echoed from the crowd as we pulled out of the inner harbour; while my sister at the prow, had caught hold of one of the men who was using a glass, asking a thousand questions, careless of the spray that broke over her, deaf, sightless to all, except the little speck that, just visible on the top of the waves, evidently neared. We approached with all the speed six rowers could give; the orderly and picturesque dress of the soldiers on the beach, the sounds of exulting music, the stirring breeze and waving flags, the unchecked exclamations of the eager crowd, whose dark looks and foreign garb were purely eastern; the sight of temple-crowned rock, the white marble of the buildings glittering in the sun, and standing in bright relief against the dark ridge of lofty mountains beyond; the near roar of the sea, the splash of oars, and dash of spray, all steeped my soul in a delirium, unfelt, unimagined in the common course of common life. Trembling, I was unable to continue to look through the glass with which I had watched the motion of the crew, when the frigate's boat had first been launched. We rapidly drew near, so that at length the number and forms of those within could be discerned; its dark sides grew big, and the splash of its oars became audible: I could distinguish the languid form of my friend, as he half raised himself at our approach.

Perdita's questions had ceased; she leaned on my arm, panting with emotions too acute for tears—our men pulled alongside the other boat. As a last effort, my sister mustered her strength, her firmness; she stepped from one boat to the other, and then with a shriek she sprang towards Raymond, knelt at his side, and glueing her lips to the hand she seized, her face shrouded by her long hair, gave herself up to tears.

Raymond had somewhat raised himself at our approach, but it was with difficulty that he exerted himself even thus much. With sunken cheek and hollow eyes, pale and gaunt, how could I recognize the beloved of Perdita? I continued awe-struck and mute—he looked smilingly on the poor girl; the smile was his. A day of sun-shine falling on a dark valley, displays its before hidden characteristics; and now this smile, the same with which he first spoke love to Perdita, with which he had welcomed the protectorate, playing on his altered countenance, made me in my heart's core feel that this was Raymond.

He stretched out to me his other hand; I discerned the trace of manacles on his bared wrist. I heard my sister's sobs, and thought, happy are women who can weep, and in a passionate caress disburthen the oppression of their feelings; shame and habitual restraint hold back a man. I would have given worlds to have acted as in days of boyhood, have strained him to my breast, pressed his hand to my lips, and wept over him; my swelling heart choked me; the natural current would not be checked; the big rebellious tears gathered in my eyes; I turned aside, and they dropped in the sea—they came fast and faster;—yet I could hardly be ashamed, for I saw that the rough sailors were not unmoved, and Raymond's eyes alone were dry from among our crew. He lay in that blessed calm which convalescence always induces, enjoying in secure tranquillity his liberty and re-union with her whom he adored. Perdita at length subdued her burst of passion, and rose, —she looked round for Clara; the child frightened, not recognizing her father, and neglected by us, had crept to the other end of the boat; she came at her mother's call. Perdita presented her to Raymond; her first words were: "Beloved, embrace our child!"

"Come hither, sweet one," said her father, "do you not know me?" she knew his voice, and cast herself in his arms with half bashful but uncontrollable emotion.

Perceiving the weakness of Raymond, I was afraid of ill consequences from the pressure of the crowd on his landing. But they were awed as I had been, at the change of his appearance. The music died away, the shouts abruptly ended; the soldiers had cleared a space in which a carriage was drawn up. He was placed in it; Perdita and Clara entered with him, and his escort closed round it; a hollow murmur, akin to the roaring of the near waves, went through the multitude; they fell back as the carriage advanced, and fearful of injuring him they had come to welcome, by loud testimonies of joy, they satisfied themselves with bending in a low salaam as the carriage passed; it went slowly along the road of the Piraeus; passed by antique temple and heroic tomb, beneath the craggy rock of the citadel. The sound of the waves was left behind; that of the multitude continued at intervals, suppressed and hoarse; and though, in the city, the houses, churches, and public buildings were decorated with tapestry and banners—though the soldiery lined the streets, and the inhabitants in thousands were assembled to give him hail, the same solemn silence prevailed, the soldiery presented arms, the banners vailed, many a white hand waved a streamer, and vainly sought to discern the hero in the vehicle, which, closed and encompassed by the city guards, drew him to the palace allotted for his abode.

Raymond was weak and exhausted, yet the interest he perceived to be excited on his account, filled him with proud pleasure. He was nearly killed with kindness. It is true, the populace retained themselves; but there arose a perpetual hum and bustle from the throng round the palace, which added to the noise of fireworks, the frequent explosion of arms, the tramp to and fro of horsemen and carriages, to which effervescence he was the focus, retarded his recovery. So we retired awhile to Eleusis, and here rest and tender care added each day to the strength of our invalid. The zealous attention of Perdita claimed the first rank in the causes which induced his rapid recovery; but the second was surely the delight he felt in the affection and good will of the

Greeks. We are said to love much those whom we greatly benefit. Raymond had fought and conquered for the Athenians; he had suffered, on their account, peril, imprisonment, and hardship; their gratitude affected him deeply, and he inly vowed to unite his fate for ever to that of a people so enthusiastically devoted to him.

Social feeling and sympathy constituted a marked feature in my disposition. In early youth, the living drama acted around me, drew me heart and soul into its vortex. I was now conscious of a change. I loved, I hoped, I enjoyed; but there was something besides this. I was inquisitive as to the internal principles of action of those around me: anxious to read their thoughts justly, and for ever occupied in divining their inmost mind. All events, at the same time that they deeply interested me, arranged themselves in pictures before me. I gave the right place to every personage in the groupe, the just balance to every sentiment. This undercurrent of thought, often soothed me amidst distress, and even agony. It gave ideality to that, from which, taken in naked truth, the soul would have revolted: it bestowed pictorial colours on misery and disease, and not unfrequently relieved me from despair in deplorable changes. This faculty, or instinct, was now roused. I watched the re-awakened devotion of my sister; Clara's timid, but concentrated admiration of her father, and Raymond's appetite for renown, and sensitiveness to the demonstrations of affection of the Athenians. Attentively perusing this animated volume, I was the less surprised at the tale I read on the new-turned page.

The Turkish army were at this time besieging Rodosto; and the Greeks, hastening their preparations, and sending each day reinforcements, were on the eve of forcing the enemy to battle. Each people looked on the coming struggle as that which would be to a great degree decisive; as, in case of victory, the next step would be the siege of Constantinople by the Greeks. Raymond, being somewhat recovered, prepared to re-assume his command in the army.

Perdita did not oppose herself to his determination. She only stipulated to be permitted to accompany him. She had set down no rule of conduct for herself; but for her life she could not have opposed his slightest wish, or do other than acquiesce cheerfully

in all his projects. One word, in truth, had alarmed her more than battles or sieges, during which she trusted Raymond's high command would exempt him from danger. That word, as yet it was not more to her, was PLAGUE. This enemy to the human race had begun early in June to raise its serpent-head on the shores of the Nile; parts of Asia, not usually subject to this evil, were infected. It was in Constantinople; but as each year that city experienced a like visitation, small attention was paid to those accounts which declared more people to have died there already, than usually made up the accustomed prey of the whole of the hotter months. However it might be, neither plague nor war could prevent Perdita from following her lord, or induce her to utter one objection to the plans which he proposed. To be near him, to be loved by him, to feel him again her own, was the limit of her desires. The object of her life was to do him pleasure: it had been so before, but with a difference. In past times, without thought or foresight she had made him happy, being so herself, and in any question of choice, consulted her own wishes, as being one with his. Now she sedulously put herself out of the question, sacrificing even her anxiety for his health and welfare to her resolve not to oppose any of his desires. Love of the Greek people, appetite for glory, and hatred of the barbarian government under which he had suffered even to the approach of death, stimulated him. He wished to repay the kindness of the Athenians, to keep alive the splendid associations connected with his name, and to eradicate from Europe a power which, while every other nation advanced in civilization, stood still, a monument of antique barbarism. Having effected the reunion of Raymond and Perdita, I was eager to return to England; but his earnest request, added to awakening curiosity, and an indefinable anxiety to behold the catastrophe, now apparently at hand, in the long drawn history of Grecian and Turkish warfare, induced me to consent to prolong until the autumn, the period of my residence in Greece.

As soon as the health of Raymond was sufficiently re-established, he prepared to join the Grecian camp, near Kishan, a town of some importance, situated to the east of the Hebrus; in

which Perdita and Clara were to remain until the event of the expected battle. We quitted Athens on the 2nd of June. Raymond had recovered from the gaunt and pallid looks of fever. If I no longer saw the fresh glow of youth on his matured countenance, if care had besieged his brow,

"And dug deep trenches in his beauty's field,"

—SHAKSPEARE'S SONNETS

if his hair, slightly mingled with grey, and his look, considerate even in its eagerness, gave signs of added years and past sufferings, yet there was something irresistibly affecting in the sight of one, lately snatched from the grave, renewing his career, untamed by sickness or disaster. The Athenians saw in him, not as heretofore, the heroic boy or desperate man, who was ready to die for them; but the prudent commander, who for their sakes was careful of his life, and could make his own warrior-propensities second to the scheme of conduct policy might point out.

440

All Athens accompanied us for several miles. When he had landed a month ago, the noisy populace had been hushed by sorrow and fear; but this was a festival day to all. The air resounded with their shouts; their picturesque costume, and the gay colours of which it was composed, flaunted in the sunshine; their eager gestures and rapid utterance accorded with their wild appearance. Raymond was the theme of every tongue, the hope of each wife, mother or betrothed bride, whose husband, child, or lover, making a part of the Greek army, were to be conducted to victory by him.

Notwithstanding the hazardous object of our journey, it was full of romantic interest, as we passed through the vallies, and over the hills, of this divine country. Raymond was inspirited by the intense sensations of recovered health; he felt that in being general of the Athenians, he filled a post worthy of his ambition; and, in his hope of the conquest of Constantinople, he counted on an event which would be as a landmark in the waste of ages, an exploit unequalled in the annals of man; when a city of grand

historic association, the beauty of whose site was the wonder of the world, which for many hundred years had been the strong hold of the Moslems, should be rescued from slavery and barbarism, and restored to a people illustrious for genius, civilization, and a spirit of liberty. Perdita rested on his restored society, on his love, his hopes and fame, even as a Sybarite on a luxurious couch; every thought was transport, each emotion bathed as it were in a congenial and balmy element.

We arrived at Kishan on the 7th of July. The weather during our journey had been serene. Each day, before dawn, we left our night's encampment, and watched the shadows as they retreated from hill and valley, and the golden splendour of the sun's approach. The accompanying soldiers received, with national vivacity, enthusiastic pleasure from the sight of beautiful nature. The uprising of the star of day was hailed by triumphant strains, while the birds, heard by snatches, filled up the intervals of the music. At noon, we pitched our tents in some shady valley, or embowering wood among the mountains, while a stream prattling over pebbles induced grateful sleep. Our evening march, more calm, was yet more delightful than the morning restlessness of spirit. If the band played, involuntarily they chose airs of moderated passion; the farewell of love, or lament at absence, was followed and closed by some solemn hymn, which harmonized with the tranquil loveliness of evening, and elevated the soul to grand and religious thought. Often all sounds were suspended, that we might listen to the nightingale, while the fire-flies danced in bright measure, and the soft cooing of the aziolo spoke of fair weather to the travellers. Did we pass a valley? Soft shades encompassed us, and rocks tinged with beauteous hues. If we traversed a mountain, Greece, a living map, was spread beneath, her renowned pinnacles cleaving the ether; her rivers threading in silver line the fertile land. Afraid almost to breathe, we English travellers surveyed with extasy this splendid landscape, so different from the sober hues and melancholy graces of our native scenery. When we quitted Macedonia, the fertile but low plains of Thrace afforded fewer beauties; yet our journey continued to be interesting. An advanced guard gave

information of our approach, and the country people were quickly in motion to do honour to Lord Raymond. The villages were decorated by triumphal arches of greenery by day, and lamps by night; tapestry waved from the windows, the ground was strewn with flowers, and the name of Raymond, joined to that of Greece, was echoed in the Evive of the peasant crowd.

When we arrived at Kishan, we learnt, that on hearing of the advance of Lord Raymond and his detachment, the Turkish army had retreated from Rodosto; but meeting with a reinforcement, they had re-trod their steps. In the meantime, Argyropylo, the Greek commander-in-chief, had advanced, so as to be between the Turks and Rodosto; a battle, it was said, was inevitable. Perdita and her child were to remain at Kishan. Raymond asked me, if I would not continue with them. "Now by the fells of Cumberland," I cried, "by all of the vagabond and poacher that appertains to me, I will stand at your side, draw my sword in the Greek cause, and be hailed as a victor along with you!"

All the plain, from Kishan to Rodosto, a distance of sixteen leagues, was alive with troops, or with the camp-followers, all in motion at the approach of a battle. The small garrisons were drawn from the various towns and fortresses, and went to swell the main army. We met baggage waggons, and many females of high and low rank returning to Fairy or Kishan, there to wait the issue of the expected day. When we arrived at Rodosto, we found that the field had been taken, and the scheme of the battle arranged. The sound of firing, early on the following morning, informed us that advanced posts of the armies were engaged. Regiment after regiment advanced, their colours flying and bands playing. They planted the cannon on the tumuli, sole elevations in this level country, and formed themselves into column and hollow square; while the pioneers threw up small mounds for their protection.

These then were the preparations for a battle, nay, the battle itself; far different from any thing the imagination had pictured. We read of centre and wing in Greek and Roman history; we fancy a spot, plain as a table, and soldiers small as chessmen; and drawn forth, so that the most ignorant of the game can discover

science and order in the disposition of the forces. When I came to the reality, and saw regiments file off to the left far out of sight, fields intervening between the battalions, but a few troops sufficiently near me to observe their motions, I gave up all idea of understanding, even of seeing a battle, but attaching myself to Raymond attended with intense interest to his actions. He shewed himself collected, gallant and imperial; his commands were prompt, his intuition of the events of the day to me miraculous. In the mean time the cannon roared; the music lifted up its enlivening voice at intervals; and we on the highest of the mounds I mentioned, too far off to observe the fallen sheaves which death gathered into his storehouse, beheld the regiments, now lost in smoke, now banners and staves peering above the cloud, while shout and clamour drowned every sound.

Early in the day, Argyropylo was wounded dangerously, and Raymond assumed the command of the whole army. He made few remarks, till, on observing through his glass the sequel of an order he had given, his face, clouded for awhile with doubt, became radiant. "The day is ours," he cried, "the Turks fly from the bayonet." And then swiftly he dispatched his aides-de-camp to command the horse to fall on the routed enemy. The defeat became total; the cannon ceased to roar; the infantry rallied, and horse pursued the flying Turks along the dreary plain; the staff of Raymond was dispersed in various directions, to make observations, and bear commands. Even I was dispatched to a distant part of the field.

The ground on which the battle was fought, was a level plain—so level, that from the tumuli you saw the waving line of mountains on the wide-stretched horizon; yet the intervening space was unvaried by the least irregularity, save such undulations as resembled the waves of the sea. The whole of this part of Thrace had been so long a scene of contest, that it had remained uncultivated, and presented a dreary, barren appearance. The order I had received, was to make an observation of the direction which a detachment of the enemy might have taken, from a northern tumulus; the whole Turkish army, followed by the Greek, had poured eastward; none but the dead remained in the

direction of my side. From the top of the mound, I looked far round—all was silent and deserted.

The last beams of the nearly sunken sun shot up from behind the far summit of Mount Athos; the sea of Marmora still glittered beneath its rays, while the Asiatic coast beyond was half hid in a haze of low cloud. Many a casque, and bayonet, and sword, fallen from unnerved arms, reflected the departing ray; they lay scattered far and near. From the east, a band of ravens, old inhabitants of the Turkish cemeteries, came sailing along towards their harvest; the sun disappeared. This hour, melancholy yet sweet, has always seemed to me the time when we are most naturally led to commune with higher powers; our mortal sternness departs, and gentle complacency invests the soul. But now, in the midst of the dying and the dead, how could a thought of heaven or a sensation of tranquillity possess one of the murderers? During the busy day, my mind had yielded itself a willing slave to the state of things presented to it by its fellow-beings; historical association, hatred of the foe, and military enthusiasm had held dominion over me. Now, I looked on the evening star, as softly and calmly it hung pendulous in the orange hues of sunset. I turned to the corse-strewn earth; and felt ashamed of my species. So perhaps were the placid skies; for they quickly veiled themselves in mist, and in this change assisted the swift disappearance of twilight usual in the south; heavy masses of cloud floated up from the south east, and red and turbid lightning shot from their dark edges; the rushing wind disturbed the garments of the dead, and was chilled as it passed over their icy forms. Darkness gathered round; the objects about me became indistinct, I descended from my station, and with difficulty guided my horse, so as to avoid the slain.

Suddenly I heard a piercing shriek; a form seemed to rise from the earth; it flew swiftly towards me, sinking to the ground again as it drew near. All this passed so suddenly, that I with difficulty reined in my horse, so that it should not trample on the prostrate being. The dress of this person was that of a soldier, but the bared neck and arms, and the continued shrieks discovered a female thus disguised. I dismounted to her aid, while she, with heavy

groans, and her hand placed on her side, resisted my attempt to lead her on. In the hurry of the moment I forgot that I was in Greece, and in my native accents endeavoured to soothe the sufferer. With wild and terrific exclamations did the lost, dying Evadne (for it was she) recognize the language of her lover; pain and fever from her wound had deranged her intellects, while her piteous cries and feeble efforts to escape, penetrated me with compassion. In wild delirium she called upon the name of Raymond; she exclaimed that I was keeping him from her, while the Turks with fearful instruments of torture were about to take his life. Then again she sadly lamented her hard fate; that a woman, with a woman's heart and sensibility, should be driven by hopeless love and vacant hopes to take up the trade of arms, and suffer beyond the endurance of man privation, labour, and pain—the while her dry, hot hand pressed mine, and her brow and lips burned with consuming fire.

As her strength grew less, I lifted her from the ground; her emaciated form hung over my arm, her sunken cheek rested on my breast; in a sepulchral voice she murmured:—"This is the end of love!—Yet not the end!"—and frenzy lent her strength as she cast her arm up to heaven: "there is the end! there we meet again. Many living deaths have I borne for thee, O Raymond, and now I expire, thy victim!—By my death I purchase thee—lo! the instruments of war, fire, the plague are my servitors. I dared, I conquered them all, till now! I have sold myself to death, with the sole condition that thou shouldst follow me—Fire, and war, and plague, unite for thy destruction—O my Raymond, there is no safety for thee!"

With an heavy heart I listened to the changes of her delirium; I made her a bed of cloaks; her violence decreased and a clammy dew stood on her brow as the paleness of death succeeded to the crimson of fever, I placed her on the cloaks. She continued to rave of her speedy meeting with her beloved in the grave, of his death nigh at hand; sometimes she solemnly declared that he was summoned; sometimes she bewailed his hard destiny. Her voice grew feebler, her speech interrupted; a few convulsive

movements, and her muscles relaxed, the limbs fell, no more to be sustained, one deep sigh, and life was gone.

I bore her from the near neighbourhood of the dead; wrapt in cloaks, I placed her beneath a tree. Once more I looked on her altered face; the last time I saw her she was eighteen; beautiful as poet's vision, splendid as a Sultana of the East—Twelve years had past; twelve years of change, sorrow and hardship; her brilliant complexion had become worn and dark, her limbs had lost the roundness of youth and womanhood; her eyes had sunk deep,

Crushed and o'erworn,
The hours had drained her blood, and filled her brow
With lines and wrinkles.

With shuddering horror I veiled this monument of human passion and human misery; I heaped over her all of flags and heavy accoutrements I could find, to guard her from birds and beasts of prey, until I could bestow on her a fitting grave. Sadly and slowly I stemmed my course from among the heaps of slain, and, guided by the twinkling lights of the town, at length reached Rodosto.

Chapter II

On my arrival, I found that an order had already gone forth for the army to proceed immediately towards Constantinople; and the troops which had suffered least in the battle were already on their way. The town was full of tumult. The wound, and consequent inability of Argyropylo, caused Raymond to be the first in command. He rode through the town, visiting the wounded, and giving such orders as were necessary for the siege he meditated. Early in the morning the whole army was in motion. In the hurry I could hardly find an opportunity to bestow the last offices on Evadne. Attended only by my servant, I dug a deep grave for her at the foot of the tree, and without disturbing her warrior shroud, I placed her in it, heaping stones upon the grave. The dazzling sun and glare of daylight, deprived the scene of solemnity; from

Evadne's low tomb, I joined Raymond and his staff, now on their way to the Golden City.

Constantinople was invested, trenches dug, and advances made. The whole Greek fleet blockaded it by sea; on land from the river Kyat Kbanah, near the Sweet Waters, to the Tower of Marmora, on the shores of the Propontis, along the whole line of the ancient walls, the trenches of the siege were drawn. We already possessed Pera; the Golden Horn itself, the city, bastioned by the sea, and the ivy-mantled walls of the Greek emperors was all of Europe that the Mahometans could call theirs. Our army looked on her as certain prey. They counted the garrison; it was impossible that it should be relieved; each sally was a victory; for, even when the Turks were triumphant, the loss of men they sustained was an irreparable injury. I rode one morning with Raymond to the lofty mound, not far from the Top Kapou, (Cannon-gate), on which Mahmoud planted his standard, and first saw the city. Still the same lofty domes and minarets towered above the verdurous walls, where Constantine had died, and the Turk had entered the city. The plain around was interspersed with cemeteries, Turk, Greek, and Armenian, with their growth of cypress trees; and other woods of more cheerful aspect, diversified the scene. Among them the Greek army was encamped, and their squadrons moved to and fro—now in regular march, now in swift career.

Raymond's eyes were fixed on the city. "I have counted the hours of her life," said he; "one month, and she falls. Remain with me till then; wait till you see the cross on St. Sophia; and then return to your peaceful glades."

"You then," I asked, "still remain in Greece?"

"Assuredly," replied Raymond. "Yet Lionel, when I say this, believe me I look back with regret to our tranquil life at Windsor. I am but half a soldier; I love the renown, but not the trade of war. Before the battle of Rodosto I was full of hope and spirit; to conquer there, and afterwards to take Constantinople, was the hope, the bourne, the fulfilment of my ambition. This enthusiasm is now spent, I know not why; I seem to myself to be entering a

darksome gulph; the ardent spirit of the army is irksome to me, the rapture of triumph null."

He paused, and was lost in thought. His serious mien recalled, by some association, the half-forgotten Evadne to my mind, and I seized this opportunity to make enquiries from him concerning her strange lot. I asked him, if he had ever seen among the troops any one resembling her; if since he had returned to Greece he had heard of her?

He started at her name,—he looked uneasily on me. "Even so," he cried, "I knew you would speak of her. Long, long I had forgotten her. Since our encampment here, she daily, hourly visits my thoughts. When I am addressed, her name is the sound I expect: in every communication, I imagine that she will form a part. At length you have broken the spell; tell me what you know of her."

I related my meeting with her; the story of her death was told and re-told. With painful earnestness he questioned me concerning her prophecies with regard to him. I treated them as the ravings of a maniac. "No, no," he said, "do not deceive yourself,—me you cannot. She has said nothing but what I knew before—though this is confirmation. Fire, the sword, and plague! They may all be found in yonder city; on my head alone may they fall!"

From this day Raymond's melancholy increased. He secluded himself as much as the duties of his station permitted. When in company, sadness would in spite of every effort steal over his features, and he sat absent and mute among the busy crowd that thronged about him. Perdita rejoined him, and before her he forced himself to appear cheerful, for she, even as a mirror, changed as he changed, and if he were silent and anxious, she solicitously inquired concerning, and endeavoured to remove the cause of his seriousness. She resided at the palace of Sweet Waters, a summer seraglio of the Sultan; the beauty of the surrounding scenery, undefiled by war, and the freshness of the river, made this spot doubly delightful. Raymond felt no relief, received no pleasure from any show of heaven or earth. He often left Perdita, to wander in the grounds alone; or in a light shallop

he floated idly on the pure waters, musing deeply. Sometimes I joined him; at such times his countenance was invariably solemn, his air dejected. He seemed relieved on seeing me, and would talk with some degree of interest on the affairs of the day. There was evidently something behind all this; yet, when he appeared about to speak of that which was nearest his heart, he would abruptly turn away, and with a sigh endeavour to deliver the painful idea to the winds.

It had often occurred, that, when, as I said, Raymond quitted Perdita's drawing-room, Clara came up to me, and gently drawing me aside, said, "Papa is gone; shall we go to him? I dare say he will be glad to see you." And, as accident permitted, I complied with or refused her request. One evening a numerous assembly of Greek chieftains were gathered together in the palace. The intriguing Palli, the accomplished Karazza, the warlike Ypsilanti, were among the principal. They talked of the events of the day; the skirmish at noon; the diminished numbers of the Infidels; their defeat and flight: they contemplated, after a short interval of time, the capture of the Golden City. They endeavoured to picture forth what would then happen, and spoke in lofty terms of the prosperity of Greece, when Constantinople should become its capital. The conversation then reverted to Asiatic intelligence, and the ravages the plague made in its chief cities; conjectures were hazarded as to the progress that disease might have made in the besieged city.

Raymond had joined in the former part of the discussion. In lively terms he demonstrated the extremities to which Constantinople was reduced; the wasted and haggard, though ferocious appearance of the troops; famine and pestilence was at work for them, he observed, and the infidels would soon be obliged to take refuge in their only hope—submission. Suddenly in the midst of his harangue he broke off, as if stung by some painful thought; he rose uneasily, and I perceived him at length quit the hall, and through the long corridor seek the open air. He did not return; and soon Clara crept round to me, making the accustomed invitation. I consented to her request, and taking her little hand, followed Raymond. We found him just about to

embark in his boat, and he readily agreed to receive us as companions. After the heats of the day, the cooling land-breeze ruffled the river, and filled our little sail. The city looked dark to the south, while numerous lights along the near shores, and the beautiful aspect of the banks reposing in placid night, the waters keenly reflecting the heavenly lights, gave to this beauteous river a dower of loveliness that might have characterized a retreat in Paradise. Our single boatman attended to the sail; Raymond steered; Clara sat at his feet, clasping his knees with her arms, and laying her head on them. Raymond began the conversation somewhat abruptly.

"This, my friend, is probably the last time we shall have an opportunity of conversing freely; my plans are now in full operation, and my time will become more and more occupied. Besides, I wish at once to tell you my wishes and expectations, and then never again to revert to so painful a subject. First, I must thank you, Lionel, for having remained here at my request. Vanity first prompted me to ask you: vanity, I call it; yet even in this I see the hand of fate—your presence will soon be necessary; you will become the last resource of Perdita, her protector and consoler. You will take her back to Windsor."—

"Not without you," I said. "You do not mean to separate again?"

"Do not deceive yourself," replied Raymond, "the separation at hand is one over which I have no control; most near at hand is it; the days are already counted. May I trust you? For many days I have longed to disclose the mysterious presentiments that weigh on me, although I fear that you will ridicule them. Yet do not, my gentle friend; for, all childish and unwise as they are, they have become a part of me, and I dare not expect to shake them off.

"Yet how can I expect you to sympathize with me? You are of this world; I am not. You hold forth your hand; it is even as a part of yourself; and you do not yet divide the feeling of identity from the mortal form that shapes forth Lionel. How then can you understand me? Earth is to me a tomb, the firmament a vault, shrouding mere corruption. Time is no more, for I have stepped within the threshold of eternity; each man I meet appears a corse,

which will soon be deserted of its animating spark, on the eve of decay and corruption.

*Cada piedra un piramide levanta,
y cada flor costruye un monumento,
cada edificio es un sepulcro altivo,
cada soldado un esqueleto vivo."*

—CALDERON DE LA BARCA

His accent was mournful,—he sighed deeply. "A few months ago," he continued, "I was thought to be dying; but life was strong within me. My affections were human; hope and love were the day-stars of my life. Now— they dream that the brows of the conqueror of the infidel faith are about to be encircled by triumphant laurel; they talk of honourable reward, of title, power, and wealth—all I ask of Greece is a grave. Let them raise a mound above my lifeless body, which may stand even when the dome of St. Sophia has fallen.

470

"Wherefore do I feel thus? At Rodosto I was full of hope; but when first I saw Constantinople, that feeling, with every other joyful one, departed. The last words of Evadne were the seal upon the warrant of my death. Yet I do not pretend to account for my mood by any particular event. All I can say is, that it is so. The plague I am told is in Constantinople, perhaps I have imbibed its effluvia—perhaps disease is the real cause of my prognostications. It matters little why or wherefore I am affected, no power can avert the stroke, and the shadow of Fate's uplifted hand already darkens me.

"To you, Lionel, I entrust your sister and her child. Never mention to her the fatal name of Evadne. She would doubly sorrow over the strange link that enchains me to her, making my spirit obey her dying voice, following her, as it is about to do, to the unknown country."

I listened to him with wonder; but that his sad demeanour and solemn utterance assured me of the truth and intensity of his feelings, I should with light derision have attempted to dissipate his fears. Whatever I was about to reply, was interrupted by the

powerful emotions of Clara. Raymond had spoken, thoughtless of her presence, and she, poor child, heard with terror and faith the prophecy of his death. Her father was moved by her violent grief; he took her in his arms and soothed her, but his very soothings were solemn and fearful. "Weep not, sweet child," said he, "the coming death of one you have hardly known. I may die, but in death I can never forget or desert my own Clara. In after sorrow or joy, believe that your father's spirit is near, to save or sympathize with you. Be proud of me, and cherish your infant remembrance of me. Thus, sweetest, I shall not appear to die. One thing you must promise,—not to speak to any one but your uncle, of the conversation you have just overheard. When I am gone, you will console your mother, and tell her that death was only bitter because it divided me from her; that my last thoughts will be spent on her. But while I live, promise not to betray me; promise, my child."

With faltering accents Clara promised, while she still clung to her father in a transport of sorrow. Soon we returned to shore, and I endeavoured to obviate the impression made on the child's mind, by treating Raymond's fears lightly. We heard no more of them; for, as he had said, the siege, now drawing to a conclusion, became paramount in interest, engaging all his time and attention.

The empire of the Mahometans in Europe was at its close. The Greek fleet blockading every port of Stamboul, prevented the arrival of succour from Asia; all egress on the side towards land had become impracticable, except to such desperate sallies, as reduced the numbers of the enemy without making any impression on our lines. The garrison was now so much diminished, that it was evident that the city could easily have been carried by storm; but both humanity and policy dictated a slower mode of proceeding. We could hardly doubt that, if pursued to the utmost, its palaces, its temples and store of wealth would be destroyed in the fury of contending triumph and defeat. Already the defenceless citizens had suffered through the barbarity of the Janisaries; and, in time of storm, tumult and massacre, beauty, infancy and decrepitude, would have alike been sacrificed to the brutal ferocity of the soldiers. Famine and

blockade were certain means of conquest; and on these we founded our hopes of victory.

Each day the soldiers of the garrison assaulted our advanced posts, and impeded the accomplishment of our works. Fire-boats were launched from the various ports, while our troops sometimes recoiled from the devoted courage of men who did not seek to live, but to sell their lives dearly. These contests were aggravated by the season: they took place during summer, when the southern Asiatic wind came laden with intolerable heat, when the streams were dried up in their shallow beds, and the vast basin of the sea appeared to glow under the unmitigated rays of the solstitial sun. Nor did night refresh the earth. Dew was denied; herbage and flowers there were none; the very trees drooped; and summer assumed the blighted appearance of winter, as it went forth in silence and flame to abridge the means of sustenance to man. In vain did the eye strive to find the wreck of some northern cloud in the stainless empyrean, which might bring hope of change and moisture to the oppressive and windless atmosphere. All was serene, burning, annihilating. We the besiegers were in the comparison little affected by these evils. The woods around afforded us shade,—the river secured to us a constant supply of water; nay, detachments were employed in furnishing the army with ice, which had been laid up on Haemus, and Athos, and the mountains of Macedonia, while cooling fruits and wholesome food renovated the strength of the labourers, and made us bear with less impatience the weight of the unrefreshing air. But in the city things wore a different face. The sun's rays were refracted from the pavement and buildings—the stoppage of the public fountains—the bad quality of the food, and scarcity even of that, produced a state of suffering, which was aggravated by the scourge of disease; while the garrison arrogated every superfluity to themselves, adding by waste and riot to the necessary evils of the time. Still they would not capitulate.

Suddenly the system of warfare was changed. We experienced no more assaults; and by night and day we continued our labours unimpeded. Stranger still, when the troops advanced near the city, the walls were vacant, and no cannon was pointed against the

intruders. When these circumstances were reported to Raymond, he caused minute observations to be made as to what was doing within the walls, and when his scouts returned, reporting only the continued silence and desolation of the city, he commanded the army to be drawn out before the gates. No one appeared on the walls; the very portals, though locked and barred, seemed unguarded; above, the many domes and glittering crescents pierced heaven; while the old walls, survivors of ages, with ivy-crowned tower and weed-tangled buttress, stood as rocks in an uninhabited waste. From within the city neither shout nor cry, nor aught except the casual howling of a dog, broke the noon-day stillness. Even our soldiers were awed to silence; the music paused; the clang of arms was hushed. Each man asked his fellow in whispers, the meaning of this sudden peace; while Raymond from an height endeavoured, by means of glasses, to discover and observe the stratagem of the enemy. No form could be discerned on the terraces of the houses; in the higher parts of the town no moving shadow bespoke the presence of any living being: the very trees waved not, and mocked the stability of architecture with like immovability.

The tramp of horses, distinctly heard in the silence, was at length discerned. It was a troop sent by Karazza, the Admiral; they bore dispatches to the Lord General. The contents of these papers were important. The night before, the watch, on board one of the smaller vessels anchored near the seraglio wall, was roused by a slight splashing as of muffled oars; the alarm was given: twelve small boats, each containing three Janizaries, were descried endeavouring to make their way through the fleet to the opposite shore of Scutari. When they found themselves discovered they discharged their muskets, and some came to the front to cover the others, whose crews, exerting all their strength, endeavoured to escape with their light barks from among the dark hulls that environed them. They were in the end all sunk, and, with the exception of two or three prisoners, the crews drowned. Little could be got from the survivors; but their cautious answers caused it to be surmised that several expeditions had preceded this last, and that several Turks of rank and importance had been

conveyed to Asia. The men disdainfully repelled the idea of having deserted the defence of their city; and one, the youngest among them, in answer to the taunt of a sailor, exclaimed, "Take it, Christian dogs! take the palaces, the gardens, the mosques, the abode of our fathers—take plague with them; pestilence is the enemy we fly; if she be your friend, hug her to your bosoms. The curse of Allah is on Stamboul, share ye her fate."

Such was the account sent by Karazza to Raymond: but a tale full of monstrous exaggerations, though founded on this, was spread by the accompanying troop among our soldiers. A murmur arose, the city was the prey of pestilence; already had a mighty power subjugated the inhabitants; Death had become lord of Constantinople.

I have heard a picture described, wherein all the inhabitants of earth were drawn out in fear to stand the encounter of Death. The feeble and decrepid fled; the warriors retreated, though they threatened even in flight. Wolves and lions, and various monsters of the desert roared against him; while the grim Unreality hovered shaking his spectral dart, a solitary but invincible assailant. Even so was it with the army of Greece. I am convinced, that had the myriad troops of Asia come from over the Propontis, and stood defenders of the Golden City, each and every Greek would have marched against the overwhelming numbers, and have devoted himself with patriotic fury for his country. But here no hedge of bayonets opposed itself, no death-dealing artillery, no formidable array of brave soldiers—the unguarded walls afforded easy entrance—the vacant palaces luxurious dwellings; but above the dome of St. Sophia the superstitious Greek saw Pestilence, and shrunk in trepidation from her influence.

Raymond was actuated by far other feelings. He descended the hill with a face beaming with triumph, and pointing with his sword to the gates, commanded his troops to—down with those barricades—the only obstacles now to completest victory. The soldiers answered his cheerful words with aghast and awe-struck looks; instinctively they drew back, and Raymond rode in the front of the lines:—"By my sword I swear," he cried, "that no ambush or stratagem endangers you. The enemy is already

vanquished; the pleasant places, the noble dwellings and spoil of the city are already yours; force the gate; enter and possess the seats of your ancestors, your own inheritance!"

An universal shudder and fearful whispering passed through the lines; not a soldier moved. "Cowards!" exclaimed their general, exasperated, "give me an hatchet! I alone will enter! I will plant your standard; and when you see it wave from yon highest minaret, you may gain courage, and rally round it!"

One of the officers now came forward: "General," he said, "we neither fear the courage, nor arms, the open attack, nor secret ambush of the Moslems. We are ready to expose our breasts, exposed ten thousand times before, to the balls and scymetars of the infidels, and to fall gloriously for Greece. But we will not die in heaps, like dogs poisoned in summer-time, by the pestilential air of that city—we dare not go against the Plague!"

A multitude of men are feeble and inert, without a voice, a leader; give them that, and they regain the strength belonging to their numbers. Shouts from a thousand voices now rent the air—the cry of applause became universal. Raymond saw the danger; he was willing to save his troops from the crime of disobedience; for he knew, that contention once begun between the commander and his army, each act and word added to the weakness of the former, and bestowed power on the latter. He gave orders for the retreat to be sounded, and the regiments repaired in good order to the camp.

I hastened to carry the intelligence of these strange proceedings to Perdita; and we were soon joined by Raymond. He looked gloomy and perturbed. My sister was struck by my narrative: "How beyond the imagination of man," she exclaimed, "are the decrees of heaven, wondrous and inexplicable!"

"Foolish girl," cried Raymond angrily, "are you like my valiant soldiers, panic-struck? What is there inexplicable, pray, tell me, in so very natural an occurrence? Does not the plague rage each year in Stamboul? What wonder, that this year, when as we are told, its virulence is unexampled in Asia, that it should have occasioned double havoc in that city? What wonder then, in time of siege, want, extreme heat, and drought, that it should make

unaccustomed ravages? Less wonder far is it, that the garrison, despairing of being able to hold out longer, should take advantage of the negligence of our fleet to escape at once from siege and capture. It is not pestilence —by the God that lives! it is not either plague or impending danger that makes us, like birds in harvest-time, terrified by a scarecrow, abstain from the ready prey—it is base superstition—And thus the aim of the valiant is made the shuttlecock of fools; the worthy ambition of the high-souled, the plaything of these tamed hares! But yet Stamboul shall be ours! By my past labours, by torture and imprisonment suffered for them, by my victories, by my sword, I swear—by my hopes of fame, by my former deserts now awaiting their reward, I deeply vow, with these hands to plant the cross on yonder mosque!"

"Dearest Raymond!" interrupted Perdita, in a supplicating accent.

He had been walking to and fro in the marble hall of the seraglio; his very lips were pale with rage, while, quivering, they shaped his angry words—his eyes shot fire—his gestures seemed restrained by their very vehemence. "Perdita," he continued, impatiently, "I know what you would say; I know that you love me, that you are good and gentle; but this is no woman's work—nor can a female heart guess at the hurricane which tears me!"

He seemed half afraid of his own violence, and suddenly quitted the hall: a look from Perdita shewed me her distress, and I followed him. He was pacing the garden: his passions were in a state of inconceivable turbulence. "Am I for ever," he cried, "to be the sport of fortune! Must man, the heaven-climber, be for ever the victim of the crawling reptiles of his species! Were I as you, Lionel, looking forward to many years of life, to a succession of love-enlightened days, to refined enjoyments and fresh-springing hopes, I might yield, and breaking my General's staff, seek repose in the glades of Windsor. But I am about to die!—nay, interrupt me not—soon I shall die. From the many-peopled earth, from the sympathies of man, from the loved resorts of my youth, from the kindness of my friends, from the affection of my only beloved Perdita, I am about to be removed. Such is the will of fate! Such the decree of the High Ruler from whom there is no appeal: to

whom I submit. But to lose all—to lose with life and love, glory also! It shall not be!

"I, and in a few brief years, all you,—this panic-struck army, and all the population of fair Greece, will no longer be. But other generations will arise, and ever and for ever will continue, to be made happier by our present acts, to be glorified by our valour. The prayer of my youth was to be one among those who render the pages of earth's history splendid; who exalt the race of man, and make this little globe a dwelling of the mighty. Alas, for Raymond! the prayer of his youth is wasted—the hopes of his manhood are null!

490

"From my dungeon in yonder city I cried, soon I will be thy lord! When Evadne pronounced my death, I thought that the title of Victor of Constantinople would be written on my tomb, and I subdued all mortal fear. I stand before its vanquished walls, and dare not call myself a conqueror. So shall it not be! Did not Alexander leap from the walls of the city of the Oxydracae, to shew his coward troops the way to victory, encountering alone the swords of its defenders? Even so will I brave the plague—and though no man follow, I will plant the Grecian standard on the height of St. Sophia."

Reason came unavailing to such high-wrought feelings. In vain I shewed him, that when winter came, the cold would dissipate the pestilential air, and restore courage to the Greeks. "Talk not of other season than this!" he cried. "I have lived my last winter, and the date of this year, 2092, will be carved upon my tomb. Already do I see," he continued, looking up mournfully, "the bourne and precipitate edge of my existence, over which I plunge into the gloomy mystery of the life to come. I am prepared, so that I leave behind a trail of light so radiant, that my worst enemies cannot cloud it. I owe this to Greece, to you, to my surviving Perdita, and to myself, the victim of ambition."

We were interrupted by an attendant, who announced, that the staff of Raymond was assembled in the council-chamber. He requested me in the meantime to ride through the camp, and to observe and report to him the dispositions of the soldiers; he then left me. I had been excited to the utmost by the proceedings of the

day, and now more than ever by the passionate language of Raymond. Alas! for human reason! He accused the Greeks of superstition: what name did he give to the faith he lent to the predictions of Evadne? I passed from the palace of Sweet Waters to the plain on which the encampment lay, and found its inhabitants in commotion. The arrival of several with fresh stories of marvels, from the fleet; the exaggerations bestowed on what was already known; tales of old prophecies, of fearful histories of whole regions which had been laid waste during the present year by pestilence, alarmed and occupied the troops. Discipline was lost; the army disbanded itself. Each individual, before a part of a great whole moving only in unison with others, now became resolved into the unit nature had made him, and thought of himself only. They stole off at first by ones and twos, then in larger companies, until, unimpeded by the officers, whole battalions sought the road that led to Macedonia.

About midnight I returned to the palace and sought Raymond; he was alone, and apparently composed; such composure, at least, was his as is inspired by a resolve to adhere to a certain line of conduct. He heard my account of the self-dissolution of the army with calmness, and then said, "You know, Verney, my fixed determination not to quit this place, until in the light of day Stamboul is confessedly ours. If the men I have about me shrink from following me, others, more courageous, are to be found. Go you before break of day, bear these dispatches to Karazza, add to them your own entreaties that he send me his marines and naval force; if I can get but one regiment to second me, the rest would follow of course. Let him send me this regiment. I shall expect your return by to-morrow noon."

Methought this was but a poor expedient; but I assured him of my obedience and zeal. I quitted him to take a few hours rest. With the breaking of morning I was accoutred for my ride. I lingered awhile, desirous of taking leave of Perdita, and from my window observed the approach of the sun. The golden splendour arose, and weary nature awoke to suffer yet another day of heat and thirsty decay. No flowers lifted up their dew-laden cups to meet the dawn; the dry grass had withered on the plains; the

burning fields of air were vacant of birds; the cicale alone, children of the sun, began their shrill and deafening song among the cypresses and olives. I saw Raymond's coal-black charger brought to the palace gate; a small company of officers arrived soon after; care and fear was painted on each cheek, and in each eye, unrefreshed by sleep. I found Raymond and Perdita together. He was watching the rising sun, while with one arm he encircled his beloved's waist; she looked on him, the sun of her life, with earnest gaze of mingled anxiety and tenderness. Raymond started angrily when he saw me. "Here still?" he cried. "Is this your promised zeal?"

"Pardon me," I said, "but even as you speak, I am gone."

"Nay, pardon me," he replied; "I have no right to command or reproach; but my life hangs on your departure and speedy return. Farewell!"

His voice had recovered its bland tone, but a dark cloud still hung on his features. I would have delayed; I wished to recommend watchfulness to Perdita, but his presence restrained me. I had no pretence for my hesitation; and on his repeating his farewell, I clasped his outstretched hand; it was cold and clammy. "Take care of yourself, my dear Lord," I said.

"Nay," said Perdita, "that task shall be mine. Return speedily, Lionel." With an air of absence he was playing with her auburn locks, while she leaned on him; twice I turned back, only to look again on this matchless pair. At last, with slow and heavy steps, I had paced out of the hall, and sprung upon my horse. At that moment Clara flew towards me; clasping my knee she cried, "Make haste back, uncle! Dear uncle, I have such fearful dreams; I dare not tell my mother. Do not be long away!" I assured her of my impatience to return, and then, with a small escort rode along the plain towards the tower of Marmora.

I fulfilled my commission; I saw Karazza. He was somewhat surprised; he would see, he said, what could be done; but it required time; and Raymond had ordered me to return by noon. It was impossible to effect any thing in so short a time. I must stay till the next day; or come back, after having reported the present state of things to the general. My choice was easily made. A

restlessness, a fear of what was about to betide, a doubt as to Raymond's purposes, urged me to return without delay to his quarters. Quitting the Seven Towers, I rode eastward towards the Sweet Waters. I took a circuitous path, principally for the sake of going to the top of the mount before mentioned, which commanded a view of the city. I had my glass with me. The city basked under the noon-day sun, and the venerable walls formed its picturesque boundary. Immediately before me was the Top Kapou, the gate near which Mahomet had made the breach by which he entered the city. Trees gigantic and aged grew near; before the gate I discerned a crowd of moving human figures—with intense curiosity I lifted my glass to my eye. I saw Lord Raymond on his charger; a small company of officers had gathered about him; and behind was a promiscuous concourse of soldiers and subalterns, their discipline lost, their arms thrown aside; no music sounded, no banners streamed. The only flag among them was one which Raymond carried; he pointed with it to the gate of the city. The circle round him fell back. With angry gestures he leapt from his horse, and seizing a hatchet that hung from his saddle-bow, went with the apparent intention of battering down the opposing gate. A few men came to aid him; their numbers increased; under their united blows the obstacle was vanquished, gate, portcullis, and fence were demolished; and the wide sun-lit way, leading to the heart of the city, now lay open before them. The men shrank back; they seemed afraid of what they had already done, and stood as if they expected some Mighty Phantom to stalk in offended majesty from the opening. Raymond sprung lightly on his horse, grasped the standard, and with words which I could not hear (but his gestures, being their fit accompaniment, were marked by passionate energy,) he seemed to adjure their assistance and companionship; even as he spoke, the crowd receded from him. Indignation now transported him; his words I guessed were fraught with disdain—then turning from his coward followers, he addressed himself to enter the city alone. His very horse seemed to back from the fatal entrance; his dog, his faithful dog, lay moaning and supplicating in his path—in a moment more, he had plunged the rowels into the sides of the

stung animal, who bounded forward, and he, the gateway passed, was galloping up the broad and desart street.

Until this moment my soul had been in my eyes only. I had gazed with wonder, mixed with fear and enthusiasm. The latter feeling now predominated. I forgot the distance between us: "I will go with thee, Raymond!" I cried; but, my eye removed from the glass, I could scarce discern the pigmy forms of the crowd, which about a mile from me surrounded the gate; the form of Raymond was lost. Stung with impatience, I urged my horse with force of spur and loosened reins down the acclivity, that, before danger could arrive, I might be at the side of my noble, godlike friend. A number of buildings and trees intervened, when I had reached the plain, hiding the city from my view. But at that moment a crash was heard. Thunderlike it reverberated through the sky, while the air was darkened. A moment more and the old walls again met my sight, while over them hovered a murky cloud; fragments of buildings whirled above, half seen in smoke, while flames burst out beneath, and continued explosions filled the air with terrific thunders. Flying from the mass of falling ruin which leapt over the high walls, and shook the ivy towers, a crowd of soldiers made for the road by which I came; I was surrounded, hemmed in by them, unable to get forward. My impatience rose to its utmost; I stretched out my hands to the men; I conjured them to turn back and save their General, the conqueror of Stamboul, the liberator of Greece; tears, aye tears, in warm flow gushed from my eyes—I would not believe in his destruction; yet every mass that darkened the air seemed to bear with it a portion of the martyred Raymond. Horrible sights were shaped to me in the turbid cloud that hovered over the city; and my only relief was derived from the struggles I made to approach the gate. Yet when I effected my purpose, all I could discern within the precincts of the massive walls was a city of fire: the open way through which Raymond had ridden was enveloped in smoke and flame. After an interval the explosions ceased, but the flames still shot up from various quarters; the dome of St. Sophia had disappeared. Strange to say (the result perhaps of the concussion of air occasioned by the blowing up of the city) huge,

white thunder clouds lifted themselves up from the southern horizon, and gathered over-head; they were the first blots on the blue expanse that I had seen for months, and amidst this havoc and despair they inspired pleasure. The vault above became obscured, lightning flashed from the heavy masses, followed instantaneously by crashing thunder; then the big rain fell. The flames of the city bent beneath it; and the smoke and dust arising from the ruins was dissipated.

I no sooner perceived an abatement of the flames than, hurried on by an irresistible impulse, I endeavoured to penetrate the town. I could only do this on foot, as the mass of ruin was impracticable for a horse. I had never entered the city before, and its ways were unknown to me. The streets were blocked up, the ruins smoking; I climbed up one heap, only to view others in succession; and nothing told me where the centre of the town might be, or towards what point Raymond might have directed his course. The rain ceased; the clouds sunk behind the horizon; it was now evening, and the sun descended swiftly the western sky. I scrambled on, until I came to a street, whose wooden houses, half-burnt, had been cooled by the rain, and were fortunately uninjured by the gunpowder. Up this I hurried—until now I had not seen a vestige of man. Yet none of the defaced human forms which I distinguished, could be Raymond; so I turned my eyes away, while my heart sickened within me. I came to an open space—a mountain of ruin in the midst, announced that some large mosque had occupied the space—and here, scattered about, I saw various articles of luxury and wealth, singed, destroyed—but shewing what they had been in their ruin—jewels, strings of pearls, embroidered robes, rich furs, glittering tapestries, and oriental ornaments, seemed to have been collected here in a pile destined for destruction; but the rain had stopped the havoc midway.

Hours passed, while in this scene of ruin I sought for Raymond. Insurmountable heaps sometimes opposed themselves; the still burning fires scorched me. The sun set; the atmosphere grew dim—and the evening star no longer shone companionless. The glare of flames attested the progress of destruction, while, during mingled light and obscurity, the piles around me took

gigantic proportions and weird shapes. For a moment I could yield to the creative power of the imagination, and for a moment was soothed by the sublime fictions it presented to me. The beatings of my human heart drew me back to blank reality. Where, in this wilderness of death, art thou, O Raymond—ornament of England, deliverer of Greece, "hero of unwritten story," where in this burning chaos are thy dear relics strewed? I called aloud for him—through the darkness of night, over the scorching ruins of fallen Constantinople, his name was heard; no voice replied—echo even was mute.

I was overcome by weariness; the solitude depressed my spirits. The sultry air impregnated with dust, the heat and smoke of burning palaces, palsied my limbs. Hunger suddenly came acutely upon me. The excitement which had hitherto sustained me was lost; as a building, whose props are loosened, and whose foundations rock, totters and falls, so when enthusiasm and hope deserted me, did my strength fail. I sat on the sole remaining step of an edifice, which even in its downfall, was huge and magnificent; a few broken walls, not dislodged by gunpowder, stood in fantastic groups, and a flame glimmered at intervals on the summit of the pile. For a time hunger and sleep contended, till the constellations reeled before my eyes and then were lost. I strove to rise, but my heavy lids closed, my limbs over-wearied, claimed repose—I rested my head on the stone, I yielded to the grateful sensation of utter forgetfulness; and in that scene of desolation, on that night of despair—I slept.

Chapter III

The stars still shone brightly when I awoke, and Taurus high in the southern heaven shewed that it was midnight. I awoke from disturbed dreams. Methought I had been invited to Timon's last feast; I came with keen appetite, the covers were removed, the hot water sent up its unsatisfying steams, while I fled before the anger of the host, who assumed the form of Raymond; while to my diseased fancy, the vessels hurled by him after me, were surcharged with fetid vapour, and my friend's shape, altered by a

thousand distortions, expanded into a gigantic phantom, bearing on its brow the sign of pestilence. The growing shadow rose and rose, filling, and then seeming to endeavour to burst beyond, the adamantine vault that bent over, sustaining and enclosing the world. The night-mare became torture; with a strong effort I threw off sleep, and recalled reason to her wonted functions. My first thought was Perdita; to her I must return; her I must support, drawing such food from despair as might best sustain her wounded heart; recalling her from the wild excesses of grief, by the austere laws of duty, and the soft tenderness of regret.

The position of the stars was my only guide. I turned from the awful ruin of the Golden City, and, after great exertion, succeeded in extricating myself from its enclosure. I met a company of soldiers outside the walls; I borrowed a horse from one of them, and hastened to my sister. The appearance of the plain was changed during this short interval; the encampment was broken up; the relics of the disbanded army met in small companies here and there; each face was clouded; every gesture spoke astonishment and dismay.

With an heavy heart I entered the palace, and stood fearful to advance, to speak, to look. In the midst of the hall was Perdita; she sat on the marble pavement, her head fallen on her bosom, her hair dishevelled, her fingers twined busily one within the other; she was pale as marble, and every feature was contracted by agony. She perceived me, and looked up enquiringly; her half glance of hope was misery; the words died before I could articulate them; I felt a ghastly smile wrinkle my lips. She understood my gesture; again her head fell; again her fingers worked restlessly. At last I recovered speech, but my voice terrified her; the hapless girl had understood my look, and for worlds she would not that the tale of her heavy misery should have been shaped out and confirmed by hard, irrevocable words. Nay, she seemed to wish to distract my thoughts from the subject: she rose from the floor: "Hush!" she said, whisperingly; "after much weeping, Clara sleeps; we must not disturb her." She seated herself then on the same ottoman where I had left her in the morning resting on the beating heart of her Raymond; I dared not

approach her, but sat at a distant corner, watching her starting and nervous gestures. At length, in an abrupt manner she asked, "Where is he?"

"O, fear not," she continued, "fear not that I should entertain hope! Yet tell me, have you found him? To have him once more in my arms, to see him, however changed, is all I desire. Though Constantinople be heaped above him as a tomb, yet I must find him—then cover us with the city's weight, with a mountain piled above—I care not, so that one grave hold Raymond and his Perdita." Then weeping, she clung to me: "Take me to him," she cried, "unkind Lionel, why do you keep me here? Of myself I cannot find him—but you know where he lies—lead me thither."

At first these agonizing complaints filled me with intolerable compassion. But soon I endeavoured to extract patience for her from the ideas she suggested. I related my adventures of the night, my endeavours to find our lost one, and my disappointment. Turning her thoughts this way, I gave them an object which rescued them from insanity. With apparent calmness she discussed with me the probable spot where he might be found, and planned the means we should use for that purpose. Then hearing of my fatigue and abstinence, she herself brought me food. I seized the favourable moment, and endeavoured to awaken in her something beyond the killing torpor of grief. As I spoke, my subject carried me away; deep admiration; grief, the offspring of truest affection, the overflowing of a heart bursting with sympathy for all that had been great and sublime in the career of my friend, inspired me as I poured forth the praises of Raymond.

"Alas, for us," I cried, "who have lost this latest honour of the world! Beloved Raymond! He is gone to the nations of the dead; he has become one of those, who render the dark abode of the obscure grave illustrious by dwelling there. He has journeyed on the road that leads to it, and joined the mighty of soul who went before him. When the world was in its infancy death must have been terrible, and man left his friends and kindred to dwell, a solitary stranger, in an unknown country. But now, he who dies finds many companions gone before to prepare for his reception.

The great of past ages people it, the exalted hero of our own days is counted among its inhabitants, while life becomes doubly 'the desert and the solitude.'

"What a noble creature was Raymond, the first among the men of our time. By the grandeur of his conceptions, the graceful daring of his actions, by his wit and beauty, he won and ruled the minds of all. Of one only fault he might have been accused; but his death has cancelled that. I have heard him called inconstant of purpose—when he deserted, for the sake of love, the hope of sovereignty, and when he abdicated the protectorship of England, men blamed his infirmity of purpose. Now his death has crowned his life, and to the end of time it will be remembered, that he devoted himself, a willing victim, to the glory of Greece. Such was his choice: he expected to die. He foresaw that he should leave this cheerful earth, the lightsome sky, and thy love, Perdita; yet he neither hesitated or turned back, going right onward to his mark of fame. While the earth lasts, his actions will be recorded with praise. Grecian maidens will in devotion strew flowers on his tomb, and make the air around it resonant with patriotic hymns, in which his name will find high record."

I saw the features of Perdita soften; the sternness of grief yielded to tenderness—I continued:—"Thus to honour him, is the sacred duty of his survivors. To make his name even as an holy spot of ground, enclosing it from all hostile attacks by our praise, shedding on it the blossoms of love and regret, guarding it from decay, and bequeathing it untainted to posterity. Such is the duty of his friends. A dearer one belongs to you, Perdita, mother of his child. Do you remember in her infancy, with what transport you beheld Clara, recognizing in her the united being of yourself and Raymond; joying to view in this living temple a manifestation of your eternal loves. Even such is she still. You say that you have lost Raymond. O, no!—yet he lives with you and in you there. From him she sprung, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone—and not, as heretofore, are you content to trace in her downy cheek and delicate limbs, an affinity to Raymond, but in her enthusiastic affections, in the sweet qualities of her mind, you may still find him living, the good, the great, the beloved. Be it your care to

foster this similarity—be it your care to render her worthy of him, so that, when she glory in her origin, she take not shame for what she is."

I could perceive that, when I recalled my sister's thoughts to her duties in life, she did not listen with the same patience as before. She appeared to suspect a plan of consolation on my part, from which she, cherishing her new-born grief, revolted. "You talk of the future," she said, "while the present is all to me. Let me find the earthly dwelling of my beloved; let us rescue that from common dust, so that in times to come men may point to the sacred tomb, and name it his—then to other thoughts, and a new course of life, or what else fate, in her cruel tyranny, may have marked out for me."

After a short repose I prepared to leave her, that I might endeavour to accomplish her wish. In the mean time we were joined by Clara, whose pallid cheek and scared look shewed the deep impression grief had made on her young mind. She seemed to be full of something to which she could not give words; but, seizing an opportunity afforded by Perdita's absence, she preferred to me an earnest prayer, that I would take her within view of the gate at which her father had entered Constantinople. She promised to commit no extravagance, to be docile, and immediately to return. I could not refuse; for Clara was not an ordinary child; her sensibility and intelligence seemed already to have endowed her with the rights of womanhood. With her therefore, before me on my horse, attended only by the servant who was to re-conduct her, we rode to the Top Kapou. We found a party of soldiers gathered round it. They were listening. "They are human cries," said one: "More like the howling of a dog," replied another; and again they bent to catch the sound of regular distant moans, which issued from the precincts of the ruined city. "That, Clara," I said, "is the gate, that the street which yestermorn your father rode up." Whatever Clara's intention had been in asking to be brought hither, it was balked by the presence of the soldiers. With earnest gaze she looked on the labyrinth of smoking piles which had been a city, and then expressed her readiness to return home. At this moment a melancholy howl

struck on our ears; it was repeated; "Hark!" cried Clara, "he is there; that is Florio, my father's dog." It seemed to me impossible that she could recognise the sound, but she persisted in her assertion till she gained credit with the crowd about. At least it would be a benevolent action to rescue the sufferer, whether human or brute, from the desolation of the town; so, sending Clara back to her home, I again entered Constantinople. Encouraged by the impunity attendant on my former visit, several soldiers who had made a part of Raymond's body guard, who had loved him, and sincerely mourned his loss, accompanied me.

It is impossible to conjecture the strange enchainment of events which restored the lifeless form of my friend to our hands. In that part of the town where the fire had most raged the night before, and which now lay quenched, black and cold, the dying dog of Raymond crouched beside the mutilated form of its lord. At such a time sorrow has no voice; affliction, tamed by its very vehemence, is mute. The poor animal recognised me, licked my hand, crept close to its lord, and died. He had been evidently thrown from his horse by some falling ruin, which had crushed his head, and defaced his whole person. I bent over the body, and took in my hand the edge of his cloak, less altered in appearance than the human frame it clothed. I pressed it to my lips, while the rough soldiers gathered around, mourning over this worthiest prey of death, as if regret and endless lamentation could re-illumine the extinguished spark, or call to its shattered prison-house of flesh the liberated spirit. Yesterday those limbs were worth an universe; they then enshrined a transcendent power, whose intents, words, and actions were worthy to be recorded in letters of gold; now the superstition of affection alone could give value to the shattered mechanism, which, incapable and clod-like, no more resembled Raymond, than the fallen rain is like the former mansion of cloud in which it climbed the highest skies, and gilded by the sun, attracted all eyes, and satiated the sense by its excess of beauty.

Such as he had now become, such as was his terrene vesture, defaced and spoiled, we wrapt it in our cloaks, and lifting the burthen in our arms, bore it from this city of the dead. The question arose as to where we should deposit him. In our road to

the palace, we passed through the Greek cemetery; here on a tablet of black marble I caused him to be laid; the cypresses waved high above, their death-like gloom accorded with his state of nothingness. We cut branches of the funereal trees and placed them over him, and on these again his sword. I left a guard to protect this treasure of dust; and ordered perpetual torches to be burned around.

When I returned to Perdita, I found that she had already been informed of the success of my undertaking. He, her beloved, the sole and eternal object of her passionate tenderness, was restored her. Such was the maniac language of her enthusiasm. What though those limbs moved not, and those lips could no more frame modulated accents of wisdom and love! What though like a weed flung from the fruitless sea, he lay the prey of corruption—still that was the form she had caressed, those the lips that meeting hers, had drank the spirit of love from the commingling breath; that was the earthly mechanism of dissoluble clay she had called her own. True, she looked forward to another life; true, the burning spirit of love seemed to her unextinguishable throughout eternity. Yet at this time, with human fondness, she clung to all that her human senses permitted her to see and feel to be a part of Raymond.

Pale as marble, clear and beaming as that, she heard my tale, and enquired concerning the spot where he had been deposited. Her features had lost the distortion of grief; her eyes were brightened, her very person seemed dilated; while the excessive whiteness and even transparency of her skin, and something hollow in her voice, bore witness that not tranquillity, but excess of excitement, occasioned the treacherous calm that settled on her countenance. I asked her where he should be buried. She replied, "At Athens; even at the Athens which he loved. Without the town, on the acclivity of Hymettus, there is a rocky recess which he pointed out to me as the spot where he would wish to repose."

My own desire certainly was that he should not be removed from the spot where he now lay. But her wish was of course to be complied with; and I entreated her to prepare without delay for our departure.

Behold now the melancholy train cross the flats of Thrace, and wind through the defiles, and over the mountains of Macedonia, coast the clear waves of the Peneus, cross the Larissean plain, pass the straits of Thermopylae, and ascending in succession Oeta and Parnassus, descend to the fertile plain of Athens. Women bear with resignation these long drawn ills, but to a man's impatient spirit, the slow motion of our cavalcade, the melancholy repose we took at noon, the perpetual presence of the pall, gorgeous though it was, that wrapt the rifled casket which had contained Raymond, the monotonous recurrence of day and night, unvaried by hope or change, all the circumstances of our march were intolerable. Perdita, shut up in herself, spoke little. Her carriage was closed; and, when we rested, she sat leaning her pale cheek on her white cold hand, with eyes fixed on the ground, indulging thoughts which refused communication or sympathy.

We descended from Parnassus, emerging from its many folds, and passed through Livadia on our road to Attica. Perdita would not enter Athens; but reposing at Marathon on the night of our arrival, conducted me on the following day, to the spot selected by her as the treasure house of Raymond's dear remains. It was in a recess near the head of the ravine to the south of Hymettus. The chasm, deep, black, and hoary, swept from the summit to the base; in the fissures of the rock myrtle underwood grew and wild thyme, the food of many nations of bees; enormous crags protruded into the cleft, some beetling over, others rising perpendicularly from it. At the foot of this sublime chasm, a fertile laughing valley reached from sea to sea, and beyond was spread the blue Aegean, sprinkled with islands, the light waves glancing beneath the sun. Close to the spot on which we stood, was a solitary rock, high and conical, which, divided on every side from the mountain, seemed a nature-hewn pyramid; with little labour this block was reduced to a perfect shape; the narrow cell was scooped out beneath in which Raymond was placed, and a short inscription, carved in the living stone, recorded the name of its tenant, the cause and aera of his death.

Every thing was accomplished with speed under my directions. I agreed to leave the finishing and guardianship of the tomb to the

head of the religious establishment at Athens, and by the end of October prepared for my return to England. I mentioned this to Perdita. It was painful to appear to drag her from the last scene that spoke of her lost one; but to linger here was vain, and my very soul was sick with its yearning to rejoin my Idris and her babes. In reply, my sister requested me to accompany her the following evening to the tomb of Raymond. Some days had passed since I had visited the spot. The path to it had been enlarged, and steps hewn in the rock led us less circuitously than before, to the spot itself; the platform on which the pyramid stood was enlarged, and looking towards the south, in a recess overshadowed by the straggling branches of a wild fig-tree, I saw foundations dug, and props and rafters fixed, evidently the commencement of a cottage; standing on its unfinished threshold, the tomb was at our right-hand, the whole ravine, and plain, and azure sea immediately before us; the dark rocks received a glow from the descending sun, which glanced along the cultivated valley, and dyed in purple and orange the placid waves; we sat on a rocky elevation, and I gazed with rapture on the beauteous panorama of living and changeful colours, which varied and enhanced the graces of earth and ocean.

"Did I not do right," said Perdita, "in having my loved one conveyed hither? Hereafter this will be the cynosure of Greece. In such a spot death loses half its terrors, and even the inanimate dust appears to partake of the spirit of beauty which hallows this region. Lionel, he sleeps there; that is the grave of Raymond, he whom in my youth I first loved; whom my heart accompanied in days of separation and anger; to whom I am now joined for ever. Never—mark me—never will I leave this spot. Methinks his spirit remains here as well as that dust, which, uncommunicable though it be, is more precious in its nothingness than aught else widowed earth clasps to her sorrowing bosom. The myrtle bushes, the thyme, the little cyclamen, which peep from the fissures of the rock, all the produce of the place, bear affinity to him; the light that invests the hills participates in his essence, and sky and mountains, sea and valley, are imbued by the presence of his spirit. I will live and die here!

"Go you to England, Lionel; return to sweet Idris and dearest Adrian; return, and let my orphan girl be as a child of your own in your house. Look on me as dead; and truly if death be a mere change of state, I am dead. This is another world, from that which late I inhabited, from that which is now your home. Here I hold communion only with the has been, and to come. Go you to England, and leave me where alone I can consent to drag out the miserable days which I must still live."

A shower of tears terminated her sad harangue. I had expected some extravagant proposition, and remained silent awhile, collecting my thoughts that I might the better combat her fanciful scheme. "You cherish dreary thoughts, my dear Perdita," I said, "nor do I wonder that for a time your better reason should be influenced by passionate grief and a disturbed imagination. Even I am in love with this last home of Raymond's; nevertheless we must quit it."

525

"I expected this," cried Perdita; "I supposed that you would treat me as a mad, foolish girl. But do not deceive yourself; this cottage is built by my order; and here I shall remain, until the hour arrives when I may share his happier dwelling."

"My dearest girl!"

"And what is there so strange in my design? I might have deceived you; I might have talked of remaining here only a few months; in your anxiety to reach Windsor you would have left me, and without reproach or contention, I might have pursued my plan. But I disdained the artifice; or rather in my wretchedness it was my only consolation to pour out my heart to you, my brother, my only friend. You will not dispute with me? You know how wilful your poor, misery-stricken sister is. Take my girl with you; wean her from sights and thoughts of sorrow; let infantine hilarity revisit her heart, and animate her eyes; so could it never be, were she near me; it is far better for all of you that you should never see me again. For myself, I will not voluntarily seek death, that is, I will not, while I can command myself; and I can here. But drag me from this country; and my power of self control vanishes, nor can I answer for the violence my agony of grief may lead me to commit."

"You clothe your meaning, Perdita," I replied, "in powerful words, yet that meaning is selfish and unworthy of you. You have often agreed with me that there is but one solution to the intricate riddle of life; to improve ourselves, and contribute to the happiness of others: and now, in the very prime of life, you desert your principles, and shut yourself up in useless solitude. Will you think of Raymond less at Windsor, the scene of your early happiness? Will you commune less with his departed spirit, while you watch over and cultivate the rare excellence of his child? You have been sadly visited; nor do I wonder that a feeling akin to insanity should drive you to bitter and unreasonable imaginings. But a home of love awaits you in your native England. My tenderness and affection must soothe you; the society of Raymond's friends will be of more solace than these dreary speculations. We will all make it our first care, our dearest task, to contribute to your happiness."

Perdita shook her head; "If it could be so," she replied, "I were much in the wrong to disdain your offers. But it is not a matter of choice; I can live here only. I am a part of this scene; each and all its properties are a part of me. This is no sudden fancy; I live by it. The knowledge that I am here, rises with me in the morning, and enables me to endure the light; it is mingled with my food, which else were poison; it walks, it sleeps with me, for ever it accompanies me. Here I may even cease to repine, and may add my tardy consent to the decree which has taken him from me. He would rather have died such a death, which will be recorded in history to endless time, than have lived to old age unknown, unhonoured. Nor can I desire better, than, having been the chosen and beloved of his heart, here, in youth's prime, before added years can tarnish the best feelings of my nature, to watch his tomb, and speedily rejoin him in his blessed repose."

"So much, my dearest Lionel, I have said, wishing to persuade you that I do right. If you are unconvinced, I can add nothing further by way of argument, and I can only declare my fixed resolve. I stay here; force only can remove me. Be it so; drag me away—I return; confine me, imprison me, still I escape, and come here. Or would my brother rather devote the heart-broken Perdita

to the straw and chains of a maniac, than suffer her to rest in peace beneath the shadow of His society, in this my own selected and beloved recess?"—

All this appeared to me, I own, methodized madness. I imagined, that it was my imperative duty to take her from scenes that thus forcibly reminded her of her loss. Nor did I doubt, that in the tranquillity of our family circle at Windsor, she would recover some degree of composure, and in the end, of happiness. My affection for Clara also led me to oppose these fond dreams of cherished grief; her sensibility had already been too much excited; her infant heedlessness too soon exchanged for deep and anxious thought. The strange and romantic scheme of her mother, might confirm and perpetuate the painful view of life, which had intruded itself thus early on her contemplation.

On returning home, the captain of the steam packet with whom I had agreed to sail, came to tell me, that accidental circumstances hastened his departure, and that, if I went with him, I must come on board at five on the following morning. I hastily gave my consent to this arrangement, and as hastily formed a plan through which Perdita should be forced to become my companion. I believe that most people in my situation would have acted in the same manner. Yet this consideration does not, or rather did not in after time, diminish the reproaches of my conscience. At the moment, I felt convinced that I was acting for the best, and that all I did was right and even necessary.

I sat with Perdita and soothed her, by my seeming assent to her wild scheme. She received my concurrence with pleasure, and a thousand times over thanked her deceiving, deceitful brother. As night came on, her spirits, enlivened by my unexpected concession, regained an almost forgotten vivacity. I pretended to be alarmed by the feverish glow in her cheek; I entreated her to take a composing draught; I poured out the medicine, which she took docilely from me. I watched her as she drank it. Falsehood and artifice are in themselves so hateful, that, though I still thought I did right, a feeling of shame and guilt came painfully upon me. I left her, and soon heard that she slept soundly under the influence of the opiate I had administered. She was carried

thus unconscious on board; the anchor weighed, and the wind being favourable, we stood far out to sea; with all the canvas spread, and the power of the engine to assist, we scudded swiftly and steadily through the chafed element.

It was late in the day before Perdita awoke, and a longer time elapsed before recovering from the torpor occasioned by the laudanum, she perceived her change of situation. She started wildly from her couch, and flew to the cabin window. The blue and troubled sea sped past the vessel, and was spread shoreless around: the sky was covered by a rack, which in its swift motion shewed how speedily she was borne away. The creaking of the masts, the clang of the wheels, the tramp above, all persuaded her that she was already far from the shores of Greece.—"Where are we?" she cried, "where are we going?"—

535

The attendant whom I had stationed to watch her, replied, "to England."—

"And my brother?"—

"Is on deck, Madam."

"Unkind! unkind!" exclaimed the poor victim, as with a deep sigh she looked on the waste of waters. Then without further remark, she threw herself on her couch, and closing her eyes remained motionless; so that but for the deep sighs that burst from her, it would have seemed that she slept.

As soon as I heard that she had spoken, I sent Clara to her, that the sight of the lovely innocent might inspire gentle and affectionate thoughts. But neither the presence of her child, nor a subsequent visit from me, could rouse my sister. She looked on Clara with a countenance of woful meaning, but she did not speak. When I appeared, she turned away, and in reply to my enquiries, only said, "You know not what you have done!"—I trusted that this sullenness betokened merely the struggle between disappointment and natural affection, and that in a few days she would be reconciled to her fate.

540

When night came on, she begged that Clara might sleep in a separate cabin. Her servant, however, remained with her. About midnight she spoke to the latter, saying that she had had a bad

dream, and bade her go to her daughter, and bring word whether she rested quietly. The woman obeyed.

The breeze, that had flagged since sunset, now rose again. I was on deck, enjoying our swift progress. The quiet was disturbed only by the rush of waters as they divided before the steady keel, the murmur of the moveless and full sails, the wind whistling in the shrouds, and the regular motion of the engine. The sea was gently agitated, now shewing a white crest, and now resuming an uniform hue; the clouds had disappeared; and dark ether clipt the broad ocean, in which the constellations vainly sought their accustomed mirror. Our rate could not have been less than eight knots.

Suddenly I heard a splash in the sea. The sailors on watch rushed to the side of the vessel, with the cry—some one gone overboard. "It is not from deck," said the man at the helm, "something has been thrown from the aft cabin." A call for the boat to be lowered was echoed from the deck. I rushed into my sister's cabin; it was empty.

With sails abaft, the engine stopt, the vessel remained unwillingly stationary, until, after an hour's search, my poor Perdita was brought on board. But no care could re-animate her, no medicine cause her dear eyes to open, and the blood to flow again from her pulseless heart. One clenched hand contained a slip of paper, on which was written, "To Athens." To ensure her removal thither, and prevent the irrecoverable loss of her body in the wide sea, she had had the precaution to fasten a long shawl round her waist, and again to the staunchions of the cabin window. She had drifted somewhat under the keel of the vessel, and her being out of sight occasioned the delay in finding her. And thus the ill-starred girl died a victim to my senseless rashness. Thus, in early day, she left us for the company of the dead, and preferred to share the rocky grave of Raymond, before the animated scene this cheerful earth afforded, and the society of loving friends. Thus in her twenty-ninth year she died; having enjoyed some few years of the happiness of paradise, and sustaining a reverse to which her impatient spirit and affectionate disposition were unable to submit. As I marked the placid

expression that had settled on her countenance in death, I felt, in spite of the pangs of remorse, in spite of heart-rending regret, that it was better to die so, than to drag on long, miserable years of repining and inconsolable grief. Stress of weather drove us up the Adriatic Gulph; and, our vessel being hardly fitted to weather a storm, we took refuge in the port of Ancona. Here I met Georgio Palli, the vice-admiral of the Greek fleet, a former friend and warm partizan of Raymond. I committed the remains of my lost Perdita to his care, for the purpose of having them transported to Hymettus, and placed in the cell her Raymond already occupied beneath the pyramid. This was all accomplished even as I wished. She reposed beside her beloved, and the tomb above was inscribed with the united names of Raymond and Perdita.

I then came to a resolution of pursuing our journey to England overland. My own heart was racked by regrets and remorse. The apprehension, that Raymond had departed for ever, that his name, blended eternally with the past, must be erased from every anticipation of the future, had come slowly upon me. I had always admired his talents; his noble aspirations; his grand conceptions of the glory and majesty of his ambition: his utter want of mean passions; his fortitude and daring. In Greece I had learnt to love him; his very waywardness, and self-abandonment to the impulses of superstition, attached me to him doubly; it might be weakness, but it was the antipodes of all that was grovelling and selfish. To these pangs were added the loss of Perdita, lost through my own accursed self-will and conceit. This dear one, my sole relation; whose progress I had marked from tender childhood through the varied path of life, and seen her throughout conspicuous for integrity, devotion, and true affection; for all that constitutes the peculiar graces of the female character, and beheld her at last the victim of too much loving, too constant an attachment to the perishable and lost, she, in her pride of beauty and life, had thrown aside the pleasant perception of the apparent world for the unreality of the grave, and had left poor Clara quite an orphan. I concealed from this beloved child that her mother's death was voluntary, and tried every means to awaken cheerfulness in her sorrow-stricken spirit.

One of my first acts for the recovery even of my own composure, was to bid farewell to the sea. Its hateful splash renewed again and again to my sense the death of my sister; its roar was a dirge; in every dark hull that was tossed on its inconstant bosom, I imaged a bier, that would convey to death all who trusted to its treacherous smiles. Farewell to the sea! Come, my Clara, sit beside me in this aerial bark; quickly and gently it cleaves the azure serene, and with soft undulation glides upon the current of the air; or, if storm shake its fragile mechanism, the green earth is below; we can descend, and take shelter on the stable continent. Here aloft, the companions of the swift-winged birds, we skim through the unresisting element, fleetly and fearlessly. The light boat heaves not, nor is opposed by death-bearing waves; the ether opens before the prow, and the shadow of the globe that upholds it, shelters us from the noon-day sun. Beneath are the plains of Italy, or the vast undulations of the wave-like Apennines: fertility reposes in their many folds, and woods crown the summits. The free and happy peasant, unshackled by the Austrian, bears the double harvest to the garner; and the refined citizens rear without dread the long blighted tree of knowledge in this garden of the world. We were lifted above the Alpine peaks, and from their deep and brawling ravines entered the plain of fair France, and after an airy journey of six days, we landed at Dieppe, furled the feathered wings, and closed the silken globe of our little pinnace. A heavy rain made this mode of travelling now incommodious; so we embarked in a steam-packet, and after a short passage landed at Portsmouth.

A strange story was rife here. A few days before, a tempest-struck vessel had appeared off the town: the hull was parched-looking and cracked, the sails rent, and bent in a careless, unseamanlike manner, the shrouds tangled and broken. She drifted towards the harbour, and was stranded on the sands at the entrance. In the morning the custom-house officers, together with a crowd of idlers, visited her. One only of the crew appeared to have arrived with her. He had got to shore, and had walked a few paces towards the town, and then, vanquished by malady and approaching death, had fallen on the inhospitable beach. He was

found stiff, his hands clenched, and pressed against his breast. His skin, nearly black, his matted hair and bristly beard, were signs of a long protracted misery. It was whispered that he had died of the plague. No one ventured on board the vessel, and strange sights were averred to be seen at night, walking the deck, and hanging on the masts and shrouds. She soon went to pieces; I was shewn where she had been, and saw her disjoined timbers tossed on the waves. The body of the man who had landed, had been buried deep in the sands; and none could tell more, than that the vessel was American built, and that several months before the *Fortunatas* had sailed from Philadelphia, of which no tidings were afterwards received.

Chapter IV

I returned to my family estate in the autumn of the year 2092. My heart had long been with them; and I felt sick with the hope and delight of seeing them again. The district which contained them appeared the abode of every kindly spirit. Happiness, love and peace, walked the forest paths, and tempered the atmosphere. After all the agitation and sorrow I had endured in Greece, I sought Windsor, as the storm-driven bird does the nest in which it may fold its wings in tranquillity.

How unwise had the wanderers been, who had deserted its shelter, entangled themselves in the web of society, and entered on what men of the world call "life,"—that labyrinth of evil, that scheme of mutual torture. To live, according to this sense of the word, we must not only observe and learn, we must also feel; we must not be mere spectators of action, we must act; we must not describe, but be subjects of description. Deep sorrow must have been the inmate of our bosoms; fraud must have lain in wait for us; the artful must have deceived us; sickening doubt and false hope must have chequered our days; hilarity and joy, that lap the soul in ecstasy, must at times have possessed us. Who that knows what "life" is, would pine for this feverish species of existence? I have lived. I have spent days and nights of festivity; I have joined in ambitious hopes, and exulted in victory: now,—shut the door

on the world, and build high the wall that is to separate me from the troubled scene enacted within its precincts. Let us live for each other and for happiness; let us seek peace in our dear home, near the inland murmur of streams, and the gracious waving of trees, the beauteous vesture of earth, and sublime pageantry of the skies. Let us leave "life," that we may live.

Idris was well content with this resolve of mine. Her native sprightliness needed no undue excitement, and her placid heart reposed contented on my love, the well-being of her children, and the beauty of surrounding nature. Her pride and blameless ambition was to create smiles in all around her, and to shed repose on the fragile existence of her brother. In spite of her tender nursing, the health of Adrian perceptibly declined. Walking, riding, the common occupations of life, overcame him: he felt no pain, but seemed to tremble for ever on the verge of annihilation. Yet, as he had lived on for months nearly in the same state, he did not inspire us with any immediate fear; and, though he talked of death as an event most familiar to his thoughts, he did not cease to exert himself to render others happy, or to cultivate his own astonishing powers of mind. Winter passed away; and spring, led by the months, awakened life in all nature. The forest was dressed in green; the young calves frisked on the new-sprung grass; the wind-winged shadows of light clouds sped over the green cornfields; the hermit cuckoo repeated his monotonous all-hail to the season; the nightingale, bird of love and minion of the evening star, filled the woods with song; while Venus lingered in the warm sunset, and the young green of the trees lay in gentle relief along the clear horizon.

Delight awoke in every heart, delight and exultation; for there was peace through all the world; the temple of Universal Janus was shut, and man died not that year by the hand of man.

"Let this last but twelve months," said Adrian; "and earth will become a Paradise. The energies of man were before directed to the destruction of his species: they now aim at its liberation and preservation. Man cannot repose, and his restless aspirations will now bring forth good instead of evil. The favoured countries of the south will throw off the iron yoke of servitude; poverty will

quit us, and with that, sickness. What may not the forces, never before united, of liberty and peace achieve in this dwelling of man?"

"Dreaming, for ever dreaming, Windsor!" said Ryland, the old adversary of Raymond, and candidate for the Protectorate at the ensuing election. "Be assured that earth is not, nor ever can be heaven, while the seeds of hell are natives of her soil. When the seasons have become equal, when the air breeds no disorders, when its surface is no longer liable to blights and droughts, then sickness will cease; when men's passions are dead, poverty will depart. When love is no longer akin to hate, then brotherhood will exist: we are very far from that state at present."

"Not so far as you may suppose," observed a little old astronomer, by name Merrival, "the poles precede slowly, but securely; in an hundred thousand years—"

"We shall all be underground," said Ryland.

555

"The pole of the earth will coincide with the pole of the ecliptic," continued the astronomer, "an universal spring will be produced, and earth become a paradise."

"And we shall of course enjoy the benefit of the change," said Ryland, contemptuously.

[1] Our party at length broke up; "We are all dreaming this morning," said Ryland, "it is as wise to discuss the probability of a visitation of the plague in our well-governed metropolis, as to calculate the centuries which must escape before we can grow pine-apples here in the open air."

But, though it seemed absurd to calculate upon the arrival of the plague in London, I could not reflect without extreme pain on the desolation this evil would cause in Greece. The English for the most part talked of Thrace and Macedonia, as they would of a lunar territory, which, unknown to them, presented no distinct idea or interest to the minds. I had trod the soil. The faces of many of the inhabitants were familiar to me; in the towns, plains, hills, and defiles of these countries, I had enjoyed unspeakable delight, as I journeyed through them the year before. Some romantic village, some cottage, or elegant abode there situated, inhabited by the lovely and the good, rose before my mental sight,

and the question haunted me, is the plague there also?—That same invincible monster, which hovered over and devoured Constantinople—that fiend more cruel than tempest, less tame than fire, is, alas, unchained in that beautiful country—these reflections would not allow me to rest.

The political state of England became agitated as the time drew near when the new Protector was to be elected. This event excited the more interest, since it was the current report, that if the popular candidate (Ryland) should be chosen, the question of the abolition of hereditary rank, and other feudal relics, would come under the consideration of parliament. Not a word had been spoken during the present session on any of these topics. Every thing would depend upon the choice of a Protector, and the elections of the ensuing year. Yet this very silence was awful, shewing the deep weight attributed to the question; the fear of either party to hazard an ill-timed attack, and the expectation of a furious contention when it should begin.

But although St. Stephen's did not echo with the voice which filled each heart, the newspapers teemed with nothing else; and in private companies the conversation however remotely begun, soon verged towards this central point, while voices were lowered and chairs drawn closer. The nobles did not hesitate to express their fear; the other party endeavoured to treat the matter lightly. "Shame on the country," said Ryland, "to lay so much stress upon words and frippery; it is a question of nothing; of the new painting of carriage-pannels and the embroidery of footmen's coats."

Yet could England indeed doff her lordly trappings, and be content with the democratic style of America? Were the pride of ancestry, the patrician spirit, the gentle courtesies and refined pursuits, splendid attributes of rank, to be erased among us? We were told that this would not be the case; that we were by nature a poetical people, a nation easily duped by words, ready to array clouds in splendour, and bestow honour on the dust. This spirit we could never lose; and it was to diffuse this concentrated spirit of birth, that the new law was to be brought forward. We were assured that, when the name and title of Englishman was the sole

patent of nobility, we should all be noble; that when no man born under English sway, felt another his superior in rank, courtesy and refinement would become the birth-right of all our countrymen. Let not England be so far disgraced, as to have it imagined that it can be without nobles, nature's true nobility, who bear their patent in their mien, who are from their cradle elevated above the rest of their species, because they are better than the rest. Among a race of independent, and generous, and well educated men, in a country where the imagination is empress of men's minds, there needs be no fear that we should want a perpetual succession of the high-born and lordly. That party, however, could hardly yet be considered a minority in the kingdom, who extolled the ornament of the column, "the Corinthian capital of polished society;" they appealed to prejudices without number, to old attachments and young hopes; to the expectation of thousands who might one day become peers; they set up as a scarecrow, the spectre of all that was sordid, mechanic and base in the commercial republics.

The plague had come to Athens. Hundreds of English residents returned to their own country. Raymond's beloved Athenians, the free, the noble people of the divinest town in Greece, fell like ripe corn before the merciless sickle of the adversary. Its pleasant places were deserted; its temples and palaces were converted into tombs; its energies, bent before towards the highest objects of human ambition, were now forced to converge to one point, the guarding against the innumerable arrows of the plague.

At any other time this disaster would have excited extreme compassion among us; but it was now passed over, while each mind was engaged by the coming controversy. It was not so with me; and the question of rank and right dwindled to insignificance in my eyes, when I pictured the scene of suffering Athens. I heard of the death of only sons; of wives and husbands most devoted; of the rending of ties twisted with the heart's fibres, of friend losing friend, and young mothers mourning for their first born; and these moving incidents were grouped and painted in my mind by the knowledge of the persons, by my esteem and affection for the sufferers. It was the admirers, friends, fellow soldiers of Raymond, families that had welcomed Perdita to Greece, and

lamented with her the loss of her lord, that were swept away, and went to dwell with them in the undistinguishing tomb.

The plague at Athens had been preceded and caused by the contagion from the East; and the scene of havoc and death continued to be acted there, on a scale of fearful magnitude. A hope that the visitation of the present year would prove the last, kept up the spirits of the merchants connected with these countries; but the inhabitants were driven to despair, or to a resignation which, arising from fanaticism, assumed the same dark hue. America had also received the taint; and, were it yellow fever or plague, the epidemic was gifted with a virulence before unfelt. The devastation was not confined to the towns, but spread throughout the country; the hunter died in the woods, the peasant in the corn-fields, and the fisher on his native waters.

A strange story was brought to us from the East, to which little credit would have been given, had not the fact been attested by a multitude of witnesses, in various parts of the world. On the twenty-first of June, it was said that an hour before noon, a black sun arose: an orb, the size of that luminary, but dark, defined, whose beams were shadows, ascended from the west; in about an hour it had reached the meridian, and eclipsed the bright parent of day. Night fell upon every country, night, sudden, rayless, entire. The stars came out, shedding their ineffectual glimmerings on the light-widowed earth. But soon the dim orb passed from over the sun, and lingered down the eastern heaven. As it descended, its dusky rays crossed the brilliant ones of the sun, and deadened or distorted them. The shadows of things assumed strange and ghastly shapes. The wild animals in the woods took fright at the unknown shapes figured on the ground. They fled they knew not whither; and the citizens were filled with greater dread, at the convulsion which "shook lions into civil streets;"—birds, strong-winged eagles, suddenly blinded, fell in the market-places, while owls and bats shewed themselves welcoming the early night. Gradually the object of fear sank beneath the horizon, and to the last shot up shadowy beams into the otherwise radiant air. Such was the tale sent us from Asia, from the eastern extremity of Europe, and from Africa as far west as the Golden Coast.

Whether this story were true or not, the effects were certain. Through Asia, from the banks of the Nile to the shores of the Caspian, from the Hellespont even to the sea of Oman, a sudden panic was driven. The men filled the mosques; the women, veiled, hastened to the tombs, and carried offerings to the dead, thus to preserve the living. The plague was forgotten, in this new fear which the black sun had spread; and, though the dead multiplied, and the streets of Ispahan, of Pekin, and of Delhi were strewed with pestilence-struck corpses, men passed on, gazing on the ominous sky, regardless of the death beneath their feet. The christians sought their churches,—christian maidens, even at the feast of roses, clad in white, with shining veils, sought, in long procession, the places consecrated to their religion, filling the air with their hymns; while, ever and anon, from the lips of some poor mourner in the crowd, a voice of wailing burst, and the rest looked up, fancying they could discern the sweeping wings of angels, who passed over the earth, lamenting the disasters about to fall on man.

In the sunny clime of Persia, in the crowded cities of China, amidst the aromatic groves of Cashmere, and along the southern shores of the Mediterranean, such scenes had place. Even in Greece the tale of the sun of darkness encreased the fears and despair of the dying multitude. We, in our cloudy isle, were far removed from danger, and the only circumstance that brought these disasters at all home to us, was the daily arrival of vessels from the east, crowded with emigrants, mostly English; for the Moslems, though the fear of death was spread keenly among them, still clung together; that, if they were to die (and if they were, death would as readily meet them on the homeless sea, or in far England, as in Persia,)— if they were to die, their bones might rest in earth made sacred by the relics of true believers. Mecca had never before been so crowded with pilgrims; yet the Arabs neglected to pillage the caravans, but, humble and weaponless, they joined the procession, praying Mahomet to avert plague from their tents and deserts.

I cannot describe the rapturous delight with which I turned from political brawls at home, and the physical evils of distant

countries, to my own dear home, to the selected abode of goodness and love; to peace, and the interchange of every sacred sympathy. Had I never quitted Windsor, these emotions would not have been so intense; but I had in Greece been the prey of fear and deplorable change; in Greece, after a period of anxiety and sorrow, I had seen depart two, whose very names were the symbol of greatness and virtue. But such miseries could never intrude upon the domestic circle left to me, while, secluded in our beloved forest, we passed our lives in tranquillity. Some small change indeed the progress of years brought here; and time, as it is wont, stamped the traces of mortality on our pleasures and expectations. Idris, the most affectionate wife, sister and friend, was a tender and loving mother. The feeling was not with her as with many, a pastime; it was a passion. We had had three children; one, the second in age, died while I was in Greece. This had dashed the triumphant and rapturous emotions of maternity with grief and fear. Before this event, the little beings, sprung from herself, the young heirs of her transient life, seemed to have a sure lease of existence; now she dreaded that the pitiless destroyer might snatch her remaining darlings, as it had snatched their brother. The least illness caused throes of terror; she was miserable if she were at all absent from them; her treasure of happiness she had garnered in their fragile being, and kept forever on the watch, lest the insidious thief should as before steal these valued gems. She had fortunately small cause for fear. Alfred, now nine years old, was an upright, manly little fellow, with radiant brow, soft eyes, and gentle, though independent disposition. Our youngest was yet in infancy; but his downy cheek was sprinkled with the roses of health, and his unwearied vivacity filled our halls with innocent laughter.

Clara had passed the age which, from its mute ignorance, was the source of the fears of Idris. Clara was dear to her, to all. There was so much intelligence combined with innocence, sensibility with forbearance, and seriousness with perfect good-humour, a beauty so transcendent, united to such endearing simplicity, that she hung like a pearl in the shrine of our possessions, a treasure of wonder and excellence.

At the beginning of winter our Alfred, now nine years of age, first went to school at Eton. This appeared to him the primary step towards manhood, and he was proportionably pleased. Community of study and amusement developed the best parts of his character, his steady perseverance, generosity, and well-governed firmness. What deep and sacred emotions are excited in a father's bosom, when he first becomes convinced that his love for his child is not a mere instinct, but worthily bestowed, and that others, less akin, participate his approbation! It was supreme happiness to Idris and myself, to find that the frankness which Alfred's open brow indicated, the intelligence of his eyes, the tempered sensibility of his tones, were not delusions, but indications of talents and virtues, which would "grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength." At this period, the termination of an animal's love for its offspring,—the true affection of the human parent commences. We no longer look on this dearest part of ourselves, as a tender plant which we must cherish, or a plaything for an idle hour. We build now on his intellectual faculties, we establish our hopes on his moral propensities. His weakness still imparts anxiety to this feeling, his ignorance prevents entire intimacy; but we begin to respect the future man, and to endeavour to secure his esteem, even as if he were our equal. What can a parent have more at heart than the good opinion of his child? In all our transactions with him our honour must be inviolate, the integrity of our relations untainted: fate and circumstance may, when he arrives at maturity, separate us for ever—but, as his aegis in danger, his consolation in hardship, let the ardent youth for ever bear with him through the rough path of life, love and honour for his parents.

We had lived so long in the vicinity of Eton, that its population of young folks was well known to us. Many of them had been Alfred's playmates, before they became his school-fellows. We now watched this youthful congregation with redoubled interest. We marked the difference of character among the boys, and endeavoured to read the future man in the stripling. There is nothing more lovely, to which the heart more yearns than a free-spirited boy, gentle, brave, and generous. Several of the Etonians

had these characteristics; all were distinguished by a sense of honour, and spirit of enterprize; in some, as they verged towards manhood, this degenerated into presumption; but the younger ones, lads a little older than our own, were conspicuous for their gallant and sweet dispositions.

[2]

Willingly do I give place to thee, dear Alfred! advance, offspring of tender love, child of our hopes; advance a soldier on the road to which I have been the pioneer! I will make way for thee. I have already put off the carelessness of childhood, the unlined brow, and springy gait of early years, that they may adorn thee. Advance; and I will despoil myself still further for thy advantage. Time shall rob me of the graces of maturity, shall take the fire from my eyes, and agility from my limbs, shall steal the better part of life, eager expectation and passionate love, and shower them in double portion on thy dear head. Advance! avail thyself of the gift, thou and thy comrades; and in the drama you are about to act, do not disgrace those who taught you to enter on the stage, and to pronounce becomingly the parts assigned to you! May your progress be uninterrupted and secure; born during the spring-tide of the hopes of man, may you lead up the summer to which no winter may succeed!

Chapter V

Some disorder had surely crept into the course of the elements, destroying their benignant influence. The wind, prince of air, raged through his kingdom, lashing the sea into fury, and subduing the rebel earth into some sort of obedience.

The God sends down his angry plagues from high,
Famine and pestilence in heaps they die.
Again in vengeance of his wrath he falls
On their great hosts, and breaks their tottering walls;
Arrests their navies on the ocean's plain,
And whelms their strength with mountains of the main.

—ELTON'S TRANSLATION OF HESIOD'S WORKS

Their deadly power shook the flourishing countries of the south, and during winter, even, we, in our northern retreat, began to quake under their ill effects.

That fable is unjust, which gives the superiority to the sun over the wind. Who has not seen the lightsome earth, the balmy atmosphere, and basking nature become dark, cold and ungenial, when the sleeping wind has awoke in the east? Or, when the dun clouds thickly veil the sky, while exhaustless stores of rain are poured down, until, the dank earth refusing to imbibe the superabundant moisture, it lies in pools on the surface; when the torch of day seems like a meteor, to be quenched; who has not seen the cloud-stirring north arise, the streaked blue appear, and soon an opening made in the vapours in the eye of the wind, through which the bright azure shines? The clouds become thin; an arch is formed for ever rising upwards, till, the universal cope being unveiled, the sun pours forth its rays, re-animated and fed by the breeze.

Then mighty art thou, O wind, to be throned above all other vicegerents of nature's power; whether thou comest destroying from the east, or pregnant with elementary life from the west; thee the clouds obey; the sun is subservient to thee; the shoreless ocean is thy slave! Thou sweepest over the earth, and oaks, the growth of centuries, submit to thy viewless axe; the snow-drift is scattered on the pinnacles of the Alps, the avalanche thunders down their vallies. Thou holdest the keys of the frost, and canst first chain and then set free the streams; under thy gentle governance the buds and leaves are born, they flourish nursed by thee.

Why dost thou howl thus, O wind? By day and by night for four long months thy roarings have not ceased—the shores of the sea are strewn with wrecks, its keel-welcoming surface has become impassable, the earth has shed her beauty in obedience to thy command; the frail balloon dares no longer sail on the agitated air; thy ministers, the clouds, deluge the land with rain; rivers forsake their banks; the wild torrent tears up the mountain path; plain and wood, and verdant dell are despoiled of their loveliness; our very cities are wasted by thee. Alas, what will

become of us? It seems as if the giant waves of ocean, and vast arms of the sea, were about to wrench the deep-rooted island from its centre; and cast it, a ruin and a wreck, upon the fields of the Atlantic.

What are we, the inhabitants of this globe, least among the many that people infinite space? Our minds embrace infinity; the visible mechanism of our being is subject to merest accident. Day by day we are forced to believe this. He whom a scratch has disorganized, he who disappears from apparent life under the influence of the hostile agency at work around us, had the same powers as I—I also am subject to the same laws. In the face of all this we call ourselves lords of the creation, wielders of the elements, masters of life and death, and we allege in excuse of this arrogance, that though the individual is destroyed, man continues for ever.

Thus, losing our identity, that of which we are chiefly conscious, we glory in the continuity of our species, and learn to regard death without terror. But when any whole nation becomes the victim of the destructive powers of exterior agents, then indeed man shrinks into insignificance, he feels his tenure of life insecure, his inheritance on earth cut off.

580

I remember, after having witnessed the destructive effects of a fire, I could not even behold a small one in a stove, without a sensation of fear. The mounting flames had curled round the building, as it fell, and was destroyed. They insinuated themselves into the substances about them, and the impediments to their progress yielded at their touch. Could we take integral parts of this power, and not be subject to its operation? Could we domesticate a cub of this wild beast, and not fear its growth and maturity?

Thus we began to feel, with regard to many-visaged death let loose on the chosen districts of our fair habitation, and above all, with regard to the plague. We feared the coming summer. Nations, bordering on the already infected countries, began to enter upon serious plans for the better keeping out of the enemy. We, a commercial people, were obliged to bring such schemes

under consideration; and the question of contagion became matter of earnest disquisition.

That the plague was not what is commonly called contagious, like the scarlet fever, or extinct small-pox, was proved. It was called an epidemic. But the grand question was still unsettled of how this epidemic was generated and increased. If infection depended upon the air, the air was subject to infection. As for instance, a typhus fever has been brought by ships to one sea-port town; yet the very people who brought it there, were incapable of communicating it in a town more fortunately situated. But how are we to judge of airs, and pronounce—in such a city plague will die unproductive; in such another, nature has provided for it a plentiful harvest? In the same way, individuals may escape ninety-nine times, and receive the death-blow at the hundredth; because bodies are sometimes in a state to reject the infection of malady, and at others, thirsty to imbibe it. These reflections made our legislators pause, before they could decide on the laws to be put in force. The evil was so wide-spreading, so violent and immedicable, that no care, no prevention could be judged superfluous, which even added a chance to our escape.

These were questions of prudence; there was no immediate necessity for an earnest caution. England was still secure. France, Germany, Italy and Spain, were interposed, walls yet without a breach, between us and the plague. Our vessels truly were the sport of winds and waves, even as Gulliver was the toy of the Brobdignagians; but we on our stable abode could not be hurt in life or limb by these eruptions of nature. We could not fear—we did not. Yet a feeling of awe, a breathless sentiment of wonder, a painful sense of the degradation of humanity, was introduced into every heart. Nature, our mother, and our friend, had turned on us a brow of menace. She shewed us plainly, that, though she permitted us to assign her laws and subdue her apparent powers, yet, if she put forth but a finger, we must quake. She could take our globe, fringed with mountains, girded by the atmosphere, containing the condition of our being, and all that man's mind could invent or his force achieve; she could take the ball in her

hand, and cast it into space, where life would be drunk up, and man and all his efforts for ever annihilated.

These speculations were rife among us; yet not the less we proceeded in our daily occupations, and our plans, whose accomplishment demanded the lapse of many years. No voice was heard telling us to hold! When foreign distresses came to be felt by us through the channels of commerce, we set ourselves to apply remedies. Subscriptions were made for the emigrants, and merchants bankrupt by the failure of trade. The English spirit awoke to its full activity, and, as it had ever done, set itself to resist the evil, and to stand in the breach which diseased nature had suffered chaos and death to make in the bounds and banks which had hitherto kept them out.

At the commencement of summer, we began to feel, that the mischief which had taken place in distant countries was greater than we had at first suspected. Quito was destroyed by an earthquake. Mexico laid waste by the united effects of storm, pestilence and famine. Crowds of emigrants inundated the west of Europe; and our island had become the refuge of thousands. In the mean time Ryland had been chosen Protector. He had sought this office with eagerness, under the idea of turning his whole forces to the suppression of the privileged orders of our community. His measures were thwarted, and his schemes interrupted by this new state of things. Many of the foreigners were utterly destitute; and their increasing numbers at length forbade a recourse to the usual modes of relief. Trade was stopped by the failure of the interchange of cargoes usual between us, and America, India, Egypt and Greece. A sudden break was made in the routine of our lives. In vain our Protector and his partizans sought to conceal this truth; in vain, day after day, he appointed a period for the discussion of the new laws concerning hereditary rank and privilege; in vain he endeavoured to represent the evil as partial and temporary. These disasters came home to so many bosoms, and, through the various channels of commerce, were carried so entirely into every class and division of the community, that of necessity they became the first question in the state, the chief subjects to which we must turn our attention.

Can it be true, each asked the other with wonder and dismay, that whole countries are laid waste, whole nations annihilated, by these disorders in nature? The vast cities of America, the fertile plains of Hindostan, the crowded abodes of the Chinese, are menaced with utter ruin. Where late the busy multitudes assembled for pleasure or profit, now only the sound of wailing and misery is heard. The air is empoisoned, and each human being inhales death, even while in youth and health, their hopes are in the flower. We called to mind the plague of 1348, when it was calculated that a third of mankind had been destroyed. As yet western Europe was uninfected; would it always be so?

O, yes, it would—Countrymen, fear not! In the still uncultivated wilds of America, what wonder that among its other giant destroyers, Plague should be numbered! It is of old a native of the East, sister of the tornado, the earthquake, and the simoon. Child of the sun, and nursling of the tropics, it would expire in these climes. It drinks the dark blood of the inhabitant of the south, but it never feasts on the pale-faced Celt. If perchance some stricken Asiatic come among us, plague dies with him, uncommunicated and innoxious. Let us weep for our brethren, though we can never experience their reverse. Let us lament over and assist the children of the garden of the earth. Late we envied their abodes, their spicy groves, fertile plains, and abundant loveliness. But in this mortal life extremes are always matched; the thorn grows with the rose, the poison tree and the cinnamon mingle their boughs. Persia, with its cloth of gold, marble halls, and infinite wealth, is now a tomb. The tent of the Arab is fallen in the sands, and his horse spurns the ground unbridled and unsaddled. The voice of lamentation fills the valley of Cashmere; its dells and woods, its cool fountains, and gardens of roses, are polluted by the dead; in Circassia and Georgia the spirit of beauty weeps over the ruin of its favourite temple—the form of woman.

Our own distresses, though they were occasioned by the fictitious reciprocity of commerce, encreased in due proportion. Bankers, merchants, and manufacturers, whose trade depended on exports and interchange of wealth, became bankrupt. Such things, when they happen singly, affect only the immediate parties; but

the prosperity of the nation was now shaken by frequent and extensive losses. Families, bred in opulence and luxury, were reduced to beggary. The very state of peace in which we gloried was injurious; there were no means of employing the idle, or of sending any overplus of population out of the country. Even the source of colonies was dried up, for in New Holland, Van Diemen's Land, and the Cape of Good Hope, plague raged. O, for some medicinal vial to purge unwholesome nature, and bring back the earth to its accustomed health!

Ryland was a man of strong intellects and quick and sound decision in the usual course of things, but he stood aghast at the multitude of evils that gathered round us. Must he tax the landed interest to assist our commercial population? To do this, he must gain the favour of the chief land-holders, the nobility of the country; and these were his vowed enemies—he must conciliate them by abandoning his favourite scheme of equalization; he must confirm them in their manorial rights; he must sell his cherished plans for the permanent good of his country, for temporary relief. He must aim no more at the dear object of his ambition; throwing his arms aside, he must for present ends give up the ultimate object of his endeavours. He came to Windsor to consult with us. Every day added to his difficulties; the arrival of fresh vessels with emigrants, the total cessation of commerce, the starving multitude that thronged around the palace of the Protectorate, were circumstances not to be tampered with. The blow was struck; the aristocracy obtained all they wished, and they subscribed to a twelvemonths' bill, which levied twenty per cent on all the rent-rolls of the country. Calm was now restored to the metropolis, and to the populous cities, before driven to desperation; and we returned to the consideration of distant calamities, wondering if the future would bring any alleviation to their excess. It was August; so there could be small hope of relief during the heats. On the contrary, the disease gained virulence, while starvation did its accustomed work. Thousands died unlamented; for beside the yet warm corpse the mourner was stretched, made mute by death.

On the eighteenth of this month news arrived in London that the plague was in France and Italy. These tidings were at first whispered about town; but no one dared express aloud the soul-quailing intelligence. When any one met a friend in the street, he only cried as he hurried on, "You know!"— while the other, with an ejaculation of fear and horror, would answer,— "What will become of us?" At length it was mentioned in the newspapers. The paragraph was inserted in an obscure part: "We regret to state that there can be no longer a doubt of the plague having been introduced at Leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles." No word of comment followed; each reader made his own fearful one. We were as a man who hears that his house is burning, and yet hurries through the streets, borne along by a lurking hope of a mistake, till he turns the corner, and sees his sheltering roof enveloped in a flame. Before it had been a rumour; but now in words uneraseable, in definite and undeniable print, the knowledge went forth. Its obscurity of situation rendered it the more conspicuous: the diminutive letters grew gigantic to the bewildered eye of fear: they seemed graven with a pen of iron, impressed by fire, woven in the clouds, stamped on the very front of the universe.

The English, whether travellers or residents, came pouring in one great revulsive stream, back on their own country; and with them crowds of Italians and Spaniards. Our little island was filled even to bursting. At first an unusual quantity of specie made its appearance with the emigrants; but these people had no means of receiving back into their hands what they spent among us. With the advance of summer, and the increase of the distemper, rents were unpaid, and their remittances failed them. It was impossible to see these crowds of wretched, perishing creatures, late nurslings of luxury, and not stretch out a hand to save them. As at the conclusion of the eighteenth century, the English unlocked their hospitable store, for the relief of those driven from their homes by political revolution; so now they were not backward in affording aid to the victims of a more wide-spreading calamity. We had many foreign friends whom we eagerly sought out, and relieved from dreadful penury. Our Castle became an asylum for the unhappy. A little population occupied its halls. The revenue of

its possessor, which had always found a mode of expenditure congenial to his generous nature, was now attended to more parsimoniously, that it might embrace a wider portion of utility. It was not however money, except partially, but the necessities of life, that became scarce. It was difficult to find an immediate remedy. The usual one of imports was entirely cut off. In this emergency, to feed the very people to whom we had given refuge, we were obliged to yield to the plough and the mattock our pleasure-grounds and parks. Live stock diminished sensibly in the country, from the effects of the great demand in the market. Even the poor deer, our antlered proteges, were obliged to fall for the sake of worthier pensioners. The labour necessary to bring the lands to this sort of culture, employed and fed the offcasts of the diminished manufactories.

Adrian did not rest only with the exertions he could make with regard to his own possessions. He addressed himself to the wealthy of the land; he made proposals in parliament little adapted to please the rich; but his earnest pleadings and benevolent eloquence were irresistible. To give up their pleasure-grounds to the agriculturist, to diminish sensibly the number of horses kept for the purposes of luxury throughout the country, were means obvious, but unpleasing. Yet, to the honour of the English be it recorded, that, although natural disinclination made them delay awhile, yet when the misery of their fellow-creatures became glaring, an enthusiastic generosity inspired their decrees. The most luxurious were often the first to part with their indulgencies. As is common in communities, a fashion was set. The high-born ladies of the country would have deemed themselves disgraced if they had now enjoyed, what they before called a necessary, the ease of a carriage. Chairs, as in olden time, and Indian palanquins were introduced for the infirm; but else it was nothing singular to see females of rank going on foot to places of fashionable resort. It was more common, for all who possessed landed property to secede to their estates, attended by whole troops of the indigent, to cut down their woods to erect temporary dwellings, and to portion out their parks, parterres and flower-gardens, to necessitous families. Many of these, of high

rank in their own countries, now, with hoe in hand, turned up the soil. It was found necessary at last to check the spirit of sacrifice, and to remind those whose generosity proceeded to lavish waste, that, until the present state of things became permanent, of which there was no likelihood, it was wrong to carry change so far as to make a reaction difficult. Experience demonstrated that in a year or two pestilence would cease; it were well that in the mean time we should not have destroyed our fine breeds of horses, or have utterly changed the face of the ornamented portion of the country.

It may be imagined that things were in a bad state indeed, before this spirit of benevolence could have struck such deep roots. The infection had now spread in the southern provinces of France. But that country had so many resources in the way of agriculture, that the rush of population from one part of it to another, and its increase through foreign emigration, was less felt than with us. The panic struck appeared of more injury, than disease and its natural concomitants.

Winter was hailed, a general and never-failing physician. The embrowning woods, and swollen rivers, the evening mists, and morning frosts, were welcomed with gratitude. The effects of purifying cold were immediately felt; and the lists of mortality abroad were curtailed each week. Many of our visitors left us: those whose homes were far in the south, fled delightedly from our northern winter, and sought their native land, secure of plenty even after their fearful visitation. We breathed again. What the coming summer would bring, we knew not; but the present months were our own, and our hopes of a cessation of pestilence were high.

595

Chapter VI

I have lingered thus long on the extreme bank, the wasting shoal that stretched into the stream of life, dallying with the shadow of death. Thus long, I have cradled my heart in retrospection of past happiness, when hope was. Why not for ever thus? I am not immortal; and the thread of my history might be spun out to the limits of my existence. But the same sentiment

that first led me to pourtray scenes replete with tender recollections, now bids me hurry on. The same yearning of this warm, panting heart, that has made me in written words record my vagabond youth, my serene manhood, and the passions of my soul, makes me now recoil from further delay. I must complete my work.

Here then I stand, as I said, beside the fleet waters of the flowing years, and now away! Spread the sail, and strain with oar, hurrying by dark impending crags, adown steep rapids, even to the sea of desolation I have reached. Yet one moment, one brief interval before I put from shore— once, once again let me fancy myself as I was in 2094 in my abode at Windsor, let me close my eyes, and imagine that the immeasurable boughs of its oaks still shadow me, its castle walls anear. Let fancy pourtray the joyous scene of the twentieth of June, such as even now my aching heart recalls it.

Circumstances had called me to London; here I heard talk that symptoms of the plague had occurred in hospitals of that city. I returned to Windsor; my brow was clouded, my heart heavy; I entered the Little Park, as was my custom, at the Frogmore gate, on my way to the Castle. A great part of these grounds had been given to cultivation, and strips of potatoe-land and corn were scattered here and there. The rooks cawed loudly in the trees above; mixed with their hoarse cries I heard a lively strain of music. It was Alfred's birthday. The young people, the Etonians, and children of the neighbouring gentry, held a mock fair, to which all the country people were invited. The park was speckled by tents, whose flaunting colours and gaudy flags, waving in the sunshine, added to the gaiety of the scene. On a platform erected beneath the terrace, a number of the younger part of the assembly were dancing. I leaned against a tree to observe them. The band played the wild eastern air of Weber introduced in Abon Hassan; its volatile notes gave wings to the feet of the dancers, while the lookers-on unconsciously beat time. At first the tripping measure lifted my spirit with it, and for a moment my eyes gladly followed the mazes of the dance. The revulsion of thought passed like keen steel to my heart. Ye are all going to die, I thought; already your

tomb is built up around you. Awhile, because you are gifted with agility and strength, you fancy that you live: but frail is the "bower of flesh" that encaskets life; dissoluble the silver cord than binds you to it. The joyous soul, charioted from pleasure to pleasure by the graceful mechanism of well-formed limbs, will suddenly feel the axle-tree give way, and spring and wheel dissolve in dust. Not one of you, O! fated crowd, can escape—not one! not my own ones! not my Idris and her babes! Horror and misery! Already the gay dance vanished, the green sward was strewn with corpses, the blue air above became fetid with deathly exhalations. Shriek, ye clarions! ye loud trumpets, howl! Pile dirge on dirge; rouse the funereal chords; let the air ring with dire wailing; let wild discord rush on the wings of the wind! Already I hear it, while guardian angels, attendant on humanity, their task achieved, hasten away, and their departure is announced by melancholy strains; faces all unseemly with weeping, forced open my lids; faster and faster many groups of these woe-begone countenances thronged around, exhibiting every variety of wretchedness—well known faces mingled with the distorted creations of fancy. Ashy pale, Raymond and Perdita sat apart, looking on with sad smiles. Adrian's countenance flitted across, tainted by death—Idris, with eyes languidly closed and livid lips, was about to slide into the wide grave. The confusion grew—their looks of sorrow changed to mockery; they nodded their heads in time to the music, whose clang became maddening.

I felt that this was insanity—I sprang forward to throw it off; I rushed into the midst of the crowd. Idris saw me: with light step she advanced; as I folded her in my arms, feeling, as I did, that I thus enclosed what was to me a world, yet frail as the waterdrop which the noon-day sun will drink from the water lily's cup; tears filled my eyes, unwont to be thus moistened. The joyful welcome of my boys, the soft gratulation of Clara, the pressure of Adrian's hand, contributed to unman me. I felt that they were near, that they were safe, yet methought this was all deceit;—the earth reeled, the firm-enrooted trees moved—dizziness came over me—I sank to the ground.

My beloved friends were alarmed—nay, they expressed their alarm so anxiously, that I dared not pronounce the word plague, that hovered on my lips, lest they should construe my perturbed looks into a symptom, and see infection in my languor. I had scarcely recovered, and with feigned hilarity had brought back smiles into my little circle, when we saw Ryland approach.

Ryland had something the appearance of a farmer; of a man whose muscles and full grown stature had been developed under the influence of vigorous exercise and exposure to the elements. This was to a great degree the case: for, though a large landed proprietor, yet, being a projector, and of an ardent and industrious disposition, he had on his own estate given himself up to agricultural labours. When he went as ambassador to the Northern States of America, he, for some time, planned his entire migration; and went so far as to make several journies far westward on that immense continent, for the purpose of choosing the site of his new abode. Ambition turned his thoughts from these designs—ambition, which labouring through various lets and hindrances, had now led him to the summit of his hopes, in making him Lord Protector of England.

His countenance was rough but intelligent—his ample brow and quick grey eyes seemed to look out, over his own plans, and the opposition of his enemies. His voice was stentorian: his hand stretched out in debate, seemed by its gigantic and muscular form, to warn his hearers that words were not his only weapons. Few people had discovered some cowardice and much infirmity of purpose under this imposing exterior. No man could crush a "butterfly on the wheel" with better effect; no man better cover a speedy retreat from a powerful adversary. This had been the secret of his secession at the time of Lord Raymond's election. In the unsteady glance of his eye, in his extreme desire to learn the opinions of all, in the feebleness of his hand-writing, these qualities might be obscurely traced, but they were not generally known. He was now our Lord Protector. He had canvassed eagerly for this post. His protectorate was to be distinguished by every kind of innovation on the aristocracy. This his selected task was exchanged for the far different one of encountering the ruin

caused by the convulsions of physical nature. He was incapable of meeting these evils by any comprehensive system; he had resorted to expedient after expedient, and could never be induced to put a remedy in force, till it came too late to be of use.

Certainly the Ryland that advanced towards us now, bore small resemblance to the powerful, ironical, seemingly fearless canvasser for the first rank among Englishmen. Our native oak, as his partisans called him, was visited truly by a nipping winter. He scarcely appeared half his usual height; his joints were unknit, his limbs would not support him; his face was contracted, his eye wandering; debility of purpose and dastard fear were expressed in every gesture.

In answer to our eager questions, one word alone fell, as it were involuntarily, from his convulsed lips: The Plague.—"Where?"—"Every where—we must fly—all fly—but whither? No man can tell—there is no refuge on earth, it comes on us like a thousand packs of wolves—we must all fly—where shall you go? Where can any of us go?"

These words were syllabled trembling by the iron man. Adrian replied, "Whither indeed would you fly? We must all remain; and do our best to help our suffering fellow-creatures."

"Help!" said Ryland, "there is no help!—great God, who talks of help! All the world has the plague!"

"Then to avoid it, we must quit the world," observed Adrian, with a gentle smile.

Ryland groaned; cold drops stood on his brow. It was useless to oppose his paroxysm of terror: but we soothed and encouraged him, so that after an interval he was better able to explain to us the ground of his alarm. It had come sufficiently home to him. One of his servants, while waiting on him, had suddenly fallen down dead. The physician declared that he died of the plague. We endeavoured to calm him—but our own hearts were not calm. I saw the eye of Idris wander from me to her children, with an anxious appeal to my judgment. Adrian was absorbed in meditation. For myself, I own that Ryland's words rang in my ears; all the world was infected;—in what uncontaminated seclusion could I save my beloved treasures, until the shadow of

death had passed from over the earth? We sunk into silence: a silence that drank in the doleful accounts and prognostications of our guest. We had receded from the crowd; and ascending the steps of the terrace, sought the Castle. Our change of cheer struck those nearest to us; and, by means of Ryland's servants, the report soon spread that he had fled from the plague in London. The sprightly parties broke up—they assembled in whispering groups. The spirit of gaiety was eclipsed; the music ceased; the young people left their occupations and gathered together. The lightness of heart which had dressed them in masquerade habits, had decorated their tents, and assembled them in fantastic groups, appeared a sin against, and a provocative to, the awful destiny that had laid its palsying hand upon hope and life. The merriment of the hour was an unholy mockery of the sorrows of man. The foreigners whom we had among us, who had fled from the plague in their own country, now saw their last asylum invaded; and, fear making them garrulous, they described to eager listeners the miseries they had beheld in cities visited by the calamity, and gave fearful accounts of the insidious and irremediable nature of the disease.

We had entered the Castle. Idris stood at a window that overlooked the park; her maternal eyes sought her own children among the young crowd. An Italian lad had got an audience about him, and with animated gestures was describing some scene of horror. Alfred stood immoveable before him, his whole attention absorbed. Little Evelyn had endeavoured to draw Clara away to play with him; but the Italian's tale arrested her, she crept near, her lustrous eyes fixed on the speaker. Either watching the crowd in the park, or occupied by painful reflection, we were all silent; Ryland stood by himself in an embrasure of the window; Adrian paced the hall, revolving some new and overpowering idea—suddenly he stopped and said: "I have long expected this; could we in reason expect that this island should be exempt from the universal visitation? The evil is come home to us, and we must not shrink from our fate. What are your plans, my Lord Protector, for the benefit of our country?"

"For heaven's love! Windsor," cried Ryland, "do not mock me with that title. Death and disease level all men. I neither pretend to protect nor govern an hospital—such will England quickly become."

610

"Do you then intend, now in time of peril, to recede from your duties?"

"Duties! speak rationally, my Lord!—when I am a plague-spotted corpse, where will my duties be? Every man for himself! the devil take the protectorship, say I, if it expose me to danger!"

"Faint-hearted man!" cried Adrian indignantly—"Your countrymen put their trust in you, and you betray them!"

"I betray them!" said Ryland, "the plague betrays me. Faint-hearted! It is well, shut up in your castle, out of danger, to boast yourself out of fear. Take the Protectorship who will; before God I renounce it!"

"And before God," replied his opponent, fervently, "do I receive it! No one will canvass for this honour now—none envy my danger or labours. Deposit your powers in my hands. Long have I fought with death, and much" (he stretched out his thin hand) "much have I suffered in the struggle. It is not by flying, but by facing the enemy, that we can conquer. If my last combat is now about to be fought, and I am to be worsted—so let it be!"

615

"But come, Ryland, recollect yourself! Men have hitherto thought you magnanimous and wise, will you cast aside these titles? Consider the panic your departure will occasion. Return to London. I will go with you. Encourage the people by your presence. I will incur all the danger. Shame! shame! if the first magistrate of England be foremost to renounce his duties."

Meanwhile among our guests in the park, all thoughts of festivity had faded. As summer-flies are scattered by rain, so did this congregation, late noisy and happy, in sadness and melancholy murmurs break up, dwindling away apace. With the set sun and the deepening twilight the park became nearly empty. Adrian and Ryland were still in earnest discussion. We had prepared a banquet for our guests in the lower hall of the castle; and thither Idris and I repaired to receive and entertain the few that remained. There is nothing more melancholy than a merry-

meeting thus turned to sorrow: the gala dresses—the decorations, gay as they might otherwise be, receive a solemn and funereal appearance. If such change be painful from lighter causes, it weighed with intolerable heaviness from the knowledge that the earth's desolator had at last, even as an arch-fiend, lightly overleaped the boundaries our precautions raised, and at once enthroned himself in the full and beating heart of our country. Idris sat at the top of the half-empty hall. Pale and tearful, she almost forgot her duties as hostess; her eyes were fixed on her children. Alfred's serious air shewed that he still revolved the tragic story related by the Italian boy. Evelyn was the only mirthful creature present: he sat on Clara's lap; and, making matter of glee from his own fancies, laughed aloud. The vaulted roof echoed again his infant tone. The poor mother who had brooded long over, and suppressed the expression of her anguish, now burst into tears, and folding her babe in her arms, hurried from the hall. Clara and Alfred followed. While the rest of the company, in confused murmur, which grew louder and louder, gave voice to their many fears.

The younger part gathered round me to ask my advice; and those who had friends in London were anxious beyond the rest, to ascertain the present extent of disease in the metropolis. I encouraged them with such thoughts of cheer as presented themselves. I told them exceedingly few deaths had yet been occasioned by pestilence, and gave them hopes, as we were the last visited, so the calamity might have lost its most venomous power before it had reached us. The cleanliness, habits of order, and the manner in which our cities were built, were all in our favour. As it was an epidemic, its chief force was derived from pernicious qualities in the air, and it would probably do little harm where this was naturally salubrious. At first, I had spoken only to those nearest me; but the whole assembly gathered about me, and I found that I was listened to by all. "My friends," I said, "our risk is common; our precautions and exertions shall be common also. If manly courage and resistance can save us, we will be saved. We will fight the enemy to the last. Plague shall not find us a ready prey; we will dispute every inch of ground; and, by methodical

and inflexible laws, pile invincible barriers to the progress of our foe. Perhaps in no part of the world has she met with so systematic and determined an opposition. Perhaps no country is naturally so well protected against our invader; nor has nature anywhere been so well assisted by the hand of man. We will not despair. We are neither cowards nor fatalists; but, believing that God has placed the means for our preservation in our own hands, we will use those means to our utmost. Remember that cleanliness, sobriety, and even good-humour and benevolence, are our best medicines."

There was little I could add to this general exhortation; for the plague, though in London, was not among us. I dismissed the guests therefore; and they went thoughtful, more than sad, to await the events in store for them.

I now sought Adrian, anxious to hear the result of his discussion with Ryland. He had in part prevailed; the Lord Protector consented to return to London for a few weeks; during which time things should be so arranged, as to occasion less consternation at his departure. Adrian and Idris were together. The sadness with which the former had first heard that the plague was in London had vanished; the energy of his purpose informed his body with strength, the solemn joy of enthusiasm and self-devotion illuminated his countenance; and the weakness of his physical nature seemed to pass from him, as the cloud of humanity did, in the ancient fable, from the divine lover of Semele. He was endeavouring to encourage his sister, and to bring her to look on his intent in a less tragic light than she was prepared to do; and with passionate eloquence he unfolded his designs to her.

"Let me, at the first word," he said, "relieve your mind from all fear on my account. I will not task myself beyond my powers, nor will I needlessly seek danger. I feel that I know what ought to be done, and as my presence is necessary for the accomplishment of my plans, I will take especial care to preserve my life.

"I am now going to undertake an office fitted for me. I cannot intrigue, or work a tortuous path through the labyrinth of men's vices and passions; but I can bring patience, and sympathy, and

such aid as art affords, to the bed of disease; I can raise from earth the miserable orphan, and awaken to new hopes the shut heart of the mourner. I can enchain the plague in limits, and set a term to the misery it would occasion; courage, forbearance, and watchfulness, are the forces I bring towards this great work.

"O, I shall be something now! From my birth I have aspired like the eagle—but, unlike the eagle, my wings have failed, and my vision has been blinded. Disappointment and sickness have hitherto held dominion over me; twin born with me, my would, was for ever enchained by the shall not, of these my tyrants. A shepherd-boy that tends a silly flock on the mountains, was more in the scale of society than I. Congratulate me then that I have found fitting scope for my powers. I have often thought of offering my services to the pestilence-stricken towns of France and Italy; but fear of paining you, and expectation of this catastrophe, withheld me. To England and to Englishmen I dedicate myself. If I can save one of her mighty spirits from the deadly shaft; if I can ward disease from one of her smiling cottages, I shall not have lived in vain."

Strange ambition this! Yet such was Adrian. He appeared given up to contemplation, averse to excitement, a lowly student, a man of visions—but afford him worthy theme, and—

Like to the lark at break of day arising,
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate.

—SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

so did he spring up from listlessness and unproductive thought, to the highest pitch of virtuous action.

With him went enthusiasm, the high-wrought resolve, the eye that without blenching could look at death. With us remained sorrow, anxiety, and unendurable expectation of evil. The man, says Lord Bacon, who hath wife and children, has given hostages to fortune. Vain was all philosophical reasoning—vain all fortitude—vain, vain, a reliance on probable good. I might heap high the scale with logic, courage, and resignation—but let one

fear for Idris and our children enter the opposite one, and, overweighed, it kicked the beam.

The plague was in London! Fools that we were not long ago to have foreseen this. We wept over the ruin of the boundless continents of the east, and the desolation of the western world; while we fancied that the little channel between our island and the rest of the earth was to preserve us alive among the dead. It were no mighty leap methinks from Calais to Dover. The eye easily discerns the sister land; they were united once; and the little path that runs between looks in a map but as a trodden footway through high grass. Yet this small interval was to save us: the sea was to rise a wall of adamant—without, disease and misery—within, a shelter from evil, a nook of the garden of paradise—a particle of celestial soil, which no evil could invade—truly we were wise in our generation, to imagine all these things!

But we are awake now. The plague is in London; the air of England is tainted, and her sons and daughters strew the unwholesome earth. And now, the sea, late our defence, seems our prison bound; hemmed in by its gulphs, we shall die like the famished inhabitants of a besieged town. Other nations have a fellowship in death; but we, shut out from all neighbourhood, must bury our own dead, and little England become a wide, wide tomb.

This feeling of universal misery assumed concentration and shape, when I looked on my wife and children; and the thought of danger to them possessed my whole being with fear. How could I save them? I revolved a thousand and a thousand plans. They should not die—first I would be gathered to nothingness, ere infection should come anear these idols of my soul. I would walk barefoot through the world, to find an uninfected spot; I would build my home on some wave-tossed plank, drifted about on the barren, shoreless ocean. I would betake me with them to some wild beast's den, where a tyger's cubs, which I would slay, had been reared in health. I would seek the mountain eagle's eirie, and live years suspended in some inaccessible recess of a sea-bounding cliff—no labour too great, no scheme too wild, if it promised life to them. O! ye heart-strings of mine, could ye be

torn asunder, and my soul not spend itself in tears of blood for sorrow!

Idris, after the first shock, regained a portion of fortitude. She studiously shut out all prospect of the future, and cradled her heart in present blessings. She never for a moment lost sight of her children. But while they in health sported about her, she could cherish contentment and hope. A strange and wild restlessness came over me—the more intolerable, because I was forced to conceal it. My fears for Adrian were ceaseless; August had come; and the symptoms of plague encreased rapidly in London. It was deserted by all who possessed the power of removing; and he, the brother of my soul, was exposed to the perils from which all but slaves enchained by circumstance fled. He remained to combat the fiend—his side unguarded, his toils unshared—infection might even reach him, and he die unattended and alone. By day and night these thoughts pursued me. I resolved to visit London, to see him; to quiet these agonizing throes by the sweet medicine of hope, or the opiate of despair.

It was not until I arrived at Brentford, that I perceived much change in the face of the country. The better sort of houses were shut up; the busy trade of the town palsied; there was an air of anxiety among the few passengers I met, and they looked wonderingly at my carriage—the first they had seen pass towards London, since pestilence sat on its high places, and possessed its busy streets. I met several funerals; they were slenderly attended by mourners, and were regarded by the spectators as omens of direst import. Some gazed on these processions with wild eagerness—others fled timidly—some wept aloud.

Adrian's chief endeavour, after the immediate succour of the sick, had been to disguise the symptoms and progress of the plague from the inhabitants of London. He knew that fear and melancholy forebodings were powerful assistants to disease; that desponding and brooding care rendered the physical nature of man peculiarly susceptible of infection. No unseemly sights were therefore discernible: the shops were in general open, the concourse of passengers in some degree kept up. But although the appearance of an infected town was avoided, to me, who had not

beheld it since the commencement of the visitation, London appeared sufficiently changed. There were no carriages, and grass had sprung high in the streets; the houses had a desolate look; most of the shutters were closed; and there was a ghast and frightened stare in the persons I met, very different from the usual business-like demeanour of the Londoners. My solitary carriage attracted notice, as it rattled along towards the Protectoral Palace—and the fashionable streets leading to it wore a still more dreary and deserted appearance. I found Adrian's anti-chamber crowded—it was his hour for giving audience. I was unwilling to disturb his labours, and waited, watching the ingress and egress of the petitioners. They consisted of people of the middling and lower classes of society, whose means of subsistence failed with the cessation of trade, and of the busy spirit of money-making in all its branches, peculiar to our country. There was an air of anxiety, sometimes of terror in the new-comers, strongly contrasted with the resigned and even satisfied mien of those who had had audience. I could read the influence of my friend in their quickened motions and cheerful faces. Two o'clock struck, after which none were admitted; those who had been disappointed went sullenly or sorrowfully away, while I entered the audience-chamber.

I was struck by the improvement that appeared in the health of Adrian. He was no longer bent to the ground, like an over-nursed flower of spring, that, shooting up beyond its strength, is weighed down even by its own coronal of blossoms. His eyes were bright, his countenance composed, an air of concentrated energy was diffused over his whole person, much unlike its former languor. He sat at a table with several secretaries, who were arranging petitions, or registering the notes made during that day's audience. Two or three petitioners were still in attendance. I admired his justice and patience. Those who possessed a power of living out of London, he advised immediately to quit it, affording them the means of so doing. Others, whose trade was beneficial to the city, or who possessed no other refuge, he provided with advice for better avoiding the epidemic; relieving overloaded families, supplying the gaps made in others by death. Order, comfort, and

even health, rose under his influence, as from the touch of a magician's wand.

"I am glad you are come," he said to me, when we were at last alone; "I can only spare a few minutes, and must tell you much in that time. The plague is now in progress—it is useless closing one's eyes to the fact—the deaths encrease each week. What will come I cannot guess. As yet, thank God, I am equal to the government of the town; and I look only to the present. Ryland, whom I have so long detained, has stipulated that I shall suffer him to depart before the end of this month. The deputy appointed by parliament is dead; another therefore must be named; I have advanced my claim, and I believe that I shall have no competitor. To-night the question is to be decided, as there is a call of the house for the purpose. You must nominate me, Lionel; Ryland, for shame, cannot shew himself; but you, my friend, will do me this service?"

How lovely is devotion! Here was a youth, royally sprung, bred in luxury, by nature averse to the usual struggles of a public life, and now, in time of danger, at a period when to live was the utmost scope of the ambitious, he, the beloved and heroic Adrian, made, in sweet simplicity, an offer to sacrifice himself for the public good. The very idea was generous and noble,—but, beyond this, his unpretending manner, his entire want of the assumption of a virtue, rendered his act ten times more touching. I would have withstood his request; but I had seen the good he diffused; I felt that his resolves were not to be shaken, so, with an heavy heart, I consented to do as he asked. He grasped my hand affectionately:—"Thank you," he said, "you have relieved me from a painful dilemma, and are, as you ever were, the best of my friends. Farewell—I must now leave you for a few hours. Go you and converse with Ryland. Although he deserts his post in London, he may be of the greatest service in the north of England, by receiving and assisting travellers, and contributing to supply the metropolis with food. Awaken him, I entreat you, to some sense of duty."

Adrian left me, as I afterwards learnt, upon his daily task of visiting the hospitals, and inspecting the crowded parts of

London. I found Ryland much altered, even from what he had been when he visited Windsor. Perpetual fear had jaundiced his complexion, and shrivelled his whole person. I told him of the business of the evening, and a smile relaxed the contracted muscles. He desired to go; each day he expected to be infected by pestilence, each day he was unable to resist the gentle violence of Adrian's detention. The moment Adrian should be legally elected his deputy, he would escape to safety. Under this impression he listened to all I said; and, elevated almost to joy by the near prospect of his departure, he entered into a discussion concerning the plans he should adopt in his own county, forgetting, for the moment, his cherished resolution of shutting himself up from all communication in the mansion and grounds of his estate.

In the evening, Adrian and I proceeded to Westminster. As we went he reminded me of what I was to say and do, yet, strange to say, I entered the chamber without having once reflected on my purpose. Adrian remained in the coffee-room, while I, in compliance with his desire, took my seat in St. Stephen's. There reigned unusual silence in the chamber. I had not visited it since Raymond's protectorate; a period conspicuous for a numerous attendance of members, for the eloquence of the speakers, and the warmth of the debate. The benches were very empty, those by custom occupied by the hereditary members were vacant; the city members were there—the members for the commercial towns, few landed proprietors, and not many of those who entered parliament for the sake of a career. The first subject that occupied the attention of the house was an address from the Lord Protector, praying them to appoint a deputy during a necessary absence on his part.

A silence prevailed, till one of the members coming to me, whispered that the Earl of Windsor had sent him word that I was to move his election, in the absence of the person who had been first chosen for this office. Now for the first time I saw the full extent of my task, and I was overwhelmed by what I had brought on myself. Ryland had deserted his post through fear of the plague: from the same fear Adrian had no competitor. And I, the nearest kinsman of the Earl of Windsor, was to propose his

election. I was to thrust this selected and matchless friend into the post of danger— impossible! the die was cast—I would offer myself as candidate.

The few members who were present, had come more for the sake of terminating the business by securing a legal attendance, than under the idea of a debate. I had risen mechanically—my knees trembled; irresolution hung on my voice, as I uttered a few words on the necessity of choosing a person adequate to the dangerous task in hand. But, when the idea of presenting myself in the room of my friend intruded, the load of doubt and pain was taken from off me. My words flowed spontaneously—my utterance was firm and quick. I adverted to what Adrian had already done—I promised the same vigilance in furthering all his views. I drew a touching picture of his vacillating health; I boasted of my own strength. I prayed them to save even from himself this scion of the noblest family in England. My alliance with him was the pledge of my sincerity, my union with his sister, my children, his presumptive heirs, were the hostages of my truth.

This unexpected turn in the debate was quickly communicated to Adrian. He hurried in, and witnessed the termination of my impassioned harangue. I did not see him: my soul was in my words,—my eyes could not perceive that which was; while a vision of Adrian's form, tainted by pestilence, and sinking in death, floated before them. He seized my hand, as I concluded—"Unkind!" he cried, "you have betrayed me!" then, springing forwards, with the air of one who had a right to command, he claimed the place of deputy as his own. He had bought it, he said, with danger, and paid for it with toil. His ambition rested there; and, after an interval devoted to the interests of his country, was I to step in, and reap the profit? Let them remember what London had been when he arrived: the panic that prevailed brought famine, while every moral and legal tie was loosened. He had restored order—this had been a work which required perseverance, patience, and energy; and he had neither slept nor waked but for the good of his country.—Would they dare wrong him thus? Would they wrest his hard-earned reward from him, to bestow it on one, who, never having mingled in public life, would

come a tyro to the craft, in which he was an adept. He demanded the place of deputy as his right. Ryland had shewn that he preferred him. Never before had he, who was born even to the inheritance of the throne of England, never had he asked favour or honour from those now his equals, but who might have been his subjects. Would they refuse him? Could they thrust back from the path of distinction and laudable ambition, the heir of their ancient kings, and heap another disappointment on a fallen house.

No one had ever before heard Adrian allude to the rights of his ancestors. None had ever before suspected, that power, or the suffrage of the many, could in any manner become dear to him. He had begun his speech with vehemence; he ended with unassuming gentleness, making his appeal with the same humility, as if he had asked to be the first in wealth, honour, and power among Englishmen, and not, as was the truth, to be the foremost in the ranks of loathsome toils and inevitable death. A murmur of approbation rose after his speech. "Oh, do not listen to him," I cried, "he speaks false—false to himself,"—I was interrupted: and, silence being restored, we were ordered, as was the custom, to retire during the decision of the house. I fancied that they hesitated, and that there was some hope for me—I was mistaken—hardly had we quitted the chamber, before Adrian was recalled, and installed in his office of Lord Deputy to the Protector.

We returned together to the palace. "Why, Lionel," said Adrian, "what did you intend? you could not hope to conquer, and yet you gave me the pain of a triumph over my dearest friend."

"This is mockery," I replied, "you devote yourself,—you, the adored brother of Idris, the being, of all the world contains, dearest to our hearts—you devote yourself to an early death. I would have prevented this; my death would be a small evil—or rather I should not die; while you cannot hope to escape."

"As to the likelihood of escaping," said Adrian, "ten years hence the cold stars may shine on the graves of all of us; but as to my peculiar liability to infection, I could easily prove, both logically and physically, that in the midst of contagion I have a better chance of life than you.

"This is my post: I was born for this—to rule England in anarchy, to save her in danger—to devote myself for her. The blood of my forefathers cries aloud in my veins, and bids me be first among my countrymen. Or, if this mode of speech offend you, let me say, that my mother, the proud queen, instilled early into me a love of distinction, and all that, if the weakness of my physical nature and my peculiar opinions had not prevented such a design, might have made me long since struggle for the lost inheritance of my race. But now my mother, or, if you will, my mother's lessons, awaken within me. I cannot lead on to battle; I cannot, through intrigue and faithlessness rear again the throne upon the wreck of English public spirit. But I can be the first to support and guard my country, now that terrific disasters and ruin have laid strong hands upon her.

"That country and my beloved sister are all I have. I will protect the first—the latter I commit to your charge. If I survive, and she be lost, I were far better dead. Preserve her—for her own sake I know that you will—if you require any other spur, think that, in preserving her, you preserve me. Her faultless nature, one sum of perfections, is wrapt up in her affections—if they were hurt, she would droop like an unwatered floweret, and the slightest injury they receive is a nipping frost to her. Already she fears for us. She fears for the children she adores, and for you, the father of these, her lover, husband, protector; and you must be near her to support and encourage her. Return to Windsor then, my brother; for such you are by every tie—fill the double place my absence imposes on you, and let me, in all my sufferings here, turn my eyes towards that dear seclusion, and say—There is peace."

Chapter VII

I did proceed to Windsor, but not with the intention of remaining there. I went but to obtain the consent of Idris, and then to return and take my station beside my unequalled friend; to share his labours, and save him, if so it must be, at the expence of my life. Yet I dreaded to witness the anguish which my resolve

might excite in Idris. I had vowed to my own heart never to shadow her countenance even with transient grief, and should I prove recreant at the hour of greatest need? I had begun my journey with anxious haste; now I desired to draw it out through the course of days and months. I longed to avoid the necessity of action; I strove to escape from thought—vainly—futurity, like a dark image in a phantasmagoria, came nearer and more near, till it clasped the whole earth in its shadow.

A slight circumstance induced me to alter my usual route, and to return home by Egham and Bishopgate. I alighted at Perdita's ancient abode, her cottage; and, sending forward the carriage, determined to walk across the park to the castle. This spot, dedicated to sweetest recollections, the deserted house and neglected garden were well adapted to nurse my melancholy. In our happiest days, Perdita had adorned her cottage with every aid art might bring, to that which nature had selected to favour. In the same spirit of exaggeration she had, on the event of her separation from Raymond, caused it to be entirely neglected. It was now in ruin: the deer had climbed the broken palings, and reposed among the flowers; grass grew on the threshold, and the swinging lattice creaking to the wind, gave signal of utter desertion. The sky was blue above, and the air impregnated with fragrance by the rare flowers that grew among the weeds. The trees moved overhead, awakening nature's favourite melody—but the melancholy appearance of the choaked paths, and weed-grown flower-beds, dimmed even this gay summer scene. The time when in proud and happy security we assembled at this cottage, was gone—soon the present hours would join those past, and shadows of future ones rose dark and menacing from the womb of time, their cradle and their bier. For the first time in my life I envied the sleep of the dead, and thought with pleasure of one's bed under the sod, where grief and fear have no power. I passed through the gap of the broken paling—I felt, while I disdained, the choaking tears—I rushed into the depths of the forest. O death and change, rulers of our life, where are ye, that I may grapple with you! What was there in our tranquillity, that excited your envy—in our happiness, that ye should destroy it? We were happy, loving, and beloved;

the horn of Amalthea contained no blessing unshowered upon us,
but, alas!

*la fortuna
deidad barbara importuna,
oy cadaver y ayer flor,
no permanece jamas!*

—CALDERON DE LA BARCA

As I wandered on thus ruminating, a number of country people passed me. They seemed full of careful thought, and a few words of their conversation that reached me, induced me to approach and make further enquiries. A party of people flying from London, as was frequent in those days, had come up the Thames in a boat. No one at Windsor would afford them shelter; so, going a little further up, they remained all night in a deserted hut near Bolter's lock. They pursued their way the following morning, leaving one of their company behind them, sick of the plague. This circumstance once spread abroad, none dared approach within half a mile of the infected neighbourhood, and the deserted wretch was left to fight with disease and death in solitude, as he best might. I was urged by compassion to hasten to the hut, for the purpose of ascertaining his situation, and administering to his wants.

As I advanced I met knots of country-people talking earnestly of this event: distant as they were from the apprehended contagion, fear was impressed on every countenance. I passed by a group of these terrorists, in a lane in the direct road to the hut. One of them stopped me, and, conjecturing that I was ignorant of the circumstance, told me not to go on, for that an infected person lay but at a short distance.

"I know it," I replied, "and I am going to see in what condition the poor fellow is."

A murmur of surprise and horror ran through the assembly. I continued:—"This poor wretch is deserted, dying, succourless; in these unhappy times, God knows how soon any or all of us may be in like want. I am going to do, as I would be done by."

"But you will never be able to return to the Castle—Lady Idris—his children—" in confused speech were the words that struck my ear.

"Do you not know, my friends," I said, "that the Earl himself, now Lord Protector, visits daily, not only those probably infected by this disease, but the hospitals and pest houses, going near, and even touching the sick? yet he was never in better health. You labour under an entire mistake as to the nature of the plague; but do not fear, I do not ask any of you to accompany me, nor to believe me, until I return safe and sound from my patient."

So I left them, and hurried on. I soon arrived at the hut: the door was ajar. I entered, and one glance assured me that its former inhabitant was no more—he lay on a heap of straw, cold and stiff; while a pernicious effluvia filled the room, and various stains and marks served to shew the virulence of the disorder.

I had never before beheld one killed by pestilence. While every mind was full of dismay at its effects, a craving for excitement had led us to peruse De Foe's account, and the masterly delineations of the author of *Arthur Mervyn*. The pictures drawn in these books were so vivid, that we seemed to have experienced the results depicted by them. But cold were the sensations excited by words, burning though they were, and describing the death and misery of thousands, compared to what I felt in looking on the corpse of this unhappy stranger. This indeed was the plague. I raised his rigid limbs, I marked the distortion of his face, and the stony eyes lost to perception. As I was thus occupied, chill horror congealed my blood, making my flesh quiver and my hair to stand on end. Half insanelly I spoke to the dead. So the plague killed you, I muttered. How came this? Was the coming painful? You look as if the enemy had tortured, before he murdered you. And now I leapt up precipitately, and escaped from the hut, before nature could revoke her laws, and inorganic words be breathed in answer from the lips of the departed.

On returning through the lane, I saw at a distance the same assemblage of persons which I had left. They hurried away, as soon as they saw me; my agitated mien added to their fear of coming near one who had entered within the verge of contagion.

At a distance from facts one draws conclusions which appear infallible, which yet when put to the test of reality, vanish like unreal dreams. I had ridiculed the fears of my countrymen, when they related to others; now that they came home to myself, I paused. The Rubicon, I felt, was passed; and it behoved me well to reflect what I should do on this hither side of disease and danger. According to the vulgar superstition, my dress, my person, the air I breathed, bore in it mortal danger to myself and others. Should I return to the Castle, to my wife and children, with this taint upon me? Not surely if I were infected; but I felt certain that I was not—a few hours would determine the question—I would spend these in the forest, in reflection on what was to come, and what my future actions were to be. In the feeling communicated to me by the sight of one struck by the plague, I forgot the events that had excited me so strongly in London; new and more painful prospects, by degrees were cleared of the mist which had hitherto veiled them. The question was no longer whether I should share Adrian's toils and danger; but in what manner I could, in Windsor and the neighbourhood, imitate the prudence and zeal which, under his government, produced order and plenty in London, and how, now pestilence had spread more widely, I could secure the health of my own family.

I spread the whole earth out as a map before me. On no one spot of its surface could I put my finger and say, here is safety. In the south, the disease, virulent and immedicable, had nearly annihilated the race of man; storm and inundation, poisonous winds and blights, filled up the measure of suffering. In the north it was worse—the lesser population gradually declined, and famine and plague kept watch on the survivors, who, helpless and feeble, were ready to fall an easy prey into their hands.

I contracted my view to England. The overgrown metropolis, the great heart of mighty Britain, was pulseless. Commerce had ceased. All resort for ambition or pleasure was cut off—the streets were grass-grown—the houses empty—the few, that from necessity remained, seemed already branded with the taint of inevitable pestilence. In the larger manufacturing towns the same tragedy was acted on a smaller, yet more disastrous scale. There

was no Adrian to superintend and direct, while whole flocks of the poor were struck and killed. Yet we were not all to die. No truly, though thinned, the race of man would continue, and the great plague would, in after years, become matter of history and wonder. Doubtless this visitation was for extent unexampled—more need that we should work hard to dispute its progress; ere this men have gone out in sport, and slain their thousands and tens of thousands; but now man had become a creature of price; the life of one of them was of more worth than the so called treasures of kings. Look at his thought-endued countenance, his graceful limbs, his majestic brow, his wondrous mechanism—the type and model of this best work of God is not to be cast aside as a broken vessel—he shall be preserved, and his children and his children's children carry down the name and form of man to latest time.

Above all I must guard those entrusted by nature and fate to my especial care. And surely, if among all my fellow-creatures I were to select those who might stand forth examples of the greatness and goodness of man, I could choose no other than those allied to me by the most sacred ties. Some from among the family of man must survive, and these should be among the survivors; that should be my task—to accomplish it my own life were a small sacrifice. There then in that castle—in Windsor Castle, birth-place of Idris and my babes, should be the haven and retreat for the wrecked bark of human society. Its forest should be our world—its garden afford us food; within its walls I would establish the shaken throne of health. I was an outcast and a vagabond, when Adrian gently threw over me the silver net of love and civilization, and linked me inextricably to human charities and human excellence. I was one, who, though an aspirant after good, and an ardent lover of wisdom, was yet unenrolled in any list of worth, when Idris, the princely born, who was herself the personification of all that was divine in woman, she who walked the earth like a poet's dream, as a carved goddess endued with sense, or pictured saint stepping from the canvas—she, the most worthy, chose me, and gave me herself—a priceless gift.

During several hours I continued thus to meditate, till hunger and fatigue brought me back to the passing hour, then marked by long shadows cast from the descending sun. I had wandered towards Bracknell, far to the west of Windsor. The feeling of perfect health which I enjoyed, assured me that I was free from contagion. I remembered that Idris had been kept in ignorance of my proceedings. She might have heard of my return from London, and my visit to Bolter's Lock, which, connected with my continued absence, might tend greatly to alarm her. I returned to Windsor by the Long Walk, and passing through the town towards the Castle, I found it in a state of agitation and disturbance.

"It is too late to be ambitious," says Sir Thomas Browne. "We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons; one face of Janus holds no proportion to the other." Upon this text many fanatics arose, who prophesied that the end of time was come. The spirit of superstition had birth, from the wreck of our hopes, and antics wild and dangerous were played on the great theatre, while the remaining particle of futurity dwindled into a point in the eyes of the prognosticators. Weak-spirited women died of fear as they listened to their denunciations; men of robust form and seeming strength fell into idiotcy and madness, racked by the dread of coming eternity. A man of this kind was now pouring forth his eloquent despair among the inhabitants of Windsor. The scene of the morning, and my visit to the dead, which had been spread abroad, had alarmed the country-people, so they had become fit instruments to be played upon by a maniac.

The poor wretch had lost his young wife and lovely infant by the plague. He was a mechanic; and, rendered unable to attend to the occupation which supplied his necessities, famine was added to his other miseries. He left the chamber which contained his wife and child—wife and child no more, but "dead earth upon the earth"—wild with hunger, watching and grief, his diseased fancy made him believe himself sent by heaven to preach the end of time to the world. He entered the churches, and foretold to the congregations their speedy removal to the vaults below. He appeared like the forgotten spirit of the time in the theatres, and

bade the spectators go home and die. He had been seized and confined; he had escaped and wandered from London among the neighbouring towns, and, with frantic gestures and thrilling words, he unveiled to each their hidden fears, and gave voice to the soundless thought they dared not syllable. He stood under the arcade of the town-hall of Windsor, and from this elevation harangued a trembling crowd.

"Hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth," he cried, "hear thou, all seeing, but most pitiless Heaven! hear thou too, O tempest-tossed heart, which breathes out these words, yet faints beneath their meaning! Death is among us! The earth is beautiful and flower-bedecked, but she is our grave! The clouds of heaven weep for us—the pageantry of the stars is but our funeral torchlight. Grey headed men, ye hoped for yet a few years in your long-known abode—but the lease is up, you must remove—children, ye will never reach maturity, even now the small grave is dug for ye—mothers, clasp them in your arms, one death embraces you!"

Shuddering, he stretched out his hands, his eyes cast up, seemed bursting from their sockets, while he appeared to follow shapes, to us invisible, in the yielding air—"There they are," he cried, "the dead! They rise in their shrouds, and pass in silent procession towards the far land of their doom—their bloodless lips move not—their shadowy limbs are void of motion, while still they glide onwards. We come," he exclaimed, springing forwards, "for what should we wait? Haste, my friends, apparel yourselves in the court-dress of death. Pestilence will usher you to his presence. Why thus long? they, the good, the wise, and the beloved, are gone before. Mothers, kiss you last—husbands, protectors no more, lead on the partners of your death! Come, O come! while the dear ones are yet in sight, for soon they will pass away, and we never never shall join them more."

From such ravings as these, he would suddenly become collected, and with unexaggerated but terrific words, paint the horrors of the time; describe with minute detail, the effects of the plague on the human frame, and tell heart-breaking tales of the snapping of dear affinities—the gasping horror of despair over the death-bed of the last beloved—so that groans and even shrieks

burst from the crowd. One man in particular stood in front, his eyes fixt on the prophet, his mouth open, his limbs rigid, while his face changed to various colours, yellow, blue, and green, through intense fear. The maniac caught his glance, and turned his eye on him—one has heard of the gaze of the rattle-snake, which allures the trembling victim till he falls within his jaws. The maniac became composed; his person rose higher; authority beamed from his countenance. He looked on the peasant, who began to tremble, while he still gazed; his knees knocked together; his teeth chattered. He at last fell down in convulsions. "That man has the plague," said the maniac calmly. A shriek burst from the lips of the poor wretch; and then sudden motionlessness came over him; it was manifest to all that he was dead.

Cries of horror filled the place—every one endeavoured to effect his escape—in a few minutes the market place was cleared—the corpse lay on the ground; and the maniac, subdued and exhausted, sat beside it, leaning his gaunt cheek upon his thin hand. Soon some people, deputed by the magistrates, came to remove the body; the unfortunate being saw a jailor in each—he fled precipitately, while I passed onwards to the Castle.

Death, cruel and relentless, had entered these beloved walls. An old servant, who had nursed Idris in infancy, and who lived with us more on the footing of a revered relative than a domestic, had gone a few days before to visit a daughter, married, and settled in the neighbourhood of London. On the night of her return she sickened of the plague. From the haughty and unbending nature of the Countess of Windsor, Idris had few tender filial associations with her. This good woman had stood in the place of a mother, and her very deficiencies of education and knowledge, by rendering her humble and defenceless, endeared her to us—she was the especial favourite of the children. I found my poor girl, there is no exaggeration in the expression, wild with grief and dread. She hung over the patient in agony, which was not mitigated when her thoughts wandered towards her babes, for whom she feared infection. My arrival was like the newly discovered lamp of a lighthouse to sailors, who are weathering some dangerous point. She deposited her appalling doubts in my

hands; she relied on my judgment, and was comforted by my participation in her sorrow. Soon our poor nurse expired; and the anguish of suspense was changed to deep regret, which though at first more painful, yet yielded with greater readiness to my consolations. Sleep, the sovereign balm, at length steeped her tearful eyes in forgetfulness.

She slept; and quiet prevailed in the Castle, whose inhabitants were hushed to repose. I was awake, and during the long hours of dead night, my busy thoughts worked in my brain, like ten thousand mill-wheels, rapid, acute, untameable. All slept—all England slept; and from my window, commanding a wide prospect of the star-illuminated country, I saw the land stretched out in placid rest. I was awake, alive, while the brother of death possessed my race. What, if the more potent of these fraternal deities should obtain dominion over it? The silence of midnight, to speak truly, though apparently a paradox, rung in my ears. The solitude became intolerable—I placed my hand on the beating heart of Idris, I bent my head to catch the sound of her breath, to assure myself that she still existed—for a moment I doubted whether I should not awake her; so effeminate an horror ran through my frame.—Great God! would it one day be thus? One day all extinct, save myself, should I walk the earth alone? Were these warning voices, whose inarticulate and oracular sense forced belief upon me?

670

Yet I would not call them
Voices of warning, that announce to us
Only the inevitable. As the sun,
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere—so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.

—COLERIDGE'S TRANSLATION OF SCHILLER'S *WALLENSTEIN*

Chapter VIII

After a long interval, I am again impelled by the restless spirit within me to continue my narration; but I must alter the mode

which I have hitherto adopted. The details contained in the foregoing pages, apparently trivial, yet each slightest one weighing like lead in the depressed scale of human afflictions; this tedious dwelling on the sorrows of others, while my own were only in apprehension; this slowly laying bare of my soul's wounds: this journal of death; this long drawn and tortuous path, leading to the ocean of countless tears, awakens me again to keen grief. I had used this history as an opiate; while it described my beloved friends, fresh with life and glowing with hope, active assistants on the scene, I was soothed; there will be a more melancholy pleasure in painting the end of all. But the intermediate steps, the climbing the wall, raised up between what was and is, while I still looked back nor saw the concealed desert beyond, is a labour past my strength. Time and experience have placed me on an height from which I can comprehend the past as a whole; and in this way I must describe it, bringing forward the leading incidents, and disposing light and shade so as to form a picture in whose very darkness there will be harmony.

It would be needless to narrate those disastrous occurrences, for which a parallel might be found in any slighter visitation of our gigantic calamity. Does the reader wish to hear of the pest-houses, where death is the comforter—of the mournful passage of the death-cart—of the insensibility of the worthless, and the anguish of the loving heart—of harrowing shrieks and silence dire—of the variety of disease, desertion, famine, despair, and death? There are many books which can feed the appetite craving for these things; let them turn to the accounts of Boccaccio, De Foe, and Browne. The vast annihilation that has swallowed all things—the voiceless solitude of the once busy earth—the lonely state of singleness which hems me in, has deprived even such details of their stinging reality, and mellowing the lurid tints of past anguish with poetic hues, I am able to escape from the mosaic of circumstance, by perceiving and reflecting back the grouping and combined colouring of the past.

I had returned from London possessed by the idea, with the intimate feeling that it was my first duty to secure, as well as I was able, the well-being of my family, and then to return and take

my post beside Adrian. The events that immediately followed on my arrival at Windsor changed this view of things. The plague was not in London alone, it was every where—it came on us, as Ryland had said, like a thousand packs of wolves, howling through the winter night, gaunt and fierce. When once disease was introduced into the rural districts, its effects appeared more horrible, more exigent, and more difficult to cure, than in towns. There was a companionship in suffering there, and, the neighbours keeping constant watch on each other, and inspired by the active benevolence of Adrian, succour was afforded, and the path of destruction smoothed. But in the country, among the scattered farm-houses, in lone cottages, in fields, and barns, tragedies were acted harrowing to the soul, unseen, unheard, unnoticed. Medical aid was less easily procured, food was more difficult to obtain, and human beings, unwithheld by shame, for they were unbeheld of their fellows, ventured on deeds of greater wickedness, or gave way more readily to their abject fears.

Deeds of heroism also occurred, whose very mention swells the heart and brings tears into the eyes. Such is human nature, that beauty and deformity are often closely linked. In reading history we are chiefly struck by the generosity and self-devotion that follow close on the heels of crime, veiling with supernal flowers the stain of blood. Such acts were not wanting to adorn the grim train that waited on the progress of the plague.

The inhabitants of Berkshire and Bucks had been long aware that the plague was in London, in Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, York, in short, in all the more populous towns of England. They were not however the less astonished and dismayed when it appeared among themselves. They were impatient and angry in the midst of terror. They would do something to throw off the clinging evil, and, while in action, they fancied that a remedy was applied. The inhabitants of the smaller towns left their houses, pitched tents in the fields, wandering separate from each other careless of hunger or the sky's inclemency, while they imagined that they avoided the death-dealing disease. The farmers and cottagers, on the contrary, struck with the fear of solitude, and madly desirous of medical assistance, flocked into the towns.

But winter was coming, and with winter, hope. In August, the plague had appeared in the country of England, and during September it made its ravages. Towards the end of October it dwindled away, and was in some degree replaced by a typhus, of hardly less virulence. The autumn was warm and rainy: the infirm and sickly died off—happier they: many young people flushed with health and prosperity, made pale by wasting malady, became the inhabitants of the grave. The crop had failed, the bad corn, and want of foreign wines, added vigour to disease. Before Christmas half England was under water. The storms of the last winter were renewed; but the diminished shipping of this year caused us to feel less the tempests of the sea. The flood and storms did more harm to continental Europe than to us—giving, as it were, the last blow to the calamities which destroyed it. In Italy the rivers were unwatched by the diminished peasantry; and, like wild beasts from their lair when the hunters and dogs are afar, did Tiber, Arno, and Po, rush upon and destroy the fertility of the plains. Whole villages were carried away. Rome, and Florence, and Pisa were overflowed, and their marble palaces, late mirrored in tranquil streams, had their foundations shaken by their winter-gifted power. In Germany and Russia the injury was still more momentous.

But frost would come at last, and with it a renewal of our lease of earth. Frost would blunt the arrows of pestilence, and enchain the furious elements; and the land would in spring throw off her garment of snow, released from her menace of destruction. It was not until February that the desired signs of winter appeared. For three days the snow fell, ice stopped the current of the rivers, and the birds flew out from crackling branches of the frost-whitened trees. On the fourth morning all vanished. A south-west wind brought up rain—the sun came out, and mocking the usual laws of nature, seemed even at this early season to burn with solstitial force. It was no consolation, that with the first winds of March the lanes were filled with violets, the fruit trees covered with blossoms, that the corn sprung up, and the leaves came out, forced by the unseasonable heat. We feared the balmy air—we feared the cloudless sky, the flower-covered earth, and delightful

woods, for we looked on the fabric of the universe no longer as our dwelling, but our tomb, and the fragrant land smelled to the apprehension of fear like a wide church-yard.

*Pisando la tierra dura
de continuo el hombre esta
y cada passo que da
es sobre su sepultura.*

—CALDERON DE LA BARCA

Yet notwithstanding these disadvantages winter was breathing time; and we exerted ourselves to make the best of it. Plague might not revive with the summer; but if it did, it should find us prepared. It is a part of man's nature to adapt itself through habit even to pain and sorrow. Pestilence had become a part of our future, our existence; it was to be guarded against, like the flooding of rivers, the encroachments of ocean, or the inclemency of the sky. After long suffering and bitter experience, some panacea might be discovered; as it was, all that received infection died— all however were not infected; and it became our part to fix deep the foundations, and raise high the barrier between contagion and the sane; to introduce such order as would conduce to the well-being of the survivors, and as would preserve hope and some portion of happiness to those who were spectators of the still renewed tragedy. Adrian had introduced systematic modes of proceeding in the metropolis, which, while they were unable to stop the progress of death, yet prevented other evils, vice and folly, from rendering the awful fate of the hour still more tremendous. I wished to imitate his example, but men are used to

—move all together, if they move at all,

—WORDSWORTH

and I could find no means of leading the inhabitants of scattered towns and villages, who forgot my words as soon as

they heard them not, and veered with every baffling wind, that might arise from an apparent change of circumstance.

680

I adopted another plan. Those writers who have imagined a reign of peace and happiness on earth, have generally described a rural country, where each small township was directed by the elders and wise men. This was the key of my design. Each village, however small, usually contains a leader, one among themselves whom they venerate, whose advice they seek in difficulty, and whose good opinion they chiefly value. I was immediately drawn to make this observation by occurrences that presented themselves to my personal experience.

In the village of Little Marlow an old woman ruled the community. She had lived for some years in an alms-house, and on fine Sundays her threshold was constantly beset by a crowd, seeking her advice and listening to her admonitions. She had been a soldier's wife, and had seen the world; infirmity, induced by fevers caught in unwholesome quarters, had come on her before its time, and she seldom moved from her little cot. The plague entered the village; and, while fright and grief deprived the inhabitants of the little wisdom they possessed, old Martha stepped forward and said— "Before now I have been in a town where there was the plague."—"And you escaped?"—"No, but I recovered."—After this Martha was seated more firmly than ever on the regal seat, elevated by reverence and love. She entered the cottages of the sick; she relieved their wants with her own hand; she betrayed no fear, and inspired all who saw her with some portion of her own native courage. She attended the markets—she insisted upon being supplied with food for those who were too poor to purchase it. She shewed them how the well-being of each included the prosperity of all. She would not permit the gardens to be neglected, nor the very flowers in the cottage lattices to droop from want of care. Hope, she said, was better than a doctor's prescription, and every thing that could sustain and enliven the spirits, of more worth than drugs and mixtures.

It was the sight of Little Marlow, and my conversations with Martha, that led me to the plan I formed. I had before visited the manor houses and gentlemen's seats, and often found the

inhabitants actuated by the purest benevolence, ready to lend their utmost aid for the welfare of their tenants. But this was not enough. The intimate sympathy generated by similar hopes and fears, similar experience and pursuits, was wanting here. The poor perceived that the rich possessed other means of preservation than those which could be partaken of by themselves, seclusion, and, as far as circumstances permitted, freedom from care. They could not place reliance on them, but turned with tenfold dependence to the succour and advice of their equals. I resolved therefore to go from village to village, seeking out the rustic archon of the place, and by systematizing their exertions, and enlightening their views, encrease both their power and their use among their fellow-cottagers. Many changes also now occurred in these spontaneous regal elections: depositions and abdications were frequent, while, in the place of the old and prudent, the ardent youth would step forward, eager for action, regardless of danger. Often too, the voice to which all listened was suddenly silenced, the helping hand cold, the sympathetic eye closed, and the villagers feared still more the death that had selected a choice victim, shivering in dust the heart that had beat for them, reducing to incommunicable annihilation the mind for ever occupied with projects for their welfare.

Whoever labours for man must often find ingratitude, watered by vice and folly, spring from the grain which he has sown. Death, which had in our younger days walked the earth like "a thief that comes in the night," now, rising from his subterranean vault, girt with power, with dark banner floating, came a conqueror. Many saw, seated above his vice-regal throne, a supreme Providence, who directed his shafts, and guided his progress, and they bowed their heads in resignation, or at least in obedience. Others perceived only a passing casualty; they endeavoured to exchange terror for heedlessness, and plunged into licentiousness, to avoid the agonizing throes of worst apprehension. Thus, while the wise, the good, and the prudent were occupied by the labours of benevolence, the truce of winter produced other effects among the young, the thoughtless, and the vicious. During the colder months there was a general rush to

London in search of amusement—the ties of public opinion were loosened; many were rich, heretofore poor—many had lost father and mother, the guardians of their morals, their mentors and restraints. It would have been useless to have opposed these impulses by barriers, which would only have driven those actuated by them to more pernicious indulgencies. The theatres were open and thronged; dance and midnight festival were frequented—in many of these decorum was violated, and the evils, which hitherto adhered to an advanced state of civilization, were doubled. The student left his books, the artist his study: the occupations of life were gone, but the amusements remained; enjoyment might be protracted to the verge of the grave. All factitious colouring disappeared—death rose like night, and, protected by its murky shadows the blush of modesty, the reserve of pride, the decorum of prudery were frequently thrown aside as useless veils. This was not universal. Among better natures, anguish and dread, the fear of eternal separation, and the awful wonder produced by unprecedented calamity, drew closer the ties of kindred and friendship. Philosophers opposed their principles, as barriers to the inundation of profligacy or despair, and the only ramparts to protect the invaded territory of human life; the religious, hoping now for their reward, clung fast to their creeds, as the rafts and planks which over the tempest-vexed sea of suffering, would bear them in safety to the harbour of the Unknown Continent. The loving heart, obliged to contract its view, bestowed its overflow of affection in triple portion on the few that remained. Yet, even among these, the present, as an unalienable possession, became all of time to which they dared commit the precious freight of their hopes.

The experience of immemorial time had taught us formerly to count our enjoyments by years, and extend our prospect of life through a lengthened period of progression and decay; the long road threaded a vast labyrinth, and the Valley of the Shadow of Death, in which it terminated, was hid by intervening objects. But an earthquake had changed the scene—under our very feet the earth yawned—deep and precipitous the gulph below opened to receive us, while the hours charioted us towards the chasm. But it

was winter now, and months must elapse before we are hurled from our security. We became ephemera, to whom the interval between the rising and setting sun was as a long drawn year of common time. We should never see our children ripen into maturity, nor behold their downy cheeks roughen, their blithe hearts subdued by passion or care; but we had them now—they lived, and we lived—what more could we desire? With such schooling did my poor Idris try to hush thronging fears, and in some measure succeeded. It was not as in summer-time, when each hour might bring the dreaded fate—until summer, we felt sure; and this certainty, short lived as it must be, yet for awhile satisfied her maternal tenderness. I know not how to express or communicate the sense of concentrated, intense, though evanescent transport, that imparadized us in the present hour. Our joys were dearer because we saw their end; they were keener because we felt, to its fullest extent, their value; they were purer because their essence was sympathy— as a meteor is brighter than a star, did the felicity of this winter contain in itself the extracted delights of a long, long life.

How lovely is spring! As we looked from Windsor Terrace on the sixteen fertile counties spread beneath, speckled by happy cottages and wealthier towns, all looked as in former years, heart-cheering and fair. The land was ploughed, the slender blades of wheat broke through the dark soil, the fruit trees were covered with buds, the husbandman was abroad in the fields, the milk-maid tripped home with well-filled pails, the swallows and martins struck the sunny pools with their long, pointed wings, the new dropped lambs reposed on the young grass, the tender growth of leaves—

685

Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds
A silent space with ever sprouting green.

—KEATS

Man himself seemed to regenerate, and feel the frost of winter yield to an elastic and warm renewal of life—reason told us that care and sorrow would grow with the opening year—but how to

believe the ominous voice breathed up with pestiferous vapours from fear's dim cavern, while nature, laughing and scattering from her green lap flowers, and fruits, and sparkling waters, invited us to join the gay masque of young life she led upon the scene?

Where was the plague? "Here—every where!" one voice of horror and dismay exclaimed, when in the pleasant days of a sunny May the Destroyer of man brooded again over the earth, forcing the spirit to leave its organic chrysalis, and to enter upon an untried life. With one mighty sweep of its potent weapon, all caution, all care, all prudence were levelled low: death sat at the tables of the great, stretched itself on the cottager's pallet, seized the dastard who fled, quelled the brave man who resisted: despondency entered every heart, sorrow dimmed every eye.

Sights of woe now became familiar to me, and were I to tell all of anguish and pain that I witnessed, of the despairing moans of age, and the more terrible smiles of infancy in the bosom of horror, my reader, his limbs quivering and his hair on end, would wonder how I did not, seized with sudden frenzy, dash myself from some precipice, and so close my eyes for ever on the sad end of the world. But the powers of love, poetry, and creative fancy will dwell even beside the sick of the plague, with the squalid, and with the dying. A feeling of devotion, of duty, of a high and steady purpose, elevated me; a strange joy filled my heart. In the midst of saddest grief I seemed to tread air, while the spirit of good shed round me an ambrosial atmosphere, which blunted the sting of sympathy, and purified the air of sighs. If my wearied soul flagged in its career, I thought of my loved home, of the casket that contained my treasures, of the kiss of love and the filial caress, while my eyes were moistened by purest dew, and my heart was at once softened and refreshed by thrilling tenderness.

Maternal affection had not rendered Idris selfish; at the beginning of our calamity she had, with thoughtless enthusiasm, devoted herself to the care of the sick and helpless. I checked her; and she submitted to my rule. I told her how the fear of her danger palsied my exertions, how the knowledge of her safety strung my nerves to endurance. I shewed her the dangers which

her children incurred during her absence; and she at length agreed not to go beyond the inclosure of the forest. Indeed, within the walls of the Castle we had a colony of the unhappy, deserted by their relatives, and in themselves helpless, sufficient to occupy her time and attention, while ceaseless anxiety for my welfare and the health of her children, however she strove to curb or conceal it, absorbed all her thoughts, and undermined the vital principle. After watching over and providing for their safety, her second care was to hide from me her anguish and tears. Each night I returned to the Castle, and found there repose and love awaiting me. Often I waited beside the bed of death till midnight, and through the obscurity of rainy, cloudy nights rode many miles, sustained by one circumstance only, the safety and sheltered repose of those I loved. If some scene of tremendous agony shook my frame and fevered my brow, I would lay my head on the lap of Idris, and the tumultuous pulses subsided into a temperate flow—her smile could raise me from hopelessness, her embrace bathe my sorrowing heart in calm peace. Summer advanced, and, crowned with the sun's potent rays, plague shot her unerring shafts over the earth. The nations beneath their influence bowed their heads, and died. The corn that sprung up in plenty, lay in autumn rotting on the ground, while the melancholy wretch who had gone out to gather bread for his children, lay stiff and plague-struck in the furrow. The green woods waved their boughs majestically, while the dying were spread beneath their shade, answering the solemn melody with inharmonious cries. The painted birds flitted through the shades; the careless deer reposed unhurt upon the fern—the oxen and the horses strayed from their unguarded stables, and grazed among the wheat, for death fell on man alone.

With summer and mortality grew our fears. My poor love and I looked at each other, and our babes.—"We will save them, Idris," I said, "I will save them. Years hence we shall recount to them our fears, then passed away with their occasion. Though they only should remain on the earth, still they shall live, nor shall their cheeks become pale nor their sweet voices languish." Our eldest in some degree understood the scenes passing around, and at

times, he with serious looks questioned me concerning the reason of so vast a desolation. But he was only ten years old; and the hilarity of youth soon chased unreasonable care from his brow. Evelyn, a laughing cherub, a gamesome infant, without idea of pain or sorrow, would, shaking back his light curls from his eyes, make the halls re-echo with his merriment, and in a thousand artless ways attract our attention to his play. Clara, our lovely gentle Clara, was our stay, our solace, our delight. She made it her task to attend the sick, comfort the sorrowing, assist the aged, and partake the sports and awaken the gaiety of the young. She flitted through the rooms, like a good spirit, dispatched from the celestial kingdom, to illumine our dark hour with alien splendour. Gratitude and praise marked where her footsteps had been. Yet, when she stood in unassuming simplicity before us, playing with our children, or with girlish assiduity performing little kind offices for Idris, one wondered in what fair lineament of her pure loveliness, in what soft tone of her thrilling voice, so much of heroism, sagacity and active goodness resided.

The summer passed tediously, for we trusted that winter would at least check the disease. That it would vanish altogether was an hope too dear— too heartfelt, to be expressed. When such a thought was heedlessly uttered, the hearers, with a gush of tears and passionate sobs, bore witness how deep their fears were, how small their hopes. For my own part, my exertions for the public good permitted me to observe more closely than most others, the virulence and extensive ravages of our sightless enemy. A short month has destroyed a village, and where in May the first person sickened, in June the paths were deformed by unburied corpses—the houses tenantless, no smoke arising from the chimneys; and the housewife's clock marked only the hour when death had been triumphant. From such scenes I have sometimes saved a deserted infant—sometimes led a young and grieving mother from the lifeless image of her first born, or drawn the sturdy labourer from childish weeping over his extinct family.

July is gone. August must pass, and by the middle of September we may hope. Each day was eagerly counted; and the inhabitants of towns, desirous to leap this dangerous interval,

plunged into dissipation, and strove, by riot, and what they wished to imagine to be pleasure, to banish thought and opiate despair. None but Adrian could have tamed the motley population of London, which, like a troop of unbitted steeds rushing to their pastures, had thrown aside all minor fears, through the operation of the fear paramount. Even Adrian was obliged in part to yield, that he might be able, if not to guide, at least to set bounds to the license of the times. The theatres were kept open; every place of public resort was frequented; though he endeavoured so to modify them, as might best quiet the agitation of the spectators, and at the same time prevent a reaction of misery when the excitement was over. Tragedies deep and dire were the chief favourites. Comedy brought with it too great a contrast to the inner despair: when such were attempted, it was not unfrequent for a comedian, in the midst of the laughter occasioned by his disproportioned buffoonery, to find a word or thought in his part that jarred with his own sense of wretchedness, and burst from mimic merriment into sobs and tears, while the spectators, seized with irresistible sympathy, wept, and the pantomimic revelry was changed to a real exhibition of tragic passion.

It was not in my nature to derive consolation from such scenes; from theatres, whose buffoon laughter and discordant mirth awakened distempered sympathy, or where fictitious tears and wailings mocked the heart-felt grief within; from festival or crowded meeting, where hilarity sprung from the worst feelings of our nature, or such enthrallment of the better ones, as impressed it with garish and false varnish; from assemblies of mourners in the guise of revellers. Once however I witnessed a scene of singular interest at one of the theatres, where nature overpowered art, as an overflowing cataract will tear away the puny manufacture of a mock cascade, which had before been fed by a small portion of its waters.

I had come to London to see Adrian. He was not at the palace; and, though the attendants did not know whither he had gone, they did not expect him till late at night. It was between six and seven o'clock, a fine summer afternoon, and I spent my leisure hours in a ramble through the empty streets of London; now

turning to avoid an approaching funeral, now urged by curiosity to observe the state of a particular spot; my wanderings were instinct with pain, for silence and desertion characterized every place I visited, and the few beings I met were so pale and woe-begone, so marked with care and depressed by fear, that weary of encountering only signs of misery, I began to retread my steps towards home.

I was now in Holborn, and passed by a public house filled with uproarious companions, whose songs, laughter, and shouts were more sorrowful than the pale looks and silence of the mourner. Such an one was near, hovering round this house. The sorry plight of her dress displayed her poverty, she was ghastly pale, and continued approaching, first the window and then the door of the house, as if fearful, yet longing to enter. A sudden burst of song and merriment seemed to sting her to the heart; she murmured, "Can he have the heart?" and then mustering her courage, she stepped within the threshold. The landlady met her in the passage; the poor creature asked, "Is my husband here? Can I see George?"

"See him," cried the woman, "yes, if you go to him; last night he was taken with the plague, and we sent him to the hospital."

The unfortunate inquirer staggered against a wall, a faint cry escaped her

—"O! were you cruel enough," she exclaimed, "to send him there?"

The landlady meanwhile hurried away; but a more compassionate bar-maid gave her a detailed account, the sum of which was, that her husband had been taken ill, after a night of riot, and sent by his boon companions with all expedition to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. I had watched this scene, for there was a gentleness about the poor woman that interested me; she now tottered away from the door, walking as well as she could down Holborn Hill; but her strength soon failed her; she leaned against a wall, and her head sunk on her bosom, while her pallid cheek became still more white. I went up to her and offered my services. She hardly looked up—"You can do me no good," she replied; "I must go to the hospital; if I do not die before I get there."

There were still a few hackney-coaches accustomed to stand about the streets, more truly from habit than for use. I put her in one of these, and entered with her that I might secure her entrance into the hospital. Our way was short, and she said little; except interrupted ejaculations of reproach that he had left her, exclamations on the unkindness of some of his friends, and hope that she would find him alive. There was a simple, natural earnestness about her that interested me in her fate, especially when she assured me that her husband was the best of men,—had been so, till want of business during these unhappy times had thrown him into bad company. "He could not bear to come home," she said, "only to see our children die. A man cannot have the patience a mother has, with her own flesh and blood."

We were set down at St. Bartholomew's, and entered the wretched precincts of the house of disease. The poor creature clung closer to me, as she saw with what heartless haste they bore the dead from the wards, and took them into a room, whose half-opened door displayed a number of corpses, horrible to behold by one unaccustomed to such scenes. We were directed to the ward where her husband had been first taken, and still was, the nurse said, if alive. My companion looked eagerly from one bed to the other, till at the end of the ward she espied, on a wretched bed, a squalid, haggard creature, writhing under the torture of disease. She rushed towards him, she embraced him, blessing God for his preservation.

The enthusiasm that inspired her with this strange joy, blinded her to the horrors about her; but they were intolerably agonizing to me. The ward was filled with an effluvia that caused my heart to heave with painful qualms. The dead were carried out, and the sick brought in, with like indifference; some were screaming with pain, others laughing from the influence of more terrible delirium; some were attended by weeping, despairing relations, others called aloud with thrilling tenderness or reproach on the friends who had deserted them, while the nurses went from bed to bed, incarnate images of despair, neglect, and death. I gave gold to my luckless companion; I recommended her to the care of the attendants; I then hastened away; while the tormentor, the

imagination, busied itself in picturing my own loved ones, stretched on such beds, attended thus. The country afforded no such mass of horrors; solitary wretches died in the open fields; and I have found a survivor in a vacant village, contending at once with famine and disease; but the assembly of pestilence, the banqueting hall of death, was spread only in London.

I rambled on, oppressed, distracted by painful emotions—suddenly I found myself before Drury Lane Theatre. The play was *Macbeth*—the first actor of the age was there to exert his powers to drug with irreflection the auditors; such a medicine I yearned for, so I entered. The theatre was tolerably well filled. Shakspeare, whose popularity was established by the approval of four centuries, had not lost his influence even at this dread period; but was still "Ut magus," the wizard to rule our hearts and govern our imaginations. I came in during the interval between the third and fourth act. I looked round on the audience; the females were mostly of the lower classes, but the men were of all ranks, come hither to forget awhile the protracted scenes of wretchedness, which awaited them at their miserable homes. The curtain drew up, and the stage presented the scene of the witches' cave. The wildness and supernatural machinery of *Macbeth*, was a pledge that it could contain little directly connected with our present circumstances. Great pains had been taken in the scenery to give the semblance of reality to the impossible. The extreme darkness of the stage, whose only light was received from the fire under the cauldron, joined to a kind of mist that floated about it, rendered the unearthly shapes of the witches obscure and shadowy. It was not three decrepid old hags that bent over their pot throwing in the grim ingredients of the magic charm, but forms frightful, unreal, and fanciful. The entrance of Hecate, and the wild music that followed, took us out of this world. The cavern shape the stage assumed, the beetling rocks, the glare of the fire, the misty shades that crossed the scene at times, the music in harmony with all witch-like fancies, permitted the imagination to revel, without fear of contradiction, or reproof from reason or the heart. The entrance of *Macbeth* did not destroy the illusion, for he was actuated by the same feelings that inspired us, and while the work

of magic proceeded we sympathized in his wonder and his daring, and gave ourselves up with our whole souls to the influence of scenic delusion. I felt the beneficial result of such excitement, in a renewal of those pleasing flights of fancy to which I had long been a stranger. The effect of this scene of incantation communicated a portion of its power to that which followed. We forgot that Malcolm and Macduff were mere human beings, acted upon by such simple passions as warmed our own breasts. By slow degrees however we were drawn to the real interest of the scene. A shudder like the swift passing of an electric shock ran through the house, when Rosse exclaimed, in answer to "Stands Scotland where it did?"

Alas, poor country;
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell
Is there scarce asked, for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying, or ere they sicken.

Each word struck the sense, as our life's passing bell; we feared to look at each other, but bent our gaze on the stage, as if our eyes could fall innocuous on that alone. The person who played the part of Rosse, suddenly became aware of the dangerous ground he trod. He was an inferior actor, but truth now made him excellent; as he went on to announce to Macduff the slaughter of his family, he was afraid to speak, trembling from apprehension of a burst of grief from the audience, not from his fellow-mime. Each word was drawn out with difficulty; real anguish painted his features; his eyes were now lifted in sudden horror, now fixed in dread upon the ground. This shew of terror encreased ours, we gasped with him, each neck was stretched out, each face changed with the actor's changes— at length while Macduff, who, attending to his part, was unobservant of the high wrought sympathy of the house, cried with well acted passion:

All my pretty ones?
Did you say all?—O hell kite! All?
What! all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
At one fell swoop!

A pang of tameless grief wrenched every heart, a burst of despair was echoed from every lip.—I had entered into the universal feeling—I had been absorbed by the terrors of Rosse—I re-echoed the cry of Macduff, and then rushed out as from an hell of torture, to find calm in the free air and silent street.

Free the air was not, or the street silent. Oh, how I longed then for the dear soothings of maternal Nature, as my wounded heart was still further stung by the roar of heartless merriment from the public-house, by the sight of the drunkard reeling home, having lost the memory of what he would find there in oblivious debauch, and by the more appalling salutations of those melancholy beings to whom the name of home was a mockery. I ran on at my utmost speed until I found myself I knew not how, close to Westminster Abbey, and was attracted by the deep and swelling tone of the organ. I entered with soothing awe the lighted chancel, and listened to the solemn religious chaunt, which spoke peace and hope to the unhappy. The notes, freighted with man's dearest prayers, re-echoed through the dim aisles, and the bleeding of the soul's wounds was staunch'd by heavenly balm. In spite of the misery I deprecated, and could not understand; in spite of the cold hearths of wide London, and the corpse-strewn fields of my native land; in spite of all the variety of agonizing emotions I had that evening experienced, I thought that in reply to our melodious adjurations, the Creator looked down in compassion and promise of relief; the awful peal of the heaven-winged music seemed fitting voice wherewith to commune with the Supreme; calm was produced by its sound, and by the sight of many other human creatures offering up prayers and submission with me. A sentiment approaching happiness followed the total resignation of one's being to the guardianship of the world's ruler. Alas! with the failing of this solemn strain, the elevated spirit sank again to earth. Suddenly one of the choristers died—he was

lifted from his desk, the vaults below were hastily opened—he was consigned with a few muttered prayers to the darksome cavern, abode of thousands who had gone before—now wide yawning to receive even all who fulfilled the funeral rites. In vain I would then have turned from this scene, to darkened aisle or lofty dome, echoing with melodious praise. In the open air alone I found relief; among nature's beauteous works, her God reassumed his attribute of benevolence, and again I could trust that he who built up the mountains, planted the forests, and poured out the rivers, would erect another state for lost humanity, where we might awaken again to our affections, our happiness, and our faith.

Fortunately for me those circumstances were of rare occurrence that obliged me to visit London, and my duties were confined to the rural district which our lofty castle overlooked; and here labour stood in the place of pastime, to occupy such of the country people as were sufficiently exempt from sorrow or disease. My endeavours were directed towards urging them to their usual attention to their crops, and to the acting as if pestilence did not exist. The mower's scythe was at times heard; yet the joyless haymakers after they had listlessly turned the grass, forgot to cart it; the shepherd, when he had sheared his sheep, would let the wool lie to be scattered by the winds, deeming it useless to provide clothing for another winter. At times however the spirit of life was awakened by these employments; the sun, the refreshing breeze, the sweet smell of the hay, the rustling leaves and prattling rivulets brought repose to the agitated bosom, and bestowed a feeling akin to happiness on the apprehensive. Nor, strange to say, was the time without its pleasures. Young couples, who had loved long and hopelessly, suddenly found every impediment removed, and wealth pour in from the death of relatives. The very danger drew them closer. The immediate peril urged them to seize the immediate opportunity; wildly and passionately they sought to know what delights existence afforded, before they yielded to death, and

Snatching their pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life,

—ANDREW MARVELL

they defied the conquering pestilence to destroy what had been, or to erase even from their death-bed thoughts the sentiment of happiness which had been theirs.

One instance of this kind came immediately under our notice, where a high-born girl had in early youth given her heart to one of meaner extraction. He was a schoolfellow and friend of her brother's, and usually spent a part of the holidays at the mansion of the duke her father. They had played together as children, been the confidants of each other's little secrets, mutual aids and consolers in difficulty and sorrow. Love had crept in, noiseless, terrorless at first, till each felt their life bound up in the other, and at the same time knew that they must part. Their extreme youth, and the purity of their attachment, made them yield with less resistance to the tyranny of circumstances. The father of the fair Juliet separated them; but not until the young lover had promised to remain absent only till he had rendered himself worthy of her, and she had vowed to preserve her virgin heart, his treasure, till he returned to claim and possess it.

Plague came, threatening to destroy at once the aim of the ambitious and the hopes of love. Long the Duke of L——derided the idea that there could be danger while he pursued his plans of cautious seclusion; and he so far succeeded, that it was not till this second summer, that the destroyer, at one fell stroke, overthrew his precautions, his security, and his life. Poor Juliet saw one by one, father, mother, brothers, and sisters, sicken and die. Most of the servants fled on the first appearance of disease, those who remained were infected mortally; no neighbour or rustic ventured within the verge of contagion. By a strange fatality Juliet alone escaped, and she to the last waited on her relatives, and smoothed the pillow of death. The moment at length came, when the last blow was given to the last of the house: the youthful survivor of her race sat alone among the dead. There was no living being near

to soothe her, or withdraw her from this hideous company. With the declining heat of a September night, a whirlwind of storm, thunder, and hail, rattled round the house, and with ghastly harmony sung the dirge of her family. She sat upon the ground absorbed in wordless despair, when through the gusty wind and bickering rain she thought she heard her name called. Whose could that familiar voice be? Not one of her relations, for they lay glaring on her with stony eyes. Again her name was syllabled, and she shuddered as she asked herself, am I becoming mad, or am I dying, that I hear the voices of the departed? A second thought passed, swift as an arrow, into her brain; she rushed to the window; and a flash of lightning shewed to her the expected vision, her lover in the shrubbery beneath; joy lent her strength to descend the stairs, to open the door, and then she fainted in his supporting arms.

A thousand times she reproached herself, as with a crime, that she should revive to happiness with him. The natural clinging of the human mind to life and joy was in its full energy in her young heart; she gave herself impetuously up to the enchantment: they were married; and in their radiant features I saw incarnate, for the last time, the spirit of love, of rapturous sympathy, which once had been the life of the world.

I envied them, but felt how impossible it was to imbibe the same feeling, now that years had multiplied my ties in the world. Above all, the anxious mother, my own beloved and drooping Idris, claimed my earnest care; I could not reproach the anxiety that never for a moment slept in her heart, but I exerted myself to distract her attention from too keen an observation of the truth of things, of the near and nearer approaches of disease, misery, and death, of the wild look of our attendants as intelligence of another and yet another death reached us; for to the last something new occurred that seemed to transcend in horror all that had gone before. Wretched beings crawled to die under our succouring roof; the inhabitants of the Castle decreased daily, while the survivors huddled together in fear, and, as in a famine-struck boat, the sport of the wild, interminable waves, each looked in the other's face, to guess on whom the death-lot would next fall. All

this I endeavoured to veil, so that it might least impress my Idris; yet, as I have said, my courage survived even despair: I might be vanquished, but I would not yield.

One day, it was the ninth of September, seemed devoted to every disaster, to every harrowing incident. Early in the day, I heard of the arrival of the aged grandmother of one of our servants at the Castle. This old woman had reached her hundredth year; her skin was shrivelled, her form was bent and lost in extreme decrepitude; but as still from year to year she continued in existence, out-living many younger and stronger, she began to feel as if she were to live for ever. The plague came, and the inhabitants of her village died. Clinging, with the dastard feeling of the aged, to the remnant of her spent life, she had, on hearing that the pestilence had come into her neighbourhood, barred her door, and closed her casement, refusing to communicate with any. She would wander out at night to get food, and returned home, pleased that she had met no one, that she was in no danger from the plague. As the earth became more desolate, her difficulty in acquiring sustenance increased; at first, her son, who lived near, had humoured her by placing articles of food in her way: at last he died. But, even though threatened by famine, her fear of the plague was paramount; and her greatest care was to avoid her fellow creatures. She grew weaker each day, and each day she had further to go. The night before, she had reached Datchet; and, prowling about, had found a baker's shop open and deserted. Laden with spoil, she hastened to return, and lost her way. The night was windless, hot, and cloudy; her load became too heavy for her; and one by one she threw away her loaves, still endeavouring to get along, though her hobbling fell into lameness, and her weakness at last into inability to move.

She lay down among the tall corn, and fell asleep. Deep in midnight, she was awaked by a rustling near her; she would have started up, but her stiff joints refused to obey her will. A low moan close to her ear followed, and the rustling increased; she heard a smothered voice breathe out, Water, Water! several times; and then again a sigh heaved from the heart of the sufferer. The old woman shuddered, she contrived at length to sit upright; but

her teeth chattered, and her knees knocked together—close, very close, lay a half-naked figure, just discernible in the gloom, and the cry for water and the stifled moan were again uttered. Her motions at length attracted the attention of her unknown companion; her hand was seized with a convulsive violence that made the grasp feel like iron, the fingers like the keen teeth of a trap.—"At last you are come!" were the words given forth—but this exertion was the last effort of the dying—the joints relaxed, the figure fell prostrate, one low moan, the last, marked the moment of death. Morning broke; and the old woman saw the corpse, marked with the fatal disease, close to her; her wrist was livid with the hold loosened by death. She felt struck by the plague; her aged frame was unable to bear her away with sufficient speed; and now, believing herself infected, she no longer dreaded the association of others; but, as swiftly as she might, came to her grand-daughter, at Windsor Castle, there to lament and die. The sight was horrible; still she clung to life, and lamented her mischance with cries and hideous groans; while the swift advance of the disease shewed, what proved to be the fact, that she could not survive many hours.

While I was directing that the necessary care should be taken of her, Clara came in; she was trembling and pale; and, when I anxiously asked her the cause of her agitation, she threw herself into my arms weeping and exclaiming—"Uncle, dearest uncle, do not hate me for ever! I must tell you, for you must know, that Evelyn, poor little Evelyn"—her voice was choked by sobs. The fear of so mighty a calamity as the loss of our adored infant made the current of my blood pause with chilly horror; but the remembrance of the mother restored my presence of mind. I sought the little bed of my darling; he was oppressed by fever; but I trusted, I fondly and fearfully trusted, that there were no symptoms of the plague. He was not three years old, and his illness appeared only one of those attacks incident to infancy. I watched him long—his heavy half-closed lids, his burning cheeks and restless twining of his small fingers—the fever was violent, the torpor complete—enough, without the greater fear of pestilence, to awaken alarm. Idris must not see him in this state.

Clara, though only twelve years old, was rendered, through extreme sensibility, so prudent and careful, that I felt secure in entrusting the charge of him to her, and it was my task to prevent Idris from observing their absence. I administered the fitting remedies, and left my sweet niece to watch beside him, and bring me notice of any change she should observe.

I then went to Idris, contriving in my way, plausible excuses for remaining all day in the Castle, and endeavouring to disperse the traces of care from my brow. Fortunately she was not alone. I found Merrival, the astronomer, with her. He was far too long sighted in his view of humanity to heed the casualties of the day, and lived in the midst of contagion unconscious of its existence. This poor man, learned as La Place, guileless and unforeseeing as a child, had often been on the point of starvation, he, his pale wife and numerous offspring, while he neither felt hunger, nor observed distress. His astronomical theories absorbed him; calculations were scrawled with coal on the bare walls of his garret: a hard-earned guinea, or an article of dress, was exchanged for a book without remorse; he neither heard his children cry, nor observed his companion's emaciated form, and the excess of calamity was merely to him as the occurrence of a cloudy night, when he would have given his right hand to observe a celestial phenomenon. His wife was one of those wondrous beings, to be found only among women, with affections not to be diminished by misfortune. Her mind was divided between boundless admiration for her husband, and tender anxiety for her children—she waited on him, worked for them, and never complained, though care rendered her life one long-drawn, melancholy dream.

He had introduced himself to Adrian, by a request he made to observe some planetary motions from his glass. His poverty was easily detected and relieved. He often thanked us for the books we lent him, and for the use of our instruments, but never spoke of his altered abode or change of circumstances. His wife assured us, that he had not observed any difference, except in the absence of the children from his study, and to her infinite surprise he complained of this unaccustomed quiet.

He came now to announce to us the completion of his Essay on the Pericyclical Motions of the Earth's Axis, and the precession of the equinoctial points. If an old Roman of the period of the Republic had returned to life, and talked of the impending election of some laurel-crowned consul, or of the last battle with Mithridates, his ideas would not have been more alien to the times, than the conversation of Merrival. Man, no longer with an appetite for sympathy, clothed his thoughts in visible signs; nor were there any readers left: while each one, having thrown away his sword with opposing shield alone, awaited the plague, Merrival talked of the state of mankind six thousand years hence. He might with equal interest to us, have added a commentary, to describe the unknown and unimaginable lineaments of the creatures, who would then occupy the vacated dwelling of mankind. We had not the heart to undeceive the poor old man; and at the moment I came in, he was reading parts of his book to Idris, asking what answer could be given to this or that position.

Idris could not refrain from a smile, as she listened; she had already gathered from him that his family was alive and in health; though not apt to forget the precipice of time on which she stood, yet I could perceive that she was amused for a moment, by the contrast between the contracted view we had so long taken of human life, and the seven league strides with which Merrival paced a coming eternity. I was glad to see her smile, because it assured me of her total ignorance of her infant's danger: but I shuddered to think of the revulsion that would be occasioned by a discovery of the truth. While Merrival was talking, Clara softly opened a door behind Idris, and beckoned me to come with a gesture and look of grief. A mirror betrayed the sign to Idris—she started up. To suspect evil, to perceive that, Alfred being with us, the danger must regard her youngest darling, to fly across the long chambers into his apartment, was the work but of a moment. There she beheld her Evelyn lying fever-stricken and motionless. I followed her, and strove to inspire more hope than I could myself entertain; but she shook her head mournfully. Anguish deprived her of presence of mind; she gave up to me and Clara the physician's and nurse's parts; she sat by the bed, holding one

little burning hand, and, with glazed eyes fixed on her babe, passed the long day in one unvaried agony. It was not the plague that visited our little boy so roughly; but she could not listen to my assurances; apprehension deprived her of judgment and reflection; every slight convulsion of her child's features shook her frame —if he moved, she dreaded the instant crisis; if he remained still, she saw death in his torpor, and the cloud on her brow darkened.

The poor little thing's fever encreased towards night. The sensation is most dreary, to use no stronger term, with which one looks forward to passing the long hours of night beside a sick bed, especially if the patient be an infant, who cannot explain its pain, and whose flickering life resembles the wasting flame of the watch-light,

720

Whose narrow fire
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers.

—THE CENCI

With eagerness one turns toward the east, with angry impatience one marks the unchequered darkness; the crowing of a cock, that sound of glee during day-time, comes wailing and untuneable—the creaking of rafters, and slight stir of invisible insect is heard and felt as the signal and type of desolation. Clara, overcome by weariness, had seated herself at the foot of her cousin's bed, and in spite of her efforts slumber weighed down her lids; twice or thrice she shook it off; but at length she was conquered and slept. Idris sat at the bedside, holding Evelyn's hand; we were afraid to speak to each other; I watched the stars—I hung over my child—I felt his little pulse—I drew near the mother—again I receded. At the turn of morning a gentle sigh from the patient attracted me, the burning spot on his cheek faded—his pulse beat softly and regularly—torpor yielded to sleep. For a long time I dared not hope; but when his unobstructed breathing and the moisture that suffused his forehead, were tokens no longer to be mistaken of the departure of mortal malady, I

ventured to whisper the news of the change to Idris, and at length succeeded in persuading her that I spoke truth.

But neither this assurance, nor the speedy convalescence of our child could restore her, even to the portion of peace she before enjoyed. Her fear had been too deep, too absorbing, too entire, to be changed to security. She felt as if during her past calm she had dreamed, but was now awake; she was

As one
In some lone watch-tower on the deep, awakened
From soothing visions of the home he loves,
Trembling to hear the wrathful billows roar;

—THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY, BY T. L. BEDDOES, ESQ.

as one who has been cradled by a storm, and awakes to find the vessel sinking. Before, she had been visited by pangs of fear—now, she never enjoyed an interval of hope. No smile of the heart ever irradiated her fair countenance; sometimes she forced one, and then gushing tears would flow, and the sea of grief close above these wrecks of past happiness. Still while I was near her, she could not be in utter despair—she fully confided herself to me—she did not seem to fear my death, or revert to its possibility; to my guardianship she consigned the full freight of her anxieties, reposing on my love, as a wind-nipped fawn by the side of a doe, as a wounded nestling under its mother's wing, as a tiny, shattered boat, quivering still, beneath some protecting willow-tree. While I, not proudly as in days of joy, yet tenderly, and with glad consciousness of the comfort I afforded, drew my trembling girl close to my heart, and tried to ward every painful thought or rough circumstance from her sensitive nature.

One other incident occurred at the end of this summer. The Countess of Windsor, Ex-Queen of England, returned from Germany. She had at the beginning of the season quitted the vacant city of Vienna; and, unable to tame her haughty mind to anything like submission, she had delayed at Hamburgh, and, when at last she came to London, many weeks elapsed before she gave Adrian notice of her arrival. In spite of her coldness and

long absence, he welcomed her with sensibility, displaying such affection as sought to heal the wounds of pride and sorrow, and was repulsed only by her total apparent want of sympathy. Idris heard of her mother's return with pleasure. Her own maternal feelings were so ardent, that she imagined her parent must now, in this waste world, have lost pride and harshness, and would receive with delight her filial attentions. The first check to her duteous demonstrations was a formal intimation from the fallen majesty of England, that I was in no manner to be intruded upon her. She consented, she said, to forgive her daughter, and acknowledge her grandchildren; larger concessions must not be expected.

To me this proceeding appeared (if so light a term may be permitted) extremely whimsical. Now that the race of man had lost in fact all distinction of rank, this pride was doubly fatuitous; now that we felt a kindred, fraternal nature with all who bore the stamp of humanity, this angry reminiscence of times for ever gone, was worse than foolish. Idris was too much taken up by her own dreadful fears, to be angry, hardly grieved; for she judged that insensibility must be the source of this continued rancour. This was not altogether the fact: but predominant self-will assumed the arms and masque of callous feeling; and the haughty lady disdained to exhibit any token of the struggle she endured; while the slave of pride, she fancied that she sacrificed her happiness to immutable principle.

False was all this—false all but the affections of our nature, and the links of sympathy with pleasure or pain. There was but one good and one evil in the world—life and death. The pomp of rank, the assumption of power, the possessions of wealth vanished like morning mist. One living beggar had become of more worth than a national peerage of dead lords— alas the day!—than of dead heroes, patriots, or men of genius. There was much of degradation in this: for even vice and virtue had lost their attributes—life—life—the continuation of our animal mechanism — was the Alpha and Omega of the desires, the prayers, the prostrate ambition of human race.

Chapter IX

Half England was desolate, when October came, and the equinoctial winds swept over the earth, chilling the ardours of the unhealthy season. The summer, which was uncommonly hot, had been protracted into the beginning of this month, when on the eighteenth a sudden change was brought about from summer temperature to winter frost. Pestilence then made a pause in her death-dealing career. Gasping, not daring to name our hopes, yet full even to the brim with intense expectation, we stood, as a shipwrecked sailor stands on a barren rock islanded by the ocean, watching a distant vessel, fancying that now it nears, and then again that it is bearing from sight. This promise of a renewed lease of life turned rugged natures to melting tenderness, and by contrast filled the soft with harsh and unnatural sentiments. When it seemed destined that all were to die, we were reckless of the how and when—now that the virulence of the disease was mitigated, and it appeared willing to spare some, each was eager to be among the elect, and clung to life with dastard tenacity. Instances of desertion became more frequent; and even murders, which made the hearer sick with horror, where the fear of contagion had armed those nearest in blood against each other. But these smaller and separate tragedies were about to yield to a mightier interest—and, while we were promised calm from infectious influences, a tempest arose wilder than the winds, a tempest bred by the passions of man, nourished by his most violent impulses, unexampled and dire.

A number of people from North America, the relics of that populous continent, had set sail for the East with mad desire of change, leaving their native plains for lands not less afflicted than their own. Several hundreds landed in Ireland, about the first of November, and took possession of such vacant habitations as they could find; seizing upon the superabundant food, and the stray cattle. As they exhausted the produce of one spot, they went on to another. At length they began to interfere with the inhabitants, and strong in their concentrated numbers, ejected the natives from their dwellings, and robbed them of their winter store. A few

events of this kind roused the fiery nature of the Irish; and they attacked the invaders. Some were destroyed; the major part escaped by quick and well ordered movements; and danger made them careful. Their numbers ably arranged; the very deaths among them concealed; moving on in good order, and apparently given up to enjoyment, they excited the envy of the Irish. The Americans permitted a few to join their band, and presently the recruits outnumbered the strangers—nor did they join with them, nor imitate the admirable order which, preserved by the Trans-Atlantic chiefs, rendered them at once secure and formidable. The Irish followed their track in disorganized multitudes; each day encreasing; each day becoming more lawless. The Americans were eager to escape from the spirit they had roused, and, reaching the eastern shores of the island, embarked for England. Their incursion would hardly have been felt had they come alone; but the Irish, collected in unnatural numbers, began to feel the inroads of famine, and they followed in the wake of the Americans for England also. The crossing of the sea could not arrest their progress. The harbours of the desolate sea-ports of the west of Ireland were filled with vessels of all sizes, from the man of war to the small fishers' boat, which lay sailorless, and rotting on the lazy deep. The emigrants embarked by hundreds, and unfurling their sails with rude hands, made strange havoc of buoy and cordage. Those who modestly betook themselves to the smaller craft, for the most part achieved their watery journey in safety. Some, in the true spirit of reckless enterprise, went on board a ship of an hundred and twenty guns; the vast hull drifted with the tide out of the bay, and after many hours its crew of landmen contrived to spread a great part of her enormous canvass—the wind took it, and while a thousand mistakes of the helmsman made her present her head now to one point, and now to another, the vast fields of canvass that formed her sails flapped with a sound like that of a huge cataract; or such as a sea-like forest may give forth when buffeted by an equinoctial north-wind. The port-holes were open, and with every sea, which as she lurched, washed her decks, they received whole tons of water. The difficulties were increased by a fresh breeze which began to

blow, whistling among the shrouds, dashing the sails this way and that, and rending them with horrid split, and such whir as may have visited the dreams of Milton, when he imagined the winnowing of the arch-fiend's van-like wings, which encreased the uproar of wild chaos. These sounds were mingled with the roaring of the sea, the splash of the chafed billows round the vessel's sides, and the gurgling up of the water in the hold. The crew, many of whom had never seen the sea before, felt indeed as if heaven and earth came ruining together, as the vessel dipped her bows in the waves, or rose high upon them. Their yells were drowned in the clamour of elements, and the thunder rivings of their unwieldy habitation—they discovered at last that the water gained on them, and they betook themselves to their pumps; they might as well have laboured to empty the ocean by bucketfuls. As the sun went down, the gale encreased; the ship seemed to feel her danger, she was now completely water-logged, and presented other indications of settling before she went down. The bay was crowded with vessels, whose crews, for the most part, were observing the uncouth sportings of this huge unwieldy machine—they saw her gradually sink; the waters now rising above her lower decks—they could hardly wink before she had utterly disappeared, nor could the place where the sea had closed over her be at all discerned. Some few of her crew were saved, but the greater part clinging to her cordage and masts went down with her, to rise only when death loosened their hold.

This event caused many of those who were about to sail, to put foot again on firm land, ready to encounter any evil rather than to rush into the yawning jaws of the pitiless ocean. But these were few, in comparison to the numbers who actually crossed. Many went up as high as Belfast to ensure a shorter passage, and then journeying south through Scotland, they were joined by the poorer natives of that country, and all poured with one consent into England.

Such incursions struck the English with affright, in all those towns where there was still sufficient population to feel the change. There was room enough indeed in our hapless country for twice the number of invaders; but their lawless spirit instigated

them to violence; they took a delight in thrusting the possessors from their houses; in seizing on some mansion of luxury, where the noble dwellers secluded themselves in fear of the plague; in forcing these of either sex to become their servants and purveyors; till, the ruin complete in one place, they removed their locust visitation to another. When unopposed they spread their ravages wide; in cases of danger they clustered, and by dint of numbers overthrew their weak and despairing foes. They came from the east and the north, and directed their course without apparent motive, but unanimously towards our unhappy metropolis.

Communication had been to a great degree cut off through the paralyzing effects of pestilence, so that the van of our invaders had proceeded as far as Manchester and Derby, before we received notice of their arrival. They swept the country like a conquering army, burning—laying waste—murdering. The lower and vagabond English joined with them. Some few of the Lords Lieutenant who remained, endeavoured to collect the militia—but the ranks were vacant, panic seized on all, and the opposition that was made only served to increase the audacity and cruelty of the enemy. They talked of taking London, conquering England—calling to mind the long detail of injuries which had for many years been forgotten. Such vaunts displayed their weakness, rather than their strength—yet still they might do extreme mischief, which, ending in their destruction, would render them at last objects of compassion and remorse.

We were now taught how, in the beginning of the world, mankind clothed their enemies in impossible attributes—and how details proceeding from mouth to mouth, might, like Virgil's ever-growing Rumour, reach the heavens with her brow, and clasp Hesperus and Lucifer with her outstretched hands. Gorgon and Centaur, dragon and iron-hoofed lion, vast sea-monster and gigantic hydra, were but types of the strange and appalling accounts brought to London concerning our invaders. Their landing was long unknown, but having now advanced within an hundred miles of London, the country people flying before them arrived in successive troops, each exaggerating the numbers, fury,

and cruelty of the assailants. Tumult filled the before quiet streets—women and children deserted their homes, escaping they knew not whither—fathers, husbands, and sons, stood trembling, not for themselves, but for their loved and defenceless relations. As the country people poured into London, the citizens fled southwards—they climbed the higher edifices of the town, fancying that they could discern the smoke and flames the enemy spread around them. As Windsor lay, to a great degree, in the line of march from the west, I removed my family to London, assigning the Tower for their sojourn, and joining Adrian, acted as his Lieutenant in the coming struggle.

We employed only two days in our preparations, and made good use of them. Artillery and arms were collected; the remnants of such regiments, as could be brought through many losses into any show of muster, were put under arms, with that appearance of military discipline which might encourage our own party, and seem most formidable to the disorganized multitude of our enemies. Even music was not wanting: banners floated in the air, and the shrill fife and loud trumpet breathed forth sounds of encouragement and victory. A practised ear might trace an undue faltering in the step of the soldiers; but this was not occasioned so much by fear of the adversary, as by disease, by sorrow, and by fatal prognostications, which often weighed most potently on the brave, and quelled the manly heart to abject subjection.

Adrian led the troops. He was full of care. It was small relief to him that our discipline should gain us success in such a conflict; while plague still hovered to equalize the conqueror and the conquered, it was not victory that he desired, but bloodless peace. As we advanced, we were met by bands of peasantry, whose almost naked condition, whose despair and horror, told at once the fierce nature of the coming enemy. The senseless spirit of conquest and thirst of spoil blinded them, while with insane fury they deluged the country in ruin. The sight of the military restored hope to those who fled, and revenge took place of fear. They inspired the soldiers with the same sentiment. Languor was changed to ardour, the slow step converted to a speedy pace, while the hollow murmur of the multitude, inspired by one

feeling, and that deadly, filled the air, drowning the clang of arms and sound of music. Adrian perceived the change, and feared that it would be difficult to prevent them from wreaking their utmost fury on the Irish. He rode through the lines, charging the officers to restrain the troops, exhorting the soldiers, restoring order, and quieting in some degree the violent agitation that swelled every bosom.

We first came upon a few stragglers of the Irish at St. Albans. They retreated, and, joining others of their companions, still fell back, till they reached the main body. Tidings of an armed and regular opposition recalled them to a sort of order. They made Buckingham their head-quarters, and scouts were sent out to ascertain our situation. We remained for the night at Luton. In the morning a simultaneous movement caused us each to advance. It was early dawn, and the air, impregnated with freshest odour, seemed in idle mockery to play with our banners, and bore onwards towards the enemy the music of the bands, the neighings of the horses, and regular step of the infantry. The first sound of martial instruments that came upon our undisciplined foe, inspired surprise, not unmingled with dread. It spoke of other days, of days of concord and order; it was associated with times when plague was not, and man lived beyond the shadow of imminent fate. The pause was momentary. Soon we heard their disorderly clamour, the barbarian shouts, the untimed step of thousands coming on in disarray. Their troops now came pouring on us from the open country or narrow lanes; a large extent of unenclosed fields lay between us; we advanced to the middle of this, and then made a halt: being somewhat on superior ground, we could discern the space they covered. When their leaders perceived us drawn out in opposition, they also gave the word to halt, and endeavoured to form their men into some imitation of military discipline. The first ranks had muskets; some were mounted, but their arms were such as they had seized during their advance, their horses those they had taken from the peasantry; there was no uniformity, and little obedience, but their shouts and wild gestures showed the untamed spirit that inspired them. Our soldiers received the word, and advanced to quickest time, but in

perfect order: their uniform dresses, the gleam of their polished arms, their silence, and looks of sullen hate, were more appalling than the savage clamour of our innumerable foe. Thus coming nearer and nearer each other, the howls and shouts of the Irish increased; the English proceeded in obedience to their officers, until they came near enough to distinguish the faces of their enemies; the sight inspired them with fury: with one cry, that rent heaven and was re-echoed by the furthest lines, they rushed on; they disdained the use of the bullet, but with fixed bayonet dashed among the opposing foe, while the ranks opening at intervals, the matchmen lighted the cannon, whose deafening roar and blinding smoke filled up the horror of the scene. I was beside Adrian; a moment before he had again given the word to halt, and had remained a few yards distant from us in deep meditation: he was forming swiftly his plan of action, to prevent the effusion of blood; the noise of cannon, the sudden rush of the troops, and yell of the foe, startled him: with flashing eyes he exclaimed, "Not one of these must perish!" and plunging the rowels into his horse's sides, he dashed between the conflicting bands. We, his staff, followed him to surround and protect him; obeying his signal, however, we fell back somewhat. The soldiery perceiving him, paused in their onset; he did not swerve from the bullets that passed near him, but rode immediately between the opposing lines. Silence succeeded to clamour; about fifty men lay on the ground dying or dead. Adrian raised his sword in act to speak: "By whose command," he cried, addressing his own troops, "do you advance? Who ordered your attack? Fall back; these misguided men shall not be slaughtered, while I am your general. Sheath your weapons; these are your brothers, commit not fratricide; soon the plague will not leave one for you to glut your revenge upon: will you be more pitiless than pestilence? As you honour me—as you worship God, in whose image those also are created—as your children and friends are dear to you,—shed not a drop of precious human blood."

He spoke with outstretched hand and winning voice, and then turning to our invaders, with a severe brow, he commanded them to lay down their arms: "Do you think," he said, "that because we

are wasted by plague, you can overcome us; the plague is also among you, and when ye are vanquished by famine and disease, the ghosts of those you have murdered will arise to bid you not hope in death. Lay down your arms, barbarous and cruel men—men whose hands are stained with the blood of the innocent, whose souls are weighed down by the orphan's cry! We shall conquer, for the right is on our side; already your cheeks are pale—the weapons fall from your nerveless grasp. Lay down your arms, fellow men! brethren! Pardon, succour, and brotherly love await your repentance. You are dear to us, because you wear the frail shape of humanity; each one among you will find a friend and host among these forces. Shall man be the enemy of man, while plague, the foe to all, even now is above us, triumphing in our butchery, more cruel than her own?"

Each army paused. On our side the soldiers grasped their arms firmly, and looked with stern glances on the foe. These had not thrown down their weapons, more from fear than the spirit of contest; they looked at each other, each wishing to follow some example given him,—but they had no leader. Adrian threw himself from his horse, and approaching one of those just slain: "He was a man," he cried, "and he is dead. O quickly bind up the wounds of the fallen—let not one die; let not one more soul escape through your merciless gashes, to relate before the throne of God the tale of fratricide; bind up their wounds—restore them to their friends. Cast away the hearts of tigers that burn in your breasts; throw down those tools of cruelty and hate; in this pause of exterminating destiny, let each man be brother, guardian, and stay to the other. Away with those blood-stained arms, and hasten some of you to bind up these wounds."

As he spoke, he knelt on the ground, and raised in his arms a man from whose side the warm tide of life gushed—the poor wretch gasped—so still had either host become, that his moans were distinctly heard, and every heart, late fiercely bent on universal massacre, now beat anxiously in hope and fear for the fate of this one man. Adrian tore off his military scarf and bound it round the sufferer—it was too late—the man heaved a deep sigh, his head fell back, his limbs lost their sustaining power.—

"He is dead!" said Adrian, as the corpse fell from his arms on the ground, and he bowed his head in sorrow and awe. The fate of the world seemed bound up in the death of this single man. On either side the bands threw down their arms, even the veterans wept, and our party held out their hands to their foes, while a gush of love and deepest amity filled every heart. The two forces mingling, unarmed and hand in hand, talking only how each might assist the other, the adversaries conjoined; each repenting, the one side their former cruelties, the other their late violence, they obeyed the orders of the General to proceed towards London.

Adrian was obliged to exert his utmost prudence, first to allay the discord, and then to provide for the multitude of the invaders. They were marched to various parts of the southern counties, quartered in deserted villages,—a part were sent back to their own island, while the season of winter so far revived our energy, that the passes of the country were defended, and any increase of numbers prohibited.

On this occasion Adrian and Idris met after a separation of nearly a year. Adrian had been occupied in fulfilling a laborious and painful task. He had been familiar with every species of human misery, and had for ever found his powers inadequate, his aid of small avail. Yet the purpose of his soul, his energy and ardent resolution, prevented any re-action of sorrow. He seemed born anew, and virtue, more potent than Medean alchemy, endued him with health and strength. Idris hardly recognized the fragile being, whose form had seemed to bend even to the summer breeze, in the energetic man, whose very excess of sensibility rendered him more capable of fulfilling his station of pilot in storm-tossed England.

It was not thus with Idris. She was uncomplaining; but the very soul of fear had taken its seat in her heart. She had grown thin and pale, her eyes filled with involuntary tears, her voice was broken and low. She tried to throw a veil over the change which she knew her brother must observe in her, but the effort was ineffectual; and when alone with him, with a burst of irrepressible grief she gave vent to her apprehensions and sorrow. She described in vivid terms the ceaseless care that with still renewing

hunger ate into her soul; she compared this gnawing of sleepless expectation of evil, to the vulture that fed on the heart of Prometheus; under the influence of this eternal excitement, and of the interminable struggles she endured to combat and conceal it, she felt, she said, as if all the wheels and springs of the animal machine worked at double rate, and were fast consuming themselves. Sleep was not sleep, for her waking thoughts, bridled by some remains of reason, and by the sight of her children happy and in health, were then transformed to wild dreams, all her terrors were realized, all her fears received their dread fulfilment. To this state there was no hope, no alleviation, unless the grave should quickly receive its destined prey, and she be permitted to die, before she experienced a thousand living deaths in the loss of those she loved. Fearing to give me pain, she hid as best she could the excess of her wretchedness, but meeting thus her brother after a long absence, she could not restrain the expression of her woe, but with all the vividness of imagination with which misery is always replete, she poured out the emotions of her heart to her beloved and sympathizing Adrian.

Her present visit to London tended to augment her state of inquietude, by shewing in its utmost extent the ravages occasioned by pestilence. It hardly preserved the appearance of an inhabited city; grass sprung up thick in the streets; the squares were weed-grown, the houses were shut up, while silence and loneliness characterized the busiest parts of the town. Yet in the midst of desolation Adrian had preserved order; and each one continued to live according to law and custom—human institutions thus surviving as it were divine ones, and while the decree of population was abrogated, property continued sacred. It was a melancholy reflection; and in spite of the diminution of evil produced, it struck on the heart as a wretched mockery. All idea of resort for pleasure, of theatres and festivals had passed away. "Next summer," said Adrian as we parted on our return to Windsor, "will decide the fate of the human race. I shall not pause in my exertions until that time; but, if plague revives with the coming year, all contest with her must cease, and our only occupation be the choice of a grave."

I must not forget one incident that occurred during this visit to London. The visits of Merrival to Windsor, before frequent, had suddenly ceased. At this time where but a hair's line separated the living from the dead, I feared that our friend had become a victim to the all-embracing evil. On this occasion I went, dreading the worst, to his dwelling, to see if I could be of any service to those of his family who might have survived. The house was deserted, and had been one of those assigned to the invading strangers quartered in London. I saw his astronomical instruments put to strange uses, his globes defaced, his papers covered with abstruse calculations destroyed. The neighbours could tell me little, till I lighted on a poor woman who acted as nurse in these perilous times. She told me that all the family were dead, except Merrival himself, who had gone mad—mad, she called it, yet on questioning her further, it appeared that he was possessed only by the delirium of excessive grief. This old man, tottering on the edge of the grave, and prolonging his prospect through millions of calculated years,—this visionary who had not seen starvation in the wasted forms of his wife and children, or plague in the horrible sights and sounds that surrounded him—this astronomer, apparently dead on earth, and living only in the motion of the spheres—loved his family with unapparent but intense affection. Through long habit they had become a part of himself; his want of worldly knowledge, his absence of mind and infant guilelessness, made him utterly dependent on them. It was not till one of them died that he perceived their danger; one by one they were carried off by pestilence; and his wife, his helpmate and supporter, more necessary to him than his own limbs and frame, which had hardly been taught the lesson of self-preservation, the kind companion whose voice always spoke peace to him, closed her eyes in death. The old man felt the system of universal nature which he had so long studied and adored, slide from under him, and he stood among the dead, and lifted his voice in curses.—No wonder that the attendant should interpret as phrensy the harrowing maledictions of the grief-struck old man.

I had commenced my search late in the day, a November day, that closed in early with pattering rain and melancholy wind. As I

turned from the door, I saw Merrival, or rather the shadow of Merrival, attenuated and wild, pass me, and sit on the steps of his home. The breeze scattered the grey locks on his temples, the rain drenched his uncovered head, he sat hiding his face in his withered hands. I pressed his shoulder to awaken his attention, but he did not alter his position. "Merrival," I said, "it is long since we have seen you—you must return to Windsor with me—Lady Idris desires to see you, you will not refuse her request—come home with me."

He replied in a hollow voice, "Why deceive a helpless old man, why talk hypocritically to one half crazed? Windsor is not my home; my true home I have found; the home that the Creator has prepared for me."

745

His accent of bitter scorn thrilled me—"Do not tempt me to speak," he continued, "my words would scare you—in an universe of cowards I dare think—among the church-yard tombs—among the victims of His merciless tyranny I dare reproach the Supreme Evil. How can he punish me? Let him bare his arm and transfix me with lightning—this is also one of his attributes"—and the old man laughed.

He rose, and I followed him through the rain to a neighbouring church-yard—he threw himself on the wet earth. "Here they are," he cried, "beautiful creatures—breathing, speaking, loving creatures. She who by day and night cherished the age-worn lover of her youth—they, parts of my flesh, my children—here they are: call them, scream their names through the night; they will not answer!" He clung to the little heaps that marked the graves. "I ask but one thing; I do not fear His hell, for I have it here; I do not desire His heaven, let me but die and be laid beside them; let me but, when I lie dead, feel my flesh as it moulders, mingle with theirs. Promise," and he raised himself painfully, and seized my arm, "promise to bury me with them."

"So God help me and mine as I promise," I replied, "on one condition: return with me to Windsor."

"To Windsor!" he cried with a shriek, "Never!—from this place I never go—my bones, my flesh, I myself, are already buried here, and what you see of me is corrupted clay like them. I

will lie here, and cling here, till rain, and hail, and lightning and storm, ruining on me, make me one in substance with them below."

In a few words I must conclude this tragedy. I was obliged to leave London, and Adrian undertook to watch over him; the task was soon fulfilled; age, grief, and inclement weather, all united to hush his sorrows, and bring repose to his heart, whose beats were agony. He died embracing the sod, which was piled above his breast, when he was placed beside the beings whom he regretted with such wild despair.

I returned to Windsor at the wish of Idris, who seemed to think that there was greater safety for her children at that spot; and because, once having taken on me the guardianship of the district, I would not desert it while an inhabitant survived. I went also to act in conformity with Adrian's plans, which was to congregate in masses what remained of the population; for he possessed the conviction that it was only through the benevolent and social virtues that any safety was to be hoped for the remnant of mankind.

It was a melancholy thing to return to this spot so dear to us, as the scene of a happiness rarely before enjoyed, here to mark the extinction of our species, and trace the deep uneraseable footsteps of disease over the fertile and cherished soil. The aspect of the country had so far changed, that it had been impossible to enter on the task of sowing seed, and other autumnal labours. That season was now gone; and winter had set in with sudden and unusual severity. Alternate frosts and thaws succeeding to floods, rendered the country impassable. Heavy falls of snow gave an arctic appearance to the scenery; the roofs of the houses peeped from the white mass; the lowly cot and stately mansion, alike deserted, were blocked up, their thresholds uncleared; the windows were broken by the hail, while the prevalence of a north-east wind rendered out-door exertions extremely painful. The altered state of society made these accidents of nature, sources of real misery. The luxury of command and the attentions of servitude were lost. It is true that the necessaries of life were assembled in such quantities, as to supply to superfluity the wants

of the diminished population; but still much labour was required to arrange these, as it were, raw materials; and depressed by sickness, and fearful of the future, we had not energy to enter boldly and decidedly on any system.

I can speak for myself—want of energy was not my failing. The intense life that quickened my pulses, and animated my frame, had the effect, not of drawing me into the mazes of active life, but of exalting my lowliness, and of bestowing majestic proportions on insignificant objects—I could have lived the life of a peasant in the same way—my trifling occupations were swelled into important pursuits; my affections were impetuous and engrossing passions, and nature with all her changes was invested in divine attributes. The very spirit of the Greek mythology inhabited my heart; I deified the uplands, glades, and streams, I

Had sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
And heard old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

—WORDSWORTH

Strange, that while the earth preserved her monotonous course, I dwelt with ever-renewing wonder on her antique laws, and now that with excentric wheel she rushed into an untried path, I should feel this spirit fade; I struggled with despondency and weariness, but like a fog, they choked me. Perhaps, after the labours and stupendous excitement of the past summer, the calm of winter and the almost menial toils it brought with it, were by natural reaction doubly irksome. It was not the grasping passion of the preceding year, which gave life and individuality to each moment—it was not the aching pangs induced by the distresses of the times. The utter inutility that had attended all my exertions took from them their usual effects of exhilaration, and despair rendered abortive the balm of self applause—I longed to return to my old occupations, but of what use were they? To read were futile—to write, vanity indeed. The earth, late wide circus for the display of dignified exploits, vast theatre for a magnificent drama, now presented a vacant space, an empty stage—for actor or spectator there was no longer aught to say or hear.

Our little town of Windsor, in which the survivors from the neighbouring counties were chiefly assembled, wore a melancholy aspect. Its streets were blocked up with snow—the few passengers seemed palsied, and frozen by the ungenial visitation of winter. To escape these evils was the aim and scope of all our exertions. Families late devoted to exalting and refined pursuits, rich, blooming, and young, with diminished numbers and care-fraught hearts, huddled over a fire, grown selfish and grovelling through suffering. Without the aid of servants, it was necessary to discharge all household duties; hands unused to such labour must knead the bread, or in the absence of flour, the statesmen or perfumed courtier must undertake the butcher's office. Poor and rich were now equal, or rather the poor were the superior, since they entered on such tasks with alacrity and experience; while ignorance, inaptitude, and habits of repose, rendered them fatiguing to the luxurious, galling to the proud, disgusting to all whose minds, bent on intellectual improvement, held it their dearest privilege to be exempt from attending to mere animal wants.

But in every change goodness and affection can find field for exertion and display. Among some these changes produced a devotion and sacrifice of self at once graceful and heroic. It was a sight for the lovers of the human race to enjoy; to behold, as in ancient times, the patriarchal modes in which the variety of kindred and friendship fulfilled their duteous and kindly offices. Youths, nobles of the land, performed for the sake of mother or sister, the services of menials with amiable cheerfulness. They went to the river to break the ice, and draw water: they assembled on foraging expeditions, or axe in hand felled the trees for fuel. The females received them on their return with the simple and affectionate welcome known before only to the lowly cottage—a clean hearth and bright fire; the supper ready cooked by beloved hands; gratitude for the provision for to-morrow's meal: strange enjoyments for the high-born English, yet they were now their sole, hard earned, and dearly prized luxuries.

None was more conspicuous for this graceful submission to circumstances, noble humility, and ingenious fancy to adorn such

acts with romantic colouring, than our own Clara. She saw my despondency, and the aching cares of Idris. Her perpetual study was to relieve us from labour and to spread ease and even elegance over our altered mode of life. We still had some attendants spared by disease, and warmly attached to us. But Clara was jealous of their services; she would be sole handmaid of Idris, sole minister to the wants of her little cousins; nothing gave her so much pleasure as our employing her in this way; she went beyond our desires, earnest, diligent, and unwearied,—

Abra was ready ere we called her name,
And though we called another, Abra came.

—PRIOR'S "SOLOMON"

It was my task each day to visit the various families assembled in our town, and when the weather permitted, I was glad to prolong my ride, and to muse in solitude over every changeful appearance of our destiny, endeavouring to gather lessons for the future from the experience of the past. The impatience with which, while in society, the ills that afflicted my species inspired me, were softened by loneliness, when individual suffering was merged in the general calamity, strange to say, less afflicting to contemplate. Thus often, pushing my way with difficulty through the narrow snow-blocked town, I crossed the bridge and passed through Eton. No youthful congregation of gallant-hearted boys thronged the portal of the college; sad silence pervaded the busy school-room and noisy playground. I extended my ride towards Salt Hill, on every side impeded by the snow. Were those the fertile fields I loved—was that the interchange of gentle upland and cultivated dale, once covered with waving corn, diversified by stately trees, watered by the meandering Thames? One sheet of white covered it, while bitter recollection told me that cold as the winter-clothed earth, were the hearts of the inhabitants. I met troops of horses, herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, wandering at will; here throwing down a hay-rick, and nestling from cold in its heart, which afforded them shelter and food—there having taken possession of a vacant cottage. Once on a frosty day, pushed on

by restless unsatisfying reflections, I sought a favourite haunt, a little wood not far distant from Salt Hill. A bubbling spring prattles over stones on one side, and a plantation of a few elms and beeches, hardly deserve, and yet continue the name of wood. This spot had for me peculiar charms. It had been a favourite resort of Adrian; it was secluded; and he often said that in boyhood, his happiest hours were spent here; having escaped the stately bondage of his mother, he sat on the rough hewn steps that led to the spring, now reading a favourite book, now musing, with speculation beyond his years, on the still unravelled skein of morals or metaphysics. A melancholy foreboding assured me that I should never see this place more; so with careful thought, I noted each tree, every winding of the streamlet and irregularity of the soil, that I might better call up its idea in absence. A robin red-breast dropt from the frosty branches of the trees, upon the congealed rivulet; its panting breast and half-closed eyes shewed that it was dying: a hawk appeared in the air; sudden fear seized the little creature; it exerted its last strength, throwing itself on its back, raising its talons in impotent defence against its powerful enemy. I took it up and placed it in my breast. I fed it with a few crumbs from a biscuit; by degrees it revived; its warm fluttering heart beat against me; I cannot tell why I detail this trifling incident—but the scene is still before me; the snow-clad fields seen through the silvered trunks of the beeches,—the brook, in days of happiness alive with sparkling waters, now choked by ice—the leafless trees fantastically dressed in hoar frost—the shapes of summer leaves imaged by winter's frozen hand on the hard ground—the dusky sky, drear cold, and unbroken silence—while close in my bosom, my feathered nursling lay warm, and safe, speaking its content with a light chirp— painful reflections thronged, stirring my brain with wild commotion—cold and death-like as the snowy fields was all earth—misery-stricken the life-tide of the inhabitants—why should I oppose the cataract of destruction that swept us away?—why string my nerves and renew my wearied efforts—ah, why? But that my firm courage and cheerful exertions might shelter the dear mate, whom I chose in the spring of my life; though the throbbings of my heart be

replete with pain, though my hopes for the future are chill, still while your dear head, my gentlest love, can repose in peace on that heart, and while you derive from its fostering care, comfort, and hope, my struggles shall not cease,—I will not call myself altogether vanquished.

One fine February day, when the sun had reassumed some of its genial power, I walked in the forest with my family. It was one of those lovely winter-days which assert the capacity of nature to bestow beauty on barrenness. The leafless trees spread their fibrous branches against the pure sky; their intricate and pervious tracery resembled delicate sea-weed; the deer were turning up the snow in search of the hidden grass; the white was made intensely dazzling by the sun, and trunks of the trees, rendered more conspicuous by the loss of preponderating foliage, gathered around like the labyrinthine columns of a vast temple; it was impossible not to receive pleasure from the sight of these things. Our children, freed from the bondage of winter, bounded before us; pursuing the deer, or rousing the pheasants and partridges from their coverts. Idris leant on my arm; her sadness yielded to the present sense of pleasure. We met other families on the Long Walk, enjoying like ourselves the return of the genial season. At once, I seemed to awake; I cast off the clinging sloth of the past months; earth assumed a new appearance, and my view of the future was suddenly made clear. I exclaimed, "I have now found out the secret!"

"What secret?"

760

In answer to this question, I described our gloomy winter-life, our sordid cares, our menial labours:—"This northern country," I said, "is no place for our diminished race. When mankind were few, it was not here that they battled with the powerful agents of nature, and were enabled to cover the globe with offspring. We must seek some natural Paradise, some garden of the earth, where our simple wants may be easily supplied, and the enjoyment of a delicious climate compensate for the social pleasures we have lost. If we survive this coming summer, I will not spend the ensuing winter in England; neither I nor any of us."

I spoke without much heed, and the very conclusion of what I said brought with it other thoughts. Should we, any of us, survive the coming summer? I saw the brow of Idris clouded; I again felt, that we were enchained to the car of fate, over whose coursers we had no control. We could no longer say, This we will do, and this we will leave undone. A mightier power than the human was at hand to destroy our plans or to achieve the work we avoided. It were madness to calculate upon another winter. This was our last. The coming summer was the extreme end of our vista; and, when we arrived there, instead of a continuation of the long road, a gulph yawned, into which we must of force be precipitated. The last blessing of humanity was wrested from us; we might no longer hope. Can the madman, as he clanks his chains, hope? Can the wretch, led to the scaffold, who when he lays his head on the block, marks the double shadow of himself and the executioner, whose uplifted arm bears the axe, hope? Can the ship-wrecked mariner, who spent with swimming, hears close behind the splashing waters divided by a shark which pursues him through the Atlantic, hope? Such hope as theirs, we also may entertain!

Old fable tells us, that this gentle spirit sprung from the box of Pandora, else crammed with evils; but these were unseen and null, while all admired the inspiriting loveliness of young Hope; each man's heart became her home; she was enthroned sovereign of our lives, here and here-after; she was deified and worshipped, declared incorruptible and everlasting. But like all other gifts of the Creator to Man, she is mortal; her life has attained its last hour. We have watched over her; nursed her flickering existence; now she has fallen at once from youth to decrepitude, from health to immedicable disease; even as we spend ourselves in struggles for her recovery, she dies; to all nations the voice goes forth, Hope is dead! We are but mourners in the funeral train, and what immortal essence or perishable creation will refuse to make one in the sad procession that attends to its grave the dead comforter of humanity?

Does not the sun call in his light? and day
Like a thin exhalation melt away—
Both wrapping up their beams in clouds to be
Themselves close mourners at this obsequie.

—CLEVELAND'S POEMS

Volume III

Chapter I

Hear you not the rushing sound of the coming tempest? Do you not behold the clouds open, and destruction lurid and dire pour down on the blasted earth? See you not the thunderbolt fall, and are deafened by the shout of heaven that follows its descent? Feel you not the earth quake and open with agonizing groans, while the air is pregnant with shrieks and wailings,— all announcing the last days of man? No! none of these things accompanied our fall! The balmy air of spring, breathed from nature's ambrosial home, invested the lovely earth, which wakened as a young mother about to lead forth in pride her beauteous offspring to meet their sire who had been long absent. The buds decked the trees, the flowers adorned the land: the dark branches, swollen with seasonable juices, expanded into leaves, and the variegated foliage of spring, bending and singing in the breeze, rejoiced in the genial warmth of the unclouded empyrean: the brooks flowed murmuring, the sea was waveless, and the promontories that over-hung it were reflected in the placid waters; birds awoke in the woods, while abundant food for man and beast sprung up from the dark ground. Where was pain and evil? Not in the calm air or weltering ocean; not in the woods or fertile fields, nor among the birds that made the woods resonant with song, nor the animals that in the midst of plenty basked in the sunshine. Our enemy, like the Calamity of Homer, trod our hearts, and no sound was echoed from her steps—

With ills the land is rife, with ills the sea,
Diseases haunt our frail humanity,
Through noon, through night, on casual wing they glide,
Silent,—a voice the power all-wise denied.

—ELTON'S TRANSLATION OF HESIOD

Once man was a favourite of the Creator, as the royal psalmist sang, "God had made him a little lower than the angels, and had crowned him with glory and honour. God made him to have dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet." Once it was so; now is man lord of the creation? Look at him—ha! I see plague! She has invested his form, is incarnate in his flesh, has entwined herself with his being, and blinds his heaven-seeking eyes. Lie down, O man, on the flower-strown earth; give up all claim to your inheritance, all you can ever possess of it is the small cell which the dead require. Plague is the companion of spring, of sunshine, and plenty. We no longer struggle with her. We have forgotten what we did when she was not. Of old navies used to stem the giant ocean-waves betwixt Indus and the Pole for slight articles of luxury. Men made perilous journies to possess themselves of earth's splendid trifles, gems and gold. Human labour was wasted—human life set at nought. Now life is all that we covet; that this automaton of flesh should, with joints and springs in order, perform its functions, that this dwelling of the soul should be capable of containing its dweller. Our minds, late spread abroad through countless spheres and endless combinations of thought, now retrenched themselves behind this wall of flesh, eager to preserve its well-being only. We were surely sufficiently degraded.

At first the increase of sickness in spring brought increase of toil to such of us, who, as yet spared to life, bestowed our time and thoughts on our fellow creatures. We nerved ourselves to the task: "in the midst of despair we performed the tasks of hope." We went out with the resolution of disputing with our foe. We aided the sick, and comforted the sorrowing; turning from the multitudinous dead to the rare survivors, with an energy of desire

that bore the resemblance of power, we bade them—live. Plague sat paramount the while, and laughed us to scorn.

Have any of you, my readers, observed the ruins of an anthill immediately after its destruction? At first it appears entirely deserted of its former inhabitants; in a little time you see an ant struggling through the upturned mould; they reappear by twos and threes, running hither and thither in search of their lost companions. Such were we upon earth, wondering aghast at the effects of pestilence. Our empty habitations remained, but the dwellers were gathered to the shades of the tomb.

As the rules of order and pressure of laws were lost, some began with hesitation and wonder to transgress the accustomed uses of society. Palaces were deserted, and the poor man dared at length, unreprieved, intrude into the splendid apartments, whose very furniture and decorations were an unknown world to him. It was found, that, though at first the stop put to all circulation of property, had reduced those before supported by the factitious wants of society to sudden and hideous poverty, yet when the boundaries of private possession were thrown down, the products of human labour at present existing were more, far more, than the thinned generation could possibly consume. To some among the poor this was matter of exultation. We were all equal now; magnificent dwellings, luxurious carpets, and beds of down, were afforded to all. Carriages and horses, gardens, pictures, statues, and princely libraries, there were enough of these even to superfluity; and there was nothing to prevent each from assuming possession of his share. We were all equal now; but near at hand was an equality still more levelling, a state where beauty and strength, and wisdom, would be as vain as riches and birth. The grave yawned beneath us all, and its prospect prevented any of us from enjoying the ease and plenty which in so awful a manner was presented to us.

Still the bloom did not fade on the cheeks of my babes; and Clara sprung up in years and growth, unsullied by disease. We had no reason to think the site of Windsor Castle peculiarly healthy, for many other families had expired beneath its roof; we lived therefore without any particular precaution; but we lived, it

seemed, in safety. If Idris became thin and pale, it was anxiety that occasioned the change; an anxiety I could in no way alleviate. She never complained, but sleep and appetite fled from her, a slow fever preyed on her veins, her colour was hectic, and she often wept in secret; gloomy prognostications, care, and agonizing dread, ate up the principle of life within her. I could not fail to perceive this change. I often wished that I had permitted her to take her own course, and engage herself in such labours for the welfare of others as might have distracted her thoughts. But it was too late now. Besides that, with the nearly extinct race of man, all our toils grew near a conclusion, she was too weak; consumption, if so it might be called, or rather the over active life within her, which, as with Adrian, spent the vital oil in the early morning hours, deprived her limbs of strength. At night, when she could leave me unperceived, she wandered through the house, or hung over the couches of her children; and in the day time would sink into a perturbed sleep, while her murmurs and starts betrayed the unquiet dreams that vexed her. As this state of wretchedness became more confirmed, and, in spite of her endeavours at concealment more apparent, I strove, though vainly, to awaken in her courage and hope. I could not wonder at the vehemence of her care; her very soul was tenderness; she trusted indeed that she should not outlive me if I became the prey of the vast calamity, and this thought sometimes relieved her. We had for many years trod the highway of life hand in hand, and still thus linked, we might step within the shades of death; but her children, her lovely, playful, animated children—beings sprung from her own dear side—portions of her own being—depositories of our loves—even if we died, it would be comfort to know that they ran man's accustomed course. But it would not be so; young and blooming as they were, they would die, and from the hopes of maturity, from the proud name of attained manhood, they were cut off for ever. Often with maternal affection she had figured their merits and talents exerted on life's wide stage. Alas for these latter days! The world had grown old, and all its inmates partook of the decrepitude. Why talk of infancy, manhood, and old age? We all stood equal sharers of the last throes of time-worn nature. Arrived

at the same point of the world's age—there was no difference in us; the name of parent and child had lost their meaning; young boys and girls were level now with men. This was all true; but it was not less agonizing to take the admonition home.

Where could we turn, and not find a desolation pregnant with the dire lesson of example? The fields had been left uncultivated, weeds and gaudy flowers sprung up,—or where a few wheat-fields shewed signs of the living hopes of the husbandman, the work had been left halfway, the ploughman had died beside the plough; the horses had deserted the furrow, and no seedsman had approached the dead; the cattle unattended wandered over the fields and through the lanes; the tame inhabitants of the poultry yard, baulked of their daily food, had become wild—young lambs were dropt in flower-gardens, and the cow stalled in the hall of pleasure. Sickly and few, the country people neither went out to sow nor reap; but sauntered about the meadows, or lay under the hedges, when the inclement sky did not drive them to take shelter under the nearest roof. Many of those who remained, secluded themselves; some had laid up stores which should prevent the necessity of leaving their homes;—some deserted wife and child, and imagined that they secured their safety in utter solitude. Such had been Ryland's plan, and he was discovered dead and half-devoured by insects, in a house many miles from any other, with piles of food laid up in useless superfluity. Others made long journies to unite themselves to those they loved, and arrived to find them dead.

London did not contain above a thousand inhabitants; and this number was continually diminishing. Most of them were country people, come up for the sake of change; the Londoners had sought the country. The busy eastern part of the town was silent, or at most you saw only where, half from cupidity, half from curiosity, the warehouses had been more ransacked than pillaged: bales of rich India goods, shawls of price, jewels, and spices, unpacked, strewed the floors. In some places the possessor had to the last kept watch on his store, and died before the barred gates. The massy portals of the churches swung creaking on their hinges; and some few lay dead on the pavement. The wretched

female, loveless victim of vulgar brutality, had wandered to the toilet of high-born beauty, and, arraying herself in the garb of splendour, had died before the mirror which reflected to herself alone her altered appearance. Women whose delicate feet had seldom touched the earth in their luxury, had fled in fright and horror from their homes, till, losing themselves in the squalid streets of the metropolis, they had died on the threshold of poverty. The heart sickened at the variety of misery presented; and, when I saw a specimen of this gloomy change, my soul ached with the fear of what might befall my beloved Idris and my babes. Were they, surviving Adrian and myself, to find themselves protectorless in the world? As yet the mind alone had suffered—could I for ever put off the time, when the delicate frame and shrinking nerves of my child of prosperity, the nursling of rank and wealth, who was my companion, should be invaded by famine, hardship, and disease? Better die at once—better plunge a poinard in her bosom, still untouched by drear adversity, and then again sheathe it in my own! But, no; in times of misery we must fight against our destinies, and strive not to be overcome by them. I would not yield, but to the last gasp resolutely defended my dear ones against sorrow and pain; and if I were vanquished at last, it should not be ingloriously. I stood in the gap, resisting the enemy—the impalpable, invisible foe, who had so long besieged us—as yet he had made no breach: it must be my care that he should not, secretly undermining, burst up within the very threshold of the temple of love, at whose altar I daily sacrificed. The hunger of Death was now stung more sharply by the diminution of his food: or was it that before, the survivors being many, the dead were less eagerly counted? Now each life was a gem, each human breathing form of far, O! far more worth than subtlest imagery of sculptured stone; and the daily, nay, hourly decrease visible in our numbers, visited the heart with sickening misery. This summer extinguished our hopes, the vessel of society was wrecked, and the shattered raft, which carried the few survivors over the sea of misery, was riven and tempest tost. Man existed by twos and threes; man, the individual who might sleep, and wake, and perform the animal functions; but man, in

himself weak, yet more powerful in congregated numbers than wind or ocean; man, the queller of the elements, the lord of created nature, the peer of demi-gods, existed no longer.

Farewell to the patriotic scene, to the love of liberty and well earned meed of virtuous aspiration!—farewell to crowded senate, vocal with the councils of the wise, whose laws were keener than the sword blade tempered at Damascus!—farewell to kingly pomp and warlike pageantry; the crowns are in the dust, and the wearers are in their graves!—farewell to the desire of rule, and the hope of victory; to high vaulting ambition, to the appetite for praise, and the craving for the suffrage of their fellows! The nations are no longer! No senate sits in council for the dead; no scion of a time honoured dynasty pants to rule over the inhabitants of a charnel house; the general's hand is cold, and the soldier has his untimely grave dug in his native fields, unhonoured, though in youth. The market-place is empty, the candidate for popular favour finds none whom he can represent. To chambers of painted state farewell!—To midnight revelry, and the panting emulation of beauty, to costly dress and birth-day shew, to title and the gilded coronet, farewell!

Farewell to the giant powers of man,—to knowledge that could pilot the deep-drawing bark through the opposing waters of shoreless ocean,—to science that directed the silken balloon through the pathless air,—to the power that could put a barrier to mighty waters, and set in motion wheels, and beams, and vast machinery, that could divide rocks of granite or marble, and make the mountains plain!

Farewell to the arts,—to eloquence, which is to the human mind as the winds to the sea, stirring, and then allaying it;—farewell to poetry and deep philosophy, for man's imagination is cold, and his enquiring mind can no longer expatiate on the wonders of life, for "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest!"—to the graceful building, which in its perfect proportion transcended the rude forms of nature, the fretted gothic and massy saracenic pile, to the stupendous arch and glorious dome, the fluted column with its capital, Corinthian, Ionic, or Doric, the peristyle and fair

entablature, whose harmony of form is to the eye as musical concord to the ear!—farewell to sculpture, where the pure marble mocks human flesh, and in the plastic expression of the culled excellencies of the human shape, shines forth the god!—farewell to painting, the high wrought sentiment and deep knowledge of the artists's mind in pictured canvas—to paradisaical scenes, where trees are ever vernal, and the ambrosial air rests in perpetual glow:—to the stamped form of tempest, and wildest uproar of universal nature encaged in the narrow frame, O farewell! Farewell to music, and the sound of song; to the marriage of instruments, where the concord of soft and harsh unites in sweet harmony, and gives wings to the panting listeners, whereby to climb heaven, and learn the hidden pleasures of the eternals!—Farewell to the well-trod stage; a truer tragedy is enacted on the world's ample scene, that puts to shame mimic grief: to high-bred comedy, and the low buffoon, farewell!—Man may laugh no more. Alas! to enumerate the adornments of humanity, shews, by what we have lost, how supremely great man was. It is all over now. He is solitary; like our first parents expelled from Paradise, he looks back towards the scene he has quitted. The high walls of the tomb, and the flaming sword of plague, lie between it and him. Like to our first parents, the whole earth is before him, a wide desert. Unsupported and weak, let him wander through fields where the unreaped corn stands in barren plenty, through copses planted by his fathers, through towns built for his use. Posterity is no more; fame, and ambition, and love, are words void of meaning; even as the cattle that grazes in the field, do thou, O deserted one, lie down at evening-tide, unknowing of the past, careless of the future, for from such fond ignorance alone canst thou hope for ease!

Joy paints with its own colours every act and thought. The happy do not feel poverty—for delight is as a gold-tissued robe, and crowns them with priceless gems. Enjoyment plays the cook to their homely fare, and mingles intoxication with their simple drink. Joy strews the hard couch with roses, and makes labour ease.

Sorrow doubles the burthen to the bent-down back; plants thorns in the unyielding pillow; mingles gall with water; adds saltiness to their bitter bread; cloathing them in rags, and strewing ashes on their bare heads. To our irremediable distress every small and pelting inconvenience came with added force; we had strung our frames to endure the Atlean weight thrown on us; we sank beneath the added feather chance threw on us, "the grasshopper was a burthen." Many of the survivors had been bred in luxury—their servants were gone, their powers of command vanished like unreal shadows: the poor even suffered various privations; and the idea of another winter like the last, brought affright to our minds. Was it not enough that we must die, but toil must be added?—must we prepare our funeral repast with labour, and with unseemly drudgery heap fuel on our deserted hearths — must we with servile hands fabricate the garments, soon to be our shroud?

Not so! We are presently to die, let us then enjoy to its full relish the remnant of our lives. Sordid care, avaunt! menial labours, and pains, slight in themselves, but too gigantic for our exhausted strength, shall make no part of our ephemeral existences. In the beginning of time, when, as now, man lived by families, and not by tribes or nations, they were placed in a genial clime, where earth fed them untilled, and the balmy air enwrapt their reposing limbs with warmth more pleasant than beds of down. The south is the native place of the human race; the land of fruits, more grateful to man than the hard-earned Ceres of the north,—of trees, whose boughs are as a palace-roof, of couches of roses, and of the thirst-appeasing grape. We need not there fear cold and hunger.

Look at England! the grass shoots up high in the meadows; but they are dank and cold, unfit bed for us. Corn we have none, and the crude fruits cannot support us. We must seek firing in the bowels of the earth, or the unkind atmosphere will fill us with rheums and aches. The labour of hundreds of thousands alone could make this inclement nook fit habitation for one man. To the south then, to the sun!—where nature is kind, where Jove has

showered forth the contents of Amalthea's horn, and earth is garden.

England, late birth-place of excellence and school of the wise, thy children are gone, thy glory faded! Thou, England, wert the triumph of man! Small favour was shewn thee by thy Creator, thou Isle of the North; a ragged canvas naturally, painted by man with alien colours; but the hues he gave are faded, never more to be renewed. So we must leave thee, thou marvel of the world; we must bid farewell to thy clouds, and cold, and scarcity for ever! Thy manly hearts are still; thy tale of power and liberty at its close! Bereft of man, O little isle! the ocean waves will buffet thee, and the raven flap his wings over thee; thy soil will be birth-place of weeds, thy sky will canopy barrenness. It was not for the rose of Persia thou wert famous, nor the banana of the east; not for the spicy gales of India, nor the sugar groves of America; not for thy vines nor thy double harvests, nor for thy vernal airs, nor solstitial sun—but for thy children, their unwearied industry and lofty aspiration. They are gone, and thou goest with them the oft trodden path that leads to oblivion, —

Farewell, sad Isle, farewell, thy fatal glory
Is summed, cast up, and cancelled in this story.
Cleveland's Poems

Chapter II

In the autumn of this year 2096, the spirit of emigration crept in among the few survivors, who, congregating from various parts of England, met in London. This spirit existed as a breath, a wish, a far off thought, until communicated to Adrian, who imbibed it with ardour, and instantly engaged himself in plans for its execution. The fear of immediate death vanished with the heats of September. Another winter was before us, and we might elect our mode of passing it to the best advantage. Perhaps in rational philosophy none could be better chosen than this scheme of migration, which would draw us from the immediate scene of our woe, and, leading us through pleasant and picturesque countries,

amuse for a time our despair. The idea once broached, all were impatient to put it in execution.

We were still at Windsor; our renewed hopes medicined the anguish we had suffered from the late tragedies. The death of many of our inmates had weaned us from the fond idea, that Windsor Castle was a spot sacred from the plague; but our lease of life was renewed for some months, and even Idris lifted her head, as a lily after a storm, when a last sunbeam tinges its silver cup. Just at this time Adrian came down to us; his eager looks shewed us that he was full of some scheme. He hastened to take me aside, and disclosed to me with rapidity his plan of emigration from England.

To leave England for ever! to turn from its polluted fields and groves, and, placing the sea between us, to quit it, as a sailor quits the rock on which he has been wrecked, when the saving ship rides by. Such was his plan.

To leave the country of our fathers, made holy by their graves!—We could not feel even as a voluntary exile of old, who might for pleasure or convenience forsake his native soil; though thousands of miles might divide him, England was still a part of him, as he of her. He heard of the passing events of the day; he knew that, if he returned, and resumed his place in society, the entrance was still open, and it required but the will, to surround himself at once with the associations and habits of boyhood. Not so with us, the remnant. We left none to represent us, none to repeople the desert land, and the name of England died, when we left her,

In vagabond pursuit of dreadful safety.

Yet let us go! England is in her shroud,—we may not enchain ourselves to a corpse. Let us go—the world is our country now, and we will choose for our residence its most fertile spot. Shall we, in these desert halls, under this wintry sky, sit with closed eyes and folded hands, expecting death? Let us rather go out to meet it gallantly: or perhaps—for all this pendulous orb, this fair gem in the sky's diadem, is not surely plague-stricken—perhaps, in

some secluded nook, amidst eternal spring, and waving trees, and purling streams, we may find Life. The world is vast, and England, though her many fields and wide spread woods seem interminable, is but a small part of her. At the close of a day's march over high mountains and through snowy vallies, we may come upon health, and committing our loved ones to its charge, replant the uprooted tree of humanity, and send to late posterity the tale of the ante-pestilential race, the heroes and sages of the lost state of things.

Hope beckons and sorrow urges us, the heart beats high with expectation, and this eager desire of change must be an omen of success. O come! Farewell to the dead! farewell to the tombs of those we loved!—farewell to giant London and the placid Thames, to river and mountain or fair district, birth-place of the wise and good, to Windsor Forest and its antique castle, farewell! themes for story alone are they,—we must live elsewhere.

Such were in part the arguments of Adrian, uttered with enthusiasm and unanswerable rapidity. Something more was in his heart, to which he dared not give words. He felt that the end of time was come; he knew that one by one we should dwindle into nothingness. It was not adviseable to wait this sad consummation in our native country; but travelling would give us our object for each day, that would distract our thoughts from the swift-approaching end of things. If we went to Italy, to sacred and eternal Rome, we might with greater patience submit to the decree, which had laid her mighty towers low. We might lose our selfish grief in the sublime aspect of its desolation. All this was in the mind of Adrian; but he thought of my children, and, instead of communicating to me these resources of despair, he called up the image of health and life to be found, where we knew not—when we knew not; but if never to be found, for ever and for ever to be sought. He won me over to his party, heart and soul.

It devolved on me to disclose our plan to Idris. The images of health and hope which I presented to her, made her with a smile consent. With a smile she agreed to leave her country, from which she had never before been absent, and the spot she had inhabited from infancy; the forest and its mighty trees, the woodland paths

and green recesses, where she had played in childhood, and had lived so happily through youth; she would leave them without regret, for she hoped to purchase thus the lives of her children. They were her life; dearer than a spot consecrated to love, dearer than all else the earth contained. The boys heard with childish glee of our removal: Clara asked if we were to go to Athens. "It is possible," I replied; and her countenance became radiant with pleasure. There she would behold the tomb of her parents, and the territory filled with recollections of her father's glory. In silence, but without respite, she had brooded over these scenes. It was the recollection of them that had turned her infant gaiety to seriousness, and had impressed her with high and restless thoughts.

There were many dear friends whom we must not leave behind, humble though they were. There was the spirited and obedient steed which Lord Raymond had given his daughter; there was Alfred's dog and a pet eagle, whose sight was dimmed through age. But this catalogue of favourites to be taken with us, could not be made without grief to think of our heavy losses, and a deep sigh for the many things we must leave behind. The tears rushed into the eyes of Idris, while Alfred and Evelyn brought now a favourite rose tree, now a marble vase beautifully carved, insisting that these must go, and exclaiming on the pity that we could not take the castle and the forest, the deer and the birds, and all accustomed and cherished objects along with us. "Fond and foolish ones," I said, "we have lost for ever treasures far more precious than these; and we desert them, to preserve treasures to which in comparison they are nothing. Let us not for a moment forget our object and our hope; and they will form a resistless mound to stop the overflowing of our regret for trifles."

The children were easily distracted, and again returned to their prospect of future amusement. Idris had disappeared. She had gone to hide her weakness; escaping from the castle, she had descended to the little park, and sought solitude, that she might there indulge her tears; I found her clinging round an old oak, pressing its rough trunk with her roseate lips, as her tears fell plenteously, and her sobs and broken exclamations could not be

suppressed; with surpassing grief I beheld this loved one of my heart thus lost in sorrow! I drew her towards me; and, as she felt my kisses on her eyelids, as she felt my arms press her, she revived to the knowledge of what remained to her. "You are very kind not to reproach me," she said: "I weep, and a bitter pang of intolerable sorrow tears my heart. And yet I am happy; mothers lament their children, wives lose their husbands, while you and my children are left to me. Yes, I am happy, most happy, that I can weep thus for imaginary sorrows, and that the slight loss of my adored country is not dwindled and annihilated in mightier misery. Take me where you will; where you and my children are, there shall be Windsor, and every country will be England to me. Let these tears flow not for myself, happy and ungrateful as I am, but for the dead world—for our lost country—for all of love, and life, and joy, now choked in the dusty chambers of death."

She spoke quickly, as if to convince herself; she turned her eyes from the trees and forest-paths she loved; she hid her face in my bosom, and we— yes, my masculine firmness dissolved—we wept together consolatory tears, and then calm—nay, almost cheerful, we returned to the castle.

The first cold weather of an English October, made us hasten our preparations. I persuaded Idris to go up to London, where she might better attend to necessary arrangements. I did not tell her, that to spare her the pang of parting from inanimate objects, now the only things left, I had resolved that we should none of us return to Windsor. For the last time we looked on the wide extent of country visible from the terrace, and saw the last rays of the sun tinge the dark masses of wood variegated by autumnal tints; the uncultivated fields and smokeless cottages lay in shadow below; the Thames wound through the wide plain, and the venerable pile of Eton college, stood in dark relief, a prominent object; the cawing of the myriad rooks which inhabited the trees of the little park, as in column or thick wedge they speeded to their nests, disturbed the silence of evening. Nature was the same, as when she was the kind mother of the human race; now, childless and forlorn, her fertility was a mockery; her loveliness a mask for deformity. Why should the breeze gently stir the trees,

man felt not its refreshment? Why did dark night adorn herself with stars—man saw them not? Why are there fruits, or flowers, or streams, man is not here to enjoy them?

Idris stood beside me, her dear hand locked in mine. Her face was radiant with a smile.—"The sun is alone," she said, "but we are not. A strange star, my Lionel, ruled our birth; sadly and with dismay we may look upon the annihilation of man; but we remain for each other. Did I ever in the wide world seek other than thee? And since in the wide world thou remainest, why should I complain? Thou and nature are still true to me. Beneath the shades of night, and through the day, whose garish light displays our solitude, thou wilt still be at my side, and even Windsor will not be regretted."

I had chosen night time for our journey to London, that the change and desolation of the country might be the less observable. Our only surviving servant drove us. We past down the steep hill, and entered the dusky avenue of the Long Walk. At times like these, minute circumstances assume giant and majestic proportions; the very swinging open of the white gate that admitted us into the forest, arrested my thoughts as matter of interest; it was an every day act, never to occur again! The setting crescent of the moon glittered through the massy trees to our right, and when we entered the park, we scared a troop of deer, that fled bounding away in the forest shades. Our two boys quietly slept; once, before our road turned from the view, I looked back on the castle. Its windows glistened in the moonshine, and its heavy outline lay in a dark mass against the sky—the trees near us waved a solemn dirge to the midnight breeze. Idris leaned back in the carriage; her two hands pressed mine, her countenance was placid, she seemed to lose the sense of what she now left, in the memory of what she still possessed.

My thoughts were sad and solemn, yet not of unmingled pain. The very excess of our misery carried a relief with it, giving sublimity and elevation to sorrow. I felt that I carried with me those I best loved; I was pleased, after a long separation to rejoin Adrian; never again to part. I felt that I quitted what I loved, not what loved me. The castle walls, and long familiar trees, did not

hear the parting sound of our carriage-wheels with regret. And, while I felt Idris to be near, and heard the regular breathing of my children, I could not be unhappy. Clara was greatly moved; with streaming eyes, suppressing her sobs, she leaned from the window, watching the last glimpse of her native Windsor.

Adrian welcomed us on our arrival. He was all animation; you could no longer trace in his look of health, the suffering valetudinarian; from his smile and sprightly tones you could not guess that he was about to lead forth from their native country, the numbered remnant of the English nation, into the tenantless realms of the south, there to die, one by one, till the LAST MAN should remain in a voiceless, empty world.

Adrian was impatient for our departure, and had advanced far in his preparations. His wisdom guided all. His care was the soul, to move the luckless crowd, who relied wholly on him. It was useless to provide many things, for we should find abundant provision in every town. It was Adrian's wish to prevent all labour; to bestow a festive appearance on this funeral train. Our numbers amounted to not quite two thousand persons. These were not all assembled in London, but each day witnessed the arrival of fresh numbers, and those who resided in the neighbouring towns, had received orders to assemble at one place, on the twentieth of November. Carriages and horses were provided for all; captains and under officers chosen, and the whole assemblage wisely organized. All obeyed the Lord Protector of dying England; all looked up to him. His council was chosen, it consisted of about fifty persons. Distinction and station were not the qualifications of their election. We had no station among us, but that which benevolence and prudence gave; no distinction save between the living and the dead. Although we were anxious to leave England before the depth of winter, yet we were detained. Small parties had been dispatched to various parts of England, in search of stragglers; we would not go, until we had assured ourselves that in all human probability we did not leave behind a single human being.

On our arrival in London, we found that the aged Countess of Windsor was residing with her son in the palace of the

Protectorate; we repaired to our accustomed abode near Hyde Park. Idris now for the first time for many years saw her mother, anxious to assure herself that the childishness of old age did not mingle with unforgotten pride, to make this high-born dame still so inveterate against me. Age and care had furrowed her cheeks, and bent her form; but her eye was still bright, her manners authoritative and unchanged; she received her daughter coldly, but displayed more feeling as she folded her grand-children in her arms. It is our nature to wish to continue our systems and thoughts to posterity through our own offspring. The Countess had failed in this design with regard to her children; perhaps she hoped to find the next remove in birth more tractable. Once Idris named me casually—a frown, a convulsive gesture of anger, shook her mother, and, with voice trembling with hate, she said—"I am of little worth in this world; the young are impatient to push the old off the scene; but, Idris, if you do not wish to see your mother expire at your feet, never again name that person to me; all else I can bear; and now I am resigned to the destruction of my cherished hopes: but it is too much to require that I should love the instrument that providence gifted with murderous properties for my destruction."

This was a strange speech, now that, on the empty stage, each might play his part without impediment from the other. But the haughty Ex-Queen thought as Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony,

We could not stall together
In the whole world.

The period of our departure was fixed for the twenty-fifth of November. The weather was temperate; soft rains fell at night, and by day the wintry sun shone out. Our numbers were to move forward in separate parties, and to go by different routes, all to unite at last at Paris. Adrian and his division, consisting in all of five hundred persons, were to take the direction of Dover and Calais. On the twentieth of November, Adrian and I rode for the last time through the streets of London. They were grass-grown and desert. The open doors of the empty mansions creaked upon

their hinges; rank herbage, and deforming dirt, had swiftly accumulated on the steps of the houses; the voiceless steeples of the churches pierced the smokeless air; the churches were open, but no prayer was offered at the altars; mildew and damp had already defaced their ornaments; birds, and tame animals, now homeless, had built nests, and made their lairs in consecrated spots. We passed St. Paul's. London, which had extended so far in suburbs in all direction, had been somewhat deserted in the midst, and much of what had in former days obscured this vast building was removed. Its ponderous mass, blackened stone, and high dome, made it look, not like a temple, but a tomb. Methought above the portico was engraved the *Hic jacet* of England. We passed on eastwards, engaged in such solemn talk as the times inspired. No human step was heard, nor human form discerned. Troops of dogs, deserted of their masters, passed us; and now and then a horse, unbridled and unsaddled, trotted towards us, and tried to attract the attention of those which we rode, as if to allure them to seek like liberty. An unwieldy ox, who had fed in an abandoned granary, suddenly lowed, and shewed his shapeless form in a narrow door-way; every thing was desert; but nothing was in ruin. And this medley of undamaged buildings, and luxurious accommodation, in trim and fresh youth, was contrasted with the lonely silence of the unpeopled streets.

Night closed in, and it began to rain. We were about to return homewards, when a voice, a human voice, strange now to hear, attracted our attention. It was a child singing a merry, lightsome air; there was no other sound. We had traversed London from Hyde Park even to where we now were in the Minories, and had met no person, heard no voice nor footstep. The singing was interrupted by laughing and talking; never was merry ditty so sadly timed, never laughter more akin to tears. The door of the house from which these sounds proceeded was open, the upper rooms were illuminated as for a feast. It was a large magnificent house, in which doubtless some rich merchant had lived. The singing again commenced, and rang through the high-roofed rooms, while we silently ascended the stair-case. Lights now appeared to guide us; and a long suite of splendid rooms

illuminated, made us still more wonder. Their only inhabitant, a little girl, was dancing, waltzing, and singing about them, followed by a large Newfoundland dog, who boisterously jumping on her, and interrupting her, made her now scold, now laugh, now throw herself on the carpet to play with him. She was dressed grotesquely, in glittering robes and shawls fit for a woman; she appeared about ten years of age. We stood at the door looking on this strange scene, till the dog perceiving us barked loudly; the child turned and saw us: her face, losing its gaiety, assumed a sullen expression: she slunk back, apparently meditating an escape. I came up to her, and held her hand; she did not resist, but with a stern brow, so strange in childhood, so different from her former hilarity, she stood still, her eyes fixed on the ground. "What do you do here?" I said gently; "Who are you?"—she was silent, but trembled violently.—"My poor child," asked Adrian, "are you alone?" There was a winning softness in his voice, that went to the heart of the little girl; she looked at him, then snatching her hand from me, threw herself into his arms, clinging round his neck, ejaculating—"Save me! save me!" while her unnatural sullenness dissolved in tears.

"I will save you," he replied, "of what are you afraid? you need not fear my friend, he will do you no harm. Are you alone?"

"No, Lion is with me."

"And your father and mother?—"

"I never had any; I am a charity girl. Every body is gone, gone for a great, great many days; but if they come back and find me out, they will beat me so!"

Her unhappy story was told in these few words: an orphan, taken on pretended charity, ill-treated and reviled, her oppressors had died: unknowing of what had passed around her, she found herself alone; she had not dared venture out, but by the continuance of her solitude her courage revived, her childish vivacity caused her to play a thousand freaks, and with her brute companion she passed a long holiday, fearing nothing but the return of the harsh voices and cruel usage of her protectors. She readily consented to go with Adrian.

In the mean time, while we descanted on alien sorrows, and on a solitude which struck our eyes and not our hearts, while we imagined all of change and suffering that had intervened in these once thronged streets, before, tenantless and abandoned, they became mere kennels for dogs, and stables for cattle:—while we read the death of the world upon the dark fane, and hugged ourselves in the remembrance that we possessed that which was all the world to us—in the meanwhile—

We had arrived from Windsor early in October, and had now been in London about six weeks. Day by day, during that time, the health of my Idris declined: her heart was broken; neither sleep nor appetite, the chosen servants of health, waited on her wasted form. To watch her children hour by hour, to sit by me, drinking deep the dear persuasion that I remained to her, was all her pastime. Her vivacity, so long assumed, her affectionate display of cheerfulness, her light-hearted tone and springy gait were gone. I could not disguise to myself, nor could she conceal, her life-consuming sorrow. Still change of scene, and reviving hopes might restore her; I feared the plague only, and she was untouched by that.

I had left her this evening, reposing after the fatigues of her preparations. Clara sat beside her, relating a story to the two boys. The eyes of Idris were closed: but Clara perceived a sudden change in the appearance of our eldest darling; his heavy lids veiled his eyes, an unnatural colour burnt in his cheeks, his breath became short. Clara looked at the mother; she slept, yet started at the pause the narrator made— Fear of awakening and alarming her, caused Clara to go on at the eager call of Evelyn, who was unaware of what was passing. Her eyes turned alternately from Alfred to Idris; with trembling accents she continued her tale, till she saw the child about to fall: starting forward she caught him, and her cry roused Idris. She looked on her son. She saw death stealing across his features; she laid him on a bed, she held drink to his parched lips.

Yet he might be saved. If I were there, he might be saved; perhaps it was not the plague. Without a counsellor, what could she do? stay and behold him die! Why at that moment was I

away? "Look to him, Clara," she exclaimed, "I will return immediately."

She inquired among those who, selected as the companions of our journey, had taken up their residence in our house; she heard from them merely that I had gone out with Adrian. She entreated them to seek me: she returned to her child, he was plunged in a frightful state of torpor; again she rushed down stairs; all was dark, desert, and silent; she lost all self-possession; she ran into the street; she called on my name. The pattering rain and howling wind alone replied to her. Wild fear gave wings to her feet; she darted forward to seek me, she knew not where; but, putting all her thoughts, all her energy, all her being in speed only, most misdirected speed, she neither felt, nor feared, nor paused, but ran right on, till her strength suddenly deserted her so suddenly, that she had not thought to save herself. Her knees failed her, and she fell heavily on the pavement. She was stunned for a time; but at length rose, and though sorely hurt, still walked on, shedding a fountain of tears, stumbling at times, going she knew not whither, only now and then with feeble voice she called my name, adding with heart-piercing exclamations, that I was cruel and unkind. Human being there was none to reply; and the inclemency of the night had driven the wandering animals to the habitations they had usurped. Her thin dress was drenched with rain; her wet hair clung round her neck; she tottered through the dark streets; till, striking her foot against an unseen impediment, she again fell; she could not rise; she hardly strove; but, gathering up her limbs, she resigned herself to the fury of the elements, and the bitter grief of her own heart. She breathed an earnest prayer to die speedily, for there was no relief but death. While hopeless of safety for herself, she ceased to lament for her dying child, but shed kindly, bitter tears for the grief I should experience in losing her. While she lay, life almost suspended, she felt a warm, soft hand on her brow, and a gentle female voice asked her, with expressions of tender compassion, if she could not rise? That another human being, sympathetic and kind, should exist near, roused her; half rising, with clasped hands, and fresh springing tears, she entreated her

companion to seek for me, to bid me hasten to my dying child, to save him, for the love of heaven, to save him!

The woman raised her; she led her under shelter, she entreated her to return to her home, whither perhaps I had already returned. Idris easily yielded to her persuasions, she leaned on the arm of her friend, she endeavoured to walk on, but irresistible faintness made her pause again and again.

Quickened by the encreasing storm, we had hastened our return, our little charge was placed before Adrian on his horse. There was an assemblage of persons under the portico of our house, in whose gestures I instinctively read some heavy change, some new misfortune. With swift alarm, afraid to ask a single question, I leapt from my horse; the spectators saw me, knew me, and in awful silence divided to make way for me. I snatched a light, and rushing up stairs, and hearing a groan, without reflection I threw open the door of the first room that presented itself. It was quite dark; but, as I stepped within, a pernicious scent assailed my senses, producing sickening qualms, which made their way to my very heart, while I felt my leg clasped, and a groan repeated by the person that held me. I lowered my lamp, and saw a negro half clad, writhing under the agony of disease, while he held me with a convulsive grasp. With mixed horror and impatience I strove to disengage myself, and fell on the sufferer; he wound his naked festering arms round me, his face was close to mine, and his breath, death-laden, entered my vitals. For a moment I was overcome, my head was bowed by aching nausea; till, reflection returning, I sprung up, threw the wretch from me, and darting up the staircase, entered the chamber usually inhabited by my family. A dim light shewed me Alfred on a couch; Clara trembling, and paler than whitest snow, had raised him on her arm, holding a cup of water to his lips. I saw full well that no spark of life existed in that ruined form, his features were rigid, his eyes glazed, his head had fallen back. I took him from her, I laid him softly down, kissed his cold little mouth, and turned to speak in a vain whisper, when loudest sound of thunderlike cannon could not have reached him in his immaterial abode.

And where was Idris? That she had gone out to seek me, and had not returned, were fearful tidings, while the rain and driving wind clattered against the window, and roared round the house. Added to this, the sickening sensation of disease gained upon me; no time was to be lost, if ever I would see her again. I mounted my horse and rode out to seek her, fancying that I heard her voice in every gust, oppressed by fever and aching pain.

I rode in the dark and rain through the labyrinthine streets of unpeopled London. My child lay dead at home; the seeds of mortal disease had taken root in my bosom; I went to seek Idris, my adored, now wandering alone, while the waters were rushing from heaven like a cataract to bathe her dear head in chill damp, her fair limbs in numbing cold. A female stood on the step of a door, and called to me as I galloped past. It was not Idris; so I rode swiftly on, until a kind of second sight, a reflection back again on my senses of what I had seen but not marked, made me feel sure that another figure, thin, graceful and tall, stood clinging to the foremost person who supported her. In a minute I was beside the suppliant, in a minute I received the sinking Idris in my arms. Lifting her up, I placed her on the horse; she had not strength to support herself; so I mounted behind her, and held her close to my bosom, wrapping my riding-cloak round her, while her companion, whose well known, but changed countenance, (it was Juliet, daughter of the Duke of L——) could at this moment of horror obtain from me no more than a passing glance of compassion. She took the abandoned rein, and conducted our obedient steed homewards. Dare I avouch it? That was the last moment of my happiness; but I was happy. Idris must die, for her heart was broken: I must die, for I had caught the plague; earth was a scene of desolation; hope was madness; life had married death; they were one; but, thus supporting my fainting love, thus feeling that I must soon die, I revelled in the delight of possessing her once more; again and again I kissed her, and pressed her to my heart.

We arrived at our home. I assisted her to dismount, I carried her up stairs, and gave her into Clara's care, that her wet garments might be changed. Briefly I assured Adrian of her safety, and

requested that we might be left to repose. As the miser, who with trembling caution visits his treasure to count it again and again, so I numbered each moment, and grudged every one that was not spent with Idris. I returned swiftly to the chamber where the life of my life reposed; before I entered the room I paused for a few seconds; for a few seconds I tried to examine my state; sickness and shuddering ever and anon came over me; my head was heavy, my chest oppressed, my legs bent under me; but I threw off resolutely the swift growing symptoms of my disorder, and met Idris with placid and even joyous looks. She was lying on a couch; carefully fastening the door to prevent all intrusion; I sat by her, we embraced, and our lips met in a kiss long drawn and breathless—would that moment had been my last!

Maternal feeling now awoke in my poor girl's bosom, and she asked: "And Alfred?"

"Idris," I replied, "we are spared to each other, we are together; do not let any other idea intrude. I am happy; even on this fatal night, I declare myself happy, beyond all name, all thought—what would you more, sweet one?"

Idris understood me: she bowed her head on my shoulder and wept. "Why," she again asked, "do you tremble, Lionel, what shakes you thus?"

"Well may I be shaken," I replied, "happy as I am. Our child is dead, and the present hour is dark and ominous. Well may I tremble! but, I am happy, mine own Idris, most happy."

"I understand thee, my kind love," said Idris, "thus—pale as thou art with sorrow at our loss; trembling and aghast, though wouldest assuage my grief by thy dear assurances. I am not happy," (and the tears flashed and fell from under her down-cast lids), "for we are inmates of a miserable prison, and there is no joy for us; but the true love I bear you will render this and every other loss endurable."

"We have been happy together, at least," I said; "no future misery can deprive us of the past. We have been true to each other for years, ever since my sweet princess-love came through the snow to the lowly cottage of the poverty-stricken heir of the ruined Verney. Even now, that eternity is before us, we take hope only

from the presence of each other. Idris, do you think, that when we die, we shall be divided?"

"Die! when we die! what mean you? What secret lies hid from me in those dreadful words?"

"Must we not all die, dearest?" I asked with a sad smile.

"Gracious God! are you ill, Lionel, that you speak of death? My only friend, heart of my heart, speak!"

"I do not think," replied I, "that we have any of us long to live; and when the curtain drops on this mortal scene, where, think you, we shall find ourselves?" Idris was calmed by my unembarrassed tone and look; she answered:—"You may easily believe that during this long progress of the plague, I have thought much on death, and asked myself, now that all mankind is dead to this life, to what other life they may have been borne. Hour after hour, I have dwelt on these thoughts, and strove to form a rational conclusion concerning the mystery of a future state. What a scare-crow, indeed, would death be, if we were merely to cast aside the shadow in which we now walk, and, stepping forth into the unclouded sunshine of knowledge and love, revived with the same companions, the same affections, and reached the fulfilment of our hopes, leaving our fears with our earthly vesture in the grave. Alas! the same strong feeling which makes me sure that I shall not wholly die, makes me refuse to believe that I shall live wholly as I do now. Yet, Lionel, never, never, can I love any but you; through eternity I must desire your society; and, as I am innocent of harm to others, and as relying and confident as my mortal nature permits, I trust that the Ruler of the world will never tear us asunder."

"Your remarks are like yourself, dear love," replied I, "gentle and good; let us cherish such a belief, and dismiss anxiety from our minds. But, sweet, we are so formed, (and there is no sin, if God made our nature, to yield to what he ordains), we are so formed, that we must love life, and cling to it; we must love the living smile, the sympathetic touch, and thrilling voice, peculiar to our mortal mechanism. Let us not, through security in hereafter, neglect the present. This present moment, short as it is, is a part of eternity, and the dearest part, since it is our own

unalienably. Thou, the hope of my futurity, art my present joy. Let me then look on thy dear eyes, and, reading love in them, drink intoxicating pleasure."

Timidly, for my vehemence somewhat terrified her, Idris looked on me. My eyes were bloodshot, starting from my head; every artery beat, methought, audibly, every muscle throbbed, each single nerve felt. Her look of wild affright told me, that I could no longer keep my secret:—"So it is, mine own beloved," I said, "the last hour of many happy ones is arrived, nor can we shun any longer the inevitable destiny. I cannot live long—but, again and again, I say, this moment is ours!"

Paler than marble, with white lips and convulsed features, Idris became aware of my situation. My arm, as I sat, encircled her waist. She felt the palm burn with fever, even on the heart it pressed:—"One moment," she murmured, scarce audibly, "only one moment."—

She kneeled, and hiding her face in her hands, uttered a brief, but earnest prayer, that she might fulfil her duty, and watch over me to the last. While there was hope, the agony had been unendurable;—all was now concluded; her feelings became solemn and calm. Even as Epicharis, unperturbed and firm, submitted to the instruments of torture, did Idris, suppressing every sigh and sign of grief, enter upon the endurance of torments, of which the rack and the wheel are but faint and metaphysical symbols.

I was changed; the tight-drawn cord that sounded so harshly was loosened, the moment that Idris participated in my knowledge of our real situation. The perturbed and passion-tossed waves of thought subsided, leaving only the heavy swell that kept right on without any outward manifestation of its disturbance, till it should break on the remote shore towards which I rapidly advanced:—"It is true that I am sick," I said, "and your society, my Idris is my only medicine; come, and sit beside me."

She made me lie down on the couch, and, drawing a low ottoman near, sat close to my pillow, pressing my burning hands in her cold palms. She yielded to my feverish restlessness, and let me talk, and talked to me, on subjects strange indeed to beings,

who thus looked the last, and heard the last, of what they loved alone in the world. We talked of times gone by; of the happy period of our early love; of Raymond, Perdita, and Evadne. We talked of what might arise on this desert earth, if, two or three being saved, it were slowly re-peopled.—We talked of what was beyond the tomb; and, man in his human shape being nearly extinct, we felt with certainty of faith, that other spirits, other minds, other perceptive beings, sightless to us, must people with thought and love this beauteous and imperishable universe.

We talked—I know not how long—but, in the morning I awoke from a painful heavy slumber; the pale cheek of Idris rested on my pillow; the large orbs of her eyes half raised the lids, and shewed the deep blue lights beneath; her lips were unclosed, and the slight murmurs they formed told that, even while asleep, she suffered. "If she were dead," I thought, "what difference? now that form is the temple of a residing deity; those eyes are the windows of her soul; all grace, love, and intelligence are throned on that lovely bosom—were she dead, where would this mind, the dearer half of mine, be? For quickly the fair proportion of this edifice would be more defaced, than are the sand-choked ruins of the desert temples of Palmyra."

Chapter III

Idris stirred and awoke; alas! she awoke to misery. She saw the signs of disease on my countenance, and wondered how she could permit the long night to pass without her having sought, not cure, that was impossible, but alleviation to my sufferings. She called Adrian; my couch was quickly surrounded by friends and assistants, and such medicines as were judged fitting were administered. It was the peculiar and dreadful distinction of our visitation, that none who had been attacked by the pestilence had recovered. The first symptom of the disease was the death-warrant, which in no single instance had been followed by pardon or reprieve. No gleam of hope therefore cheered my friends.

While fever producing torpor, heavy pains, sitting like lead on my limbs, and making my breast heave, were upon me; I

continued insensible to every thing but pain, and at last even to that. I awoke on the fourth morning as from a dreamless sleep. An irritating sense of thirst, and, when I strove to speak or move, an entire dereliction of power, was all I felt.

For three days and nights Idris had not moved from my side. She administered to all my wants, and never slept nor rested. She did not hope; and therefore she neither endeavoured to read the physician's countenance, nor to watch for symptoms of recovery. All her thought was to attend on me to the last, and then to lie down and die beside me. On the third night animation was suspended; to the eye and touch of all I was dead. With earnest prayer, almost with force, Adrian tried to draw Idris from me. He exhausted every adjuration, her child's welfare and his own. She shook her head, and wiped a stealing tear from her sunk cheek, but would not yield; she entreated to be allowed to watch me that one night only, with such affliction and meek earnestness, that she gained her point, and sat silent and motionless, except when, stung by intolerable remembrance, she kissed my closed eyes and pallid lips, and pressed my stiffening hands to her beating heart.

At dead of night, when, though it was mid winter, the cock crowed at three o'clock, as herald of the morning change, while hanging over me, and mourning in silent, bitter thought for the loss of all of love towards her that had been enshrined in my heart; her dishevelled hair hung over her face, and the long tresses fell on the bed; she saw one ringlet in motion, and the scattered hair slightly stirred, as by a breath. It is not so, she thought, for he will never breathe more. Several times the same thing occurred, and she only marked it by the same reflection; till the whole ringlet waved back, and she thought she saw my breast heave. Her first emotion was deadly fear, cold dew stood on her brow; my eyes half opened; and, re-assured, she would have exclaimed, "He lives!" but the words were choked by a spasm, and she fell with a groan on the floor.

Adrian was in the chamber. After long watching, he had unwillingly fallen into a sleep. He started up, and beheld his sister senseless on the earth, weltering in a stream of blood that gushed from her mouth. Encreasing signs of life in me in some degree

explained her state; the surprise, the burst of joy, the revulsion of every sentiment, had been too much for her frame, worn by long months of care, late shattered by every species of woe and toil. She was now in far greater danger than I, the wheels and springs of my life, once again set in motion, acquired elasticity from their short suspension. For a long time, no one believed that I should indeed continue to live; during the reign of the plague upon earth, not one person, attacked by the grim disease, had recovered. My restoration was looked on as a deception; every moment it was expected that the evil symptoms would recur with redoubled violence, until confirmed convalescence, absence of all fever or pain, and encreasing strength, brought slow conviction that I had recovered from the plague.

The restoration of Idris was more problematical. When I had been attacked by illness, her cheeks were sunk, her form emaciated; but now, the vessel, which had broken from the effects of extreme agitation, did not entirely heal, but was as a channel that drop by drop drew from her the ruddy stream that vivified her heart. Her hollow eyes and worn countenance had a ghastly appearance; her cheek-bones, her open fair brow, the projection of the mouth, stood fearfully prominent; you might tell each bone in the thin anatomy of her frame. Her hand hung powerless; each joint lay bare, so that the light penetrated through and through. It was strange that life could exist in what was wasted and worn into a very type of death.

To take her from these heart-breaking scenes, to lead her to forget the world's desolation in the variety of objects presented by travelling, and to nurse her failing strength in the mild climate towards which we had resolved to journey, was my last hope for her preservation. The preparations for our departure, which had been suspended during my illness, were renewed. I did not revive to doubtful convalescence; health spent her treasures upon me; as the tree in spring may feel from its wrinkled limbs the fresh green break forth, and the living sap rise and circulate, so did the renewed vigour of my frame, the cheerful current of my blood, the new-born elasticity of my limbs, influence my mind to cheerful endurance and pleasurable thoughts. My body, late the

heavy weight that bound me to the tomb, was exuberant with health; mere common exercises were insufficient for my reviving strength; methought I could emulate the speed of the race-horse, discern through the air objects at a blinding distance, hear the operations of nature in her mute abodes; my senses had become so refined and susceptible after my recovery from mortal disease.

Hope, among my other blessings, was not denied to me; and I did fondly trust that my unwearied attentions would restore my adored girl. I was therefore eager to forward our preparations. According to the plan first laid down, we were to have quitted London on the twenty-fifth of November; and, in pursuance of this scheme, two-thirds of our people—the people— all that remained of England, had gone forward, and had already been some weeks in Paris. First my illness, and subsequently that of Idris, had detained Adrian with his division, which consisted of three hundred persons, so that we now departed on the first of January, 2098. It was my wish to keep Idris as distant as possible from the hurry and clamour of the crowd, and to hide from her those appearances that would remind her most forcibly of our real situation. We separated ourselves to a great degree from Adrian, who was obliged to give his whole time to public business. The Countess of Windsor travelled with her son. Clara, Evelyn, and a female who acted as our attendant, were the only persons with whom we had contact. We occupied a commodious carriage, our servant officiated as coachman. A party of about twenty persons preceded us at a small distance. They had it in charge to prepare our halting places and our nightly abode. They had been selected for this service out of a great number that offered, on account of the superior sagacity of the man who had been appointed their leader.

Immediately on our departure, I was delighted to find a change in Idris, which I fondly hoped prognosticated the happiest results. All the cheerfulness and gentle gaiety natural to her revived. She was weak, and this alteration was rather displayed in looks and voice than in acts; but it was permanent and real. My recovery from the plague and confirmed health instilled into her a firm belief that I was now secure from this dread enemy. She told me

that she was sure she should recover. That she had a presentiment, that the tide of calamity which deluged our unhappy race had now turned. That the remnant would be preserved, and among them the dear objects of her tender affection; and that in some selected spot we should wear out our lives together in pleasant society. "Do not let my state of feebleness deceive you," she said; "I feel that I am better; there is a quick life within me, and a spirit of anticipation that assures me, that I shall continue long to make a part of this world. I shall throw off this degrading weakness of body, which infects even my mind with debility, and I shall enter again on the performance of my duties. I was sorry to leave Windsor: but now I am weaned from this local attachment; I am content to remove to a mild climate, which will complete my recovery. Trust me, dearest, I shall neither leave you, nor my brother, nor these dear children; my firm determination to remain with you to the last, and to continue to contribute to your happiness and welfare, would keep me alive, even if grim death were nearer at hand than he really is."

I was only half re-assured by these expressions; I could not believe that the over-quick flow of her blood was a sign of health, or that her burning cheeks denoted convalescence. But I had no fears of an immediate catastrophe; nay, I persuaded myself that she would ultimately recover. And thus cheerfulness reigned in our little society. Idris conversed with animation on a thousand topics. Her chief desire was to lead our thoughts from melancholy reflections; so she drew charming pictures of a tranquil solitude, of a beauteous retreat, of the simple manners of our little tribe, and of the patriarchal brotherhood of love, which would survive the ruins of the populous nations which had lately existed. We shut out from our thoughts the present, and withdrew our eyes from the dreary landscape we traversed. Winter reigned in all its gloom. The leafless trees lay without motion against the dun sky; the forms of frost, mimicking the foliage of summer, strewed the ground; the paths were overgrown; the unploughed cornfields were patched with grass and weeds; the sheep congregated at the threshold of the cottage, the horned ox thrust his head from the

window. The wind was bleak, and frequent sleet or snow-storms, added to the melancholy appearance wintry nature assumed.

We arrived at Rochester, and an accident caused us to be detained there a day. During that time, a circumstance occurred that changed our plans, and which, alas! in its result changed the eternal course of events, turning me from the pleasant new sprung hope I enjoyed, to an obscure and gloomy desert. But I must give some little explanation before I proceed with the final cause of our temporary alteration of plan, and refer again to those times when man walked the earth fearless, before Plague had become Queen of the World.

There resided a family in the neighbourhood of Windsor, of very humble pretensions, but which had been an object of interest to us on account of one of the persons of whom it was composed. The family of the Claytons had known better days; but, after a series of reverses, the father died a bankrupt, and the mother heartbroken, and a confirmed invalid, retired with her five children to a little cottage between Eton and Salt Hill. The eldest of these children, who was thirteen years old, seemed at once from the influence of adversity, to acquire the sagacity and principle belonging to a more mature age. Her mother grew worse and worse in health, but Lucy attended on her, and was as a tender parent to her younger brothers and sisters, and in the meantime shewed herself so good-humoured, social, and benevolent, that she was beloved as well as honoured, in her little neighbourhood.

Lucy was besides extremely pretty; so when she grew to be sixteen, it was to be supposed, notwithstanding her poverty, that she should have admirers. One of these was the son of a country-curate; he was a generous, frank-hearted youth, with an ardent love of knowledge, and no mean acquirements. Though Lucy was untaught, her mother's conversation and manners gave her a taste for refinements superior to her present situation. She loved the youth even without knowing it, except that in any difficulty she naturally turned to him for aid, and awoke with a lighter heart every Sunday, because she knew that she would be met and accompanied by him in her evening walk with her sisters. She had another admirer, one of the head-waiters at the inn at Salt Hill. He

also was not without pretensions to urbane superiority, such as he learnt from gentlemen's servants and waiting-maids, who initiating him in all the slang of high life below stairs, rendered his arrogant temper ten times more intrusive. Lucy did not disclaim him—she was incapable of that feeling; but she was sorry when she saw him approach, and quietly resisted all his endeavours to establish an intimacy. The fellow soon discovered that his rival was preferred to him; and this changed what was at first a chance admiration into a passion, whose main springs were envy, and a base desire to deprive his competitor of the advantage he enjoyed over himself.

Poor Lucy's sad story was but a common one. Her lover's father died; and he was left destitute. He accepted the offer of a gentleman to go to India with him, feeling secure that he should soon acquire an independence, and return to claim the hand of his beloved. He became involved in the war carried on there, was taken prisoner, and years elapsed before tidings of his existence were received in his native land. In the meantime disastrous poverty came on Lucy. Her little cottage, which stood looking from its trellice, covered with woodbine and jessamine, was burnt down; and the whole of their little property was included in the destruction. Whither betake them? By what exertion of industry could Lucy procure them another abode? Her mother nearly bed-ridden, could not survive any extreme of famine-struck poverty. At this time her other admirer stepped forward, and renewed his offer of marriage. He had saved money, and was going to set up a little inn at Datchet. There was nothing alluring to Lucy in this offer, except the home it secured to her mother; and she felt more sure of this, since she was struck by the apparent generosity which occasioned the present offer. She accepted it; thus sacrificing herself for the comfort and welfare of her parent.

It was some years after her marriage that we became acquainted with her. The accident of a storm caused us to take refuge in the inn, where we witnessed the brutal and quarrelsome behaviour of her husband, and her patient endurance. Her lot was not a fortunate one. Her first lover had returned with the hope of making her his own, and met her by accident, for the first time, as

the mistress of his country inn, and the wife of another. He withdrew despairingly to foreign parts; nothing went well with him; at last he enlisted, and came back again wounded and sick, and yet Lucy was debarred from nursing him. Her husband's brutal disposition was aggravated by his yielding to the many temptations held out by his situation, and the consequent disarrangement of his affairs. Fortunately she had no children; but her heart was bound up in her brothers and sisters, and these his avarice and ill temper soon drove from the house; they were dispersed about the country, earning their livelihood with toil and care. He even shewed an inclination to get rid of her mother—but Lucy was firm here—she had sacrificed herself for her; she lived for her —she would not part with her—if the mother went, she would also go beg bread for her, die with her, but never desert her. The presence of Lucy was too necessary in keeping up the order of the house, and in preventing the whole establishment from going to wreck, for him to permit her to leave him. He yielded the point; but in all accesses of anger, or in his drunken fits, he recurred to the old topic, and stung poor Lucy's heart by opprobrious epithets bestowed on her parent.

A passion however, if it be wholly pure, entire, and reciprocal, brings with it its own solace. Lucy was truly, and from the depth of heart, devoted to her mother; the sole end she proposed to herself in life, was the comfort and preservation of this parent. Though she grieved for the result, yet she did not repent of her marriage, even when her lover returned to bestow competence on her. Three years had intervened, and how, in their pennyless state, could her mother have existed during this time? This excellent woman was worthy of her child's devotion. A perfect confidence and friendship existed between them; besides, she was by no means illiterate; and Lucy, whose mind had been in some degree cultivated by her former lover, now found in her the only person who could understand and appreciate her. Thus, though suffering, she was by no means desolate, and when, during fine summer days, she led her mother into the flowery and shady lanes near their abode, a gleam of unmixed joy enlightened her countenance;

she saw that her parent was happy, and she knew that this happiness was of her sole creating.

Meanwhile her husband's affairs grew more and more involved; ruin was near at hand, and she was about to lose the fruit of all her labours, when pestilence came to change the aspect of the world. Her husband reaped benefit from the universal misery; but, as the disaster encreased, the spirit of lawlessness seized him; he deserted his home to revel in the luxuries promised him in London, and found there a grave. Her former lover had been one of the first victims of the disease. But Lucy continued to live for and in her mother. Her courage only failed when she dreaded peril for her parent, or feared that death might prevent her from performing those duties to which she was unalterably devoted.

When we had quitted Windsor for London, as the previous step to our final emigration, we visited Lucy, and arranged with her the plan of her own and her mother's removal. Lucy was sorry at the necessity which forced her to quit her native lanes and village, and to drag an infirm parent from her comforts at home, to the homeless waste of depopulate earth; but she was too well disciplined by adversity, and of too sweet a temper, to indulge in repinings at what was inevitable.

Subsequent circumstances, my illness and that of Idris, drove her from our remembrance; and we called her to mind at last, only to conclude that she made one of the few who came from Windsor to join the emigrants, and that she was already in Paris. When we arrived at Rochester therefore, we were surprised to receive, by a man just come from Slough, a letter from this exemplary sufferer. His account was, that, journeying from his home, and passing through Datchet, he was surprised to see smoke issue from the chimney of the inn, and supposing that he should find comrades for his journey assembled there, he knocked and was admitted. There was no one in the house but Lucy, and her mother; the latter had been deprived of the use of her limbs by an attack of rheumatism, and so, one by one, all the remaining inhabitants of the country set forward, leaving them alone. Lucy intreated the man to stay with her; in a week or two her mother

would be better, and they would then set out; but they must perish, if they were left thus helpless and forlorn. The man said, that his wife and children were already among the emigrants, and it was therefore, according to his notion, impossible for him to remain. Lucy, as a last resource, gave him a letter for Idris, to be delivered to her wherever he should meet us. This commission at least he fulfilled, and Idris received with emotion the following letter:—

HONOURED LADY,

I am sure that you will remember and pity me, and I dare hope that you will assist me; what other hope have I? Pardon my manner of writing, I am so bewildered. A month ago my dear mother was deprived of the use of her limbs. She is already better, and in another month would I am sure be able to travel, in the way you were so kind as to say you would arrange for us. But now everybody is gone—everybody—as they went away, each said, that perhaps my mother would be better, before we were quite deserted. But three days ago I went to Samuel Woods, who, on account of his new-born child, remained to the last; and there being a large family of them, I thought I could persuade them to wait a little longer for us; but I found the house deserted. I have not seen a soul since, till this good man came. —What will become of us? My mother does not know our state; she is so ill, that I have hidden it from her.

Will you not send some one to us? I am sure we must perish miserably as we are. If I were to try to move my mother now, she would die on the road; and if, when she gets better, I were able, I cannot guess how, to find out the roads, and get on so many many miles to the sea, you would all be in France, and the great ocean would be between us, which is so terrible even to sailors. What would it be to me, a woman, who never saw it? We should be imprisoned by it in this country, all, all alone, with no help; better die where we are. I can hardly write—I cannot stop my tears—it is not for myself; I could put my trust in God; and let the worst come, I think I could bear it, if I were alone. But my mother, my sick, my dear, dear mother, who never, since I was born, spoke a harsh word to me, who has been patient in many sufferings; pity her, dear Lady, she must die a miserable death if you do not pity her. People speak carelessly of her, because she is old and infirm, as if we must not all, if we are spared, become so; and then, when the young are old themselves, they will think that they ought to be taken care of. It is very silly of me to write in this way to you; but, when I hear her trying not to groan, and see her look smiling on me to comfort me, when I know she is in pain; and when I think that she does not know the worst, but she soon must; and then she will not complain; but I shall sit guessing at all that she is dwelling upon, of famine and misery—I feel as if my heart must break, and I do not know what I say or do; my mother—mother for whom I have borne much, God preserve you from this fate! Preserve her, Lady, and He will bless you; and I, poor miserable creature as I am, will thank you and pray for you while I live.

Your unhappy and dutiful servant,

Dec. 30th, 2097. LUCY MARTIN.

This letter deeply affected Idris, and she instantly proposed, that we should return to Datchet, to assist Lucy and her mother. I said that I would without delay set out for that place, but entreated her to join her brother, and there await my return with the children. But Idris was in high spirits, and full of hope. She

declared that she could not consent even to a temporary separation from me, but that there was no need of this, the motion of the carriage did her good, and the distance was too trifling to be considered. We could dispatch messengers to Adrian, to inform him of our deviation from the original plan. She spoke with vivacity, and drew a picture after her own dear heart, of the pleasure we should bestow upon Lucy, and declared, if I went, she must accompany me, and that she should very much dislike to entrust the charge of rescuing them to others, who might fulfil it with coldness or inhumanity. Lucy's life had been one act of devotion and virtue; let her now reap the small reward of finding her excellence appreciated, and her necessity assisted, by those whom she respected and honoured.

These, and many other arguments, were urged with gentle pertinacity, and the ardour of a wish to do all the good in her power, by her whose simple expression of a desire and slightest request had ever been a law with me. I, of course, consented, the moment that I saw that she had set her heart upon this step. We sent half our attendant troop on to Adrian; and with the other half our carriage took a retrograde course back to Windsor.

I wonder now how I could be so blind and senseless, as thus to risk the safety of Idris; for, if I had eyes, surely I could see the sure, though deceitful, advance of death in her burning cheek and encreasing weakness. But she said she was better; and I believed her. Extinction could not be near a being, whose vivacity and intelligence hourly encreased, and whose frame was endowed with an intense, and I fondly thought, a strong and permanent spirit of life. Who, after a great disaster, has not looked back with wonder at his inconceivable obtuseness of understanding, that could not perceive the many minute threads with which fate weaves the inextricable net of our destinies, until he is inmeshed completely in it?

The cross roads which we now entered upon, were even in a worse state than the long neglected high-ways; and the inconvenience seemed to menace the perishing frame of Idris with destruction. Passing through Dartford, we arrived at Hampton on the second day. Even in this short interval my

beloved companion grew sensibly worse in health, though her spirits were still light, and she cheered my growing anxiety with gay sallies; sometimes the thought pierced my brain—Is she dying?—as I saw her fair fleshless hand rest on mine, or observed the feebleness with which she performed the accustomed acts of life. I drove away the idea, as if it had been suggested by insanity; but it occurred again and again, only to be dispelled by the continued liveliness of her manner.

About mid-day, after quitting Hampton, our carriage broke down: the shock caused Idris to faint, but on her reviving no other ill consequence ensued; our party of attendants had as usual gone on before us, and our coachman went in search of another vehicle, our former one being rendered by this accident unfit for service. The only place near us was a poor village, in which he found a kind of caravan, able to hold four people, but it was clumsy and ill hung; besides this he found a very excellent cabriolet: our plan was soon arranged; I would drive Idris in the latter; while the children were conveyed by the servant in the former. But these arrangements cost time; we had agreed to proceed that night to Windsor, and thither our purveyors had gone: we should find considerable difficulty in getting accommodation, before we reached this place; after all, the distance was only ten miles; my horse was a good one; I would go forward at a good pace with Idris, leaving the children to follow at a rate more consonant to the uses of their cumberous machine.

Evening closed in quickly, far more quickly than I was prepared to expect. At the going down of the sun it began to snow heavily. I attempted in vain to defend my beloved companion from the storm; the wind drove the snow in our faces; and it lay so high on the ground, that we made but small way; while the night was so dark, that but for the white covering on the ground we should not have been able to see a yard before us. We had left our accompanying caravan far behind us; and now I perceived that the storm had made me unconsciously deviate from my intended route. I had gone some miles out of my way. My knowledge of the country enabled me to regain the right road; but, instead of going, as at first agreed upon, by a cross road

through Stanwell to Datchet, I was obliged to take the way of Egham and Bishopgate. It was certain therefore that I should not be rejoined by the other vehicle, that I should not meet a single fellow-creature till we arrived at Windsor.

The back of our carriage was drawn up, and I hung a pelisse before it, thus to curtain the beloved sufferer from the pelting sleet. She leaned on my shoulder, growing every moment more languid and feeble; at first she replied to my words of cheer with affectionate thanks; but by degrees she sunk into silence; her head lay heavily upon me; I only knew that she lived by her irregular breathing and frequent sighs. For a moment I resolved to stop, and, opposing the back of the cabriolet to the force of the tempest, to expect morning as well as I might. But the wind was bleak and piercing, while the occasional shudderings of my poor Idris, and the intense cold I felt myself, demonstrated that this would be a dangerous experiment. At length methought she slept—fatal sleep, induced by frost: at this moment I saw the heavy outline of a cottage traced on the dark horizon close to us: "Dearest love," I said, "support yourself but one moment, and we shall have shelter; let us stop here, that I may open the door of this blessed dwelling."

As I spoke, my heart was transported, and my senses swam with excessive delight and thankfulness; I placed the head of Idris against the carriage, and, leaping out, scrambled through the snow to the cottage, whose door was open. I had apparatus about me for procuring light, and that shewed me a comfortable room, with a pile of wood in one corner, and no appearance of disorder, except that, the door having been left partly open, the snow, drifting in, had blocked up the threshold. I returned to the carriage, and the sudden change from light to darkness at first blinded me. When I recovered my sight—eternal God of this lawless world! O supreme Death! I will not disturb thy silent reign, or mar my tale with fruitless exclamations of horror—I saw Idris, who had fallen from the seat to the bottom of the carriage; her head, its long hair pendent, with one arm, hung over the side.—Struck by a spasm of horror, I lifted her up; her heart was pulseless, her faded lips unfanned by the slightest breath.

I carried her into the cottage; I placed her on the bed. Lighting a fire, I chafed her stiffening limbs; for two long hours I sought to restore departed life; and, when hope was as dead as my beloved, I closed with trembling hands her glazed eyes. I did not doubt what I should now do. In the confusion attendant on my illness, the task of interring our darling Alfred had devolved on his grandmother, the Ex-Queen, and she, true to her ruling passion, had caused him to be carried to Windsor, and buried in the family vault, in St. George's Chapel. I must proceed to Windsor, to calm the anxiety of Clara, who would wait anxiously for us—yet I would fain spare her the heart-breaking spectacle of Idris, brought in by me lifeless from the journey. So first I would place my beloved beside her child in the vault, and then seek the poor children who would be expecting me.

I lighted the lamps of my carriage; I wrapt her in furs, and placed her along the seat; then taking the reins, made the horses go forward. We proceeded through the snow, which lay in masses impeding the way, while the descending flakes, driving against me with redoubled fury, blinded me. The pain occasioned by the angry elements, and the cold iron of the shafts of frost which buffeted me, and entered my aching flesh, were a relief to me; blunting my mental suffering. The horses staggered on, and the reins hung loosely in my hands. I often thought I would lay my head close to the sweet, cold face of my lost angel, and thus resign myself to conquering torpor. Yet I must not leave her a prey to the fowls of the air; but, in pursuance of my determination place her in the tomb of her forefathers, where a merciful God might permit me to rest also.

The road we passed through Egham was familiar to me; but the wind and snow caused the horses to drag their load slowly and heavily. Suddenly the wind veered from south-west to west, and then again to north-west. As Sampson with tug and strain stirred from their bases the columns that supported the Philistine temple, so did the gale shake the dense vapours propped on the horizon, while the massy dome of clouds fell to the south, disclosing through the scattered web the clear empyrean, and the little stars, which were set at an immeasurable distance in the crystalline

fields, showered their small rays on the glittering snow. Even the horses were cheered, and moved on with renovated strength. We entered the forest at Bishopgate, and at the end of the Long Walk I saw the Castle, "the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers." I looked with reverence on a structure, ancient almost as the rock on which it stood, abode of kings, theme of admiration for the wise. With greater reverence and, tearful affection I beheld it as the asylum of the long lease of love I had enjoyed there with the perishable, unmatchable treasure of dust, which now lay cold beside me. Now indeed, I could have yielded to all the softness of my nature, and wept; and, womanlike, have uttered bitter plaints; while the familiar trees, the herds of living deer, the sward oft prest by her fairy-feet, one by one with sad association presented themselves. The white gate at the end of the Long Walk was wide open, and I rode up the empty town through the first gate of the feudal tower; and now St. George's Chapel, with its blackened fretted sides, was right before me. I halted at its door, which was open; I entered, and placed my lighted lamp on the altar; then I returned, and with tender caution I bore Idris up the aisle into the chancel, and laid her softly down on the carpet which covered the step leading to the communion table. The banners of the knights of the garter, and their half drawn swords, were hung in vain emblazonry above the stalls. The banner of her family hung there, still surmounted by its regal crown. Farewell to the glory and heraldry of England!—I turned from such vanity with a slight feeling of wonder, at how mankind could have ever been interested in such things. I bent over the lifeless corpse of my beloved; and, while looking on her uncovered face, the features already contracted by the rigidity of death, I felt as if all the visible universe had grown as soulless, inane, and comfortless as the clay-cold image beneath me. I felt for a moment the intolerable sense of struggle with, and detestation for, the laws which govern the world; till the calm still visible on the face of my dead love recalled me to a more soothing tone of mind, and I proceeded to fulfil the last office that

could now be paid her. For her I could not lament, so much I envied her enjoyment of "the sad immunities of the grave."

The vault had been lately opened to place our Alfred therein. The ceremony customary in these latter days had been cursorily performed, and the pavement of the chapel, which was its entrance, having been removed, had not been replaced. I descended the steps, and walked through the long passage to the large vault which contained the kindred dust of my Idris. I distinguished the small coffin of my babe. With hasty, trembling hands I constructed a bier beside it, spreading it with the furs and Indian shawls, which had wrapt Idris in her journey thither. I lighted the glimmering lamp, which flickered in this damp abode of the dead; then I bore my lost one to her last bed, decently composing her limbs, and covering them with a mantle, veiling all except her face, which remained lovely and placid. She appeared to rest like one over-wearied, her beauteous eyes steeped in sweet slumber. Yet, so it was not—she was dead! How intensely I then longed to lie down beside her, to gaze till death should gather me to the same repose.

But death does not come at the bidding of the miserable. I had lately recovered from mortal illness, and my blood had never flowed with such an even current, nor had my limbs ever been so instinct with quick life, as now. I felt that my death must be voluntary. Yet what more natural than famine, as I watched in this chamber of mortality, placed in a world of the dead, beside the lost hope of my life? Meanwhile as I looked on her, the features, which bore a sisterly resemblance to Adrian, brought my thoughts back again to the living, to this dear friend, to Clara, and to Evelyn, who were probably now in Windsor, waiting anxiously for our arrival.

Methought I heard a noise, a step in the far chapel, which was re-echoed by its vaulted roof, and borne to me through the hollow passages. Had Clara seen my carriage pass up the town, and did she seek me here? I must save her at least from the horrible scene the vault presented. I sprung up the steps, and then saw a female figure, bent with age, and clad in long mourning robes, advance through the dusky chapel, supported by a slender cane, yet

tottering even with this support. She heard me, and looked up; the lamp I held illuminated my figure, and the moon-beams, struggling through the painted glass, fell upon her face, wrinkled and gaunt, yet with a piercing eye and commanding brow—I recognized the Countess of Windsor. With a hollow voice she asked, "Where is the princess?"

I pointed to the torn up pavement: she walked to the spot, and looked down into the palpable darkness; for the vault was too distant for the rays of the small lamp I had left there to be discernible.

"Your light," she said. I gave it her; and she regarded the now visible, but precipitous steps, as if calculating her capacity to descend. Instinctively I made a silent offer of my assistance. She motioned me away with a look of scorn, saying in an harsh voice, as she pointed downwards, "There at least I may have her undisturbed."

She walked deliberately down, while I, overcome, miserable beyond words, or tears, or groans, threw myself on the pavement near—the stiffening form of Idris was before me, the death-struck countenance hushed in eternal repose beneath. That was to me the end of all! The day before, I had figured to my self various adventures, and communion with my friends in after time—now I had leapt the interval, and reached the utmost edge and bourne of life. Thus wrapt in gloom, enclosed, walled up, vaulted over by the omnipotent present, I was startled by the sound of feet on the steps of the tomb, and I remembered her whom I had utterly forgotten, my angry visitant; her tall form slowly rose upwards from the vault, a living statue, instinct with hate, and human, passionate strife: she seemed to me as having reached the pavement of the aisle; she stood motionless, seeking with her eyes alone, some desired object—till, perceiving me close to her, she placed her wrinkled hand on my arm, exclaiming with tremulous accents, "Lionel Verney, my son!" This name, applied at such a moment by my angel's mother, instilled into me more respect than I had ever before felt for this disdainful lady. I bowed my head, and kissed her shrivelled hand, and, remarking that she trembled violently, supported her to the end of the chancel, where she sat

on the steps that led to the regal stall. She suffered herself to be led, and still holding my hand, she leaned her head back against the stall, while the moon beams, tinged with various colours by the painted glass, fell on her glistening eyes; aware of her weakness, again calling to mind her long cherished dignity, she dashed the tears away; yet they fell fast, as she said, for excuse, "She is so beautiful and placid, even in death. No harsh feeling ever clouded her serene brow; how did I treat her? wounding her gentle heart with savage coldness; I had no compassion on her in past years, does she forgive me now? Little, little does it boot to talk of repentance and forgiveness to the dead, had I during her life once consulted her gentle wishes, and curbed my rugged nature to do her pleasure, I should not feel thus."

Idris and her mother were unlike in person. The dark hair, deep-set black eyes, and prominent features of the Ex-Queen were in entire contrast to the golden tresses, the full blue orbs, and the soft lines and contour of her daughter's countenance. Yet, in latter days, illness had taken from my poor girl the full outline of her face, and reduced it to the inflexible shape of the bone beneath. In the form of her brow, in her oval chin, there was to be found a resemblance to her mother; nay in some moods, their gestures were not unlike; nor, having lived so long together, was this wonderful.

There is a magic power in resemblance. When one we love dies, we hope to see them in another state, and half expect that the agency of mind will inform its new garb in imitation of its decayed earthly vesture. But these are ideas of the mind only. We know that the instrument is shivered, the sensible image lies in miserable fragments, dissolved to dusty nothingness; a look, a gesture, or a fashioning of the limbs similar to the dead in a living person, touches a thrilling chord, whose sacred harmony is felt in the heart's dearest recess. Strangely moved, prostrate before this spectral image, and enslaved by the force of blood manifested in likeness of look and movement, I remained trembling in the presence of the harsh, proud, and till now unloved mother of Idris.

Poor, mistaken woman! in her tenderest mood before, she had cherished the idea, that a word, a look of reconciliation from her, would be received with joy, and repay long years of severity. Now that the time was gone for the exercise of such power, she fell at once upon the thorny truth of things, and felt that neither smile nor caress could penetrate to the unconscious state, or influence the happiness of her who lay in the vault beneath. This conviction, together with the remembrance of soft replies to bitter speeches, of gentle looks repaying angry glances; the perception of the falsehood, paltriness and futility of her cherished dreams of birth and power; the overpowering knowledge, that love and life were the true emperors of our mortal state; all, as a tide, rose, and filled her soul with stormy and bewildering confusion. It fell to my lot, to come as the influential power, to allay the fierce tossing of these tumultuous waves. I spoke to her; I led her to reflect how happy Idris had really been, and how her virtues and numerous excellencies had found scope and estimation in her past career. I praised her, the idol of my heart's dear worship, the admired type of feminine perfection. With ardent and overflowing eloquence, I relieved my heart from its burthen, and awoke to the sense of a new pleasure in life, as I poured forth the funeral eulogy. Then I referred to Adrian, her loved brother, and to her surviving child. I declared, which I had before almost forgotten, what my duties were with regard to these valued portions of herself, and bade the melancholy repentant mother reflect, how she could best expiate unkindness towards the dead, by redoubled love of the survivors. Consoling her, my own sorrows were assuaged; my sincerity won her entire conviction.

She turned to me. The hard, inflexible, persecuting woman, turned with a mild expression of face, and said, "If our beloved angel sees us now, it will delight her to find that I do you even tardy justice. You were worthy of her; and from my heart I am glad that you won her away from me. Pardon, my son, the many wrongs I have done you; forget my bitter words and unkind treatment—take me, and govern me as you will."

I seized this docile moment to propose our departure from the church.

"First," she said, "let us replace the pavement above the vault."

We drew near to it; "Shall we look on her again?" I asked.

"I cannot," she replied, "and, I pray you, neither do you. We need not torture ourselves by gazing on the soulless body, while her living spirit is buried quick in our hearts, and her surpassing loveliness is so deeply carved there, that sleeping or waking she must ever be present to us."

For a few moments, we bent in solemn silence over the open vault. I consecrated my future life, to the embalming of her dear memory; I vowed to serve her brother and her child till death. The convulsive sob of my companion made me break off my internal orisons. I next dragged the stones over the entrance of the tomb, and closed the gulph that contained the life of my life. Then, supporting my decrepid fellow-mourner, we slowly left the chapel. I felt, as I stepped into the open air, as if I had quitted an happy nest of repose, for a dreary wilderness, a tortuous path, a bitter, joyless, hopeless pilgrimage.

Chapter IV

Our escort had been directed to prepare our abode for the night at the inn, opposite the ascent to the Castle. We could not again visit the halls and familiar chambers of our home, on a mere visit. We had already left for ever the glades of Windsor, and all of coppice, flowery hedgerow, and murmuring stream, which gave shape and intensity to the love of our country, and the almost superstitious attachment with which we regarded native England. It had been our intention to have called at Lucy's dwelling in Datchet, and to have re-assured her with promises of aid and protection before we repaired to our quarters for the night. Now, as the Countess of Windsor and I turned down the steep hill that led from the Castle, we saw the children, who had just stopped in their caravan, at the inn-door. They had passed through Datchet without halting. I dreaded to meet them, and to be the bearer of my tragic story, so while they were still occupied in the hurry of arrival, I suddenly left them, and through the snow and clear moon-light air, hastened along the well known road to Datchet.

Well known indeed it was. Each cottage stood on its accustomed site, each tree wore its familiar appearance. Habit had graven uneraseably on my memory, every turn and change of object on the road. At a short distance beyond the Little Park, was an elm half blown down by a storm, some ten years ago; and still, with leafless snow-laden branches, it stretched across the pathway, which wound through a meadow, beside a shallow brook, whose brawling was silenced by frost—that stile, that white gate, that hollow oak tree, which doubtless once belonged to the forest, and which now shewed in the moonlight its gaping rent; to whose fanciful appearance, tricked out by the dusk into a resemblance of the human form, the children had given the name of Falstaff;—all these objects were as well known to me as the cold hearth of my deserted home, and every moss-grown wall and plot of orchard ground, alike as twin lambs are to each other in a stranger's eye, yet to my accustomed gaze bore differences, distinction, and a name. England remained, though England was dead—it was the ghost of merry England that I beheld, under those greenwood shade passing generations had sported in security and ease. To this painful recognition of familiar places, was added a feeling experienced by all, understood by none—a feeling as if in some state, less visionary than a dream, in some past real existence, I had seen all I saw, with precisely the same feelings as I now beheld them—as if all my sensations were a duplex mirror of a former revelation. To get rid of this oppressive sense I strove to imagine change in this tranquil spot—this augmented my mood, by causing me to bestow more attention on the objects which occasioned me pain.

I reached Datchet and Lucy's humble abode—once noisy with Saturday night revellers, or trim and neat on Sunday morning it had borne testimony to the labours and orderly habits of the housewife. The snow lay high about the door, as if it had remained unclosed for many days.

880

"What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?"

I muttered to myself as I looked at the dark casements. At first I thought I saw a light in one of them, but it proved to be merely the refraction of the moon-beams, while the only sound was the crackling branches as the breeze whirled the snow flakes from them—the moon sailed high and unclouded in the interminable ether, while the shadow of the cottage lay black on the garden behind. I entered this by the open wicket, and anxiously examined each window. At length I detected a ray of light struggling through a closed shutter in one of the upper rooms—it was a novel feeling, alas! to look at any house and say there dwells its usual inmate—the door of the house was merely on the latch: so I entered and ascended the moon-lit staircase. The door of the inhabited room was ajar: looking in, I saw Lucy sitting as at work at the table on which the light stood; the implements of needlework were about her, but her hand had fallen on her lap, and her eyes, fixed on the ground, shewed by their vacancy that her thoughts wandered. Traces of care and watching had diminished her former attractions—but her simple dress and cap, her desponding attitude, and the single candle that cast its light upon her, gave for a moment a picturesque grouping to the whole. A fearful reality recalled me from the thought—a figure lay stretched on the bed covered by a sheet—her mother was dead, and Lucy, apart from all the world, deserted and alone, watched beside the corpse during the weary night. I entered the room, and my unexpected appearance at first drew a scream from the lone survivor of a dead nation; but she recognised me, and recovered herself, with the quick exercise of self-control habitual to her. "Did you not expect me?" I asked, in that low voice which the presence of the dead makes us as it were instinctively assume.

"You are very good," replied she, "to have come yourself; I can never thank you sufficiently; but it is too late."

"Too late," cried I, "what do you mean? It is not too late to take you from this deserted place, and conduct you to——"

My own loss, which I had forgotten as I spoke, now made me turn away, while choking grief impeded my speech. I threw open the window, and looked on the cold, waning, ghastly, misshaped circle on high, and the chill white earth beneath—did the spirit of

sweet Idris sail along the moon-frozen crystal air?—No, no, a more genial atmosphere, a lovelier habitation was surely hers!

I indulged in this meditation for a moment, and then again addressed the mourner, who stood leaning against the bed with that expression of resigned despair, of complete misery, and a patient sufferance of it, which is far more touching than any of the insane ravings or wild gesticulation of untamed sorrow. I desired to draw her from this spot; but she opposed my wish. That class of persons whose imagination and sensibility have never been taken out of the narrow circle immediately in view, if they possess these qualities to any extent, are apt to pour their influence into the very realities which appear to destroy them, and to cling to these with double tenacity from not being able to comprehend any thing beyond. Thus Lucy, in desert England, in a dead world, wished to fulfil the usual ceremonies of the dead, such as were customary to the English country people, when death was a rare visitant, and gave us time to receive his dreaded usurpation with pomp and circumstance—going forth in procession to deliver the keys of the tomb into his conquering hand. She had already, alone as she was, accomplished some of these, and the work on which I found her employed, was her mother's shroud. My heart sickened at such detail of woe, which a female can endure, but which is more painful to the masculine spirit than deadliest struggle, or throes of unutterable but transient agony.

This must not be, I told her; and then, as further inducement, I communicated to her my recent loss, and gave her the idea that she must come with me to take charge of the orphan children, whom the death of Idris had deprived of a mother's care. Lucy never resisted the call of a duty, so she yielded, and closing the casements and doors with care, she accompanied me back to Windsor. As we went she communicated to me the occasion of her mother's death. Either by some mischance she had got sight of Lucy's letter to Idris, or she had overheard her conversation with the countryman who bore it; however it might be, she obtained a knowledge of the appalling situation of herself and her daughter, her aged frame could not sustain the anxiety and horror this

discovery instilled—she concealed her knowledge from Lucy, but brooded over it through sleepless nights, till fever and delirium, swift forerunners of death, disclosed the secret. Her life, which had long been hovering on its extinction, now yielded at once to the united effects of misery and sickness, and that same morning she had died.

After the tumultuous emotions of the day, I was glad to find on my arrival at the inn that my companions had retired to rest. I gave Lucy in charge to the Countess's attendant, and then sought repose from my various struggles and impatient regrets. For a few moments the events of the day floated in disastrous pageant through my brain, till sleep bathed it in forgetfulness; when morning dawned and I awoke, it seemed as if my slumber had endured for years.

My companions had not shared my oblivion. Clara's swollen eyes shewed that she has passed the night in weeping. The Countess looked haggard and wan. Her firm spirit had not found relief in tears, and she suffered the more from all the painful retrospect and agonizing regret that now occupied her. We departed from Windsor, as soon as the burial rites had been performed for Lucy's mother, and, urged on by an impatient desire to change the scene, went forward towards Dover with speed, our escort having gone before to provide horses; finding them either in the warm stables they instinctively sought during the cold weather, or standing shivering in the bleak fields ready to surrender their liberty in exchange for offered corn.

During our ride the Countess recounted to me the extraordinary circumstances which had brought her so strangely to my side in the chancel of St. George's chapel. When last she had taken leave of Idris, as she looked anxiously on her faded person and pallid countenance, she had suddenly been visited by a conviction that she saw her for the last time. It was hard to part with her while under the dominion of this sentiment, and for the last time she endeavoured to persuade her daughter to commit herself to her nursing, permitting me to join Adrian. Idris mildly refused, and thus they separated. The idea that they should never again meet grew on the Countess's mind, and haunted her

perpetually; a thousand times she had resolved to turn back and join us, and was again and again restrained by the pride and anger of which she was the slave. Proud of heart as she was, she bathed her pillow with nightly tears, and through the day was subdued by nervous agitation and expectation of the dreaded event, which she was wholly incapable of curbing. She confessed that at this period her hatred of me knew no bounds, since she considered me as the sole obstacle to the fulfilment of her dearest wish, that of attending upon her daughter in her last moments. She desired to express her fears to her son, and to seek consolation from his sympathy with, or courage from his rejection of, her auguries.

On the first day of her arrival at Dover she walked with him on the sea beach, and with the timidity characteristic of passionate and exaggerated feeling was by degrees bringing the conversation to the desired point, when she could communicate her fears to him, when the messenger who bore my letter announcing our temporary return to Windsor, came riding down to them. He gave some oral account of how he had left us, and added, that notwithstanding the cheerfulness and good courage of Lady Idris, he was afraid that she would hardly reach Windsor alive. "True," said the Countess, "your fears are just, she is about to expire!"

As she spoke, her eyes were fixed on a tomblike hollow of the cliff, and she saw, she averred the same to me with solemnity, Idris pacing slowly towards this cave. She was turned from her, her head was bent down, her white dress was such as she was accustomed to wear, except that a thin crape-like veil covered her golden tresses, and concealed her as a dim transparent mist. She looked dejected, as docilely yielding to a commanding power; she submissively entered, and was lost in the dark recess.

"Were I subject to visionary moods," said the venerable lady, as she continued her narrative, "I might doubt my eyes, and condemn my credulity; but reality is the world I live in, and what I saw I doubt not had existence beyond myself. From that moment I could not rest; it was worth my existence to see her once again before she died; I knew that I should not accomplish this, yet I must endeavour. I immediately departed for Windsor; and, though I was assured that we travelled speedily, it seemed to

me that our progress was snail-like, and that delays were created solely for my annoyance. Still I accused you, and heaped on your head the fiery ashes of my burning impatience. It was no disappointment, though an agonizing pang, when you pointed to her last abode; and words would ill express the abhorrence I that moment felt towards you, the triumphant impediment to my dearest wishes. I saw her, and anger, and hate, and injustice died at her bier, giving place at their departure to a remorse (Great God, that I should feel it!) which must last while memory and feeling endure."

To medicine such remorse, to prevent awakening love and new-born mildness from producing the same bitter fruit that hate and harshness had done, I devoted all my endeavours to soothe the venerable penitent. Our party was a melancholy one; each was possessed by regret for what was remediless; for the absence of his mother shadowed even the infant gaiety of Evelyn. Added to this was the prospect of the uncertain future. Before the final accomplishment of any great voluntary change the mind vacillates, now soothing itself by fervent expectation, now recoiling from obstacles which seem never to have presented themselves before with so frightful an aspect. An involuntary tremor ran through me when I thought that in another day we might have crossed the watery barrier, and have set forward on that hopeless, interminable, sad wandering, which but a short time before I regarded as the only relief to sorrow that our situation afforded.

Our approach to Dover was announced by the loud roarings of the wintry sea. They were borne miles inland by the sound-laden blast, and by their unaccustomed uproar, imparted a feeling of insecurity and peril to our stable abode. At first we hardly permitted ourselves to think that any unusual eruption of nature caused this tremendous war of air and water, but rather fancied that we merely listened to what we had heard a thousand times before, when we had watched the flocks of fleece-crowned waves, driven by the winds, come to lament and die on the barren sands and pointed rocks. But we found upon advancing farther, that Dover was overflowed— many of the houses were

overthrown by the surges which filled the streets, and with hideous brawlings sometimes retreated leaving the pavement of the town bare, till again hurried forward by the influx of ocean, they returned with thunder-sound to their usurped station.

Hardly less disturbed than the tempestuous world of waters was the assembly of human beings, that from the cliff fearfully watched its ravings. On the morning of the arrival of the emigrants under the conduct of Adrian, the sea had been serene and glassy, the slight ripples refracted the sunbeams, which shed their radiance through the clear blue frosty air. This placid appearance of nature was hailed as a good augury for the voyage, and the chief immediately repaired to the harbour to examine two steamboats which were moored there. On the following midnight, when all were at rest, a frightful storm of wind and clattering rain and hail first disturbed them, and the voice of one shrieking in the streets, that the sleepers must awake or they would be drowned; and when they rushed out, half clothed, to discover the meaning of this alarm, they found that the tide, rising above every mark, was rushing into the town. They ascended the cliff, but the darkness permitted only the white crest of waves to be seen, while the roaring wind mingled its howlings in dire accord with the wild surges. The awful hour of night, the utter inexperience of many who had never seen the sea before, the wailing of women and cries of children added to the horror of the tumult. All the following day the same scene continued. When the tide ebbed, the town was left dry; but on its flow, it rose even higher than on the preceding night. The vast ships that lay rotting in the roads were whirled from their anchorage, and driven and jammed against the cliff, the vessels in the harbour were flung on land like sea-weed, and there battered to pieces by the breakers. The waves dashed against the cliff, which if in any place it had been before loosened, now gave way, and the affrighted crowd saw vast fragments of the near earth fall with crash and roar into the deep. This sight operated differently on different persons. The greater part thought it a judgment of God, to prevent or punish our emigration from our native land. Many were doubly eager to quit

a nook of ground now become their prison, which appeared unable to resist the inroads of ocean's giant waves.

When we arrived at Dover, after a fatiguing day's journey, we all required rest and sleep; but the scene acting around us soon drove away such ideas. We were drawn, along with the greater part of our companions, to the edge of the cliff, there to listen to and make a thousand conjectures. A fog narrowed our horizon to about a quarter of a mile, and the misty veil, cold and dense, enveloped sky and sea in equal obscurity. What added to our inquietude was the circumstance that two-thirds of our original number were now waiting for us in Paris, and clinging, as we now did most painfully, to any addition to our melancholy remnant, this division, with the tameless impassable ocean between, struck us with affright. At length, after loitering for several hours on the cliff, we retired to Dover Castle, whose roof sheltered all who breathed the English air, and sought the sleep necessary to restore strength and courage to our worn frames and languid spirits.

Early in the morning Adrian brought me the welcome intelligence that the wind had changed: it had been south-west; it was now north-east. The sky was stripped bare of clouds by the increasing gale, while the tide at its ebb seceded entirely from the town. The change of wind rather increased the fury of the sea, but it altered its late dusky hue to a bright green; and in spite of its unmitigated clamour, its more cheerful appearance instilled hope and pleasure. All day we watched the ranging of the mountainous waves, and towards sunset a desire to decypher the promise for the morrow at its setting, made us all gather with one accord on the edge of the cliff. When the mighty luminary approached within a few degrees of the tempest-tossed horizon, suddenly, a wonder! three other suns, alike burning and brilliant, rushed from various quarters of the heavens towards the great orb; they whirled round it. The glare of light was intense to our dazzled eyes; the sun itself seemed to join in the dance, while the sea burned like a furnace, like all Vesuvius a-light, with flowing lava beneath. The horses broke loose from their stalls in terror—a herd of cattle, panic struck, raced down to the brink of the cliff, and blinded by light, plunged down with frightful yells in the waves

below. The time occupied by the apparition of these meteors was comparatively short; suddenly the three mock suns united in one, and plunged into the sea. A few seconds afterwards, a deafening watery sound came up with awful peal from the spot where they had disappeared.

Meanwhile the sun, disencumbered from his strange satellites, paced with its accustomed majesty towards its western home. When—we dared not trust our eyes late dazzled, but it seemed that—the sea rose to meet it—it mounted higher and higher, till the fiery globe was obscured, and the wall of water still ascended the horizon; it appeared as if suddenly the motion of earth was revealed to us—as if no longer we were ruled by ancient laws, but were turned adrift in an unknown region of space. Many cried aloud, that these were no meteors, but globes of burning matter, which had set fire to the earth, and caused the vast cauldron at our feet to bubble up with its measureless waves; the day of judgment was come they averred, and a few moments would transport us before the awful countenance of the omnipotent judge; while those less given to visionary terrors, declared that two conflicting gales had occasioned the last phaenomenon. In support of this opinion they pointed out the fact that the east wind died away, while the rushing of the coming west mingled its wild howl with the roar of the advancing waters. Would the cliff resist this new battery? Was not the giant wave far higher than the precipice? Would not our little island be deluged by its approach? The crowd of spectators fled. They were dispersed over the fields, stopping now and then, and looking back in terror. A sublime sense of awe calmed the swift pulsations of my heart—I awaited the approach of the destruction menaced, with that solemn resignation which an unavoidable necessity instils. The ocean every moment assumed a more terrific aspect, while the twilight was dimmed by the rack which the west wind spread over the sky. By slow degrees however, as the wave advanced, it took a more mild appearance; some under current of air, or obstruction in the bed of the waters, checked its progress, and it sank gradually; while the surface of the sea became uniformly higher as it dissolved into it. This change took from us the fear of an immediate catastrophe,

although we were still anxious as to the final result. We continued during the whole night to watch the fury of the sea and the pace of the driving clouds, through whose openings the rare stars rushed impetuously; the thunder of conflicting elements deprived us of all power to sleep.

This endured ceaselessly for three days and nights. The stoutest hearts quailed before the savage enmity of nature; provisions began to fail us, though every day foraging parties were dispersed to the nearer towns. In vain we schooled ourselves into the belief, that there was nothing out of the common order of nature in the strife we witnessed; our disastrous and overwhelming destiny turned the best of us to cowards. Death had hunted us through the course of many months, even to the narrow strip of time on which we now stood; narrow indeed, and buffeted by storms, was our footway overhanging the great sea of calamity

As an unsheltered northern shore
Is shaken by the wintry wave—
And frequent storms for evermore,
(While from the west the loud winds rave,
Or from the east, or mountains hoar)
The struck and tott'ring sand-bank lave.

—CHORUS IN *OEDIPUS COLONEUS*

It required more than human energy to bear up against the menaces of destruction that every where surrounded us.

900

After the lapse of three days, the gale died away, the sea-gull sailed upon the calm bosom of the windless atmosphere, and the last yellow leaf on the topmost branch of the oak hung without motion. The sea no longer broke with fury; but a swell setting in steadily for shore, with long sweep and sullen burst replaced the roar of the breakers. Yet we derived hope from the change, and we did not doubt that after the interval of a few days the sea would resume its tranquillity. The sunset of the fourth day favoured this idea; it was clear and golden. As we gazed on the purple sea, radiant beneath, we were attracted by a novel spectacle; a dark speck—as it neared, visibly a boat—rode on the

top of the waves, every now and then lost in the steep vallies between. We marked its course with eager questionings; and, when we saw that it evidently made for shore, we descended to the only practicable landing place, and hoisted a signal to direct them. By the help of glasses we distinguished her crew; it consisted of nine men, Englishmen, belonging in truth to the two divisions of our people, who had preceded us, and had been for several weeks at Paris. As countryman was wont to meet countryman in distant lands, did we greet our visitors on their landing, with outstretched hands and gladsome welcome. They were slow to reciprocate our gratulations. They looked angry and resentful; not less than the chafed sea which they had traversed with imminent peril, though apparently more displeased with each other than with us. It was strange to see these human beings, who appeared to be given forth by the earth like rare and inestimable plants, full of towering passion, and the spirit of angry contest. Their first demand was to be conducted to the Lord Protector of England, so they called Adrian, though he had long discarded the empty title, as a bitter mockery of the shadow to which the Protectorship was now reduced. They were speedily led to Dover Castle, from whose keep Adrian had watched the movements of the boat. He received them with the interest and wonder so strange a visitation created. In the confusion occasioned by their angry demands for precedence, it was long before we could discover the secret meaning of this strange scene. By degrees, from the furious declamations of one, the fierce interruptions of another, and the bitter scoffs of a third, we found that they were deputies from our colony at Paris, from three parties there formed, who, each with angry rivalry, tried to attain a superiority over the other two. These deputies had been dispatched by them to Adrian, who had been selected arbiter; and they had journed from Paris to Calais, through the vacant towns and desolate country, indulging the while violent hatred against each other; and now they pleaded their several causes with unmitigated party-spirit.

By examining the deputies apart, and after much investigation, we learnt the true state of things at Paris. Since parliament had

elected him Ryland's deputy, all the surviving English had submitted to Adrian. He was our captain to lead us from our native soil to unknown lands, our lawgiver and our preserver. On the first arrangement of our scheme of emigration, no continued separation of our members was contemplated, and the command of the whole body in gradual ascent of power had its apex in the Earl of Windsor. But unforeseen circumstances changed our plans for us, and occasioned the greater part of our numbers to be divided for the space of nearly two months, from the supreme chief. They had gone over in two distinct bodies; and on their arrival at Paris dissension arose between them.

They had found Paris a desert. When first the plague had appeared, the return of travellers and merchants, and communications by letter, informed us regularly of the ravages made by disease on the continent. But with the encreased mortality this intercourse declined and ceased. Even in England itself communication from one part of the island to the other became slow and rare. No vessel stemmed the flood that divided Calais from Dover; or if some melancholy voyager, wishing to assure himself of the life or death of his relatives, put from the French shore to return among us, often the greedy ocean swallowed his little craft, or after a day or two he was infected by the disorder, and died before he could tell the tale of the desolation of France. We were therefore to a great degree ignorant of the state of things on the continent, and were not without some vague hope of finding numerous companions in its wide track. But the same causes that had so fearfully diminished the English nation had had even greater scope for mischief in the sister land. France was a blank; during the long line of road from Calais to Paris not one human being was found. In Paris there were a few, perhaps a hundred, who, resigned to their coming fate, flitted about the streets of the capital and assembled to converse of past times, with that vivacity and even gaiety that seldom deserts the individuals of this nation.

The English took uncontested possession of Paris. Its high houses and narrow streets were lifeless. A few pale figures were to be distinguished at the accustomed resort at the Tuileries; they

wondered wherefore the islanders should approach their ill-fated city—for in the excess of wretchedness, the sufferers always imagine, that their part of the calamity is the bitterest, as, when enduring intense pain, we would exchange the particular torture we writhe under, for any other which should visit a different part of the frame. They listened to the account the emigrants gave of their motives for leaving their native land, with a shrug almost of disdain—"Return," they said, "return to your island, whose sea breezes, and division from the continent gives some promise of health; if Pestilence among you has slain its hundreds, with us it has slain its thousands. Are you not even now more numerous than we are?—A year ago you would have found only the sick burying the dead; now we are happier; for the pang of struggle has passed away, and the few you find here are patiently waiting the final blow. But you, who are not content to die, breathe no longer the air of France, or soon you will only be a part of her soil."

Thus, by menaces of the sword, they would have driven back those who had escaped from fire. But the peril left behind was deemed imminent by my countrymen; that before them doubtful and distant; and soon other feelings arose to obliterate fear, or to replace it by passions, that ought to have had no place among a brotherhood of unhappy survivors of the expiring world.

The more numerous division of emigrants, which arrived first at Paris, assumed a superiority of rank and power; the second party asserted their independence. A third was formed by a sectarian, a self-erected prophet, who, while he attributed all power and rule to God, strove to get the real command of his comrades into his own hands. This third division consisted of fewest individuals, but their purpose was more one, their obedience to their leader more entire, their fortitude and courage more unyielding and active.

During the whole progress of the plague, the teachers of religion were in possession of great power; a power of good, if rightly directed, or of incalculable mischief, if fanaticism or intolerance guided their efforts. In the present instance, a worse feeling than either of these actuated the leader. He was an

impostor in the most determined sense of the term. A man who had in early life lost, through the indulgence of vicious propensities, all sense of rectitude or self-esteem; and who, when ambition was awakened in him, gave himself up to its influence unbridled by any scruple. His father had been a methodist preacher, an enthusiastic man with simple intentions; but whose pernicious doctrines of election and special grace had contributed to destroy all conscientious feeling in his son. During the progress of the pestilence he had entered upon various schemes, by which to acquire adherents and power. Adrian had discovered and defeated these attempts; but Adrian was absent; the wolf assumed the shepherd's garb, and the flock admitted the deception: he had formed a party during the few weeks he had been in Paris, who zealously propagated the creed of his divine mission, and believed that safety and salvation were to be afforded only to those who put their trust in him.

When once the spirit of dissension had arisen, the most frivolous causes gave it activity. The first party, on arriving at Paris, had taken possession of the Tuileries; chance and friendly feeling had induced the second to lodge near to them. A contest arose concerning the distribution of the pillage; the chiefs of the first division demanded that the whole should be placed at their disposal; with this assumption the opposite party refused to comply. When next the latter went to forage, the gates of Paris were shut on them. After overcoming this difficulty, they marched in a body to the Tuileries. They found that their enemies had been already expelled thence by the Elect, as the fanatical party designated themselves, who refused to admit any into the palace who did not first abjure obedience to all except God, and his delegate on earth, their chief. Such was the beginning of the strife, which at length proceeded so far, that the three divisions, armed, met in the Place Vendome, each resolved to subdue by force the resistance of its adversaries. They assembled, their muskets were loaded, and even pointed at the breasts of their so called enemies. One word had been sufficient; and there the last of mankind would have burthened their souls with the crime of murder, and dipt their hands in each other's blood. A sense of

shame, a recollection that not only their cause, but the existence of the whole human race was at stake, entered the breast of the leader of the more numerous party. He was aware, that if the ranks were thinned, no other recruits could fill them up; that each man was as a priceless gem in a kingly crown, which if destroyed, the earth's deep entrails could yield no paragon. He was a young man, and had been hurried on by presumption, and the notion of his high rank and superiority to all other pretenders; now he repented his work, he felt that all the blood about to be shed would be on his head; with sudden impulse therefore he spurred his horse between the bands, and, having fixed a white handkerchief on the point of his uplifted sword, thus demanded parley; the opposite leaders obeyed the signal. He spoke with warmth; he reminded them of the oath all the chiefs had taken to submit to the Lord Protector; he declared their present meeting to be an act of treason and mutiny; he allowed that he had been hurried away by passion, but that a cooler moment had arrived; and he proposed that each party should send deputies to the Earl of Windsor, inviting his interference and offering submission to his decision. His offer was accepted so far, that each leader consented to command a retreat, and moreover agreed, that after the approbation of their several parties had been consulted, they should meet that night on some neutral spot to ratify the truce. At the meeting of the chiefs, this plan was finally concluded upon. The leader of the fanatics indeed refused to admit the arbitration of Adrian; he sent ambassadors, rather than deputies, to assert his claim, not plead his cause.

The truce was to continue until the first of February, when the bands were again to assemble on the Place Vendome; it was of the utmost consequence therefore that Adrian should arrive in Paris by that day, since an hair might turn the scale, and peace, scared away by intestine broils, might only return to watch by the silent dead. It was now the twenty-eighth of January; every vessel stationed near Dover had been beaten to pieces and destroyed by the furious storms I have commemorated. Our journey however would admit of no delay. That very night, Adrian, and I, and twelve others, either friends or attendants, put off from the

English shore, in the boat that had brought over the deputies. We all took our turn at the oar; and the immediate occasion of our departure affording us abundant matter for conjecture and discourse, prevented the feeling that we left our native country, depopulate England, for the last time, to enter deeply into the minds of the greater part of our number. It was a serene starlight night, and the dark line of the English coast continued for some time visible at intervals, as we rose on the broad back of the waves. I exerted myself with my long oar to give swift impulse to our skiff; and, while the waters splashed with melancholy sound against its sides, I looked with sad affection on this last glimpse of sea-girt England, and strained my eyes not too soon to lose sight of the castellated cliff, which rose to protect the land of heroism and beauty from the inroads of ocean, that, turbulent as I had lately seen it, required such cyclopean walls for its repulsion. A solitary sea-gull winged its flight over our heads, to seek its nest in a cleft of the precipice. Yes, thou shalt revisit the land of thy birth, I thought, as I looked invidiously on the airy voyager; but we shall, never more! Tomb of Idris, farewell! Grave, in which my heart lies sepultured, farewell for ever!

We were twelve hours at sea, and the heavy swell obliged us to exert all our strength. At length, by mere dint of rowing, we reached the French coast. The stars faded, and the grey morning cast a dim veil over the silver horns of the waning moon—the sun rose broad and red from the sea, as we walked over the sands to Calais. Our first care was to procure horses, and although wearied by our night of watching and toil, some of our party immediately went in quest of these in the wide fields of the unenclosed and now barren plain round Calais. We divided ourselves, like seamen, into watches, and some reposed, while others prepared the morning's repast. Our foragers returned at noon with only six horses—on these, Adrian and I, and four others, proceeded on our journey towards the great city, which its inhabitants had fondly named the capital of the civilized world. Our horses had become, through their long holiday, almost wild, and we crossed the plain round Calais with impetuous speed. From the height near Boulogne, I turned again to look on England; nature had cast a

misty pall over her, her cliff was hidden—there was spread the watery barrier that divided us, never again to be crossed; she lay on the ocean plain,

In the great pool a swan's nest.

Ruined the nest, alas! the swans of Albion had passed away for ever—an uninhabited rock in the wide Pacific, which had remained since the creation uninhabited, unnamed, unmarked, would be of as much account in the world's future history, as desert England.

Our journey was impeded by a thousand obstacles. As our horses grew tired, we had to seek for others; and hours were wasted, while we exhausted our artifices to allure some of these enfranchised slaves of man to resume the yoke; or as we went from stable to stable through the towns, hoping to find some who had not forgotten the shelter of their native stalls. Our ill success in procuring them, obliged us continually to leave some one of our companions behind; and on the first of February, Adrian and I entered Paris, wholly unaccompanied. The serene morning had dawned when we arrived at Saint Denis, and the sun was high, when the clamour of voices, and the clash, as we feared, of weapons, guided us to where our countrymen had assembled on the Place Vendome. We passed a knot of Frenchmen, who were talking earnestly of the madness of the insular invaders, and then coming by a sudden turn upon the Place, we saw the sun glitter on drawn swords and fixed bayonets, while yells and clamours rent the air. It was a scene of unaccustomed confusion in these days of depopulation. Roused by fancied wrongs, and insulting scoffs, the opposite parties had rushed to attack each other; while the elect, drawn up apart, seemed to wait an opportunity to fall with better advantage on their foes, when they should have mutually weakened each other. A merciful power interposed, and no blood was shed; for, while the insane mob were in the very act of attack, the females, wives, mothers and daughters, rushed between; they seized the bridles; they embraced the knees of the horsemen, and hung on the necks, or enweaponed arms of their enraged relatives;

the shrill female scream was mingled with the manly shout, and formed the wild clamour that welcomed us on our arrival.

Our voices could not be heard in the tumult; Adrian however was eminent for the white charger he rode; spurring him, he dashed into the midst of the throng: he was recognized, and a loud cry raised for England and the Protector. The late adversaries, warmed to affection at the sight of him, joined in heedless confusion, and surrounded him; the women kissed his hands, and the edges of his garments; nay, his horse received tribute of their embraces; some wept their welcome; he appeared an angel of peace descended among them; and the only danger was, that his mortal nature would be demonstrated, by his suffocation from the kindness of his friends. His voice was at length heard, and obeyed; the crowd fell back; the chiefs alone rallied round him. I had seen Lord Raymond ride through his lines; his look of victory, and majestic mien obtained the respect and obedience of all: such was not the appearance or influence of Adrian. His slight figure, his fervent look, his gesture, more of deprecation than rule, were proofs that love, unmingled with fear, gave him dominion over the hearts of a multitude, who knew that he never flinched from danger, nor was actuated by other motives than care for the general welfare. No distinction was now visible between the two parties, late ready to shed each other's blood, for, though neither would submit to the other, they both yielded ready obedience to the Earl of Windsor.

One party however remained, cut off from the rest, which did not sympathize in the joy exhibited on Adrian's arrival, or imbibe the spirit of peace, which fell like dew upon the softened hearts of their countrymen. At the head of this assembly was a ponderous, dark-looking man, whose malign eye surveyed with gloating delight the stern looks of his followers. They had hitherto been inactive, but now, perceiving themselves to be forgotten in the universal jubilee, they advanced with threatening gestures: our friends had, as it were in wanton contention, attacked each other; they wanted but to be told that their cause was one, for it to become so: their mutual anger had been a fire of straw, compared to the slow-burning hatred they both entertained for these

seceders, who seized a portion of the world to come, there to entrench and incastellate themselves, and to issue with fearful sally, and appalling denunciations, on the mere common children of the earth. The first advance of the little army of the elect reawakened their rage; they grasped their arms, and waited but their leader's signal to commence the attack, when the clear tones of Adrian's voice were heard, commanding them to fall back; with confused murmur and hurried retreat, as the wave ebbs clamorously from the sands it lately covered, our friends obeyed. Adrian rode singly into the space between the opposing bands; he approached the hostile leader, as requesting him to imitate his example, but his look was not obeyed, and the chief advanced, followed by his whole troop. There were many women among them, who seemed more eager and resolute than their male companions. They pressed round their leader, as if to shield him, while they loudly bestowed on him every sacred denomination and epithet of worship. Adrian met them half way; they halted: "What," he said, "do you seek? Do you require any thing of us that we refuse to give, and that you are forced to acquire by arms and warfare?"

His questions were answered by a general cry, in which the words election, sin, and red right arm of God, could alone be heard.

915

Adrian looked expressly at their leader, saying, "Can you not silence your followers? Mine, you perceive, obey me."

The fellow answered by a scowl; and then, perhaps fearful that his people should become auditors of the debate he expected to ensue, he commanded them to fall back, and advanced by himself. "What, I again ask," said Adrian, "do you require of us?"

"Repentance," replied the man, whose sinister brow gathered clouds as he spoke. "Obedience to the will of the Most High, made manifest to these his Elected People. Do we not all die through your sins, O generation of unbelief, and have we not a right to demand of you repentance and obedience?"

"And if we refuse them, what then?" his opponent inquired mildly.

"Beware," cried the man, "God hears you, and will smite your stony heart in his wrath; his poisoned arrows fly, his dogs of death are unleashed! We will not perish unrevenged—and mighty will our avenger be, when he descends in visible majesty, and scatters destruction among you."

"My good fellow," said Adrian, with quiet scorn, "I wish that you were ignorant only, and I think it would be no difficult task to prove to you, that you speak of what you do not understand. On the present occasion however, it is enough for me to know that you seek nothing of us; and, heaven is our witness, we seek nothing of you. I should be sorry to embitter by strife the few days that we any of us may have here to live; when there," he pointed downwards, "we shall not be able to contend, while here we need not. Go home, or stay; pray to your God in your own mode; your friends may do the like. My orisons consist in peace and good will, in resignation and hope. Farewell!"

He bowed slightly to the angry disputant who was about to reply; and, turning his horse down Rue Saint Honore, called on his friends to follow him. He rode slowly, to give time to all to join him at the Barrier, and then issued his orders that those who yielded obedience to him, should rendezvous at Versailles. In the meantime he remained within the walls of Paris, until he had secured the safe retreat of all. In about a fortnight the remainder of the emigrants arrived from England, and they all repaired to Versailles; apartments were prepared for the family of the Protector in the Grand Trianon, and there, after the excitement of these events, we reposed amidst the luxuries of the departed Bourbons.

Chapter V

After the repose of a few days, we held a council, to decide on our future movements. Our first plan had been to quit our wintry native latitude, and seek for our diminished numbers the luxuries and delights of a southern climate. We had not fixed on any precise spot as the termination of our wanderings; but a vague picture of perpetual spring, fragrant groves, and sparkling

streams, floated in our imagination to entice us on. A variety of causes had detained us in England, and we had now arrived at the middle of February; if we pursued our original project, we should find ourselves in a worse situation than before, having exchanged our temperate climate for the intolerable heats of a summer in Egypt or Persia. We were therefore obliged to modify our plan, as the season continued to be inclement; and it was determined that we should await the arrival of spring in our present abode, and so order our future movements as to pass the hot months in the icy vallies of Switzerland, deferring our southern progress until the ensuing autumn, if such a season was ever again to be beheld by us.

The castle and town of Versailles afforded our numbers ample accommodation, and foraging parties took it by turns to supply our wants. There was a strange and appalling motley in the situation of these the last of the race. At first I likened it to a colony, which borne over the far seas, struck root for the first time in a new country. But where was the bustle and industry characteristic of such an assemblage; the rudely constructed dwelling, which was to suffice till a more commodious mansion could be built; the marking out of fields; the attempt at cultivation; the eager curiosity to discover unknown animals and herbs; the excursions for the sake of exploring the country? Our habitations were palaces our food was ready stored in granaries—there was no need of labour, no inquisitiveness, no restless desire to get on. If we had been assured that we should secure the lives of our present numbers, there would have been more vivacity and hope in our councils. We should have discussed as to the period when the existing produce for man's sustenance would no longer suffice for us, and what mode of life we should then adopt. We should have considered more carefully our future plans, and debated concerning the spot where we should in future dwell. But summer and the plague were near, and we dared not look forward. Every heart sickened at the thought of amusement; if the younger part of our community were ever impelled, by youthful and untamed hilarity, to enter on any dance or song, to cheer the melancholy time, they would suddenly break off, checked by a

mournful look or agonizing sigh from any one among them, who was prevented by sorrows and losses from mingling in the festivity. If laughter echoed under our roof, yet the heart was vacant of joy; and, when ever it chanced that I witnessed such attempts at pastime, they encreased instead of diminishing my sense of woe. In the midst of the pleasure-hunting throng, I would close my eyes, and see before me the obscure cavern, where was garnered the mortality of Idris, and the dead lay around, mouldering in hushed repose. When I again became aware of the present hour, softest melody of Lydian flute, or harmonious maze of graceful dance, was but as the demoniac chorus in the Wolf's Glen, and the caperings of the reptiles that surrounded the magic circle.

My dearest interval of peace occurred, when, released from the obligation of associating with the crowd, I could repose in the dear home where my children lived. Children I say, for the tenderest emotions of paternity bound me to Clara. She was now fourteen; sorrow, and deep insight into the scenes around her, calmed the restless spirit of girlhood; while the remembrance of her father whom she idolized, and respect for me and Adrian, implanted an high sense of duty in her young heart. Though serious she was not sad; the eager desire that makes us all, when young, plume our wings, and stretch our necks, that we may more swiftly alight tiptoe on the height of maturity, was subdued in her by early experience. All that she could spare of overflowing love from her parents' memory, and attention to her living relatives, was spent upon religion. This was the hidden law of her heart, which she concealed with childish reserve, and cherished the more because it was secret. What faith so entire, what charity so pure, what hope so fervent, as that of early youth? and she, all love, all tenderness and trust, who from infancy had been tossed on the wide sea of passion and misfortune, saw the finger of apparent divinity in all, and her best hope was to make herself acceptable to the power she worshipped. Evelyn was only five years old; his joyous heart was incapable of sorrow, and he enlivened our house with the innocent mirth incident to his years.

The aged Countess of Windsor had fallen from her dream of power, rank and grandeur; she had been suddenly seized with the conviction, that love was the only good of life, virtue the only ennobling distinction and enriching wealth. Such a lesson had been taught her by the dead lips of her neglected daughter; and she devoted herself, with all the fiery violence of her character, to the obtaining the affection of the remnants of her family. In early years the heart of Adrian had been chilled towards her; and, though he observed a due respect, her coldness, mixed with the recollection of disappointment and madness, caused him to feel even pain in her society. She saw this, and yet determined to win his love; the obstacle served the rather to excite her ambition. As Henry, Emperor of Germany, lay in the snow before Pope Leo's gate for three winter days and nights, so did she in humility wait before the icy barriers of his closed heart, till he, the servant of love, and prince of tender courtesy, opened it wide for her admittance, bestowing, with fervency and gratitude, the tribute of filial affection she merited. Her understanding, courage, and presence of mind, became powerful auxiliaries to him in the difficult task of ruling the tumultuous crowd, which were subjected to his control, in truth by a single hair.

The principal circumstances that disturbed our tranquillity during this interval, originated in the vicinity of the impostor-prophet and his followers. They continued to reside at Paris; but missionaries from among them often visited Versailles—and such was the power of assertions, however false, yet vehemently iterated, over the ready credulity of the ignorant and fearful, that they seldom failed in drawing over to their party some from among our numbers. An instance of this nature coming immediately under our notice, we were led to consider the miserable state in which we should leave our countrymen, when we should, at the approach of summer, move on towards Switzerland, and leave a deluded crew behind us in the hands of their miscreant leader. The sense of the smallness of our numbers, and expectation of decrease, pressed upon us; and, while it would be a subject of congratulation to ourselves to add one to our party, it would be doubly gratifying to rescue from the pernicious

influence of superstition and unrelenting tyranny, the victims that now, though voluntarily enchained, groaned beneath it. If we had considered the preacher as sincere in a belief of his own denunciations, or only moderately actuated by kind feeling in the exercise of his assumed powers, we should have immediately addressed ourselves to him, and endeavoured with our best arguments to soften and humanize his views. But he was instigated by ambition, he desired to rule over these last stragglers from the fold of death; his projects went so far, as to cause him to calculate that, if, from these crushed remains, a few survived, so that a new race should spring up, he, by holding tight the reins of belief, might be remembered by the post-pestilential race as a patriarch, a prophet, nay a deity; such as of old among the post-diluvians were Jupiter the conqueror, Serapis the lawgiver, and Vishnou the preserver. These ideas made him inflexible in his rule, and violent in his hate of any who presumed to share with him his usurped empire.

It is a strange fact, but incontestible, that the philanthropist, who ardent in his desire to do good, who patient, reasonable and gentle, yet disdains to use other argument than truth, has less influence over men's minds, than he who, grasping and selfish, refuses not to adopt any means, nor awaken any passion, nor diffuse any falsehood, for the advancement of his cause. If this from time immemorial has been the case, the contrast was infinitely greater, now that the one could bring harrowing fears and transcendent hopes into play; while the other had few hopes to hold forth, nor could influence the imagination to diminish the fears which he himself was the first to entertain. The preacher had persuaded his followers, that their escape from the plague, the salvation of their children, and the rise of a new race of men from their seed, depended on their faith in, and their submission to him. They greedily imbibed this belief; and their over-weening credulity even rendered them eager to make converts to the same faith.

How to seduce any individuals from such an alliance of fraud, was a frequent subject of Adrian's meditations and discourse. He formed many plans for the purpose; but his own troop kept him in

full occupation to ensure their fidelity and safety; beside which the preacher was as cautious and prudent, as he was cruel. His victims lived under the strictest rules and laws, which either entirely imprisoned them within the Tuileries, or let them out in such numbers, and under such leaders, as precluded the possibility of controversy. There was one among them however whom I resolved to save; she had been known to us in happier days; Idris had loved her; and her excellent nature made it peculiarly lamentable that she should be sacrificed by this merciless cannibal of souls.

This man had between two and three hundred persons enlisted under his banners. More than half of them were women; there were about fifty children of all ages; and not more than eighty men. They were mostly drawn from that which, when such distinctions existed, was denominated the lower rank of society. The exceptions consisted of a few high-born females, who, panic-struck, and tamed by sorrow, had joined him. Among these was one, young, lovely, and enthusiastic, whose very goodness made her a more easy victim. I have mentioned her before: Juliet, the youngest daughter, and now sole relic of the ducal house of L—. There are some beings, whom fate seems to select on whom to pour, in unmeasured portion, the vials of her wrath, and whom she bathes even to the lips in misery. Such a one was the ill-starred Juliet. She had lost her indulgent parents, her brothers and sisters, companions of her youth; in one fell swoop they had been carried off from her. Yet she had again dared to call herself happy; united to her admirer, to him who possessed and filled her whole heart, she yielded to the lethean powers of love, and knew and felt only his life and presence. At the very time when with keen delight she welcomed the tokens of maternity, this sole prop of her life failed, her husband died of the plague. For a time she had been lulled in insanity; the birth of her child restored her to the cruel reality of things, but gave her at the same time an object for whom to preserve at once life and reason. Every friend and relative had died off, and she was reduced to solitude and penury; deep melancholy and angry impatience distorted her judgment, so that she could not persuade herself to disclose her distress to us.

When she heard of the plan of universal emigration, she resolved to remain behind with her child, and alone in wide England to live or die, as fate might decree, beside the grave of her beloved. She had hidden herself in one of the many empty habitations of London; it was she who rescued my Idris on the fatal twentieth of November, though my immediate danger, and the subsequent illness of Idris, caused us to forget our hapless friend. This circumstance had however brought her again in contact with her fellow-creatures; a slight illness of her infant, proved to her that she was still bound to humanity by an indestructible tie; to preserve this little creature's life became the object of her being, and she joined the first division of migrants who went over to Paris.

She became an easy prey to the methodist; her sensibility and acute fears rendered her accessible to every impulse; her love for her child made her eager to cling to the merest straw held out to save him. Her mind, once unstrung, and now tuned by roughest inharmonious hands, made her credulous: beautiful as fabled goddess, with voice of unrivalled sweetness, burning with new lighted enthusiasm, she became a stedfast proselyte, and powerful auxiliary to the leader of the elect. I had remarked her in the crowd, on the day we met on the Place Vendome; and, recollecting suddenly her providential rescue of my lost one, on the night of the twentieth of November, I reproached myself for my neglect and ingratitude, and felt impelled to leave no means that I could adopt untried, to recall her to her better self, and rescue her from the fangs of the hypocrite destroyer.

I will not, at this period of my story, record the artifices I used to penetrate the asylum of the Tuileries, or give what would be a tedious account of my stratagems, disappointments, and perseverance. I at last succeeded in entering these walls, and roamed its halls and corridors in eager hope to find my selected convert. In the evening I contrived to mingle unobserved with the congregation, which assembled in the chapel to listen to the crafty and eloquent harangue of their prophet. I saw Juliet near him. Her dark eyes, fearfully impressed with the restless glare of madness, were fixed on him; she held her infant, not yet a year old, in her

arms; and care of it alone could distract her attention from the words to which she eagerly listened. After the sermon was over, the congregation dispersed; all quitted the chapel except she whom I sought; her babe had fallen asleep; so she placed it on a cushion, and sat on the floor beside, watching its tranquil slumber.

I presented myself to her; for a moment natural feeling produced a sentiment of gladness, which disappeared again, when with ardent and affectionate exhortation I besought her to accompany me in flight from this den of superstition and misery. In a moment she relapsed into the delirium of fanaticism, and, but that her gentle nature forbade, would have loaded me with execrations. She conjured me, she commanded me to leave her—"Beware, O beware," she cried, "fly while yet your escape is practicable. Now you are safe; but strange sounds and inspirations come on me at times, and if the Eternal should in awful whisper reveal to me his will, that to save my child you must be sacrificed, I would call in the satellites of him you call the tyrant; they would tear you limb from limb; nor would I hallow the death of him whom Idris loved, by a single tear."

She spoke hurriedly, with tuneless voice, and wild look; her child awoke, and, frightened, began to cry; each sob went to the ill-fated mother's heart, and she mingled the epithets of endearment she addressed to her infant, with angry commands that I should leave her. Had I had the means, I would have risked all, have torn her by force from the murderer's den, and trusted to the healing balm of reason and affection. But I had no choice, no power even of longer struggle; steps were heard along the gallery, and the voice of the preacher drew near. Juliet, straining her child in a close embrace, fled by another passage. Even then I would have followed her; but my foe and his satellites entered; I was surrounded, and taken prisoner.

I remembered the menace of the unhappy Juliet, and expected the full tempest of the man's vengeance, and the awakened wrath of his followers, to fall instantly upon me. I was questioned. My answers were simple and sincere. "His own mouth condemns him," exclaimed the impostor; "he confesses that his intention was to seduce from the way of salvation our well-beloved sister in

God; away with him to the dungeon; to-morrow he dies the death; we are manifestly called upon to make an example, tremendous and appalling, to scare the children of sin from our asylum of the saved."

My heart revolted from his hypocritical jargon: but it was unworthy of me to combat in words with the ruffian; and my answer was cool; while, far from being possessed with fear, methought, even at the worst, a man true to himself, courageous and determined, could fight his way, even from the boards of the scaffold, through the herd of these misguided maniacs. "Remember," I said, "who I am; and be well assured that I shall not die unavenged. Your legal magistrate, the Lord Protector, knew of my design, and is aware that I am here; the cry of blood will reach him, and you and your miserable victims will long lament the tragedy you are about to act."

My antagonist did not deign to reply, even by a look;—"You know your duty," he said to his comrades,—"obey."

In a moment I was thrown on the earth, bound, blindfolded, and hurried away—liberty of limb and sight was only restored to me, when, surrounded by dungeon-walls, dark and impervious, I found myself a prisoner and alone.

Such was the result of my attempt to gain over the proselyte of this man of crime; I could not conceive that he would dare put me to death.—Yet I was in his hands; the path of his ambition had ever been dark and cruel; his power was founded upon fear; the one word which might cause me to die, unheard, unseen, in the obscurity of my dungeon, might be easier to speak than the deed of mercy to act. He would not risk probably a public execution; but a private assassination would at once terrify any of my companions from attempting a like feat, at the same time that a cautious line of conduct might enable him to avoid the enquiries and the vengeance of Adrian.

Two months ago, in a vault more obscure than the one I now inhabited, I had revolved the design of quietly laying me down to die; now I shuddered at the approach of fate. My imagination was busied in shaping forth the kind of death he would inflict. Would he allow me to wear out life with famine; or was the food

administered to me to be medicined with death? Would he steal on me in my sleep; or should I contend to the last with my murderers, knowing, even while I struggled, that I must be overcome? I lived upon an earth whose diminished population a child's arithmetic might number; I had lived through long months with death stalking close at my side, while at intervals the shadow of his skeleton-shape darkened my path. I had believed that I despised the grim phantom, and laughed his power to scorn.

Any other fate I should have met with courage, nay, have gone out gallantly to encounter. But to be murdered thus at the midnight hour by cold-blooded assassins, no friendly hand to close my eyes, or receive my parting blessing—to die in combat, hate and execration—ah, why, my angel love, didst thou restore me to life, when already I had stepped within the portals of the tomb, now that so soon again I was to be flung back a mangled corpse!

Hours passed—centuries. Could I give words to the many thoughts which occupied me in endless succession during this interval, I should fill volumes. The air was dank, the dungeon-floor mildewed and icy cold; hunger came upon me too, and no sound reached me from without. To-morrow the ruffian had declared that I should die. When would to-morrow come? Was it not already here?

My door was about to be opened. I heard the key turn, and the bars and bolts slowly removed. The opening of intervening passages permitted sounds from the interior of the palace to reach me; and I heard the clock strike one. They come to murder me, I thought; this hour does not befit a public execution. I drew myself up against the wall opposite the entrance; I collected my forces, I rallied my courage, I would not fall a tame prey. Slowly the door receded on its hinges—I was ready to spring forward to seize and grapple with the intruder, till the sight of who it was changed at once the temper of my mind. It was Juliet herself; pale and trembling she stood, a lamp in her hand, on the threshold of the dungeon, looking at me with wistful countenance. But in a moment she re-assumed her self-possession; and her languid eyes

recovered their brilliancy. She said, "I am come to save you, Verney."

"And yourself also," I cried: "dearest friend, can we indeed be saved?"

"Not a word," she replied, "follow me!"

945

I obeyed instantly. We threaded with light steps many corridors, ascended several flights of stairs, and passed through long galleries; at the end of one she unlocked a low portal; a rush of wind extinguished our lamp; but, in lieu of it, we had the blessed moon-beams and the open face of heaven. Then first Juliet spoke:—"You are safe," she said, "God bless you!—farewell!"

I seized her reluctant hand—"Dear friend," I cried, "misguided victim, do you not intend to escape with me? Have you not risked all in facilitating my flight? and do you think, that I will permit you to return, and suffer alone the effects of that miscreant's rage? Never!"

"Do not fear for me," replied the lovely girl mournfully, "and do not imagine that without the consent of our chief you could be without these walls. It is he that has saved you; he assigned to me the part of leading you hither, because I am best acquainted with your motives for coming here, and can best appreciate his mercy in permitting you to depart."

"And are you," I cried, "the dupe of this man? He dreads me alive as an enemy, and dead he fears my avengers. By favouring this clandestine escape he preserves a shew of consistency to his followers; but mercy is far from his heart. Do you forget his artifices, his cruelty, and fraud? As I am free, so are you. Come, Juliet, the mother of our lost Idris will welcome you, the noble Adrian will rejoice to receive you; you will find peace and love, and better hopes than fanaticism can afford. Come, and fear not; long before day we shall be at Versailles; close the door on this abode of crime—come, sweet Juliet, from hypocrisy and guilt to the society of the affectionate and good."

I spoke hurriedly, but with fervour: and while with gentle violence I drew her from the portal, some thought, some recollection of past scenes of youth and happiness, made her

950

listen and yield to me; suddenly she broke away with a piercing shriek:—"My child, my child! he has my child; my darling girl is my hostage."

She darted from me into the passage; the gate closed between us—she was left in the fangs of this man of crime, a prisoner, still to inhale the pestilential atmosphere which adhered to his demoniac nature; the unimpeded breeze played on my cheek, the moon shone graciously upon me, my path was free. Glad to have escaped, yet melancholy in my very joy, I retraced my steps to Versailles.

Chapter VI

Eventful winter passed; winter, the respite of our ills. By degrees the sun, which with slant beams had before yielded the more extended reign to night, lengthened his diurnal journey, and mounted his highest throne, at once the fosterer of earth's new beauty, and her lover. We who, like flies that congregate upon a dry rock at the ebbing of the tide, had played wantonly with time, allowing our passions, our hopes, and our mad desires to rule us, now heard the approaching roar of the ocean of destruction, and would have fled to some sheltered crevice, before the first wave broke over us. We resolved without delay, to commence our journey to Switzerland; we became eager to leave France. Under the icy vaults of the glaciers, beneath the shadow of the pines, the swinging of whose mighty branches was arrested by a load of snow; beside the streams whose intense cold proclaimed their origin to be from the slow-melting piles of congelated waters, amidst frequent storms which might purify the air, we should find health, if in truth health were not herself diseased.

We began our preparations at first with alacrity. We did not now bid adieu to our native country, to the graves of those we loved, to the flowers, and streams, and trees, which had lived beside us from infancy. Small sorrow would be ours on leaving Paris. A scene of shame, when we remembered our late contentions, and thought that we left behind a flock of miserable, deluded victims, bending under the tyranny of a selfish impostor.

Small pangs should we feel in leaving the gardens, woods, and halls of the palaces of the Bourbons at Versailles, which we feared would soon be tainted by the dead, when we looked forward to vallies lovelier than any garden, to mighty forests and halls, built not for mortal majesty, but palaces of nature's own, with the Alp of marmoreal whiteness for their walls, the sky for their roof.

Yet our spirits flagged, as the day drew near which we had fixed for our departure. Dire visions and evil auguries, if such things were, thickened around us, so that in vain might men say—

These are their reasons, they are natural,

—SHAKESPEARE—JULIUS CAESAR.

we felt them to be ominous, and dreaded the future event enchained to them. That the night owl should screech before the noon-day sun, that the hard-winged bat should wheel around the bed of beauty, that muttering thunder should in early spring startle the cloudless air, that sudden and exterminating blight should fall on the tree and shrub, were unaccustomed, but physical events, less horrible than the mental creations of almighty fear. Some had sight of funeral processions, and faces all begrimed with tears, which flitted through the long avenues of the gardens, and drew aside the curtains of the sleepers at dead of night. Some heard wailing and cries in the air; a mournful chaunt would stream through the dark atmosphere, as if spirits above sang the requiem of the human race. What was there in all this, but that fear created other senses within our frames, making us see, hear, and feel what was not? What was this, but the action of diseased imaginations and childish credulity? So might it be; but what was most real, was the existence of these very fears; the staring looks of horror, the faces pale even to ghastliness, the voices struck dumb with harrowing dread, of those among us who saw and heard these things. Of this number was Adrian, who knew the delusion, yet could not cast off the clinging terror. Even ignorant infancy appeared with timorous shrieks and convulsions to acknowledge

the presence of unseen powers. We must go: in change of scene, in occupation, and such security as we still hoped to find, we should discover a cure for these gathering horrors.

On mustering our company, we found them to consist of fourteen hundred souls, men, women, and children. Until now therefore, we were undiminished in numbers, except by the desertion of those who had attached themselves to the impostor-prophet, and remained behind in Paris. About fifty French joined us. Our order of march was easily arranged; the ill success which had attended our division, determined Adrian to keep all in one body. I, with an hundred men, went forward first as purveyor, taking the road of the Cote d'Or, through Auxerre, Dijon, Dole, over the Jura to Geneva. I was to make arrangements, at every ten miles, for the accommodation of such numbers as I found the town or village would receive, leaving behind a messenger with a written order, signifying how many were to be quartered there. The remainder of our tribe was then divided into bands of fifty each, every division containing eighteen men, and the remainder, consisting of women and children. Each of these was headed by an officer, who carried the roll of names, by which they were each day to be mustered. If the numbers were divided at night, in the morning those in the van waited for those in the rear. At each of the large towns before mentioned, we were all to assemble; and a conclave of the principal officers would hold council for the general weal. I went first, as I said; Adrian last. His mother, with Clara and Evelyn under her protection, remained also with him. Thus our order being determined, I departed. My plan was to go at first no further than Fontainebleau, where in a few days I should be joined by Adrian, before I took flight again further eastward.

My friend accompanied me a few miles from Versailles. He was sad; and, in a tone of unaccustomed despondency, uttered a prayer for our speedy arrival among the Alps, accompanied with an expression of vain regret that we were not already there. "In that case," I observed, "we can quicken our march; why adhere to a plan whose dilatory proceeding you already disapprove?"

"Nay," replied he, "it is too late now. A month ago, and we were masters of ourselves; now,—" he turned his face from me; though gathering twilight had already veiled its expression, he turned it yet more away, as he added —"a man died of the plague last night!"

He spoke in a smothered voice, then suddenly clasping his hands, he exclaimed, "Swiftly, most swiftly advances the last hour for us all; as the stars vanish before the sun, so will his near approach destroy us. I have done my best; with grasping hands and impotent strength, I have hung on the wheel of the chariot of plague; but she drags me along with it, while, like Juggernaut, she proceeds crushing out the being of all who strew the high road of life. Would that it were over—would that her procession achieved, we had all entered the tomb together!"

Tears streamed from his eyes. "Again and again," he continued, "will the tragedy be acted; again I must hear the groans of the dying, the wailing of the survivors; again witness the pangs, which, consummating all, envelope an eternity in their evanescent existence. Why am I reserved for this? Why the tainted wether of the flock, am I not struck to earth among the first? It is hard, very hard, for one of woman born to endure all that I endure!"

960

Hitherto, with an undaunted spirit, and an high feeling of duty and worth, Adrian had fulfilled his self-imposed task. I had contemplated him with reverence, and a fruitless desire of imitation. I now offered a few words of encouragement and sympathy. He hid his face in his hands, and while he strove to calm himself, he ejaculated, "For a few months, yet for a few months more, let not, O God, my heart fail, or my courage be bowed down; let not sights of intolerable misery madden this half-crazed brain, or cause this frail heart to beat against its prison-bound, so that it burst. I have believed it to be my destiny to guide and rule the last of the race of man, till death extinguish my government; and to this destiny I submit.

"Pardon me, Verney, I pain you, but I will no longer complain. Now I am myself again, or rather I am better than myself. You have known how from my childhood aspiring thoughts and high

desires have warred with inherent disease and overstrained sensitiveness, till the latter became victors. You know how I placed this wasted feeble hand on the abandoned helm of human government. I have been visited at times by intervals of fluctuation; yet, until now, I have felt as if a superior and indefatigable spirit had taken up its abode within me or rather incorporated itself with my weaker being. The holy visitant has for a time slept, perhaps to show me how powerless I am without its inspiration. Yet, stay for a while, O Power of goodness and strength; disdain not yet this rent shrine of fleshly mortality, O immortal Capability! While one fellow creature remains to whom aid can be afforded, stay by and prop your shattered, falling engine!"

His vehemence, and voice broken by irrepressible sighs, sunk to my heart; his eyes gleamed in the gloom of night like two earthly stars; and, his form dilating, his countenance beaming, truly it almost seemed as if at his eloquent appeal a more than mortal spirit entered his frame, exalting him above humanity. He turned quickly towards me, and held out his hand. "Farewell, Verney," he cried, "brother of my love, farewell; no other weak expression must cross these lips, I am alive again: to our tasks, to our combats with our unvanquishable foe, for to the last I will struggle against her."

He grasped my hand, and bent a look on me, more fervent and animated than any smile; then turning his horse's head, he touched the animal with the spur, and was out of sight in a moment.

A man last night had died of the plague. The quiver was not emptied, nor the bow unstrung. We stood as marks, while Parthian Pestilence aimed and shot, insatiated by conquest, unobstructed by the heaps of slain. A sickness of the soul, contagious even to my physical mechanism, came over me. My knees knocked together, my teeth chattered, the current of my blood, clotted by sudden cold, painfully forced its way from my heavy heart. I did not fear for myself, but it was misery to think that we could not even save this remnant. That those I loved might in a few days be as clay-cold as Idris in her antique tomb; nor could strength of body or energy of mind ward off the blow.

A sense of degradation came over me. Did God create man, merely in the end to become dead earth in the midst of healthful vegetating nature? Was he of no more account to his Maker, than a field of corn blighted in the ear? Were our proud dreams thus to fade? Our name was written "a little lower than the angels;" and, behold, we were no better than ephemera. We had called ourselves the "paragon of animals," and, lo! we were a "quint-essence of dust." We repined that the pyramids had outlasted the embalmed body of their builder. Alas! the mere shepherd's hut of straw we passed on the road, contained in its structure the principle of greater longevity than the whole race of man. How reconcile this sad change to our past aspirations, to our apparent powers!

Sudden an internal voice, articulate and clear, seemed to say:—Thus from eternity, it was decreed: the steeds that bear Time onwards had this hour and this fulfilment enchained to them, since the void brought forth its burthen. Would you read backwards the unchangeable laws of Necessity?

Mother of the world! Servant of the Omnipotent! eternal, changeless Necessity! who with busy fingers sittest ever weaving the indissoluble chain of events!—I will not murmur at thy acts. If my human mind cannot acknowledge that all that is, is right; yet since what is, must be, I will sit amidst the ruins and smile. Truly we were not born to enjoy, but to submit, and to hope.

Will not the reader tire, if I should minutely describe our long-drawn journey from Paris to Geneva? If, day by day, I should record, in the form of a journal, the thronging miseries of our lot, could my hand write, or language afford words to express, the variety of our woe; the hustling and crowding of one deplorable event upon another? Patience, oh reader! whoever thou art, wherever thou dwellest, whether of race spiritual, or, sprung from some surviving pair, thy nature will be human, thy habitation the earth; thou wilt here read of the acts of the extinct race, and wilt ask wonderingly, if they, who suffered what thou findest recorded, were of frail flesh and soft organization like thyself. Most true, they were— weep therefore; for surely, solitary being, thou wilt be of gentle disposition; shed compassionate tears; but the while

lend thy attention to the tale, and learn the deeds and sufferings of thy predecessors.

Yet the last events that marked our progress through France were so full of strange horror and gloomy misery, that I dare not pause too long in the narration. If I were to dissect each incident, every small fragment of a second would contain an harrowing tale, whose minutest word would curdle the blood in thy young veins. It is right that I should erect for thy instruction this monument of the foregone race; but not that I should drag thee through the wards of an hospital, nor the secret chambers of the charnel-house. This tale, therefore, shall be rapidly unfolded. Images of destruction, pictures of despair, the procession of the last triumph of death, shall be drawn before thee, swift as the rack driven by the north wind along the blotted splendour of the sky.

Weed-grown fields, desolate towns, the wild approach of riderless horses had now become habitual to my eyes; nay, sights far worse, of the unburied dead, and human forms which were strewn on the road side, and on the steps of once frequented habitations, where,

970

Through the flesh that wastes away
Beneath the parching sun, the whitening bones
Start forth, and moulder in the sable dust.

—ELTON'S TRANSLATION OF HESIOD'S "SHIELD OF HERCULES"

Sights like these had become—ah, woe the while! so familiar, that we had ceased to shudder, or spur our stung horses to sudden speed, as we passed them. France in its best days, at least that part of France through which we travelled, had been a cultivated desert, and the absence of enclosures, of cottages, and even of peasantry, was saddening to a traveller from sunny Italy, or busy England. Yet the towns were frequent and lively, and the cordial politeness and ready smile of the wooden-shoed peasant restored good humour to the splenetic. Now, the old woman sat no more at the door with her distaff—the lank beggar no longer asked charity in courtier-like phrase; nor on holidays did the peasantry thread with slow grace the mazes of the dance. Silence, melancholy bride of death, went in procession with him from town to town through the spacious region.

We arrived at Fontainebleau, and speedily prepared for the reception of our friends. On mustering our numbers for the night, three were found missing. When I enquired for them, the man to whom I spoke, uttered the word "plague," and fell at my feet in convulsions; he also was infected. There were hard faces around me; for among my troop were sailors who had crossed the line times unnumbered, soldiers who, in Russia and far America, had suffered famine, cold and danger, and men still sterner-featured, once nightly depredators in our over-grown metropolis; men bred from their cradle to see the whole machine of society at work for their destruction. I looked round, and saw upon the faces of all horror and despair written in glaring characters.

We passed four days at Fontainebleau. Several sickened and died, and in the mean time neither Adrian nor any of our friends appeared. My own troop was in commotion; to reach Switzerland, to plunge into rivers of snow, and to dwell in caves of ice, became the mad desire of all. Yet we had promised to wait for the Earl; and he came not. My people demanded to be led forward—rebellion, if so we might call what was the mere casting away of straw-formed shackles, appeared manifestly among them. They would away on the word without a leader. The only chance of safety, the only hope of preservation from every form of indescribable suffering, was our keeping together. I told them this; while the most determined among them answered with sullenness, that they could take care of themselves, and replied to my entreaties with scoffs and menaces.

At length, on the fifth day, a messenger arrived from Adrian, bearing letters, which directed us to proceed to Auxerre, and there await his arrival, which would only be deferred for a few days. Such was the tenor of his public letters. Those privately delivered to me, detailed at length the difficulties of his situation, and left the arrangement of my future plans to my own discretion. His account of the state of affairs at Versailles was brief, but the oral communications of his messenger filled up his omissions, and shewed me that perils of the most frightful nature were gathering around him. At first the re-awakening of the plague had been concealed; but the number of deaths encreasing, the secret was

divulged, and the destruction already achieved, was exaggerated by the fears of the survivors. Some emissaries of the enemy of mankind, the accursed Impostors, were among them instilling their doctrine that safety and life could only be ensured by submission to their chief; and they succeeded so well, that soon, instead of desiring to proceed to Switzerland, the major part of the multitude, weak-minded women, and dastardly men, desired to return to Paris, and, by ranging themselves under the banners of the so called prophet, and by a cowardly worship of the principle of evil, to purchase respite, as they hoped, from impending death. The discord and tumult induced by these conflicting fears and passions, detained Adrian. It required all his ardour in pursuit of an object, and his patience under difficulties, to calm and animate such a number of his followers, as might counterbalance the panic of the rest, and lead them back to the means from which alone safety could be derived. He had hoped immediately to follow me; but, being defeated in this intention, he sent his messenger urging me to secure my own troop at such a distance from Versailles, as to prevent the contagion of rebellion from reaching them; promising, at the same time, to join me the moment a favourable occasion should occur, by means of which he could withdraw the main body of the emigrants from the evil influence at present exercised over them.

I was thrown into a most painful state of uncertainty by these communications. My first impulse was that we should all return to Versailles, there to assist in extricating our chief from his perils. I accordingly assembled my troop, and proposed to them this retrograde movement, instead of the continuation of our journey to Auxerre. With one voice they refused to comply. The notion circulated among them was, that the ravages of the plague alone detained the Protector; they opposed his order to my request; they came to a resolve to proceed without me, should I refuse to accompany them. Argument and adjuration were lost on these dastards. The continual diminution of their own numbers, effected by pestilence, added a sting to their dislike of delay; and my opposition only served to bring their resolution to a crisis. That same evening they departed towards Auxerre. Oaths, as from

soldiers to their general, had been taken by them: these they broke. I also had engaged myself not to desert them; it appeared to me inhuman to ground any infraction of my word on theirs. The same spirit that caused them to rebel against me, would impel them to desert each other; and the most dreadful sufferings would be the consequence of their journey in their present unordered and chiefless array. These feelings for a time were paramount; and, in obedience to them, I accompanied the rest towards Auxerre. We arrived the same night at Villeneuve-la-Guiard, a town at the distance of four posts from Fontainebleau. When my companions had retired to rest, and I was left alone to revolve and ruminate upon the intelligence I received of Adrian's situation, another view of the subject presented itself to me. What was I doing, and what was the object of my present movements? Apparently I was to lead this troop of selfish and lawless men towards Switzerland, leaving behind my family and my selected friend, which, subject as they were hourly to the death that threatened to all, I might never see again. Was it not my first duty to assist the Protector, setting an example of attachment and duty? At a crisis, such as the one I had reached, it is very difficult to balance nicely opposing interests, and that towards which our inclinations lead us, obstinately assumes the appearance of selfishness, even when we meditate a sacrifice. We are easily led at such times to make a compromise of the question; and this was my present resource. I resolved that very night to ride to Versailles; if I found affairs less desperate than I now deemed them, I would return without delay to my troop; I had a vague idea that my arrival at that town, would occasion some sensation more or less strong, of which we might profit, for the purpose of leading forward the vacillating multitude—at least no time was to be lost—I visited the stables, I saddled my favourite horse, and vaulting on his back, without giving myself time for further reflection or hesitation, quitted Villeneuve-la-Guiard on my return to Versailles.

I was glad to escape from my rebellious troop, and to lose sight for a time, of the strife of evil with good, where the former for ever remained triumphant. I was stung almost to madness by my uncertainty concerning the fate of Adrian, and grew reckless

of any event, except what might lose or preserve my unequalled friend. With an heavy heart, that sought relief in the rapidity of my course, I rode through the night to Versailles. I spurred my horse, who addressed his free limbs to speed, and tossed his gallant head in pride. The constellations reeled swiftly by, swiftly each tree and stone and landmark fled past my onward career. I bared my head to the rushing wind, which bathed my brow in delightful coolness. As I lost sight of Villeneuve-la-Guiard, I forgot the sad drama of human misery; methought it was happiness enough to live, sensitive the while of the beauty of the verdure-clad earth, the star-bespangled sky, and the tameless wind that lent animation to the whole. My horse grew tired—and I, forgetful of his fatigue, still as he lagged, cheered him with my voice, and urged him with the spur. He was a gallant animal, and I did not wish to exchange him for any chance beast I might light on, leaving him never to be refound. All night we went forward; in the morning he became sensible that we approached Versailles, to reach which as his home, he mustered his flagging strength. The distance we had come was not less than fifty miles, yet he shot down the long Boulevards swift as an arrow; poor fellow, as I dismounted at the gate of the castle, he sunk on his knees, his eyes were covered with a film, he fell on his side, a few gasps inflated his noble chest, and he died. I saw him expire with an anguish, unaccountable even to myself, the spasm was as the wrenching of some limb in agonizing torture, but it was brief as it was intolerable. I forgot him, as I swiftly darted through the open portal, and up the majestic stairs of this castle of victories—heard Adrian's voice—O fool! O woman nurtured, effeminate and contemptible being—I heard his voice, and answered it with convulsive shrieks; I rushed into the Hall of Hercules, where he stood surrounded by a crowd, whose eyes, turned in wonder on me, reminded me that on the stage of the world, a man must repress such girlish extacies. I would have given worlds to have embraced him; I dared not—Half in exhaustion, half voluntarily, I threw myself at my length on the ground— dare I disclose the truth to the gentle offspring of solitude? I did so, that I might kiss the dear and sacred earth he trod.

I found everything in a state of tumult. An emissary of the leader of the elect, had been so worked up by his chief, and by his own fanatical creed, as to make an attempt on the life of the Protector and preserver of lost mankind. His hand was arrested while in the act of poignarding the Earl; this circumstance had caused the clamour I heard on my arrival at the castle, and the confused assembly of persons that I found assembled in the Salle d'Hercule. Although superstition and demoniac fury had crept among the emigrants, yet several adhered with fidelity to their noble chieftain; and many, whose faith and love had been unhinged by fear, felt all their latent affection rekindled by this detestable attempt. A phalanx of faithful breasts closed round him; the wretch, who, although a prisoner and in bonds, vaunted his design, and madly claimed the crown of martyrdom, would have been torn to pieces, had not his intended victim interposed. Adrian, springing forward, shielded him with his own person, and commanded with energy the submission of his infuriate friends—at this moment I had entered.

Discipline and peace were at length restored in the castle; and then Adrian went from house to house, from troop to troop, to soothe the disturbed minds of his followers, and recall them to their ancient obedience. But the fear of immediate death was still rife amongst these survivors of a world's destruction; the horror occasioned by the attempted assassination, past away; each eye turned towards Paris. Men love a prop so well, that they will lean on a pointed poisoned spear; and such was he, the impostor, who, with fear of hell for his scourge, most ravenous wolf, played the driver to a credulous flock.

It was a moment of suspense, that shook even the resolution of the unyielding friend of man. Adrian for one moment was about to give in, to cease the struggle, and quit, with a few adherents, the deluded crowd, leaving them a miserable prey to their passions, and to the worse tyrant who excited them. But again, after a brief fluctuation of purpose, he resumed his courage and resolves, sustained by the singleness of his purpose, and the untried spirit of benevolence which animated him. At this moment, as an omen of excellent import, his wretched enemy

pulled destruction on his head, destroying with his own hands the dominion he had erected.

His grand hold upon the minds of men, took its rise from the doctrine inculcated by him, that those who believed in, and followed him, were the remnant to be saved, while all the rest of mankind were marked out for death. Now, at the time of the Flood, the omnipotent repented him that he had created man, and as then with water, now with the arrows of pestilence, was about to annihilate all, except those who obeyed his decrees, promulgated by the ipse dixit prophet. It is impossible to say on what foundations this man built his hopes of being able to carry on such an imposture. It is likely that he was fully aware of the lie which murderous nature might give to his assertions, and believed it to be the cast of a die, whether he should in future ages be revered as an inspired delegate from heaven, or be recognized as an impostor by the present dying generation. At any rate he resolved to keep up the drama to the last act. When, on the first approach of summer, the fatal disease again made its ravages among the followers of Adrian, the impostor exultingly proclaimed the exemption of his own congregation from the universal calamity. He was believed; his followers, hitherto shut up in Paris, now came to Versailles. Mingling with the coward band there assembled, they reviled their admirable leader, and asserted their own superiority and exemption. At length the plague, slow-footed, but sure in her noiseless advance, destroyed the illusion, invading the congregation of the elect, and showering promiscuous death among them. Their leader endeavoured to conceal this event; he had a few followers, who, admitted into the arcana of his wickedness, could help him in the execution of his nefarious designs. Those who sickened were immediately and quietly withdrawn, the cord and a midnight-grave disposed of them for ever; while some plausible excuse was given for their absence. At last a female, whose maternal vigilance subdued even the effects of the narcotics administered to her, became a witness of their murderous designs on her only child. Mad with horror, she would have burst among her deluded fellow-victims, and, wildly shrieking, have awaked the dull ear of night with the

history of the fiend-like crime; when the Impostor, in his last act of rage and desperation, plunged a poignard in her bosom. Thus wounded to death, her garments dripping with her own life-blood, bearing her strangled infant in her arms, beautiful and young as she was, Juliet, (for it was she) denounced to the host of deceived believers, the wickedness of their leader. He saw the aghast looks of her auditors, changing from horror to fury—the names of those already sacrificed were echoed by their relatives, now assured of their loss. The wretch with that energy of purpose, which had borne him thus far in his guilty career, saw his danger, and resolved to evade the worst forms of it—he rushed on one of the foremost, seized a pistol from his girdle, and his loud laugh of derision mingled with the report of the weapon with which he destroyed himself.

They left his miserable remains even where they lay; they placed the corpse of poor Juliet and her babe upon a bier, and all, with hearts subdued to saddest regret, in long procession walked towards Versailles. They met troops of those who had quitted the kindly protection of Adrian, and were journeying to join the fanatics. The tale of horror was recounted—all turned back; and thus at last, accompanied by the undiminished numbers of surviving humanity, and preceded by the mournful emblem of their recovered reason, they appeared before Adrian, and again and for ever vowed obedience to his commands, and fidelity to his cause.

Chapter VII

These events occupied so much time, that June had numbered more than half its days, before we again commenced our long-protracted journey. The day after my return to Versailles, six men, from among those I had left at Villeneuve-la-Guiard, arrived, with intelligence, that the rest of the troop had already proceeded towards Switzerland. We went forward in the same track.

It is strange, after an interval of time, to look back on a period, which, though short in itself, appeared, when in actual progress, to be drawn out interminably. By the end of July we entered

Dijon; by the end of July those hours, days, and weeks had mingled with the ocean of forgotten time, which in their passage teemed with fatal events and agonizing sorrow. By the end of July, little more than a month had gone by, if man's life were measured by the rising and setting of the sun: but, alas! in that interval ardent youth had become grey-haired; furrows deep and uneraseable were trenched in the blooming cheek of the young mother; the elastic limbs of early manhood, paralyzed as by the burthen of years, assumed the decrepitude of age. Nights passed, during whose fatal darkness the sun grew old before it rose; and burning days, to cool whose baleful heat the balmy eve, lingering far in eastern climes, came lagging and ineffectual; days, in which the dial, radiant in its noon-day station, moved not its shadow the space of a little hour, until a whole life of sorrow had brought the sufferer to an untimely grave.

We departed from Versailles fifteen hundred souls. We set out on the eighteenth of June. We made a long procession, in which was contained every dear relationship, or tie of love, that existed in human society. Fathers and husbands, with guardian care, gathered their dear relatives around them; wives and mothers looked for support to the manly form beside them, and then with tender anxiety bent their eyes on the infant troop around. They were sad, but not hopeless. Each thought that someone would be saved; each, with that pertinacious optimism, which to the last characterized our human nature, trusted that their beloved family would be the one preserved.

We passed through France, and found it empty of inhabitants. Some one or two natives survived in the larger towns, which they roamed through like ghosts; we received therefore small encrease to our numbers, and such decrease through death, that at last it became easier to count the scanty list of survivors. As we never deserted any of the sick, until their death permitted us to commit their remains to the shelter of a grave, our journey was long, while every day a frightful gap was made in our troop—they died by tens, by fifties, by hundreds. No mercy was shewn by death; we ceased to expect it, and every day welcomed the sun with the feeling that we might never see it rise again.

The nervous terrors and fearful visions which had scared us during the spring, continued to visit our coward troop during this sad journey. Every evening brought its fresh creation of spectres; a ghost was depicted by every blighted tree; and appalling shapes were manufactured from each shaggy bush. By degrees these common marvels palled on us, and then other wonders were called into being. Once it was confidently asserted, that the sun rose an hour later than its seasonable time; again it was discovered that he grew paler and paler; that shadows took an uncommon appearance. It was impossible to have imagined, during the usual calm routine of life men had before experienced, the terrible effects produced by these extravagant delusions: in truth, of such little worth are our senses, when unsupported by concurring testimony, that it was with the utmost difficulty I kept myself free from the belief in supernatural events, to which the major part of our people readily gave credit. Being one sane amidst a crowd of the mad, I hardly dared assert to my own mind, that the vast luminary had undergone no change—that the shadows of night were unthickened by innumerable shapes of awe and terror; or that the wind, as it sung in the trees, or whistled round an empty building, was not pregnant with sounds of wailing and despair. Sometimes realities took ghostly shapes; and it was impossible for one's blood not to curdle at the perception of an evident mixture of what we knew to be true, with the visionary semblance of all that we feared.

Once, at the dusk of the evening, we saw a figure all in white, apparently of more than human stature, flourishing about the road, now throwing up its arms, now leaping to an astonishing height in the air, then turning round several times successively, then raising itself to its full height and gesticulating violently. Our troop, on the alert to discover and believe in the supernatural, made a halt at some distance from this shape; and, as it became darker, there was something appalling even to the incredulous, in the lonely spectre, whose gambols, if they hardly accorded with spiritual dignity, were beyond human powers. Now it leapt right up in the air, now sheer over a high hedge, and was again the moment after in the road before us. By the time I came up, the

fright experienced by the spectators of this ghostly exhibition, began to manifest itself in the flight of some, and the close huddling together of the rest. Our goblin now perceived us; he approached, and, as we drew reverentially back, made a low bow. The sight was irresistibly ludicrous even to our hapless band, and his politeness was hailed by a shout of laughter;—then, again springing up, as a last effort, it sunk to the ground, and became almost invisible through the dusky night. This circumstance again spread silence and fear through the troop; the more courageous at length advanced, and, raising the dying wretch, discovered the tragic explanation of this wild scene. It was an opera-dancer, and had been one of the troop which deserted from Villeneuve-la-Guiard: falling sick, he had been deserted by his companions; in an access of delirium he had fancied himself on the stage, and, poor fellow, his dying sense eagerly accepted the last human applause that could ever be bestowed on his grace and agility.

At another time we were haunted for several days by an apparition, to which our people gave the appellation of the Black Spectre. We never saw it except at evening, when his coal black steed, his mourning dress, and plume of black feathers, had a majestic and awe-striking appearance; his face, one said, who had seen it for a moment, was ashy pale; he had lingered far behind the rest of his troop, and suddenly at a turn in the road, saw the Black Spectre coming towards him; he hid himself in fear, and the horse and his rider slowly past, while the moonbeams fell on the face of the latter, displaying its unearthly hue. Sometimes at dead of night, as we watched the sick, we heard one galloping through the town; it was the Black Spectre come in token of inevitable death. He grew giant tall to vulgar eyes; an icy atmosphere, they said, surrounded him; when he was heard, all animals shuddered, and the dying knew that their last hour was come. It was Death himself, they declared, come visibly to seize on subject earth, and quell at once our decreasing numbers, sole rebels to his law. One day at noon, we saw a dark mass on the road before us, and, coming up, beheld the Black Spectre fallen from his horse, lying in the agonies of disease upon the ground. He did not survive many hours; and his last words disclosed the secret of his

mysterious conduct. He was a French noble of distinction, who, from the effects of plague, had been left alone in his district; during many months, he had wandered from town to town, from province to province, seeking some survivor for a companion, and abhorring the loneliness to which he was condemned. When he discovered our troop, fear of contagion conquered his love of society. He dared not join us, yet he could not resolve to lose sight of us, sole human beings who besides himself existed in wide and fertile France; so he accompanied us in the spectral guise I have described, till pestilence gathered him to a larger congregation, even that of Dead Mankind.

It had been well, if such vain terrors could have distracted our thoughts from more tangible evils. But these were too dreadful and too many not to force themselves into every thought, every moment, of our lives. We were obliged to halt at different periods for days together, till another and yet another was consigned as a clod to the vast clod which had been once our living mother. Thus we continued travelling during the hottest season; and it was not till the first of August, that we, the emigrants,—reader, there were just eighty of us in number,—entered the gates of Dijon.

[3]

990

This was all over, now that the ocean of death had sucked in the slackening tide, and its source was dried up. We first had bidden adieu to the state of things which having existed many thousand years, seemed eternal; such a state of government, obedience, traffic, and domestic intercourse, as had moulded our hearts and capacities, as far back as memory could reach. Then to patriotic zeal, to the arts, to reputation, to enduring fame, to the name of country, we had bidden farewell. We saw depart all hope of retrieving our ancient state—all expectation, except the feeble one of saving our individual lives from the wreck of the past. To preserve these we had quitted England—England, no more; for without her children, what name could that barren island claim? With tenacious grasp we clung to such rule and order as could best save us; trusting that, if a little colony could be preserved, that would suffice at some remoter period to restore the lost community of mankind.

But the game is up! We must all die; nor leave survivor nor heir to the wide inheritance of earth. We must all die! The species of man must perish; his frame of exquisite workmanship; the wondrous mechanism of his senses; the noble proportion of his godlike limbs; his mind, the throned king of these; must perish. Will the earth still keep her place among the planets; will she still journey with unmarked regularity round the sun; will the seasons change, the trees adorn themselves with leaves, and flowers shed their fragrance, in solitude? Will the mountains remain unmoved, and streams still keep a downward course towards the vast abyss; will the tides rise and fall, and the winds fan universal nature; will beasts pasture, birds fly, and fishes swim, when man, the lord, possessor, perceiver, and recorder of all these things, has passed away, as though he had never been? O, what mockery is this! Surely death is not death, and humanity is not extinct; but merely passed into other shapes, unsubjected to our perceptions. Death is a vast portal, an high road to life: let us hasten to pass; let us exist no more in this living death, but die that we may live!

We had longed with inexpressible earnestness to reach Dijon, since we had fixed on it, as a kind of station in our progress. But now we entered it with a torpor more painful than acute suffering. We had come slowly but irrevocably to the opinion, that our utmost efforts would not preserve one human being alive. We took our hands therefore away from the long grasped rudder; and the frail vessel on which we floated, seemed, the government over her suspended, to rush, prow foremost, into the dark abyss of the billows. A gush of grief, a wanton profusion of tears, and vain laments, and overflowing tenderness, and passionate but fruitless clinging to the priceless few that remained, was followed by languor and recklessness.

During this disastrous journey we lost all those, not of our own family, to whom we had particularly attached ourselves among the survivors. It were not well to fill these pages with a mere catalogue of losses; yet I cannot refrain from this last mention of those principally dear to us. The little girl whom Adrian had rescued from utter desertion, during our ride through London on the twentieth of November, died at Auxerre. The poor child had

attached herself greatly to us; and the suddenness of her death added to our sorrow. In the morning we had seen her apparently in health—in the evening, Lucy, before we retired to rest, visited our quarters to say that she was dead. Poor Lucy herself only survived, till we arrived at Dijon. She had devoted herself throughout to the nursing the sick, and attending the friendless. Her excessive exertions brought on a slow fever, which ended in the dread disease whose approach soon released her from her sufferings. She had throughout been endeared to us by her good qualities, by her ready and cheerful execution of every duty, and mild acquiescence in every turn of adversity. When we consigned her to the tomb, we seemed at the same time to bid a final adieu to those peculiarly feminine virtues conspicuous in her; uneducated and unpretending as she was, she was distinguished for patience, forbearance, and sweetness. These, with all their train of qualities peculiarly English, would never again be revived for us. This type of all that was most worthy of admiration in her class among my countrywomen, was placed under the sod of desert France; and it was as a second separation from our country to have lost sight of her for ever.

The Countess of Windsor died during our abode at Dijon. One morning I was informed that she wished to see me. Her message made me remember, that several days had elapsed since I had last seen her. Such a circumstance had often occurred during our journey, when I remained behind to watch to their close the last moments of some one of our hapless comrades, and the rest of the troop past on before me. But there was something in the manner of her messenger, that made me suspect that all was not right. A caprice of the imagination caused me to conjecture that some ill had occurred to Clara or Evelyn, rather than to this aged lady. Our fears, for ever on the stretch, demanded a nourishment of horror; and it seemed too natural an occurrence, too like past times, for the old to die before the young. I found the venerable mother of my Idris lying on a couch, her tall emaciated figure stretched out; her face fallen away, from which the nose stood out in sharp profile, and her large dark eyes, hollow and deep, gleamed with such light as may edge a thunder cloud at sun-set. All was

shrivelled and dried up, except these lights; her voice too was fearfully changed, as she spoke to me at intervals. "I am afraid," said she, "that it is selfish in me to have asked you to visit the old woman again, before she dies: yet perhaps it would have been a greater shock to hear suddenly that I was dead, than to see me first thus."

I clasped her shrivelled hand: "Are you indeed so ill?" I asked.

"Do you not perceive death in my face," replied she, "it is strange; I ought to have expected this, and yet I confess it has taken me unaware. I never clung to life, or enjoyed it, till these last months, while among those I senselessly deserted: and it is hard to be snatched immediately away. I am glad, however, that I am not a victim of the plague; probably I should have died at this hour, though the world had continued as it was in my youth."

She spoke with difficulty, and I perceived that she regretted the necessity of death, even more than she cared to confess. Yet she had not to complain of an undue shortening of existence; her faded person shewed that life had naturally spent itself. We had been alone at first; now Clara entered; the Countess turned to her with a smile, and took the hand of this lovely child; her roseate palm and snowy fingers, contrasted with relaxed fibres and yellow hue of those of her aged friend; she bent to kiss her, touching her withered mouth with the warm, full lips of youth. "Verney," said the Countess, "I need not recommend this dear girl to you, for your own sake you will preserve her. Were the world as it was, I should have a thousand sage precautions to impress, that one so sensitive, good, and beauteous, might escape the dangers that used to lurk for the destruction of the fair and excellent. This is all nothing now.

"I commit you, my kind nurse, to your uncle's care; to yours I entrust the dearest relic of my better self. Be to Adrian, sweet one, what you have been to me—enliven his sadness with your sprightly sallies; sooth his anguish by your sober and inspired converse, when he is dying; nurse him as you have done me."

Clara burst into tears; "Kind girl," said the Countess, "do not weep for me. Many dear friends are left to you."

"And yet," cried Clara, "you talk of their dying also. This is indeed cruel —how could I live, if they were gone? If it were possible for my beloved protector to die before me, I could not nurse him; I could only die too."

The venerable lady survived this scene only twenty-four hours. She was the last tie binding us to the ancient state of things. It was impossible to look on her, and not call to mind in their wonted guise, events and persons, as alien to our present situation as the disputes of Themistocles and Aristides, or the wars of the two roses in our native land. The crown of England had pressed her brow; the memory of my father and his misfortunes, the vain struggles of the late king, the images of Raymond, Evadne, and Perdita, who had lived in the world's prime, were brought vividly before us. We consigned her to the oblivious tomb with reluctance; and when I turned from her grave, Janus veiled his retrospective face; that which gazed on future generations had long lost its faculty.

After remaining a week at Dijon, until thirty of our number deserted the vacant ranks of life, we continued our way towards Geneva. At noon on the second day we arrived at the foot of Jura. We halted here during the heat of the day. Here fifty human beings—fifty, the only human beings that survived of the food-teeming earth, assembled to read in the looks of each other ghastly plague, or wasting sorrow, desperation, or worse, carelessness of future or present evil. Here we assembled at the foot of this mighty wall of mountain, under a spreading walnut tree; a brawling stream refreshed the green sward by its sprinkling; and the busy grasshopper chirped among the thyme. We clustered together a group of wretched sufferers. A mother cradled in her enfeebled arms the child, last of many, whose glazed eye was about to close for ever. Here beauty, late glowing in youthful lustre and consciousness, now wan and neglected, knelt fanning with uncertain motion the beloved, who lay striving to paint his features, distorted by illness, with a thankful smile. There an hard-featured, weather-worn veteran, having prepared his meal, sat, his head dropped on his breast, the useless knife falling from his grasp, his limbs utterly relaxed, as thought of

wife and child, and dearest relative, all lost, passed across his recollection. There sat a man who for forty years had basked in fortune's tranquil sunshine; he held the hand of his last hope, his beloved daughter, who had just attained womanhood; and he gazed on her with anxious eyes, while she tried to rally her fainting spirit to comfort him. Here a servant, faithful to the last, though dying, waited on one, who, though still erect with health, gazed with gasping fear on the variety of woe around.

Adrian stood leaning against a tree; he held a book in his hand, but his eye wandered from the pages, and sought mine; they mingled a sympathetic glance; his looks confessed that his thoughts had quitted the inanimate print, for pages more pregnant with meaning, more absorbing, spread out before him. By the margin of the stream, apart from all, in a tranquil nook, where the purling brook kissed the green sward gently, Clara and Evelyn were at play, sometimes beating the water with large boughs, sometimes watching the summer-flies that sported upon it. Evelyn now chased a butterfly—now gathered a flower for his cousin; and his laughing cherub-face and clear brow told of the light heart that beat in his bosom. Clara, though she endeavoured to give herself up to his amusement, often forgot him, as she turned to observe Adrian and me. She was now fourteen, and retained her childish appearance, though in height a woman; she acted the part of the tenderest mother to my little orphan boy; to see her playing with him, or attending silently and submissively on our wants, you thought only of her admirable docility and patience; but, in her soft eyes, and the veined curtains that veiled them, in the clearness of her marmoreal brow, and the tender expression of her lips, there was an intelligence and beauty that at once excited admiration and love.

When the sun had sunk towards the precipitate west, and the evening shadows grew long, we prepared to ascend the mountain. The attention that we were obliged to pay to the sick, made our progress slow. The winding road, though steep, presented a confined view of rocky fields and hills, each hiding the other, till our farther ascent disclosed them in succession. We were seldom shaded from the declining sun, whose slant beams were instinct

with exhausting heat. There are times when minor difficulties grow gigantic —times, when as the Hebrew poet expressively terms it, "the grasshopper is a burthen;" so was it with our ill fated party this evening. Adrian, usually the first to rally his spirits, and dash foremost into fatigue and hardship, with relaxed limbs and declined head, the reins hanging loosely in his grasp, left the choice of the path to the instinct of his horse, now and then painfully rousing himself, when the steepness of the ascent required that he should keep his seat with better care. Fear and horror encompassed me. Did his languid air attest that he also was struck with contagion? How long, when I look on this matchless specimen of mortality, may I perceive that his thought answers mine? how long will those limbs obey the kindly spirit within? how long will light and life dwell in the eyes of this my sole remaining friend? Thus pacing slowly, each hill surmounted, only presented another to be ascended; each jutting corner only discovered another, sister to the last, endlessly. Sometimes the pressure of sickness in one among us, caused the whole cavalcade to halt; the call for water, the eagerly expressed wish to repose; the cry of pain, and suppressed sob of the mourner—such were the sorrowful attendants of our passage of the Jura.

Adrian had gone first. I saw him, while I was detained by the loosening of a girth, struggling with the upward path, seemingly more difficult than any we had yet passed. He reached the top, and the dark outline of his figure stood in relief against the sky. He seemed to behold something unexpected and wonderful; for, pausing, his head stretched out, his arms for a moment extended, he seemed to give an All Hail! to some new vision. Urged by curiosity, I hurried to join him. After battling for many tedious minutes with the precipice, the same scene presented itself to me, which had wrapt him in extatic wonder.

Nature, or nature's favourite, this lovely earth, presented her most unrivalled beauties in resplendent and sudden exhibition. Below, far, far below, even as it were in the yawning abyss of the ponderous globe, lay the placid and azure expanse of lake Lemán; vine-covered hills hedged it in, and behind dark mountains in cone-like shape, or irregular cyclopean wall, served for further

defence. But beyond, and high above all, as if the spirits of the air had suddenly unveiled their bright abodes, placed in scaleless altitude in the stainless sky, heaven-kissing, companions of the unattainable ether, were the glorious Alps, clothed in dazzling robes of light by the setting sun. And, as if the world's wonders were never to be exhausted, their vast immensities, their jagged crags, and roseate painting, appeared again in the lake below, dipping their proud heights beneath the unruffled waves—palaces for the Naiads of the placid waters. Towns and villages lay scattered at the foot of Jura, which, with dark ravine, and black promontories, stretched its roots into the watery expanse beneath. Carried away by wonder, I forgot the death of man, and the living and beloved friend near me. When I turned, I saw tears streaming from his eyes; his thin hands pressed one against the other, his animated countenance beaming with admiration; "Why," cried he, at last, "Why, oh heart, whisperest thou of grief to me? Drink in the beauty of that scene, and possess delight beyond what a fabled paradise could afford."

By degrees, our whole party surmounting the steep, joined us, not one among them, but gave visible tokens of admiration, surpassing any before experienced. One cried, "God reveals his heaven to us; we may die blessed." Another and another, with broken exclamations, and extravagant phrases, endeavoured to express the intoxicating effect of this wonder of nature. So we remained awhile, lightened of the pressing burthen of fate, forgetful of death, into whose night we were about to plunge; no longer reflecting that our eyes now and for ever were and would be the only ones which might perceive the divine magnificence of this terrestrial exhibition. An enthusiastic transport, akin to happiness, burst, like a sudden ray from the sun, on our darkened life. Precious attribute of woe-worn humanity! that can snatch extatic emotion, even from under the very share and harrow, that ruthlessly ploughs up and lays waste every hope.

This evening was marked by another event. Passing through Ferney in our way to Geneva, unaccustomed sounds of music arose from the rural church which stood embosomed in trees, surrounded by smokeless, vacant cottages. The peal of an organ

with rich swell awoke the mute air, lingering along, and mingling with the intense beauty that clothed the rocks and woods, and waves around. Music—the language of the immortals, disclosed to us as testimony of their existence—music, "silver key of the fountain of tears," child of love, soother of grief, inspirer of heroism and radiant thoughts, O music, in this our desolation, we had forgotten thee! Nor pipe at eve cheered us, nor harmony of voice, nor linked thrill of string; thou camest upon us now, like the revealing of other forms of being; and transported as we had been by the loveliness of nature, fancying that we beheld the abode of spirits, now we might well imagine that we heard their melodious communings. We paused in such awe as would seize on a pale votarist, visiting some holy shrine at midnight; if she beheld animated and smiling, the image which she worshipped. We all stood mute; many knelt. In a few minutes however, we were recalled to human wonder and sympathy by a familiar strain. The air was Haydn's "New-Created World," and, old and drooping as humanity had become, the world yet fresh as at creation's day, might still be worthily celebrated by such an hymn of praise. Adrian and I entered the church; the nave was empty, though the smoke of incense rose from the altar, bringing with it the recollection of vast congregations, in once thronged cathedrals; we went into the loft. A blind old man sat at the bellows; his whole soul was ear; and as he sat in the attitude of attentive listening, a bright glow of pleasure was diffused over his countenance; for, though his lack-lustre eye could not reflect the beam, yet his parted lips, and every line of his face and venerable brow spoke delight. A young woman sat at the keys, perhaps twenty years of age. Her auburn hair hung on her neck, and her fair brow shone in its own beauty; but her drooping eyes let fall fast-flowing tears, while the constraint she exercised to suppress her sobs, and still her trembling, flushed her else pale cheek; she was thin; languor, and alas! sickness, bent her form. We stood looking at the pair, forgetting what we heard in the absorbing sight; till, the last chord struck, the peal died away in lessening reverberations. The mighty voice, inorganic we might call it, for we could in no way associate it with mechanism of pipe or key,

stilled its sonorous tone, and the girl, turning to lend her assistance to her aged companion, at length perceived us.

It was her father; and she, since childhood, had been the guide of his darkened steps. They were Germans from Saxony, and, emigrating thither but a few years before, had formed new ties with the surrounding villagers. About the time that the pestilence had broken out, a young German student had joined them. Their simple history was easily divined. He, a noble, loved the fair daughter of the poor musician, and followed them in their flight from the persecutions of his friends; but soon the mighty leveller came with unblunted scythe to mow, together with the grass, the tall flowers of the field. The youth was an early victim. She preserved herself for her father's sake. His blindness permitted her to continue a delusion, at first the child of accident—and now solitary beings, sole survivors in the land, he remained unacquainted with the change, nor was aware that when he listened to his child's music, the mute mountains, senseless lake, and unconscious trees, were, himself excepted, her sole auditors.

1010

The very day that we arrived she had been attacked by symptomatic illness. She was paralyzed with horror at the idea of leaving her aged, sightless father alone on the empty earth; but she had not courage to disclose the truth, and the very excess of her desperation animated her to surpassing exertions. At the accustomed vesper hour, she led him to the chapel; and, though trembling and weeping on his account, she played, without fault in time, or error in note, the hymn written to celebrate the creation of the adorned earth, soon to be her tomb.

We came to her like visitors from heaven itself; her high-wrought courage; her hardly sustained firmness, fled with the appearance of relief. With a shriek she rushed towards us, embraced the knees of Adrian, and uttering but the words, "O save my father!" with sobs and hysterical cries, opened the long-shut floodgates of her woe.

Poor girl!—she and her father now lie side by side, beneath the high walnut-tree where her lover reposes, and which in her dying moments she had pointed out to us. Her father, at length aware of his daughter's danger, unable to see the changes of her dear

countenance, obstinately held her hand, till it was chilled and stiffened by death. Nor did he then move or speak, till, twelve hours after, kindly death took him to his breakless repose. They rest beneath the sod, the tree their monument;—the hallowed spot is distinct in my memory, paled in by craggy Jura, and the far, immeasurable Alps; the spire of the church they frequented still points from out the embosoming trees; and though her hand be cold, still methinks the sounds of divine music which they loved wander about, solacing their gentle ghosts.

Chapter VIII

We had now reached Switzerland, so long the final mark and aim of our exertions. We had looked, I know not wherefore, with hope and pleasing expectation on her congregation of hills and snowy crags, and opened our bosoms with renewed spirits to the icy Biz, which even at Midsummer used to come from the northern glacier laden with cold. Yet how could we nourish expectation of relief? Like our native England, and the vast extent of fertile France, this mountain-embowered land was desolate of its inhabitants. Nor bleak mountain-top, nor snow-nourished rivulet; not the ice-laden Biz, nor thunder, the tamer of contagion, had preserved them— why therefore should we claim exemption?

Who was there indeed to save? What troop had we brought fit to stand at bay, and combat with the conqueror? We were a failing remnant, tamed to mere submission to the coming blow. A train half dead, through fear of death—a hopeless, unresisting, almost reckless crew, which, in the tossed bark of life, had given up all pilotage, and resigned themselves to the destructive force of ungoverned winds. Like a few furrows of unreaped corn, which, left standing on a wide field after the rest is gathered to the garner, are swiftly borne down by the winter storm. Like a few straggling swallows, which, remaining after their fellows had, on the first unkind breath of passing autumn, migrated to genial climes, were struck to earth by the first frost of November. Like a stray sheep that wanders over the sleet-beaten hill-side, while the flock is in the pen, and dies before morning-dawn. Like a cloud,

like one of many that were spread in impenetrable woof over the sky, which, when the shepherd north has driven its companions "to drink Antipodean noon," fades and dissolves in the clear ether—Such were we!

[4] Strange that we should seek shelter here! Surely, if, in those countries where earth was wont, like a tender mother, to nourish her children, we had found her a destroyer, we need not seek it here, where stricken by keen penury she seems to shudder through her stony veins. Nor were we mistaken in our conjecture. We vainly sought the vast and ever moving glaciers of Chamounix, rifts of pendant ice, seas of congelated waters, the leafless groves of tempest-battered pines, dells, mere paths for the loud avalanche, and hill-tops, the resort of thunder-storms. Pestilence reigned paramount even here. By the time that day and night, like twin sisters of equal growth, shared equally their dominion over the hours, one by one, beneath the ice-caves, beside the waters springing from the thawed snows of a thousand winters, another and yet another of the remnant of the race of Man, closed their eyes for ever to the light.

Yet we were not quite wrong in seeking a scene like this, whereon to close the drama. Nature, true to the last, consoled us in the very heart of misery. Sublime grandeur of outward objects soothed our hapless hearts, and were in harmony with our desolation. Many sorrows have befallen man during his chequered course; and many a woe-stricken mourner has found himself sole survivor among many. Our misery took its majestic shape and colouring from the vast ruin, that accompanied and made one with it. Thus on lovely earth, many a dark ravine contains a brawling stream, shadowed by romantic rocks, threaded by mossy paths—but all, except this, wanted the mighty back-ground, the towering Alps, whose snowy capes, or bared ridges, lifted us from our dull mortal abode, to the palaces of Nature's own.

This solemn harmony of event and situation regulated our feelings, and gave as it were fitting costume to our last act. Majestic gloom and tragic pomp attended the decease of wretched humanity. The funeral procession of monarchs of old, was

transcended by our splendid shews. Near the sources of the Arveiron we performed the rites for, four only excepted, the last of the species. Adrian and I, leaving Clara and Evelyn wrapt in peaceful unobserving slumber, carried the body to this desolate spot, and placed it in those caves of ice beneath the glacier, which rive and split with the slightest sound, and bring destruction on those within the clefts—no bird or beast of prey could here profane the frozen form. So, with hushed steps and in silence, we placed the dead on a bier of ice, and then, departing, stood on the rocky platform beside the river springs. All hushed as we had been, the very striking of the air with our persons had sufficed to disturb the repose of this thawless region; and we had hardly left the cavern, before vast blocks of ice, detaching themselves from the roof, fell, and covered the human image we had deposited within. We had chosen a fair moonlight night, but our journey thither had been long, and the crescent sank behind the western heights by the time we had accomplished our purpose. The snowy mountains and blue glaciers shone in their own light. The rugged and abrupt ravine, which formed one side of Mont Anvert, was opposite to us, the glacier at our side; at our feet Arveiron, white and foaming, dashed over the pointed rocks that jutted into it, and, with whirring spray and ceaseless roar, disturbed the stilly night. Yellow lightnings played around the vast dome of Mont Blanc, silent as the snow-clad rock they illuminated; all was bare, wild, and sublime, while the singing of the pines in melodious murmurings added a gentle interest to the rough magnificence. Now the riving and fall of icy rocks clave the air; now the thunder of the avalanche burst on our ears. In countries whose features are of less magnitude, nature betrays her living powers in the foliage of the trees, in the growth of herbage, in the soft purling of meandering streams; here, endowed with giant attributes, the torrent, the thunder-storm, and the flow of massive waters, display her activity. Such the church-yard, such the requiem, such the eternal congregation, that waited on our companion's funeral!

Nor was it the human form alone which we had placed in this eternal sepulchre, whose obsequies we now celebrated. With this last victim Plague vanished from the earth. Death had never

wanted weapons wherewith to destroy life, and we, few and weak as we had become, were still exposed to every other shaft with which his full quiver teemed. But pestilence was absent from among them. For seven years it had had full sway upon earth; she had trod every nook of our spacious globe; she had mingled with the atmosphere, which as a cloak enwraps all our fellow-creatures—the inhabitants of native Europe—the luxurious Asiatic—the swarthy African and free American had been vanquished and destroyed by her. Her barbarous tyranny came to its close here in the rocky vale of Chamounix.

Still recurring scenes of misery and pain, the fruits of this distemper, made no more a part of our lives—the word plague no longer rung in our ears—the aspect of plague incarnate in the human countenance no longer appeared before our eyes. From this moment I saw plague no more. She abdicated her throne, and despoiled herself of her imperial sceptre among the ice rocks that surrounded us. She left solitude and silence co-heirs of her kingdom.

1020

My present feelings are so mingled with the past, that I cannot say whether the knowledge of this change visited us, as we stood on this sterile spot. It seems to me that it did; that a cloud seemed to pass from over us, that a weight was taken from the air; that henceforth we breathed more freely, and raised our heads with some portion of former liberty. Yet we did not hope. We were impressed by the sentiment, that our race was run, but that plague would not be our destroyer. The coming time was as a mighty river, down which a charmed boat is driven, whose mortal steersman knows, that the obvious peril is not the one he needs fear, yet that danger is nigh; and who floats awe-struck under beetling precipices, through the dark and turbid waters—seeing in the distance yet stranger and ruder shapes, towards which he is irresistibly impelled. What would become of us? O for some Delphic oracle, or Pythian maid, to utter the secrets of futurity! O for some Oedipus to solve the riddle of the cruel Sphynx! Such Oedipus was I to be—not divining a word's juggle, but whose agonizing pangs, and sorrow-tainted life were to be the engines, wherewith to lay bare the secrets of destiny, and reveal the

meaning of the enigma, whose explanation closed the history of the human race.

Dim fancies, akin to these, haunted our minds, and instilled feelings not unallied to pleasure, as we stood beside this silent tomb of nature, reared by these lifeless mountains, above her living veins, choking her vital principle. "Thus are we left," said Adrian, "two melancholy blasted trees, where once a forest waved. We are left to mourn, and pine, and die. Yet even now we have our duties, which we must string ourselves to fulfil: the duty of bestowing pleasure where we can, and by force of love, irradiating with rainbow hues the tempest of grief. Nor will I repine if in this extremity we preserve what we now possess. Something tells me, Verney, that we need no longer dread our cruel enemy, and I cling with delight to the oracular voice. Though strange, it will be sweet to mark the growth of your little boy, and the development of Clara's young heart. In the midst of a desert world, we are everything to them; and, if we live, it must be our task to make this new mode of life happy to them. At present this is easy, for their childish ideas do not wander into futurity, and the stinging craving for sympathy, and all of love of which our nature is susceptible, is not yet awake within them: we cannot guess what will happen then, when nature asserts her indefeasible and sacred powers; but, long before that time, we may all be cold, as he who lies in yonder tomb of ice. We need only provide for the present, and endeavour to fill with pleasant images the inexperienced fancy of your lovely niece. The scenes which now surround us, vast and sublime as they are, are not such as can best contribute to this work. Nature is here like our fortunes, grand, but too destructive, bare, and rude, to be able to afford delight to her young imagination. Let us descend to the sunny plains of Italy. Winter will soon be here, to clothe this wilderness in double desolation; but we will cross the bleak hill-tops, and lead her to scenes of fertility and beauty, where her path will be adorned with flowers, and the cheery atmosphere inspire pleasure and hope."

In pursuance of this plan we quitted Chamounix on the following day. We had no cause to hasten our steps; no event was

transacted beyond our actual sphere to enchain our resolves, so we yielded to every idle whim, and deemed our time well spent, when we could behold the passage of the hours without dismay. We loitered along the lovely Vale of Servox; passed long hours on the bridge, which, crossing the ravine of Arve, commands a prospect of its pine-clothed depths, and the snowy mountains that wall it in. We rambled through romantic Switzerland; till, fear of coming winter leading us forward, the first days of October found us in the valley of La Maurienne, which leads to Cenis. I cannot explain the reluctance we felt at leaving this land of mountains; perhaps it was, that we regarded the Alps as boundaries between our former and our future state of existence, and so clung fondly to what of old we had loved. Perhaps, because we had now so few impulses urging to a choice between two modes of action, we were pleased to preserve the existence of one, and preferred the prospect of what we were to do, to the recollection of what had been done. We felt that for this year danger was past; and we believed that, for some months, we were secured to each other. There was a thrilling, agonizing delight in the thought—it filled the eyes with misty tears, it tore the heart with tumultuous heavings; frailer than the "snow fall in the river," were we each and all—but we strove to give life and individuality to the meteoric course of our several existences, and to feel that no moment escaped us unenjoyed. Thus tottering on the dizzy brink, we were happy. Yes! as we sat beneath the toppling rocks, beside the waterfalls, near

—Forests, ancient as the hills,
And folding sunny spots of greenery,

where the chamois grazed, and the timid squirrel laid up its hoard—descanting on the charms of nature, drinking in the while her unalienable beauties—we were, in an empty world, happy.

Yet, O days of joy—days, when eye spoke to eye, and voices, sweeter than the music of the swinging branches of the pines, or rivulet's gentle murmur, answered mine—yet, O days replete with beatitude, days of loved society—days unutterably dear to me

forlorn—pass, O pass before me, making me in your memory forget what I am. Behold, how my streaming eyes blot this senseless paper—behold, how my features are convulsed by agonizing throes, at your mere recollection, now that, alone, my tears flow, my lips quiver, my cries fill the air, unseen, unmarked, unheard! Yet, O yet, days of delight! let me dwell on your long-drawn hours!

As the cold increased upon us, we passed the Alps, and descended into Italy. At the uprising of morn, we sat at our repast, and cheated our regrets by gay sallies or learned disquisitions. The live-long day we sauntered on, still keeping in view the end of our journey, but careless of the hour of its completion. As the evening star shone out, and the orange sunset, far in the west, marked the position of the dear land we had for ever left, talk, thought enchaining, made the hours fly—O that we had lived thus for ever and for ever! Of what consequence was it to our four hearts, that they alone were the fountains of life in the wide world? As far as mere individual sentiment was concerned, we had rather be left thus united together, than if, each alone in a populous desert of unknown men, we had wandered truly companionless till life's last term. In this manner, we endeavoured to console each other; in this manner, true philosophy taught us to reason.

It was the delight of Adrian and myself to wait on Clara, naming her the little queen of the world, ourselves her humblest servitors. When we arrived at a town, our first care was to select for her its most choice abode; to make sure that no harrowing relic remained of its former inhabitants; to seek food for her, and minister to her wants with assiduous tenderness. Clara entered into our scheme with childish gaiety. Her chief business was to attend on Evelyn; but it was her sport to array herself in splendid robes, adorn herself with sunny gems, and ape a princely state. Her religion, deep and pure, did not teach her to refuse to blunt thus the keen sting of regret; her youthful vivacity made her enter, heart and soul, into these strange masquerades.

We had resolved to pass the ensuing winter at Milan, which, as being a large and luxurious city, would afford us choice of homes.

We had descended the Alps, and left far behind their vast forests and mighty crags. We entered smiling Italy. Mingled grass and corn grew in her plains, the unpruned vines threw their luxuriant branches around the elms. The grapes, overripe, had fallen on the ground, or hung purple, or burnished green, among the red and yellow leaves. The ears of standing corn winnowed to emptiness by the spendthrift winds; the fallen foliage of the trees, the weed-grown brooks, the dusky olive, now spotted with its blackened fruit; the chestnuts, to which the squirrel only was harvest-man; all plenty, and yet, alas! all poverty, painted in wondrous hues and fantastic groupings this land of beauty. In the towns, in the voiceless towns, we visited the churches, adorned by pictures, master-pieces of art, or galleries of statues—while in this genial clime the animals, in new found liberty, rambled through the gorgeous palaces, and hardly feared our forgotten aspect. The dove-coloured oxen turned their full eyes on us, and paced slowly by; a startling throng of silly sheep, with pattering feet, would start up in some chamber, formerly dedicated to the repose of beauty, and rush, huddling past us, down the marble staircase into the street, and again in at the first open door, taking unrebuked possession of hallowed sanctuary, or kingly council-chamber. We no longer started at these occurrences, nor at worse exhibition of change—when the palace had become a mere tomb, pregnant with fetid stench, strewn with the dead; and we could perceive how pestilence and fear had played strange antics, chasing the luxurious dame to the dank fields and bare cottage; gathering, among carpets of Indian woof, and beds of silk, the rough peasant, or the deformed half-human shape of the wretched beggar.

We arrived at Milan, and stationed ourselves in the Vice-Roy's palace. Here we made laws for ourselves, dividing our day, and fixing distinct occupations for each hour. In the morning we rode in the adjoining country, or wandered through the palaces, in search of pictures or antiquities. In the evening we assembled to read or to converse. There were few books that we dared read; few, that did not cruelly deface the painting we bestowed on our solitude, by recalling combinations and emotions never more to

be experienced by us. Metaphysical disquisition; fiction, which wandering from all reality, lost itself in self-created errors; poets of times so far gone by, that to read of them was as to read of Atlantis and Utopia; or such as referred to nature only, and the workings of one particular mind; but most of all, talk, varied and ever new, beguiled our hours.

[5] Thus was it in the time of the ancient regal poet; thus was it now. 1030

Yet how could we miserable hail the approach of this delightful season? We hoped indeed that death did not now as heretofore walk in its shadow; yet, left as we were alone to each other, we looked in each other's faces with enquiring eyes, not daring altogether to trust to our presentiments, and endeavouring to divine which would be the hapless survivor to the other three. We were to pass the summer at the lake of Como, and thither we removed as soon as spring grew to her maturity, and the snow disappeared from the hill tops. Ten miles from Como, under the steep heights of the eastern mountains, by the margin of the lake, was a villa called the Pliniana, from its being built on the site of a fountain, whose periodical ebb and flow is described by the younger Pliny in his letters. The house had nearly fallen into ruin, till in the year 2090, an English nobleman had bought it, and fitted it up with every luxury. Two large halls, hung with splendid tapestry, and paved with marble, opened on each side of a court, of whose two other sides one overlooked the deep dark lake, and the other was bounded by a mountain, from whose stony side gushed, with roar and splash, the celebrated fountain. Above, underwood of myrtle and tufts of odorous plants crowned the rock, while the star-pointing giant cypresses reared themselves in the blue air, and the recesses of the hills were adorned with the luxuriant growth of chestnut-trees. Here we fixed our summer residence. We had a lovely skiff, in which we sailed, now stemming the midmost waves, now coasting the over-hanging and craggy banks, thick sown with evergreens, which dipped their shining leaves in the waters, and were mirrored in many a little bay and creek of waters of translucent darkness. Here orange plants bloomed, here birds poured forth melodious hymns; and

here, during spring, the cold snake emerged from the clefts, and basked on the sunny terraces of rock.

Were we not happy in this paradisiacal retreat? If some kind spirit had whispered forgetfulness to us, methinks we should have been happy here, where the precipitous mountains, nearly pathless, shut from our view the far fields of desolate earth, and with small exertion of the imagination, we might fancy that the cities were still resonant with popular hum, and the peasant still guided his plough through the furrow, and that we, the world's free denizens, enjoyed a voluntary exile, and not a remediless cutting off from our extinct species.

Not one among us enjoyed the beauty of this scenery so much as Clara. Before we quitted Milan, a change had taken place in her habits and manners. She lost her gaiety, she laid aside her sports, and assumed an almost vestal plainness of attire. She shunned us, retiring with Evelyn to some distant chamber or silent nook; nor did she enter into his pastimes with the same zest as she was wont, but would sit and watch him with sadly tender smiles, and eyes bright with tears, yet without a word of complaint. She approached us timidly, avoided our caresses, nor shook off her embarrassment till some serious discussion or lofty theme called her for awhile out of herself. Her beauty grew as a rose, which, opening to the summer wind, discloses leaf after leaf till the sense aches with its excess of loveliness. A slight and variable colour tinged her cheeks, and her motions seemed attuned by some hidden harmony of surpassing sweetness. We redoubled our tenderness and earnest attentions. She received them with grateful smiles, that fled swift as sunny beam from a glittering wave on an April day.

Our only acknowledged point of sympathy with her, appeared to be Evelyn. This dear little fellow was a comforter and delight to us beyond all words. His buoyant spirit, and his innocent ignorance of our vast calamity, were balm to us, whose thoughts and feelings were over-wrought and spun out in the immensity of speculative sorrow. To cherish, to caress, to amuse him was the common task of all. Clara, who felt towards him in some degree like a young mother, gratefully acknowledged our kindness

towards him. To me, O! to me, who saw the clear brows and soft eyes of the beloved of my heart, my lost and ever dear Idris, re-born in his gentle face, to me he was dear even to pain; if I pressed him to my heart, methought I clasped a real and living part of her, who had lain there through long years of youthful happiness.

It was the custom of Adrian and myself to go out each day in our skiff to forage in the adjacent country. In these expeditions we were seldom accompanied by Clara or her little charge, but our return was an hour of hilarity. Evelyn ransacked our stores with childish eagerness, and we always brought some new found gift for our fair companion. Then too we made discoveries of lovely scenes or gay palaces, whither in the evening we all proceeded. Our sailing expeditions were most divine, and with a fair wind or transverse course we cut the liquid waves; and, if talk failed under the pressure of thought, I had my clarionet with me, which awoke the echoes, and gave the change to our careful minds. Clara at such times often returned to her former habits of free converse and gay sally; and though our four hearts alone beat in the world, those four hearts were happy.

One day, on our return from the town of Como, with a laden boat, we expected as usual to be met at the port by Clara and Evelyn, and we were somewhat surprised to see the beach vacant. I, as my nature prompted, would not prognosticate evil, but explained it away as a mere casual incident. Not so Adrian. He was seized with sudden trembling and apprehension, and he called to me with vehemence to steer quickly for land, and, when near, leapt from the boat, half falling into the water; and, scrambling up the steep bank, hastened along the narrow strip of garden, the only level space between the lake and the mountain. I followed without delay; the garden and inner court were empty, so was the house, whose every room we visited. Adrian called loudly upon Clara's name, and was about to rush up the near mountain-path, when the door of a summer-house at the end of the garden slowly opened, and Clara appeared, not advancing towards us, but leaning against a column of the building with blanched cheeks, in a posture of utter despondency. Adrian sprang

towards her with a cry of joy, and folded her delightedly in his arms. She withdrew from his embrace, and, without a word, again entered the summer-house. Her quivering lips, her despairing heart refused to afford her voice to express our misfortune. Poor little Evelyn had, while playing with her, been seized with sudden fever, and now lay torpid and speechless on a little couch in the summer-house.

For a whole fortnight we unceasingly watched beside the poor child, as his life declined under the ravages of a virulent typhus. His little form and tiny lineaments encaged the embryo of the world-spanning mind of man. Man's nature, brimful of passions and affections, would have had an home in that little heart, whose swift pulsations hurried towards their close. His small hand's fine mechanism, now flaccid and unbent, would in the growth of sinew and muscle, have achieved works of beauty or of strength. His tender rosy feet would have trod in firm manhood the bowers and glades of earth— these reflections were now of little use: he lay, thought and strength suspended, waiting unresisting the final blow.

We watched at his bedside, and when the access of fever was on him, we neither spoke nor looked at each other, marking only his obstructed breath and the mortal glow that tinged his sunken cheek, the heavy death that weighed on his eyelids. It is a trite evasion to say, that words could not express our long drawn agony; yet how can words image sensations, whose tormenting keenness throw us back, as it were, on the deep roots and hidden foundations of our nature, which shake our being with earthquake-throe, so that we leave to confide in accustomed feelings which like mother-earth support us, and cling to some vain imagination or deceitful hope, which will soon be buried in the ruins occasioned by the final shock. I have called that period a fortnight, which we passed watching the changes of the sweet child's malady—and such it might have been—at night, we wondered to find another day gone, while each particular hour seemed endless. Day and night were exchanged for one another uncounted; we slept hardly at all, nor did we even quit his room, except when a pang of grief seized us, and we retired from each

other for a short period to conceal our sobs and tears. We endeavoured in vain to abstract Clara from this deplorable scene. She sat, hour after hour, looking at him, now softly arranging his pillow, and, while he had power to swallow, administered his drink. At length the moment of his death came: the blood paused in its flow —his eyes opened, and then closed again: without convulsion or sigh, the frail tenement was left vacant of its spiritual inhabitant.

I have heard that the sight of the dead has confirmed materialists in their belief. I ever felt otherwise. Was that my child—that moveless decaying inanimation? My child was enraptured by my caresses; his dear voice cloathed with meaning articulations his thoughts, otherwise inaccessible; his smile was a ray of the soul, and the same soul sat upon its throne in his eyes. I turn from this mockery of what he was. Take, O earth, thy debt! freely and for ever I consign to thee the garb thou didst afford. But thou, sweet child, amiable and beloved boy, either thy spirit has sought a fitter dwelling, or, shrined in my heart, thou livest while it lives.

We placed his remains under a cypress, the upright mountain being scooped out to receive them. And then Clara said, "If you wish me to live, take me from hence. There is something in this scene of transcendent beauty, in these trees, and hills and waves, that for ever whisper to me, leave thy cumbrous flesh, and make a part of us. I earnestly entreat you to take me away."

1040

So on the fifteenth of August we bade adieu to our villa, and the embowering shades of this abode of beauty; to calm bay and noisy waterfall; to Evelyn's little grave we bade farewell! and then, with heavy hearts, we departed on our pilgrimage towards Rome.

Chapter IX

Now—soft awhile—have I arrived so near the end? Yes! it is all over now—a step or two over those new made graves, and the wearisome way is done. Can I accomplish my task? Can I streak my paper with words capacious of the grand conclusion? Arise,

black Melancholy! quit thy Cimmerian solitude! Bring with thee murky fogs from hell, which may drink up the day; bring blight and pestiferous exhalations, which, entering the hollow caverns and breathing places of earth, may fill her stony veins with corruption, so that not only herbage may no longer flourish, the trees may rot, and the rivers run with gall—but the everlasting mountains be decomposed, and the mighty deep putrify, and the genial atmosphere which clips the globe, lose all powers of generation and sustenance. Do this, sad visaged power, while I write, while eyes read these pages.

And who will read them? Beware, tender offspring of the re-born world—beware, fair being, with human heart, yet untamed by care, and human brow, yet unploughed by time—beware, lest the cheerful current of thy blood be checked, thy golden locks turn grey, thy sweet dimpling smiles be changed to fixed, harsh wrinkles! Let not day look on these lines, lest garish day waste, turn pale, and die. Seek a cypress grove, whose moaning boughs will be harmony befitting; seek some cave, deep embowered in earth's dark entrails, where no light will penetrate, save that which struggles, red and flickering, through a single fissure, staining thy page with grimmest livery of death.

There is a painful confusion in my brain, which refuses to delineate distinctly succeeding events. Sometimes the irradiation of my friend's gentle smile comes before me; and methinks its light spans and fills eternity—then, again, I feel the gasping throes—

We quitted Como, and in compliance with Adrian's earnest desire, we took Venice in our way to Rome. There was something to the English peculiarly attractive in the idea of this wave-encircled, island-enthroned city. Adrian had never seen it. We went down the Po and the Brenta in a boat; and, the days proving intolerably hot, we rested in the bordering palaces during the day, travelling through the night, when darkness made the bordering banks indistinct, and our solitude less remarkable; when the wandering moon lit the waves that divided before our prow, and the night-wind filled our sails, and the murmuring stream, waving trees, and swelling canvass, accorded in harmonious strain. Clara,

long overcome by excessive grief, had to a great degree cast aside her timid, cold reserve, and received our attentions with grateful tenderness. While Adrian with poetic fervour discoursed of the glorious nations of the dead, of the beauteous earth and the fate of man, she crept near him, drinking in his speech with silent pleasure. We banished from our talk, and as much as possible from our thoughts, the knowledge of our desolation. And it would be incredible to an inhabitant of cities, to one among a busy throng, to what extent we succeeded. It was as a man confined in a dungeon, whose small and grated rift at first renders the doubtful light more sensibly obscure, till, the visual orb having drunk in the beam, and adapted itself to its scantiness, he finds that clear noon inhabits his cell. So we, a simple triad on empty earth, were multiplied to each other, till we became all in all. We stood like trees, whose roots are loosened by the wind, which support one another, leaning and clinging with encreased fervour while the wintry storms howl. Thus we floated down the widening stream of the Po, sleeping when the cicale sang, awake with the stars. We entered the narrower banks of the Brenta, and arrived at the shore of the Laguna at sunrise on the sixth of September. The bright orb slowly rose from behind its cupolas and towers, and shed its penetrating light upon the glassy waters. Wrecks of gondolas, and some few uninjured ones, were strewed on the beach at Fusina. We embarked in one of these for the widowed daughter of ocean, who, abandoned and fallen, sat forlorn on her propping isles, looking towards the far mountains of Greece. We rowed lightly over the Laguna, and entered Canale Grande. The tide ebbed sullenly from out the broken portals and violated halls of Venice: sea weed and sea monsters were left on the blackened marble, while the salt ooze defaced the matchless works of art that adorned their walls, and the sea gull flew out from the shattered window. In the midst of this appalling ruin of the monuments of man's power, nature asserted her ascendancy, and shone more beauteous from the contrast. The radiant waters hardly trembled, while the rippling waves made many sided mirrors to the sun; the blue immensity, seen beyond Lido, stretched far, unspecked by boat, so tranquil, so lovely, that it

seemed to invite us to quit the land strewn with ruins, and to seek refuge from sorrow and fear on its placid extent.

We saw the ruins of this hapless city from the height of the tower of San Marco, immediately under us, and turned with sickening hearts to the sea, which, though it be a grave, rears no monument, discloses no ruin. Evening had come apace. The sun set in calm majesty behind the misty summits of the Apennines, and its golden and roseate hues painted the mountains of the opposite shore. "That land," said Adrian, "tinged with the last glories of the day, is Greece." Greece! The sound had a responsive chord in the bosom of Clara. She vehemently reminded us that we had promised to take her once again to Greece, to the tomb of her parents. Why go to Rome? what should we do at Rome? We might take one of the many vessels to be found here, embark in it, and steer right for Albania.

I objected the dangers of ocean, and the distance of the mountains we saw, from Athens; a distance which, from the savage uncultivation of the country, was almost impassable. Adrian, who was delighted with Clara's proposal, obviated these objections. The season was favourable; the north-west that blew would take us transversely across the gulph; and then we might find, in some abandoned port, a light Greek caique, adapted for such navigation, and run down the coast of the Morea, and, passing over the Isthmus of Corinth, without much land-travelling or fatigue, find ourselves at Athens. This appeared to me wild talk; but the sea, glowing with a thousand purple hues, looked so brilliant and safe; my beloved companions were so earnest, so determined, that, when Adrian said, "Well, though it is not exactly what you wish, yet consent, to please me"—I could no longer refuse. That evening we selected a vessel, whose size just seemed fitted for our enterprize; we bent the sails and put the rigging in order, and reposing that night in one of the city's thousand palaces, agreed to embark at sunrise the following morning.

When winds that move not its calm surface, sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more;
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind—

Thus said Adrian, quoting a translation of Moschus's poem, as
in the clear morning light, we rowed over the Laguna, past Lido,
into the open sea—I would have added in continuation,

But when the roar
Of ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst—

But my friends declared that such verses were evil augury; so
in cheerful mood we left the shallow waters, and, when out at sea,
unfurled our sails to catch the favourable breeze. The laughing
morning air filled them, while sun-light bathed earth, sky and
ocean—the placid waves divided to receive our keel, and
playfully kissed the dark sides of our little skiff, murmuring a
welcome; as land receded, still the blue expanse, most waveless,
twin sister to the azure empyrean, afforded smooth conduct to our
bark. As the air and waters were tranquil and balmy, so were our
minds steeped in quiet. In comparison with the unstained deep,
funereal earth appeared a grave, its high rocks and stately
mountains were but monuments, its trees the plumes of a herse,
the brooks and rivers brackish with tears for departed man.
Farewell to desolate towns—to fields with their savage
intermixture of corn and weeds—to ever multiplying relics of our
lost species. Ocean, we commit ourselves to thee—even as the
patriarch of old floated above the drowned world, let us be saved,
as thus we betake ourselves to thy perennial flood.

Adrian sat at the helm; I attended to the rigging, the breeze
right aft filled our swelling canvas, and we ran before it over the
untroubled deep. The wind died away at noon; its idle breath just
permitted us to hold our course. As lazy, fair-weather sailors,
careless of the coming hour, we talked gaily of our coasting
voyage, of our arrival at Athens. We would make our home of one

of the Cyclades, and there in myrtle-groves, amidst perpetual spring, fanned by the wholesome sea-breezes—we would live long years in beatific union—Was there such a thing as death in the world?—

The sun passed its zenith, and lingered down the stainless floor of heaven. Lying in the boat, my face turned up to the sky, I thought I saw on its blue white, marbled streaks, so slight, so immaterial, that now I said— They are there—and now, It is a mere imagination. A sudden fear stung me while I gazed; and, starting up, and running to the prow,—as I stood, my hair was gently lifted on my brow—a dark line of ripples appeared to the east, gaining rapidly on us—my breathless remark to Adrian, was followed by the flapping of the canvas, as the adverse wind struck it, and our boat lurched—swift as speech, the web of the storm thickened over head, the sun went down red, the dark sea was strewn with foam, and our skiff rose and fell in its encreasing furrows.

Behold us now in our frail tenement, hemmed in by hungry, roaring waves, buffeted by winds. In the inky east two vast clouds, sailing contrary ways, met; the lightning leapt forth, and the hoarse thunder muttered. Again in the south, the clouds replied, and the forked stream of fire running along the black sky, shewed us the appalling piles of clouds, now met and obliterated by the heaving waves. Great God! And we alone—we three—alone—alone—sole dwellers on the sea and on the earth, we three must perish! The vast universe, its myriad worlds, and the plains of boundless earth which we had left—the extent of shoreless sea around—contracted to my view—they and all that they contained, shrunk up to one point, even to our tossing bark, freighted with glorious humanity.

A convulsion of despair crossed the love-beaming face of Adrian, while with set teeth he murmured, "Yet they shall be saved!" Clara, visited by an human pang, pale and trembling, crept near him—he looked on her with an encouraging smile—"Do you fear, sweet girl? O, do not fear, we shall soon be on shore!"

The darkness prevented me from seeing the changes of her countenance; but her voice was clear and sweet, as she replied, "Why should I fear? neither sea nor storm can harm us, if mighty destiny or the ruler of destiny does not permit. And then the stinging fear of surviving either of you, is not here—one death will clasp us undivided."

Meanwhile we took in all our sails, save a gib; and, as soon as we might without danger, changed our course, running with the wind for the Italian shore. Dark night mixed everything; we hardly discerned the white crests of the murderous surges, except when lightning made brief noon, and drank the darkness, shewing us our danger, and restoring us to double night. We were all silent, except when Adrian, as steersman, made an encouraging observation. Our little shell obeyed the rudder miraculously well, and ran along on the top of the waves, as if she had been an offspring of the sea, and the angry mother sheltered her endangered child.

I sat at the prow, watching our course; when suddenly I heard the waters break with redoubled fury. We were certainly near the shore—at the same time I cried, "About there!" and a broad lightning filling the concave, shewed us for one moment the level beach a-head, disclosing even the sands, and stunted, ooze-sprinkled beds of reeds, that grew at high water mark. Again it was dark, and we drew in our breath with such content as one may, who, while fragments of volcano-hurled rock darken the air, sees a vast mass ploughing the ground immediately at his feet. What to do we knew not—the breakers here, there, everywhere, encompassed us—they roared, and dashed, and flung their hated spray in our faces. With considerable difficulty and danger we succeeded at length in altering our course, and stretched out from shore. I urged my companions to prepare for the wreck of our little skiff, and to bind themselves to some oar or spar which might suffice to float them. I was myself an excellent swimmer—the very sight of the sea was wont to raise in me such sensations, as a huntsman experiences, when he hears a pack of hounds in full cry; I loved to feel the waves wrap me and strive to overpower me; while I, lord of myself, moved this way or that, in

spite of their angry buffetings. Adrian also could swim—but the weakness of his frame prevented him from feeling pleasure in the exercise, or acquiring any great expertness. But what power could the strongest swimmer oppose to the overpowering violence of ocean in its fury? My efforts to prepare my companions were rendered nearly futile—for the roaring breakers prevented our hearing one another speak, and the waves, that broke continually over our boat, obliged me to exert all my strength in lading the water out, as fast as it came in. The while darkness, palpable and rayless, hemmed us round, dissipated only by the lightning; sometimes we beheld thunderbolts, fiery red, fall into the sea, and at intervals vast spouts stooped from the clouds, churning the wild ocean, which rose to meet them; while the fierce gale bore the rack onwards, and they were lost in the chaotic mingling of sky and sea. Our gunwales had been torn away, our single sail had been rent to ribbands, and borne down the stream of the wind. We had cut away our mast, and lightened the boat of all she contained—Clara attempted to assist me in heaving the water from the hold, and, as she turned her eyes to look on the lightning, I could discern by that momentary gleam, that resignation had conquered every fear. We have a power given us in any worst extremity, which props the else feeble mind of man, and enables us to endure the most savage tortures with a stillness of soul which in hours of happiness we could not have imagined. A calm, more dreadful in truth than the tempest, allayed the wild beatings of my heart—a calm like that of the gamester, the suicide, and the murderer, when the last die is on the point of being cast—while the poisoned cup is at the lips,—as the death-blow is about to be given.

Hours passed thus—hours which might write old age on the face of beardless youth, and grizzle the silky hair of infancy—hours, while the chaotic uproar continued, while each dread gust transcended in fury the one before, and our skiff hung on the breaking wave, and then rushed into the valley below, and trembled and spun between the watery precipices that seemed most to meet above her. For a moment the gale paused, and ocean sank to comparative silence—it was a breathless interval; the

wind which, as a practised leaper, had gathered itself up before it sprung, now with terrific roar rushed over the sea, and the waves struck our stern. Adrian exclaimed that the rudder was gone;—"We are lost," cried Clara, "Save yourselves—O save yourselves!" The lightning shewed me the poor girl half buried in the water at the bottom of the boat; as she was sinking in it Adrian caught her up, and sustained her in his arms. We were without a rudder—we rushed prow foremost into the vast billows piled up a-head—they broke over and filled the tiny skiff; one scream I heard—one cry that we were gone, I uttered; I found myself in the waters; darkness was around. When the light of the tempest flashed, I saw the keel of our upset boat close to me—I clung to this, grasping it with clenched hand and nails, while I endeavoured during each flash to discover any appearance of my companions. I thought I saw Adrian at no great distance from me, clinging to an oar; I sprung from my hold, and with energy beyond my human strength, I dashed aside the waters as I strove to lay hold of him. As that hope failed, instinctive love of life animated me, and feelings of contention, as if a hostile will combated with mine. I breasted the surges, and flung them from me, as I would the opposing front and sharpened claws of a lion about to enfold my bosom. When I had been beaten down by one wave, I rose on another, while I felt bitter pride curl my lip.

Ever since the storm had carried us near the shore, we had never attained any great distance from it. With every flash I saw the bordering coast; yet the progress I made was small, while each wave, as it receded, carried me back into ocean's far abysses. At one moment I felt my foot touch the sand, and then again I was in deep water; my arms began to lose their power of motion; my breath failed me under the influence of the strangling waters—a thousand wild and delirious thoughts crossed me: as well as I can now recall them, my chief feeling was, how sweet it would be to lay my head on the quiet earth, where the surges would no longer strike my weakened frame, nor the sound of waters ring in my ears—to attain this repose, not to save my life, I made a last effort—the shelving shore suddenly presented a footing for me. I rose, and was again thrown down by the breakers—a point of rock to

which I was enabled to cling, gave me a moment's respite; and then, taking advantage of the ebbing of the waves, I ran forwards — gained the dry sands, and fell senseless on the oozy reeds that sprinkled them.

I must have lain long deprived of life; for when first, with a sickening feeling, I unclosed my eyes, the light of morning met them. Great change had taken place meanwhile: grey dawn dappled the flying clouds, which sped onwards, leaving visible at intervals vast lakes of pure ether. A fountain of light arose in an encreasing stream from the east, behind the waves of the Adriatic, changing the grey to a roseate hue, and then flooding sky and sea with aerial gold.

A kind of stupor followed my fainting; my senses were alive, but memory was extinct. The blessed respite was short—a snake lurked near me to sting me into life—on the first retrospective emotion I would have started up, but my limbs refused to obey me; my knees trembled, the muscles had lost all power. I still believed that I might find one of my beloved companions cast like me, half alive, on the beach; and I strove in every way to restore my frame to the use of its animal functions. I wrung the brine from my hair; and the rays of the risen sun soon visited me with genial warmth. With the restoration of my bodily powers, my mind became in some degree aware of the universe of misery, henceforth to be its dwelling. I ran to the water's edge, calling on the beloved names. Ocean drank in, and absorbed my feeble voice, replying with pitiless roar. I climbed a near tree: the level sands bounded by a pine forest, and the sea clipped round by the horizon, was all that I could discern. In vain I extended my researches along the beach; the mast we had thrown overboard, with tangled cordage, and remnants of a sail, was the sole relic land received of our wreck. Sometimes I stood still, and wrung my hands. I accused earth and sky —the universal machine and the Almighty power that misdirected it. Again I threw myself on the sands, and then the sighing wind, mimicking a human cry, roused me to bitter, fallacious hope. Assuredly if any little bark or smallest canoe had been near, I should have sought the savage

plains of ocean, found the dear remains of my lost ones, and clinging round them, have shared their grave.

The day passed thus; each moment contained eternity; although when hour after hour had gone by, I wondered at the quick flight of time. Yet even now I had not drunk the bitter potion to the dregs; I was not yet persuaded of my loss; I did not yet feel in every pulsation, in every nerve, in every thought, that I remained alone of my race,—that I was the LAST MAN.

The day had clouded over, and a drizzling rain set in at sunset. Even the eternal skies weep, I thought; is there any shame then, that mortal man should spend himself in tears? I remembered the ancient fables, in which human beings are described as dissolving away through weeping into ever-gushing fountains. Ah! that so it were; and then my destiny would be in some sort akin to the watery death of Adrian and Clara. Oh! grief is fantastic; it weaves a web on which to trace the history of its woe from every form and change around; it incorporates itself with all living nature; it finds sustenance in every object; as light, it fills all things, and, like light, it gives its own colours to all.

I had wandered in my search to some distance from the spot on which I had been cast, and came to one of those watch-towers, which at stated distances line the Italian shore. I was glad of shelter, glad to find a work of human hands, after I had gazed so long on nature's drear barrenness; so I entered, and ascended the rough winding staircase into the guard-room. So far was fate kind, that no harrowing vestige remained of its former inhabitants; a few planks laid across two iron tressels, and strewn with the dried leaves of Indian corn, was the bed presented to me; and an open chest, containing some half mouldered biscuit, awakened an appetite, which perhaps existed before, but of which, until now, I was not aware. Thirst also, violent and parching, the result of the sea-water I had drank, and of the exhaustion of my frame, tormented me. Kind nature had gifted the supply of these wants with pleasurable sensations, so that I—even I!—was refreshed and calmed, as I ate of this sorry fare, and drank a little of the sour wine which half filled a flask left in this abandoned dwelling. Then I stretched myself on the

bed, not to be disdained by the victim of shipwreck. The earthy smell of the dried leaves was balm to my sense after the hateful odour of sea-weed. I forgot my state of loneliness. I neither looked backward nor forward; my senses were hushed to repose; I fell asleep and dreamed of all dear inland scenes, of hay-makers, of the shepherd's whistle to his dog, when he demanded his help to drive the flock to fold; of sights and sounds peculiar to my boyhood's mountain life, which I had long forgotten.

I awoke in a painful agony—for I fancied that ocean, breaking its bounds, carried away the fixed continent and deep rooted mountains, together with the streams I loved, the woods, and the flocks—it raged around, with that continued and dreadful roar which had accompanied the last wreck of surviving humanity. As my waking sense returned, the bare walls of the guard room closed round me, and the rain pattered against the single window. How dreadful it is, to emerge from the oblivion of slumber, and to receive as a good morrow the mute wailing of one's own hapless heart—to return from the land of deceptive dreams, to the heavy knowledge of unchanged disaster!—Thus was it with me, now, and for ever! The sting of other griefs might be blunted by time; and even mine yielded sometimes during the day, to the pleasure inspired by the imagination or the senses; but I never look first upon the morning-light but with my fingers pressed tight on my bursting heart, and my soul deluged with the interminable flood of hopeless misery. Now I awoke for the first time in the dead world—I awoke alone—and the dull dirge of the sea, heard even amidst the rain, recalled me to the reflection of the wretch I had become. The sound came like a reproach, a scoff—like the sting of remorse in the soul—I gasped—the veins and muscles of my throat swelled, suffocating me. I put my fingers to my ears, I buried my head in the leaves of my couch, I would have dived to the centre to lose hearing of that hideous moan.

But another task must be mine—again I visited the detested beach—again I vainly looked far and wide—again I raised my unanswered cry, lifting up the only voice that could ever again force the mute air to syllable the human thought.

What a pitiable, forlorn, disconsolate being I was! My very aspect and garb told the tale of my despair. My hair was matted and wild—my limbs soiled with salt ooze; while at sea, I had thrown off those of my garments that encumbered me, and the rain drenched the thin summer-clothing I had retained—my feet were bare, and the stunted reeds and broken shells made them bleed—the while, I hurried to and fro, now looking earnestly on some distant rock which, islanded in the sands, bore for a moment a deceptive appearance—now with flashing eyes reproaching the murderous ocean for its unutterable cruelty.

For a moment I compared myself to that monarch of the waste—Robinson Crusoe. We had been both thrown companionless—he on the shore of a desolate island: I on that of a desolate world. I was rich in the so called goods of life. If I turned my steps from the near barren scene, and entered any of the earth's million cities, I should find their wealth stored up for my accommodation—clothes, food, books, and a choice of dwelling beyond the command of the princes of former times—every climate was subject to my selection, while he was obliged to toil in the acquirement of every necessary, and was the inhabitant of a tropical island, against whose heats and storms he could obtain small shelter.—Viewing the question thus, who would not have preferred the Sybarite enjoyments I could command, the philosophic leisure, and ample intellectual resources, to his life of labour and peril? Yet he was far happier than I: for he could hope, nor hope in vain—the destined vessel at last arrived, to bear him to countrymen and kindred, where the events of his solitude became a fire-side tale. To none could I ever relate the story of my adversity; no hope had I. He knew that, beyond the ocean which begirt his lonely island, thousands lived whom the sun enlightened when it shone also on him: beneath the meridian sun and visiting moon, I alone bore human features; I alone could give articulation to thought; and, when I slept, both day and night were unbeheld of any. He had fled from his fellows, and was transported with terror at the print of a human foot. I would have knelt down and worshipped the same. The wild and cruel Caribbee, the merciless Cannibal—or worse than these, the

uncouth, brute, and remorseless veteran in the vices of civilization, would have been to me a beloved companion, a treasure dearly prized—his nature would be kin to mine; his form cast in the same mould; human blood would flow in his veins; a human sympathy must link us for ever. It cannot be that I shall never behold a fellow being more!—never! —never!—not in the course of years!—Shall I wake, and speak to none, pass the interminable hours, my soul, islanded in the world, a solitary point, surrounded by vacuum? Will day follow day endlessly thus? —No! no! a God rules the world—providence has not exchanged its golden sceptre for an aspic's sting. Away! let me fly from the ocean-grave, let me depart from this barren nook, paled in, as it is, from access by its own desolateness; let me tread once again the paved towns; step over the threshold of man's dwellings, and most certainly I shall find this thought a horrible vision—a maddening, but evanescent dream.

I entered Ravenna, (the town nearest to the spot whereon I had been cast), before the second sun had set on the empty world; I saw many living creatures; oxen, and horses, and dogs, but there was no man among them; I entered a cottage, it was vacant; I ascended the marble stairs of a palace, the bats and the owls were nestled in the tapestry; I stepped softly, not to awaken the sleeping town: I rebuked a dog, that by yelping disturbed the sacred stillness; I would not believe that all was as it seemed—The world was not dead, but I was mad; I was deprived of sight, hearing, and sense of touch; I was labouring under the force of a spell, which permitted me to behold all sights of earth, except its human inhabitants; they were pursuing their ordinary labours. Every house had its inmate; but I could not perceive them. If I could have deluded myself into a belief of this kind, I should have been far more satisfied. But my brain, tenacious of its reason, refused to lend itself to such imaginations—and though I endeavoured to play the antic to myself, I knew that I, the offspring of man, during long years one among many—now remained sole survivor of my species.

The sun sank behind the western hills; I had fasted since the preceding evening, but, though faint and weary, I loathed food,

nor ceased, while yet a ray of light remained, to pace the lonely streets. Night came on, and sent every living creature but me to the bosom of its mate. It was my solace, to blunt my mental agony by personal hardship—of the thousand beds around, I would not seek the luxury of one; I lay down on the pavement,—a cold marble step served me for a pillow—midnight came; and then, though not before, did my wearied lids shut out the sight of the twinkling stars, and their reflex on the pavement near. Thus I passed the second night of my desolation.

Chapter X

I awoke in the morning, just as the higher windows of the lofty houses received the first beams of the rising sun. The birds were chirping, perched on the windows sills and deserted thresholds of the doors. I awoke, and my first thought was, Adrian and Clara are dead. I no longer shall be hailed by their good-morrow—or pass the long day in their society. I shall never see them more. The ocean has robbed me of them—stolen their hearts of love from their breasts, and given over to corruption what was dearer to me than light, or life, or hope.

1070

I was an untaught shepherd-boy, when Adrian deigned to confer on me his friendship. The best years of my life had been passed with him. All I had possessed of this world's goods, of happiness, knowledge, or virtue—I owed to him. He had, in his person, his intellect, and rare qualities, given a glory to my life, which without him it had never known. Beyond all other beings he had taught me, that goodness, pure and single, can be an attribute of man. It was a sight for angels to congregate to behold, to view him lead, govern, and solace, the last days of the human race.

My lovely Clara also was lost to me—she who last of the daughters of man, exhibited all those feminine and maiden virtues, which poets, painters, and sculptors, have in their various languages strove to express. Yet, as far as she was concerned, could I lament that she was removed in early youth from the certain advent of misery? Pure she was of soul, and all her intents

were holy. But her heart was the throne of love, and the sensibility her lovely countenance expressed, was the prophet of many woes, not the less deep and drear, because she would have for ever concealed them.

These two wondrously endowed beings had been spared from the universal wreck, to be my companions during the last year of solitude. I had felt, while they were with me, all their worth. I was conscious that every other sentiment, regret, or passion had by degrees merged into a yearning, clinging affection for them. I had not forgotten the sweet partner of my youth, mother of my children, my adored Idris; but I saw at least a part of her spirit alive again in her brother; and after, that by Evelyn's death I had lost what most dearly recalled her to me; I enshrined her memory in Adrian's form, and endeavoured to confound the two dear ideas. I sound the depths of my heart, and try in vain to draw thence the expressions that can typify my love for these remnants of my race. If regret and sorrow came athwart me, as well it might in our solitary and uncertain state, the clear tones of Adrian's voice, and his fervent look, dissipated the gloom; or I was cheered unaware by the mild content and sweet resignation Clara's cloudless brow and deep blue eyes expressed. They were all to me—the suns of my benighted soul—repose in my weariness—slumber in my sleepless woe. Ill, most ill, with disjointed words, bare and weak, have I expressed the feeling with which I clung to them. I would have wound myself like ivy inextricably round them, so that the same blow might destroy us. I would have entered and been a part of them—so that

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,

even now I had accompanied them to their new and incommunicable abode.

Never shall I see them more. I am bereft of their dear converse—bereft of sight of them. I am a tree rent by lightning; never will the bark close over the bared fibres—never will their quivering life, torn by the winds, receive the opiate of a moment's balm. I

am alone in the world— but that expression as yet was less pregnant with misery, than that Adrian and Clara are dead.

The tide of thought and feeling rolls on for ever the same, though the banks and shapes around, which govern its course, and the reflection in the wave, vary. Thus the sentiment of immediate loss in some sort decayed, while that of utter, irremediable loneliness grew on me with time. Three days I wandered through Ravenna—now thinking only of the beloved beings who slept in the oozy caves of ocean—now looking forward on the dread blank before me; shuddering to make an onward step—writhing at each change that marked the progress of the hours.

For three days I wandered to and fro in this melancholy town. I passed whole hours in going from house to house, listening whether I could detect some lurking sign of human existence. Sometimes I rang at a bell; it tinkled through the vaulted rooms, and silence succeeded to the sound. I called myself hopeless, yet still I hoped; and still disappointment ushered in the hours, intruding the cold, sharp steel which first pierced me, into the aching festering wound. I fed like a wild beast, which seizes its food only when stung by intolerable hunger. I did not change my garb, or seek the shelter of a roof, during all those days. Burning heats, nervous irritation, a ceaseless, but confused flow of thought, sleepless nights, and days instinct with a frenzy of agitation, possessed me during that time.

As the fever of my blood encreased, a desire of wandering came upon me. I remember, that the sun had set on the fifth day after my wreck, when, without purpose or aim, I quitted the town of Ravenna. I must have been very ill. Had I been possessed by more or less of delirium, that night had surely been my last; for, as I continued to walk on the banks of the Mantone, whose upward course I followed, I looked wistfully on the stream, acknowledging to myself that its pellucid waves could medicine my woes for ever, and was unable to account to myself for my tardiness in seeking their shelter from the poisoned arrows of thought, that were piercing me through and through. I walked a considerable part of the night, and excessive weariness at length conquered my repugnance to the availing myself of the deserted

habitations of my species. The waning moon, which had just risen, shewed me a cottage, whose neat entrance and trim garden reminded me of my own England. I lifted up the latch of the door and entered. A kitchen first presented itself, where, guided by the moon beams, I found materials for striking a light. Within this was a bed room; the couch was furnished with sheets of snowy whiteness; the wood piled on the hearth, and an array as for a meal, might almost have deceived me into the dear belief that I had here found what I had so long sought—one survivor, a companion for my loneliness, a solace to my despair. I steeled myself against the delusion; the room itself was vacant: it was only prudent, I repeated to myself, to examine the rest of the house. I fancied that I was proof against the expectation; yet my heart beat audibly, as I laid my hand on the lock of each door, and it sunk again, when I perceived in each the same vacancy. Dark and silent they were as vaults; so I returned to the first chamber, wondering what sightless host had spread the materials for my repast, and my repose. I drew a chair to the table, and examined what the viands were of which I was to partake. In truth it was a death feast! The bread was blue and mouldy; the cheese lay a heap of dust. I did not dare examine the other dishes; a troop of ants passed in a double line across the table cloth; every utensil was covered with dust, with cobwebs, and myriads of dead flies: these were objects each and all betokening the fallaciousness of my expectations. Tears rushed into my eyes; surely this was a wanton display of the power of the destroyer. What had I done, that each sensitive nerve was thus to be anatomized? Yet why complain more now than ever? This vacant cottage revealed no new sorrow—the world was empty; mankind was dead—I knew it well—why quarrel therefore with an acknowledged and stale truth? Yet, as I said, I had hoped in the very heart of despair, so that every new impression of the hard-cut reality on my soul brought with it a fresh pang, telling me the yet unstudied lesson, that neither change of place nor time could bring alleviation to my misery, but that, as I now was, I must continue, day after day, month after month, year after year, while I lived. I hardly dared conjecture what space of time that expression implied. It is true, I

was no longer in the first blush of manhood; neither had I declined far in the vale of years—men have accounted mine the prime of life: I had just entered my thirty-seventh year; every limb was as well knit, every articulation as true, as when I had acted the shepherd on the hills of Cumberland; and with these advantages I was to commence the train of solitary life. Such were the reflections that ushered in my slumber on that night.

The shelter, however, and less disturbed repose which I enjoyed, restored me the following morning to a greater portion of health and strength, than I had experienced since my fatal shipwreck. Among the stores I had discovered on searching the cottage the preceding night, was a quantity of dried grapes; these refreshed me in the morning, as I left my lodging and proceeded towards a town which I discerned at no great distance. As far as I could divine, it must have been Forli. I entered with pleasure its wide and grassy streets. All, it is true, pictured the excess of desolation; yet I loved to find myself in those spots which had been the abode of my fellow creatures. I delighted to traverse street after street, to look up at the tall houses, and repeat to myself, once they contained beings similar to myself—I was not always the wretch I am now. The wide square of Forli, the arcade around it, its light and pleasant aspect cheered me. I was pleased with the idea, that, if the earth should be again peopled, we, the lost race, would, in the relics left behind, present no contemptible exhibition of our powers to the new comers.

I entered one of the palaces, and opened the door of a magnificent saloon. I started—I looked again with renewed wonder. What wild-looking, unkempt, half-naked savage was that before me? The surprise was momentary.

1080

I perceived that it was I myself whom I beheld in a large mirror at the end of the hall. No wonder that the lover of the princely Idris should fail to recognize himself in the miserable object there pourtrayed. My tattered dress was that in which I had crawled half alive from the tempestuous sea. My long and tangled hair hung in elf locks on my brow—my dark eyes, now hollow and wild, gleamed from under them—my cheeks were discoloured by the jaundice, which (the effect of misery and

neglect) suffused my skin, and were half hid by a beard of many days' growth.

Yet why should I not remain thus, I thought; the world is dead, and this squalid attire is a fitter mourning garb than the foppery of a black suit. And thus, methinks, I should have remained, had not hope, without which I do not believe man could exist, whispered to me, that, in such a plight, I should be an object of fear and aversion to the being, preserved I knew not where, but I fondly trusted, at length, to be found by me. Will my readers scorn the vanity, that made me attire myself with some care, for the sake of this visionary being? Or will they forgive the freaks of a half crazed imagination? I can easily forgive myself—for hope, however vague, was so dear to me, and a sentiment of pleasure of so rare occurrence, that I yielded readily to any idea, that cherished the one, or promised any recurrence of the former to my sorrowing heart. After such occupation, I visited every street, alley, and nook of Forli. These Italian towns presented an appearance of still greater desolation, than those of England or France. Plague had appeared here earlier—it had finished its course, and achieved its work much sooner than with us. Probably the last summer had found no human being alive, in all the track included between the shores of Calabria and the northern Alps. My search was utterly vain, yet I did not despond. Reason methought was on my side; and the chances were by no means contemptible, that there should exist in some part of Italy a survivor like myself—of a wasted, depopulate land. As therefore I rambled through the empty town, I formed my plan for future operations. I would continue to journey on towards Rome. After I should have satisfied myself, by a narrow search, that I left behind no human being in the towns through which I passed, I would write up in a conspicuous part of each, with white paint, in three languages, that "Verney, the last of the race of Englishmen, had taken up his abode in Rome."

In pursuance of this scheme, I entered a painter's shop, and procured myself the paint. It is strange that so trivial an occupation should have consoled, and even enlivened me. But grief renders one childish, despair fantastic. To this simple

inscription, I merely added the adjuration, "Friend, come! I wait for thee!—Deh, vieni! ti aspetto!" On the following morning, with something like hope for my companion, I quitted Forli on my way to Rome. Until now, agonizing retrospect, and dreary prospects for the future, had stung me when awake, and cradled me to my repose. Many times I had delivered myself up to the tyranny of anguish— many times I resolved a speedy end to my woes; and death by my own hands was a remedy, whose practicability was even cheering to me. What could I fear in the other world? If there were an hell, and I were doomed to it, I should come an adept to the sufferance of its tortures—the act were easy, the speedy and certain end of my deplorable tragedy. But now these thoughts faded before the new born expectation. I went on my way, not as before, feeling each hour, each minute, to be an age instinct with incalculable pain.

As I wandered along the plain, at the foot of the Appennines—through their vallies, and over their bleak summits, my path led me through a country which had been trodden by heroes, visited and admired by thousands. They had, as a tide, receded, leaving me blank and bare in the midst. But why complain? Did I not hope?—so I schooled myself, even after the enlivening spirit had really deserted me, and thus I was obliged to call up all the fortitude I could command, and that was not much, to prevent a recurrence of that chaotic and intolerable despair, that had succeeded to the miserable shipwreck, that had consummated every fear, and dashed to annihilation every joy.

I rose each day with the morning sun, and left my desolate inn. As my feet strayed through the unpeopled country, my thoughts rambled through the universe, and I was least miserable when I could, absorbed in reverie, forget the passage of the hours. Each evening, in spite of weariness, I detested to enter any dwelling, there to take up my nightly abode—I have sat, hour after hour, at the door of the cottage I had selected, unable to lift the latch, and meet face to face blank desertion within. Many nights, though autumnal mists were spread around, I passed under an ilex—many times I have supped on arbutus berries and chestnuts, making a fire, gypsy-like, on the ground—because wild natural

scenery reminded me less acutely of my hopeless state of loneliness. I counted the days, and bore with me a peeled willow-wand, on which, as well as I could remember, I had notched the days that had elapsed since my wreck, and each night I added another unit to the melancholy sum.

I had toiled up a hill which led to Spoleto. Around was spread a plain, encircled by the chestnut-covered Appennines. A dark ravine was on one side, spanned by an aqueduct, whose tall arches were rooted in the dell below, and attested that man had once deigned to bestow labour and thought here, to adorn and civilize nature. Savage, ungrateful nature, which in wild sport defaced his remains, protruding her easily renewed, and fragile growth of wild flowers and parasite plants around his eternal edifices. I sat on a fragment of rock, and looked round. The sun had bathed in gold the western atmosphere, and in the east the clouds caught the radiance, and budded into transient loveliness. It set on a world that contained me alone for its inhabitant. I took out my wand—I counted the marks. Twenty-five were already traced—twenty-five days had already elapsed, since human voice had gladdened my ears, or human countenance met my gaze. Twenty-five long, weary days, succeeded by dark and lonesome nights, had mingled with foregone years, and had become a part of the past—the never to be recalled—a real, undeniable portion of my life—twenty-five long, long days.

Why this was not a month!—Why talk of days—or weeks—or months—I must grasp years in my imagination, if I would truly picture the future to myself—three, five, ten, twenty, fifty anniversaries of that fatal epoch might elapse—every year containing twelve months, each of more numerous calculation in a diary, than the twenty-five days gone by—Can it be? Will it be?—We had been used to look forward to death tremulously—wherefore, but because its place was obscure? But more terrible, and far more obscure, was the unveiled course of my lone futurity. I broke my wand; I threw it from me. I needed no recorder of the inch and barley-corn growth of my life, while my unquiet thoughts created other divisions, than those ruled over by the planets—and, in looking back on the age that had elapsed

since I had been alone, I disdained to give the name of days and hours to the throes of agony which had in truth portioned it out.

I hid my face in my hands. The twitter of the young birds going to rest, and their rustling among the trees, disturbed the still evening-air—the crickets chirped—the aziolo cooed at intervals. My thoughts had been of death—these sounds spoke to me of life. I lifted up my eyes—a bat wheeled round—the sun had sunk behind the jagged line of mountains, and the paly, crescent moon was visible, silver white, amidst the orange sunset, and accompanied by one bright star, prolonged thus the twilight. A herd of cattle passed along in the dell below, untended, towards their watering place—the grass was rustled by a gentle breeze, and the olive-woods, mellowed into soft masses by the moonlight, contrasted their sea-green with the dark chestnut foliage. Yes, this is the earth; there is no change—no ruin—no rent made in her verdurous expanse; she continues to wheel round and round, with alternate night and day, through the sky, though man is not her adorer or inhabitant. Why could I not forget myself like one of those animals, and no longer suffer the wild tumult of misery that I endure? Yet, ah! what a deadly breach yawns between their state and mine! Have not they companions? Have not they each their mate—their cherished young, their home, which, though unexpressed to us, is, I doubt not, endeared and enriched, even in their eyes, by the society which kind nature has created for them? It is I only that am alone—I, on this little hill top, gazing on plain and mountain recess—on sky, and its starry population, listening to every sound of earth, and air, and murmuring wave,—I only cannot express to any companion my many thoughts, nor lay my throbbing head on any loved bosom, nor drink from meeting eyes an intoxicating dew, that transcends the fabulous nectar of the gods. Shall I not then complain? Shall I not curse the murderous engine which has mowed down the children of men, my brethren? Shall I not bestow a malediction on every other of nature's offspring, which dares live and enjoy, while I live and suffer?

Ah, no! I will discipline my sorrowing heart to sympathy in your joys; I will be happy, because ye are so. Live on, ye innocents, nature's selected darlings; I am not much unlike to you.

Nerves, pulse, brain, joint, and flesh, of such am I composed, and ye are organized by the same laws. I have something beyond this, but I will call it a defect, not an endowment, if it leads me to misery, while ye are happy. Just then, there emerged from a near copse two goats and a little kid, by the mother's side; they began to browse the herbage of the hill. I approached near to them, without their perceiving me; I gathered a handful of fresh grass, and held it out; the little one nestled close to its mother, while she timidly withdrew. The male stepped forward, fixing his eyes on me: I drew near, still holding out my lure, while he, depressing his head, rushed at me with his horns. I was a very fool; I knew it, yet I yielded to my rage. I snatched up a huge fragment of rock; it would have crushed my rash foe. I poised it—aimed it—then my heart failed me. I hurled it wide of the mark; it rolled clattering among the bushes into dell. My little visitants, all aghast, galloped back into the covert of the wood; while I, my very heart bleeding and torn, rushed down the hill, and by the violence of bodily exertion, sought to escape from my miserable self.

No, no, I will not live among the wild scenes of nature, the enemy of all that lives. I will seek the towns—Rome, the capital of the world, the crown of man's achievements. Among its storied streets, hallowed ruins, and stupendous remains of human exertion, I shall not, as here, find every thing forgetful of man; trampling on his memory, defacing his works, proclaiming from hill to hill, and vale to vale,—by the torrents freed from the boundaries which he imposed—by the vegetation liberated from the laws which he enforced—by his habitation abandoned to mildew and weeds, that his power is lost, his race annihilated for ever.

I hailed the Tiber, for that was as it were an unalienable possession of humanity. I hailed the wild Campagna, for every rood had been trod by man; and its savage uncultivation, of no recent date, only proclaimed more distinctly his power, since he had given an honourable name and sacred title to what else would have been a worthless, barren track. I entered Eternal Rome by the Porta del Popolo, and saluted with awe its time-honoured space. The wide square, the churches near, the long extent of the

Corso, the near eminence of Trinita de' Monti appeared like fairy work, they were so silent, so peaceful, and so very fair. It was evening; and the population of animals which still existed in this mighty city, had gone to rest; there was no sound, save the murmur of its many fountains, whose soft monotony was harmony to my soul. The knowledge that I was in Rome, soothed me; that wondrous city, hardly more illustrious for its heroes and sages, than for the power it exercised over the imaginations of men. I went to rest that night; the eternal burning of my heart quenched,—my senses tranquil.

The next morning I eagerly began my rambles in search of oblivion. I ascended the many terraces of the garden of the Colonna Palace, under whose roof I had been sleeping; and passing out from it at its summit, I found myself on Monte Cavallo. The fountain sparkled in the sun; the obelisk above pierced the clear dark-blue air. The statues on each side, the works, as they are inscribed, of Phidias and Praxiteles, stood in undiminished grandeur, representing Castor and Pollux, who with majestic power tamed the rearing animal at their side. If those illustrious artists had in truth chiselled these forms, how many passing generations had their giant proportions outlived! and now they were viewed by the last of the species they were sculptured to represent and deify. I had shrunk into insignificance in my own eyes, as I considered the multitudinous beings these stone demigods had outlived, but this after-thought restored me to dignity in my own conception. The sight of the poetry eternized in these statues, took the sting from the thought, arraying it only in poetic ideality.

I repeated to myself,—I am in Rome! I behold, and as it were, familiarly converse with the wonder of the world, sovereign mistress of the imagination, majestic and eternal survivor of millions of generations of extinct men. I endeavoured to quiet the sorrows of my aching heart, by even now taking an interest in what in my youth I had ardently longed to see. Every part of Rome is replete with relics of ancient times. The meanest streets are strewn with truncated columns, broken capitals—Corinthian and Ionic, and sparkling fragments of granite or porphyry. The

walls of the most penurious dwellings enclose a fluted pillar or ponderous stone, which once made part of the palace of the Caesars; and the voice of dead time, in still vibrations, is breathed from these dumb things, animated and glorified as they were by man.

I embraced the vast columns of the temple of Jupiter Stator, which survives in the open space that was the Forum, and leaning my burning cheek against its cold durability, I tried to lose the sense of present misery and present desertion, by recalling to the haunted cell of my brain vivid memories of times gone by. I rejoiced at my success, as I figured Camillus, the Gracchi, Cato, and last the heroes of Tacitus, which shine meteors of surpassing brightness during the murky night of the empire;—as the verses of Horace and Virgil, or the glowing periods of Cicero thronged into the opened gates of my mind, I felt myself exalted by long forgotten enthusiasm. I was delighted to know that I beheld the scene which they beheld—the scene which their wives and mothers, and crowds of the unnamed witnessed, while at the same time they honoured, applauded, or wept for these matchless specimens of humanity. At length, then, I had found a consolation. I had not vainly sought the storied precincts of Rome—I had discovered a medicine for my many and vital wounds.

I sat at the foot of these vast columns. The Coliseum, whose naked ruin is robed by nature in a verdurous and glowing veil, lay in the sunlight on my right. Not far off, to the left, was the Tower of the Capitol. Triumphal arches, the falling walls of many temples, strewed the ground at my feet. I strove, I resolved, to force myself to see the Plebeian multitude and lofty Patrician forms congregated around; and, as the Diorama of ages passed across my subdued fancy, they were replaced by the modern Roman; the Pope, in his white stole, distributing benedictions to the kneeling worshippers; the friar in his cowl; the dark-eyed girl, veiled by her mezzera; the noisy, sun-burnt rustic, leading his herd of buffaloes and oxen to the Campo Vaccino. The romance with which, dipping our pencils in the rainbow hues of sky and transcendent nature, we to a degree gratuitously endow the Italians, replaced the solemn grandeur of antiquity. I remembered

the dark monk, and floating figures of "The Italian," and how my boyish blood had thrilled at the description. I called to mind Corinna ascending the Capitol to be crowned, and, passing from the heroine to the author, reflected how the Enchantress Spirit of Rome held sovereign sway over the minds of the imaginative, until it rested on me—sole remaining spectator of its wonders.

I was long wrapt by such ideas; but the soul wearies of a pauseless flight; and, stooping from its wheeling circuits round and round this spot, suddenly it fell ten thousand fathom deep, into the abyss of the present—into self-knowledge—into tenfold sadness. I roused myself—I cast off my waking dreams; and I, who just now could almost hear the shouts of the Roman throng, and was hustled by countless multitudes, now beheld the desert ruins of Rome sleeping under its own blue sky; the shadows lay tranquilly on the ground; sheep were grazing untended on the Palatine, and a buffalo stalked down the Sacred Way that led to the Capitol. I was alone in the Forum; alone in Rome; alone in the world. Would not one living man—one companion in my weary solitude, be worth all the glory and remembered power of this time-honoured city? Double sorrow—sadness, bred in Cimmerian caves, robed my soul in a mourning garb. The generations I had conjured up to my fancy, contrasted more strongly with the end of all—the single point in which, as a pyramid, the mighty fabric of society had ended, while I, on the giddy height, saw vacant space around me.

From such vague laments I turned to the contemplation of the minutiae of my situation. So far, I had not succeeded in the sole object of my desires, the finding a companion for my desolation. Yet I did not despair. It is true that my inscriptions were set up for the most part, in insignificant towns and villages; yet, even without these memorials, it was possible that the person, who like me should find himself alone in a depopulated land, should, like me, come to Rome. The more slender my expectation was, the more I chose to build on it, and to accommodate my actions to this vague possibility.

It became necessary therefore, that for a time I should domesticate myself at Rome. It became necessary, that I should

look my disaster in the face— not playing the school-boy's part of obedience without submission; enduring life, and yet rebelling against the laws by which I lived.

Yet how could I resign myself? Without love, without sympathy, without communion with any, how could I meet the morning sun, and with it trace its oft repeated journey to the evening shades? Why did I continue to live— why not throw off the weary weight of time, and with my own hand, let out the fluttering prisoner from my agonized breast?—It was not cowardice that withheld me; for the true fortitude was to endure; and death had a soothing sound accompanying it, that would easily entice me to enter its demesne. But this I would not do. I had, from the moment I had reasoned on the subject, instituted myself the subject to fate, and the servant of necessity, the visible laws of the invisible God—I believed that my obedience was the result of sound reasoning, pure feeling, and an exalted sense of the true excellence and nobility of my nature. Could I have seen in this empty earth, in the seasons and their change, the hand of a blind power only, most willingly would I have placed my head on the sod, and closed my eyes on its loveliness for ever. But fate had administered life to me, when the plague had already seized on its prey—she had dragged me by the hair from out the strangling waves—By such miracles she had bought me for her own; I admitted her authority, and bowed to her decrees. If, after mature consideration, such was my resolve, it was doubly necessary that I should not lose the end of life, the improvement of my faculties, and poison its flow by repinings without end. Yet how cease to repine, since there was no hand near to extract the barbed spear that had entered my heart of hearts? I stretched out my hand, and it touched none whose sensations were responsive to mine. I was girded, walled in, vaulted over, by seven-fold barriers of loneliness. Occupation alone, if I could deliver myself up to it, would be capable of affording an opiate to my sleepless sense of woe. Having determined to make Rome my abode, at least for some months, I made arrangements for my accommodation—I selected my home. The Colonna Palace was well adapted for my purpose. Its grandeur— its treasure of

paintings, its magnificent halls were objects soothing and even exhilarating.

I found the granaries of Rome well stored with grain, and particularly with Indian corn; this product requiring less art in its preparation for food, I selected as my principal support. I now found the hardships and lawlessness of my youth turn to account. A man cannot throw off the habits of sixteen years. Since that age, it is true, I had lived luxuriously, or at least surrounded by all the conveniences civilization afforded. But before that time, I had been "as uncouth a savage, as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome"—and now, in Rome itself, robber and shepherd propensities, similar to those of its founder, were of advantage to its sole inhabitant. I spent the morning riding and shooting in the Campagna—I passed long hours in the various galleries—I gazed at each statue, and lost myself in a reverie before many a fair Madonna or beauteous nymph. I haunted the Vatican, and stood surrounded by marble forms of divine beauty. Each stone deity was possessed by sacred gladness, and the eternal fruition of love. They looked on me with unsympathizing complacency, and often in wild accents I reproached them for their supreme indifference—for they were human shapes, the human form divine was manifest in each fairest limb and lineament. The perfect moulding brought with it the idea of colour and motion; often, half in bitter mockery, half in self-delusion, I clasped their icy proportions, and, coming between Cupid and his Psyche's lips, pressed the unconceiving marble.

I endeavoured to read. I visited the libraries of Rome. I selected a volume, and, choosing some sequestered, shady nook, on the banks of the Tiber, or opposite the fair temple in the Borghese Gardens, or under the old pyramid of Cestius, I endeavoured to conceal me from myself, and immerse myself in the subject traced on the pages before me. As if in the same soil you plant nightshade and a myrtle tree, they will each appropriate the mould, moisture, and air administered, for the fostering their several properties—so did my grief find sustenance, and power of existence, and growth, in what else had been divine manna, to feed radiant meditation. Ah! while I streak this paper with the tale

of what my so named occupations were—while I shape the skeleton of my days—my hand trembles—my heart pants, and my brain refuses to lend expression, or phrase, or idea, by which to image forth the veil of unutterable woe that clothed these bare realities. O, worn and beating heart, may I dissect thy fibres, and tell how in each unmitigable misery, sadness dire, repinings, and despair, existed? May I record my many ravings—the wild curses I hurled at torturing nature—and how I have passed days shut out from light and food—from all except the burning hell alive in my own bosom?

I was presented, meantime, with one other occupation, the one best fitted to discipline my melancholy thoughts, which strayed backwards, over many a ruin, and through many a flowery glade, even to the mountain recess, from which in early youth I had first emerged.

During one of my rambles through the habitations of Rome, I found writing materials on a table in an author's study. Parts of a manuscript lay scattered about. It contained a learned disquisition on the Italian language; one page an unfinished dedication to posterity, for whose profit the writer had sifted and selected the niceties of this harmonious language—to whose everlasting benefit he bequeathed his labours.

I also will write a book, I cried—for whom to read?—to whom dedicated? And then with silly flourish (what so capricious and childish as despair?) I wrote, DEDICATION TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD. SHADOWS, ARISE, AND READ YOUR FALL! BEHOLD THE HISTORY OF THE LAST MAN.

Yet, will not this world be re-peopled, and the children of a saved pair of lovers, in some to me unknown and unattainable seclusion, wandering to these prodigious relics of the antepestilential race, seek to learn how beings so wondrous in their achievements, with imaginations infinite, and powers godlike, had departed from their home to an unknown country?

I will write and leave in this most ancient city, this "world's sole monument," a record of these things. I will leave a monument of the existence of Verney, the Last Man. At first I thought only to speak of plague, of death, and last, of desertion;

but I lingered fondly on my early years, and recorded with sacred zeal the virtues of my companions. They have been with me during the fulfilment of my task. I have brought it to an end—I lift my eyes from my paper—again they are lost to me. Again I feel that I am alone.

A year has passed since I have been thus occupied. The seasons have made their wonted round, and decked this eternal city in a changeful robe of surpassing beauty. A year has passed; and I no longer guess at my state or my prospects—loneliness is my familiar, sorrow my inseparable companion. I have endeavoured to brave the storm—I have endeavoured to school myself to fortitude—I have sought to imbue myself with the lessons of wisdom. It will not do. My hair has become nearly grey—my voice, unused now to utter sound, comes strangely on my ears. My person, with its human powers and features, seem to me a monstrous excrescence of nature. How express in human language a woe human being until this hour never knew! How give intelligible expression to a pang none but I could ever understand!—No one has entered Rome. None will ever come. I smile bitterly at the delusion I have so long nourished, and still more, when I reflect that I have exchanged it for another as delusive, as false, but to which I now cling with the same fond trust.

Winter has come again; and the gardens of Rome have lost their leaves—the sharp air comes over the Campagna, and has driven its brute inhabitants to take up their abode in the many dwellings of the deserted city—frost has suspended the gushing fountains—and Trevi has stilled her eternal music. I had made a rough calculation, aided by the stars, by which I endeavoured to ascertain the first day of the new year. In the old out-worn age, the Sovereign Pontiff was used to go in solemn pomp, and mark the renewal of the year by driving a nail in the gate of the temple of Janus. On that day I ascended St. Peter's, and carved on its topmost stone the aera 2100, last year of the world!

My only companion was a dog, a shaggy fellow, half water and half shepherd's dog, whom I found tending sheep in the Campagna. His master was dead, but nevertheless he continued

fulfilling his duties in expectation of his return. If a sheep strayed from the rest, he forced it to return to the flock, and sedulously kept off every intruder. Riding in the Campagna I had come upon his sheep-walk, and for some time observed his repetition of lessons learned from man, now useless, though unforgotten. His delight was excessive when he saw me. He sprung up to my knees; he capered round and round, wagging his tail, with the short, quick bark of pleasure: he left his fold to follow me, and from that day has never neglected to watch by and attend on me, shewing boisterous gratitude whenever I caressed or talked to him. His pattering steps and mine alone were heard, when we entered the magnificent extent of nave and aisle of St. Peter's. We ascended the myriad steps together, when on the summit I achieved my design, and in rough figures noted the date of the last year. I then turned to gaze on the country, and to take leave of Rome. I had long determined to quit it, and I now formed the plan I would adopt for my future career, after I had left this magnificent abode.

A solitary being is by instinct a wanderer, and that I would become. A hope of amelioration always attends on change of place, which would even lighten the burthen of my life. I had been a fool to remain in Rome all this time: Rome noted for Malaria, the famous caterer for death. But it was still possible, that, could I visit the whole extent of earth, I should find in some part of the wide extent a survivor. Methought the sea-side was the most probable retreat to be chosen by such a one. If left alone in an inland district, still they could not continue in the spot where their last hopes had been extinguished; they would journey on, like me, in search of a partner for their solitude, till the watery barrier stopped their further progress.

To that water—cause of my woes, perhaps now to be their cure, I would betake myself. Farewell, Italy!—farewell, thou ornament of the world, matchless Rome, the retreat of the solitary one during long months!—to civilized life—to the settled home and succession of monotonous days, farewell! Peril will now be mine; and I hail her as a friend—death will perpetually cross my path, and I will meet him as a benefactor; hardship, inclement

weather, and dangerous tempests will be my sworn mates. Ye spirits of storm, receive me! ye powers of destruction, open wide your arms, and clasp me for ever! if a kinder power have not decreed another end, so that after long endurance I may reap my reward, and again feel my heart beat near the heart of another like to me.

Tiber, the road which is spread by nature's own hand, threading her continent, was at my feet, and many a boat was tethered to the banks. I would with a few books, provisions, and my dog, embark in one of these and float down the current of the stream into the sea; and then, keeping near land, I would coast the beauteous shores and sunny promontories of the blue Mediterranean, pass Naples, along Calabria, and would dare the twin perils of Scylla and Charybdis; then, with fearless aim, (for what had I to lose?) skim ocean's surface towards Malta and the further Cyclades. I would avoid Constantinople, the sight of whose well-known towers and inlets belonged to another state of existence from my present one; I would coast Asia Minor, and Syria, and, passing the seven-mouthed Nile, steer northward again, till losing sight of forgotten Carthage and deserted Lybia, I should reach the pillars of Hercules. And then—no matter where—the oozy caves, and soundless depths of ocean may be my dwelling, before I accomplish this long-drawn voyage, or the arrow of disease find my heart as I float singly on the weltering Mediterranean; or, in some place I touch at, I may find what I seek—a companion; or if this may not be—to endless time, decrepid and grey headed—youth already in the grave with those I love—the lone wanderer will still unfurl his sail, and clasp the tiller—and, still obeying the breezes of heaven, for ever round another and another promontory, anchoring in another and another bay, still ploughing seedless ocean, leaving behind the verdant land of native Europe, adown the tawny shore of Africa, having weathered the fierce seas of the Cape, I may moor my worn skiff in a creek, shaded by spicy groves of the odorous islands of the far Indian ocean.

These are wild dreams. Yet since, now a week ago, they came on me, as I stood on the height of St. Peter's, they have ruled my imagination. I have chosen my boat, and laid in my scant stores. I

have selected a few books; the principal are Homer and Shakespeare—But the libraries of the world are thrown open to me—and in any port I can renew my stock. I form no expectation of alteration for the better; but the monotonous present is intolerable to me. Neither hope nor joy are my pilots—restless despair and fierce desire of change lead me on. I long to grapple with danger, to be excited by fear, to have some task, however slight or voluntary, for each day's fulfilment. I shall witness all the variety of appearance, that the elements can assume—I shall read fair augury in the rainbow—menace in the cloud—some lesson or record dear to my heart in everything. Thus around the shores of deserted earth, while the sun is high, and the moon waxes or wanes, angels, the spirits of the dead, and the ever-open eye of the Supreme, will behold the tiny bark, freighted with Verney—the LAST MAN.

FOOTNOTES

[1]

See an ingenious Essay, entitled, "The Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients Demonstrated," by Mackey, a shoemaker, of Norwich printed in 1822. [\[back\]](#)

[2]

Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution [\[back\]](#)

[3]

Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution [\[back\]](#)

[4]

Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters from Norway [\[back\]](#)

[5]

Solomon's Song [\[back\]](#)

Unit 2: Realism

The dates for Realism as a movement vary, from as early as 1820 to as late as 1920. Although Realism is, in many ways, a rejection of Romanticism, it does address some of the same concerns about the industrial revolution that Wordsworth had expressed earlier. The passage of years increased the number of authors who noted the failures of industrialization, especially where pollution and quality of life were concerned. The British period of Victorianism (1837-1901) saw a gradual shifting from Romanticism to Realism. Poets such as Tennyson and Robert Browning are more properly transitional poets: products of Romanticism, but who express themselves in more realistic terms. It is important to remember not only that literary movements are not set in stone, but also that they are not always identified the same way by their own time period. When Charles Baudelaire wrote his seminal work, *The Flowers of Evil* (1857), he was praised as a poet of Romanticism by Gustave Flaubert, even though most modern scholars locate Baudelaire in Realism, and later poets of Modernism cite him as an early example of their own movement.

Romanticism was slowly but surely replaced with an attempt to see the world as it is. As later generations would note, it is difficult to represent reality in its entirety in one poem, play, short story, or novel. Early Realists tended to include more portrayals of middle class and/or lower class characters, who previously were not the main subjects of literature. In Europe, writers such as Ibsen wrote about the middle class specifically, using ordinary occurrences (at least, ordinary for the middle class experience) as the stuff of drama. Authors such as Henry James occasionally were criticized for novels in which very little seems to happen, since ordinary events are rarely as dramatic as the situations regularly found in Romanticism. In some cases, the attempt to be more realistic led to many works that focused on the negative aspects of humans, leaving out the positive aspects to avoid Romantic overtones.

Instead of Romanticism's belief in the power of emotion and intuition to achieve insight, Realism addressed more concrete issues, usually with direct and straightforward language. In American Realism, Mark Twain's use of dialect falls into this category. Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is realistic in its use of common, everyday speech, which includes dialect and slang. The novel also offers a realistic portrayal of the

complicated friendship that slowly develops between Huck, a poor white boy, and Jim, a runaway slave.



HUCKLEBERRY FINN.

Drawing by E.W. Kemble of Huckleberry Finn with a rabbit and a gun, from the original 1884 edition of the book. License: Public Domain.

Another way that Realism distinguished itself from the previous movement was in its examination of human psychology. Robert Browning looked at the psychology of narcissists, murderers, and psychopaths in many of his dramatic monologues. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novels take place

as much in the minds of the characters as they do in the interactions among characters. In *Notes from Underground* (1864), Dostoyevsky uses Realism to explore the allure (and dangers) of Romanticism, including its continuing hold on audiences. Dostoyevsky's "Underground Man" attempts to explain not only why he does what he does, but claims that the reader is no different—a tactic used by Baudelaire in his poem "To The Reader" at the beginning of *The Flowers of Evil*.



The Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky in 1863. Black and white photograph. License: Public Domain

As a general guideline, Realism tended to point out society's problems (and the problems with the Romantic view), but offered observations, rather

than suggested changes. Naturalism, a subset of Realism often treated as a separate movement, was regularly motivated by a desire to improve the world. Naturalism concerned itself with the poorest members of society in particular, and social change was the goal. Naturalism was criticized for being even more focused on the negative aspects of life than regular Realism. Emile Zola's novel *Germinal* (1885) is perhaps the most famous example of Naturalism. In it, Zola depicts the lead-up to and aftermath of a coal miners' strike with a stark realism that shocked readers. His unsentimental portrayal (in almost journalistic fashion) of events angered both conservatives (reluctant to admit the brutal working and living conditions of the poor) and socialists (unhappy that the workers were not Romantic heroes). Eventually, Modernism began in literature as Realism and Naturalism were ending, overlapping for a brief period of time. Perhaps not surprisingly, Modernism would claim to be more real than Realism—or, as the artist Georgia O'Keeffe said, "Nothing is less real than realism" (Haber), preferring abstract art as a way to arrive at a more complete image of (one type of) truth.

Written by Laura Getty

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

Selected Poems

British

Early Realism (Victorianism)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a poet who inspired devotion. In the present day, it is worth remembering that some poets were celebrities on the level of modern day actors and musicians, with fan followings, fan letters, and requests for autographs. The public admired her politics as well as her artistry; she wrote abolitionist poems, and works such as "The Cry of the Children" (1842) are believed to have created popular support for child labor laws passed in 1844. One of her admirers was the poet Robert Browning: six years younger than she was and not yet famous. In his first letter to her in January 1845 (over five hundred of their letters survive), he declares his love not only of her poems, but of her. At that point, Elizabeth had been an invalid for years, for some time confined in her room by a controlling father who refused to allow any of his twelve children to marry. Twenty months later, Robert and Elizabeth eloped (her father disowned her), traveling to Italy, where Elizabeth recovered some of her health and gave birth to their son in 1849. During those early years, the love poems that she wrote to Robert became Sonnets from the Portuguese; unlike her other poetry, Elizabeth was hesitant at first to admit that she wrote the passionate poems, originally claiming that she had simply translated them from a Portuguese collection. She continued to write on a full range of topics, including the most popular work in her lifetime, the verse-novel *Aurora Leigh*. She died after another bout of illness in Florence, Italy, in the arms of her husband.

Consider while reading:

1. What do Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnets suggest about her relationship with Robert Browning?
2. Which elements are representative of Realism in the of "The Cry of the Children"? Which elements are Romanticism? Why put them together in this way?

Written by Laura Getty

FROM SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

License: Public Domain

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

III

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart!
Unlike our uses and our destinies.
Our ministering two angels look surprise
On one another, as they strike athwart
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art A guest for queens to social
pageantries, With gages from a hundred brighter eyes
Than tears even can make mine, to play thy part Of chief musician. What hast *thou*
to do With looking from the lattice-lights at me, A poor, tired, wandering
singer, singing through The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,— And Death must dig the level
where these agree.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way Of speaking gently,—for a trick of
thought That falls in well with mine, and certes brought A sense of pleasant
ease on such a day"— For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may Be
changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought, May be unwrought so.
Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,— A creature might forget to weep,
who bore Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore Thou mayst love on, through love's
eternity.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height My soul can reach, when feeling
out of sight For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right; I love thee purely, as they turn from
Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath, Smiles, tears, of all my life!—
and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

License: Public Domain

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Φηῦ, φηῦ, τί προσδέρκεσθ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;
Medea

I

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers, Ere the sorrow comes with years?

They are leaning their young heads against their mothers.

And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,

The young birds are chirping in the nest, The young fawns are playing with the shadows,

The young flowers are blowing toward the west— But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly!

They are weeping in the playtime of the others, In the country of the free.

II

Do you question the young children in the sorrow Why their tears are falling so?

The old man may weep for his to-morrow

Which is lost in Long Ago;

The old tree is leafless in the forest,

The old year is ending in the frost,

The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,

The old hope is hardest to be lost:

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

Do you ask them why they stand

Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers, In our happy Fatherland?

III

They look up with their pale and sunken faces, And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses

Down the cheeks of infancy;

"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,

Our young feet," they say, "are very weak; Few paces have we taken, yet are weary— Our grave-rest is very far to seek:

Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children, For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering, And the graves are for the old."

IV

"True," say the children, "it may happen

That we die before our time:

Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen Like a snowball, in the rime.

We looked into the pit prepared to take her:

Was no room for any work in the close clay!

From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her, Crying, 'Get up, little Alice!
it is day.'

If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower, With your ear down, little Alice
never cries; Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her, For the
smile has time for growing in her eyes: And merry go her moments, lulled and
stilled in The shroud by the kirk-chime.

It is good when it happens," say the children, "That we die before our time."

V

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking

Death in life, as best to have:

They are binding up their hearts away from breaking, With a cerement from the
grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city, Sing out, children, as the little
thrushes do; Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty, Laugh aloud,
to feel your fingers let them through!

But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows Like our weeds anear the
mine?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows, From your pleasures fair and fine!

VI

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,

And we cannot run or leap;

If we cared for any meadows, it were merely

To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,

We fall upon our faces, trying to go;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,

The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring

Through the coal-dark, underground;

Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron

In the factories, round and round.

VII

"For all day the wheels are droning, turning;
 Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning, And the walls turn in their
 places:
Turns the sky in the high window, blank and reeling, Turns the long light that
 drops adown the wall, Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling: All are
 turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning,
 And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning), 'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

VIII

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing Of their tender human
 youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
 Is not all the life God fashions or reveals: Let them prove their living souls
 against the notion That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
 Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward, Spin on blindly in the
 dark.

IX

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers, To look up to Him and pray;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others, Will bless them another day.
They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us, While the rushing of the iron
 wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us Pass by, hearing not, or answer
 not a word.
And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding) Strangers speaking at the
 door:
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him, Hears our weeping any more?

X

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
 And at midnight's hour of harm,
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
 We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words except 'Our Father,'

And we think that, in some pause of angels' song, God may pluck them with the
silence sweet to gather, And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely, 'Come and rest with me, my
child.'

XI

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,
"He is speechless as a stone:
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children,— "up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving: We look up for God, but tears
have made us blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving, O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving, And the children doubt of each.

XII

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom; They sink in man's despair,
without its calm; Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm: Are worn as if with age, yet
unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,— Are orphans of the earthly love
and heavenly.
Let them weep! let them weep!

XIII

They look up with their pale and sunken faces, And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places, With eyes turned on Deity.
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation, Will you stand, to move the
world, on a child's heart,— Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation, And
tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper Than the strong man in his wrath."

LORD WALTER'S WIFE

License: Public Domain

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

I

"But why do you go?" said the lady, while both sat under the yew,
And her eyes were alive in their depth, as the kraken beneath the sea-blue.

II

"Because I fear you," he answered;—"because you are far too fair,
And able to strangle my soul in a mesh of your gold-coloured hair."

III

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason! Such knots are quickly undone, And too much
beauty, I reckon, is nothing but too much sun."

IV

"Yet farewell so," he answered;—"the sun-stroke's fatal at times.
I value your husband, Lord Walter, whose gallop rings still from the limes."

V

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. You smell a rose through a fence: If two should
smell it, what matter? who grumbles, and where's the pretence?"

VI

"But I," he replied, "have promised another, when love was free,
To love her alone, alone, who alone and afar loves me."

VII

"Why, that," she said, "is no reason. Love's always free, I am told.
Will you vow to be safe from the headache on Tuesday, and think it will hold?"

VIII

"But you," he replied, "have a daughter, a young little child, who was laid In your
lap to be pure; so I leave you: the angels would make me afraid."

IX

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. The angels keep out of the way; And Dora, the
child, observes nothing, although you should please me and stay."

X

At which he rose up in his anger,— "Why, now, you no longer are fair!"

Why, now, you no longer are fatal, but ugly and hateful, I swear."

XI

At which she laughed out in her scorn: "These men! Oh, these men overnice, Who are shocked if a colour not virtuous is frankly put on by a vice."

XII

Her eyes blazed upon him—"And *you*! You bring us your vices so near That we smell them! You think in our presence a thought 't would defame us to hear!

XIII

"What reason had you, and what right,—I appeal to your soul from my life,— To find me too fair as a woman? Why, sir, I am pure, and a wife.

XIV

"Is the day-star too fair up above you? It burns you not. Dare you imply I brushed you more close than the star does, when Walter had set me as high?

XV

"If a man finds a woman too fair, he means simply adapted too much To uses unlawful and fatal. The praise!—shall I thank you for such?

XVI

"Too fair?—not unless you misuse us! and surely if, once in a while, You attain to it, straightway you call us no longer too fair, but too vile.

XVII

"A moment,—I pray your attention!—I have a poor word in my head I must utter, though womanly custom would set it down better unsaid.

XVIII

"You grew, sir, pale to impertinence, once when I showed you a ring. You kissed my fan when I dropped it. No matter!—I've broken the thing.

XIX

"You did me the honour, perhaps, to be moved at my side now and then In the senses—a vice, I have heard, which is common to beasts and some men.

XX

"Love's a virtue for heroes!—as white as the snow on high hills, And immortal as every great soul is that struggles, endures, and fulfils.

XXI

"I love my Walter profoundly,—you, Maude, though you faltered a week, For the sake of ... what was it—an eyebrow? or, less still, a mole on a cheek?

XXII

"And since, when all's said, you're too noble to stoop to the frivolous cant About crimes irresistible, virtues that swindle, betray and supplant,

XXIII

"I determined to prove to yourself that, whate'er you might dream or avow By illusion, you wanted precisely no more of me than you have now.

XXIV

"There! Look me full in the face!—in the face. Understand, if you can, That the eyes of such women as I am are clean as the palm of a man.

XXV

"Drop his hand, you insult him. Avoid us for fear we should cost you a scar— You take us for harlots, I tell you, and not for the women we are.

XXVI

"You wronged me: but then I considered ... there's Walter! And so at the end I vowed that he should not be mulcted, by me, in the hand of a friend.

XXVII

"Have I hurt you indeed? We are quits then. Nay, friend of my Walter, be mine! Come, Dora, my darling, my angel, and help me to ask him to dine."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Introduction

Written by Faculty

THE LOTOS-EATERS

License: Public Domain

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land, "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon, Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon; And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go; And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke, Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops, Three silent pinnacles of aged snow, Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with showery drops, Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the dale Was seen far inland, and the yellow down Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seem'd the same!

And round about the keel with faces pale, Dark faces pale against that rosy flame, The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem, Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave To each, but whoso did receive of them

And taste, to him the gushing of the wave Far far away did seem to mourn and rave

On alien shores; and if his fellow spake, His voice was thin, as voices from the grave; And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake, And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand, Between the sun and moon upon the shore; And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland, Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar, Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.

Then some one said, "We will return no more;"

And all at once they sang, "Our island home Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

Choric Song

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the
grass, Or night-dews on still waters between walls Of shadowy granite, in a
gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, And from the craggy ledge the
poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress, While all things else have rest from
weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone, We only toil, who are the first of
things, And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown; Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm; Nor harken what the inner spirit
sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care, Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,

The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow, Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil, Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave In silence—ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream, With half-shut eyes ever to
seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light, Which will not leave the myrrh-
bush on the height; To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach, And tender curving lines of creamy
spray; To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy; To muse and brood and live again in
memory, With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives

And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change; For surely now our household
hearth is cold, Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange, And we should
come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings Before them of the ten years' war in
Troy, And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile;
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars And eyes grown dim with gazing on
the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly, How sweet—while warm airs lull us,
blowing lowly— With half-dropped eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine— To watch the emerald-color'd
water falling Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine, Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd
out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone; Thro' every hollow cave and
alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we, Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to
larboard, when the surge was seething free, Where the wallowing monster
spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind, In the hollow Lotos-land to
live and lie reclined On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd Far below them in the
valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd Round their golden houses, girdled
with the gleaming world; Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted
lands, Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song Steaming up, a
lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong, Like a tale of little meaning tho' the
words are strong; Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil, Storing yearly little dues
of wheat, and wine and oil; Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis
whisper'd— down in hell Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell, Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore Than labor in the deep
mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar; O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not
wander more.

ULYSSES

License: Public Domain

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king, By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those That loved me, and alone; on
shore, and when Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades Vext the dim sea: I
am become a name;

For always roaming with a hungry heart Much have I seen and known; cities of
men And manners, climates, councils, governments, Myself not least, but
honour'd of them all; And drunk delight of battle with my peers, Far on the
ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades For ever and for ever when I
move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end, To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were For some three suns to store and
hoard myself, And this gray spirit yearning in desire To follow knowledge, like
a sinking star, Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus, To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle
— Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil This labour, by slow prudence to
make mild A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees Subdue them to the
useful and the good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay

Meet adoration to my household gods,

When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail: There gloom the dark broad seas.

My mariners, Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took

The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I
are old; Old age hath yet his honour and his toil; Death closes all: but
something ere the end, Some work of noble note, may yet be done, Not
unbecoming men that strove with Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks: The long day wanes: the slow moon
climbs: the deep Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends, 'Tis not
too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite The sounding furrows; for my purpose
holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars until I
die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down: It may be we shall touch the Happy
Isles, And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'

We are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and heaven; that
which we are, we are; One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find, and not
to yield.

Robert Browning (1812-1889)

Selected Poems

British

Early Realism (Victorianism)

Robert Browning was an unknown poet when he fell in love with one of the most famous poets of his time, Elizabeth Barrett. Their relationship was the stuff of love poems; he fell in love with her, although he had never met her, by reading her poetry. At the time, she was an invalid who was kept pretty much a prisoner by her tyrannical father, who had decided never to allow any of his twelve children to marry. After a secret correspondence over twenty months, they eloped to Italy. She recovered enough of her health that she was able to give birth to a son, and they lived in Italy until her death in 1861. It was really only after her death that Robert Browning started to acquire fame as a poet, eventually becoming one of the most respected poets of the Victorian era. Although he wrote poems and plays on a range of topics, some of his most famous poems are his dramatic monologues, often with narrators who have extreme or even psychotic personalities. At first, audiences were startled by the dark humor and occasionally grotesque situations in many of the monologues, unaccustomed to reading about the human psyche in this way. In "My Last Duchess," the Duke addresses a silent representative of a Count whose daughter he wants to marry. The Duke is the epitome of an entitled snob, but his monologue slowly reveals that these qualities led him to become an unrepentant murderer, with a terrifying possessiveness that continues long after his first wife's death. "Porphyria's Lover" contains one of the best twists (the pun will become clear after reading it) in the monologues; it is again a study in psychotic self-absorption, as well as a technical triumph (try reading it without stopping at the end of the lines, but instead by stopping only at punctuation marks). The third monologue presented here is "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," a nightmarish quest with an ambiguous ending. The poem inspired many other writers, including Stephen King, who based his Dark Tower series (1978-2012) on the poem.

Consider while reading:

1. In "My Last Duchess," the Duke is speaking to a representative of a Count, and he is trying to marry the Count's daughter. Imagine the entire monologue from the perspective of the Count's representative. Why does he want to go downstairs before the Duke does?
2. Look up "porphyria" in a dictionary. How does the meaning of the word affect your reading of the poem?
3. Where does Childe Roland find the Dark Tower? In what ways can the ending be interpreted?

Written by Laura Getty

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

License: Public Domain

Robert Browning

The rain set early in to-night, The sullen wind was soon awake, It tore the elm-tops down for spite, And did its worst to vex the lake: I listened with heart fit to break.

When glided in Porphyria; straight She shut the cold out and the storm, And kneeled and made the cheerless grate Blaze up, and all the cottage warm; Which done, she rose, and from her form Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl, And laid her soiled gloves by, untied Her hat and let the damp hair fall, And, last, she sat down by my side And called me. When no voice replied, She put my arm about her waist,

And made her smooth white shoulder bare And all her yellow hair displaced, And, stooping, made my cheek lie there, And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair, Murmuring how she loved me—she

Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor, To set its struggling passion free From pride, and vainer ties dissever, And give herself to me forever.

But passion sometimes would prevail, Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain A sudden thought of one so pale

For love of her, and all in vain: So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes

Happy and proud; at last I knew Porphyria worshipped me; surprise Made my heart swell, and still it grew While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair, Perfectly pure and good: I found A thing to do, and all her hair

In one long yellow string I wound Three times her little throat around, And strangled her. No pain felt she; I am quite sure she felt no pain.

As a shut bud that holds a bee,

I warily oped her lids: again Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.

And I untightened next the tress

About her neck; her cheek once more Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:

I propped her head up as before, Only, this time my shoulder bore

Her head, which droops upon it still: The smiling rosy little head, So glad it has its utmost will,

That all it scorned at once is fled, And I, its love, am gained instead!

Porphyria's love: she guessed not how Her darling one wish would be heard.

And thus we sit together now,

And all night long we have not stirred, And yet God has not said a word!

MY LAST DUCHESS

License: Public Domain

Robert Browning

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands Worked busily a day, and there she
stands.

Will't please you sit and look at her? I said "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance, The depth and passion of its
earnest glance, But to myself they turned (since none puts by The curtain I have
drawn for you, but I) And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst, How
such a glance came there; so, not the first Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't
was not Her husband's presence only, called that spot Of joy into the Duchess'
cheek: perhaps Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps Over my lady's
wrist too much," or "Paint Must never hope to reproduce the faint

Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff Was courtesy, she thought, and
cause enough For calling up that spot of joy. She had A heart—how shall I say?
—too soon made glad, Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er She looked on,
and her looks went everywhere.

Sir, 't was all one! My favor at her breast, The dropping of the daylight in the
West, The bough of cherries some officious fool Broke in the orchard for her,
the white mule She rode with round the terrace—all and each Would draw from
her alike the approving speech, Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good!
but thanked Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked My gift of a nine-
hundred-years-old name With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame This sort of
trifling? Even had you skill In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this Or that in you disgusts me; here
you miss, Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let Herself be lessoned so, nor
plainly set Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse, —E'en then would be
some stooping; and I choose Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without Much the same smile? This
grew; I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands As
if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence Is ample warrant that no just
pretence

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though, Taming a sea-horse, thought a
rarity,

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

License: Public Domain

Robert Browning

See Edgar's song in Lear.

My first thought was, he lied in every word, That hoary cripple, with malicious
eye Askance to watch the working of his lie On mine, and mouth scarce able to
afford

Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored Its edge, at one more victim gained
thereby.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?

What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare All travellers who might find him
posted there, And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh Would
break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph For pastime in the dusty
thoroughfare, If at his counsel I should turn aside Into that ominous tract
which, all agree, Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly I did turn as he
pointed: neither pride

Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering.

What with my search drawn out through years, my hope Dwindled into a ghost
not fit to cope

With that obstreperous joy success would bring,— I hardly tried now to rebuke the
spring

My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

As when a sick man very near to death Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and
end The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend, And hears one bid the
other go, draw breath

Freelier outside, ("since all is o'er," he saith, "And the blow fallen no grieving can
amend;") While some discuss if near the other graves Be room enough for this,
and when a day Suits best for carrying the corpse away, With care about the
banners, scarves and staves: And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest, Heard failure prophesied so oft, been
writ So many times among "The Band"—to wit, The knights who to the Dark
Tower's search addressed Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him, That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
Than, pausing to throw backward a last view O'er the safe road, 'twas gone;
gray plain all round: Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; naught else remained to do.

So, on I went. I think I never saw Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve: For
flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe, You'd think: a burr had been a
treasure trove.

No! penury, inertness and grimace, In some strange sort, were the land's portion.
"See Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly, "It nothing skills: I cannot help
my case:
'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place, Calcine its clods and set my
prisoners free."

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk Above its mates, the head was chopped;
the bents Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents In the dock's
harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to balk All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute must
walk Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the
mud Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare, Stood stupefied, however he came
there:
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know, With that red gaunt and colloped neck
a-strain, And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane; Seldom went such
grotesqueness with such woe;.
I never saw a brute I hated so;
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.

As a man calls for wine before he fights, I asked one draught of earlier, happier
sights, Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art: One taste of the old time sets all to
rights.

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands Frank as ten years ago when
knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) lie durst.
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands Pin to his breast a
parchment? His own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

Better this present than a past like that; Back therefore to my darkening path
again!
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked: when something on the dismal flat Came to arrest my thoughts and
change their train.

A sudden little river crossed my path As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see
the wrath Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along, Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit Of mute despair, a suicidal
throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared To set my foot upon a dead
man's cheek, Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek For hollows, tangled in
his hair or beard!
—It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.

Now for a better country. Vain presage!

Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage, Whose savage trample thus
could pad the dank

Soil to a splash? Toads in a poisoned tank,

Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.

What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?

No footprint leading to that horrid mews, None out of it. Mad brewage set to
work

Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk Pits for his pastime, Christians
against Jews.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!

What bad use was that engine for, that wheel, Or brake, not wheel—that harrow
fit to reel Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air

Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,

Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood, Next a marsh, it would seem,

and now mere earth Desperate and done with: (so a fool finds mirth, Makes a
thing and then mars it, till his mood Changes and off he goes!) within a rood—
Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim, Now patches where some leanness
of the soil's Broke into moss or substances like boils; Then came some palsied
oak, a cleft in him

Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim

Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

And just as far as ever from the end!

Naught in the distance but the evening, naught To point my footstep further! At
the thought, A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,

Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned That brushed my cap—
perchance the guide I sought.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew, 'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given

place All round to mountains—with such name to grace Mere ugly heights and
heaps now stolen in view.

How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you!

How to get from them was no clearer case.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick Of mischief happened to me, God
knows when— In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then, Progress this way.
When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!

Burningly it came on me all at once, This was the place! those two hills on the
right, Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight; While to the left, a
tall scalped mountain ... Dunc, Dotard, a-doing at the very nonce,
After a life spent training for the sight!

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart, Built of brown stone, without a
counterpart In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf Points to the
shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day Came back again for that! before it
left, The dying sunset kindled through a cleft: The hills, like giants at a hunting,
lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—
"Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled Increasing like a bell. Names in
my ears, Of all the lost adventurers my peers,— How such a one was strong,
and such was bold, And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met To view the last of me, a living
frame For one more picture! in a sheet of flame I saw them and I knew them
all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew. "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*"

Frederick Douglass (c.1818-1895)

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave

American

Realism

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845) is an autobiographical account written by Frederick Douglass. Douglass was a prominent 19th-century African-American abolitionist, orator, and author who also became the first high-ranking African-American U.S. government official. Born as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey in the slave state of Maryland, Frederick changed his surname to Douglass after escaping from the South in 1838 to avoid getting captured and sent back. After fleeing to the North, he worked with other abolitionists and gave public lectures about his life in the South and the slaves' conditions; these public lectures became the basis for *Narrative*. In *Narrative*, Douglass famously recounts his first experience of literacy and his realization of its importance for freedom. He also makes references to the Bible, Shakespeare, and other works such as *The Columbian Orator*. *Narrative* is often regarded as the finest example of the slave narrative not only for its content but also for its eloquence and literary artistry. The slave narrative refers to (auto)biographical written accounts or fictional works about enslaved people, especially enslaved Africans. While the American slave narrative is itself a distinct literary genre, Douglass's *Narrative* has characteristics corresponding to 19th-century Realism in its testimonial desire for realistic representations of slaves' lives in North America, its unabashed attention to objective (including brutal) details, and its desire for democracy and human equality.

Consider while reading:

1. How does Douglass's *Narrative* demonstrate the power of both orality and literacy?
2. When Douglass was writing his *Narrative*, slavery was still not abolished in the United States. How do you think this historical context might have led Douglass to specific decisions on the content of *Narrative*?

3. Explore the significance of the appendix, considering its argument, rhetorical devices, and target audience.

Written by Kyoungnye Kwon

THE NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

An American Slave

License: Public Domain

Frederick Douglass

Preface

In the month of August, 1841, I attended an anti-slavery convention in Nantucket, at which it was my happiness to become acquainted with *Frederick Douglass*, the writer of the following Narrative. He was a stranger to nearly every member of that body; but, having recently made his escape from the southern prison-house of bondage, and feeling his curiosity excited to ascertain the principles and measures of the abolitionists,—of whom he had heard a somewhat vague description while he was a slave,—he was induced to give his attendance, on the occasion alluded to, though at that time a resident in New Bedford.

Fortunate, most fortunate occurrence!—fortunate for the millions of his manacled brethren, yet panting for deliverance from their awful thralldom!—fortunate for the cause of negro emancipation, and of universal liberty!—fortunate for the land of his birth, which he has already done so much to save and bless!—fortunate for a large circle of friends and acquaintances, whose sympathy and affection he has strongly secured by the many sufferings he has endured, by his virtuous traits of character, by his ever-abiding remembrance of those who are in bonds, as being bound with them!—fortunate for the multitudes, in various parts of our republic, whose minds he has enlightened on the subject of slavery, and who have been melted to tears by his pathos, or roused to virtuous indignation by his stirring eloquence against the enslavers of men!—fortunate for himself, as it at once brought him into the field of public usefulness, "gave the world assurance of a MAN," quickened the slumbering energies of his soul, and consecrated him to the great work of breaking the rod of the oppressor, and letting the oppressed go free!

I shall never forget his first speech at the convention—the extraordinary emotion it excited in my own mind—the powerful

impression it created upon a crowded auditory, completely taken by surprise—the applause which followed from the beginning to the end of his felicitous remarks. I think I never hated slavery so intensely as at that moment; certainly, my perception of the enormous outrage which is inflicted by it, on the godlike nature of its victims, was rendered far more clear than ever. There stood one, in physical proportion and stature commanding and exact—in intellect richly endowed—in natural eloquence a prodigy—in soul manifestly "created but a little lower than the angels"—yet a slave, ay, a fugitive slave,—trembling for his safety, hardly daring to believe that on the American soil, a single white person could be found who would befriend him at all hazards, for the love of God and humanity! Capable of high attainments as an intellectual and moral being—needing nothing but a comparatively small amount of cultivation to make him an ornament to society and a blessing to his race—by the law of the land, by the voice of the people, by the terms of the slave code, he was only a piece of property, a beast of burden, a chattel personal, nevertheless!

A beloved friend from New Bedford prevailed on *Mr. Douglass* to address the convention: He came forward to the platform with a hesitancy and embarrassment, necessarily the attendants of a sensitive mind in such a novel position. After apologizing for his ignorance, and reminding the audience that slavery was a poor school for the human intellect and heart, he proceeded to narrate some of the facts in his own history as a slave, and in the course of his speech gave utterance to many noble thoughts and thrilling reflections. As soon as he had taken his seat, filled with hope and admiration, I rose, and declared that *Patrick Henry*, of revolutionary fame, never made a speech more eloquent in the cause of liberty, than the one we had just listened to from the lips of that hunted fugitive. So I believed at that time—such is my belief now. I reminded the audience of the peril which surrounded this self-emancipated young man at the North,—even in Massachusetts, on the soil of the Pilgrim Fathers, among the descendants of revolutionary sires; and I appealed to them, whether they would ever allow him to be carried back into slavery,—law or no law, constitution or no constitution. The

response was unanimous and in thunder-tones—"NO!" "Will you succor and protect him as a brother-man—a resident of the old Bay State?" "YES!" shouted the whole mass, with an energy so startling, that the ruthless tyrants south of Mason and Dixon's line might almost have heard the mighty burst of feeling, and recognized it as the pledge of an invincible determination, on the part of those who gave it, never to betray him that wanders, but to hide the outcast, and firmly to abide the consequences.

It was at once deeply impressed upon my mind, that, if *Mr. Douglass* could be persuaded to consecrate his time and talents to the promotion of the anti-slavery enterprise, a powerful impetus would be given to it, and a stunning blow at the same time inflicted on northern prejudice against a colored complexion. I therefore endeavored to instil hope and courage into his mind, in order that he might dare to engage in a vocation so anomalous and responsible for a person in his situation; and I was seconded in this effort by warm-hearted friends, especially by the late General Agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, *Mr. John A. Collins*, whose judgment in this instance entirely coincided with my own. At first, he could give no encouragement; with unfeigned diffidence, he expressed his conviction that he was not adequate to the performance of so great a task; the path marked out was wholly an untrodden one; he was sincerely apprehensive that he should do more harm than good. After much deliberation, however, he consented to make a trial; and ever since that period, he has acted as a lecturing agent, under the auspices either of the American or the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. In labors he has been most abundant; and his success in combating prejudice, in gaining proselytes, in agitating the public mind, has far surpassed the most sanguine expectations that were raised at the commencement of his brilliant career. He has borne himself with gentleness and meekness, yet with true manliness of character. As a public speaker, he excels in pathos, wit, comparison, imitation, strength of reasoning, and fluency of language. There is in him that union of head and heart, which is indispensable to an enlightenment of the heads and a winning of the hearts of others. May his strength continue to be

equal to his day! May he continue to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God," that he may be increasingly serviceable in the cause of bleeding humanity, whether at home or abroad!

It is certainly a very remarkable fact, that one of the most efficient advocates of the slave population, now before the public, is a fugitive slave, in the person of *Frederick Douglass*; and that the free colored population of the United States are as ably represented by one of their own number, in the person of *Charles Lenox Remond*, whose eloquent appeals have extorted the highest applause of multitudes on both sides of the Atlantic. Let the calumniators of the colored race despise themselves for their baseness and illiberality of spirit, and henceforth cease to talk of the natural inferiority of those who require nothing but time and opportunity to attain to the highest point of human excellence.

It may, perhaps, be fairly questioned, whether any other portion of the population of the earth could have endured the privations, sufferings and horrors of slavery, without having become more degraded in the scale of humanity than the slaves of African descent. Nothing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind; and yet how wonderfully they have sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries! To illustrate the effect of slavery on the white man,—to show that he has no powers of endurance, in such a condition, superior to those of his black brother,—*Daniel O'connell*, the distinguished advocate of universal emancipation, and the mightiest champion of prostrate but not conquered Ireland, relates the following anecdote in a speech delivered by him in the Conciliation Hall, Dublin, before the Loyal National Repeal Association, March 31, 1845. "No matter," said *Mr. O'connell*, "under what specious term it may disguise itself, slavery is still hideous. *It has a natural, an inevitable tendency to brutalize every noble faculty of man.* An American sailor, who was cast away on the shore of Africa, where he was kept in slavery for three years, was, at the expiration of that period, found to be imbruted and stultified—he had lost all reasoning power; and

having forgotten his native language, could only utter some savage gibberish between Arabic and English, which nobody could understand, and which even he himself found difficulty in pronouncing. So much for the humanizing influence of *The Domestic Institution!*" Admitting this to have been an extraordinary case of mental deterioration, it proves at least that the white slave can sink as low in the scale of humanity as the black one.

Mr. Douglass has very properly chosen to write his own Narrative, in his own style, and according to the best of his ability, rather than to employ some one else. It is, therefore, entirely his own production; and, considering how long and dark was the career he had to run as a slave,—how few have been his opportunities to improve his mind since he broke his iron fetters,—it is, in my judgment, highly creditable to his head and heart. He who can peruse it without a tearful eye, a heaving breast, an afflicted spirit,—without being filled with an unutterable abhorrence of slavery and all its abettors, and animated with a determination to seek the immediate overthrow of that execrable system,—without trembling for the fate of this country in the hands of a righteous God, who is ever on the side of the oppressed, and whose arm is not shortened that it cannot save,—must have a flinty heart, and be qualified to act the part of a trafficker "in slaves and the souls of men." I am confident that it is essentially true in all its statements; that nothing has been set down in malice, nothing exaggerated, nothing drawn from the imagination; that it comes short of the reality, rather than overstates a single fact in regard to *slavery as it is*. The experience of *Frederick Douglass*, as a slave, was not a peculiar one; his lot was not especially a hard one; his case may be regarded as a very fair specimen of the treatment of slaves in Maryland, in which State it is conceded that they are better fed and less cruelly treated than in Georgia, Alabama, or Louisiana. Many have suffered incomparably more, while very few on the plantations have suffered less, than himself. Yet how deplorable was his situation! what terrible chastisements were inflicted upon his person! what still more shocking outrages were perpetrated

upon his mind! with all his noble powers and sublime aspirations, how like a brute was he treated, even by those professing to have the same mind in them that was in Christ Jesus! to what dreadful liabilities was he continually subjected! how destitute of friendly counsel and aid, even in his greatest extremities! how heavy was the midnight of woe which shrouded in blackness the last ray of hope, and filled the future with terror and gloom! what longings after freedom took possession of his breast, and how his misery augmented, in proportion as he grew reflective and intelligent,—thus demonstrating that a happy slave is an extinct man! how he thought, reasoned, felt, under the lash of the driver, with the chains upon his limbs! what perils he encountered in his endeavors to escape from his horrible doom! and how signal have been his deliverance and preservation in the midst of a nation of pitiless enemies!

This Narrative contains many affecting incidents, many passages of great eloquence and power; but I think the most thrilling one of them all is the description *Douglass* gives of his feelings, as he stood soliloquizing respecting his fate, and the chances of his one day being a freeman, on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay—viewing the receding vessels as they flew with their white wings before the breeze, and apostrophizing them as animated by the living spirit of freedom. Who can read that passage, and be insensible to its pathos and sublimity? Compressed into it is a whole Alexandrian library of thought, feeling, and sentiment—all that can, all that need be urged, in the form of expostulation, entreaty, rebuke, against that crime of crimes,—making man the property of his fellow-man! O, how accursed is that system, which entombs the godlike mind of man, defaces the divine image, reduces those who by creation were crowned with glory and honor to a level with four-footed beasts, and exalts the dealer in human flesh above all that is called God! Why should its existence be prolonged one hour? Is it not evil, only evil, and that continually? What does its presence imply but the absence of all fear of God, all regard for man, on the part of the people of the United States? Heaven speed its eternal overthrow!

So profoundly ignorant of the nature of slavery are many persons, that they are stubbornly incredulous whenever they read or listen to any recital of the cruelties which are daily inflicted on its victims. They do not deny that the slaves are held as property; but that terrible fact seems to convey to their minds no idea of injustice, exposure to outrage, or savage barbarity. Tell them of cruel scourgings, of mutilations and brandings, of scenes of pollution and blood, of the banishment of all light and knowledge, and they affect to be greatly indignant at such enormous exaggerations, such wholesale misstatements, such abominable libels on the character of the southern planters! As if all these direful outrages were not the natural results of slavery! As if it were less cruel to reduce a human being to the condition of a thing, than to give him a severe flagellation, or to deprive him of necessary food and clothing! As if whips, chains, thumb-screws, paddles, blood-hounds, overseers, drivers, patrols, were not all indispensable to keep the slaves down, and to give protection to their ruthless oppressors! As if, when the marriage institution is abolished, concubinage, adultery, and incest, must not necessarily abound; when all the rights of humanity are annihilated, any barrier remains to protect the victim from the fury of the spoiler; when absolute power is assumed over life and liberty, it will not be wielded with destructive sway! Skeptics of this character abound in society. In some few instances, their incredulity arises from a want of reflection; but, generally, it indicates a hatred of the light, a desire to shield slavery from the assaults of its foes, a contempt of the colored race, whether bond or free. Such will try to discredit the shocking tales of slaveholding cruelty which are recorded in this truthful Narrative; but they will labor in vain. *Mr. Douglass* has frankly disclosed the place of his birth, the names of those who claimed ownership in his body and soul, and the names also of those who committed the crimes which he has alleged against them. His statements, therefore, may easily be disproved, if they are untrue.

In the course of his Narrative, he relates two instances of murderous cruelty,—in one of which a planter deliberately shot a slave belonging to a neighboring plantation, who had

unintentionally gotten within his lordly domain in quest of fish; and in the other, an overseer blew out the brains of a slave who had fled to a stream of water to escape a bloody scourging. *Mr. Douglass* states that in neither of these instances was any thing done by way of legal arrest or judicial investigation. The *Baltimore American*, of March 17, 1845, relates a similar case of atrocity, perpetrated with similar impunity—as follows:—"*Shooting a slave.*—We learn, upon the authority of a letter from Charles county, Maryland, received by a gentleman of this city, that a young man, named Matthews, a nephew of General Matthews, and whose father, it is believed, holds an office at Washington, killed one of the slaves upon his father's farm by shooting him. The letter states that young Matthews had been left in charge of the farm; that he gave an order to the servant, which was disobeyed, when he proceeded to the house, *obtained a gun, and, returning, shot the servant.* He immediately, the letter continues, fled to his father's residence, where he still remains unmolested."—Let it never be forgotten, that no slaveholder or overseer can be convicted of any outrage perpetrated on the person of a slave, however diabolical it may be, on the testimony of colored witnesses, whether bond or free. By the slave code, they are adjudged to be as incompetent to testify against a white man, as though they were indeed a part of the brute creation. Hence, there is no legal protection in fact, whatever there may be in form, for the slave population; and any amount of cruelty may be inflicted on them with impunity. Is it possible for the human mind to conceive of a more horrible state of society?

The effect of a religious profession on the conduct of southern masters is vividly described in the following Narrative, and shown to be any thing but salutary. In the nature of the case, it must be in the highest degree pernicious. The testimony of *Mr. Douglass*, on this point, is sustained by a cloud of witnesses, whose veracity is unimpeachable. "A slaveholder's profession of Christianity is a palpable imposture. He is a felon of the highest grade. He is a man-stealer. It is of no importance what you put in the other scale."

Reader! are you with the man-stealers in sympathy and purpose, or on the side of their down-trodden victims? If with the former, then are you the foe of God and man. If with the latter, what are you prepared to do and dare in their behalf? Be faithful, be vigilant, be untiring in your efforts to break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free. Come what may—cost what it may—inscribe on the banner which you unfurl to the breeze, as your religious and political motto—"NO COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY! NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS!"

Wm. Lloyd Garrison,
Boston, May 1, 1845

Letter from Wendell Phillips, Esq.

Boston, April 22, 1845
My Dear Friend:

You remember the old fable of "The Man and the Lion," where the lion complained that he should not be so misrepresented "when the lions wrote history."

I am glad the time has come when the "lions write history." We have been left long enough to gather the character of slavery from the involuntary evidence of the masters. One might, indeed, rest sufficiently satisfied with what, it is evident, must be, in general, the results of such a relation, without seeking farther to find whether they have followed in every instance. Indeed, those who stare at the half-peck of corn a week, and love to count the lashes on the slave's back, are seldom the "stuff" out of which reformers and abolitionists are to be made. I remember that, in 1838, many were waiting for the results of the West India experiment, before they could come into our ranks. Those "results" have come long ago; but, alas! few of that number have come with them, as converts. A man must be disposed to judge of emancipation by other tests than whether it has increased the produce of sugar,—and to hate slavery for other reasons than because it starves men and whips women,—before he is ready to lay the first stone of his anti-slavery life.

I was glad to learn, in your story, how early the most neglected of God's children waken to a sense of their rights, and of the injustice done them. Experience is a keen teacher; and long before you had mastered your A B C, or knew where the "white sails" of the Chesapeake were bound, you began, I see, to gauge the wretchedness of the slave, not by his hunger and want, not by his lashes and toil, but by the cruel and blighting death which gathers over his soul.

In connection with this, there is one circumstance which makes your recollections peculiarly valuable, and renders your early insight the more remarkable. You come from that part of the country where we are told slavery appears with its fairest features. Let us hear, then, what it is at its best estate—gaze on its bright side, if it has one; and then imagination may task her powers to add dark lines to the picture, as she travels southward to that (for the colored man) Valley of the Shadow of Death, where the Mississippi sweeps along.

Again, we have known you long, and can put the most entire confidence in your truth, candor, and sincerity. Every one who has heard you speak has felt, and, I am confident, every one who reads your book will feel, persuaded that you give them a fair specimen of the whole truth. No one-sided portrait,—no wholesale complaints,—but strict justice done, whenever individual kindness has neutralized, for a moment, the deadly system with which it was strangely allied. You have been with us, too, some years, and can fairly compare the twilight of rights, which your race enjoy at the North, with that "noon of night" under which they labor south of Mason and Dixon's line. Tell us whether, after all, the half-free colored man of Massachusetts is worse off than the pampered slave of the rice swamps!

In reading your life, no one can say that we have unfairly picked out some rare specimens of cruelty. We know that the bitter drops, which even you have drained from the cup, are no incidental aggravations, no individual ills, but such as must mingle always and necessarily in the lot of every slave. They are the essential ingredients, not the occasional results, of the system.

After all, I shall read your book with trembling for you. Some years ago, when you were beginning to tell me your real name and birthplace, you may remember I stopped you, and preferred to remain ignorant of all. With the exception of a vague description, so I continued, till the other day, when you read me your memoirs. I hardly knew, at the time, whether to thank you or not for the sight of them, when I reflected that it was still dangerous, in Massachusetts, for honest men to tell their names! They say the fathers, in 1776, signed the Declaration of Independence with the halter about their necks. You, too, publish your declaration of freedom with danger compassing you around. In all the broad lands which the Constitution of the United States overshadows, there is no single spot,—however narrow or desolate,—where a fugitive slave can plant himself and say, "I am safe." The whole armory of Northern Law has no shield for you. I am free to say that, in your place, I should throw the MS. into the fire.

You, perhaps, may tell your story in safety, endeared as you are to so many warm hearts by rare gifts, and a still rarer devotion of them to the service of others. But it will be owing only to your labors, and the fearless efforts of those who, trampling the laws and Constitution of the country under their feet, are determined that they will "hide the outcast," and that their hearths shall be, spite of the law, an asylum for the oppressed, if, some time or other, the humblest may stand in our streets, and bear witness in safety against the cruelties of which he has been the victim.

Yet it is sad to think, that these very throbbing hearts which welcome your story, and form your best safeguard in telling it, are all beating contrary to the "statute in such case made and provided." Go on, my dear friend, till you, and those who, like you, have been saved, so as by fire, from the dark prison-house, shall stereotype these free, illegal pulses into statutes; and New England, cutting loose from a blood-stained Union, shall glory in being the house of refuge for the oppressed,—till we no longer merely "*hide* the outcast," or make a merit of standing idly by while he is hunted in our midst; but, consecrating anew the soil of the Pilgrims as an asylum for the oppressed, proclaim our

welcome to the slave so loudly, that the tones shall reach every hut in the Carolinas, and make the broken-hearted bondman leap up at the thought of old Massachusetts.

God speed the day!

Till then, and ever,
Yours truly,
Wendell Phillips

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born in slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland. He was not sure of the exact year of his birth, but he knew that it was 1817 or 1818. As a young boy he was sent to Baltimore, to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write, with the assistance of his master's wife. In 1838 he escaped from slavery and went to New York City, where he married Anna Murray, a free colored woman whom he had met in Baltimore. Soon thereafter he changed his name to Frederick Douglass. In 1841 he addressed a convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket and so greatly impressed the group that they immediately employed him as an agent. He was such an impressive orator that numerous persons doubted if he had ever been a slave, so he wrote *Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass*. During the Civil War he assisted in the recruiting of colored men for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments and consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves. After the war he was active in securing and protecting the rights of the freemen. In his later years, at different times, he was secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshal and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia, and United States Minister to Haiti. His other autobiographical works are *My Bondage And My Freedom* and *Life And Times Of Frederick Douglass*, published in 1855 and 1881 respectively. He died in 1895.

Chapter I

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries on the part of a slave improper and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, some time during 1835, I was about seventeen years old.

My mother was named Harriet Bailey. She was the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, both colored, and quite dark. My mother was of a darker complexion than either my grandmother or grandfather.

My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labor. For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its

mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise, unless a slave has special permission from his or her master to the contrary—a permission which they seldom get, and one that gives to him that gives it the proud name of being a kind master. I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms, near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew any thing about it. Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger.

Called thus suddenly away, she left me without the slightest intimation of who my father was. The whisper that my master was my father, may or may not be true; and, true or false, it is of but little consequence to my purpose whilst the fact remains, in all its glaring odiousness, that slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mothers; and this is done too obviously to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement, the slaveholder, in cases not a few, sustains to his slaves the double relation of master and father.

I know of such cases; and it is worthy of remark that such slaves invariably suffer greater hardships, and have more to contend with, than others. They are, in the first place, a constant offence to their mistress. She is ever disposed to find fault with them; they can seldom do any thing to please her; she is never better pleased than when she sees them under the lash, especially when she suspects her husband of showing to his mulatto children favors which he withholds from his black slaves. The master is frequently compelled to sell this class of his slaves, out of deference to the feelings of his white wife; and, cruel as the deed may strike any one to be, for a man to sell his own children to human flesh-mongers, it is often the dictate of humanity for him to do so; for, unless he does this, he must not only whip them himself, but must stand by and see one white son tie up his brother, of but few shades darker complexion than himself, and ply the gory lash to his naked back; and if he lisp one word of disapproval, it is set down to his parental partiality, and only makes a bad matter worse, both for himself and the slave whom he would protect and defend.

Every year brings with it multitudes of this class of slaves. It was doubtless in consequence of a knowledge of this fact, that one great statesman of the south predicted the downfall of slavery by the inevitable laws of population. Whether this prophecy is ever fulfilled or not, it is nevertheless plain that a very different-looking class of people are springing up at the south, and are now held in slavery, from those originally brought to this country from Africa; and if their increase do no other good, it will do away the force of the argument, that God cursed Ham, and therefore American slavery is right. If the lineal descendants of Ham are alone to be scripturally enslaved, it is certain that slavery at the south must soon become unscriptural; for thousands are ushered into the world, annually, who, like myself, owe their existence to white fathers, and those fathers most frequently their own masters.

I have had two masters. My first master's name was Anthony. I do not remember his first name. He was generally called Captain Anthony—a title which, I presume, he acquired by sailing a craft

on the Chesapeake Bay. He was not considered a rich slaveholder. He owned two or three farms, and about thirty slaves. His farms and slaves were under the care of an overseer. The overseer's name was Plummer. Mr. Plummer was a miserable drunkard, a profane swearer, and a savage monster. He always went armed with a cowskin and a heavy cudgel. I have known him to cut and slash the women's heads so horribly, that even master would be enraged at his cruelty, and would threaten to whip him if he did not mind himself. Master, however, was not a humane slaveholder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.

This occurrence took place very soon after I went to live with my old master, and under the following circumstances. Aunt Hester went out one night,—where or for what I do not know,—and happened to be absent when my master desired her presence. He had ordered her not to go out evenings, and warned her that she must never let him catch her in company with a young man, who was paying attention to her belonging to Colonel Lloyd. The

young man's name was Ned Roberts, generally called Lloyd's Ned. Why master was so careful of her, may be safely left to conjecture. She was a woman of noble form, and of graceful proportions, having very few equals, and fewer superiors, in personal appearance, among the colored or white women of our neighborhood.

Aunt Hester had not only disobeyed his orders in going out, but had been found in company with Lloyd's Ned; which circumstance, I found, from what he said while whipping her, was the chief offence. Had he been a man of pure morals himself, he might have been thought interested in protecting the innocence of my aunt; but those who knew him will not suspect him of any such virtue. Before he commenced whipping Aunt Hester, he took her into the kitchen, and stripped her from neck to waist, leaving her neck, shoulders, and back, entirely naked. He then told her to cross her hands, calling her at the same time a d——d b——h. After crossing her hands, he tied them with a strong rope, and led her to a stool under a large hook in the joist, put in for the purpose. He made her get upon the stool, and tied her hands to the hook. She now stood fair for his infernal purpose. Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes. He then said to her, "Now, you d——d b——h, I'll learn you how to disobey my orders!" and after rolling up his sleeves, he commenced to lay on the heavy cowskin, and soon the warm, red blood (amid heart-rending shrieks from her, and horrid oaths from him) came dripping to the floor. I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next. It was all new to me. I had never seen any thing like it before. I had always lived with my grandmother on the outskirts of the plantation, where she was put to raise the children of the younger women. I had therefore been, until now, out of the way of the bloody scenes that often occurred on the plantation.

Chapter II

My master's family consisted of two sons, Andrew and Richard; one daughter, Lucretia, and her husband, Captain Thomas Auld. They lived in one house, upon the home plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. My master was Colonel Lloyd's clerk and superintendent. He was what might be called the overseer of the overseers. I spent two years of childhood on this plantation in my old master's family. It was here that I witnessed the bloody transaction recorded in the first chapter; and as I received my first impressions of slavery on this plantation, I will give some description of it, and of slavery as it there existed. The plantation is about twelve miles north of Easton, in Talbot county, and is situated on the border of Miles River. The principal products raised upon it were tobacco, corn, and wheat. These were raised in great abundance; so that, with the products of this and the other farms belonging to him, he was able to keep in almost constant employment a large sloop, in carrying them to market at Baltimore. This sloop was named Sally Lloyd, in honor of one of the colonel's daughters. My master's son-in-law, Captain Auld, was master of the vessel; she was otherwise manned by the colonel's own slaves. Their names were Peter, Isaac, Rich, and Jake. These were esteemed very highly by the other slaves, and looked upon as the privileged ones of the plantation; for it was no small affair, in the eyes of the slaves, to be allowed to see Baltimore.

Colonel Lloyd kept from three to four hundred slaves on his home plantation, and owned a large number more on the neighboring farms belonging to him. The names of the farms nearest to the home plantation were Wye Town and New Design. "Wye Town" was under the overseership of a man named Noah Willis. New Design was under the overseership of a Mr. Townsend. The overseers of these, and all the rest of the farms, numbering over twenty, received advice and direction from the managers of the home plantation. This was the great business place. It was the seat of government for the whole twenty farms. All disputes among the overseers were settled here. If a slave was convicted of any high misdemeanor, became unmanageable, or evinced a determination to run away, he was brought immediately

here, severely whipped, put on board the sloop, carried to Baltimore, and sold to Austin Woolfolk, or some other slave-trader, as a warning to the slaves remaining.

Here, too, the slaves of all the other farms received their monthly allowance of food, and their yearly clothing. The men and women slaves received, as their monthly allowance of food, eight pounds of pork, or its equivalent in fish, and one bushel of corn meal. Their yearly clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers, like the shirts, one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse negro cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes; the whole of which could not have cost more than seven dollars. The allowance of the slave children was given to their mothers, or the old women having the care of them. The children unable to work in the field had neither shoes, stockings, jackets, nor trousers, given to them; their clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts per year. When these failed them, they went naked until the next allowance-day. Children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen at all seasons of the year.

There were no beds given the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these. This, however, is not considered a very great privation. They find less difficulty from the want of beds, than from the want of time to sleep; for when their day's work in the field is done, the most of them having their washing, mending, and cooking to do, and having few or none of the ordinary facilities for doing either of these, very many of their sleeping hours are consumed in preparing for the field the coming day; and when this is done, old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed,—the cold, damp floor,—each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep till they are summoned to the field by the driver's horn. At the sound of this, all must rise, and be off to the field. There must be no halting; every one must be at his or her post; and woe betides them who hear not this morning summons to the field; for if they are not awakened by the sense of hearing, they are by the sense of feeling: no age nor sex finds any favor. Mr.

Severe, the overseer, used to stand by the door of the quarter, armed with a large hickory stick and heavy cowskin, ready to whip any one who was so unfortunate as not to hear, or, from any other cause, was prevented from being ready to start for the field at the sound of the horn.

Mr. Severe was rightly named: he was a cruel man. I have seen him whip a woman, causing the blood to run half an hour at the time; and this, too, in the midst of her crying children, pleading for their mother's release. He seemed to take pleasure in manifesting his fiendish barbarity. Added to his cruelty, he was a profane swearer. It was enough to chill the blood and stiffen the hair of an ordinary man to hear him talk. Scarce a sentence escaped him but that was commenced or concluded by some horrid oath. The field was the place to witness his cruelty and profanity. His presence made it both the field of blood and of blasphemy. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves of the field, in the most frightful manner. His career was short. He died very soon after I went to Colonel Lloyd's; and he died as he lived, uttering, with his dying groans, bitter curses and horrid oaths. His death was regarded by the slaves as the result of a merciful providence.

Mr. Severe's place was filled by a Mr. Hopkins. He was a very different man. He was less cruel, less profane, and made less noise, than Mr. Severe. His course was characterized by no extraordinary demonstrations of cruelty. He whipped, but seemed to take no pleasure in it. He was called by the slaves a good overseer.

40

The home plantation of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like aspect very unlike the neighboring farms. The number of houses, too, conspired to give it advantage over the neighboring farms. It was called by the slaves the *Great House Farm*. Few privileges were

esteemed higher, by the slaves of the out-farms, than that of being selected to do errands at the Great House Farm. It was associated in their minds with greatness. A representative could not be prouder of his election to a seat in the American Congress, than a slave on one of the out-farms would be of his election to do errands at the Great House Farm. They regarded it as evidence of great confidence reposed in them by their overseers; and it was on this account, as well as a constant desire to be out of the field from under the driver's lash, that they esteemed it a high privilege, one worth careful living for. He was called the smartest and most trusty fellow, who had this honor conferred upon him the most frequently. The competitors for this office sought as diligently to please their overseers, as the office-seekers in the political parties seek to please and deceive the people. The same traits of character might be seen in Colonel Lloyd's slaves, as are seen in the slaves of the political parties.

The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, for the monthly allowance for themselves and their fellow-slaves, were peculiarly enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. The thought that came up, came out—if not in the word, in the sound;—and as frequently in the one as in the other. They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone. Into all of their songs they would manage to weave something of the Great House Farm. Especially would they do this, when leaving home. They would then sing most exultingly the following words:—

"I am going away to the Great House Farm!
O, yea! O, yea! O!"

This they would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere

hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do.

I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to those songs, even now, afflicts me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conception of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds. If any one wishes to be impressed with the soul-killing effects of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd's plantation, and, on allowance-day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul,—and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because "there is no flesh in his obdurate heart."

I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike uncommon to me while in the jaws of slavery. The singing of a man cast away upon a desolate island might be as appropriately considered as evidence

of contentment and happiness, as the singing of a slave; the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.

Chapter III

Colonel Lloyd kept a large and finely cultivated garden, which afforded almost constant employment for four men, besides the chief gardener, (Mr. M'Durmond.) This garden was probably the greatest attraction of the place. During the summer months, people came from far and near—from Baltimore, Easton, and Annapolis—to see it. It abounded in fruits of almost every description, from the hardy apple of the north to the delicate orange of the south. This garden was not the least source of trouble on the plantation. Its excellent fruit was quite a temptation to the hungry swarms of boys, as well as the older slaves, belonging to the colonel, few of whom had the virtue or the vice to resist it. Scarcely a day passed, during the summer, but that some slave had to take the lash for stealing fruit. The colonel had to resort to all kinds of stratagems to keep his slaves out of the garden. The last and most successful one was that of tarring his fence all around; after which, if a slave was caught with any tar upon his person, it was deemed sufficient proof that he had either been into the garden, or had tried to get in. In either case, he was severely whipped by the chief gardener. This plan worked well; the slaves became as fearful of tar as of the lash. They seemed to realize the impossibility of touching *tar* without being defiled.

The colonel also kept a splendid riding equipage. His stable and carriage-house presented the appearance of some of our large city livery establishments. His horses were of the finest form and noblest blood. His carriage-house contained three splendid coaches, three or four gigs, besides dearborns and barouches of the most fashionable style.

This establishment was under the care of two slaves—old Barney and young Barney—father and son. To attend to this establishment was their sole work. But it was by no means an easy employment; for in nothing was Colonel Lloyd more particular than in the management of his horses. The slightest

inattention to these was unpardonable, and was visited upon those, under whose care they were placed, with the severest punishment; no excuse could shield them, if the colonel only suspected any want of attention to his horses—a supposition which he frequently indulged, and one which, of course, made the office of old and young Barney a very trying one. They never knew when they were safe from punishment. They were frequently whipped when least deserving, and escaped whipping when most deserving it. Every thing depended upon the looks of the horses, and the state of Colonel Lloyd's own mind when his horses were brought to him for use. If a horse did not move fast enough, or hold his head high enough, it was owing to some fault of his keepers. It was painful to stand near the stable-door, and hear the various complaints against the keepers when a horse was taken out for use. "This horse has not had proper attention. He has not been sufficiently rubbed and curried, or he has not been properly fed; his food was too wet or too dry; he got it too soon or too late; he was too hot or too cold; he had too much hay, and not enough of grain; or he had too much grain, and not enough of hay; instead of old Barney's attending to the horse, he had very improperly left it to his son." To all these complaints, no matter how unjust, the slave must answer never a word. Colonel Lloyd could not brook any contradiction from a slave. When he spoke, a slave must stand, listen, and tremble; and such was literally the case. I have seen Colonel Lloyd make old Barney, a man between fifty and sixty years of age, uncover his bald head, kneel down upon the cold, damp ground, and receive upon his naked and toil-worn shoulders more than thirty lashes at the time. Colonel Lloyd had three sons—Edward, Murray, and Daniel,—and three sons-in-law, Mr. Winder, Mr. Nicholson, and Mr. Lowndes. All of these lived at the Great House Farm, and enjoyed the luxury of whipping the servants when they pleased, from old Barney down to William Wilkes, the coach-driver. I have seen Winder make one of the house-servants stand off from him a suitable distance to be touched with the end of his whip, and at every stroke raise great ridges upon his back.

To describe the wealth of Colonel Lloyd would be almost equal to describing the riches of Job. He kept from ten to fifteen house-servants. He was said to own a thousand slaves, and I think this estimate quite within the truth. Colonel Lloyd owned so many that he did not know them when he saw them; nor did all the slaves of the out-farms know him. It is reported of him, that, while riding along the road one day, he met a colored man, and addressed him in the usual manner of speaking to colored people on the public highways of the south: "Well, boy, whom do you belong to?" "To Colonel Lloyd," replied the slave. "Well, does the colonel treat you well?" "No, sir," was the ready reply. "What, does he work you too hard?" "Yes, sir." "Well, don't he give you enough to eat?" "Yes, sir, he gives me enough, such as it is."

The colonel, after ascertaining where the slave belonged, rode on; the man also went on about his business, not dreaming that he had been conversing with his master. He thought, said, and heard nothing more of the matter, until two or three weeks afterwards. The poor man was then informed by his overseer that, for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. He was immediately chained and handcuffed; and thus, without a moment's warning, he was snatched away, and forever sundered, from his family and friends, by a hand more unrelenting than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions.

It is partly in consequence of such facts, that slaves, when inquired of as to their condition and the character of their masters, almost universally say they are contented, and that their masters are kind. The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition. The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves the maxim, that a still tongue makes a wise head. They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family. If they have any thing to say of their masters, it is generally in their masters' favor, especially when speaking to an untried man. I have been frequently asked, when a slave, if I had a kind master, and do not remember ever to have

given a negative answer; nor did I, in pursuing this course, consider myself as uttering what was absolutely false; for I always measured the kindness of my master by the standard of kindness set up among slaveholders around us. Moreover, slaves are like other people, and imbibe prejudices quite common to others. They think their own better than that of others. Many, under the influence of this prejudice, think their own masters are better than the masters of other slaves; and this, too, in some cases, when the very reverse is true. Indeed, it is not uncommon for slaves even to fall out and quarrel among themselves about the relative goodness of their masters, each contending for the superior goodness of his own over that of the others. At the very same time, they mutually execrate their masters when viewed separately. It was so on our plantation. When Colonel Lloyd's slaves met the slaves of Jacob Jepson, they seldom parted without a quarrel about their masters; Colonel Lloyd's slaves contending that he was the richest, and Mr. Jepson's slaves that he was the smartest, and most of a man. Colonel Lloyd's slaves would boast his ability to buy and sell Jacob Jepson. Mr. Jepson's slaves would boast his ability to whip Colonel Lloyd. These quarrels would almost always end in a fight between the parties, and those that whipped were supposed to have gained the point at issue. They seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to themselves. It was considered as being bad enough to be a slave; but to be a poor man's slave was deemed a disgrace indeed!

Chapter IV

Mr. Hopkins remained but a short time in the office of overseer. Why his career was so short, I do not know, but suppose he lacked the necessary severity to suit Colonel Lloyd. Mr. Hopkins was succeeded by Mr. Austin Gore, a man possessing, in an eminent degree, all those traits of character indispensable to what is called a first-rate overseer. Mr. Gore had served Colonel Lloyd, in the capacity of overseer, upon one of the out-farms, and

had shown himself worthy of the high station of overseer upon the home or Great House Farm.

Mr. Gore was proud, ambitious, and persevering. He was artful, cruel, and obdurate. He was just the man for such a place, and it was just the place for such a man. It afforded scope for the full exercise of all his powers, and he seemed to be perfectly at home in it. He was one of those who could torture the slightest look, word, or gesture, on the part of the slave, into impudence, and would treat it accordingly. There must be no answering back to him; no explanation was allowed a slave, showing himself to have been wrongfully accused. Mr. Gore acted fully up to the maxim laid down by slaveholders,—"It is better that a dozen slaves should suffer under the lash, than that the overseer should be convicted, in the presence of the slaves, of having been at fault." No matter how innocent a slave might be—it availed him nothing, when accused by Mr. Gore of any misdemeanor. To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty. To escape punishment was to escape accusation; and few slaves had the fortune to do either, under the overseership of Mr. Gore. He was just proud enough to demand the most debasing homage of the slave, and quite servile enough to crouch, himself, at the feet of the master. He was ambitious enough to be contented with nothing short of the highest rank of overseers, and persevering enough to reach the height of his ambition. He was cruel enough to inflict the severest punishment, artful enough to descend to the lowest trickery, and obdurate enough to be insensible to the voice of a reproving conscience. He was, of all the overseers, the most dreaded by the slaves. His presence was painful; his eye flashed confusion; and seldom was his sharp, shrill voice heard, without producing horror and trembling in their ranks.

Mr. Gore was a grave man, and, though a young man, he indulged in no jokes, said no funny words, seldom smiled. His words were in perfect keeping with his looks, and his looks were in perfect keeping with his words. Overseers will sometimes indulge in a witty word, even with the slaves; not so with Mr.

Gore. He spoke but to command, and commanded but to be obeyed; he dealt sparingly with his words, and bountifully with his whip, never using the former where the latter would answer as well. When he whipped, he seemed to do so from a sense of duty, and feared no consequences. He did nothing reluctantly, no matter how disagreeable; always at his post, never inconsistent. He never promised but to fulfil. He was, in a word, a man of the most inflexible firmness and stone-like coolness.

His savage barbarity was equalled only by the consummate coolness with which he committed the grossest and most savage deeds upon the slaves under his charge. Mr. Gore once undertook to whip one of Colonel Lloyd's slaves, by the name of Demby. He had given Demby but few stripes, when, to get rid of the scourging, he ran and plunged himself into a creek, and stood there at the depth of his shoulders, refusing to come out. Mr. Gore told him that he would give him three calls, and that, if he did not come out at the third call, he would shoot him. The first call was given. Demby made no response, but stood his ground. The second and third calls were given with the same result. Mr. Gore then, without consultation or deliberation with any one, not even giving Demby an additional call, raised his musket to his face, taking deadly aim at his standing victim, and in an instant poor Demby was no more. His mangled body sank out of sight, and blood and brains marked the water where he had stood.

A thrill of horror flashed through every soul upon the plantation, excepting Mr. Gore. He alone seemed cool and collected. He was asked by Colonel Lloyd and my old master, why he resorted to this extraordinary expedient. His reply was, (as well as I can remember,) that Demby had become unmanageable. He was setting a dangerous example to the other slaves,—one which, if suffered to pass without some such demonstration on his part, would finally lead to the total subversion of all rule and order upon the plantation. He argued that if one slave refused to be corrected, and escaped with his life, the other slaves would soon copy the example; the result of which would be, the freedom of the slaves, and the enslavement of the whites. Mr. Gore's defence was satisfactory. He was continued in

his station as overseer upon the home plantation. His fame as an overseer went abroad. His horrid crime was not even submitted to judicial investigation. It was committed in the presence of slaves, and they of course could neither institute a suit, nor testify against him; and thus the guilty perpetrator of one of the bloodiest and most foul murders goes unwhipped of justice, and uncensured by the community in which he lives. Mr. Gore lived in St. Michael's, Talbot county, Maryland, when I left there; and if he is still alive, he very probably lives there now; and if so, he is now, as he was then, as highly esteemed and as much respected as though his guilty soul had not been stained with his brother's blood.

I speak advisedly when I say this,—that killing a slave, or any colored person, in Talbot county, Maryland, is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community. Mr. Thomas Lanman, of St. Michael's, killed two slaves, one of whom he killed with a hatchet, by knocking his brains out. He used to boast of the commission of the awful and bloody deed. I have heard him do so laughingly, saying, among other things, that he was the only benefactor of his country in the company, and that when others would do as much as he had done, we should be relieved of "the d——d niggers."

The wife of Mr. Giles Hicks, living but a short distance from where I used to live, murdered my wife's cousin, a young girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, mangling her person in the most horrible manner, breaking her nose and breastbone with a stick, so that the poor girl expired in a few hours afterward. She was immediately buried, but had not been in her untimely grave but a few hours before she was taken up and examined by the coroner, who decided that she had come to her death by severe beating. The offence for which this girl was thus murdered was this:—She had been set that night to mind Mrs. Hicks's baby, and during the night she fell asleep, and the baby cried. She, having lost her rest for several nights previous, did not hear the crying. They were both in the room with Mrs. Hicks. Mrs. Hicks, finding the girl slow to move, jumped from her bed, seized an oak stick of wood by the fireplace, and with it broke the girl's nose and breastbone, and thus ended her life. I will not say that this most

horrid murder produced no sensation in the community. It did produce sensation, but not enough to bring the murderess to punishment. There was a warrant issued for her arrest, but it was never served. Thus she escaped not only punishment, but even the pain of being arraigned before a court for her horrid crime.

Whilst I am detailing bloody deeds which took place during my stay on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, I will briefly narrate another, which occurred about the same time as the murder of Demby by Mr. Gore.

Colonel Lloyd's slaves were in the habit of spending a part of their nights and Sundays in fishing for oysters, and in this way made up the deficiency of their scanty allowance. An old man belonging to Colonel Lloyd, while thus engaged, happened to get beyond the limits of Colonel Lloyd's, and on the premises of Mr. Beal Bondly. At this trespass, Mr. Bondly took offence, and with his musket came down to the shore, and blew its deadly contents into the poor old man.

Mr. Bondly came over to see Colonel Lloyd the next day, whether to pay him for his property, or to justify himself in what he had done, I know not. At any rate, this whole fiendish transaction was soon hushed up. There was very little said about it at all, and nothing done. It was a common saying, even among little white boys, that it was worth a half-cent to kill a "nigger," and a half-cent to bury one.

Chapter V

As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of the other slave children. I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them. My connection with Master Daniel was of some advantage to me. He became quite attached to me,

and was a sort of protector of me. He would not allow the older boys to impose upon me, and would divide his cakes with me.

I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked—no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.

We were not regularly allowanced. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called *mush*. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

I was probably between seven and eight years old when I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. I left it with joy. I shall never forget the ecstasy with which I received the intelligence that my old master (Anthony) had determined to let me go to Baltimore, to live with Mr. Hugh Auld, brother to my old master's son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld. I received this information about three days before my departure. They were three of the happiest days I ever enjoyed. I spent the most part of all these three days in the creek, washing off the plantation scurf, and preparing myself for my departure.

65

The pride of appearance which this would indicate was not my own. I spent the time in washing, not so much because I wished to, but because Mrs. Lucretia had told me I must get all the dead skin off my feet and knees before I could go to Baltimore; for the people in Baltimore were very cleanly, and would laugh at me if I looked dirty. Besides, she was going to give me a pair of trousers,

which I should not put on unless I got all the dirt off me. The thought of owning a pair of trousers was great indeed! It was almost a sufficient motive, not only to make me take off what would be called by pig-drovers the mange, but the skin itself. I went at it in good earnest, working for the first time with the hope of reward.

The ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case. I found no severe trial in my departure. My home was charmless; it was not home to me; on parting from it, I could not feel that I was leaving any thing which I could have enjoyed by staying. My mother was dead, my grandmother lived far off, so that I seldom saw her. I had two sisters and one brother, that lived in the same house with me; but the early separation of us from our mother had well nigh blotted the fact of our relationship from our memories. I looked for home elsewhere, and was confident of finding none which I should relish less than the one which I was leaving. If, however, I found in my new home hardship, hunger, whipping, and nakedness, I had the consolation that I should not have escaped any one of them by staying. Having already had more than a taste of them in the house of my old master, and having endured them there, I very naturally inferred my ability to endure them elsewhere, and especially at Baltimore; for I had something of the feeling about Baltimore that is expressed in the proverb, that "being hanged in England is preferable to dying a natural death in Ireland." I had the strongest desire to see Baltimore. Cousin Tom, though not fluent in speech, had inspired me with that desire by his eloquent description of the place. I could never point out any thing at the Great House, no matter how beautiful or powerful, but that he had seen something at Baltimore far exceeding, both in beauty and strength, the object which I pointed out to him. Even the Great House itself, with all its pictures, was far inferior to many buildings in Baltimore. So strong was my desire, that I thought a gratification of it would fully compensate for whatever loss of comforts I should sustain by the exchange. I left without a regret, and with the highest hopes of future happiness.

We sailed out of Miles River for Baltimore on a Saturday morning. I remember only the day of the week, for at that time I had no knowledge of the days of the month, nor the months of the year. On setting sail, I walked aft, and gave to Colonel Lloyd's plantation what I hoped would be the last look. I then placed myself in the bows of the sloop, and there spent the remainder of the day in looking ahead, interesting myself in what was in the distance rather than in things near by or behind.

In the afternoon of that day, we reached Annapolis, the capital of the State. We stopped but a few moments, so that I had no time to go on shore. It was the first large town that I had ever seen, and though it would look small compared with some of our New England factory villages, I thought it a wonderful place for its size—more imposing even than the Great House Farm!

We arrived at Baltimore early on Sunday morning, landing at Smith's Wharf, not far from Bowley's Wharf. We had on board the sloop a large flock of sheep; and after aiding in driving them to the slaughterhouse of Mr. Curtis on Louden Slater's Hill, I was conducted by Rich, one of the hands belonging on board of the sloop, to my new home in Alliciana Street, near Mr. Gardner's ship-yard, on Fells Point.

70

Mr. and Mrs. Auld were both at home, and met me at the door with their little son Thomas, to take care of whom I had been given. And here I saw what I had never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld. I wish I could describe the rapture that flashed through my soul as I beheld it. It was a new and strange sight to me, brightening up my pathway with the light of happiness. Little Thomas was told, there was his Freddy,—and I was told to take care of little Thomas; and thus I entered upon the duties of my new home with the most cheering prospect ahead.

I look upon my departure from Colonel Lloyd's plantation as one of the most interesting events of my life. It is possible, and even quite probable, that but for the mere circumstance of being removed from that plantation to Baltimore, I should have to-day, instead of being here seated by my own table, in the enjoyment of

freedom and the happiness of home, writing this Narrative, been confined in the galling chains of slavery. Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity. I have ever regarded it as the first plain manifestation of that kind providence which has ever since attended me, and marked my life with so many favors. I regarded the selection of myself as being somewhat remarkable. There were a number of slave children that might have been sent from the plantation to Baltimore. There were those younger, those older, and those of the same age. I was chosen from among them all, and was the first, last, and only choice.

I may be deemed superstitious, and even egotistical, in regarding this event as a special interposition of divine Providence in my favor. But I should be false to the earliest sentiments of my soul, if I suppressed the opinion. I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and incur my own abhorrence. From my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace; and in the darkest hours of my career in slavery, this living word of faith and spirit of hope departed not from me, but remained like ministering angels to cheer me through the gloom. This good spirit was from God, and to him I offer thanksgiving and praise.

Chapter VI

My new mistress proved to be all she appeared when I first met her at the door,—a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings. She had never had a slave under her control previously to myself, and prior to her marriage she had been dependent upon her own industry for a living. She was by trade a weaver; and by constant application to her business, she had been in a good degree preserved from the blighting and dehumanizing effects of slavery. I was utterly astonished at her goodness. I scarcely knew how to behave towards her. She was entirely unlike any other white woman I had ever seen. I could not approach her as I was

accustomed to approach other white ladies. My early instruction was all out of place. The crouching servility, usually so acceptable a quality in a slave, did not answer when manifested toward her. Her favor was not gained by it; she seemed to be disturbed by it. She did not deem it impudent or unmannerly for a slave to look her in the face. The meanest slave was put fully at ease in her presence, and none left without feeling better for having seen her. Her face was made of heavenly smiles, and her voice of tranquil music.

But, alas! this kind heart had but a short time to remain such. The fatal poison of irresponsible power was already in her hands, and soon commenced its infernal work. That cheerful eye, under the influence of slavery, soon became red with rage; that voice, made all of sweet accord, changed to one of harsh and horrid discord; and that angelic face gave place to that of a demon.

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy." These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a

grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it. Whilst I was saddened by the thought of losing the aid of my kind mistress, I was gladdened by the invaluable instruction which, by the merest accident, I had gained from my master. Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.

I had resided but a short time in Baltimore before I observed a marked difference, in the treatment of slaves, from that which I had witnessed in the country. A city slave is almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation. He is much better fed and clothed, and enjoys privileges altogether unknown to the slave on the plantation. There is a vestige of decency, a sense of shame, that does much to curb and check those outbreaks of atrocious cruelty so commonly enacted upon the plantation. He is a desperate slaveholder, who will shock the humanity of his non-slaveholding neighbors with the cries of his lacerated slave. Few are willing to incur the odium attaching to the reputation of being a cruel master; and above all things, they would not be known as not giving a slave enough to eat. Every city slaveholder is anxious to have it known of him, that he feeds his slaves well; and it is due to them to say, that most of them do give their slaves enough

to eat. There are, however, some painful exceptions to this rule. Directly opposite to us, on Philpot Street, lived Mr. Thomas Hamilton. He owned two slaves. Their names were Henrietta and Mary. Henrietta was about twenty-two years of age, Mary was about fourteen; and of all the mangled and emaciated creatures I ever looked upon, these two were the most so. His heart must be harder than stone, that could look upon these unmoved. The head, neck, and shoulders of Mary were literally cut to pieces. I have frequently felt her head, and found it nearly covered with festering sores, caused by the lash of her cruel mistress. I do not know that her master ever whipped her, but I have been an eye-witness to the cruelty of Mrs. Hamilton. I used to be in Mr. Hamilton's house nearly every day. Mrs. Hamilton used to sit in a large chair in the middle of the room, with a heavy cowskin always by her side, and scarce an hour passed during the day but was marked by the blood of one of these slaves. The girls seldom passed her without her saying, "Move faster, you *black gip*!" at the same time giving them a blow with the cowskin over the head or shoulders, often drawing the blood. She would then say, "Take that, you *black gip*!" continuing, "If you don't move faster, I'll move you!" Added to the cruel lashings to which these slaves were subjected, they were kept nearly half-starved. They seldom knew what it was to eat a full meal. I have seen Mary contending with the pigs for the offal thrown into the street. So much was Mary kicked and cut to pieces, that she was oftener called "*pecked*" than by her name.

Chapter VII

I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of

treatment immediately. She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given

me the *inch*, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the *ell*.

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. "You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, *but I am a slave for life!* Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?" These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled "The Columbian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the

third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was

pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed. While in this state of mind, I was eager to hear any one speak of slavery. I was a ready listener. Every little while, I could hear something about the abolitionists. It was some time before I found what the word meant. It was always used in such connections as to make it an interesting word to me. If a slave ran away and succeeded in getting clear, or if a slave killed his master, set fire to a barn, or did any thing very wrong in the mind of a slaveholder, it was spoken of as the fruit of *abolition*. Hearing the word in this connection very often, I set about learning what it meant. The dictionary afforded me little or no help. I found it was "the act of abolishing;" but then I did not know what was to be abolished. Here I was perplexed. I did not dare to ask any one about its meaning, for I was satisfied that it was something they wanted me to know very little about. After a patient waiting, I got one of our city papers, containing an account of the number of petitions from the north, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and of the slave trade between the States. From this time I understood the words *abolition* and *abolitionist*, and always drew near when that word was spoken, expecting to hear something of importance to myself and fellow-slaves. The light broke in upon me by degrees. I went one day down on the wharf of Mr. Waters; and seeing two Irishmen unloading a scow of stone, I went, unasked, and helped them. When we had finished, one of them came to me and asked me if I were a slave. I told him I was. He asked, "Are ye a slave

for life?" I told him that I was. The good Irishman seemed to be deeply affected by the statement. He said to the other that it was a pity so fine a little fellow as myself should be a slave for life. He said it was a shame to hold me. They both advised me to run away to the north; that I should find friends there, and that I should be free. I pretended not to be interested in what they said, and treated them as if I did not understand them; for I feared they might be treacherous. White men have been known to encourage slaves to escape, and then, to get the reward, catch them and return them to their masters. I was afraid that these seemingly good men might use me so; but I nevertheless remembered their advice, and from that time I resolved to run away. I looked forward to a time at which it would be safe for me to escape. I was too young to think of doing so immediately; besides, I wished to learn how to write, as I might have occasion to write my own pass. I consoled myself with the hope that I should one day find a good chance. Meanwhile, I would learn to write.

The idea as to how I might learn to write was suggested to me by being in Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard, and frequently seeing the ship carpenters, after hewing, and getting a piece of timber ready for use, write on the timber the name of that part of the ship for which it was intended. When a piece of timber was intended for the larboard side, it would be marked thus—"L." When a piece was for the starboard side, it would be marked thus—"S." A piece for the larboard side forward, would be marked thus—"L. F." When a piece was for starboard side forward, it would be marked thus—"S. F." For larboard aft, it would be marked thus—"L. A." For starboard aft, it would be marked thus—"S. A." I soon learned the names of these letters, and for what they were intended when placed upon a piece of timber in the ship-yard. I immediately commenced copying them, and in a short time was able to make the four letters named. After that, when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, "I don't believe you. Let me see you try it." I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn, and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should

never have gotten in any other way. During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write. I then commenced and continued copying the Italics in Webster's Spelling Book, until I could make them all without looking on the book. By this time, my little Master Thomas had gone to school, and learned how to write, and had written over a number of copy-books. These had been brought home, and shown to some of our near neighbors, and then laid aside. My mistress used to go to class meeting at the Wilk Street meetinghouse every Monday afternoon, and leave me to take care of the house. When left thus, I used to spend the time in writing in the spaces left in Master Thomas's copy-book, copying what he had written. I continued to do this until I could write a hand very similar to that of Master Thomas. Thus, after a long, tedious effort for years, I finally succeeded in learning how to write.

Chapter VIII

In a very short time after I went to live at Baltimore, my old master's youngest son Richard died; and in about three years and six months after his death, my old master, Captain Anthony, died, leaving only his son, Andrew, and daughter, Lucretia, to share his estate. He died while on a visit to see his daughter at Hillsborough. Cut off thus unexpectedly, he left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of the property, that it might be equally divided between Mrs. Lucretia and Master Andrew. I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property. Here again my feelings rose up in detestation of slavery. I had now a new conception of my degraded condition. Prior to this, I had become, if not insensible to my lot, at least partly so. I left Baltimore with a young heart overborne with sadness, and a soul full of apprehension. I took passage with Captain Rowe, in the schooner Wild Cat, and, after a sail of about twenty-four hours, I found myself near the place of my birth. I had now been absent from it almost, if not quite, five years. I, however, remembered the place very well. I was only

about five years old when I left it, to go and live with my old master on Colonel Lloyd's plantation; so that I was now between ten and eleven years old.

We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and were all subjected to the same narrow examination. Silvery-headed age and sprightly youth, maids and matrons, had to undergo the same indelicate inspection. At this moment, I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder.

After the valuation, then came the division. I have no language to express the high excitement and deep anxiety which were felt among us poor slaves during this time. Our fate for life was now to be decided. we had no more voice in that decision than the brutes among whom we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough—against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties—to sunder forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew. He was known to us all as being a most cruel wretch,—a common drunkard, who had, by his reckless mismanagement and profligate dissipation, already wasted a large portion of his father's property. We all felt that we might as well be sold at once to the Georgia traders, as to pass into his hands; for we knew that that would be our inevitable condition,—a condition held by us all in the utmost horror and dread.

I suffered more anxiety than most of my fellow-slaves. I had known what it was to be kindly treated; they had known nothing of the kind. They had seen little or nothing of the world. They were in very deed men and women of sorrow, and acquainted with grief. Their backs had been made familiar with the bloody lash, so that they had become callous; mine was yet tender; for while at Baltimore I got few whippings, and few slaves could boast of a kinder master and mistress than myself; and the thought of passing out of their hands into those of Master Andrew—a man

who, but a few days before, to give me a sample of his bloody disposition, took my little brother by the throat, threw him on the ground, and with the heel of his boot stamped upon his head till the blood gushed from his nose and ears—was well calculated to make me anxious as to my fate. After he had committed this savage outrage upon my brother, he turned to me, and said that was the way he meant to serve me one of these days,—meaning, I suppose, when I came into his possession.

Thanks to a kind Providence, I fell to the portion of Mrs. Lucretia, and was sent immediately back to Baltimore, to live again in the family of Master Hugh. Their joy at my return equalled their sorrow at my departure. It was a glad day to me. I had escaped a worse than lion's jaws. I was absent from Baltimore, for the purpose of valuation and division, just about one month, and it seemed to have been six.

Very soon after my return to Baltimore, my mistress, Lucretia, died, leaving her husband and one child, Amanda; and in a very short time after her death, Master Andrew died. Now all the property of my old master, slaves included, was in the hands of strangers,—strangers who had had nothing to do with accumulating it. Not a slave was left free. All remained slaves, from the youngest to the oldest. If any one thing in my experience, more than another, served to deepen my conviction of the infernal character of slavery, and to fill me with unutterable loathing of slaveholders, it was their base ingratitude to my poor old grandmother. She had served my old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth; she had peopled his plantation with slaves; she had become a great grandmother in his service. She had rocked him in infancy, attended him in childhood, served him through life, and at his death wiped from his icy brow the cold death-sweat, and closed his eyes forever. She was nevertheless left a slave—a slave for life—a slave in the hands of strangers; and in their hands she saw her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren, divided, like so many sheep, without being gratified with the small privilege of a single word, as to their or her own destiny. And, to cap the climax of their base ingratitude and fiendish

barbarity, my grandmother, who was now very old, having outlived my old master and all his children, having seen the beginning and end of all of them, and her present owners finding she was of but little value, her frame already racked with the pains of old age, and complete helplessness fast stealing over her once active limbs, they took her to the woods, built her a little hut, put up a little mud-chimney, and then made her welcome to the privilege of supporting herself there in perfect loneliness; thus virtually turning her out to die! If my poor old grandmother now lives, she lives to suffer in utter loneliness; she lives to remember and mourn over the loss of children, the loss of grandchildren, and the loss of great-grandchildren. They are, in the language of the slave's poet, Whittier,—

"Gone, gone, sold and gone
To the rice swamp dank and lone,
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,
Where the noisome insect stings,
Where the fever-demon strews
Poison with the falling dews,
Where the sickly sunbeams glare
Through the hot and misty air:—
Gone, gone, sold and gone
To the rice swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia hills and waters—
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!"

The hearth is desolate. The children, the unconscious children, who once sang and danced in her presence, are gone. She gropes her way, in the darkness of age, for a drink of water. Instead of the voices of her children, she hears by day the moans of the dove, and by night the screams of the hideous owl. All is gloom. The grave is at the door. And now, when weighed down by the pains and aches of old age, when the head inclines to the feet, when the beginning and ending of human existence meet, and helpless infancy and painful old age combine together—at this time, this most needful time, the time for the exercise of that tenderness and affection which children only can exercise towards a declining parent—my poor old grandmother, the devoted mother of twelve children, is left all alone, in yonder little hut, before a few dim

embers. She stands—she sits—she staggers—she falls—she groans—she dies—and there are none of her children or grandchildren present, to wipe from her wrinkled brow the cold sweat of death, or to place beneath the sod her fallen remains. Will not a righteous God visit for these things?

In about two years after the death of Mrs. Lucretia, Master Thomas married his second wife. Her name was Rowena Hamilton. She was the eldest daughter of Mr. William Hamilton. Master now lived in St. Michael's. Not long after his marriage, a misunderstanding took place between himself and Master Hugh; and as a means of punishing his brother, he took me from him to live with himself at St. Michael's. Here I underwent another most painful separation. It, however, was not so severe as the one I dreaded at the division of property; for, during this interval, a great change had taken place in Master Hugh and his once kind and affectionate wife. The influence of brandy upon him, and of slavery upon her, had effected a disastrous change in the characters of both; so that, as far as they were concerned, I thought I had little to lose by the change. But it was not to them that I was attached. It was to those little Baltimore boys that I felt the strongest attachment. I had received many good lessons from them, and was still receiving them, and the thought of leaving them was painful indeed. I was leaving, too, without the hope of ever being allowed to return. Master Thomas had said he would never let me return again. The barrier betwixt himself and brother he considered impassable.

I then had to regret that I did not at least make the attempt to carry out my resolution to run away; for the chances of success are tenfold greater from the city than from the country.

I sailed from Baltimore for St. Michael's in the sloop Amanda, Captain Edward Dodson. On my passage, I paid particular attention to the direction which the steamboats took to go to Philadelphia. I found, instead of going down, on reaching North Point they went up the bay, in a north-easterly direction. I deemed this knowledge of the utmost importance. My determination to run away was again revived. I resolved to wait only so long as the

offering of a favorable opportunity. When that came, I was determined to be off.

Chapter IX

I have now reached a period of my life when I can give dates. I left Baltimore, and went to live with Master Thomas Auld, at St. Michael's, in March, 1832. It was now more than seven years since I lived with him in the family of my old master, on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. We of course were now almost entire strangers to each other. He was to me a new master, and I to him a new slave. I was ignorant of his temper and disposition; he was equally so of mine. A very short time, however, brought us into full acquaintance with each other. I was made acquainted with his wife not less than with himself. They were well matched, being equally mean and cruel. I was now, for the first time during a space of more than seven years, made to feel the painful gnawings of hunger—a something which I had not experienced before since I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. It went hard enough with me then, when I could look back to no period at which I had enjoyed a sufficiency. It was tenfold harder after living in Master Hugh's family, where I had always had enough to eat, and of that which was good. I have said Master Thomas was a mean man. He was so. Not to give a slave enough to eat, is regarded as the most aggravated development of meanness even among slaveholders. The rule is, no matter how coarse the food, only let there be enough of it. This is the theory; and in the part of Maryland from which I came, it is the general practice,—though there are many exceptions. Master Thomas gave us enough of neither coarse nor fine food. There were four slaves of us in the kitchen—my sister Eliza, my aunt Priscilla, Henny, and myself; and we were allowed less than a half of a bushel of corn-meal per week, and very little else, either in the shape of meat or vegetables. It was not enough for us to subsist upon. We were therefore reduced to the wretched necessity of living at the expense of our neighbors. This we did by begging and stealing, whichever came handy in the time of need, the one being considered as legitimate as the other. A great

many times have we poor creatures been nearly perishing with hunger, when food in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning, and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!

Bad as all slaveholders are, we seldom meet one destitute of every element of character commanding respect. My master was one of this rare sort. I do not know of one single noble act ever performed by him. The leading trait in his character was meanness; and if there were any other element in his nature, it was made subject to this. He was mean; and, like most other mean men, he lacked the ability to conceal his meanness. Captain Auld was not born a slaveholder. He had been a poor man, master only of a Bay craft. He came into possession of all his slaves by marriage; and of all men, adopted slaveholders are the worst. He was cruel, but cowardly. He commanded without firmness. In the enforcement of his rules, he was at times rigid, and at times lax. At times, he spoke to his slaves with the firmness of Napoleon and the fury of a demon; at other times, he might well be mistaken for an inquirer who had lost his way. He did nothing of himself. He might have passed for a lion, but for his ears. In all things noble which he attempted, his own meanness shone most conspicuous. His airs, words, and actions, were the airs, words, and actions of born slaveholders, and, being assumed, were awkward enough. He was not even a good imitator. He possessed all the disposition to deceive, but wanted the power. Having no resources within himself, he was compelled to be the copyist of many, and being such, he was forever the victim of inconsistency; and of consequence he was an object of contempt, and was held as such even by his slaves. The luxury of having slaves of his own to wait upon him was something new and unprepared for. He was a slaveholder without the ability to hold slaves. He found himself incapable of managing his slaves either by force, fear, or fraud. We seldom called him "master;" we generally called him "Captain Auld," and were hardly disposed to title him at all. I doubt not that our conduct had much to do with making him appear awkward, and of consequence fretful. Our want of

reverence for him must have perplexed him greatly. He wished to have us call him master, but lacked the firmness necessary to command us to do so. His wife used to insist upon our calling him so, but to no purpose. In August, 1832, my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting held in the Bay-side, Talbot county, and there experienced religion. I indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that, if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him to be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them. If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before. Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety. His house was the house of prayer. He prayed morning, noon, and night. He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren, and was soon made a class-leader and exhorter. His activity in revivals was great, and he proved himself an instrument in the hands of the church in converting many souls. His house was the preachers' home. They used to take great pleasure in coming there to put up; for while he starved us, he stuffed them. We have had three or four preachers there at a time. The names of those who used to come most frequently while I lived there, were Mr. Storks, Mr. Ewery, Mr. Humphry, and Mr. Hickey. I have also seen Mr. George Cookman at our house. We slaves loved Mr. Cookman. We believed him to be a good man. We thought him instrumental in getting Mr. Samuel Harrison, a very rich slaveholder, to emancipate his slaves; and by some means got the impression that he was laboring to effect the emancipation of all the slaves. When he was at our house, we were sure to be called in to prayers. When the others were there, we were sometimes called in and sometimes not. Mr. Cookman took more notice of us than either of the other ministers. He could not come among us without betraying his

sympathy for us, and, stupid as we were, we had the sagacity to see it.

While I lived with my master in St. Michael's, there was a white young man, a Mr. Wilson, who proposed to keep a Sabbath school for the instruction of such slaves as might be disposed to learn to read the New Testament. We met but three times, when Mr. West and Mr. Fairbanks, both class-leaders, with many others, came upon us with sticks and other missiles, drove us off, and forbade us to meet again. Thus ended our little Sabbath school in the pious town of St. Michael's.

I have said my master found religious sanction for his cruelty. As an example, I will state one of many facts going to prove the charge. I have seen him tie up a lame young woman, and whip her with a heavy cowskin upon her naked shoulders, causing the warm red blood to drip; and, in justification of the bloody deed, he would quote this passage of Scripture—"He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Master would keep this lacerated young woman tied up in this horrid situation four or five hours at a time. I have known him to tie her up early in the morning, and whip her before breakfast; leave her, go to his store, return at dinner, and whip her again, cutting her in the places already made raw with his cruel lash. The secret of master's cruelty toward "Henny" is found in the fact of her being almost helpless. When quite a child, she fell into the fire, and burned herself horribly. Her hands were so burnt that she never got the use of them. She could do very little but bear heavy burdens. She was to master a bill of expense; and as he was a mean man, she was a constant offence to him. He seemed desirous of getting the poor girl out of existence. He gave her away once to his sister; but, being a poor gift, she was not disposed to keep her. Finally, my benevolent master, to use his own words, "set her adrift to take care of herself." Here was a recently-converted man, holding on upon the mother, and at the same time turning out her helpless child, to starve and die! Master Thomas was one of the many pious slaveholders who hold slaves for the very charitable purpose of taking care of them.

My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose. My city life, he said, had had a very pernicious effect upon me. It had almost ruined me for every good purpose, and fitted me for every thing which was bad. One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-in-law's farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael's. I would then have to go after it. My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master's father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and, for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey. Mr. Covey was a poor man, a farm-renter. He rented the place upon which he lived, as also the hands with which he tilled it. Mr. Covey had acquired a very high reputation for breaking young slaves, and this reputation was of immense value to him. It enabled him to get his farm tilled with much less expense to himself than he could have had it done without such a reputation. Some slaveholders thought it not much loss to allow Mr. Covey to have their slaves one year, for the sake of the training to which they were subjected, without any other compensation. He could hire young help with great ease, in consequence of this reputation. Added to the natural good qualities of Mr. Covey, he was a professor of religion—a pious soul—a member and a class-leader in the Methodist church. All of this added weight to his reputation as a "nigger-breaker." I was aware of all the facts, having been made acquainted with them by a young man who had lived there. I nevertheless made the change gladly; for I was sure of getting enough to eat, which is not the smallest consideration to a hungry man.

Chapter X

I had left Master Thomas's house, and went to live with Mr. Covey, on the 1st of January, 1833. I was now, for the first time in my life, a field hand. In my new employment, I found myself even more awkward than a country boy appeared to be in a large city. I had been at my new home but one week before Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger. The details of this affair are as follows: Mr. Covey sent me, very early in the morning of one of our coldest days in the month of January, to the woods, to get a load of wood. He gave me a team of unbroken oxen. He told me which was the in-hand ox, and which the off-hand one. He then tied the end of a large rope around the horns of the in-hand ox, and gave me the other end of it, and told me, if the oxen started to run, that I must hold on upon the rope. I had never driven oxen before, and of course I was very awkward. I, however, succeeded in getting to the edge of the woods with little difficulty; but I had got a very few rods into the woods, when the oxen took fright, and started full tilt, carrying the cart against trees, and over stumps, in the most frightful manner. I expected every moment that my brains would be dashed out against the trees. After running thus for a considerable distance, they finally upset the cart, dashing it with great force against a tree, and threw themselves into a dense thicket. How I escaped death, I do not know. There I was, entirely alone, in a thick wood, in a place new to me. My cart was upset and shattered, my oxen were entangled among the young trees, and there was none to help me. After a long spell of effort, I succeeded in getting my cart righted, my oxen disentangled, and again yoked to the cart. I now proceeded with my team to the place where I had, the day before, been chopping wood, and loaded my cart pretty heavily, thinking in this way to tame my oxen. I then proceeded on my way home. I had now consumed one half of the day. I got out of the woods safely, and now felt out of danger. I stopped my oxen to open the woods gate; and just as I did so, before I could get hold of my ox-rope, the oxen again started, rushed through the gate, catching it between the wheel and the body of the cart, tearing it to pieces, and coming within a

few inches of crushing me against the gate-post. Thus twice, in one short day, I escaped death by the merest chance. On my return, I told Mr. Covey what had happened, and how it happened. He ordered me to return to the woods again immediately. I did so, and he followed on after me. Just as I got into the woods, he came up and told me to stop my cart, and that he would teach me how to trifle away my time, and break gates. He then went to a large gum-tree, and with his axe cut three large switches, and, after trimming them up neatly with his pocketknife, he ordered me to take off my clothes. I made him no answer, but stood with my clothes on. He repeated his order. I still made him no answer, nor did I move to strip myself. Upon this he rushed at me with the fierceness of a tiger, tore off my clothes, and lashed me till he had worn out his switches, cutting me so savagely as to leave the marks visible for a long time after. This whipping was the first of a number just like it, and for similar offences.

I lived with Mr. Covey one year. During the first six months, of that year, scarce a week passed without his whipping me. I was seldom free from a sore back. My awkwardness was almost always his excuse for whipping me. We were worked fully up to the point of endurance. Long before day we were up, our horses fed, and by the first approach of day we were off to the field with our hoes and ploughing teams. Mr. Covey gave us enough to eat, but scarce time to eat it. We were often less than five minutes taking our meals. We were often in the field from the first approach of day till its last lingering ray had left us; and at saving-fodder time, midnight often caught us in the field binding blades.

Covey would be out with us. The way he used to stand it, was this. He would spend the most of his afternoons in bed. He would then come out fresh in the evening, ready to urge us on with his words, example, and frequently with the whip. Mr. Covey was one of the few slaveholders who could and did work with his hands. He was a hard-working man. He knew by himself just what a man or a boy could do. There was no deceiving him. His work went on in his absence almost as well as in his presence;

and he had the faculty of making us feel that he was ever present with us. This he did by surprising us. He seldom approached the spot where we were at work openly, if he could do it secretly. He always aimed at taking us by surprise. Such was his cunning, that we used to call him, among ourselves, "the snake." When we were at work in the cornfield, he would sometimes crawl on his hands and knees to avoid detection, and all at once he would rise nearly in our midst, and scream out, "Ha, ha! Come, come! Dash on, dash on!" This being his mode of attack, it was never safe to stop a single minute. His comings were like a thief in the night. He appeared to us as being ever at hand. He was under every tree, behind every stump, in every bush, and at every window, on the plantation. He would sometimes mount his horse, as if bound to St. Michael's, a distance of seven miles, and in half an hour afterwards you would see him coiled up in the corner of the wood-fence, watching every motion of the slaves. He would, for this purpose, leave his horse tied up in the woods. Again, he would sometimes walk up to us, and give us orders as though he was upon the point of starting on a long journey, turn his back upon us, and make as though he was going to the house to get ready; and, before he would get half way thither, he would turn short and crawl into a fence-corner, or behind some tree, and there watch us till the going down of the sun.

Mr. Covey's *forte* consisted in his power to deceive. His life was devoted to planning and perpetrating the grossest deceptions. Every thing he possessed in the shape of learning or religion, he made conform to his disposition to deceive. He seemed to think himself equal to deceiving the Almighty. He would make a short prayer in the morning, and a long prayer at night; and, strange as it may seem, few men would at times appear more devotional than he. The exercises of his family devotions were always commenced with singing; and, as he was a very poor singer himself, the duty of raising the hymn generally came upon me. He would read his hymn, and nod at me to commence. I would at times do so; at others, I would not. My non-compliance would almost always produce much confusion. To show himself independent of me, he would start and stagger through with his

hymn in the most discordant manner. In this state of mind, he prayed with more than ordinary spirit. Poor man! such was his disposition, and success at deceiving, I do verily believe that he sometimes deceived himself into the solemn belief, that he was a sincere worshipper of the most high God; and this, too, at a time when he may be said to have been guilty of compelling his woman slave to commit the sin of adultery. The facts in the case are these: Mr. Covey was a poor man; he was just commencing in life; he was only able to buy one slave; and, shocking as is the fact, he bought her, as he said, for *a breeder*. This woman was named Caroline. Mr. Covey bought her from Mr. Thomas Lowe, about six miles from St. Michael's. She was a large, able-bodied woman, about twenty years old. She had already given birth to one child, which proved her to be just what he wanted. After buying her, he hired a married man of Mr. Samuel Harrison, to live with him one year; and him he used to fasten up with her every night! The result was, that, at the end of the year, the miserable woman gave birth to twins. At this result Mr. Covey seemed to be highly pleased, both with the man and the wretched woman. Such was his joy, and that of his wife, that nothing they could do for Caroline during her confinement was too good, or too hard, to be done. The children were regarded as being quite an addition to his wealth.

If at any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest dregs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey. We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work, was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!

Sunday was my only leisure time. I spent this in a sort of beast-like stupor, between sleep and wake, under some large tree. At times I would rise up, a flash of energetic freedom would dart through my soul, accompanied with a faint beam of hope, that flickered for a moment, and then vanished. I sank down again, mourning over my wretched condition. I was sometimes prompted to take my life, and that of Covey, but was prevented by a combination of hope and fear. My sufferings on this plantation seem now like a dream rather than a stern reality.

Our house stood within a few rods of the Chesapeake Bay, whose broad bosom was ever white with sails from every quarter of the habitable globe. Those beautiful vessels, robed in purest white, so delightful to the eye of freemen, were to me so many shrouded ghosts, to terrify and torment me with thoughts of my wretched condition. I have often, in the deep stillness of a summer's Sabbath, stood all alone upon the lofty banks of that noble bay, and traced, with saddened heart and tearful eye, the countless number of sails moving off to the mighty ocean. The sight of these always affected me powerfully. My thoughts would compel utterance; and there, with no audience but the Almighty, I would pour out my soul's complaint, in my rude way, with an apostrophe to the moving multitude of ships:—

"You are loosed from your moorings, and are free; I am fast in my chains, and am a slave! You move merrily before the gentle gale, and I sadly before the bloody whip! You are freedom's swift-winged angels, that fly round the world; I am confined in bands of iron! O that I were free! O, that I were on one of your gallant decks, and under your protecting wing! Alas! betwixt me and you, the turbid waters roll. Go on, go on. O that I could also go! Could I but swim! If I could fly! O, why was I born a man, of whom to make a brute! The glad ship is gone; she hides in the dim distance. I am left in the hottest hell of unending slavery. O God, save me! God, deliver me! Let me be free! Is there any God? Why am I a slave? I will run away. I will not stand it. Get caught, or get clear, I'll try it. I had as well die with ague as the fever. I have only one life to lose. I had as well be killed running as die standing. Only think of it; one hundred miles straight north,

and I am free! Try it? Yes! God helping me, I will. It cannot be that I shall live and die a slave. I will take to the water. This very bay shall yet bear me into freedom. The steamboats steered in a north-east course from North Point. I will do the same; and when I get to the head of the bay, I will turn my canoe adrift, and walk straight through Delaware into Pennsylvania. When I get there, I shall not be required to have a pass; I can travel without being disturbed. Let but the first opportunity offer, and, come what will, I am off. Meanwhile, I will try to bear up under the yoke. I am not the only slave in the world. Why should I fret? I can bear as much as any of them. Besides, I am but a boy, and all boys are bound to some one. It may be that my misery in slavery will only increase my happiness when I get free. There is a better day coming."

Thus I used to think, and thus I used to speak to myself; goaded almost to madness at one moment, and at the next reconciling myself to my wretched lot.

110

I have already intimated that my condition was much worse, during the first six months of my stay at Mr. Covey's, than in the last six. The circumstances leading to the change in Mr. Covey's course toward me form an epoch in my humble history. You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man. On one of the hottest days of the month of August, 1833, Bill Smith, William Hughes, a slave named Eli, and myself, were engaged in fanning wheat. Hughes was clearing the fanned wheat from before the fan. Eli was turning, Smith was feeding, and I was carrying wheat to the fan. The work was simple, requiring strength rather than intellect; yet, to one entirely unused to such work, it came very hard. About three o'clock of that day, I broke down; my strength failed me; I was seized with a violent aching of the head, attended with extreme dizziness; I trembled in every limb. Finding what was coming, I nerved myself up, feeling it would never do to stop work. I stood as long as I could stagger to the hopper with grain. When I could stand no longer, I fell, and felt as if held down by an immense weight. The fan of course stopped; every one had his own work to do; and no one could do the work of the other, and have his own go on at the same time.

Mr. Covey was at the house, about one hundred yards from the treading-yard where we were fanning. On hearing the fan stop, he left immediately, and came to the spot where we were. He hastily inquired what the matter was. Bill answered that I was sick, and there was no one to bring wheat to the fan. I had by this time crawled away under the side of the post and rail-fence by which the yard was enclosed, hoping to find relief by getting out of the sun. He then asked where I was. He was told by one of the hands. He came to the spot, and, after looking at me awhile, asked me what was the matter. I told him as well as I could, for I scarce had strength to speak. He then gave me a savage kick in the side, and told me to get up. I tried to do so, but fell back in the attempt. He gave me another kick, and again told me to rise. I again tried, and succeeded in gaining my feet; but, stooping to get the tub with which I was feeding the fan, I again staggered and fell. While down in this situation, Mr. Covey took up the hickory slat with which Hughes had been striking off the half-bushel measure, and with it gave me a heavy blow upon the head, making a large wound, and the blood ran freely; and with this again told me to get up. I made no effort to comply, having now made up my mind to let him do his worst. In a short time after receiving this blow, my head grew better. Mr. Covey had now left me to my fate. At this moment I resolved, for the first time, to go to my master, enter a complaint, and ask his protection. In order to do this, I must that afternoon walk seven miles; and this, under the circumstances, was truly a severe undertaking. I was exceedingly feeble; made so as much by the kicks and blows which I received, as by the severe fit of sickness to which I had been subjected. I, however, watched my chance, while Covey was looking in an opposite direction, and started for St. Michael's. I succeeded in getting a considerable distance on my way to the woods, when Covey discovered me, and called after me to come back, threatening what he would do if I did not come. I disregarded both his calls and his threats, and made my way to the woods as fast as my feeble state would allow; and thinking I might be overhauled by him if I kept the road, I walked through the woods, keeping far enough from the road to avoid detection, and near

enough to prevent losing my way. I had not gone far before my little strength again failed me. I could go no farther. I fell down, and lay for a considerable time. The blood was yet oozing from the wound on my head. For a time I thought I should bleed to death; and think now that I should have done so, but that the blood so matted my hair as to stop the wound. After lying there about three quarters of an hour, I nerved myself up again, and started on my way, through bogs and briers, barefooted and bareheaded, tearing my feet sometimes at nearly every step; and after a journey of about seven miles, occupying some five hours to perform it, I arrived at master's store. I then presented an appearance enough to affect any but a heart of iron. From the crown of my head to my feet, I was covered with blood. My hair was all clotted with dust and blood; my shirt was stiff with blood. I suppose I looked like a man who had escaped a den of wild beasts, and barely escaped them. In this state I appeared before my master, humbly entreating him to interpose his authority for my protection. I told him all the circumstances as well as I could, and it seemed, as I spoke, at times to affect him. He would then walk the floor, and seek to justify Covey by saying he expected I deserved it. He asked me what I wanted. I told him, to let me get a new home; that as sure as I lived with Mr. Covey again, I should live with but to die with him; that Covey would surely kill me; he was in a fair way for it. Master Thomas ridiculed the idea that there was any danger of Mr. Covey's killing me, and said that he knew Mr. Covey; that he was a good man, and that he could not think of taking me from him; that, should he do so, he would lose the whole year's wages; that I belonged to Mr. Covey for one year, and that I must go back to him, come what might; and that I must not trouble him with any more stories, or that he would himself *get hold of me*. After threatening me thus, he gave me a very large dose of salts, telling me that I might remain in St. Michael's that night, (it being quite late,) but that I must be off back to Mr. Covey's early in the morning; and that if I did not, he would *get hold of me*, which meant that he would whip me. I remained all night, and, according to his orders, I started off to Covey's in the morning, (Saturday morning,) wearied in body and

broken in spirit. I got no supper that night, or breakfast that morning. I reached Covey's about nine o'clock; and just as I was getting over the fence that divided Mrs. Kemp's fields from ours, out ran Covey with his cowskin, to give me another whipping. Before he could reach me, I succeeded in getting to the cornfield; and as the corn was very high, it afforded me the means of hiding. He seemed very angry, and searched for me a long time. My behavior was altogether unaccountable. He finally gave up the chase, thinking, I suppose, that I must come home for something to eat; he would give himself no further trouble in looking for me. I spent that day mostly in the woods, having the alternative before me,—to go home and be whipped to death, or stay in the woods and be starved to death. That night, I fell in with Sandy Jenkins, a slave with whom I was somewhat acquainted. Sandy had a free wife who lived about four miles from Mr. Covey's; and it being Saturday, he was on his way to see her. I told him my circumstances, and he very kindly invited me to go home with him. I went home with him, and talked this whole matter over, and got his advice as to what course it was best for me to pursue. I found Sandy an old adviser. He told me, with great solemnity, I must go back to Covey; but that before I went, I must go with him into another part of the woods, where there was a certain *root*, which, if I would take some of it with me, carrying it *always on my right side*, would render it impossible for Mr. Covey, or any other white man, to whip me. He said he had carried it for years; and since he had done so, he had never received a blow, and never expected to while he carried it. I at first rejected the idea, that the simple carrying of a root in my pocket would have any such effect as he had said, and was not disposed to take it; but Sandy impressed the necessity with much earnestness, telling me it could do no harm, if it did no good. To please him, I at length took the root, and, according to his direction, carried it upon my right side. This was Sunday morning. I immediately started for home; and upon entering the yard gate, out came Mr. Covey on his way to meeting. He spoke to me very kindly, bade me drive the pigs from a lot near by, and passed on towards the church. Now, this singular conduct of Mr. Covey really made me begin to

think that there was something in the *root* which Sandy had given me; and had it been on any other day than Sunday, I could have attributed the conduct to no other cause than the influence of that root; and as it was, I was half inclined to think the *root* to be something more than I at first had taken it to be. All went well till Monday morning. On this morning, the virtue of the *root* was fully tested. Long before daylight, I was called to go and rub, curry, and feed, the horses. I obeyed, and was glad to obey. But whilst thus engaged, whilst in the act of throwing down some blades from the loft, Mr. Covey entered the stable with a long rope; and just as I was half out of the loft, he caught hold of my legs, and was about tying me. As soon as I found what he was up to, I gave a sudden spring, and as I did so, he holding to my legs, I was brought sprawling on the stable floor. Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment—from whence came the spirit I don't know—I resolved to fight; and, suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers. Mr. Covey soon called out to Hughes for help. Hughes came, and, while Covey held me, attempted to tie my right hand. While he was in the act of doing so, I watched my chance, and gave him a heavy kick close under the ribs. This kick fairly sickened Hughes, so that he left me in the hands of Mr. Covey. This kick had the effect of not only weakening Hughes, but Covey also. When he saw Hughes bending over with pain, his courage quailed. He asked me if I meant to persist in my resistance. I told him I did, come what might; that he had used me like a brute for six months, and that I was determined to be used so no longer. With that, he strove to drag me to a stick that was lying just out of the stable door. He meant to knock me down. But just as he was leaning over to get the stick, I seized him with both hands by his collar, and brought him by a sudden snatch to the ground. By this time, Bill came. Covey called upon him for assistance. Bill wanted to know what

he could do. Covey said, "Take hold of him, take hold of him!" Bill said his master hired him out to work, and not to help to whip me; so he left Covey and myself to fight our own battle out. We were at it for nearly two hours. Covey at length let me go, puffing and blowing at a great rate, saying that if I had not resisted, he would not have whipped me half so much. The truth was, that he had not whipped me at all. I considered him as getting entirely the worst end of the bargain; for he had drawn no blood from me, but I had from him. The whole six months afterwards, that I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger. He would occasionally say, he didn't want to get hold of me again. "No," thought I, "you need not; for you will come off worse than you did before."

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.

From this time I was never again what might be called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped.

It was for a long time a matter of surprise to me why Mr. Covey did not immediately have me taken by the constable to the whipping-post, and there regularly whipped for the crime of raising my hand against a white man in defence of myself. And the only explanation I can now think of does not entirely satisfy

me; but such as it is, I will give it. Mr. Covey enjoyed the most unbounded reputation for being a first-rate overseer and negro-breaker. It was of considerable importance to him. That reputation was at stake; and had he sent me—a boy about sixteen years old—to the public whipping-post, his reputation would have been lost; so, to save his reputation, he suffered me to go unpunished.

My term of actual service to Mr. Edward Covey ended on Christmas day, 1833. The days between Christmas and New Year's day are allowed as holidays; and, accordingly, we were not required to perform any labor, more than to feed and take care of the stock. This time we regarded as our own, by the grace of our masters; and we therefore used or abused it nearly as we pleased. Those of us who had families at a distance, were generally allowed to spend the whole six days in their society. This time, however, was spent in various ways. The staid, sober, thinking and industrious ones of our number would employ themselves in making corn-brooms, mats, horse-collars, and baskets; and another class of us would spend the time in hunting opossums, hares, and coons. But by far the larger part engaged in such sports and merriments as playing ball, wrestling, running foot-races, fiddling, dancing, and drinking whisky; and this latter mode of spending the time was by far the most agreeable to the feelings of our masters. A slave who would work during the holidays was considered by our masters as scarcely deserving them. He was regarded as one who rejected the favor of his master. It was deemed a disgrace not to get drunk at Christmas; and he was regarded as lazy indeed, who had not provided himself with the necessary means, during the year, to get whisky enough to last him through Christmas.

From what I know of the effect of these holidays upon the slave, I believe them to be among the most effective means in the hands of the slaveholder in keeping down the spirit of insurrection. Were the slaveholders at once to abandon this practice, I have not the slightest doubt it would lead to an immediate insurrection among the slaves. These holidays serve as conductors, or safety-valves, to carry off the rebellious spirit of enslaved humanity. But for these, the slave would be forced up to

the wildest desperation; and woe betide the slaveholder, the day he ventures to remove or hinder the operation of those conductors! I warn him that, in such an event, a spirit will go forth in their midst, more to be dreaded than the most appalling earthquake.

The holidays are part and parcel of the gross fraud, wrong, and inhumanity of slavery. They are professedly a custom established by the benevolence of the slaveholders; but I undertake to say, it is the result of selfishness, and one of the grossest frauds committed upon the down-trodden slave. They do not give the slaves this time because they would not like to have their work during its continuance, but because they know it would be unsafe to deprive them of it. This will be seen by the fact, that the slaveholders like to have their slaves spend those days just in such a manner as to make them as glad of their ending as of their beginning. Their object seems to be, to disgust their slaves with freedom, by plunging them into the lowest depths of dissipation. For instance, the slaveholders not only like to see the slave drink of his own accord, but will adopt various plans to make him drunk. One plan is, to make bets on their slaves, as to who can drink the most whisky without getting drunk; and in this way they succeed in getting whole multitudes to drink to excess. Thus, when the slave asks for virtuous freedom, the cunning slaveholder, knowing his ignorance, cheats him with a dose of vicious dissipation, artfully labelled with the name of liberty. The most of us used to drink it down, and the result was just what might be supposed; many of us were led to think that there was little to choose between liberty and slavery. We felt, and very properly too, that we had almost as well be slaves to man as to rum. So, when the holidays ended, we staggered up from the filth of our wallowing, took a long breath, and marched to the field,—feeling, upon the whole, rather glad to go, from what our master had deceived us into a belief was freedom, back to the arms of slavery.

I have said that this mode of treatment is a part of the whole system of fraud and inhumanity of slavery. It is so. The mode here adopted to disgust the slave with freedom, by allowing him

to see only the abuse of it, is carried out in other things. For instance, a slave loves molasses; he steals some. His master, in many cases, goes off to town, and buys a large quantity; he returns, takes his whip, and commands the slave to eat the molasses, until the poor fellow is made sick at the very mention of it. The same mode is sometimes adopted to make the slaves refrain from asking for more food than their regular allowance. A slave runs through his allowance, and applies for more. His master is enraged at him; but, not willing to send him off without food, gives him more than is necessary, and compels him to eat it within a given time. Then, if he complains that he cannot eat it, he is said to be satisfied neither full nor fasting, and is whipped for being hard to please! I have an abundance of such illustrations of the same principle, drawn from my own observation, but think the cases I have cited sufficient. The practice is a very common one.

On the first of January, 1834, I left Mr. Covey, and went to live with Mr. William Freeland, who lived about three miles from St. Michael's. I soon found Mr. Freeland a very different man from Mr. Covey. Though not rich, he was what would be called an educated southern gentleman. Mr. Covey, as I have shown, was a well-trained negro-breaker and slave-driver. The former (slaveholder though he was) seemed to possess some regard for honor, some reverence for justice, and some respect for humanity. The latter seemed totally insensible to all such sentiments. Mr. Freeland had many of the faults peculiar to slaveholders, such as being very passionate and fretful; but I must do him the justice to say, that he was exceedingly free from those degrading vices to which Mr. Covey was constantly addicted. The one was open and frank, and we always knew where to find him. The other was a most artful deceiver, and could be understood only by such as were skilful enough to detect his cunningly-devised frauds. Another advantage I gained in my new master was, he made no pretensions to, or profession of, religion; and this, in my opinion, was truly a great advantage. I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes,—a justifier of the most appalling barbarity,—a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds,—and a dark shelter under, which the

darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection. Were I to be again reduced to the chains of slavery, next to that enslavement, I should regard being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity that could befall me. For of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others. It was my unhappy lot not only to belong to a religious slaveholder, but to live in a community of such religionists. Very near Mr. Freeland lived the Rev. Daniel Weeden, and in the same neighborhood lived the Rev. Rigby Hopkins. These were members and ministers in the Reformed Methodist Church. Mr. Weeden owned, among others, a woman slave, whose name I have forgotten. This woman's back, for weeks, was kept literally raw, made so by the lash of this merciless, *religious* wretch. He used to hire hands. His maxim was, Behave well or behave ill, it is the duty of a master occasionally to whip a slave, to remind him of his master's authority. Such was his theory, and such his practice.

Mr. Hopkins was even worse than Mr. Weeden. His chief boast was his ability to manage slaves. The peculiar feature of his government was that of whipping slaves in advance of deserving it. He always managed to have one or more of his slaves to whip every Monday morning. He did this to alarm their fears, and strike terror into those who escaped. His plan was to whip for the smallest offences, to prevent the commission of large ones. Mr. Hopkins could always find some excuse for whipping a slave. It would astonish one, unaccustomed to a slaveholding life, to see with what wonderful ease a slaveholder can find things, of which to make occasion to whip a slave. A mere look, word, or motion, —a mistake, accident, or want of power,—are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said, he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his master? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. Does he forget to pull off his hat at the approach of a white person? Then he is wanting in reverence, and

should be whipped for it. Does he ever venture to vindicate his conduct, when censured for it? Then he is guilty of impudence,—one of the greatest crimes of which a slave can be guilty. Does he ever venture to suggest a different mode of doing things from that pointed out by his master? He is indeed presumptuous, and getting above himself; and nothing less than a flogging will do for him. Does he, while ploughing, break a plough,—or, while hoeing, break a hoe? It is owing to his carelessness, and for it a slave must always be whipped. Mr. Hopkins could always find something of this sort to justify the use of the lash, and he seldom failed to embrace such opportunities. There was not a man in the whole county, with whom the slaves who had the getting their own home, would not prefer to live, rather than with this Rev. Mr. Hopkins. And yet there was not a man any where round, who made higher professions of religion, or was more active in revivals,—more attentive to the class, love-feast, prayer and preaching meetings, or more devotional in his family,—that prayed earlier, later, louder, and longer,—than this same reverend slave-driver, Rigby Hopkins.

But to return to Mr. Freeland, and to my experience while in his employment. He, like Mr. Covey, gave us enough to eat; but, unlike Mr. Covey, he also gave us sufficient time to take our meals. He worked us hard, but always between sunrise and sunset. He required a good deal of work to be done, but gave us good tools with which to work. His farm was large, but he employed hands enough to work it, and with ease, compared with many of his neighbors. My treatment, while in his employment, was heavenly, compared with what I experienced at the hands of Mr. Edward Covey.

Mr. Freeland was himself the owner of but two slaves. Their names were Henry Harris and John Harris. The rest of his hands he hired. These consisted of myself, Sandy Jenkins,* and Handy Caldwell.

*This is the same man who gave me the roots to prevent my being whipped by Mr. Covey. He was "a clever soul." We used frequently to talk about the fight with Covey, and as often as we did so, he would claim my success as the result of the roots which he gave me. This superstition is very common among the more ignorant slaves. A slave seldom dies but that his death is attributed to trickery.

Henry and John were quite intelligent, and in a very little while after I went there, I succeeded in creating in them a strong desire to learn how to read. This desire soon sprang up in the others also. They very soon mustered up some old spelling-books, and nothing would do but that I must keep a Sabbath school. I agreed to do so, and accordingly devoted my Sundays to teaching these my loved fellow-slaves how to read. Neither of them knew his letters when I went there. Some of the slaves of the neighboring farms found what was going on, and also availed themselves of this little opportunity to learn to read. It was understood, among all who came, that there must be as little display about it as possible. It was necessary to keep our religious masters at St. Michael's unacquainted with the fact, that, instead of spending the Sabbath in wrestling, boxing, and drinking whisky, we were trying to learn how to read the will of God; for they had much rather see us engaged in those degrading sports, than to see us behaving like intellectual, moral, and accountable beings. My blood boils as I think of the bloody manner in which Messrs. Wright Fairbanks and Garrison West, both class-leaders, in connection with many others, rushed in upon us with sticks and stones, and broke up our virtuous little Sabbath school, at St. Michael's—all calling themselves Christians! humble followers of the Lord Jesus Christ! But I am again digressing.

I held my Sabbath school at the house of a free colored man, whose name I deem it imprudent to mention; for should it be known, it might embarrass him greatly, though the crime of holding the school was committed ten years ago. I had at one time over forty scholars, and those of the right sort, ardently desiring to learn. They were of all ages, though mostly men and women. I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. They were great days to my soul. The work of

instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed. We loved each other, and to leave them at the close of the Sabbath was a severe cross indeed. When I think that these precious souls are to-day shut up in the prison-house of slavery, my feelings overcome me, and I am almost ready to ask, "Does a righteous God govern the universe? and for what does he hold the thunders in his right hand, if not to smite the oppressor, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the spoiler?" These dear souls came not to Sabbath school because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged. Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up, and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race. I kept up my school nearly the whole year I lived with Mr. Freeland; and, beside my Sabbath school, I devoted three evenings in the week, during the winter, to teaching the slaves at home. And I have the happiness to know, that several of those who came to Sabbath school learned how to read; and that one, at least, is now free through my agency.

The year passed off smoothly. It seemed only about half as long as the year which preceded it. I went through it without receiving a single blow. I will give Mr. Freeland the credit of being the best master I ever had, *till I became my own master*. For the ease with which I passed the year, I was, however, somewhat indebted to the society of my fellow-slaves. They were noble souls; they not only possessed loving hearts, but brave ones. We were linked and interlinked with each other. I loved them with a love stronger than any thing I have experienced since. It is sometimes said that we slaves do not love and confide in each other. In answer to this assertion, I can say, I never loved any or confided in any people more than my fellow-slaves, and especially those with whom I lived at Mr. Freeland's. I believe we would have died for each other. We never undertook to do any thing, of any importance, without a mutual consultation. We never

moved separately. We were one; and as much so by our tempers and dispositions, as by the mutual hardships to which we were necessarily subjected by our condition as slaves.

At the close of the year 1834, Mr. Freeland again hired me of my master, for the year 1835. But, by this time, I began to want to live *upon free land* as well as *with Freeland*; and I was no longer content, therefore, to live with him or any other slaveholder. I began, with the commencement of the year, to prepare myself for a final struggle, which should decide my fate one way or the other. My tendency was upward. I was fast approaching manhood, and year after year had passed, and I was still a slave. These thoughts roused me—I must do something. I therefore resolved that 1835 should not pass without witnessing an attempt, on my part, to secure my liberty. But I was not willing to cherish this determination alone. My fellow-slaves were dear to me. I was anxious to have them participate with me in this, my life-giving determination. I therefore, though with great prudence, commenced early to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition, and to imbue their minds with thoughts of freedom. I bent myself to devising ways and means for our escape, and meanwhile strove, on all fitting occasions, to impress them with the gross fraud and inhumanity of slavery. I went first to Henry, next to John, then to the others. I found, in them all, warm hearts and noble spirits. They were ready to hear, and ready to act when a feasible plan should be proposed. This was what I wanted. I talked to them of our want of manhood, if we submitted to our enslavement without at least one noble effort to be free. We met often, and consulted frequently, and told our hopes and fears, recounted the difficulties, real and imagined, which we should be called on to meet. At times we were almost disposed to give up, and try to content ourselves with our wretched lot; at others, we were firm and unbending in our determination to go. Whenever we suggested any plan, there was shrinking—the odds were fearful. Our path was beset with the greatest obstacles; and if we succeeded in gaining the end of it, our right to be free was yet questionable—we were yet liable to be returned to bondage. We could see no spot, this side of the ocean, where we could be free.

We knew nothing about Canada. Our knowledge of the north did not extend farther than New York; and to go there, and be forever harassed with the frightful liability of being returned to slavery—with the certainty of being treated tenfold worse than before—the thought was truly a horrible one, and one which it was not easy to overcome. The case sometimes stood thus: At every gate through which we were to pass, we saw a watchman—at every ferry a guard—on every bridge a sentinel—and in every wood a patrol. We were hemmed in upon every side. Here were the difficulties, real or imagined—the good to be sought, and the evil to be shunned. On the one hand, there stood slavery, a stern reality, glaring frightfully upon us,—its robes already crimsoned with the blood of millions, and even now feasting itself greedily upon our own flesh. On the other hand, away back in the dim distance, under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-covered mountain, stood a doubtful freedom—half frozen—beckoning us to come and share its hospitality. This in itself was sometimes enough to stagger us; but when we permitted ourselves to survey the road, we were frequently appalled. Upon either side we saw grim death, assuming the most horrid shapes. Now it was starvation, causing us to eat our own flesh;—now we were contending with the waves, and were drowned;—now we were overtaken, and torn to pieces by the fangs of the terrible bloodhound. We were stung by scorpions, chased by wild beasts, bitten by snakes, and finally, after having nearly reached the desired spot,—after swimming rivers, encountering wild beasts, sleeping in the woods, suffering hunger and nakedness,—we were overtaken by our pursuers, and, in our resistance, we were shot dead upon the spot! I say, this picture sometimes appalled us, and made us

"rather bear those ills we had,
Than fly to others, that we knew not of."

In coming to a fixed determination to run away, we did more than Patrick Henry, when he resolved upon liberty or death. With

us it was a doubtful liberty at most, and almost certain death if we failed. For my part, I should prefer death to hopeless bondage.

Sandy, one of our number, gave up the notion, but still encouraged us. Our company then consisted of Henry Harris, John Harris, Henry Bailey, Charles Roberts, and myself. Henry Bailey was my uncle, and belonged to my master. Charles married my aunt: he belonged to my master's father-in-law, Mr. William Hamilton.

The plan we finally concluded upon was, to get a large canoe belonging to Mr. Hamilton, and upon the Saturday night previous to Easter holidays, paddle directly up the Chesapeake Bay. On our arrival at the head of the bay, a distance of seventy or eighty miles from where we lived, it was our purpose to turn our canoe adrift, and follow the guidance of the north star till we got beyond the limits of Maryland. Our reason for taking the water route was, that we were less liable to be suspected as runaways; we hoped to be regarded as fishermen; whereas, if we should take the land route, we should be subjected to interruptions of almost every kind. Any one having a white face, and being so disposed, could stop us, and subject us to examination.

130

The week before our intended start, I wrote several protections, one for each of us. As well as I can remember, they were in the following words, to wit:—

"This is to certify that I, the undersigned, have given the bearer, my servant, full liberty to go to Baltimore, and spend the Easter holidays.

Written with mine own hand, &c., 1835

William Hamilton

Near St. Michael's, in Talbot county, Maryland."

We were not going to Baltimore; but, in going up the bay, we went toward Baltimore, and these protections were only intended to protect us while on the bay.

As the time drew near for our departure, our anxiety became more and more intense. It was truly a matter of life and death with us. The strength of our determination was about to be fully tested. At this time, I was very active in explaining every difficulty, removing every doubt, dispelling every fear, and inspiring all

with the firmness indispensable to success in our undertaking; assuring them that half was gained the instant we made the move; we had talked long enough; we were now ready to move; if not now, we never should be; and if we did not intend to move now, we had as well fold our arms, sit down, and acknowledge ourselves fit only to be slaves. This, none of us were prepared to acknowledge. Every man stood firm; and at our last meeting, we pledged ourselves afresh, in the most solemn manner, that, at the time appointed, we would certainly start in pursuit of freedom. This was in the middle of the week, at the end of which we were to be off. We went, as usual, to our several fields of labor, but with bosoms highly agitated with thoughts of our truly hazardous undertaking. We tried to conceal our feelings as much as possible; and I think we succeeded very well.

After a painful waiting, the Saturday morning, whose night was to witness our departure, came. I hailed it with joy, bring what of sadness it might. Friday night was a sleepless one for me. I probably felt more anxious than the rest, because I was, by common consent, at the head of the whole affair. The responsibility of success or failure lay heavily upon me. The glory of the one, and the confusion of the other, were alike mine. The first two hours of that morning were such as I never experienced before, and hope never to again. Early in the morning, we went, as usual, to the field. We were spreading manure; and all at once, while thus engaged, I was overwhelmed with an indescribable feeling, in the fulness of which I turned to Sandy, who was near by, and said, "We are betrayed!" "Well," said he, "that thought has this moment struck me." We said no more. I was never more certain of any thing.

The horn was blown as usual, and we went up from the field to the house for breakfast. I went for the form, more than for want of any thing to eat that morning. Just as I got to the house, in looking out at the lane gate, I saw four white men, with two colored men. The white men were on horseback, and the colored ones were walking behind, as if tied. I watched them a few moments till they got up to our lane gate. Here they halted, and tied the colored men to the gate-post. I was not yet certain as to what the matter was. In

a few moments, in rode Mr. Hamilton, with a speed betokening great excitement. He came to the door, and inquired if Master William was in. He was told he was at the barn. Mr. Hamilton, without dismounting, rode up to the barn with extraordinary speed. In a few moments, he and Mr. Freeland returned to the house. By this time, the three constables rode up, and in great haste dismounted, tied their horses, and met Master William and Mr. Hamilton returning from the barn; and after talking awhile, they all walked up to the kitchen door. There was no one in the kitchen but myself and John. Henry and Sandy were up at the barn. Mr. Freeland put his head in at the door, and called me by name, saying, there were some gentlemen at the door who wished to see me. I stepped to the door, and inquired what they wanted. They at once seized me, and, without giving me any satisfaction, tied me—lashing my hands closely together. I insisted upon knowing what the matter was. They at length said, that they had learned I had been in a "scrape," and that I was to be examined before my master; and if their information proved false, I should not be hurt.

In a few moments, they succeeded in tying John. They then turned to Henry, who had by this time returned, and commanded him to cross his hands. "I won't!" said Henry, in a firm tone, indicating his readiness to meet the consequences of his refusal. "Won't you?" said Tom Graham, the constable. "No, I won't!" said Henry, in a still stronger tone. With this, two of the constables pulled out their shining pistols, and swore, by their Creator, that they would make him cross his hands or kill him. Each cocked his pistol, and, with fingers on the trigger, walked up to Henry, saying, at the same time, if he did not cross his hands, they would blow his damned heart out. "Shoot me, shoot me!" said Henry; "you can't kill me but once. Shoot, shoot,—and be damned! *I won't be tied!*" This he said in a tone of loud defiance; and at the same time, with a motion as quick as lightning, he with one single stroke dashed the pistols from the hand of each constable. As he did this, all hands fell upon him, and, after beating him some time, they finally overpowered him, and got him tied.

During the scuffle, I managed, I know not how, to get my pass out, and, without being discovered, put it into the fire. We were all now tied; and just as we were to leave for Easton jail, Betsy Freeland, mother of William Freeland, came to the door with her hands full of biscuits, and divided them between Henry and John. She then delivered herself of a speech, to the following effect:—addressing herself to me, she said, "*You devil! You yellow devil!* it was you that put it into the heads of Henry and John to run away. But for you, you long-legged mulatto devil! Henry nor John would never have thought of such a thing." I made no reply, and was immediately hurried off towards St. Michael's. Just a moment previous to the scuffle with Henry, Mr. Hamilton suggested the propriety of making a search for the protections which he had understood Frederick had written for himself and the rest. But, just at the moment he was about carrying his proposal into effect, his aid was needed in helping to tie Henry; and the excitement attending the scuffle caused them either to forget, or to deem it unsafe, under the circumstances, to search. So we were not yet convicted of the intention to run away.

When we got about half way to St. Michael's, while the constables having us in charge were looking ahead, Henry inquired of me what he should do with his pass. I told him to eat it with his biscuit, and own nothing; and we passed the word around, "*Own nothing*"; and "*Own nothing!*" said we all. Our confidence in each other was unshaken. We were resolved to succeed or fail together, after the calamity had befallen us as much as before. We were now prepared for any thing. We were to be dragged that morning fifteen miles behind horses, and then to be placed in the Easton jail. When we reached St. Michael's, we underwent a sort of examination. We all denied that we ever intended to run away. We did this more to bring out the evidence against us, than from any hope of getting clear of being sold; for, as I have said, we were ready for that. The fact was, we cared but little where we went, so we went together. Our greatest concern was about separation. We dreaded that more than any thing this side of death. We found the evidence against us to be the testimony of one person; our master would not tell who it was;

but we came to a unanimous decision among ourselves as to who their informant was. We were sent off to the jail at Easton. When we got there, we were delivered up to the sheriff, Mr. Joseph Graham, and by him placed in jail. Henry, John, and myself, were placed in one room together—Charles, and Henry Bailey, in another. Their object in separating us was to hinder concert.

We had been in jail scarcely twenty minutes, when a swarm of slave traders, and agents for slave traders, flocked into jail to look at us, and to ascertain if we were for sale. Such a set of beings I never saw before! I felt myself surrounded by so many fiends from perdition. A band of pirates never looked more like their father, the devil. They laughed and grinned over us, saying, "Ah, my boys! we have got you, haven't we?" And after taunting us in various ways, they one by one went into an examination of us, with intent to ascertain our value. They would impudently ask us if we would not like to have them for our masters. We would make them no answer, and leave them to find out as best they could. Then they would curse and swear at us, telling us that they could take the devil out of us in a very little while, if we were only in their hands.

While in jail, we found ourselves in much more comfortable quarters than we expected when we went there. We did not get much to eat, nor that which was very good; but we had a good clean room, from the windows of which we could see what was going on in the street, which was very much better than though we had been placed in one of the dark, damp cells. Upon the whole, we got along very well, so far as the jail and its keeper were concerned. Immediately after the holidays were over, contrary to all our expectations, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Freeland came up to Easton, and took Charles, the two Henrys, and John, out of jail, and carried them home, leaving me alone. I regarded this separation as a final one. It caused me more pain than any thing else in the whole transaction. I was ready for any thing rather than separation. I supposed that they had consulted together, and had decided that, as I was the whole cause of the intention of the others to run away, it was hard to make the innocent suffer with the guilty; and that they had, therefore,

concluded to take the others home, and sell me, as a warning to the others that remained. It is due to the noble Henry to say, he seemed almost as reluctant at leaving the prison as at leaving home to come to the prison. But we knew we should, in all probability, be separated, if we were sold; and since he was in their hands, he concluded to go peaceably home.

I was now left to my fate. I was all alone, and within the walls of a stone prison. But a few days before, and I was full of hope. I expected to have been safe in a land of freedom; but now I was covered with gloom, sunk down to the utmost despair. I thought the possibility of freedom was gone. I was kept in this way about one week, at the end of which, Captain Auld, my master, to my surprise and utter astonishment, came up, and took me out, with the intention of sending me, with a gentleman of his acquaintance, into Alabama. But, from some cause or other, he did not send me to Alabama, but concluded to send me back to Baltimore, to live again with his brother Hugh, and to learn a trade.

Thus, after an absence of three years and one month, I was once more permitted to return to my old home at Baltimore. My master sent me away, because there existed against me a very great prejudice in the community, and he feared I might be killed.

In a few weeks after I went to Baltimore, Master Hugh hired me to Mr. William Gardner, an extensive ship-builder, on Fell's Point. I was put there to learn how to calk. It, however, proved a very unfavorable place for the accomplishment of this object. Mr. Gardner was engaged that spring in building two large man-of-war brigs, professedly for the Mexican government. The vessels were to be launched in the July of that year, and in failure thereof, Mr. Gardner was to lose a considerable sum; so that when I entered, all was hurry. There was no time to learn any thing. Every man had to do that which he knew how to do. In entering the shipyard, my orders from Mr. Gardner were, to do whatever the carpenters commanded me to do. This was placing me at the beck and call of about seventy-five men. I was to regard all these as masters. Their word was to be my law. My situation was a most trying one. At times I needed a dozen pair of hands. I was

called a dozen ways in the space of a single minute. Three or four voices would strike my ear at the same moment. It was—"Fred., come help me to cant this timber here."—"Fred., come carry this timber yonder."—"Fred., bring that roller here."—"Fred., go get a fresh can of water."—"Fred., come help saw off the end of this timber."—"Fred., go quick, and get the crowbar."—"Fred., hold on the end of this fall."—"Fred., go to the blacksmith's shop, and get a new punch."—"Hurra, Fred! run and bring me a cold chisel."—"I say, Fred., bear a hand, and get up a fire as quick as lightning under that steam-box."—"Halloo, nigger! come, turn this grindstone."—"Come, come! move, move! and *bowse* this timber forward."—"I say, darky, blast your eyes, why don't you heat up some pitch?"—"Halloo! halloo! halloo!" (Three voices at the same time.) "Come here!—Go there!—Hold on where you are! Damn you, if you move, I'll knock your brains out!"

This was my school for eight months; and I might have remained there longer, but for a most horrid fight I had with four of the white apprentices, in which my left eye was nearly knocked out, and I was horribly mangled in other respects. The facts in the case were these: Until a very little while after I went there, white and black ship-carpenters worked side by side, and no one seemed to see any impropriety in it. All hands seemed to be very well satisfied. Many of the black carpenters were freemen. Things seemed to be going on very well. All at once, the white carpenters knocked off, and said they would not work with free colored workmen. Their reason for this, as alleged, was, that if free colored carpenters were encouraged, they would soon take the trade into their own hands, and poor white men would be thrown out of employment. They therefore felt called upon at once to put a stop to it. And, taking advantage of Mr. Gardner's necessities, they broke off, swearing they would work no longer, unless he would discharge his black carpenters. Now, though this did not extend to me in form, it did reach me in fact. My fellow-apprentices very soon began to feel it degrading to them to work with me. They began to put on airs, and talk about the "niggers" taking the country, saying we all ought to be killed; and, being encouraged by the journeymen, they commenced making my

condition as hard as they could, by hectoring me around, and sometimes striking me. I, of course, kept the vow I made after the fight with Mr. Covey, and struck back again, regardless of consequences; and while I kept them from combining, I succeeded very well; for I could whip the whole of them, taking them separately. They, however, at length combined, and came upon me, armed with sticks, stones, and heavy handspikes. One came in front with a half brick. There was one at each side of me, and one behind me. While I was attending to those in front, and on either side, the one behind ran up with the handspike, and struck me a heavy blow upon the head. It stunned me. I fell, and with this they all ran upon me, and fell to beating me with their fists. I let them lay on for a while, gathering strength. In an instant, I gave a sudden surge, and rose to my hands and knees. Just as I did that, one of their number gave me, with his heavy boot, a powerful kick in the left eye. My eyeball seemed to have burst. When they saw my eye closed, and badly swollen, they left me. With this I seized the handspike, and for a time pursued them. But here the carpenters interfered, and I thought I might as well give it up. It was impossible to stand my hand against so many. All this took place in sight of not less than fifty white ship-carpenters, and not one interposed a friendly word; but some cried, "Kill the damned nigger! Kill him! kill him! He struck a white person." I found my only chance for life was in flight. I succeeded in getting away without an additional blow, and barely so; for to strike a white man is death by Lynch law,—and that was the law in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard; nor is there much of any other out of Mr. Gardner's ship-yard.

I went directly home, and told the story of my wrongs to Master Hugh; and I am happy to say of him, irreligious as he was, his conduct was heavenly, compared with that of his brother Thomas under similar circumstances. He listened attentively to my narration of the circumstances leading to the savage outrage, and gave many proofs of his strong indignation at it. The heart of my once overkind mistress was again melted into pity. My puffed-out eye and blood-covered face moved her to tears. She took a chair by me, washed the blood from my face, and, with a

mother's tenderness, bound up my head, covering the wounded eye with a lean piece of fresh beef. It was almost compensation for my suffering to witness, once more, a manifestation of kindness from this, my once affectionate old mistress. Master Hugh was very much enraged. He gave expression to his feelings by pouring out curses upon the heads of those who did the deed. As soon as I got a little the better of my bruises, he took me with him to Esquire Watson's, on Bond Street, to see what could be done about the matter. Mr. Watson inquired who saw the assault committed. Master Hugh told him it was done in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard at midday, where there were a large company of men at work. "As to that," he said, "the deed was done, and there was no question as to who did it." His answer was, he could do nothing in the case, unless some white man would come forward and testify. He could issue no warrant on my word. If I had been killed in the presence of a thousand colored people, their testimony combined would have been insufficient to have arrested one of the murderers. Master Hugh, for once, was compelled to say this state of things was too bad. Of course, it was impossible to get any white man to volunteer his testimony in my behalf, and against the white young men. Even those who may have sympathized with me were not prepared to do this. It required a degree of courage unknown to them to do so; for just at that time, the slightest manifestation of humanity toward a colored person was denounced as abolitionism, and that name subjected its bearer to frightful liabilities. The watchwords of the bloody-minded in that region, and in those days, were, "Damn the abolitionists!" and "Damn the niggers!" There was nothing done, and probably nothing would have been done if I had been killed. Such was, and such remains, the state of things in the Christian city of Baltimore.

Master Hugh, finding he could get no redress, refused to let me go back again to Mr. Gardner. He kept me himself, and his wife dressed my wound till I was again restored to health. He then took me into the ship-yard of which he was foreman, in the employment of Mr. Walter Price. There I was immediately set to calking, and very soon learned the art of using my mallet and

irons. In the course of one year from the time I left Mr. Gardner's, I was able to command the highest wages given to the most experienced calkers. I was now of some importance to my master. I was bringing him from six to seven dollars per week. I sometimes brought him nine dollars per week: my wages were a dollar and a half a day. After learning how to calk, I sought my own employment, made my own contracts, and collected the money which I earned. My pathway became much more smooth than before; my condition was now much more comfortable. When I could get no calking to do, I did nothing. During these leisure times, those old notions about freedom would steal over me again. When in Mr. Gardner's employment, I was kept in such a perpetual whirl of excitement, I could think of nothing, scarcely, but my life; and in thinking of my life, I almost forgot my liberty. I have observed this in my experience of slavery,—that whenever my condition was improved, instead of its increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free, and set me to thinking of plans to gain my freedom. I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man.

I was now getting, as I have said, one dollar and fifty cents per day. I contracted for it; I earned it; it was paid to me; it was rightfully my own; yet, upon each returning Saturday night, I was compelled to deliver every cent of that money to Master Hugh. And why? Not because he earned it,—not because he had any hand in earning it,—not because I owed it to him,—nor because he possessed the slightest shadow of a right to it; but solely because he had the power to compel me to give it up. The right of the grim-visaged pirate upon the high seas is exactly the same.

Chapter XI

I now come to that part of my life during which I planned, and finally succeeded in making, my escape from slavery. But before narrating any of the peculiar circumstances, I deem it proper to make known my intention not to state all the facts connected with the transaction. My reasons for pursuing this course may be understood from the following: First, were I to give a minute statement of all the facts, it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties. Secondly, such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders than has existed heretofore among them; which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother bondman might escape his galling chains. I deeply regret the necessity that impels me to suppress any thing of importance connected with my experience in slavery. It would afford me great pleasure indeed, as well as materially add to the interest of my narrative, were I at liberty to gratify a curiosity, which I know exists in the minds of many, by an accurate statement of all the facts pertaining to my most fortunate escape. But I must deprive myself of this pleasure, and the curious of the gratification which such a statement would afford. I would allow myself to suffer under the greatest imputations which evil-minded men might suggest, rather than exculpate myself, and thereby run the hazard of closing the slightest avenue by which a brother slave might clear himself of the chains and fetters of slavery.

I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted what they call the *underground railroad*, but which I think, by their open declarations, has been made most emphatically the *upper-ground railroad*. I honor those good men and women for their noble daring, and applaud them for willingly subjecting themselves to bloody persecution, by openly avowing their participation in the escape of slaves. I, however, can see very little good resulting from such a course, either to themselves or the slaves escaping; while, upon the other hand, I see and feel assured that those open declarations are a positive evil to the slaves remaining, who are seeking to escape. They do nothing towards enlightening the

slave, whilst they do much towards enlightening the master. They stimulate him to greater watchfulness, and enhance his power to capture his slave. We owe something to the slave south of the line as well as to those north of it; and in aiding the latter on their way to freedom, we should be careful to do nothing which would be likely to hinder the former from escaping from slavery. I would keep the merciless slaveholder profoundly ignorant of the means of flight adopted by the slave. I would leave him to imagine himself surrounded by myriads of invisible tormentors, ever ready to snatch from his infernal grasp his trembling prey. Let him be left to feel his way in the dark; let darkness commensurate with his crime hover over him; and let him feel that at every step he takes, in pursuit of the flying bondman, he is running the frightful risk of having his hot brains dashed out by an invisible agency. Let us render the tyrant no aid; let us not hold the light by which he can trace the footprints of our flying brother. But enough of this. I will now proceed to the statement of those facts, connected with my escape, for which I am alone responsible, and for which no one can be made to suffer but myself.

In the early part of the year 1838, I became quite restless. I could see no reason why I should, at the end of each week, pour the reward of my toil into the purse of my master. When I carried to him my weekly wages, he would, after counting the money, look me in the face with a robber-like fierceness, and ask, "Is this all?" He was satisfied with nothing less than the last cent. He would, however, when I made him six dollars, sometimes give me six cents, to encourage me. It had the opposite effect. I regarded it as a sort of admission of my right to the whole. The fact that he gave me any part of my wages was proof, to my mind, that he believed me entitled to the whole of them. I always felt worse for having received any thing; for I feared that the giving me a few cents would ease his conscience, and make him feel himself to be a pretty honorable sort of robber. My discontent grew upon me. I was ever on the look-out for means of escape; and, finding no direct means, I determined to try to hire my time, with a view of getting money with which to make my escape. In the spring of 1838, when Master Thomas came to Baltimore to purchase his

spring goods, I got an opportunity, and applied to him to allow me to hire my time. He unhesitatingly refused my request, and told me this was another stratagem by which to escape. He told me I could go nowhere but that he could get me; and that, in the event of my running away, he should spare no pains in his efforts to catch me. He exhorted me to content myself, and be obedient. He told me, if I would be happy, I must lay out no plans for the future. He said, if I behaved myself properly, he would take care of me. Indeed, he advised me to complete thoughtlessness of the future, and taught me to depend solely upon him for happiness. He seemed to see fully the pressing necessity of setting aside my intellectual nature, in order to contentment in slavery. But in spite of him, and even in spite of myself, I continued to think, and to think about the injustice of my enslavement, and the means of escape.

About two months after this, I applied to Master Hugh for the privilege of hiring my time. He was not acquainted with the fact that I had applied to Master Thomas, and had been refused. He too, at first, seemed disposed to refuse; but, after some reflection, he granted me the privilege, and proposed the following terms: I was to be allowed all my time, make all contracts with those for whom I worked, and find my own employment; and, in return for this liberty, I was to pay him three dollars at the end of each week; find myself in calking tools, and in board and clothing. My board was two dollars and a half per week. This, with the wear and tear of clothing and calking tools, made my regular expenses about six dollars per week. This amount I was compelled to make up, or relinquish the privilege of hiring my time. Rain or shine, work or no work, at the end of each week the money must be forthcoming, or I must give up my privilege. This arrangement, it will be perceived, was decidedly in my master's favor. It relieved him of all need of looking after me. His money was sure. He received all the benefits of slaveholding without its evils; while I endured all the evils of a slave, and suffered all the care and anxiety of a freeman. I found it a hard bargain. But, hard as it was, I thought it better than the old mode of getting along. It was a step towards freedom to be allowed to bear the responsibilities

of a freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it. I bent myself to the work of making money. I was ready to work at night as well as day, and by the most untiring perseverance and industry, I made enough to meet my expenses, and lay up a little money every week. I went on thus from May till August. Master Hugh then refused to allow me to hire my time longer. The ground for his refusal was a failure on my part, one Saturday night, to pay him for my week's time. This failure was occasioned by my attending a camp meeting about ten miles from Baltimore. During the week, I had entered into an engagement with a number of young friends to start from Baltimore to the camp ground early Saturday evening; and being detained by my employer, I was unable to get down to Master Hugh's without disappointing the company. I knew that Master Hugh was in no special need of the money that night. I therefore decided to go to camp meeting, and upon my return pay him the three dollars. I staid at the camp meeting one day longer than I intended when I left. But as soon as I returned, I called upon him to pay him what he considered his due. I found him very angry; he could scarce restrain his wrath. He said he had a great mind to give me a severe whipping. He wished to know how I dared go out of the city without asking his permission. I told him I hired my time and while I paid him the price which he asked for it, I did not know that I was bound to ask him when and where I should go. This reply troubled him; and, after reflecting a few moments, he turned to me, and said I should hire my time no longer; that the next thing he should know of, I would be running away. Upon the same plea, he told me to bring my tools and clothing home forthwith. I did so; but instead of seeking work, as I had been accustomed to do previously to hiring my time, I spent the whole week without the performance of a single stroke of work. I did this in retaliation. Saturday night, he called upon me as usual for my week's wages. I told him I had no wages; I had done no work that week. Here we were upon the point of coming to blows. He raved, and swore his determination to get hold of me. I did not allow myself a single word; but was resolved, if he laid the weight of his hand upon me, it should be blow for blow. He did not strike me, but told me that he would

find me in constant employment in future. I thought the matter over during the next day, Sunday, and finally resolved upon the third day of September, as the day upon which I would make a second attempt to secure my freedom. I now had three weeks during which to prepare for my journey. Early on Monday morning, before Master Hugh had time to make any engagement for me, I went out and got employment of Mr. Butler, at his ship-yard near the drawbridge, upon what is called the City Block, thus making it unnecessary for him to seek employment for me. At the end of the week, I brought him between eight and nine dollars. He seemed very well pleased, and asked why I did not do the same the week before. He little knew what my plans were. My object in working steadily was to remove any suspicion he might entertain of my intent to run away; and in this I succeeded admirably. I suppose he thought I was never better satisfied with my condition than at the very time during which I was planning my escape. The second week passed, and again I carried him my full wages; and so well pleased was he, that he gave me twenty-five cents, (quite a large sum for a slaveholder to give a slave,) and bade me to make a good use of it. I told him I would.

Things went on without very smoothly indeed, but within there was trouble. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings as the time of my contemplated start drew near. I had a number of warmhearted friends in Baltimore,—friends that I loved almost as I did my life,—and the thought of being separated from them forever was painful beyond expression. It is my opinion that thousands would escape from slavery, who now remain, but for the strong cords of affection that bind them to their friends. The thought of leaving my friends was decidedly the most painful thought with which I had to contend. The love of them was my tender point, and shook my decision more than all things else. Besides the pain of separation, the dread and apprehension of a failure exceeded what I had experienced at my first attempt. The appalling defeat I then sustained returned to torment me. I felt assured that, if I failed in this attempt, my case would be a hopeless one—it would seal my fate as a slave forever. I could not hope to get off with any thing less than the severest punishment,

and being placed beyond the means of escape. It required no very vivid imagination to depict the most frightful scenes through which I should have to pass, in case I failed. The wretchedness of slavery, and the blessedness of freedom, were perpetually before me. It was life and death with me. But I remained firm, and, according to my resolution, on the third day of September, 1838, I left my chains, and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind. How I did so,—what means I adopted,—what direction I travelled, and by what mode of conveyance,—I must leave unexplained, for the reasons before mentioned.

I have been frequently asked how I felt when I found myself in a free State. I have never been able to answer the question with any satisfaction to myself. It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced. I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of a pirate. In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon subsided; and I was again seized with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness. I was yet liable to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery. This in itself was enough to damp the ardor of my enthusiasm. But the loneliness overcame me. There I was in the midst of thousands, and yet a perfect stranger; without home and without friends, in the midst of thousands of my own brethren—children of a common Father, and yet I dared not to unfold to any one of them my sad condition. I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey. The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this—"Trust no man!" I saw in every white man an enemy, and in almost every colored man cause for distrust. It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances. Let him be a fugitive slave in a strange land—a land given up to

be the hunting-ground for slaveholders—whose inhabitants are legalized kidnappers—where he is every moment subjected to the terrible liability of being seized upon by his fellowmen, as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!—I say, let him place himself in my situation—without home or friends—without money or credit—wanting shelter, and no one to give it—wanting bread, and no money to buy it,—and at the same time let him feel that he is pursued by merciless men-hunters, and in total darkness as to what to do, where to go, or where to stay,—perfectly helpless both as to the means of defence and means of escape,—in the midst of plenty, yet suffering the terrible gnawings of hunger,—in the midst of houses, yet having no home,—among fellow-men, yet feeling as if in the midst of wild beasts, whose greediness to swallow up the trembling and half-famished fugitive is only equalled by that with which the monsters of the deep swallow up the helpless fish upon which they subsist,—I say, let him be placed in this most trying situation,—the situation in which I was placed,—then, and not till then, will he fully appreciate the hardships of, and know how to sympathize with, the toil-worn and whip-scarred fugitive slave.

Thank Heaven, I remained but a short time in this distressed situation. I was relieved from it by the humane hand of *Mr. David Ruggles*, whose vigilance, kindness, and perseverance, I shall never forget. I am glad of an opportunity to express, as far as words can, the love and gratitude I bear him. Mr. Ruggles is now afflicted with blindness, and is himself in need of the same kind offices which he was once so forward in the performance of toward others. I had been in New York but a few days, when Mr. Ruggles sought me out, and very kindly took me to his boarding-house at the corner of Church and Lespenard Streets. Mr. Ruggles was then very deeply engaged in the memorable *Darg* case, as well as attending to a number of other fugitive slaves, devising ways and means for their successful escape; and, though watched and hemmed in on almost every side, he seemed to be more than a match for his enemies.

Very soon after I went to Mr. Ruggles, he wished to know of me where I wanted to go; as he deemed it unsafe for me to remain

in New York. I told him I was a calker, and should like to go where I could get work. I thought of going to Canada; but he decided against it, and in favor of my going to New Bedford, thinking I should be able to get work there at my trade. At this time, Anna,* my intended wife, came on; for I wrote to her immediately after my arrival at New York, (notwithstanding my homeless, houseless, and helpless condition,) informing her of my successful flight, and wishing her to come on forthwith. In a few days after her arrival, Mr. Ruggles called in the Rev. J. W. C. Pennington, who, in the presence of Mr. Ruggles, Mrs. Michaels, and two or three others, performed the marriage ceremony, and gave us a certificate, of which the following is an exact copy:—

This may certify, that I joined together in holy matrimony Frederick Johnson** and Anna Murray, as man and wife, in the presence of Mr. David Ruggles and Mrs. Michaels.

James W. C. Pennington
New York, Sept. 15, 1838

*She was free.

**I had changed my name from Frederick *Bailey* to that of *Johnson*.

Upon receiving this certificate, and a five-dollar bill from Mr. Ruggles, I shouldered one part of our baggage, and Anna took up the other, and we set out forthwith to take passage on board of the steamboat John W. Richmond for Newport, on our way to New Bedford. Mr. Ruggles gave me a letter to a Mr. Shaw in Newport, and told me, in case my money did not serve me to New Bedford, to stop in Newport and obtain further assistance; but upon our arrival at Newport, we were so anxious to get to a place of safety, that, notwithstanding we lacked the necessary money to pay our fare, we decided to take seats in the stage, and promise to pay when we got to New Bedford. We were encouraged to do this by two excellent gentlemen, residents of New Bedford, whose names I afterward ascertained to be Joseph Ricketson and William C. Taber. They seemed at once to understand our circumstances, and gave us such assurance of their friendliness as put us fully at ease in their presence.

It was good indeed to meet with such friends, at such a time. Upon reaching New Bedford, we were directed to the house of Mr. Nathan Johnson, by whom we were kindly received, and hospitably provided for. Both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson took a deep and lively interest in our welfare. They proved themselves quite worthy of the name of abolitionists. When the stage-driver found us unable to pay our fare, he held on upon our baggage as security for the debt. I had but to mention the fact to Mr. Johnson, and he forthwith advanced the money.

We now began to feel a degree of safety, and to prepare ourselves for the duties and responsibilities of a life of freedom. On the morning after our arrival at New Bedford, while at the breakfast-table, the question arose as to what name I should be called by. The name given me by my mother was, "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey." I, however, had dispensed with the two middle names long before I left Maryland so that I was generally known by the name of "Frederick Bailey." I started from Baltimore bearing the name of "Stanley." When I got to New York, I again changed my name to "Frederick Johnson," and thought that would be the last change. But when I got to New Bedford, I found it necessary again to change my name. The reason of this necessity was, that there were so many Johnsons in New Bedford, it was already quite difficult to distinguish between them. I gave Mr. Johnson the privilege of choosing me a name, but told him he must not take from me the name of "Frederick." I must hold on to that, to preserve a sense of my identity. Mr. Johnson had just been reading the "Lady of the Lake," and at once suggested that my name be "Douglass." From that time until now I have been called "Frederick Douglass;" and as I am more widely known by that name than by either of the others, I shall continue to use it as my own.

I was quite disappointed at the general appearance of things in New Bedford. The impression which I had received respecting the character and condition of the people of the north, I found to be singularly erroneous. I had very strangely supposed, while in slavery, that few of the comforts, and scarcely any of the luxuries, of life were enjoyed at the north, compared with what were

enjoyed by the slaveholders of the south. I probably came to this conclusion from the fact that northern people owned no slaves. I supposed that they were about upon a level with the non-slaveholding population of the south. I knew *they* were exceedingly poor, and I had been accustomed to regard their poverty as the necessary consequence of their being non-slaveholders. I had somehow imbibed the opinion that, in the absence of slaves, there could be no wealth, and very little refinement. And upon coming to the north, I expected to meet with a rough, hard-handed, and uncultivated population, living in the most Spartan-like simplicity, knowing nothing of the ease, luxury, pomp, and grandeur of southern slaveholders. Such being my conjectures, any one acquainted with the appearance of New Bedford may very readily infer how palpably I must have seen my mistake.

In the afternoon of the day when I reached New Bedford, I visited the wharves, to take a view of the shipping. Here I found myself surrounded with the strongest proofs of wealth. Lying at the wharves, and riding in the stream, I saw many ships of the finest model, in the best order, and of the largest size. Upon the right and left, I was walled in by granite warehouses of the widest dimensions, stowed to their utmost capacity with the necessities and comforts of life. Added to this, almost every body seemed to be at work, but noiselessly so, compared with what I had been accustomed to in Baltimore. There were no loud songs heard from those engaged in loading and unloading ships. I heard no deep oaths or horrid curses on the laborer. I saw no whipping of men; but all seemed to go smoothly on. Every man appeared to understand his work, and went at it with a sober, yet cheerful earnestness, which betokened the deep interest which he felt in what he was doing, as well as a sense of his own dignity as a man. To me this looked exceedingly strange. From the wharves I strolled around and over the town, gazing with wonder and admiration at the splendid churches, beautiful dwellings, and finely-cultivated gardens; evincing an amount of wealth, comfort, taste, and refinement, such as I had never seen in any part of slaveholding Maryland.

Every thing looked clean, new, and beautiful. I saw few or no dilapidated houses, with poverty-stricken inmates; no half-naked children and barefooted women, such as I had been accustomed to see in Hillsborough, Easton, St. Michael's, and Baltimore. The people looked more able, stronger, healthier, and happier, than those of Maryland. I was for once made glad by a view of extreme wealth, without being saddened by seeing extreme poverty. But the most astonishing as well as the most interesting thing to me was the condition of the colored people, a great many of whom, like myself, had escaped thither as a refuge from the hunters of men. I found many, who had not been seven years out of their chains, living in finer houses, and evidently enjoying more of the comforts of life, than the average of slaveholders in Maryland. I will venture to assert, that my friend Mr. Nathan Johnson (of whom I can say with a grateful heart, "I was hungry, and he gave me meat; I was thirsty, and he gave me drink; I was a stranger, and he took me in") lived in a neater house; dined at a better table; took, paid for, and read, more newspapers; better understood the moral, religious, and political character of the nation,—than nine tenths of the slaveholders in Talbot county Maryland. Yet Mr. Johnson was a working man. His hands were hardened by toil, and not his alone, but those also of Mrs. Johnson. I found the colored people much more spirited than I had supposed they would be. I found among them a determination to protect each other from the blood-thirsty kidnapper, at all hazards. Soon after my arrival, I was told of a circumstance which illustrated their spirit. A colored man and a fugitive slave were on unfriendly terms. The former was heard to threaten the latter with informing his master of his whereabouts. Straightway a meeting was called among the colored people, under the stereotyped notice, "Business of importance!" The betrayer was invited to attend. The people came at the appointed hour, and organized the meeting by appointing a very religious old gentleman as president, who, I believe, made a prayer, after which he addressed the meeting as follows: "*Friends, we have got him here, and I would recommend that you young men just take him outside the door, and kill him!*" With this, a number of them bolted at him;

but they were intercepted by some more timid than themselves, and the betrayer escaped their vengeance, and has not been seen in New Bedford since. I believe there have been no more such threats, and should there be hereafter, I doubt not that death would be the consequence.

I found employment, the third day after my arrival, in stowing a sloop with a load of oil. It was new, dirty, and hard work for me; but I went at it with a glad heart and a willing hand. I was now my own master. It was a happy moment, the rapture of which can be understood only by those who have been slaves. It was the first work, the reward of which was to be entirely my own. There was no Master Hugh standing ready, the moment I earned the money, to rob me of it. I worked that day with a pleasure I had never before experienced. I was at work for myself and newly-married wife. It was to me the starting-point of a new existence. When I got through with that job, I went in pursuit of a job of calking; but such was the strength of prejudice against color, among the white calkers, that they refused to work with me, and of course I could get no employment.*

*I am told that colored persons can now get employment at calking in New Bedford—a result of anti-slavery effort.

Finding my trade of no immediate benefit, I threw off my calking habiliments, and prepared myself to do any kind of work I could get to do. Mr. Johnson kindly let me have his wood-horse and saw, and I very soon found myself a plenty of work. There was no work too hard—none too dirty. I was ready to saw wood, shovel coal, carry wood, sweep the chimney, or roll oil casks,—all of which I did for nearly three years in New Bedford, before I became known to the anti-slavery world.

In about four months after I went to New Bedford, there came a young man to me, and inquired if I did not wish to take the "Liberator." I told him I did; but, just having made my escape from slavery, I remarked that I was unable to pay for it then. I, however, finally became a subscriber to it. The paper came, and I read it from week to week with such feelings as it would be quite

idle for me to attempt to describe. The paper became my meat and my drink. My soul was set all on fire. Its sympathy for my brethren in bonds—its scathing denunciations of slaveholders—its faithful exposures of slavery—and its powerful attacks upon the upholders of the institution—sent a thrill of joy through my soul, such as I had never felt before!

I had not long been a reader of the "Liberator," before I got a pretty correct idea of the principles, measures and spirit of the anti-slavery reform. I took right hold of the cause. I could do but little; but what I could, I did with a joyful heart, and never felt happier than when in an anti-slavery meeting. I seldom had much to say at the meetings, because what I wanted to say was said so much better by others. But, while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket, on the 11th of August, 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak, and was at the same time much urged to do so by Mr. William C. Coffin, a gentleman who had heard me speak in the colored people's meeting at New Bedford. It was a severe cross, and I took it up reluctantly. The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down. I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom, and said what I desired with considerable ease. From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren—with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide.

165

Appendix

I find, since reading over the foregoing Narrative, that I have, in several instances, spoken in such a tone and manner, respecting religion, as may possibly lead those unacquainted with my religious views to suppose me an opponent of all religion. To remove the liability of such misapprehension, I deem it proper to append the following brief explanation. What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the *slaveholding religion* of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible

difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. To be the friend of the one, is of necessity to be the enemy of the other. I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land. Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. Never was there a clearer case of "stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in." I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which every where surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. The man who robs me of my earnings at the end of each week meets me as a class-leader on Sunday morning, to show me the way of life, and the path of salvation. He who sells my sister, for purposes of prostitution, stands forth as the pious advocate of purity. He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible denies me the right of learning to read the name of the God who made me. He who is the religious advocate of marriage robs whole millions of its sacred influence, and leaves them to the ravages of wholesale pollution. The warm defender of the sacredness of the family relation is the same that scatters whole families,—sundering husbands and wives, parents and children, sisters and brothers,—leaving the hut vacant, and the hearth desolate. We see the thief preaching against theft, and the adulterer against adultery. We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the *Poor Heathen! All For The Glory Of God And The Good Of Souls!* The slave auctioneer's bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious

master. Revivals of religion and revivals in the slave-trade go hand in hand together. The slave prison and the church stand near each other. The clanking of fetters and the rattling of chains in the prison, and the pious psalm and solemn prayer in the church, may be heard at the same time. The dealers in the bodies and souls of men erect their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood-stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other—devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise.

"Just God! and these are they,
Who minister at thine altar, God of right!
Men who their hands, with prayer and blessing, lay
On Israel's ark of light.

"What! preach, and kidnap men?
Give thanks, and rob thy own afflicted poor?
Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then
Bolt hard the captive's door?

"What! servants of thy own
Merciful Son, who came to seek and save
The homeless and the outcast, fettering down
The tasked and plundered slave!

"Pilate and Herod friends!
Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!
Just God and holy! is that church which lends
Strength to the spoiler thine?"

The Christianity of America is a Christianity, of whose votaries it may be as truly said, as it was of the ancient scribes and Pharisees, "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. All their works they do for to be seen of men.—They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ... and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.—But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are

entering to go in. Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but within, they are full of extortion and excess.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Dark and terrible as is this picture, I hold it to be strictly true of the overwhelming mass of professed Christians in America. They strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Could any thing be more true of our churches? They would be shocked at the proposition of fellowshipping a *sheep-stealer*; and at the same time they hug to their communion a *man-stealer*, and brand me with being an infidel, if I find fault with them for it. They attend with Pharisaical strictness to the outward forms of religion, and at the same time neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. They are always ready to sacrifice, but seldom to show mercy. They are they who are represented as professing to love God whom they have not seen, whilst they hate their brother whom they have seen. They love the heathen on the other side of the globe. They can pray for him, pay money to have the Bible put into his hand, and missionaries to instruct him; while they despise and totally neglect the heathen at their own doors.

Such is, very briefly, my view of the religion of this land; and to avoid any misunderstanding, growing out of the use of general terms, I mean by the religion of this land, that which is revealed in the words, deeds, and actions, of those bodies, north and south,

calling themselves Christian churches, and yet in union with slaveholders. It is against religion, as presented by these bodies, that I have felt it my duty to testify.

I conclude these remarks by copying the following portrait of the religion of the south, (which is, by communion and fellowship, the religion of the north,) which I soberly affirm is "true to the life," and without caricature or the slightest exaggeration. It is said to have been drawn, several years before the present anti-slavery agitation began, by a northern Methodist preacher, who, while residing at the south, had an opportunity to see slaveholding morals, manners, and piety, with his own eyes. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

170

A Parody

"Come, saints and sinners, hear me tell
How pious priests whip Jack and Nell,
And women buy and children sell,
And preach all sinners down to hell,
And sing of heavenly union.

"They'll bleat and baa, dona like goats,
Gorge down black sheep, and strain at motes,
Array their backs in fine black coats,
Then seize their negroes by their throats,
And choke, for heavenly union.

"They'll church you if you sip a dram,
And damn you if you steal a lamb;
Yet rob old Tony, Doll, and Sam,
Of human rights, and bread and ham;
Kidnapper's heavenly union.

"They'll loudly talk of Christ's reward,
And bind his image with a cord,
And scold, and swing the lash abhorred,
And sell their brother in the Lord
To handcuffed heavenly union.

"They'll read and sing a sacred song,
And make a prayer both loud and long,
And teach the right and do the wrong,
Hailing the brother, sister throng,
With words of heavenly union.

✓
"We wonder how such saints can sing,
Or praise the Lord upon the wing,
Who roar, and scold, and whip, and sting,
And to their slaves and mammon cling,
In guilty conscience union.

"They'll raise tobacco, corn, and rye,
And drive, and thief, and cheat, and lie,
And lay up treasures in the sky,
By making switch and cowskin fly,
In hope of heavenly union.

"They'll crack old Tony on the skull,
And preach and roar like Bashan bull,
Or braying ass, of mischief full,
Then seize old Jacob by the wool,
And pull for heavenly union.

"A roaring, ranting, sleek man-thief,
Who lived on mutton, veal, and beef,
Yet never would afford relief
To needy, sable sons of grief,
Was big with heavenly union.

"'Love not the world,' the preacher said,
And winked his eye, and shook his head;
He seized on Tom, and Dick, and Ned,
Cut short their meat, and clothes, and bread,
Yet still loved heavenly union.

"Another preacher whining spoke
Of One whose heart for sinners broke:
He tied old Nanny to an oak,
And drew the blood at every stroke,
And prayed for heavenly union.

"Two others oped their iron jaws,
And waved their children-stealing paws;
There sat their children in gewgaws;
By stinting negroes' backs and maws,
They kept up heavenly union.

"All good from Jack another takes,
And entertains their flirts and rakes,
Who dress as sleek as glossy snakes,
And cram their mouths with sweetened cakes;
And this goes down for union."

Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds—faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts—and solemnly pledging my self anew to the sacred cause,—I subscribe myself,

Frederick Douglass
Lynn, Mass., April 28, 1845

THE END

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Song of Myself

Crossing Brooklyn Ferry

Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking

O Captain, My Captain

Walt Whitman was born on Long Island, New York. His family moved to Brooklyn in 1823, when young Whitman was four. He attended public school, but left when he was 12 to learn the printing trade. At this time, he also worked as a reporter for the *Long Island Patriot*. Due to a fire in the printing district of New York, Whitman was forced to seek employment as a rural school teacher. While he was like by students, he often clashed with those in charge of educational system. He returned to New York in 1841. By 1846, he became the editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, an important newspaper. However, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* fired Whitman two years later, due to his growing political activism and support of abolishing slavery. Afterwards, he worked in New Orleans as the editor the *Crescent City* newspaper for a brief period of time. His trip there cemented his support for abolishing slavery. Upon his return to New York, Whitman attended lectures by prominent thinkers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson's work was particularly inspirational for Whitman, who embraced Emerson's idea of Transcendentalism in his work "Song of Myself" from *Leaves of Grass* (1855-1892). During the Civil War started, Whitman served as a nurse. After the war, Whitman enjoyed some success for his work on Abraham Lincoln and from his published poetry. However, his writing was experimental in nature, and often contained erotic elements that garnered him harsh criticism. His most influential collection is *Leaves of Grass*, which he continued to revise and republish until his death. From that work, "Song of Myself" is seen as the hallmark piece. In this poem, Whitman introduced his free verse style that would transform American poetry. He experiments with repetition and catalogues to communicate his ideas. "Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking" appeared in the 1860 collection of *Leaves of Grass*. The poem uses nature imagery to document the speaker's

transformation into a poet. Whitman focuses on nature and brotherhood in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," which appeared in the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. The poem expresses Whitman's concept of his feeling of oneness with the world that transcends time. One of his more traditional works in terms of meter and form is "O Captain, My Captain," which first appeared in the 1865 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Easily Whitman's most popular poem in his lifetime, this elegy conceptualizes President Abraham Lincoln as the captain of ship. Whitman's continued process of refining and reinventing his poems cemented his reputation as an influential literary and cultural figure in America.

Consider while reading:

1. How does Whitman use prosody to underscore the meaning in his poems?
2. What is the significance of Whitman's use of nature?
3. Whitman was influenced by Emerson's ideas of the enlightened poet. How and where does he use this idea in "Song of Myself"?
4. What is effect of Whitman using lists in his poetry?

Written by Laura Ng

SONG OF MYSELF (1892)

License: Public Domain

Walt Whitman

1

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air, Born here of
parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same, I, now
thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten, I harbor for
good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

2

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves are crowded with perfumes, I
breathe the fragrance myself and know it and like it,
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of the distillation, it is odorless, It
is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it,
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked, I am mad
for it to be in contact with me.

The smoke of my own breath,
Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread, crotch and vine, My
respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of blood and air
through my lungs, The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore
and dark-color'd sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn, The sound of the belch'd
words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the wind, A few light kisses, a few
embraces, a reaching around of arms,

The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag, The delight
alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hill-sides, The feeling
of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me rising from bed and meeting the
sun.

Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth much?
Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems, You
shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left,) You
shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of
the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books, You shall not look through my eyes
either, nor take things from me, You shall listen to all sides and filter them from
your self.

3

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end,
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now, Nor any more youth or age
than there is now,
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

Urge and urge and urge,
Always the procreant urge of the world.

Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, always substance and increase,
always sex, Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life.

To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd feel that it is so.

Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well entretied, braced in the
beams, Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,
I and this mystery here we stand.

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.

Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen, Till that becomes
unseen and receives proof in its turn.

Showing the best and dividing it from the worst age vexes age, Knowing the
perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they discuss I am silent, and go
bathe and admire myself.

Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean, Not
an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the
rest.

I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing;
As the hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at my side through the night, and
withdraws at the peep of the day with stealthy tread, Leaving me baskets
cover'd with white towels swelling the house with their plenty, Shall I postpone
my acceptation and realization and scream at my eyes, That they turn from
gazing after and down the road,
And forthwith cipher and show me to a cent,
Exactly the value of one and exactly the value of two, and which is ahead?

4

Trippers and askers surround me,
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward and city I live in, or
the nation, The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies, authors old and
new, My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I love,
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing or loss or lack of money,
or depressions or exaltations, Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of
doubtful news, the fitful events; These come to me days and nights and go from
me again,
But they are not the Me myself.

Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am,
Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary,
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable certain rest, Looking with
side-curved head curious what will come next,
Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.

Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with linguists and
contenders, I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.

5

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you, And you must not be abased to the other.

Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat, Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even the best, Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning, How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me, And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart, And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth, And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,

And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters and lovers, And that a kelson of the creation is love,
And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,
And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein and poke-weed.

6

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands; How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark,
and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,

Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their
mothers' laps, And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers, Darker than the
colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women, And the
hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

7

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.

I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd babe, and am not
contain'd between my hat and boots, And peruse manifold objects, no two alike
and every one good,
The earth good and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as
myself, (They do not know how immortal, but I know.)

Every kind for itself and its own, for me mine male and female, For me those that
have been boys and that love women,
For me the man that is proud and feels how it stings to be slighted, For me the
sweet-heart and the old maid, for me mothers and the mothers of mothers, For
me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears,
For me children and the begetters of children.

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded, I see through the
broadcloth and gingham whether or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken away.

8

The little one sleeps in its cradle,
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and silently brush away flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up the bushy hill, I peeringly view
them from the top.

The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bedroom, I witness the corpse with
its dabbled hair, I note where the pistol has fallen.

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of the promenaders,
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb, the clank of the
shod horses on the granite floor, The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes,
pelts of snow-balls,
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd mobs,
The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne to the hospital, The meeting
of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows and fall,
The excited crowd, the policeman with his star quickly working his passage to the
centre of the crowd, The impassive stones that receive and return so many
echoes,
What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sunstruck or in fits, What
exclamations of women taken suddenly who hurry home and give birth to
babes, What living and buried speech is always vibrating here, what howls
restrain'd by decorum, Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made,

acceptances, rejections with convex lips, I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I come and I depart.

9

The big doors of the country barn stand open and ready,
The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-drawn wagon,
The clear light plays on the brown gray and green intertinged,
The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.

I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop of the load, I felt its soft jolts, one leg
reclined on the other,
I jump from the cross-beams and seize the clover and timothy,
And roll head over heels and tangle my hair full of wisps.

10

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee,
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night,
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game,
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with my dog and gun by my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud, My eyes
settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me, I tuck'd my trowser-
ends in my boots and went and had a good time; You should have been with us
that day round the chowder-kettle.

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west, the bride was a red
girl, Her father and his friends sat near cross-legged and dumbly smoking, they
had moccasins to their feet and large thick blankets hanging from their
shoulders, On a bank lounged the trapper, he was drest mostly in skins, his
luxuriant beard and curls protected his neck, he held his bride by the hand, She
had long eyelashes, her head was bare, her coarse straight locks descended
upon her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside, I heard his motions
crackling the twigs of the woodpile,

Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy and weak, And went
where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him,
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and bruis'd feet, And gave
him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness, And
remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles; He staid with me
a week before he was recuperated and pass'd north, I had him sit next me at
table, my fire-lock lean'd in the corner.

11

Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore,
Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly;
Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome.

She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank,
She hides handsome and richly drest aft the blinds of the window.

Which of the young men does she like the best?
Ah the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.

Where are you off to, lady? for I see you,
You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth bather, The rest did
not see her, but she saw them and loved them.

The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it ran from their long hair, Little
streams pass'd all over their bodies.

An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies,
It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.

The young men float on their backs, their white bellies bulge to the sun, they do
not ask who seizes fast to them, They do not know who puffs and declines with
pendant and bending arch, They do not think whom they souse with spray.

12

The butcher-boy puts off his killing-clothes, or sharpens his knife at the stall in the
market, I loiter enjoying his repartee and his shuffle and break-down.

Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil, Each has his main-sledge, they are all out, there is a great heat in the fire.

From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements, The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive arms, Overhand the hammers swing, overhand so slow, overhand so sure, They do not hasten, each man hits in his place.

13

The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses, the block swags underneath on its tied-over chain, The negro that drives the long dray of the stone-yard, steady and tall he stands pois'd on one leg on the string-piece, His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens over his hip-band, His glance is calm and commanding, he tosses the slouch of his hat away from his forehead, The sun falls on his crispy hair and mustache, falls on the black of his polish'd and perfect limbs.

I behold the picturesque giant and love him, and I do not stop there, I go with the team also.

In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward as well as forward sluing, To niches aside and junior bending, not a person or object missing, Absorbing all to myself and for this song.

Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade, what is that you express in your eyes?
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.

My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck on my distant and day-long ramble, They rise together, they slowly circle around.

I believe in those wing'd purposes,
And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me,
And consider green and violet and the tufted crown intentional,
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else, And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet trills pretty well to me, And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

14

The wild gander leads his flock through the cool night,
Ya-honk he says, and sounds it down to me like an invitation, The pert may
suppose it meaningless, but I listening close,
Find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry sky.

The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the cat on the house-sill, the chickadee, the
prairie-dog, The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,
The brood of the turkey-hen and she with her half-spread wings,
I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections, They scorn the best
I can do to relate them.

I am enamour'd of growing out-doors,
Of men that live among cattle or taste of the ocean or woods,
Of the builders and steerers of ships and the wielders of axes and mauls, and the
drivers of horses, I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me, Me going in for my chances,
spending for vast returns,
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,
Not asking the sky to come down to my good will,
Scattering it freely forever.

15

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,
The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his foreplane whistles its wild
ascending lisp, The married and unmarried children ride home to their
Thanksgiving dinner, The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a
strong arm,
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance and harpoon are ready, The duck-
shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches, The deacons are ordain'd with
cross'd hands at the altar,
The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of the big wheel, The farmer
stops by the bars as he walks on a First-day loafe and looks at the oats and rye,
The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a confirm'd case,
(He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bed-room;) The
jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,
He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes blurr with the manuscript; The
malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,

What is removed drops horribly in a pail;

The quadroon girl is sold at the auction-stand, the drunkard nods by the bar-room stove, The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the policeman travels his beat, the gate-keeper marks who pass, The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I love him, though I do not know him;) The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race,

The western turkey-shooting draws old and young, some lean on their rifles, some sit on logs, Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position, levels his piece; The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee,

As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the overseer views them from his saddle, The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their partners, the dancers bow to each other, The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret and harks to the musical rain, The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron,

The squaw wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth is offering moccasins and bead-bags for sale, The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes bent sideways, As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat the plank is thrown for the shore-going passengers, The young sister holds out the skein while the elder sister winds it off in a ball, and stops now and then for the knots, The one-year wife is recovering and happy having a week ago borne her first child, The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine or in the factory or mill, The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer, the reporter's lead flies swiftly over the note-book, the sign-painter is lettering with blue and gold, The canal boy trots on the tow-path, the book-keeper counts at his desk, the shoemaker waxes his thread, The conductor beats time for the band and all the performers follow him, The child is baptized, the convert is making his first professions, The regatta is spread on the bay, the race is begun, (how the white sails sparkle!) The drover watching his drove sings out to them that would stray,

The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling about the odd cent;) The bride unrumpled her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock moves slowly, The opium-eater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips, The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck, The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other, (Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you;)

The President holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the great Secretaries, On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms, The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of halibut in the hold, The Missourian crosses the plains toting his wares and his cattle, As the fare-collector goes through the train he gives notice by the jingling of loose change, The floor-men

are laying the floor, the tanners are tanning the roof, the masons are calling for mortar, In single file each shouldering his hod pass onward the laborers;
Seasons pursuing each other the indescribable crowd is gather'd, it is the fourth of Seventh-month, (what salutes of cannon and small arms!) Seasons pursuing each other the plougher ploughs, the mower mows, and the winter-grain falls in the ground; Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in the frozen surface, The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes deep with his axe, Flatboatmen make fast towards dusk near the cotton-wood or pecan-trees, Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river or through those drain'd by the Tennessee, or through those of the Arkansas, Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahooche or Altamahaw, Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great-grandsons around them, In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers after their day's sport, The city sleeps and the country sleeps,
The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time,
The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by his wife;
And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

16

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff that is fine, One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and the largest the same, A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable down by the Oconee I live, A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade, my joints the limberest joints on earth and the sternest joints on earth, A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deer-skin leggings, a Louisianian or Georgian, A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye; At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with fishermen off Newfoundland, At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and tacking, At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texan ranch, Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners, (loving their big proportions,) Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands and welcome to drink and meat, A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfulest,
A novice beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons,

Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,
A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

I resist any thing better than my own diversity,
Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place,
The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in their place, The
palpable is in its place and the impalpable is in its place.)

17

These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not original
with me, If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing, or next to
nothing, If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle they are nothing,
If they are not just as close as they are distant they are nothing.

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is, This the
common air that bathes the globe.

18

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for conquer'd and
slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

I beat and pound for the dead,
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes!
And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes known!

19

This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger,
It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous, I make appointments with all, I
will not have a single person slighted or left away,
The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited,
The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited, the venerealee is invited;
There shall be no difference between them and the rest.

This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float and odor of hair, This the touch of
my lips to yours, this the murmur of yearning,
This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face,
This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?
Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of a
rock has.

Do you take it I would astonish?
Does the daylight astonish? does the early redstart twittering through the woods?
Do I astonish more than they?

This hour I tell things in confidence,
I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

20

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?

All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own, Else it were time lost
listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,
That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.

Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids, conformity goes to the
fourth-remov'd, I wear my hat as I please indoors or out.

Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be ceremonious?

Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair, counsel'd with doctors and
calculated close, I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less, And the good
or bad I say of myself I say of them.

I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass, I know I shall
not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
I see that the elementary laws never apologize,
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all.) I exist
as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself, And whether I
come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million years, I can cheerfully
take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me, The first I
graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,

We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night, I call to the earth and sea
half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night—press close magnetic nourishing night!
Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

22

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean,
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,
We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of sight of the land, Cushion
me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,
Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells,
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths,
Sea of the brine of life and of unshovell'd yet always-ready graves, Howler and
scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea,
I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Partaker of influx and efflux I, extoller of hate and conciliation, Extoller of armies
and those that sleep in each others' arms.

I am he attesting sympathy,
(Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house that supports
them?) I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of
wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent, My gait is no
fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging pregnancy?
Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd over and rectified?

I find one side a balance and the antipodal side a balance, Soft doctrine as steady
help as stable doctrine,
Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past decillions, There is no better than it
and now.

What behaved well in the past or behaves well to-day is not such a wonder, The
wonder is always and always how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

23

Endless unfolding of words of ages!
And mine a word of the modern, the word En-Masse.

A word of the faith that never balks,
Here or henceforward it is all the same to me, I accept Time absolutely.

It alone is without flaw, it alone rounds and completes all, That mystic baffling
wonder alone completes all.

I accept Reality and dare not question it,
Materialism first and last imbuing.

Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!

Fetch stonecrop mixt with cedar and branches of lilac,
This is the lexicographer, this the chemist, this made a grammar of the old
cartouches, These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas.
This is the geologist, this works with the scalpel, and this is a mathematician.

Gentlemen, to you the first honors always!
Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling,
I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.

Less the reminders of properties told my words,
And more the reminders they of life untold, and of freedom and extrication, And
make short account of neuters and geldings, and favor men and women fully
equipt, And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives and them that plot
and conspire.

24

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding,
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them, No more
modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me the current and index.

I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy, By God! I will
accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves,
Voices of the diseases'd and despairing and of thieves and dwarfs,
Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,
And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of the father-stuff,
And of the rights of them the others are down upon,
Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices,
Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil,
Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

I do not press my fingers across my mouth,
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart, Copulation is
no more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from,
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread of my own body, or
any part of it, Translucent mould of me it shall be you!
Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!
Firm masculine colter it shall be you!
Whatever goes to the tilth of me it shall be you!
You my rich blood! your milky stream pale strippings of my life!
Breast that presses against other breasts it shall be you!
My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!
Root of wash'd sweet-flag! timorous pond-snipe! nest of guarded duplicate eggs! it
shall be you!
Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be you!
Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat, it shall be you!
Sun so generous it shall be you!
Vapors lighting and shading my face it shall be you!
You sweaty brooks and dews it shall be you!
Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me it shall be you!
Broad muscular fields, branches of live oak, loving lounge in my winding paths,
it shall be you!
Hands I have taken, face I have kiss'd, mortal I have ever touch'd, it shall be you.

I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious, Each moment and
whatever happens thrills me with joy,
I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the cause of my faintest wish, Nor
the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause of the friendship I take again.

That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it really be, A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

To behold the day-break!
The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows,
The air tastes good to my palate.

Hefts of the moving world at innocent gambols silently rising freshly exuding,
Scooting obliquely high and low.

Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous prongs, Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.

The earth by the sky staid with, the daily close of their junction, The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over my head,
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be master!

25

Dazzling and tremendous how quick the sun-rise would kill me,
If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of me.

We also ascend dazzling and tremendous as the sun,
We found our own O my soul in the calm and cool of the daybreak.

My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach,
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes of worlds.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal to measure itself, It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically,
Walt you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?

Come now I will not be tantalized, you conceive too much of articulation, Do you not know O speech how the buds beneath you are folded?
Waiting in gloom, protected by frost,
The dirt receding before my prophetic screams,
I underlying causes to balance them at last,
My knowledge my live parts, it keeping tally with the meaning of all things,
Happiness, (which whoever hears me let him or her set out in search of this day.) My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting from me what I really am,
Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me,

I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking toward you.

Writing and talk do not prove me,
I carry the plenum of proof and every thing else in my face,
With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skeptic.

26

Now I will do nothing but listen,
To accrue what I hear into this song, to let sounds contribute toward it.

I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames, clack of sticks
cooking my meals, I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice,
I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following,
Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and night,
Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh of work-people at
their meals, The angry base of disjointed friendship, the faint tones of the sick,
The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips pronouncing a death-
sentence, The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves, the
refrain of the anchor-lifters, The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of
swift-streaking engines and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd
lights, The steam whistle, the solid roll of the train of approaching cars, The
slow march play'd at the head of the association marching two and two, (They
go to guard some corpse, the flag-tops are draped with black muslin.) I hear the
violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's complaint,) I hear the key'd cornet, it
glides quickly in through my ears,
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,
Ah this indeed is music—this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?) The orchestra whirls me
wider than Uranus flies,
It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I possess'd them,
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent waves, I am cut by
bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath,
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in fakes of death, At length
let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles, And that we call Being.

To be in any form, what is that?
 (Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back thither,)
 If nothing lay more develop'd the quahaug in its callous shell were enough.

Mine is no callous shell,
 I have instant conductors all over me whether I pass or stop,
 They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through me.

I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am happy, To touch my person to
 some one else's is about as much as I can stand.

Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,
 Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,
 Treacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help them,
 My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly different from
 myself, On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,
 Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,
 Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,
 Depriving me of my best as for a purpose,
 Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,
 Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields,
 Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,
 They bribed to swap off with touch and go and graze at the edges of me, No
 consideration, no regard for my draining strength or my anger,
 Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a while,
 Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry me.

The sentries desert every other part of me,
 They have left me helpless to a red marauder,
 They all come to the headland to witness and assist against me.

I am given up by traitors,
 I talk wildly, I have lost my wits, I and nobody else am the greatest traitor, I went
 myself first to the headland, my own hands carried me there.

You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight in its throat, Unclench
 your floodgates, you are too much for me.

29

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd hooded sharp-tooth'd touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?

Parting track'd by arriving, perpetual payment of perpetual loan, Rich showering
rain, and recompense richer afterward.

Sprouts take and accumulate, stand by the curb prolific and vital, Landscapes
projected masculine, full-sized and golden.

30

All truths wait in all things,
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon,
The insignificant is as big to me as any,
(What is less or more than a touch?)

Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

(Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so, Only what nobody denies
is so.)

A minute and a drop of me settle my brain,
I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and lamps,
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or woman,
And a summit and flower there is the feeling they have for each other, And they
are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson until it becomes omnific, And until
one and all shall delight us, and we them.

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars, And the
pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren, And the
tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue,

And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss, fruits, grains, esculent roots,
And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over,
And have distanced what is behind me for good reasons,
But call any thing back again when I desire it.

In vain the speeding or shyness,
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against my approach, In vain the
mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd bones,
In vain objects stand leagues off and assume manifold shapes,
In vain the ocean settling in hollows and the great monsters lying low, In vain the
buzzard houses herself with the sky,
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs,
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods,
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador,
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of the cliff.

32

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd, I
stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things, Not
one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago, Not one
is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept them, They bring me tokens of
myself, they evince them plainly in their possession.

I wonder where they get those tokens,
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?

Myself moving forward then and now and forever,
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among them,
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remembrancers,
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him on brotherly terms.

A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive to my caresses, Head high in
the forehead, wide between the ears,
Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut, flexibly moving.

His nostrils dilate as my heels embrace him,
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure as we race around and return.

I but use you a minute, then I resign you, stallion,
Why do I need your paces when I myself out-gallop them?
Even as I stand or sit passing faster than you.

33

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at,
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps, I skirt sierras, my
palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with lumbermen, Along
the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet bed, Weeding my
onion-patch or hoeing rows of carrots and parsnips, crossing savannas, trailing
in forests, Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down the shallow river,
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where the buck turns
furiously at the hunter, Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock,
where the otter is feeding on fish, Where the alligator in his tough pimples
sleeps by the bayou,
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where the beaver pats the
mud with his paddle-shaped tail; Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-
flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its low moist field, Over the sharp-peak'd
farm house, with its scallop'd scum and slender shoots from the gutters, Over
the western persimmon, over the long-leav'd corn, over the delicate blue-flower
flax, Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer there with the
rest, Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the breeze;
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low scragged

limbs, Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush, Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheat-lot, Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month eve, where the great gold-bug drops through the dark, Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree and flows to the meadow, Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous shuddering of their hides, Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen, where andirons straddle the hearth-slab, where cobwebs fall in festoons from the rafters; Where trip-hammers crash, where the press is whirling its cylinders, Wherever the human heart beats with terrible throes under its ribs, Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft, (floating in it myself and looking composedly down,) Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-noose, where the heat hatches pale-green eggs in the dented sand, Where the she-whale swims with her calf and never forsakes it, Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke, Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water, Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents, Where shells grow to her slimy deck, where the dead are corrupting below; Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regiments, Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island, Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance, Upon a doorstep, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside, Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game of base-ball, At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances, drinking, laughter, At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice through a straw, At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find, At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings, house-raisings; Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles, cackles, screams, weeps, Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard, where the dry-stalks are scatter'd, where the brood-cow waits in the hovel, Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where the stud to the mare, where the cock is treading the hen, Where the heifers browse, where geese nip their food with short jerks, Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lonesome prairie, Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles far and near, Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-lived swan is curving and winding, Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs her near-human laugh, Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in the garden half hid by the high weeds, Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the ground with their heads out, Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery,

Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icicled trees,
Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of the marsh at night and feeds
upon small crabs, Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm
noon,
Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree over the well,
Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired leaves, Through
the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical firs,
Through the gymnasium, through the curtain'd saloon, through the office or public
hall; Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the foreign, pleas'd with the new
and old, Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome,
Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously,
Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the whitewash'd church,
Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist preacher, impress'd
seriously at the camp-meeting; Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway
the whole forenoon, flattening the flesh of my nose on the thick plate glass,
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a
lane or along the beach, My right and left arms round the sides of two friends,
and I in the middle; Coming home with the silent and dark-cheek'd bush-boy,
(behind me he rides at the drape of the day,) Far from the settlements studying
the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin print, By the cot in the hospital
reaching lemonade to a feverish patient, Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is
still, examining with a candle; Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure,
Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any,
Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife him,
Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone from me a long while,
Walking the old hills of Judæa with the beautiful gentle God by my side,
Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars,
Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring, and the diameter of eighty
thousand miles, Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest,
Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly, Storming,
enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning,
Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing,
I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the product, And look at quintillions
ripen'd and look at quintillions green.

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul,
My course runs below the soundings of plummets.

I help myself to material and immaterial,

No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only,
My messengers continually cruise away or bring their returns to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping chasms with a pike-pointed staff,
clinging to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck,
I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest,
We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light enough,
Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the wonderful beauty, The
enormous masses of ice pass me and I pass them, the scenery is plain in all
directions, The white-topt mountains show in the distance, I fling out my
fancies toward them, We are approaching some great battle-field in which we
are soon to be engaged, We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we
pass with still feet and caution, Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast
and ruin'd city,
The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities of the globe.

I am a free companion, I bivouac by invading watchfires, I turn the bridegroom
out of bed and stay with the bride myself,
I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs, They fetch my
man's body up dripping and drown'd.

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times,
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steam-ship, and
Death chasing it up and down the storm, How he knuckled tight and gave not
back an inch, and was faithful of days and faithful of nights, And chalk'd in
large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you;*
How he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days and would not give it
up, How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of their
prepared graves, How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the
sharp-lipp'd unshaved men; All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it
becomes mine, I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs,

The mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her children
gazing on, The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence,
blowing, cover'd with sweat, The twinges that sting like needles his legs and
neck, the murderous buckshot and the bullets, All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs, Hell and despair are upon
me, crack and again crack the marksmen,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin, I
fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded
person, My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris,
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my comrades, I heard the
distant click of their picks and shovels,
They have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me forth.

I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for my sake, Painless
after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are bared of their fire-caps,
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

Distant and dead resuscitate,
They show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the clock myself.

I am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment, I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,
Again the attacking cannon, mortars,
Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole,
The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,
The ambulanza slowly passing trailing its red drip,
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs,

The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion, The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously waves with his hand,
He gasps through the clot *Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments.*

34

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth,
(I tell not the fall of Alamo,
Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,
The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo,)
'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men.

Retreating they had form'd in a hollow square with their baggage for breastworks,
Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times their number,
was the price they took in advance, Their colonel was wounded and their
ammunition gone,
They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their
arms and march'd back prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers,
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First-day morning they were brought out in squads and massacred, it
was beautiful early summer, The work commenced about five o'clock and was
over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel,
Some made a mad and helpless rush, some stood stark and straight,
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the living and dead lay together,
The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the new-comers saw them there, Some
half-kill'd attempted to crawl away,
These were despatch'd with bayonets or batter'd with the blunts of muskets, A
youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his assassin till two more came to release
him, The three were all torn and cover'd with the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;

That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and twelve young men.

35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he,) His was the surly English
pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be; Along
the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd, My captain lash'd
fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water, On our lower-gun-
deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around and blowing
up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of
water reported, The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-
hold to give them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels, They see so
many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain, *We have not struck,*
he composedly cries, *we have just begun our part of the fighting.*

Only three guns are in use,
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's mainmast, Two well
serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top, They
hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

36

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one we have
conquer'd, The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a
countenance white as a sheet, Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the
cabin,
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd whiskers,
The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below, The husky
voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty,
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon the masts
and spars, Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of
waves, Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,
A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,
Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore, death-
messages given in charge to survivors, The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the
gnawing teeth of his saw,
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull, tapering
groan, These so, these irretrievable.

37

You laggards there on guard! look to your arms!
In at the conquer'd doors they crowd! I am possess'd!
Embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering,
See myself in prison shaped like another man,
And feel the dull unintermitted pain.

For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep watch, It is I let
out in the morning and barr'd at night.

Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to him and walk by his
side, (I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one with sweat on my
twitching lips.) Not a youngster is taken for larceny but I go up too, and am
tried and sentenced.

Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp but I also lie at the last gasp, My face is
ash-color'd, my sinews gnarl, away from me people retreat.

Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in them, I project my hat, sit
shame-faced, and beg.

38

Enough! enough! enough!
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!
Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers, dreams, gaping, I discover
myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

That I could forget the mockers and insults!
That I could forget the trickling tears and the blows of the bludgeons and
hammers!
That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and bloody
crowning.

I remember now,
I resume the overstaid fraction,
The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to it, or to any graves,
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one of an average unending
procession, Inland and sea-coast we go, and pass all boundary lines,
Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole earth,
The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thousands of years.

Eleves, I salute you! come forward!
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

39

The friendly and flowing savage, who is he?
Is he waiting for civilization, or past it and mastering it?

Is he some Southwesterner rais'd out-doors? is he Kanadian?
Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon, California?
The mountains? prairie-life, bush-life? or sailor from the sea?

Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him, They desire he should
like them, touch them, speak to them, stay with them.

Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as grass, uncomb'd head, laughter,
and naiveté, Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes and
emanations,
They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers,
They are wafted with the odor of his body or breath, they fly out of the glance of
his eyes.

40

Flaunt of the sunshine I need not your bask—lie over!
You light surfaces only, I force surfaces and depths also.

Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands,
Say, old top-knot, what do you want?

Man or woman, I might tell how I like you, but cannot, And might tell what it is in
me and what it is in you, but cannot, And might tell that pining I have, that
pulse of my nights and days.

Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity,
When I give I give myself.

You there, impotent, loose in the knees,
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you,
Spread your palms and lift the flaps of your pockets,
I am not to be denied, I compel, I have stores plenty and to spare, And any thing I
have I bestow.

I do not ask who you are, that is not important to me, You can do nothing and be
nothing but what I will infold you.

To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean,
On his right cheek I put the family kiss,
And in my soul I swear I never will deny him.

On women fit for conception I start bigger and nimbler babes.
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant republics.)

To any one dying, thither I speed and twist the knob of the door.
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed,
Let the physician and the priest go home.

I seize the descending man and raise him with resistless will, O despairer, here is
my neck,
By God, you shall not go down! hang your whole weight upon me.

I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up,
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

Sleep—I and they keep guard all night,
Not doubt, not decease shall dare to lay finger upon you,
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to myself,
And when you rise in the morning you will find what I tell you is so.

41

I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on their backs,
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed help.

I heard what was said of the universe,
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;
It is middling well as far as it goes—but is that all?

Magnifying and applying come I,
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix engraved, With
Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and image,
Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more,

Admitting they were alive and did the work of their days,
(They bore mites as for unfledg'd birds who have now to rise and fly and sing for themselves,) Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself, bestowing them freely on each man and woman I see, Discovering as much or more in a framer framing a house,
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up sleeves driving the mallet and chisel, Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke or a hair on the back of my hand just as curious as any revelation, Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes no less to me than the gods of the antique wars, Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,
Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths, their white foreheads whole and unhurt out of the flames; By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every person born, Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty angels with shirts bagg'd out at their waists, The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins past and to come, Selling all he possesses, traveling on foot to fee lawyers for his brother and sit by him while he is tried for forgery; What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square rod about me, and not filling the square rod then, The bull and the bug never worshipp'd half enough,
Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd,
The supernatural of no account, myself waiting my time to be one of the supremes, The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much good as the best, and be as prodigious; By my life-lumps! becoming already a creator, Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the shadows.

42

A call in the midst of the crowd,
My own voice, orotund sweeping and final.

Come my children,
Come my boys and girls, my women, household and intimates,
Now the performer launches his nerve, he has pass'd his prelude on the reeds within.

Easily written loose-finger'd chords—I feel the thrum of your climax and close.

My head slues round on my neck,
Music rolls, but not from the organ,
Folks are around me, but they are no household of mine.

Ever the hard unsunk ground,
Ever the eaters and drinkers, ever the upward and downward sun, ever the air and
the ceaseless tides, Ever myself and my neighbors, refreshing, wicked, real,
Ever the old inexplicable query, ever that thorn'd thumb, that breath of itches and
thirsts, Ever the vexer's *hoot! hoot!* till we find where the sly one hides and
bring him forth, Ever love, ever the sobbing liquid of life,
Ever the bandage under the chin, ever the trestles of death.

Here and there with dimes on the eyes walking,
To feed the greed of the belly the brains liberally spooning,
Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never once going, Many
sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff for payment receiving, A
few idly owning, and they the wheat continually claiming.

This is the city and I am one of the citizens,
Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets, newspapers,
schools, The mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories, stocks,
stores, real estate and personal estate.

The little plentiful manikins skipping around in collars and tail'd coats, I am aware
who they are, (they are positively not worms or fleas,) I acknowledge the
duplicates of myself, the weakest and shallowest is deathless with me, What I
do and say the same waits for them,
Every thought that flounders in me the same flounders in them.

I know perfectly well my own egotism,
Know my omnivorous lines and must not write any less,
And would fetch you whoever you are flush with myself.

Not words of routine this song of mine,
But abruptly to question, to leap beyond yet nearer bring;
This printed and bound book—but the printer and the printing-office boy?
The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend close and solid in your
arms?
The black ship mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in her turrets—but the pluck of
the captain and engineers?
In the houses the dishes and fare and furniture—but the host and hostess, and the
look out of their eyes?
The sky up there—yet here or next door, or across the way?
The saints and sages in history—but you yourself?
Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human brain,

And what is reason? and what is love? and what is life?

43

I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over,
My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient and modern,
 Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years, Waiting
 responses from oracles, honoring the gods, saluting the sun, Making a fetich of
 the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks in the circle of obis, Helping the
 llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols,
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and austere in the
 woods a gymnosophist, Drinking mead from the skull-cup, to Shastas and
 Vedas admirant, minding the Koran, Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore
 from the stone and knife, beating the serpent-skin drum, Accepting the
 Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing assuredly that he is divine,
 To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting patiently in a pew,
 Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like till my spirit
 arouses me, Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement and
 land, Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like a man leaving
 charges before a journey.

Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded,
Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd, atheistical, I know every
 one of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt, despair and unbelief.

How the flukes splash!
How they contort rapid as lightning, with spasms and spouts of blood!

Be at peace bloody flukes of doubters and sullen mopers, I take my place among
 you as much as among any,
The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same,
And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all, precisely the same.

I do not know what is untried and afterward,
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

Each who passes is consider'd, each who stops is consider'd, not a single one can it
 fail.

It cannot fail the young man who died and was buried, Nor the young woman who
died and was put by his side,
Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back and was never
seen again, Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with
bitterness worse than gall, Nor him in the poor house tubercled by rum and the
bad disorder,
Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd, nor the brutish koboo call'd the
ordure of humanity, Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to
slip in, Nor any thing in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth, Nor
any thing in the myriads of spheres, nor the myriads of myriads that inhabit
them, Nor the present, nor the least wisp that is known.

44

It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.

What is known I strip away,
I launch all men and women forward with me into the Unknown.

The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate?

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers, There are trillions
ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my brother, my sister?
I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or jealous upon me,
All has been gentle with me, I keep no account with lamentation,
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps, All below
duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there,
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic mist,
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.

Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen, For room to
me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me, My embryo has never
been torpid, nothing could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight me, Now on this
spot I stand with my robust soul.

45

O span of youth! ever-push'd elasticity!
O manhood, balanced, florid and full.

My lovers suffocate me,
Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,
Jostling me through streets and public halls, coming naked to me at night, Crying
by day Ahoy! from the rocks of the river, swinging and chirping over my head,
Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled underbrush,
Lighting on every moment of my life,
Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses,
Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts and giving them to be mine.

Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying days!

Every condition promulges not only itself, it promulges what grows after and out of itself, And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems, And all I see multiplied as high as I can cipher edge but the rim of the farther systems.

Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always expanding, Outward and outward and forever outward.

My sun has his sun and round him obediently wheels,
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside them.

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage,
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail in the long run, We should surely bring up again where we now stand,
And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do not hazard the span or make it impatient, They are but parts, any thing is but a part.

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that, Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.

46

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured and never will be measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey, (come listen all!)
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods, No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, exchange,
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a knoll,
My left hand hooking you round the waist,

My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and the public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you, You must travel it for yourself.

It is not far, it is within reach,
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not know,
Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.

Shoulder your duds dear son, and I will mine, and let us hasten forth, Wonderful
cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff of your hand on my hip, And
in due time you shall repay the same service to me,
For after we start we never lie by again.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded heaven, And I
said to my spirit *When we become the enfolders of those orbs, and the pleasure
and knowledge of every thing in them, shall we be fill'd and satisfied then?*
And my spirit said *No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.*

You are also asking me questions and I hear you,
I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourself.

Sit a while dear son,
Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk to drink,
But as soon as you sleep and renew yourself in sweet clothes, I kiss you with a
good-by kiss and open the gate for your egress hence.

Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment of your
life.

Long have you timidly waded holding a plank by the shore, Now I will you to be a
bold swimmer,
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to me, shout, and laughingly
dash with your hair.

I am the teacher of athletes,

He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own,
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived power, but in his
own right, Wicked rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than sharp steel cuts, First-rate to
ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song or play on the
banjo, Preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with small-pox over all
latherers, And those well-tann'd to those that keep out of the sun.

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour,
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while I wait for a boat,
(It is you talking just as much as myself, I act as the tongue of you, Tied in your
mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd.)

I swear I will never again mention love or death inside a house, And I swear I will
never translate myself at all, only to him or her who privately stays with me in
the open air.

If you would understand me go to the heights or water-shore, The nearest gnat is
an explanation, and a drop or motion of waves a key, The maul, the oar, the
hand-saw, second my words.

No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,
But roughs and little children better than they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he knows me well, The woodman that takes
his axe and jug with him shall take me with him all day, The farm-boy
ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of my voice, In vessels that sail
my words sail, I go with fishermen and seamen and love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is mine,
On the night ere the pending battle many seek me, and I do not fail them, On that
solemn night (it may be their last) those that know me seek me.

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his blanket, The
driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his wagon,

The young mother and old mother comprehend me,
The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where they are, They
and all would resume what I have told them.

48

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in
his shroud, And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the
earth, And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the
learning of all times, And there is no trade or employment but the young man
following it may become a hero, And there is no object so soft but it makes a
hub for the wheel'd universe, And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul
stand cool and composed before a million universes.

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.) I
hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least, Nor
do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then, In
the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass, I find
letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name, And
I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go, Others will
punctually come for ever and ever.

49

And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to alarm me.

To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes,
I see the elder-hand pressing receiving supporting,
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

And as to you Corpse I think you are good manure, but that does not offend me, I
smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,

I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons.

And as to you Life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths, (No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.)

I hear you whispering there O stars of heaven,
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual transfers and promotions,
If you do not say any thing how can I say any thing?

Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest,
Of the moon that descends the steeps of the soughing twilight,
Toss, sparkles of day and dusk—toss on the black stems that decay in the muck,
Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night,
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams reflected, And debouch
to the steady and central from the offspring great or small.

50

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me.

Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes, I sleep—I sleep
long.

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid, It is not in any
dictionary, utterance, symbol.

Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on, To it the creation is the
friend whose embracing awakes me.

Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers and sisters.

Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal life—it is Happiness.

51

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.) Do I
contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? who will soonest be through with his supper?
Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? will you prove already too late?

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my
loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds, It coaxes
me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun, I effuse my flesh in
eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love, If you want me again
look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

License: Public Domain

Walt Whitman

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle, Out of the Ninth-month
midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed
wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot, Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries, From the memories of the bird
that chanted to me, From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and
fallings I heard, From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if
with tears, From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease, From the myriad
thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any, From such as now they start
the scene revisiting, As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing, Borne
hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves, I, chanter of pains and joys,
uniter of here and hereafter, Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping
beyond them, A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing, Up this
seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together, And their nest, and four light-
green eggs spotted with brown, And every day the he-bird to and fro near at
hand, And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home, Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest, Nor return'd that afternoon,
nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea, And at night under the full
of the moon in calmer weather, Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird, The solitary guest from
Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore; I wait and I wait till you blow my
mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake, Down almost amid the
slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note, For more than once dimly
down to the beach gliding, Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself
with the shadows, Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds
and sights after their sorts, The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair, Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes, Following you my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind, And again another behind embracing
and lapping, every one close, But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late, It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love,
with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land, With love, with love.

*O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?*

*Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!*

*High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves, Surely you must know who is
here, is here, You must know who I am, my love.*

*Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only
would, For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

*O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.*

*O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.*

*Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea, For somewhere I believe I heard
my mate responding to me, So faint, I must be still, be still to listen, But not
altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.*

*Hither my love!
Here I am! here!*

*With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you, This gentle call is for you
my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere, That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray, Those are the shadows of
leaves.*

*O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

*O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.*

*The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing, With angry moans
the fierce old mother incessantly moaning, On the sands of Paumanok's shore
gray and rustling, The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the
face of the sea almost touching, The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves,
with his hair the atmosphere dallying, The love in the heart long pent, now
loose, now at last tumultuously bursting, The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul,
swiftly depositing, The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying, To the boy's soul's
questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hissing, To the outsetting bard.*

*Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,) Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is
it really to me?*

*For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you, Now in a
moment I know what I am for, I awake, And already a thousand singers, a
thousand songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours, A thousand
warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.*

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me, O solitary me listening,
never more shall I cease perpetuating you, Never more shall I escape, never
more the reverberations, Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent
from me, Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there
in the night, By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within, The unknown want,
the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,) O if I am to have so
much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,) The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before day-break, Lisp'd to me
the low and delicious word death, And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart, But
edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet, Creeping thence steadily up
to my ears and laving me softly all over, Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother, That he sang to me in the
moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach, With the thousand responsive songs at
random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves, The word of the sweetest
song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet, (Or like some old
crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside,) The sea
whisper'd me.

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY

License: Public Domain

Walt Whitman

1

Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose, And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day, The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme, The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river, The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away, The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them, The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.
Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore, Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east, Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high, A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them, Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence, Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt, Just as any

of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd, Just as you are refresh'd
by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd, Just as you
stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was
hurried, Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-
stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old, Watched the Twelfth-month
sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating
their bodies, Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left
the rest in strong shadow, Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual
edging toward the south, Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head in the
sunlit water, Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet, Look'd toward the
lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor, The sailors at
work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine
pennants, The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-
houses, The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the
wheels, The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and
glistening, The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the
granite storehouses by the docks, On the river the shadowy group, the big
steam-tug closely flank'd on each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated
lighter, On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning
high and glaringly into the night, Casting their flicker of black contrasted with
wild red and yellow light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of
streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river, The men and
women I saw were all near to me,
Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them,
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night.)

5

What is it then between us?

What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not, I too lived,
Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,

I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters around it, I
too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,

In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me, In my walks
home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me, I too had been
struck from the float forever held in solution, I too had receiv'd identity by my
body,

That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of my
body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,

The dark threw its patches down upon me also,

The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,

My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?

Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,

I am he who knew what it was to be evil,

I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,

Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,

Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,

Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant, The wolf, the
snake, the hog, not wanting in me,

The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting, Refusals,
hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting, Was one with
the rest, the days and haps of the rest,

Was call'd by my nighest name by clear loud voices of young men as they saw me
approaching or passing, Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent
leaning of their flesh against me as I sat, Saw many I loved in the street or
ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never told them a word, Lived the same life
with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping, Play'd the part that still
looks back on the actor or actress, The same old role, the role that is what we
make it, as great as we like, Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7

Closer yet I approach you,
 What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I laid in my stores in
 advance, I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
 Who knows but I am enjoying this?
 Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all
 you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-hemm'd
 Manhattan?
 River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?
 The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated
 lighter?

What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call
 me promptly and loudly by my highest name as I approach?
 What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my
 face?
 Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?
 What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
 What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish is
 accomplish'd, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
 Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
 Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men and
 women generations after me!
 Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
 Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
 Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
 Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!

Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!

Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my highest name!

Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!

Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one makes it!

Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you; Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current; Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air; Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all downcast eyes have time to take it from you!

Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the sunlit water!

Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd schooners, sloops, lighters!

Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!

Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!

Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are, You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,

About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung out divinest aromas, Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers, Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual, Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers, We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward, Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us, We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us, We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also, You furnish your parts toward eternity, Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

License: Public Domain

Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done, The ship has weather'd every
rack, the prize we sought is won, The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all
exulting, While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring; But O
heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells; Rise up—for you the flag is
flung—for you the bugle trills, For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for
you the shores a-crowding, For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager
faces turning; Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck, You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still, My father does not feel my
arm, he has no pulse nor will, The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage
closed and done, From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.

Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)

A Simple Soul

French

Realism

Gustave Flaubert was born on Dec. 12, 1821 in Rouen, France. He grew up in an affluent middle class family; his father was a respected surgeon. As a young man, Flaubert became friends in college with other students who despised the bourgeoisie, and began writing short stories and, eventually, novels that were critical of middle class values. Flaubert's health problems (he suffered from epilepsy) forced him to give up plans to study the law, so he devoted his energies to writing literature. After his father died, he retired to a country house near Rouen, where he would spend the rest of his life. His masterpiece, *Madame Bovary*, is a psychological study of a woman desperate to escape a banal middle-class life. Flaubert is considered to be one of the greatest practitioners of literary realism in France.

"A Simple Soul" is the study of the life of Felicite, a servant of Madame Aubain. Over the course of 50 years, she loses many people for whom she cares, and she ends her life caring for a rather difficult parrot named Loulou.

Consider while reading:

1. What characteristics of realism do you see in this story?
2. Analyze the character of Felicite. What kind of suffering and loss does she undergo in her life?
3. What do you think Flaubert is saying about life through this character. How do you respond to her?
4. What is the significance of the title of the short story?

Written by Anita Turlington

A SIMPLE SOUL

Gustave Flaubert

License: Public Domain

Chapter I

For half a century the housewives of Pont-l'Eveque had envied Madame Aubain her servant Felicite.

For a hundred francs a year, she cooked and did the housework, washed, ironed, mended, harnessed the horse, fattened the poultry, made the butter and remained faithful to her mistress—although the latter was by no means an agreeable person.

Madame Aubain had married a comely youth without any money, who died in the beginning of 1809, leaving her with two young children and a number of debts. She sold all her property excepting the farm of Toucques and the farm of Geffosses, the income of which barely amounted to 5,000 francs; then she left her house in Saint-Melaine, and moved into a less pretentious one which had belonged to her ancestors and stood back of the market-place. This house, with its slate-covered roof, was built between a passage-way and a narrow street that led to the river. The interior was so unevenly graded that it caused people to stumble. A narrow hall separated the kitchen from the parlour, where Madame Aubain sat all day in a straw armchair near the window. Eight mahogany chairs stood in a row against the white wainscoting. An old piano, standing beneath a barometer, was covered with a pyramid of old books and boxes. On either side of the yellow marble mantelpiece, in Louis XV style, stood a tapestry armchair. The clock represented a temple of Vesta; and the whole room smelled musty, as it was on a lower level than the garden.

On the first floor was Madame's bed-chamber, a large room papered in a flowered design and containing the portrait of Monsieur dressed in the costume of a dandy. It communicated with a smaller room, in which there were two little cribs, without any mattresses. Next, came the parlour (always closed), filled with furniture covered with sheets. Then a hall, which led to the

study, where books and papers were piled on the shelves of a book-case that enclosed three quarters of the big black desk. Two panels were entirely hidden under pen-and-ink sketches, Gouache landscapes and Audran engravings, relics of better times and vanished luxury. On the second floor, a garret-window lighted Felicite's room, which looked out upon the meadows.

She arose at daybreak, in order to attend mass, and she worked without interruption until night; then, when dinner was over, the dishes cleared away and the door securely locked, she would bury the log under the ashes and fall asleep in front of the hearth with a rosary in her hand. Nobody could bargain with greater obstinacy, and as for cleanliness, the lustre on her brass sauce-pans was the envy and despair of other servants. She was most economical, and when she ate she would gather up crumbs with the tip of her finger, so that nothing should be wasted of the loaf of bread weighing twelve pounds which was baked especially for her and lasted three weeks.

Summer and winter she wore a dimity kerchief fastened in the back with a pin, a cap which concealed her hair, a red skirt, grey stockings, and an apron with a bib like those worn by hospital nurses.

Her face was thin and her voice shrill. When she was twenty-five, she looked forty. After she had passed fifty, nobody could tell her age; erect and silent always, she resembled a wooden figure working automatically.

Chapter II

Like every other woman, she had had an affair of the heart. Her father, who was a mason, was killed by falling from a scaffolding. Then her mother died and her sisters went their different ways; a farmer took her in, and while she was quite small, let her keep cows in the fields. She was clad in miserable rags, beaten for the slightest offence and finally dismissed for a theft of thirty sous which she did not commit. She took service on another farm where she tended the poultry; and as she was well thought of by her master, her fellow-workers soon grew jealous.

One evening in August (she was then eighteen years old), they persuaded her to accompany them to the fair at Colleville. She was immediately dazzled by the noise, the lights in the trees, the brightness of the dresses, the laces and gold crosses, and the crowd of people all hopping at the same time. She was standing modestly at a distance, when presently a young man of well-to-do appearance, who had been leaning on the pole of a wagon and smoking his pipe, approached her, and asked her for a dance. He treated her to cider and cake, bought her a silk shawl, and then, thinking she had guessed his purpose, offered to see her home. When they came to the end of a field he threw her down brutally. But she grew frightened and screamed, and he walked off.

One evening, on the road leading to Beaumont, she came upon a wagon loaded with hay, and when she overtook it, she recognised Theodore. He greeted her calmly, and asked her to forget what had happened between them, as it "was all the fault of the drink."

10

She did not know what to reply and wished to run away.

Presently he began to speak of the harvest and of the notables of the village; his father had left Colleville and bought the farm of Les Ecots, so that now they would be neighbours. "Ah!" she exclaimed. He then added that his parents were looking around for a wife for him, but that he, himself, was not so anxious and preferred to wait for a girl who suited him. She hung her head. He then asked her whether she had ever thought of marrying. She replied, smilingly, that it was wrong of him to make fun of her. "Oh! no, I am in earnest," he said, and put his left arm around her waist while they sauntered along. The air was soft, the stars were bright, and the huge load of hay oscillated in front of them, drawn by four horses whose ponderous hoofs raised clouds of dust. Without a word from their driver they turned to the right. He kissed her again and she went home. The following week, Theodore obtained meetings.

They met in yards, behind walls or under isolated trees. She was not ignorant, as girls of well-to-do families are—for the animals had instructed her;—but her reason and her instinct of honour kept her from falling. Her resistance exasperated

Theodore's love and so in order to satisfy it (or perchance ingenuously), he offered to marry her. She would not believe him at first, so he made solemn promises. But, in a short time he mentioned a difficulty; the previous year, his parents had purchased a substitute for him; but any day he might be drafted and the prospect of serving in the army alarmed him greatly. To Felicite his cowardice appeared a proof of his love for her, and her devotion to him grew stronger. When she met him, he would torture her with his fears and his entreaties. At last, he announced that he was going to the prefect himself for information, and would let her know everything on the following Sunday, between eleven o'clock and midnight.

When the time grew near, she ran to meet her lover.

But instead of Theodore, one of his friends was at the meeting-place.

15

He informed her that she would never see her sweetheart again; for, in order to escape the conscription, he had married a rich old woman, Madame Lehoussais, of Toucques.

The poor girl's sorrow was frightful. She threw herself on the ground, she cried and called on the Lord, and wandered around desolately until sunrise. Then she went back to the farm, declared her intention of leaving, and at the end of the month, after she had received her wages, she packed all her belongings in a handkerchief and started for Pont-l'Eveque.

In front of the inn, she met a woman wearing widow's weeds, and upon questioning her, learned that she was looking for a cook. The girl did not know very much, but appeared so willing and so modest in her requirements, that Madame Aubain finally said:

"Very well, I will give you a trial."

And half an hour later Felicite was installed in her house.

20

At first she lived in a constant anxiety that was caused by "the style of the household" and the memory of "Monsieur," that hovered over everything. Paul and Virginia, the one aged seven, and the other barely four, seemed made of some precious material; she carried them pig-a-back, and was greatly mortified

when Madame Aubain forbade her to kiss them every other minute.

But in spite of all this, she was happy. The comfort of her new surroundings had obliterated her sadness.

Every Thursday, friends of Madame Aubain dropped in for a game of cards, and it was Felicite's duty to prepare the table and heat the foot-warmers. They arrived at exactly eight o'clock and departed before eleven.

Every Monday morning, the dealer in second-hand goods, who lived under the alley-way, spread out his wares on the sidewalk. Then the city would be filled with a buzzing of voices in which the neighing of horses, the bleating of lambs, the grunting of pigs, could be distinguished, mingled with the sharp sound of wheels on the cobble-stones. About twelve o'clock, when the market was in full swing, there appeared at the front door a tall, middle-aged peasant, with a hooked nose and a cap on the back of his head; it was Robelin, the farmer of Geffosses. Shortly afterwards came Liebard, the farmer of Toucques, short, rotund and ruddy, wearing a grey jacket and spurred boots.

Both men brought their landlady either chickens or cheese. Felicite would invariably thwart their ruses and they held her in great respect.

25

At various times, Madame Aubain received a visit from the Marquis de Gremenville, one of her uncles, who was ruined and lived at Falaise on the remainder of his estates. He always came at dinner-time and brought an ugly poodle with him, whose paws soiled their furniture. In spite of his efforts to appear a man of breeding (he even went so far as to raise his hat every time he said "My deceased father"), his habits got the better of him, and he would fill his glass a little too often and relate broad stories. Felicite would show him out very politely and say: "You have had enough for this time, Monsieur de Gremenville! Hoping to see you again!" and would close the door.

She opened it gladly for Monsieur Bourais, a retired lawyer. His bald head and white cravat, the ruffling of his shirt, his flowing brown coat, the manner in which he took snuff, his whole person, in fact, produced in her the kind of awe which we feel

when we see extraordinary persons. As he managed Madame's estates, he spent hours with her in Monsieur's study; he was in constant fear of being compromised, had a great regard for the magistracy and some pretensions to learning.

In order to facilitate the children's studies, he presented them with an engraved geography which represented various scenes of the world; cannibals with feather head-dresses, a gorilla kidnapping a young girl, Arabs in the desert, a whale being harpooned, etc.

Paul explained the pictures to Felicite. And, in fact, this was her only literary education.

The children's studies were under the direction of a poor devil employed at the town-hall, who sharpened his pocket-knife on his boots and was famous for his penmanship.

30

When the weather was fine, they went to Geffosses. The house was built in the centre of the sloping yard; and the sea looked like a grey spot in the distance. Felicite would take slices of cold meat from the lunch basket and they would sit down and eat in a room next to the dairy. This room was all that remained of a cottage that had been torn down. The dilapidated wall-paper trembled in the drafts. Madame Aubain, overwhelmed by recollections, would hang her head, while the children were afraid to open their mouths. Then, "Why don't you go and play?" their mother would say; and they would scamper off.

Paul would go to the old barn, catch birds, throw stones into the pond, or pound the trunks of the trees with a stick till they resounded like drums. Virginia would feed the rabbits and run to pick the wild flowers in the fields, and her flying legs would disclose her little embroidered pantalettes. One autumn evening, they struck out for home through the meadows. The new moon illumined part of the sky and a mist hovered like a veil over the sinuosities of the river. Oxen, lying in the pastures, gazed mildly at the passing persons. In the third field, however, several of them got up and surrounded them. "Don't be afraid," cried Felicite; and murmuring a sort of lament she passed her hand over the back of the nearest ox; he turned away and the others followed. But when they came to the next pasture, they heard frightful bellowing.

It was a bull which was hidden from them by the fog. He advanced towards the two women, and Madame Aubain prepared to flee for her life. "No, no! not so fast," warned Felicite. Still they hurried on, for they could hear the noisy breathing of the bull behind them. His hoofs pounded the grass like hammers, and presently he began to gallop! Felicite turned around and threw patches of grass in his eyes. He hung his head, shook his horns and bellowed with fury. Madame Aubain and the children, huddled at the end of the field, were trying to jump over the ditch. Felicite continued to back before the bull, blinding him with dirt, while she shouted to them to make haste.

Madame Aubain finally slid into the ditch, after shoving first Virginia and then Paul into it, and though she stumbled several times she managed, by dint of courage, to climb the other side of it.

The bull had driven Felicite up against a fence; the foam from his muzzle flew in her face and in another minute he would have disembowelled her. She had just time to slip between two bars and the huge animal, thwarted, paused.

For years, this occurrence was a topic of conversation in Pont-l'Eveque. But Felicite took no credit to herself, and probably never knew that she had been heroic.

Virginia occupied her thoughts solely, for the shock she had sustained gave her a nervous affection, and the physician, M. Poupart, prescribed the salt-water bathing at Trouville. In those days, Trouville was not greatly patronised. Madame Aubain gathered information, consulted Bourais, and made preparations as if they were going on an extended trip.

The baggage was sent the day before on Liebard's cart. On the following morning, he brought around two horses, one of which had a woman's saddle with a velveteen back to it, while on the crupper of the other was a rolled shawl that was to be used for a seat. Madame Aubain mounted the second horse, behind Liebard. Felicite took charge of the little girl, and Paul rode M. Lechaptois' donkey, which had been lent for the occasion on the condition that they should be careful of it.

The road was so bad that it took two hours to cover the eight miles. The two horses sank knee-deep into the mud and stumbled into ditches; sometimes they had to jump over them. In certain places, Liebard's mare stopped abruptly. He waited patiently till she started again, and talked of the people whose estates bordered the road, adding his own moral reflections to the outline of their histories. Thus, when they were passing through Toucques, and came to some windows draped with nasturtiums, he shrugged his shoulders and said: "There's a woman, Madame Lehoussais, who, instead of taking a young man—" Felicite could not catch what followed; the horses began to trot, the donkey to gallop, and they turned into a lane; then a gate swung open, two farm-hands appeared and they all dismounted at the very threshold of the farm-house.

Mother Liebard, when she caught sight of her mistress, was lavish with joyful demonstrations. She got up a lunch which comprised a leg of mutton, tripe, sausages, a chicken fricassee, sweet cider, a fruit tart and some preserved prunes; then to all this the good woman added polite remarks about Madame, who appeared to be in better health, Mademoiselle, who had grown to be "superb," and Paul, who had become singularly sturdy; she spoke also of their deceased grandparents, whom the Liebards had known, for they had been in the service of the family for several generations.

Like its owners, the farm had an ancient appearance. The beams of the ceiling were mouldy, the walls black with smoke and the windows grey with dust. The oak sideboard was filled with all sorts of utensils, plates, pitchers, tin bowls, wolf-traps. The children laughed when they saw a huge syringe. There was not a tree in the yard that did not have mushrooms growing around its foot, or a bunch of mistletoe hanging in its branches. Several of the trees had been blown down, but they had started to grow in the middle and all were laden with quantities of apples. The thatched roofs, which were of unequal thickness, looked like brown velvet and could resist the fiercest gales. But the wagon-shed was fast crumbling to ruins. Madame Aubain said that she

would attend to it, and then gave orders to have the horses saddled.

It took another thirty minutes to reach Trouville. The little caravan dismounted in order to pass Les Ecores, a cliff that overhangs the bay, and a few minutes later, at the end of the dock, they entered the yard of the Golden Lamb, an inn kept by Mother David.

During the first few days, Virginia felt stronger, owing to the change of air and the action of the sea-baths. She took them in her little chemise, as she had no bathing suit, and afterwards her nurse dressed her in the cabin of a customs officer, which was used for that purpose by other bathers.

In the afternoon, they would take the donkey and go to the Roches-Noires, near Hennequeville. The path led at first through undulating grounds, and thence to a plateau, where pastures and tilled fields alternated. At the edge of the road, mingling with the brambles, grew holly bushes, and here and there stood large dead trees whose branches traced zigzags upon the blue sky.

Ordinarily, they rested in a field facing the ocean, with Deauville on their left, and Havre on their right. The sea glittered brightly in the sun and was as smooth as a mirror, and so calm that they could scarcely distinguish its murmur; sparrows chirped joyfully and the immense canopy of heaven spread over it all. Madame Aubain brought out her sewing, and Virginia amused herself by braiding reeds; Felicite wove lavender blossoms, while Paul was bored and wished to go home.

45

Sometimes they crossed the Toucques in a boat, and started to hunt for sea-shells. The outgoing tide exposed star-fish and sea-urchins, and the children tried to catch the flakes of foam which the wind blew away. The sleepy waves lapping the sand unfurled themselves along the shore that extended as far as the eye could see, but where land began, it was limited by the downs which separated it from the "Swamp," a large meadow shaped like a hippodrome. When they went home that way, Trouville, on the slope of a hill below, grew larger and larger as they advanced, and, with all its houses of unequal height, seemed to spread out before them in a sort of giddy confusion.

When the heat was too oppressive, they remained in their rooms. The dazzling sunlight cast bars of light between the shutters. Not a sound in the village, not a soul on the sidewalk. This silence intensified the tranquility of everything. In the distance, the hammers of some calkers pounded the hull of a ship, and the sultry breeze brought them an odour of tar.

The principal diversion consisted in watching the return of the fishing-smacks. As soon as they passed the beacons, they began to ply to windward. The sails were lowered to one third of the masts, and with their fore-sails swelled up like balloons they glided over the waves and anchored in the middle of the harbour. Then they crept up alongside of the dock and the sailors threw the quivering fish over the side of the boat; a line of carts was waiting for them, and women with white caps sprang forward to receive the baskets and embrace their men-folk.

One day, one of them spoke to Felicite, who, after a little while, returned to the house gleefully. She had found one of her sisters, and presently Nastasie Barette, wife of Leroux, made her appearance, holding an infant in her arms, another child by the hand, while on her left was a little cabin-boy with his hands in his pockets and his cap on his ear.

At the end of fifteen minutes, Madame Aubain bade her go.

50

They always hung around the kitchen, or approached Felicite when she and the children were out walking. The husband, however, did not show himself.

Felicite developed a great fondness for them; she bought them a stove, some shirts and a blanket; it was evident that they exploited her. Her foolishness annoyed Madame Aubain, who, moreover did not like the nephew's familiarity, for he called her son "thou";—and, as Virginia began to cough and the season was over, she decided to return to Pont-l'Eveque.

Monsieur Bourais assisted her in the choice of a college. The one at Caen was considered the best. So Paul was sent away and bravely said good-bye to them all, for he was glad to go to live in a house where he would have boy companions.

Madame Aubain resigned herself to the separation from her son because it was unavoidable. Virginia brooded less and less

over it. Felicite regretted the noise he made, but soon a new occupation diverted her mind; beginning from Christmas, she accompanied the little girl to her catechism lesson every day.

Chapter III

After she had made a curtsey at the threshold, she would walk up the aisle between the double lines of chairs, open Madame Aubain's pew, sit down and look around.

55

Girls and boys, the former on the right, the latter on the left-hand side of the church, filled the stalls of the choir; the priest stood beside the reading-desk; on one stained window of the side-aisle the Holy Ghost hovered over the Virgin; on another one, Mary knelt before the Child Jesus, and behind the altar, a wooden group represented Saint Michael felling the dragon.

The priest first read a condensed lesson of sacred history. Felicite evoked Paradise, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, the blazing cities, the dying nations, the shattered idols; and out of this she developed a great respect for the Almighty and a great fear of His wrath. Then, when she had listened to the Passion, she wept. Why had they crucified Him who loved little children, nourished the people, made the blind see, and who, out of humility, had wished to be born among the poor, in a stable? The sowings, the harvests, the wine-presses, all those familiar things which the Scriptures mention, formed a part of her life; the word of God sanctified them; and she loved the lambs with increased tenderness for the sake of the Lamb, and the doves because of the Holy Ghost.

She found it hard, however, to think of the latter as a person, for was it not a bird, a flame, and sometimes only a breath? Perhaps it is its light that at night hovers over swamps, its breath that propels the clouds, its voice that renders church-bells harmonious. And Felicite worshipped devoutly, while enjoying the coolness and the stillness of the church.

As for the dogma, she could not understand it and did not even try. The priest discoursed, the children recited, and she went to

sleep, only to awaken with a start when they were leaving the church and their wooden shoes clattered on the stone pavement.

In this way, she learned her catechism, her religious education having been neglected in her youth; and thenceforth she imitated all Virginia's religious practices, fasted when she did, and went to confession with her. At the Corpus-Christi Day they both decorated an altar.

She worried in advance over Virginia's first communion. She fussed about the shoes, the rosary, the book and the gloves. With what nervousness she helped the mother dress the child!

During the entire ceremony, she felt anguished. Monsieur Bourais hid part of the choir from view, but directly in front of her, the flock of maidens, wearing white wreaths over their lowered veils, formed a snow-white field, and she recognised her darling by the slenderness of her neck and her devout attitude. The bell tinkled. All the heads bent and there was a silence. Then, at the peals of the organ the singers and the worshippers struck up the Agnes Dei; the boys' procession began; behind them came the girls. With clasped hands, they advanced step by step to the lighted altar, knelt at the first step, received one by one the Host, and returned to their seats in the same order. When Virginia's turn came, Felicite leaned forward to watch her, and through that imagination which springs from true affection, she at once became the child, whose face and dress became hers, whose heart beat in her bosom, and when Virginia opened her mouth and closed her lids, she did likewise and came very near fainting.

The following day, she presented herself early at the church so as to receive communion from the cure. She took it with the proper feeling, but did not experience the same delight as on the previous day.

Madame Aubain wished to make an accomplished girl of her daughter; and as Guyot could not teach English or music, she decided to send her to the Ursulines at Honfleur.

The child made no objection, but Felicite sighed and thought Madame was heartless. Then, she thought that perhaps her mistress was right, as these things were beyond her sphere. Finally, one day, an old fiacre stopped in front of the door and a

nun stepped out. Felicite put Virginia's luggage on top of the carriage, gave the coachman some instructions, and smuggled six jars of jam, a dozen pears and a bunch of violets under the seat.

At the last minute, Virginia had a fit of sobbing; she embraced her mother again and again, while the latter kissed her on the forehead, and said: "Now, be brave, be brave!" The step was pulled up and the fiacre rumbled off.

Then Madame Aubain had a fainting spell, and that evening all her friends, including the two Lormeaux, Madame Lechaptois, the ladies Rochefeuille, Messieurs de Houppesville and Bourais, called on her and tendered their sympathy.

At first the separation proved very painful to her. But her daughter wrote her three times a week and the other days she, herself, wrote to Virginia. Then she walked in the garden, read a little, and in this way managed to fill out the emptiness of the hours.

Each morning, out of habit, Felicite entered Virginia's room and gazed at the walls. She missed combing her hair, lacing her shoes, tucking her in her bed, and the bright face and little hand when they used to go out for a walk. In order to occupy herself she tried to make lace. But her clumsy fingers broke the threads; she had no heart for anything, lost her sleep and "wasted away," as she put it.

In order to have some distraction, she asked leave to receive the visits of her nephew Victor.

70

He would come on Sunday, after church, with ruddy cheeks and bared chest, bringing with him the scent of the country. She would set the table and they would sit down opposite each other, and eat their dinner; she ate as little as possible, herself, to avoid any extra expense, but would stuff him so with food that he would finally go to sleep. At the first stroke of vespers, she would wake him up, brush his trousers, tie his cravat and walk to church with him, leaning on his arm with maternal pride.

His parents always told him to get something out of her, either a package of brown sugar, or soap, or brandy, and sometimes even money. He brought her his clothes to mend, and she accepted the task gladly, because it meant another visit from him.

In August, his father took him on a coasting-vessel.

It was vacation time and the arrival of the children consoled Felicite. But Paul was capricious, and Virginia was growing too old to be thee-and-thou'd, a fact which seemed to produce a sort of embarrassment in their relations.

Victor went successively to Morlaix, to Dunkirk, and to Brighton; whenever he returned from a trip he would bring her a present. The first time it was a box of shells; the second, a coffee-cup; the third, a big doll of ginger-bread. He was growing handsome, had a good figure, a tiny moustache, kind eyes, and a little leather cap that sat jauntily on the back of his head. He amused his aunt by telling her stories mingled with nautical expressions.

75

One Monday, the 14th of July, 1819 (she never forgot the date), Victor announced that he had been engaged on a merchant-vessel and that in two days he would take the steamer at Honfleur and join his sailer, which was going to start from Havre very soon. Perhaps he might be away two years.

The prospect of his departure filled Felicite with despair, and in order to bid him farewell, on Wednesday night, after Madame's dinner, she put on her pattens and trudged the four miles that separated Pont-l'Eveque from Honfleur.

When she reached the Calvary, instead of turning to the right, she turned to the left and lost herself in coal-yards; she had to retrace her steps; some people she spoke to advised her to hasten. She walked helplessly around the harbour filled with vessels, and knocked against hawsers. Presently the ground sloped abruptly, lights flitted to and fro, and she thought all at once that she had gone mad when she saw some horses in the sky.

Others, on the edge of the dock, neighed at the sight of the ocean. A derrick pulled them up in the air, and dumped them into a boat, where passengers were bustling about among barrels of cider, baskets of cheese and bags of meal; chickens cackled, the captain swore and a cabin-boy rested on the railing, apparently indifferent to his surroundings. Felicite, who did not recognise him, kept shouting: "Victor!" He suddenly raised his eyes, but

while she was preparing to rush up to him, they withdrew the gangplank.

The packet, towed by singing women, glided out of the harbour. Her hull squeaked and the heavy waves beat up against her sides. The sail had turned and nobody was visible;—and on the ocean, silvered by the light of the moon, the vessel formed a black spot that grew dimmer and dimmer, and finally disappeared.

When Felicite passed the Calvary again, she felt as if she must entrust that which was dearest to her to the Lord; and for a long while she prayed, with uplifted eyes and a face wet with tears. The city was sleeping; some customs officials were taking the air; and the water kept pouring through the holes of the dam with a deafening roar. The town clock struck two.

The parlour of the convent would not open until morning, and surely a delay would annoy Madame, so, in spite of her desire to see the other child, she went home. The maids of the inn were just arising when she reached Pont-l'Eveque.

So the poor boy would be on the ocean for months! His previous trips had not alarmed her. One can come back from England and Brittany; but America, the colonies, the islands, were all lost in an uncertain region at the very end of the world.

From that time on, Felicite thought solely of her nephew. On warm days she feared he would suffer from thirst, and when it stormed, she was afraid he would be struck by lightning. When she harkened to the wind that rattled in the chimney and dislodged the tiles on the roof, she imagined that he was being buffeted by the same storm, perched on top of a shattered mast, with his whole body bend backward and covered with sea-foam; or,—these were recollections of the engraved geography—he was being devoured by savages, or captured in a forest by apes, or dying on some lonely coast. She never mentioned her anxieties, however.

Madame Aubain worried about her daughter.

The sisters thought that Virginia was affectionate but delicate. The slightest emotion enervated her. She had to give up her piano lessons. Her mother insisted upon regular letters from the convent. One morning, when the postman failed to come, she

grew impatient and began to pace to and fro, from her chair to the window. It was really extraordinary! No news since four days!

In order to console her mistress by her own example, Felicite said:

"Why, Madame, I haven't had any news since six months!—"

"From whom?—"

The servant replied gently:

"Why—from my nephew."

"Oh, yes, your nephew!" And shrugging her shoulders, Madame Aubain continued to pace the floor as if to say: "I did not think of it.—Besides, I do not care, a cabin-boy, a pauper!—but my daughter—what a difference! just think of it!—"

Felicite, although she had been reared roughly, was very indignant. Then she forgot about it.

It appeared quite natural to her that one should lose one's head about Virginia.

The two children were of equal importance; they were united in her heart and their fate was to be the same.

The chemist informed her that Victor's vessel had reached Havana. He had read the information in a newspaper.

Felicite imagined that Havana was a place where people did nothing but smoke, and that Victor walked around among negroes in a cloud of tobacco. Could a person, in case of need, return by land? How far was it from Pont-l'Eveque? In order to learn these things, she questioned Monsieur Bourais. He reached for his map and began some explanations concerning longitudes, and smiled with superiority at Felicite's bewilderment. At last, he took a pencil and pointed out an imperceptible black point in the scallops of an oval blotch, adding: "There it is." She bent over the map; the maze of coloured lines hurt her eyes without enlightening her; and when Bourais asked her what puzzled her, she requested him to show her the house Victor lived in. Bourais threw up his hands, sneezed, and then laughed uproariously; such ignorance delighted his soul; but Felicite failed to understand the cause of his mirth, she whose intelligence was so limited that she perhaps expected to see even the picture of her nephew!

It was two weeks later that Liebard came into the kitchen at market-time, and handed her a letter from her brother-in-law. As neither of them could read, she called upon her mistress.

Madame Aubain, who was counting the stitches of her knitting, laid her work down beside her, opened the letter, started, and in a low tone and with a searching look said: "They tell you of a—misfortune. Your nephew—"

He had died. The letter told nothing more.

100

Felicite dropped on a chair, leaned her head against the back, and closed her lids; presently they grew pink. Then, with drooping head, inert hands and staring eyes she repeated at intervals:

"Poor little chap! poor little chap!"

Liebard watched her and sighed. Madame Aubain was trembling.

She proposed to the girl to go to see her sister in Trouville.

With a single motion, Felicite replied that it was not necessary.

105

There was a silence. Old Liebard thought it about time for him to take leave.

Then Felicite uttered:

"They have no sympathy, they do not care!"

Her head fell forward again, and from time to time, mechanically, she toyed with the long knitting-needles on the work-table.

Some women passed through the yard with a basket of wet clothes.

110

When she saw them through the window, she suddenly remembered her own wash; as she had soaked it the day before, she must go and rinse it now. So she arose and left the room.

Her tub and her board were on the bank of the Toucques. She threw a heap of clothes on the ground, rolled up her sleeves and grasped her bat; and her loud pounding could be heard in the neighbouring gardens. The meadows were empty, the breeze wrinkled the stream, at the bottom of which were long grasses that looked like the hair of corpses floating in the water. She restrained her sorrow and was very brave until night; but, when

she had gone to her own room, she gave way to it, burying her face in the pillow and pressing her two fists against her temples.

A long while afterward, she learned through Victor's captain, the circumstances which surrounded his death. At the hospital they had bled him too much, treating him for yellow fever. Four doctors held him at one time. He died almost instantly, and the chief surgeon had said:

"Here goes another one!"

His parents had always treated him barbarously; she preferred not to see them again, and they made no advances, either from forgetfulness or out of innate hardness.

115

Virginia was growing weaker.

A cough, continual fever, oppressive breathing and spots on her cheeks indicated some serious trouble. Monsieur Popart had advised a sojourn in Provence. Madame Aubain decided that they would go, and she would have had her daughter come home at once, had it not been for the climate of Pont-l'Eveque.

She made an arrangement with a livery-stable man who drove her over to the convent every Tuesday. In the garden there was a terrace, from which the view extends to the Seine. Virginia walked in it, leaning on her mother's arm and treading the dead vine leaves. Sometimes the sun, shining through the clouds, made her blink her lids, when she gazed at the sails in the distance, and let her eyes roam over the horizon from the chateau of Tancarville to the lighthouses of Havre. Then they rested on the harbour. Her mother had bought a little cask of fine Malaga wine, and Virginia, laughing at the idea of becoming intoxicated, would drink a few drops of it, but never more.

Her strength returned. Autumn passed. Felicite began to reassure Madame Aubain. But, one evening, when she returned home after an errand, she met M. Boupart's coach in front of the door; M. Boupart himself was standing in the vestibule and Madame Aubain was tying the strings of her bonnet. "Give me my foot-warmer, my purse and my gloves; and be quick about it," she said.

Virginia had congestion of the lungs; perhaps it was desperate.

120

"Not yet," said the physician, and both got into the carriage, while the snow fell in thick flakes. It was almost night and very cold.

Felicite rushed to the church to light a candle. Then she ran after the coach which she overtook after an hour's chase, sprang up behind and held onto the straps. But suddenly a thought crossed her mind: "The yard had been left open; supposing that burglars got in!" And down she jumped.

The next morning, at daybreak, she called at the doctor's. He had been home, but had left again. Then she waited at the inn, thinking that strangers might bring her a letter. At last, at daylight she took the diligence for Lisieux.

The convent was at the end of a steep and narrow street. When she arrived about at the middle of it, she heard strange noises, a funeral knell. "It must be for someone else," thought she; and she pulled the knocker violently.

After several minutes had elapsed, she heard footsteps, the door was half opened and a nun appeared. The good sister, with an air of compunction, told her that "she had just passed away." And at the same time the tolling of Saint-Leonard's increased.

Felicite reached the second floor. Already at the threshold, she caught sight of Virginia lying on her back, with clasped hands, her mouth open and her head thrown back, beneath a black crucifix inclined toward her, and stiff curtains which were less white than her face. Madame Aubain lay at the foot of the couch, clasping it with her arms and uttering groans of agony. The Mother Superior was standing on the right side of the bed. The three candles on the bureau made red blurs, and the windows were dimmed by the fog outside. The nuns carried Madame Aubain from the room.

For two nights, Felicite never left the corpse. She would repeat the same prayers, sprinkle holy water over the sheets, get up, come back to the bed and contemplate the body. At the end of the first vigil, she noticed that the face had taken on a yellow tinge, the lips grew blue, the nose grew pinched, the eyes were sunken. She kissed them several times and would not have been greatly astonished had Virginia opened them; to souls like this the

supernatural is always quite simple. She washed her, wrapped her in a shroud, put her into the casket, laid a wreath of flowers on her head and arranged her curls. They were blond and of an extraordinary length for her age. Felicite cut off a big lock and put half of it into her bosom, resolving never to part with it.

The body was taken to Pont-l'Eveque, according to Madame Aubain's wishes; she followed the hearse in a closed carriage.

After the ceremony it took three quarters of an hour to reach the cemetery. Paul, sobbing, headed the procession; Monsieur Bourais followed, and then came the principal inhabitants of the town, the women covered with black capes, and Felicite. The memory of her nephew, and the thought that she had not been able to render him these honours, made her doubly unhappy, and she felt as if he were being buried with Virginia.

Madame Aubain's grief was uncontrollable. At first she rebelled against God, thinking that he was unjust to have taken away her child—she who had never done anything wrong, and whose conscience was so pure! But no! she ought to have taken her South. Other doctors would have saved her. She accused herself, prayed to be able to join her child, and cried in the midst of her dreams. Of the latter, one more especially haunted her. Her husband, dressed like a sailor, had come back from a long voyage, and with tears in his eyes told her that he had received the order to take Virginia away. Then they both consulted about a hiding-place.

130

Once she came in from the garden, all upset. A moment before (and she showed the place), the father and daughter had appeared to her, one after the other; they did nothing but look at her.

During several months she remained inert in her room. Felicite scolded her gently; she must keep up for her son and also for the other one, for "her memory."

"Her memory!" replied Madame Aubain, as if she were just awakening, "Oh! yes, yes, you do not forget her!" This was an allusion to the cemetery where she had been expressly forbidden to go.

But Felicite went there every day. At four o'clock exactly, she would go through the town, climb the hill, open the gate and

arrive at Virginia's tomb. It was a small column of pink marble with a flat stone at its base, and it was surrounded by a little plot enclosed by chains. The flower-beds were bright with blossoms. Felicite watered their leaves, renewed the gravel, and knelt on the ground in order to till the earth properly. When Madame Aubain was able to visit the cemetery she felt very much relieved and consoled.

Years passed, all alike and marked by no other events than the return of the great church holidays: Easter, Assumption, All Saints' Day. Household happenings constituted the only data to which in later years they often referred. Thus, in 1825, workmen painted the vestibule; in 1827, a portion of the roof almost killed a man by falling into the yard. In the summer of 1828, it was Madame's turn to offer the hallowed bread; at that time, Bourais disappeared mysteriously; and the old acquaintances, Guyot, Liebard, Madame Lechaptois, Robelin, old Gremenville, paralysed since a long time, passed away one by one. One night, the driver of the mail in Pont-l'Eveque announced the Revolution of July. A few days afterward a new sub-prefect was nominated, the Baron de Larsonniere, ex-consul in America, who, besides his wife, had his sister-in-law and her three grown daughters with him. They were often seen on their lawn, dressed in loose blouses, and they had a parrot and a negro servant. Madame Aubain received a call, which she returned promptly. As soon as she caught sight of them, Felicite would run and notify her mistress. But only one thing was capable of arousing her: a letter from her son.

He could not follow any profession as he was absorbed in drinking. His mother paid his debts and he made fresh ones; and the sighs that she heaved while she knitted at the window reached the ears of Felicite who was spinning in the kitchen.

They walked in the garden together, always speaking of Virginia, and asking each other if such and such a thing would have pleased her, and what she would probably have said on this or that occasion.

All her little belongings were put away in a closet of the room which held the two little beds. But Madame Aubain looked them

over as little as possible. One summer day, however, she resigned herself to the task and when she opened the closet the moths flew out.

Virginia's frocks were hung under a shelf where there were three dolls, some hoops, a doll-house, and a basin which she had used. Felicite and Madame Aubain also took out the skirts, the handkerchiefs, and the stockings and spread them on the beds, before putting them away again. The sun fell on the piteous things, disclosing their spots and the creases formed by the motions of the body. The atmosphere was warm and blue, and a blackbird trilled in the garden; everything seemed to live in happiness. They found a little hat of soft brown plush, but it was entirely moth-eaten. Felicite asked for it. Their eyes met and filled with tears; at last the mistress opened her arms and the servant threw herself against her breast and they hugged each other and giving vent to their grief in a kiss which equalised them for a moment.

It was the first time that this had ever happened, for Madame Aubain was not of an expansive nature. Felicite was as grateful for it as if it had been some favour, and thenceforth loved her with animal-like devotion and a religious veneration.

Her kind-heartedness developed. When she heard the drums of a marching regiment passing through the street, she would stand in the doorway with a jug of cider and give the soldiers a drink. She nursed cholera victims. She protected Polish refugees, and one of them even declared that he wished to marry her. But they quarrelled, for one morning when she returned from the Angelus she found him in the kitchen coolly eating a dish which he had prepared for himself during her absence.

After the Polish refugees, came Colmiche, an old man who was credited with having committed frightful misdeeds in '93. He lived near the river in the ruins of a pig-sty. The urchins peeped at him through the cracks in the walls and threw stones that fell on his miserable bed, where he lay gasping with catarrh, with long hair, inflamed eyelids, and a tumour as big as his head on one arm.

She got him some linen, tried to clean his hovel and dreamed of installing him in the bake-house without his being in Madame's way. When the cancer broke, she dressed it every day; sometimes she brought him some cake and placed him in the sun on a bundle of hay; and the poor old creature, trembling and drooling, would thank her in his broken voice, and put out his hands whenever she left him. Finally he died; and she had a mass said for the repose of his soul.

That day a great joy came to her: at dinner-time, Madame de Larsonniere's servant called with the parrot, the cage, and the perch and chain and lock. A note from the baroness told Madame Aubain that as her husband had been promoted to a prefecture, they were leaving that night, and she begged her to accept the bird as a remembrance and a token of her esteem.

Since a long time the parrot had been on Felicite's mind, because he came from America, which reminded her of Victor, and she had approached the negro on the subject.

145

Once even, she had said:

"How glad Madame would be to have him!"

The man had repeated this remark to his mistress who, not being able to keep the bird, took this means of getting rid of it.

Chapter IV

He was called Loulou. His body was green, his head blue, the tips of his wings were pink and his breast was golden.

But he had the tiresome tricks of biting his perch, pulling his feathers out, scattering refuse and spilling the water of his bath. Madame Aubain grew tired of him and gave him to Felicite for good.

150

She undertook his education, and soon he was able to repeat: "Pretty boy! Your servant, sir! I salute you, Marie!" His perch was placed near the door and several persons were astonished that he did not answer to the name of "Jacquot," for every parrot is called Jacquot. They called him a goose and a log, and these taunts were like so many dagger thrusts to Felicite. Strange stubbornness of the bird which would not talk when people watched him!

Nevertheless, he sought society; for on Sunday, when the ladies Rochefeuille, Monsieur de Houpeville and the new habitues, Onfroy, the chemist, Monsieur Varin and Captain Mathieu, dropped in for their game of cards, he struck the window-panes with his wings and made such a racket that it was impossible to talk.

Bourais' face must have appeared very funny to Loulou. As soon as he saw him he would begin to roar. His voice re-echoed in the yard, and the neighbours would come to the windows and begin to laugh, too; and in order that the parrot might not see him, Monsieur Bourais edged along the wall, pushed his hat over his eyes to hide his profile, and entered by the garden door, and the looks he gave the bird lacked affection. Loulou, having thrust his head into the butcher-boy's basket, received a slap, and from that time he always tried to nip his enemy. Fabu threatened to ring his neck, although he was not cruelly inclined, notwithstanding his big whiskers and tattooings. On the contrary, he rather liked the bird, and, out of devilry, tried to teach him oaths. Felicite, whom his manner alarmed, put Loulou in the kitchen, took off his chain and let him walk all over the house.

When he went downstairs, he rested his beak on the steps, lifted his right foot and then his left one; but his mistress feared that such feats would give him vertigo. He became ill and was unable to eat. There was a small growth under his tongue like those chickens are sometimes afflicted with. Felicite pulled it off with her nails and cured him. One day, Paul was imprudent enough to blow the smoke of his cigar in his face; another time, Madame Lormeau was teasing him with the tip of her umbrella and he swallowed the tip. Finally he got lost.

She had put him on the grass to cool him and went away only for a second; when she returned, she found no parrot! She hunted among the bushes, on the bank of the river, and on the roofs, without paying any attention to Madame Aubain who screamed at her: "Take care! you must be insane!" Then she searched every garden in Pont-l'Eveque and stopped the passers-by to inquire of them: "Haven't you perhaps seen my parrot?" To those who had never seen the parrot, she described him minutely. Suddenly she

thought she saw something green fluttering behind the mills at the foot of the hill. But when she was at the top of the hill she could not see it. A hod-carrier told her that he had just seen the bird in Saint-Melaine, in Mother Simon's store. She rushed to the place. The people did not know what she was talking about. At last she came home, exhausted, with her slippers worn to shreds, and despair in her heart. She sat down on the bench near Madame and was telling of her search when presently a light weight dropped on her shoulder—Loulou! What the deuce had he been doing? Perhaps he had just taken a little walk around the town!

She did not easily forget her scare; in fact, she never got over it. In consequence of a cold, she caught a sore throat; and some time later she had an earache. Three years later she was stone deaf, and spoke in a very loud voice even in church. Although her sins might have been proclaimed throughout the diocese without any shame to herself, or ill effects to the community, the cure thought it advisable to receive her confession in the vestry-room.

Imaginary buzzings also added to her bewilderment. Her mistress often said to her: "My goodness, how stupid you are!" and she would answer: "Yes, Madame," and look for something.

The narrow circle of her ideas grew more restricted than it already was; the bellowing of the oxen, the chime of the bells no longer reached her intelligence. All things moved silently, like ghosts. Only one noise penetrated her ears; the parrot's voice.

As if to divert her mind, he reproduced for her the tick-tack of the spit in the kitchen, the shrill cry of the fish-vendors, the saw of the carpenter who had a shop opposite, and when the door-bell rang, he would imitate Madame Aubain: "Felicite! go to the front door."

They held conversations together, Loulou repeating the three phrases of his repertory over and over, Felicite replying by words that had no greater meaning, but in which she poured out her feelings. In her isolation, the parrot was almost a son, a love. He climbed upon her fingers, pecked at her lips, clung to her shawl, and when she rocked her head to and fro like a nurse, the big wings of her cap and the wings of the bird flapped in unison. When clouds gathered on the horizon and the thunder rumbled,

Loulou would scream, perhaps because he remembered the storms in his native forests. The dripping of the rain would excite him to frenzy; he flapped around, struck the ceiling with his wings, upset everything, and would finally fly into the garden to play. Then he would come back into the room, light on one of the andirons, and hop around in order to get dry.

One morning during the terrible winter of 1837, when she had put him in front of the fire-place on account of the cold, she found him dead in his cage, hanging to the wire bars with his head down. He had probably died of congestion. But she believed that he had been poisoned, and although she had no proofs whatever, her suspicion rested on Fabu.

She wept so sorely that her mistress said: "Why don't you have him stuffed?"

She asked the advice of the chemist, who had always been kind to the bird.

He wrote to Havre for her. A certain man named Fellacher consented to do the work. But, as the diligence driver often lost parcels entrusted to him, Felicite resolved to take her pet to Honfleur herself.

Leafless apple-trees lined the edges of the road. The ditches were covered with ice. The dogs on the neighbouring farms barked; and Felicite, with her hands beneath her cape, her little black sabots and her basket, trotted along nimbly in the middle of the sidewalk. She crossed the forest, passed by the Haut-Chene, and reached Saint-Gatien.

165

Behind her, in a cloud of dust and impelled by the steep incline, a mail-coach drawn by galloping horses advanced like a whirlwind. When he saw a woman in the middle of the road, who did not get out of the way, the driver stood up in his seat and shouted to her and so did the postilion, while the four horses, which he could not hold back, accelerated their pace; the two leaders were almost upon her; with a jerk of the reins he threw them to one side, but, furious at the incident, he lifted his big whip and lashed her from her head to her feet with such violence that she fell to the ground unconscious.

Her first thought, when she recovered her senses, was to open the basket. Loulou was unharmed. She felt a sting on her right cheek; when she took her hand away it was red, for the blood was flowing.

She sat down on a pile of stones, and sopped her cheek with her handkerchief; then she ate a crust of bread she had put in her basket, and consoled herself by looking at the bird.

Arriving at the top of Ecquemanville, she saw the lights of Honfleur shining in the distance like so many stars; further on, the ocean spread out in a confused mass. Then a weakness came over her; the misery of her childhood, the disappointment of her first love, the departure of her nephew, the death of Virginia; all these things came back to her at once, and, rising like a swelling tide in her throat, almost choked her.

Then she wished to speak to the captain of the vessel, and without stating what she was sending, she gave him some instructions.

170

Fellacher kept the parrot a long time. He always promised that it would be ready for the following week; after six months he announced the shipment of a case, and that was the end of it. Really, it seemed as if Loulou would never come back to his home. "They have stolen him," thought Felicite.

Finally he arrived, sitting bold upright on a branch which could be screwed into a mahogany pedestal, with his foot in the air, his head on one side, and in his beak a nut which the naturalist, from love of the sumptuous, had gilded. She put him in her room.

This place, to which only a chosen few were admitted, looked like a chapel and a second-hand shop, so filled was it with devotional and heterogeneous things. The door could not be opened easily on account of the presence of a large wardrobe. Opposite the window that looked out into the garden, a bull's-eye opened on the yard; a table was placed by the cot and held a wash-basin, two combs, and a piece of blue soap in a broken saucer. On the walls were rosaries, medals, a number of Holy Virgins, and a holy-water basin made out of a cocoanut; on the bureau, which was covered with a napkin like an altar, stood the

box of shells that Victor had given her; also a watering-can and a balloon, writing-books, the engraved geography and a pair of shoes; on the nail which held the mirror, hung Virginia's little plush hat! Felicite carried this sort of respect so far that she even kept one of Monsieur's old coats. All the things which Madame Aubain discarded, Felicite begged for her own room. Thus, she had artificial flowers on the edge of the bureau, and the picture of the Comte d'Artois in the recess of the window. By means of a board, Loulou was set on a portion of the chimney which advanced into the room. Every morning when she awoke, she saw him in the dim light of dawn and recalled bygone days and the smallest details of insignificant actions, without any sense of bitterness or grief.

As she was unable to communicate with people, she lived in a sort of somnambulistic torpor. The processions of Corpus-Christi Day seemed to wake her up. She visited the neighbours to beg for candlesticks and mats so as to adorn the temporary altars in the street.

In church, she always gazed at the Holy Ghost, and noticed that there was something about it that resembled a parrot. The likenesses appeared even more striking on a coloured picture by Espinal, representing the baptism of our Saviour. With his scarlet wings and emerald body, it was really the image of Loulou. Having bought the picture, she hung it near the one of the Comte d'Artois so that she could take them in at one glance.

175

They associated in her mind, the parrot becoming sanctified through the neighbourhood of the Holy Ghost, and the latter becoming more lifelike in her eyes, and more comprehensible. In all probability the Father had never chosen as messenger a dove, as the latter has no voice, but rather one of Loulou's ancestors. And Felicite said her prayers in front of the coloured picture, though from time to time she turned slightly towards the bird.

She desired very much to enter in the ranks of the "Daughters of the Virgin." But Madame Aubain dissuaded her from it.

A most important event occurred: Paul's marriage.

After being first a notary's clerk, then in business, then in the customs, and a tax collector, and having even applied for a

position in the administration of woods and forests, he had at last, when he was thirty-six years old, by a divine inspiration, found his vocation: registrature! and he displayed such a high ability that an inspector had offered him his daughter and his influence.

Paul, who had become quite settled, brought his bride to visit his mother.

180

But she looked down upon the customs of Pont-l'Eveque, put on airs, and hurt Felicite's feelings. Madame Aubain felt relieved when she left.

The following week they learned of Monsieur Bourais' death in an inn. There were rumours of suicide, which were confirmed; doubts concerning his integrity arose. Madame Aubain looked over her accounts and soon discovered his numerous embezzlements; sales of wood which had been concealed from her, false receipts, etc. Furthermore, he had an illegitimate child, and entertained a friendship for "a person in Dozule."

These base actions affected her very much. In March, 1853, she developed a pain in her chest; her tongue looked as if it were coated with smoke, and the leeches they applied did not relieve her oppression; and on the ninth evening she died, being just seventy-two years old.

People thought that she was younger, because her hair, which she wore in bands framing her pale face, was brown. Few friends regretted her loss, for her manner was so haughty that she did not attract them. Felicite mourned for her as servants seldom mourn for their masters. The fact that Madame should die before herself perplexed her mind and seemed contrary to the order of things, and absolutely monstrous and inadmissible. Ten days later (the time to journey from Besancon), the heirs arrived. Her daughter-in-law ransacked the drawers, kept some of the furniture, and sold the rest; then they went back to their own home.

Madame's armchair, foot-warmer, work-table, the eight chairs, everything was gone! The places occupied by the pictures formed yellow squares on the walls. They had taken the two little beds, and the wardrobe had been emptied of Virginia's belongings! Felicite went upstairs, overcome with grief.

185

The following day a sign was posted on the door; the chemist screamed in her ear that the house was for sale.

For a moment she tottered, and had to sit down.

What hurt her most was to give up her room,—so nice for poor Loulou! She looked at him in despair and implored the Holy Ghost, and it was this way that she contracted the idolatrous habit of saying her prayers kneeling in front of the bird. Sometimes the sun fell through the window on his glass eye, and lighted a spark in it which sent Felicite into ecstasy.

Her mistress had left her an income of three hundred and eighty francs. The garden supplied her with vegetables. As for clothes, she had enough to last her till the end of her days, and she economised on the light by going to bed at dusk.

She rarely went out, in order to avoid passing in front of the second-hand dealer's shop where there was some of the old furniture. Since her fainting spell, she dragged her leg, and as her strength was failing rapidly, old Mother Simon, who had lost her money in the grocery business, came every morning to chop the wood and pump the water.

190

Her eyesight grew dim. She did not open the shutters after that. Many years passed. But the house did not sell or rent. Fearing that she would be put out, Felicite did not ask for repairs. The laths of the roof were rotting away, and during one whole winter her bolster was wet. After Easter she spit blood.

Then Mother Simon went for a doctor. Felicite wished to know what her complaint was. But, being too deaf to hear, she caught only one word: "Pneumonia." She was familiar with it and gently answered:—"Ah! like Madame," thinking it quite natural that she should follow her mistress.

The time for the altars in the street drew near.

The first one was always erected at the foot of the hill, the second in front of the post-office, and the third in the middle of the street. This position occasioned some rivalry among the women and they finally decided upon Madame Aubain's yard.

Felicite's fever grew worse. She was sorry that she could not do anything for the altar. If she could, at least, have contributed something towards it! Then she thought of the parrot. Her

195

neighbours objected that it would not be proper. But the cure gave his consent and she was so grateful for it that she begged him to accept after her death, her only treasure, Loulou. From Tuesday until Saturday, the day before the event, she coughed more frequently. In the evening her face was contracted, her lips stuck to her gums and she began to vomit; and on the following day, she felt so low that she called for a priest.

Three neighbours surrounded her when the dominie administered the Extreme Unction. Afterwards she said that she wished to speak to Fabu.

He arrived in his Sunday clothes, very ill at ease among the funereal surroundings.

"Forgive me," she said, making an effort to extend her arm, "I believed it was you who killed him!"

What did such accusations mean? Suspect a man like him of murder! And Fabu became excited and was about to make trouble.

"Don't you see she is not in her right mind?"

200

From time to time Felicite spoke to shadows. The women left her and Mother Simon sat down to breakfast.

A little later, she took Loulou and holding him up to Felicite:

"Say good-bye to him, now!" she commanded.

Although he was not a corpse, he was eaten up by worms; one of his wings was broken and the wadding was coming out of his body. But Felicite was blind now, and she took him and laid him against her cheek. Then Mother Simon removed him in order to set him on the altar.

Chapter V

The grass exhaled an odour of summer; flies buzzed in the air, the sun shone on the river and warmed the slated roof. Old Mother Simon had returned to Felicite and was peacefully falling asleep.

205

The ringing of bells woke her; the people were coming out of church. Felicite's delirium subsided. By thinking of the procession, she was able to see it as if she had taken part in it. All

the school-children, the singers and the firemen walked on the sidewalks, while in the middle of the street came first the custodian of the church with his halberd, then the beadle with a large cross, the teacher in charge of the boys and a sister escorting the little girls; three of the smallest ones, with curly heads, threw rose leaves into the air; the deacon with outstretched arms conducted the music; and two incense-bearers turned with each step they took toward the Holy Sacrament, which was carried by M. le Cure, attired in his handsome chasuble and walking under a canopy of red velvet supported by four men. A crowd of people followed, jammed between the walls of the houses hung with white sheets; at last the procession arrived at the foot of the hill.

A cold sweat broke out on Felicite's forehead. Mother Simon wiped it away with a cloth, saying inwardly that someday she would have to go through the same thing herself.

The murmur of the crowd grew louder, was very distinct for a moment and then died away. A volley of musketry shook the window-panes. It was the postilions saluting the Sacrament. Felicite rolled her eyes, and said as loudly as she could:

"Is he all right?" meaning the parrot.

Her death agony began. A rattle that grew more and more rapid shook her body. Froth appeared at the corners of her mouth, and her whole frame trembled. In a little while could be heard the music of the bass horns, the clear voices of the children and the men's deeper notes. At intervals all was still, and their shoes sounded like a herd of cattle passing over the grass.

The clergy appeared in the yard. Mother Simon climbed on a chair to reach the bull's-eye, and in this manner could see the altar. It was covered with a lace cloth and draped with green wreaths. In the middle stood a little frame containing relics; at the corners were two little orange-trees, and all along the edge were silver candlesticks, porcelain vases containing sun-flowers, lilies, peonies, and tufts of hydrangeas. This mount of bright colours descended diagonally from the first floor to the carpet that covered the sidewalk. Rare objects arrested one's eye. A golden sugar-bowl was crowned with violets, earrings set with Alencon stones were displayed on green moss, and two Chinese screens

with their bright landscapes were near by. Loulou, hidden beneath roses, showed nothing but his blue head which looked like a piece of lapis-lazuli.

The singers, the canopy-bearers and the children lined up against the sides of the yard. Slowly the priest ascended the steps and placed his shining sun on the lace cloth. Everybody knelt. There was deep silence; and the censers slipping on their chains were swung high in the air. A blue vapour rose in Felicite's room. She opened her nostrils and inhaled with a mystic sensuousness; then she closed her lids. Her lips smiled. The beats of her heart grew fainter and fainter, and vaguer, like a fountain giving out, like an echo dying away;—and when she exhaled her last breath, she thought she saw in the half-opened heavens a gigantic parrot hovering above her head.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)

Notes from Underground

Russian

Realism

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's life was every bit as eventful as the stories that he wrote. As a young man, he was sentenced to be executed by a firing squad for being part of a group that was considered subversive. He received a last-minute reprieve from the tsar, and Dostoyevsky instead spent four years doing hard labor in a Siberian prison camp. Those experiences informed his works; in addition to characters who face imminent death or time in Siberia, there are characters with epilepsy, gambling problems, bad luck in love, and ongoing poverty—all conditions that he faced. His fame began with his first novella, *Poor Folk* (1845), but he never made enough money from his writings to support his family in comfort. Despite all of these hardships, Dostoyevsky managed to become one of Russia's greatest writers. Leo Tolstoy praised Dostoyevsky as the better writer, and his works influenced writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Jean-Paul Sartre, and William Faulkner, among many others (including Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud). Dostoyevsky is considered the first existentialist novelist; for him, the psychology of the characters is the basis for realism (their experience of the world is the world). In novels such as *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), characters range from murderers to devout followers of the Russian Orthodox Church (Dostoyevsky's own religious preference), all portrayed with psychological clarity. In *Notes from Underground* (1864), Dostoyevsky satirizes (among other things) the idea that scientific progress will create a utopian society. In Part One, the unnamed narrator, or Underground Man, may seem crazy at first, with what appear to be random and contradictory thoughts. In fact, the argument is constructed very carefully to demonstrate that human beings demand free will—and that they will give up everything to get it. In Part Two, which is an extended flashback, the Underground Man offers a practical demonstration of his theories in his own past. Of particular interest is his love-hate relationship

with Romanticism; the narrator ultimately argues that all of us prefer Romanticism to real life (or Realism), simply because real life is not as satisfying as escapism.

Consider while reading:

1. The Underground Man (UM) contradicts himself in part because he wants to do so (free will). He also claims to be telling us the truth. Why does he need to write to an imaginary audience if he does not intend to show his work to anyone?
2. What does the brick wall represent to the UM?
3. What is the difference between justice and revenge for the UM, and why is it so problematic?
4. What do the chicken coop and the crystal palace represent for the UM?
5. In what ways is Liza braver than the UM? What victory does she have at the end?

Written by Laura Getty

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

License: Public Domain

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Translated by Constance Garnett

The author of the diary and the diary itself are, of course, imaginary. Nevertheless it is clear that such persons as the writer of these notes not only may, but positively must, exist in our society, when we consider the circumstances in the midst of which our society is formed. I have tried to expose to the view of the public more distinctly than is commonly done, one of the characters of the recent past. He is one of the representatives of a generation still living. In this fragment, entitled "Underground," this person introduces himself and his views, and, as it were, tries to explain the causes owing to which he has made his appearance and was bound to make his appearance in our midst. In the second fragment there are added the actual notes of this person concerning certain events in his life.

—AUTHOR'S NOTE

PART I Underground

1

I am a sick man. . . . I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I believe my liver is diseased. However, I know nothing at all about my disease, and do not know for certain what ails me. I don't consult a doctor for it, and never have, though I have a respect for medicine and doctors. Besides, I am extremely superstitious, sufficiently so to respect medicine, anyway (I am well-educated enough not to be superstitious, but I am superstitious). No, I refuse to consult a doctor from spite. That you probably will not understand. Well, I understand it, though. Of course, I can't explain who it is precisely that I am mortifying in this case by my spite: I am perfectly well aware that I cannot "pay out" the doctors by not consulting them; I know better than anyone that by all this I am only injuring myself and no one else. But still, if I don't consult a doctor it is from spite. My liver is bad, well—let it get worse!

I have been going on like that for a long time—twenty years. Now I am forty. I used to be in the government service, but am no

longer. I was a spiteful official. I was rude and took pleasure in being so. I did not take bribes, you see, so I was bound to find a recompense in that, at least. (A poor jest, but I will not scratch it out. I wrote it thinking it would sound very witty; but now that I have seen myself that I only wanted to show off in a despicable way, I will not scratch it out on purpose!)

When petitioners used to come for information to the table at which I sat, I used to grind my teeth at them, and felt intense enjoyment when I succeeded in making anybody unhappy. I almost did succeed. For the most part they were all timid people—of course, they were petitioners. But of the uppish ones there was one officer in particular I could not endure. He simply would not be humble, and clanked his sword in a disgusting way. I carried on a feud with him for eighteen months over that sword. At last I got the better of him. He left off clanking it. That happened in my youth, though.

But do you know, gentlemen, what was the chief point about my spite? Why, the whole point, the real sting of it lay in the fact that continually, even in the moment of the acutest spleen, I was inwardly conscious with shame that I was not only not a spiteful but not even an embittered man, that I was simply scaring sparrows at random and amusing myself by it. I might foam at the mouth, but bring me a doll to play with, give me a cup of tea with sugar in it, and maybe I should be appeased. I might even be genuinely touched, though probably I should grind my teeth at myself afterwards and lie awake at night with shame for months after. That was my way.

I was lying when I said just now that I was a spiteful official. I was lying from spite. I was simply amusing myself with the petitioners and with the officer, and in reality I never could become spiteful. I was conscious every moment in myself of many, very many elements absolutely opposite to that. I felt them positively swarming in me, these opposite elements. I knew that they had been swarming in me all my life and craving some outlet from me, but I would not let them, would not let them, purposely would not let them come out. They tormented me till I was ashamed: they drove me to convulsions and—sickened me, at

last, how they sickened me! Now, are not you fancying, gentlemen, that I am expressing remorse for something now, that I am asking your forgiveness for something? I am sure you are fancying that . . . However, I assure you I do not care if you are.

It was not only that I could not become spiteful, I did not know how to become anything; neither spiteful nor kind, neither a rascal nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect. Now, I am living out my life in my corner, taunting myself with the spiteful and useless consolation that an intelligent man cannot become anything seriously, and it is only the fool who becomes anything. Yes, a man in the nineteenth century must and morally ought to be pre-eminently a characterless creature; a man of character, an active man is pre-eminently a limited creature. That is my conviction of forty years. I am forty years old now, and you know forty years is a whole lifetime; you know it is extreme old age. To live longer than forty years is bad manners, is vulgar, immoral. Who does live beyond forty? Answer that, sincerely and honestly I will tell you who do: fools and worthless fellows. I tell all old men that to their face, all these venerable old men, all these silver-haired and reverend seniors! I tell the whole world that to its face! I have a right to say so, for I shall go on living to sixty myself. To seventy! To eighty! . . . Stay, let me take a breath . . . !

You imagine no doubt, gentlemen, that I want to amuse you. You are mistaken in that, too. I am by no means such a mirthful person as you imagine, or as you may imagine; however, irritated by all this babble (and I feel that you are irritated) you think fit to ask me who I am—then my answer is, I am a collegiate assessor. I was in the service that I might have something to eat (and solely for that reason), and when last year a distant relation left me six thousand roubles in his will I immediately retired from the service and settled down in my corner. I used to live in this corner before, but now I have settled down in it. My room is a wretched, horrid one in the outskirts of the town. My servant is an old country-woman, ill-natured from stupidity, and, moreover, there is always a nasty smell about her. I am told that the Petersburg climate is bad for me, and that with my small means it is very expensive to live in Petersburg. I know all that better than all these sage and

experienced counsellors and monitors. . . . But I am remaining in Petersburg; I am not going away from Petersburg! I am not going away because . . . ech! Why, it is absolutely no matter whether I am going away or not going away.

But what can a decent man speak of with most pleasure?

Answer: Of himself.

Well, so I will talk about myself.

10

2

I want now to tell you, gentlemen, whether you care to hear it or not, why I could not even become an insect. I tell you solemnly, that I have many times tried to become an insect. But I was not equal even to that. I swear, gentlemen, that to be too conscious is an illness—a real thorough-going illness. For man's everyday needs, it would have been quite enough to have the ordinary human consciousness, that is, half or a quarter of the amount which falls to the lot of a cultivated man of our unhappy nineteenth century, especially one who has the fatal ill-luck to inhabit Petersburg, the most theoretical and intentional town on the whole terrestrial globe. (There are intentional and unintentional towns.) It would have been quite enough, for instance, to have the consciousness by which all so-called direct persons and men of action live. I bet you think I am writing all this from affectation, to be witty at the expense of men of action; and what is more, that from ill-bred affectation, I am clanking a sword like my officer. But, gentlemen, whoever can pride himself on his diseases and even swagger over them?

Though, after all, everyone does do that; people do pride themselves on their diseases, and I do, maybe, more than anyone. We will not dispute it; my contention was absurd. But yet I am firmly persuaded that a great deal of consciousness, every sort of consciousness, in fact, is a disease. I stick to that. Let us leave that, too, for a minute. Tell me this: why does it happen that at the very, yes, at the very moments when I am most capable of feeling every refinement of all that is "sublime and beautiful," as they used to say at one time, it would, as though of design, happen to

me not only to feel but to do such ugly things, such that . . . Well, in short, actions that all, perhaps, commit; but which, as though purposely, occurred to me at the very time when I was most conscious that they ought not to be committed. The more conscious I was of goodness and of all that was "sublime and beautiful," the more deeply I sank into my mire and the more ready I was to sink in it altogether. But the chief point was that all this was, as it were, not accidental in me, but as though it were bound to be so. It was as though it were my most normal condition, and not in the least disease or depravity, so that at last all desire in me to struggle against this depravity passed. It ended by my almost believing (perhaps actually believing) that this was perhaps my normal condition. But at first, in the beginning, what agonies I endured in that struggle! I did not believe it was the same with other people, and all my life I hid this fact about myself as a secret. I was ashamed (even now, perhaps, I am ashamed): I got to the point of feeling a sort of secret abnormal, despicable enjoyment in returning home to my corner on some disgusting Petersburg night, acutely conscious that that day I had committed a loathsome action again, that what was done could never be undone, and secretly, inwardly gnawing, gnawing at myself for it, tearing and consuming myself till at last the bitterness turned into a sort of shameful accursed sweetness, and at last—into positive real enjoyment! Yes, into enjoyment, into enjoyment! I insist upon that. I have spoken of this because I keep wanting to know for a fact whether other people feel such enjoyment. I will explain; the enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one's own degradation; it was from feeling oneself that one had reached the last barrier, that it was horrible, but that it could not be otherwise; that there was no escape for you; that you never could become a different man; that even if time and faith were still left you to change into something different you would most likely not wish to change; or if you did wish to, even then you would do nothing; because perhaps in reality there was nothing for you to change into.

And the worst of it was, and the root of it all, that it was all in accord with the normal fundamental laws of over-acute

consciousness, and with the inertia that was the direct result of those laws, and that consequently one was not only unable to change but could do absolutely nothing. Thus it would follow, as the result of acute consciousness, that one is not to blame in being a scoundrel; as though that were any consolation to the scoundrel once he has come to realise that he actually is a scoundrel. But enough. . . . Ech, I have talked a lot of nonsense, but what have I explained? How is enjoyment in this to be explained? But I will explain it. I will get to the bottom of it! That is why I have taken up my pen . . .

I, for instance, have a great deal of AMOUR PROPRE. I am as suspicious and prone to take offence as a humpback or a dwarf. But upon my word I sometimes have had moments when if I had happened to be slapped in the face I should, perhaps, have been positively glad of it. I say, in earnest, that I should probably have been able to discover even in that a peculiar sort of enjoyment—the enjoyment, of course, of despair; but in despair there are the most intense enjoyments, especially when one is very acutely conscious of the hopelessness of one's position. And when one is slapped in the face—why then the consciousness of being rubbed into a pulp would positively overwhelm one. The worst of it is, look at it which way one will, it still turns out that I was always the most to blame in everything. And what is most humiliating of all, to blame for no fault of my own but, so to say, through the laws of nature. In the first place, to blame because I am cleverer than any of the people surrounding me. (I have always considered myself cleverer than any of the people surrounding me, and sometimes, would you believe it, have been positively ashamed of it. At any rate, I have all my life, as it were, turned my eyes away and never could look people straight in the face.) To blame, finally, because even if I had had magnanimity, I should only have had more suffering from the sense of its uselessness. I should certainly have never been able to do anything from being magnanimous—neither to forgive, for my assailant would perhaps have slapped me from the laws of nature, and one cannot forgive the laws of nature; nor to forget, for even if it were owing to the laws of nature, it is insulting all the same. Finally, even if I had

wanted to be anything but magnanimous, had desired on the contrary to revenge myself on my assailant, I could not have revenged myself on anyone for anything because I should certainly never have made up my mind to do anything, even if I had been able to. Why should I not have made up my mind? About that in particular I want to say a few words.

3

With people who know how to revenge themselves and to stand up for themselves in general, how is it done? Why, when they are possessed, let us suppose, by the feeling of revenge, then for the time there is nothing else but that feeling left in their whole being. Such a gentleman simply dashes straight for his object like an infuriated bull with its horns down, and nothing but a wall will stop him. (By the way: facing the wall, such gentlemen—that is, the "direct" persons and men of action—are genuinely nonplussed. For them a wall is not an evasion, as for us people who think and consequently do nothing; it is not an excuse for turning aside, an excuse for which we are always very glad, though we scarcely believe in it ourselves, as a rule. No, they are nonplussed in all sincerity. The wall has for them something tranquillising, morally soothing, final—maybe even something mysterious . . . but of the wall later.)

15

Well, such a direct person I regard as the real normal man, as his tender mother nature wished to see him when she graciously brought him into being on the earth. I envy such a man till I am green in the face. He is stupid. I am not disputing that, but perhaps the normal man should be stupid, how do you know? Perhaps it is very beautiful, in fact. And I am the more persuaded of that suspicion, if one can call it so, by the fact that if you take, for instance, the antithesis of the normal man, that is, the man of acute consciousness, who has come, of course, not out of the lap of nature but out of a retort (this is almost mysticism, gentlemen, but I suspect this, too), this retort-made man is sometimes so nonplussed in the presence of his antithesis that with all his exaggerated consciousness he genuinely thinks of himself as a

mouse and not a man. It may be an acutely conscious mouse, yet it is a mouse, while the other is a man, and therefore, et cetera, et cetera. And the worst of it is, he himself, his very own self, looks on himself as a mouse; no one asks him to do so; and that is an important point. Now let us look at this mouse in action. Let us suppose, for instance, that it feels insulted, too (and it almost always does feel insulted), and wants to revenge itself, too. There may even be a greater accumulation of spite in it than in L'HOMME DE LA NATURE ET DE LA VERITE. The base and nasty desire to vent that spite on its assailant rankles perhaps even more nastily in it than in L'HOMME DE LA NATURE ET DE LA VERITE. For through his innate stupidity the latter looks upon his revenge as justice pure and simple; while in consequence of his acute consciousness the mouse does not believe in the justice of it. To come at last to the deed itself, to the very act of revenge. Apart from the one fundamental nastiness the luckless mouse succeeds in creating around it so many other nastinesses in the form of doubts and questions, adds to the one question so many unsettled questions that there inevitably works up around it a sort of fatal brew, a stinking mess, made up of its doubts, emotions, and of the contempt spat upon it by the direct men of action who stand solemnly about it as judges and arbitrators, laughing at it till their healthy sides ache. Of course the only thing left for it is to dismiss all that with a wave of its paw, and, with a smile of assumed contempt in which it does not even itself believe, creep ignominiously into its mouse-hole. There in its nasty, stinking, underground home our insulted, crushed and ridiculed mouse promptly becomes absorbed in cold, malignant and, above all, everlasting spite. For forty years together it will remember its injury down to the smallest, most ignominious details, and every time will add, of itself, details still more ignominious, spitefully teasing and tormenting itself with its own imagination. It will itself be ashamed of its imaginings, but yet it will recall it all, it will go over and over every detail, it will invent unheard of things against itself, pretending that those things might happen, and will forgive nothing. Maybe it will begin to revenge itself, too, but, as it were, piecemeal, in trivial

ways, from behind the stove, incognito, without believing either in its own right to vengeance, or in the success of its revenge, knowing that from all its efforts at revenge it will suffer a hundred times more than he on whom it revenges itself, while he, I daresay, will not even scratch himself. On its deathbed it will recall it all over again, with interest accumulated over all the years and . . .

But it is just in that cold, abominable half despair, half belief, in that conscious burying oneself alive for grief in the underworld for forty years, in that acutely recognised and yet partly doubtful hopelessness of one's position, in that hell of unsatisfied desires turned inward, in that fever of oscillations, of resolutions determined forever and repented of again a minute later—that the savour of that strange enjoyment of which I have spoken lies. It is so subtle, so difficult of analysis, that persons who are a little limited, or even simply persons of strong nerves, will not understand a single atom of it. "Possibly," you will add on your own account with a grin, "people will not understand it either who have never received a slap in the face," and in that way you will politely hint to me that I, too, perhaps, have had the experience of a slap in the face in my life, and so I speak as one who knows. I bet that you are thinking that. But set your minds at rest, gentlemen, I have not received a slap in the face, though it is absolutely a matter of indifference to me what you may think about it. Possibly, I even regret, myself, that I have given so few slaps in the face during my life. But enough . . . not another word on that subject of such extreme interest to you.

I will continue calmly concerning persons with strong nerves who do not understand a certain refinement of enjoyment. Though in certain circumstances these gentlemen bellow their loudest like bulls, though this, let us suppose, does them the greatest credit, yet, as I have said already, confronted with the impossible they subside at once. The impossible means the stone wall! What stone wall? Why, of course, the laws of nature, the deductions of natural science, mathematics. As soon as they prove to you, for instance, that you are descended from a monkey, then it is no use scowling, accept it for a fact. When they prove to you

that in reality one drop of your own fat must be dearer to you than a hundred thousand of your fellow-creatures, and that this conclusion is the final solution of all so-called virtues and duties and all such prejudices and fancies, then you have just to accept it, there is no help for it, for twice two is a law of mathematics. Just try refuting it.

"Upon my word," they will shout at you, "it is no use protesting: it is a case of twice two makes four! Nature does not ask your permission, she has nothing to do with your wishes, and whether you like her laws or dislike them, you are bound to accept her as she is, and consequently all her conclusions. A wall, you see, is a wall . . . and so on, and so on."

Merciful Heavens! but what do I care for the laws of nature and arithmetic, when, for some reason I dislike those laws and the fact that twice two makes four? Of course I cannot break through the wall by battering my head against it if I really have not the strength to knock it down, but I am not going to be reconciled to it simply because it is a stone wall and I have not the strength.

As though such a stone wall really were a consolation, and really did contain some word of conciliation, simply because it is as true as twice two makes four. Oh, absurdity of absurdities! How much better it is to understand it all, to recognise it all, all the impossibilities and the stone wall; not to be reconciled to one of those impossibilities and stone walls if it disgusts you to be reconciled to it; by the way of the most inevitable, logical combinations to reach the most revolting conclusions on the everlasting theme, that even for the stone wall you are yourself somehow to blame, though again it is as clear as day you are not to blame in the least, and therefore grinding your teeth in silent impotence to sink into luxurious inertia, brooding on the fact that there is no one even for you to feel vindictive against, that you have not, and perhaps never will have, an object for your spite, that it is a sleight of hand, a bit of juggling, a card-sharper's trick, that it is simply a mess, no knowing what and no knowing who, but in spite of all these uncertainties and jugglings, still there is an ache in you, and the more you do not know, the worse the ache.

"Ha, ha, ha! You will be finding enjoyment in toothache next," you cry, with a laugh.

"Well, even in toothache there is enjoyment," I answer. I had toothache for a whole month and I know there is. In that case, of course, people are not spiteful in silence, but moan; but they are not candid moans, they are malignant moans, and the malignancy is the whole point. The enjoyment of the sufferer finds expression in those moans; if he did not feel enjoyment in them he would not moan. It is a good example, gentlemen, and I will develop it. Those moans express in the first place all the aimlessness of your pain, which is so humiliating to your consciousness; the whole legal system of nature on which you spit disdainfully, of course, but from which you suffer all the same while she does not. They express the consciousness that you have no enemy to punish, but that you have pain; the consciousness that in spite of all possible Wagenheims you are in complete slavery to your teeth; that if someone wishes it, your teeth will leave off aching, and if he does not, they will go on aching another three months; and that finally if you are still contumacious and still protest, all that is left you for your own gratification is to thrash yourself or beat your wall with your fist as hard as you can, and absolutely nothing more. Well, these mortal insults, these jeers on the part of someone unknown, end at last in an enjoyment which sometimes reaches the highest degree of voluptuousness. I ask you, gentlemen, listen sometimes to the moans of an educated man of the nineteenth century suffering from toothache, on the second or third day of the attack, when he is beginning to moan, not as he moaned on the first day, that is, not simply because he has toothache, not just as any coarse peasant, but as a man affected by progress and European civilisation, a man who is "divorced from the soil and the national elements," as they express it now-a-days. His moans become nasty, disgustingly malignant, and go on for whole days and nights. And of course he knows himself that he is doing himself no sort of good with his moans; he knows better than anyone that he is only lacerating and harassing himself and others

for nothing; he knows that even the audience before whom he is making his efforts, and his whole family, listen to him with loathing, do not put a ha'porth of faith in him, and inwardly understand that he might moan differently, more simply, without trills and flourishes, and that he is only amusing himself like that from ill-humour, from malignancy. Well, in all these recognitions and disgraces it is that there lies a voluptuous pleasure. As though he would say: "I am worrying you, I am lacerating your hearts, I am keeping everyone in the house awake. Well, stay awake then, you, too, feel every minute that I have toothache. I am not a hero to you now, as I tried to seem before, but simply a nasty person, an impostor. Well, so be it, then! I am very glad that you see through me. It is nasty for you to hear my despicable moans: well, let it be nasty; here I will let you have a nastier flourish in a minute. . . ." You do not understand even now, gentlemen? No, it seems our development and our consciousness must go further to understand all the intricacies of this pleasure. You laugh? Delighted. My jests, gentlemen, are of course in bad taste, jerky, involved, lacking self-confidence. But of course that is because I do not respect myself. Can a man of perception respect himself at all?

5

Come, can a man who attempts to find enjoyment in the very feeling of his own degradation possibly have a spark of respect for himself? I am not saying this now from any mawkish kind of remorse. And, indeed, I could never endure saying, "Forgive me, Papa, I won't do it again," not because I am incapable of saying that—on the contrary, perhaps just because I have been too capable of it, and in what a way, too. As though of design I used to get into trouble in cases when I was not to blame in any way. That was the nastiest part of it. At the same time I was genuinely touched and penitent, I used to shed tears and, of course, deceived myself, though I was not acting in the least and there was a sick feeling in my heart at the time. . . . For that one could not blame even the laws of nature, though the laws of nature have

continually all my life offended me more than anything. It is loathsome to remember it all, but it was loathsome even then. Of course, a minute or so later I would realise wrathfully that it was all a lie, a revolting lie, an affected lie, that is, all this penitence, this emotion, these vows of reform. You will ask why did I worry myself with such antics: answer, because it was very dull to sit with one's hands folded, and so one began cutting capers. That is really it. Observe yourselves more carefully, gentlemen, then you will understand that it is so. I invented adventures for myself and made up a life, so as at least to *live* in some way. How many times it has happened to me—well, for instance, to take offence simply on purpose, for nothing; and one knows oneself, of course, that one is offended at nothing; that one is putting it on, but yet one brings oneself at last to the point of being really offended. All my life I have had an impulse to play such pranks, so that in the end I could not control it in myself. Another time, twice, in fact, I tried hard to be in love. I suffered, too, gentlemen, I assure you. In the depth of my heart there was no faith in my suffering, only a faint stir of mockery, but yet I did suffer, and in the real, orthodox way; I was jealous, beside myself . . . and it was all from ENNUI, gentlemen, all from ENNUI; inertia overcame me. You know the direct, legitimate fruit of consciousness is inertia, that is, conscious sitting-with-the-hands-folded. I have referred to this already. I repeat, I repeat with emphasis: all "direct" persons and men of action are active just *because* they are stupid and limited. How explain that? I will tell you: in consequence of their limitation they take immediate and secondary causes for primary ones, and in that way persuade themselves more quickly and easily than other people do that they have found an infallible foundation for their activity, and their minds are at ease and you know that is the chief thing. To begin to act, you know, you must first have your mind completely at ease and no trace of doubt left in it. Why, how am I, for example, to set my mind at rest? Where are the primary causes on which I am to build? Where are my foundations? Where am I to get them from? I exercise myself in reflection, and consequently with me every primary cause at once draws after itself another still more primary, and so on to infinity.

That is just the essence of every sort of consciousness and reflection. It must be a case of the laws of nature again. What is the result of it in the end? Why, just the same. Remember I spoke just now of vengeance. (I am sure you did not take it in.) I said that a man revenges himself because he sees justice in it. Therefore he has found a primary cause, that is, justice. And so he is at rest on all sides, and consequently he carries out his revenge calmly and successfully, being persuaded that he is doing a just and honest thing. But I see no justice in it, I find no sort of virtue in it either, and consequently if I attempt to revenge myself, it is only out of spite. Spite, of course, might overcome everything, all my doubts, and so might serve quite successfully in place of a primary cause, precisely because it is not a cause. But what is to be done if I have not even spite (I began with that just now, you know). In consequence again of those accursed laws of consciousness, anger in me is subject to chemical disintegration. You look into it, the object flies off into air, your reasons evaporate, the criminal is not to be found, the wrong becomes not a wrong but a phantom, something like the toothache, for which no one is to blame, and consequently there is only the same outlet left again—that is, to beat the wall as hard as you can. So you give it up with a wave of the hand because you have not found a fundamental cause. And try letting yourself be carried away by your feelings, blindly, without reflection, without a primary cause, repelling consciousness at least for a time; hate or love, if only not to sit with your hands folded. The day after tomorrow, at the latest, you will begin despising yourself for having knowingly deceived yourself. Result: a soap-bubble and inertia. Oh, gentlemen, do you know, perhaps I consider myself an intelligent man, only because all my life I have been able neither to begin nor to finish anything. Granted I am a babbler, a harmless vexatious babbler, like all of us. But what is to be done if the direct and sole vocation of every intelligent man is babble, that is, the intentional pouring of water through a sieve?

Oh, if I had done nothing simply from laziness! Heavens, how I should have respected myself, then. I should have respected myself because I should at least have been capable of being lazy; there would at least have been one quality, as it were, positive in me, in which I could have believed myself. Question: What is he? Answer: A sluggard; how very pleasant it would have been to hear that of oneself! It would mean that I was positively defined, it would mean that there was *something* to say about me. "Sluggard"—why, it is a calling and vocation, it is a career. Do not jest, it is so. I should then be a member of the best club by right, and should find my occupation in continually respecting myself. I knew a gentleman who prided himself all his life on being a connoisseur of Lafitte. He considered this as his positive virtue, and never doubted himself. He died, not simply with a tranquil, but with a triumphant conscience, and he was quite right, too. Then I should have chosen a career for myself, I should have been a sluggard and a glutton, not a simple one, but, for instance, one with sympathies for everything sublime and beautiful. How do you like that? I have long had visions of it. That "sublime and beautiful" weighs heavily on my mind at forty. But that is at forty; then—oh, then it would have been different! I should have found for myself a form of activity in keeping with it, to be precise, drinking to the health of everything "sublime and beautiful." I should have snatched at every opportunity to drop a tear into my glass and then to drain it to all that is "sublime and beautiful." I should then have turned everything into the sublime and the beautiful; in the nastiest, unquestionable trash, I should have sought out the sublime and the beautiful. I should have exuded tears like a wet sponge. An artist, for instance, paints a picture worthy of Gay. At once I drink to the health of the artist who painted the picture worthy of Gay, because I love all that is "sublime and beautiful." An author has written AS YOU WILL: at once I drink to the health of "anyone you will" because I love all that is "sublime and beautiful."

I should claim respect for doing so. I should persecute anyone who would not show me respect. I should live at ease, I should die with dignity, why, it is charming, perfectly charming! And

what a good round belly I should have grown, what a treble chin I should have established, what a ruby nose I should have coloured for myself, so that everyone would have said, looking at me: "*Here* is an asset! Here is something real and solid!" And, say what you like, it is very agreeable to hear such remarks about oneself in this negative age.

7

But these are all golden dreams. Oh, tell me, who was it first announced, who was it first proclaimed, that man only does nasty things because he does not know his own interests; and that if he were enlightened, if his eyes were opened to his real normal interests, man would at once cease to do nasty things, would at once become good and noble because, being enlightened and understanding his real advantage, he would see his own advantage in the good and nothing else, and we all know that not one man can, consciously, act against his own interests, consequently, so to say, through necessity, he would begin doing good? Oh, the babe! Oh, the pure, innocent child! Why, in the first place, when in all these thousands of years has there been a time when man has acted only from his own interest? What is to be done with the millions of facts that bear witness that men, CONSCIOUSLY, that is fully understanding their real interests, have left them in the background and have rushed headlong on another path, to meet peril and danger, compelled to this course by nobody and by nothing, but, as it were, simply disliking the beaten track, and have obstinately, willfully, struck out another difficult, absurd way, seeking it almost in the darkness. So, I suppose, this obstinacy and perversity were pleasanter to them than any advantage. . . . Advantage! What is advantage? And will you take it upon yourself to define with perfect accuracy in what the advantage of man consists? And what if it so happens that a man's advantage, SOMETIMES, not only may, but even must, consist in his desiring in certain cases what is harmful to himself and not advantageous. And if so, if there can be such a case, the whole principle falls into dust. What do you think—are there such

cases? You laugh; laugh away, gentlemen, but only answer me: have man's advantages been reckoned up with perfect certainty? Are there not some which not only have not been included but cannot possibly be included under any classification? You see, you gentlemen have, to the best of my knowledge, taken your whole register of human advantages from the averages of statistical figures and politico-economical formulas. Your advantages are prosperity, wealth, freedom, peace—and so on, and so on. So that the man who should, for instance, go openly and knowingly in opposition to all that list would to your thinking, and indeed mine, too, of course, be an obscurantist or an absolute madman: would not he? But, you know, this is what is surprising: why does it so happen that all these statisticians, sages and lovers of humanity, when they reckon up human advantages invariably leave out one? They don't even take it into their reckoning in the form in which it should be taken, and the whole reckoning depends upon that. It would be no greater matter, they would simply have to take it, this advantage, and add it to the list. But the trouble is, that this strange advantage does not fall under any classification and is not in place in any list. I have a friend for instance . . . Ech! gentlemen, but of course he is your friend, too; and indeed there is no one, no one to whom he is not a friend! When he prepares for any undertaking this gentleman immediately explains to you, elegantly and clearly, exactly how he must act in accordance with the laws of reason and truth. What is more, he will talk to you with excitement and passion of the true normal interests of man; with irony he will upbraid the short-sighted fools who do not understand their own interests, nor the true significance of virtue; and, within a quarter of an hour, without any sudden outside provocation, but simply through something inside him which is stronger than all his interests, he will go off on quite a different tack—that is, act in direct opposition to what he has just been saying about himself, in opposition to the laws of reason, in opposition to his own advantage, in fact in opposition to everything . . . I warn you that my friend is a compound personality and therefore it is difficult to blame him as an individual. The fact is, gentlemen, it seems there

must really exist something that is dearer to almost every man than his greatest advantages, or (not to be illogical) there is a most advantageous advantage (the very one omitted of which we spoke just now) which is more important and more advantageous than all other advantages, for the sake of which a man if necessary is ready to act in opposition to all laws; that is, in opposition to reason, honour, peace, prosperity—in fact, in opposition to all those excellent and useful things if only he can attain that fundamental, most advantageous advantage which is dearer to him than all. "Yes, but it's advantage all the same," you will retort. But excuse me, I'll make the point clear, and it is not a case of playing upon words. What matters is, that this advantage is remarkable from the very fact that it breaks down all our classifications, and continually shatters every system constructed by lovers of mankind for the benefit of mankind. In fact, it upsets everything. But before I mention this advantage to you, I want to compromise myself personally, and therefore I boldly declare that all these fine systems, all these theories for explaining to mankind their real normal interests, in order that inevitably striving to pursue these interests they may at once become good and noble—are, in my opinion, so far, mere logical exercises! Yes, logical exercises. Why, to maintain this theory of the regeneration of mankind by means of the pursuit of his own advantage is to my mind almost the same thing . . . as to affirm, for instance, following Buckle, that through civilisation mankind becomes softer, and consequently less bloodthirsty and less fitted for warfare. Logically it does seem to follow from his arguments. But man has such a predilection for systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally, he is ready to deny the evidence of his senses only to justify his logic. I take this example because it is the most glaring instance of it. Only look about you: blood is being spilt in streams, and in the merriest way, as though it were champagne. Take the whole of the nineteenth century in which Buckle lived. Take Napoleon—the Great and also the present one. Take North America—the eternal union. Take the farce of Schleswig-Holstein. . . . And what is it that civilisation softens in us? The only gain of civilisation for

mankind is the greater capacity for variety of sensations—and absolutely nothing more. And through the development of this many-sidedness man may come to finding enjoyment in bloodshed. In fact, this has already happened to him. Have you noticed that it is the most civilised gentlemen who have been the subtlest slaughterers, to whom the Attilas and Stenka Razins could not hold a candle, and if they are not so conspicuous as the Attilas and Stenka Razins it is simply because they are so often met with, are so ordinary and have become so familiar to us. In any case civilisation has made mankind if not more bloodthirsty, at least more vilely, more loathsomely bloodthirsty. In old days he saw justice in bloodshed and with his conscience at peace exterminated those he thought proper. Now we do think bloodshed abominable and yet we engage in this abomination, and with more energy than ever. Which is worse? Decide that for yourselves. They say that Cleopatra (excuse an instance from Roman history) was fond of sticking gold pins into her slave-girls' breasts and derived gratification from their screams and writhings. You will say that that was in the comparatively barbarous times; that these are barbarous times too, because also, comparatively speaking, pins are stuck in even now; that though man has now learned to see more clearly than in barbarous ages, he is still far from having learnt to act as reason and science would dictate. But yet you are fully convinced that he will be sure to learn when he gets rid of certain old bad habits, and when common sense and science have completely re-educated human nature and turned it in a normal direction. You are confident that then man will cease from INTENTIONAL error and will, so to say, be compelled not to want to set his will against his normal interests. That is not all; then, you say, science itself will teach man (though to my mind it's a superfluous luxury) that he never has really had any caprice or will of his own, and that he himself is something of the nature of a piano-key or the stop of an organ, and that there are, besides, things called the laws of nature; so that everything he does is not done by his willing it, but is done of itself, by the laws of nature. Consequently we have only to discover these laws of nature, and man will no longer have to

answer for his actions and life will become exceedingly easy for him. All human actions will then, of course, be tabulated according to these laws, mathematically, like tables of logarithms up to 108,000, and entered in an index; or, better still, there would be published certain edifying works of the nature of encyclopaedic lexicons, in which everything will be so clearly calculated and explained that there will be no more incidents or adventures in the world.

Then—this is all what you say—new economic relations will be established, all ready-made and worked out with mathematical exactitude, so that every possible question will vanish in the twinkling of an eye, simply because every possible answer to it will be provided. Then the "Palace of Crystal" will be built. Then . . . In fact, those will be halcyon days. Of course there is no guaranteeing (this is my comment) that it will not be, for instance, frightfully dull then (for what will one have to do when everything will be calculated and tabulated), but on the other hand everything will be extraordinarily rational. Of course boredom may lead you to anything. It is boredom sets one sticking golden pins into people, but all that would not matter. What is bad (this is my comment again) is that I dare say people will be thankful for the gold pins then. Man is stupid, you know, phenomenally stupid; or rather he is not at all stupid, but he is so ungrateful that you could not find another like him in all creation. I, for instance, would not be in the least surprised if all of a sudden, A PROPOS of nothing, in the midst of general prosperity a gentleman with an ignoble, or rather with a reactionary and ironical, countenance were to arise and, putting his arms akimbo, say to us all: "I say, gentleman, hadn't we better kick over the whole show and scatter rationalism to the winds, simply to send these logarithms to the devil, and to enable us to live once more at our own sweet foolish will!" That again would not matter, but what is annoying is that he would be sure to find followers—such is the nature of man. And all that for the most foolish reason, which, one would think, was hardly worth mentioning: that is, that man everywhere and at all times, whoever he may be, has preferred to act as he chose and not in the least as his reason and advantage dictated. And one may

choose what is contrary to one's own interests, and sometimes one POSITIVELY OUGHT (that is my idea). One's own free unfettered choice, one's own caprice, however wild it may be, one's own fancy worked up at times to frenzy—is that very "most advantageous advantage" which we have overlooked, which comes under no classification and against which all systems and theories are continually being shattered to atoms. And how do these wiseacres know that man wants a normal, a virtuous choice? What has made them conceive that man must want a rationally advantageous choice? What man wants is simply INDEPENDENT choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead. And choice, of course, the devil only knows what choice.

8

"Ha! ha! ha! But you know there is no such thing as choice in reality, say what you like," you will interpose with a chuckle. "Science has succeeded in so far analysing man that we know already that choice and what is called freedom of will is nothing else than—"

Stay, gentlemen, I meant to begin with that myself; I confess, I was rather frightened. I was just going to say that the devil only knows what choice depends on, and that perhaps that was a very good thing, but I remembered the teaching of science . . . and pulled myself up. And here you have begun upon it. Indeed, if there really is some day discovered a formula for all our desires and caprices—that is, an explanation of what they depend upon, by what laws they arise, how they develop, what they are aiming at in one case and in another and so on, that is a real mathematical formula—then, most likely, man will at once cease to feel desire, indeed, he will be certain to. For who would want to choose by rule? Besides, he will at once be transformed from a human being into an organ-stop or something of the sort; for what is a man without desires, without free will and without choice, if not a stop in an organ? What do you think? Let us reckon the chances—can such a thing happen or not?

"H'm!" you decide. "Our choice is usually mistaken from a false view of our advantage. We sometimes choose absolute nonsense because in our foolishness we see in that nonsense the easiest means for attaining a supposed advantage. But when all that is explained and worked out on paper (which is perfectly possible, for it is contemptible and senseless to suppose that some laws of nature man will never understand), then certainly so-called desires will no longer exist. For if a desire should come into conflict with reason we shall then reason and not desire, because it will be impossible retaining our reason to be SENSELESS in our desires, and in that way knowingly act against reason and desire to injure ourselves. And as all choice and reasoning can be really calculated—because there will someday be discovered the laws of our so-called free will—so, joking apart, there may one day be something like a table constructed of them, so that we really shall choose in accordance with it. If, for instance, some day they calculate and prove to me that I made a long nose at someone because I could not help making a long nose at him and that I had to do it in that particular way, what FREEDOM is left me, especially if I am a learned man and have taken my degree somewhere? Then I should be able to calculate my whole life for thirty years beforehand. In short, if this could be arranged there would be nothing left for us to do; anyway, we should have to understand that. And, in fact, we ought unwearyingly to repeat to ourselves that at such and such a time and in such and such circumstances nature does not ask our leave; that we have got to take her as she is and not fashion her to suit our fancy, and if we really aspire to formulas and tables of rules, and well, even . . . to the chemical retort, there's no help for it, we must accept the retort too, or else it will be accepted without our consent. . ."

Yes, but here I come to a stop! Gentlemen, you must excuse me for being over-philosophical; it's the result of forty years underground! Allow me to indulge my fancy. You see, gentlemen, reason is an excellent thing, there's no disputing that, but reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man's nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of

the whole human life *including* reason and all the impulses. And although our life, in this manifestation of it, is often worthless, yet it is life and not simply extracting square roots. Here I, for instance, quite naturally want to live, in order to satisfy all my capacities for life, and not simply my capacity for reasoning, that is, not simply one twentieth of my capacity for life. What does reason know? Reason only knows what it has succeeded in learning (some things, perhaps, it will never learn; this is a poor comfort, but why not say so frankly?) and human nature acts as a whole, with everything that is in it, consciously or unconsciously, and, even if it goes wrong, it lives. I suspect, gentlemen, that you are looking at me with compassion; you tell me again that an enlightened and developed man, such, in short, as the future man will be, cannot consciously desire anything disadvantageous to himself, that that can be proved mathematically. I thoroughly agree, it can—by mathematics. But I repeat for the hundredth time, there is one case, one only, when man may consciously, purposely, desire what is injurious to himself, what is stupid, very stupid—simply in order to have the *right* to desire for himself even what is very stupid and not to be bound by an obligation to desire only what is sensible. Of course, this very stupid thing, this caprice of ours, may be in reality, gentlemen, more advantageous for us than anything else on earth, especially in certain cases. And in particular it may be more advantageous than any advantage even when it does us obvious harm, and contradicts the soundest conclusions of our reason concerning our advantage—for in any circumstances it preserves for us what is most precious and most important—that is, our personality, our individuality. Some, you see, maintain that this really is the most precious thing for mankind; choice can, of course, if it chooses, be in agreement with reason; and especially if this be not abused but kept within bounds. It is profitable and sometimes even praiseworthy. But very often, and even most often, choice is utterly and stubbornly opposed to reason . . . and . . . and . . . do you know that that, too, is profitable, sometimes even praiseworthy? Gentlemen, let us suppose that man is not stupid. (Indeed one cannot refuse to suppose that, if only from the one consideration, that, if man is

stupid, then who is wise?) But if he is not stupid, he is monstrously ungrateful! Phenomenally ungrateful. In fact, I believe that the best definition of man is the ungrateful biped. But that is not all, that is not his worst defect; his worst defect is his perpetual moral obliquity, perpetual—from the days of the Flood to the Schleswig-Holstein period. Moral obliquity and consequently lack of good sense; for it has long been accepted that lack of good sense is due to no other cause than moral obliquity. Put it to the test and cast your eyes upon the history of mankind. What will you see? Is it a grand spectacle? Grand, if you like. Take the Colossus of Rhodes, for instance, that's worth something. With good reason Mr. Anaevsky testifies of it that some say that it is the work of man's hands, while others maintain that it has been created by nature herself. Is it many-coloured? Maybe it is many-coloured, too: if one takes the dress uniforms, military and civilian, of all peoples in all ages—that alone is worth something, and if you take the undress uniforms you will never get to the end of it; no historian would be equal to the job. Is it monotonous? Maybe it's monotonous too: it's fighting and fighting; they are fighting now, they fought first and they fought last—you will admit, that it is almost too monotonous. In short, one may say anything about the history of the world—anything that might enter the most disordered imagination. The only thing one can't say is that it's rational. The very word sticks in one's throat. And, indeed, this is the odd thing that is continually happening: there are continually turning up in life moral and rational persons, sages and lovers of humanity who make it their object to live all their lives as morally and rationally as possible, to be, so to speak, a light to their neighbours simply in order to show them that it is possible to live morally and rationally in this world. And yet we all know that those very people sooner or later have been false to themselves, playing some queer trick, often a most unseemly one. Now I ask you: what can be expected of man since he is a being endowed with strange qualities? Shower upon him every earthly blessing, drown him in a sea of happiness, so that nothing but bubbles of bliss can be seen on the surface; give him economic prosperity, such that he should have nothing else to

do but sleep, eat cakes and busy himself with the continuation of his species, and even then out of sheer ingratitude, sheer spite, man would play you some nasty trick. He would even risk his cakes and would deliberately desire the most fatal rubbish, the most uneconomical absurdity, simply to introduce into all this positive good sense his fatal fantastic element. It is just his fantastic dreams, his vulgar folly that he will desire to retain, simply in order to prove to himself—as though that were so necessary—that men still are men and not the keys of a piano, which the laws of nature threaten to control so completely that soon one will be able to desire nothing but by the calendar. And that is not all: even if man really were nothing but a piano-key, even if this were proved to him by natural science and mathematics, even then he would not become reasonable, but would purposely do something perverse out of simple ingratitude, simply to gain his point. And if he does not find means he will contrive destruction and chaos, will contrive sufferings of all sorts, only to gain his point! He will launch a curse upon the world, and as only man can curse (it is his privilege, the primary distinction between him and other animals), maybe by his curse alone he will attain his object—that is, convince himself that he is a man and not a piano-key! If you say that all this, too, can be calculated and tabulated—chaos and darkness and curses, so that the mere possibility of calculating it all beforehand would stop it all, and reason would reassert itself, then man would purposely go mad in order to be rid of reason and gain his point! I believe in it, I answer for it, for the whole work of man really seems to consist in nothing but proving to himself every minute that he is a man and not a piano-key! It may be at the cost of his skin, it may be by cannibalism! And this being so, can one help being tempted to rejoice that it has not yet come off, and that desire still depends on something we don't know?

You will scream at me (that is, if you condescend to do so) that no one is touching my free will, that all they are concerned with is that my will should of itself, of its own free will, coincide with my own normal interests, with the laws of nature and arithmetic.

Good heavens, gentlemen, what sort of free will is left when we come to tabulation and arithmetic, when it will all be a case of twice two make four? Twice two makes four without my will. As if free will meant that!

9

Gentlemen, I am joking, and I know myself that my jokes are not brilliant, but you know one can take everything as a joke. I am, perhaps, jesting against the grain. Gentlemen, I am tormented by questions; answer them for me. You, for instance, want to cure men of their old habits and reform their will in accordance with science and good sense. But how do you know, not only that it is possible, but also that it is DESIRABLE to reform man in that way? And what leads you to the conclusion that man's inclinations NEED reforming? In short, how do you know that such a reformation will be a benefit to man? And to go to the root of the matter, why are you so *positively* convinced that not to act against his real normal interests guaranteed by the conclusions of reason and arithmetic is certainly always advantageous for man and must always be a law for mankind? So far, you know, this is only your supposition. It may be the law of logic, but not the law of humanity. You think, gentlemen, perhaps that I am mad? Allow me to defend myself. I agree that man is pre-eminently a creative animal, predestined to strive consciously for an object and to engage in engineering—that is, incessantly and eternally to make new roads, WHEREVER THEY MAY LEAD. But the reason why he wants sometimes to go off at a tangent may just be that he is PREDESTINED to make the road, and perhaps, too, that however stupid the "direct" practical man may be, the thought sometimes will occur to him that the road almost always does lead SOMEWHERE, and that the destination it leads to is less important than the process of making it, and that the chief thing is to save the well-conducted child from despising engineering, and so giving way to the fatal idleness, which, as we all know, is the mother of all the vices. Man likes to make roads and to create, that is a fact beyond dispute. But why has he such a passionate

love for destruction and chaos also? Tell me that! But on that point I want to say a couple of words myself. May it not be that he loves chaos and destruction (there can be no disputing that he does sometimes love it) because he is instinctively afraid of attaining his object and completing the edifice he is constructing? Who knows, perhaps he only loves that edifice from a distance, and is by no means in love with it at close quarters; perhaps he only loves building it and does not want to live in it, but will leave it, when completed, for the use of LES ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES—such as the ants, the sheep, and so on. Now the ants have quite a different taste. They have a marvellous edifice of that pattern which endures for ever—the ant-heap.

With the ant-heap the respectable race of ants began and with the ant-heap they will probably end, which does the greatest credit to their perseverance and good sense. But man is a frivolous and incongruous creature, and perhaps, like a chess player, loves the process of the game, not the end of it. And who knows (there is no saying with certainty), perhaps the only goal on earth to which mankind is striving lies in this incessant process of attaining, in other words, in life itself, and not in the thing to be attained, which must always be expressed as a formula, as positive as twice two makes four, and such positiveness is not life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death. Anyway, man has always been afraid of this mathematical certainty, and I am afraid of it now. Granted that man does nothing but seek that mathematical certainty, he traverses oceans, sacrifices his life in the quest, but to succeed, really to find it, dreads, I assure you. He feels that when he has found it there will be nothing for him to look for. When workmen have finished their work they do at least receive their pay, they go to the tavern, then they are taken to the police-station—and there is occupation for a week. But where can man go? Anyway, one can observe a certain awkwardness about him when he has attained such objects. He loves the process of attaining, but does not quite like to have attained, and that, of course, is very absurd. In fact, man is a comical creature; there seems to be a kind of jest in it all. But yet mathematical certainty is after all, something insufferable. Twice two makes four seems

to me simply a piece of insolence. Twice two makes four is a pert coxcomb who stands with arms akimbo barring your path and spitting. I admit that twice two makes four is an excellent thing, but if we are to give everything its due, twice two makes five is sometimes a very charming thing too.

And why are you so firmly, so triumphantly, convinced that only the normal and the positive—in other words, only what is conducive to welfare—is for the advantage of man? Is not reason in error as regards advantage? Does not man, perhaps, love something besides well-being? Perhaps he is just as fond of suffering? Perhaps suffering is just as great a benefit to him as well-being? Man is sometimes extraordinarily, passionately, in love with suffering, and that is a fact. There is no need to appeal to universal history to prove that; only ask yourself, if you are a man and have lived at all. As far as my personal opinion is concerned, to care only for well-being seems to me positively ill-bred. Whether it's good or bad, it is sometimes very pleasant, too, to smash things. I hold no brief for suffering nor for well-being either. I am standing for . . . my caprice, and for its being guaranteed to me when necessary. Suffering would be out of place in vaudevilles, for instance; I know that. In the "Palace of Crystal" it is unthinkable; suffering means doubt, negation, and what would be the good of a "palace of crystal" if there could be any doubt about it? And yet I think man will never renounce real suffering, that is, destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I did lay it down at the beginning that consciousness is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man prizes it and would not give it up for any satisfaction. Consciousness, for instance, is infinitely superior to twice two makes four. Once you have mathematical certainty there is nothing left to do or to understand. There will be nothing left but to bottle up your five senses and plunge into contemplation. While if you stick to consciousness, even though the same result is attained, you can at least flog yourself at times, and that will, at any rate, liven you up. Reactionary as it is, corporal punishment is better than nothing.

You believe in a palace of crystal that can never be destroyed—a palace at which one will not be able to put out one's tongue or make a long nose on the sly. And perhaps that is just why I am afraid of this edifice, that it is of crystal and can never be destroyed and that one cannot put one's tongue out at it even on the sly.

You see, if it were not a palace, but a hen-house, I might creep into it to avoid getting wet, and yet I would not call the hen-house a palace out of gratitude to it for keeping me dry. You laugh and say that in such circumstances a hen-house is as good as a mansion. Yes, I answer, if one had to live simply to keep out of the rain.

But what is to be done if I have taken it into my head that that is not the only object in life, and that if one must live one had better live in a mansion? That is my choice, my desire. You will only eradicate it when you have changed my preference. Well, do change it, allure me with something else, give me another ideal. But meanwhile I will not take a hen-house for a mansion. The palace of crystal may be an idle dream, it may be that it is inconsistent with the laws of nature and that I have invented it only through my own stupidity, through the old-fashioned irrational habits of my generation. But what does it matter to me that it is inconsistent? That makes no difference since it exists in my desires, or rather exists as long as my desires exist. Perhaps you are laughing again? Laugh away; I will put up with any mockery rather than pretend that I am satisfied when I am hungry. I know, anyway, that I will not be put off with a compromise, with a recurring zero, simply because it is consistent with the laws of nature and *actually* exists. I will not accept as the crown of my desires a block of buildings with tenements for the poor on a lease of a thousand years, and perhaps with a sign-board of a dentist hanging out. Destroy my desires, eradicate my ideals, show me something better, and I will follow you. You will say, perhaps, that it is not worth your trouble; but in that case I can give you the same answer. We are discussing things seriously; but if you won't

deign to give me your attention, I will drop your acquaintance. I can retreat into my underground hole.

But while I am alive and have desires I would rather my hand were withered off than bring one brick to such a building! Don't remind me that I have just rejected the palace of crystal for the sole reason that one cannot put out one's tongue at it. I did not say because I am so fond of putting my tongue out. Perhaps the thing I resented was, that of all your edifices there has not been one at which one could not put out one's tongue. On the contrary, I would let my tongue be cut off out of gratitude if things could be so arranged that I should lose all desire to put it out. It is not my fault that things cannot be so arranged, and that one must be satisfied with model flats. Then why am I made with such desires? Can I have been constructed simply in order to come to the conclusion that all my construction is a cheat? Can this be my whole purpose? I do not believe it.

But do you know what: I am convinced that we underground folk ought to be kept on a curb. Though we may sit forty years underground without speaking, when we do come out into the light of day and break out we talk and talk and talk. . . .

11

The long and the short of it is, gentlemen, that it is better to do nothing! Better conscious inertia! And so hurrah for underground! Though I have said that I envy the normal man to the last drop of my bile, yet I should not care to be in his place such as he is now (though I shall not cease envying him). No, no; anyway the underground life is more advantageous. There, at any rate, one can . . . Oh, but even now I am lying! I am lying because I know myself that it is not underground that is better, but something different, quite different, for which I am thirsting, but which I cannot find! Damn underground!

I will tell you another thing that would be better, and that is, if I myself believed in anything of what I have just written. I swear to you, gentlemen, there is not one thing, not one word of what I

have written that I really believe. That is, I believe it, perhaps, but at the same time I feel and suspect that I am lying like a cobbler.

"Then why have you written all this?" you will say to me. "I ought to put you underground for forty years without anything to do and then come to you in your cellar, to find out what stage you have reached! How can a man be left with nothing to do for forty years?"

"Isn't that shameful, isn't that humiliating?" you will say, perhaps, wagging your heads contemptuously. "You thirst for life and try to settle the problems of life by a logical tangle. And how persistent, how insolent are your sallies, and at the same time what a scare you are in! You talk nonsense and are pleased with it; you say impudent things and are in continual alarm and apologising for them. You declare that you are afraid of nothing and at the same time try to ingratiate yourself in our good opinion. You declare that you are gnashing your teeth and at the same time you try to be witty so as to amuse us. You know that your witticisms are not witty, but you are evidently well satisfied with their literary value. You may, perhaps, have really suffered, but you have no respect for your own suffering. You may have sincerity, but you have no modesty; out of the pettiest vanity you expose your sincerity to publicity and ignominy. You doubtlessly mean to say something, but hide your last word through fear, because you have not the resolution to utter it, and only have a cowardly impudence. You boast of consciousness, but you are not sure of your ground, for though your mind works, yet your heart is darkened and corrupt, and you cannot have a full, genuine consciousness without a pure heart. And how intrusive you are, how you insist and grimace! Lies, lies, lies!"

Of course I have myself made up all the things you say. That, too, is from underground. I have been for forty years listening to you through a crack under the floor. I have invented them myself, there was nothing else I could invent. It is no wonder that I have learned it by heart and it has taken a literary form. . . .

But can you really be so credulous as to think that I will print all this and give it to you to read too? And another problem: why do I call you "gentlemen," why do I address you as though you

really were my readers? Such confessions as I intend to make are never printed nor given to other people to read. Anyway, I am not strong-minded enough for that, and I don't see why I should be. But you see a fancy has occurred to me and I want to realise it at all costs. Let me explain.

Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone, but only to his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind. The more decent he is, the greater the number of such things in his mind. Anyway, I have only lately determined to remember some of my early adventures. Till now I have always avoided them, even with a certain uneasiness. Now, when I am not only recalling them, but have actually decided to write an account of them, I want to try the experiment whether one can, even with oneself, be perfectly open and not take fright at the whole truth. I will observe, in parenthesis, that Heine says that a true autobiography is almost an impossibility, and that man is bound to lie about himself. He considers that Rousseau certainly told lies about himself in his *Confessions*, and even intentionally lied, out of vanity. I am convinced that Heine is right; I quite understand how sometimes one may, out of sheer vanity, attribute regular crimes to oneself, and indeed I can very well conceive that kind of vanity. But Heine judged of people who made their confessions to the public. I write only for myself, and I wish to declare once and for all that if I write as though I were addressing readers, that is simply because it is easier for me to write in that form. It is a form, an empty form—I shall never have readers. I have made this plain already. .

..

I don't wish to be hampered by any restrictions in the compilation of my notes. I shall not attempt any system or method. I will jot things down as I remember them.

But here, perhaps, someone will catch at the word and ask me: if you really don't reckon on readers, why do you make such compacts with yourself—and on paper too—that is, that you

won't attempt any system or method, that you jot things down as you remember them, and so on, and so on? Why are you explaining? Why do you apologise?

Well, there it is, I answer.

There is a whole psychology in all this, though. Perhaps it is simply that I am a coward. And perhaps that I purposely imagine an audience before me in order that I may be more dignified while I write. There are perhaps thousands of reasons. Again, what is my object precisely in writing? If it is not for the benefit of the public why should I not simply recall these incidents in my own mind without putting them on paper?

Quite so; but yet it is more imposing on paper. There is something more impressive in it; I shall be better able to criticise myself and improve my style. Besides, I shall perhaps obtain actual relief from writing. Today, for instance, I am particularly oppressed by one memory of a distant past. It came back vividly to my mind a few days ago, and has remained haunting me like an annoying tune that one cannot get rid of. And yet I must get rid of it somehow. I have hundreds of such reminiscences; but at times someone stands out from the hundred and oppresses me. For some reason I believe that if I write it down I should get rid of it. Why not try?

Besides, I am bored, and I never have anything to do. Writing will be a sort of work. They say work makes man kind-hearted and honest. Well, here is a chance for me, anyway.

55

Snow is falling today, yellow and dingy. It fell yesterday, too, and a few days ago. I fancy it is the wet snow that has reminded me of that incident which I cannot shake off now. And so let it be a story A PROPOS of the falling snow.

PART II

A Propos of the Wet Snow

When from dark error's subjugation
My words of passionate exhortation
Had wrenched thy fainting spirit free;
And writhing prone in thine affliction
Thou didst recall with malediction
The vice that had encompassed thee:
And when thy slumbering conscience, fretting
By recollection's torturing flame,
Thou didst reveal the hideous setting
Of thy life's current ere I came:
When suddenly I saw thee sicken,
And weeping, hide thine anguished face,
Revolted, maddened, horror-stricken,
At memories of foul disgrace.

—NEKRASSOV (TRANSLATED BY JULIET SOSKICE)

1

AT THAT TIME I was only twenty-four. My life was even then gloomy, ill-regulated, and as solitary as that of a savage. I made friends with no one and positively avoided talking, and buried myself more and more in my hole. At work in the office I never looked at anyone, and was perfectly well aware that my companions looked upon me, not only as a queer fellow, but even looked upon me—I always fancied this—with a sort of loathing. I sometimes wondered why it was that nobody except me fancied that he was looked upon with aversion? One of the clerks had a most repulsive, pock-marked face, which looked positively villainous. I believe I should not have dared to look at anyone with such an unsightly countenance. Another had such a very dirty old uniform that there was an unpleasant odour in his proximity. Yet not one of these gentlemen showed the slightest self-consciousness—either about their clothes or their countenance or their character in any way. Neither of them ever imagined that they were looked at with repulsion; if they had imagined it they would not have minded—so long as their superiors did not look at them in that way. It is clear to me now that, owing to my unbounded vanity and to the high standard I set

for myself, I often looked at myself with furious discontent, which verged on loathing, and so I inwardly attributed the same feeling to everyone. I hated my face, for instance: I thought it disgusting, and even suspected that there was something base in my expression, and so every day when I turned up at the office I tried to behave as independently as possible, and to assume a lofty expression, so that I might not be suspected of being abject. "My face may be ugly," I thought, "but let it be lofty, expressive, and, above all, EXTREMELY intelligent." But I was positively and painfully certain that it was impossible for my countenance ever to express those qualities. And what was worst of all, I thought it actually stupid looking, and I would have been quite satisfied if I could have looked intelligent. In fact, I would even have put up with looking base if, at the same time, my face could have been thought strikingly intelligent.

Of course, I hated my fellow clerks one and all, and I despised them all, yet at the same time I was, as it were, afraid of them. In fact, it happened at times that I thought more highly of them than of myself. It somehow happened quite suddenly that I alternated between despising them and thinking them superior to myself. A cultivated and decent man cannot be vain without setting a fearfully high standard for himself, and without despising and almost hating himself at certain moments. But whether I despised them or thought them superior I dropped my eyes almost every time I met anyone. I even made experiments whether I could face so and so's looking at me, and I was always the first to drop my eyes. This worried me to distraction. I had a sickly dread, too, of being ridiculous, and so had a slavish passion for the conventional in everything external. I loved to fall into the common rut, and had a whole-hearted terror of any kind of eccentricity in myself. But how could I live up to it? I was morbidly sensitive as a man of our age should be. They were all stupid, and as like one another as so many sheep. Perhaps I was the only one in the office who fancied that I was a coward and a slave, and I fancied it just because I was more highly developed. But it was not only that I fancied it, it really was so. I was a coward and a slave. I say this without the slightest embarrassment. Every decent man of our age

must be a coward and a slave. That is his normal condition. Of that I am firmly persuaded. He is made and constructed to that very end. And not only at the present time owing to some casual circumstances, but always, at all times, a decent man is bound to be a coward and a slave. It is the law of nature for all decent people all over the earth. If anyone of them happens to be valiant about something, he need not be comforted nor carried away by that; he would show the white feather just the same before something else. That is how it invariably and inevitably ends. Only donkeys and mules are valiant, and they only till they are pushed up to the wall. It is not worthwhile to pay attention to them for they really are of no consequence.

Another circumstance, too, worried me in those days: that there was no one like me and I was unlike anyone else. "I am alone and they are EVERYONE," I thought—and pondered.

From that it is evident that I was still a youngster.

60

The very opposite sometimes happened. It was loathsome sometimes to go to the office; things reached such a point that I often came home ill. But all at once, A PROPOS of nothing, there would come a phase of scepticism and indifference (everything happened in phases to me), and I would laugh myself at my intolerance and fastidiousness, I would reproach myself with being ROMANTIC. At one time I was unwilling to speak to anyone, while at other times I would not only talk, but go to the length of contemplating making friends with them. All my fastidiousness would suddenly, for no rhyme or reason, vanish. Who knows, perhaps I never had really had it, and it had simply been affected, and got out of books. I have not decided that question even now. Once I quite made friends with them, visited their homes, played preference, drank vodka, talked of promotions. . . . But here let me make a digression.

We Russians, speaking generally, have never had those foolish transcendental "romantics"—German, and still more French—on whom nothing produces any effect; if there were an earthquake, if all France perished at the barricades, they would still be the same, they would not even have the decency to affect a change, but would still go on singing their transcendental songs to the hour of

their death, because they are fools. We, in Russia, have no fools; that is well known. That is what distinguishes us from foreign lands. Consequently these transcendental natures are not found amongst us in their pure form. The idea that they are is due to our "realistic" journalists and critics of that day, always on the lookout for Kostanzhoglos and Uncle Pyotr Ivanitchs and foolishly accepting them as our ideal; they have slandered our romantics, taking them for the same transcendental sort as in Germany or France. On the contrary, the characteristics of our "romantics" are absolutely and directly opposed to the transcendental European type, and no European standard can be applied to them. (Allow me to make use of this word "romantic"—an old-fashioned and much respected word which has done good service and is familiar to all.) The characteristics of our romantic are to understand everything, TO SEE EVERYTHING AND TO SEE IT OFTEN INCOMPARABLY MORE CLEARLY THAN OUR MOST REALISTIC MINDS SEE IT; to refuse to accept anyone or anything, but at the same time not to despise anything; to give way, to yield, from policy; never to lose sight of a useful practical object (such as rent-free quarters at the government expense, pensions, decorations), to keep their eye on that object through all the enthusiasms and volumes of lyrical poems, and at the same time to preserve "the sublime and the beautiful" inviolate within them to the hour of their death, and to preserve themselves also, incidentally, like some precious jewel wrapped in cotton wool if only for the benefit of "the sublime and the beautiful." Our "romantic" is a man of great breadth and the greatest rogue of all our rogues, I assure you. . . . I can assure you from experience, indeed. Of course, that is, if he is intelligent. But what am I saying! The romantic is always intelligent, and I only meant to observe that although we have had foolish romantics they don't count, and they were only so because in the flower of their youth they degenerated into Germans, and to preserve their precious jewel more comfortably, settled somewhere out there—by preference in Weimar or the Black Forest.

I, for instance, genuinely despised my official work and did not openly abuse it simply because I was in it myself and got a salary for it. Anyway, take note, I did not openly abuse it. Our romantic would rather go out of his mind—a thing, however, which very rarely happens—than take to open abuse, unless he had some other career in view; and he is never kicked out. At most, they would take him to the lunatic asylum as "the King of Spain" if he should go very mad. But it is only the thin, fair people who go out of their minds in Russia. Innumerable "romantics" attain later in life to considerable rank in the service. Their many-sidedness is remarkable! And what a faculty they have for the most contradictory sensations! I was comforted by this thought even in those days, and I am of the same opinion now. That is why there are so many "broad natures" among us who never lose their ideal even in the depths of degradation; and though they never stir a finger for their ideal, though they are arrant thieves and knaves, yet they tearfully cherish their first ideal and are extraordinarily honest at heart. Yes, it is only among us that the most incorrigible rogue can be absolutely and loftily honest at heart without in the least ceasing to be a rogue. I repeat, our romantics, frequently, become such accomplished rascals (I use the term "rascals" affectionately), suddenly display such a sense of reality and practical knowledge that their bewildered superiors and the public generally can only ejaculate in amazement.

Their many-sidedness is really amazing, and goodness knows what it may develop into later on, and what the future has in store for us. It is not a poor material! I do not say this from any foolish or boastful patriotism. But I feel sure that you are again imagining that I am joking. Or perhaps it's just the contrary and you are convinced that I really think so. Anyway, gentlemen, I shall welcome both views as an honour and a special favour. And do forgive my digression.

I did not, of course, maintain friendly relations with my comrades and soon was at loggerheads with them, and in my youth and inexperience I even gave up bowing to them, as though

I had cut off all relations. That, however, only happened to me once. As a rule, I was always alone.

In the first place I spent most of my time at home, reading. I tried to stifle all that was continually seething within me by means of external impressions. And the only external means I had was reading. Reading, of course, was a great help—exciting me, giving me pleasure and pain. But at times it bored me fearfully. One longed for movement in spite of everything, and I plunged all at once into dark, underground, loathsome vice of the pettiest kind. My wretched passions were acute, smarting, from my continual, sickly irritability I had hysterical impulses, with tears and convulsions. I had no resource except reading, that is, there was nothing in my surroundings which I could respect and which attracted me. I was overwhelmed with depression, too; I had an hysterical craving for incongruity and for contrast, and so I took to vice. I have not said all this to justify myself. . . . But, no! I am lying. I did want to justify myself. I make that little observation for my own benefit, gentlemen. I don't want to lie. I vowed to myself I would not.

And so, furtively, timidly, in solitude, at night, I indulged in filthy vice, with a feeling of shame which never deserted me, even at the most loathsome moments, and which at such moments nearly made me curse. Already even then I had my underground world in my soul. I was fearfully afraid of being seen, of being met, of being recognised. I visited various obscure haunts.

One night as I was passing a tavern I saw through a lighted window some gentlemen fighting with billiard cues, and saw one of them thrown out of the window. At other times I should have felt very much disgusted, but I was in such a mood at the time, that I actually envied the gentleman thrown out of the window—and I envied him so much that I even went into the tavern and into the billiard-room. "Perhaps," I thought, "I'll have a fight, too, and they'll throw me out of the window."

I was not drunk—but what is one to do—depression will drive a man to such a pitch of hysteria? But nothing happened. It seemed that I was not even equal to being thrown out of the window and I went away without having my fight.

An officer put me in my place from the first moment.

I was standing by the billiard-table and in my ignorance blocking up the way, and he wanted to pass; he took me by the shoulders and without a word—without a warning or explanation—moved me from where I was standing to another spot and passed by as though he had not noticed me. I could have forgiven blows, but I could not forgive his having moved me without noticing me.

Devil knows what I would have given for a real regular quarrel—a more decent, a more LITERARY one, so to speak. I had been treated like a fly. This officer was over six foot, while I was a spindly little fellow. But the quarrel was in my hands. I had only to protest and I certainly would have been thrown out of the window. But I changed my mind and preferred to beat a resentful retreat.

I went out of the tavern straight home, confused and troubled, and the next night I went out again with the same lewd intentions, still more furtively, abjectly and miserably than before, as it were, with tears in my eyes—but still I did go out again. Don't imagine, though, it was cowardice made me slink away from the officer; I never have been a coward at heart, though I have always been a coward in action. Don't be in a hurry to laugh—I assure you I can explain it all.

Oh, if only that officer had been one of the sort who would consent to fight a duel! But no, he was one of those gentlemen (alas, long extinct!) who preferred fighting with cues or, like Gogol's Lieutenant Pirogov, appealing to the police. They did not fight duels and would have thought a duel with a civilian like *me* an utterly unseemly procedure in any case—and they looked upon the duel altogether as something impossible, something free-thinking and French. But they were quite ready to bully, especially when they were over six foot.

I did not slink away through cowardice, but through an unbounded vanity. I was afraid not of his six foot, not of getting a sound thrashing and being thrown out of the window; I should have had physical courage enough, I assure you; but I had not the moral courage. What I was afraid of was that everyone present,

from the insolent marker down to the lowest little stinking, pimply clerk in a greasy collar, would jeer at me and fail to understand when I began to protest and to address them in literary language. For of the point of honour—not of honour, but of the point of honour (POINT D'HONNEUR)—one cannot speak among us except in literary language. You can't allude to the "point of honour" in ordinary language. I was fully convinced (the sense of reality, in spite of all my romanticism!) that they would all simply split their sides with laughter, and that the officer would not simply beat me, that is, without insulting me, but would certainly prod me in the back with his knee, kick me round the billiard-table, and only then perhaps have pity and drop me out of the window.

Of course, this trivial incident could not with me end in that. I often met that officer afterwards in the street and noticed him very carefully. I am not quite sure whether he recognised me, I imagine not; I judge from certain signs. But I—I stared at him with spite and hatred and so it went on . . . for several years! My resentment grew even deeper with years. At first I began making stealthy inquiries about this officer. It was difficult for me to do so, for I knew no one. But one day I heard someone shout his surname in the street as I was following him at a distance, as though I were tied to him—and so I learnt his surname. Another time I followed him to his flat, and for ten kopecks learned from the porter where he lived, on which storey, whether he lived alone or with others, and so on—in fact, everything one could learn from a porter. One morning, though I had never tried my hand with the pen, it suddenly occurred to me to write a satire on this officer in the form of a novel which would unmask his villainy. I wrote the novel with relish. I did unmask his villainy, I even exaggerated it; at first I so altered his surname that it could easily be recognised, but on second thoughts I changed it, and sent the story to the *Annals of the Fatherland*. But at that time such attacks were not the fashion and my story was not printed. That was a great vexation to me.

Sometimes I was positively choked with resentment. At last I determined to challenge my enemy to a duel. I composed a

splendid, charming letter to him, imploring him to apologise to me, and hinting rather plainly at a duel in case of refusal. The letter was so composed that if the officer had had the least understanding of the sublime and the beautiful he would certainly have flung himself on my neck and have offered me his friendship. And how fine that would have been! How we should have got on together! "He could have shielded me with his higher rank, while I could have improved his mind with my culture, and, well . . . my ideas, and all sorts of things might have happened." Only fancy, this was two years after his insult to me, and my challenge would have been a ridiculous anachronism, in spite of all the ingenuity of my letter in disguising and explaining away the anachronism. But, thank God (to this day I thank the Almighty with tears in my eyes) I did not send the letter to him. Cold shivers run down my back when I think of what might have happened if I had sent it.

And all at once I revenged myself in the simplest way, by a stroke of genius! A brilliant thought suddenly dawned upon me. Sometimes on holidays I used to stroll along the sunny side of the Nevsky about four o'clock in the afternoon. Though it was hardly a stroll so much as a series of innumerable miseries, humiliations and resentments; but no doubt that was just what I wanted. I used to wriggle along in a most unseemly fashion, like an eel, continually moving aside to make way for generals, for officers of the guards and the hussars, or for ladies. At such minutes there used to be a convulsive twinge at my heart, and I used to feel hot all down my back at the mere thought of the wretchedness of my attire, of the wretchedness and abjectness of my little scurrying figure. This was a regular martyrdom, a continual, intolerable humiliation at the thought, which passed into an incessant and direct sensation, that I was a mere fly in the eyes of all this world, a nasty, disgusting fly—more intelligent, more highly developed, more refined in feeling than any of them, of course—but a fly that was continually making way for everyone, insulted and injured by everyone. Why I inflicted this torture upon myself, why I went to the Nevsky, I don't know. I felt simply *drawn* there at every possible opportunity.

Already then I began to experience a rush of the enjoyment of which I spoke in the first chapter. After my affair with the officer I felt even more drawn there than before: it was on the Nevsky that I met him most frequently, there I could admire him. He, too, went there chiefly on holidays, he, too, turned out of his path for generals and persons of high rank, and he too, wriggled between them like an eel; but people, like me, or even better dressed than me, he simply walked over; he made straight for them as though there was nothing but empty space before him, and never, under any circumstances, turned aside. I gloated over my resentment watching him and . . . always resentfully made way for him. It exasperated me that even in the street I could not be on an even footing with him.

"Why must you invariably be the first to move aside?" I kept asking myself in hysterical rage, waking up sometimes at three o'clock in the morning. "Why is it you and not he? There's no regulation about it; there's no written law. Let the making way be equal as it usually is when refined people meet; he moves half-way and you move half-way; you pass with mutual respect."

80

But that never happened, and I always moved aside, while he did not even notice my making way for him. And lo and behold a bright idea dawned upon me! "What," I thought, "if I meet him and don't move on one side? What if I don't move aside on purpose, even if I knock up against him? How would that be?" This audacious idea took such a hold on me that it gave me no peace. I was dreaming of it continually, horribly, and I purposely went more frequently to the Nevsky in order to picture more vividly how I should do it when I did do it. I was delighted. This intention seemed to me more and more practical and possible.

"Of course I shall not really push him," I thought, already more good-natured in my joy. "I will simply not turn aside, will run up against him, not very violently, but just shouldering each other—just as much as decency permits. I will push against him just as much as he pushes against me." At last I made up my mind completely. But my preparations took a great deal of time. To begin with, when I carried out my plan I should need to be looking rather more decent, and so I had to think of my get-up.

"In case of emergency, if, for instance, there were any sort of public scandal (and the public there is of the most RECHERCHE: the Countess walks there; Prince D. walks there; all the literary world is there), I must be well dressed; that inspires respect and of itself puts us on an equal footing in the eyes of the society."

With this object I asked for some of my salary in advance, and bought at Tchurkin's a pair of black gloves and a decent hat. Black gloves seemed to me both more dignified and BON TON than the lemon-coloured ones which I had contemplated at first. "The colour is too gaudy, it looks as though one were trying to be conspicuous," and I did not take the lemon-coloured ones. I had got ready long beforehand a good shirt, with white bone studs; my overcoat was the only thing that held me back. The coat in itself was a very good one, it kept me warm; but it was wadded and it had a raccoon collar which was the height of vulgarity. I had to change the collar at any sacrifice, and to have a beaver one like an officer's. For this purpose I began visiting the Gostiny Dvor and after several attempts I pitched upon a piece of cheap German beaver. Though these German beavers soon grow shabby and look wretched, yet at first they look exceedingly well, and I only needed it for the occasion. I asked the price; even so, it was too expensive. After thinking it over thoroughly I decided to sell my raccoon collar. The rest of the money—a considerable sum for me, I decided to borrow from Anton Antonitch Syetotchkin, my immediate superior, an unassuming person, though grave and judicious. He never lent money to anyone, but I had, on entering the service, been specially recommended to him by an important personage who had got me my berth. I was horribly worried. To borrow from Anton Antonitch seemed to me monstrous and shameful. I did not sleep for two or three nights. Indeed, I did not sleep well at that time, I was in a fever; I had a vague sinking at my heart or else a sudden throbbing, throbbing, throbbing! Anton Antonitch was surprised at first, then he frowned, then he reflected, and did after all lend me the money, receiving from me a written authorisation to take from my salary a fortnight later the sum that he had lent me.

In this way everything was at last ready. The handsome beaver replaced the mean-looking raccoon, and I began by degrees to get to work. It would never have done to act offhand, at random; the plan had to be carried out skilfully, by degrees. But I must confess that after many efforts I began to despair: we simply could not run into each other. I made every preparation, I was quite determined—it seemed as though we should run into one another directly—and before I knew what I was doing I had stepped aside for him again and he had passed without noticing me. I even prayed as I approached him that God would grant me determination. One time I had made up my mind thoroughly, but it ended in my stumbling and falling at his feet because at the very last instant when I was six inches from him my courage failed me. He very calmly stepped over me, while I flew on one side like a ball. That night I was ill again, feverish and delirious.

And suddenly it ended most happily. The night before I had made up my mind not to carry out my fatal plan and to abandon it all, and with that object I went to the Nevsky for the last time, just to see how I would abandon it all. Suddenly, three paces from my enemy, I unexpectedly made up my mind—I closed my eyes, and we ran full tilt, shoulder to shoulder, against one another! I did not budge an inch and passed him on a perfectly equal footing! He did not even look round and pretended not to notice it; but he was only pretending, I am convinced of that. I am convinced of that to this day! Of course, I got the worst of it—he was stronger, but that was not the point. The point was that I had attained my object, I had kept up my dignity, I had not yielded a step, and had put myself publicly on an equal social footing with him. I returned home feeling that I was fully avenged for everything. I was delighted. I was triumphant and sang Italian arias. Of course, I will not describe to you what happened to me three days later; if you have read my first chapter you can guess for yourself. The officer was afterwards transferred; I have not seen him now for fourteen years. What is the dear fellow doing now? Whom is he walking over?

85

But the period of my dissipation would end and I always felt very sick afterwards. It was followed by remorse—I tried to drive it away; I felt too sick. By degrees, however, I grew used to that too. I grew used to everything, or rather I voluntarily resigned myself to enduring it. But I had a means of escape that reconciled everything—that was to find refuge in "the sublime and the beautiful," in dreams, of course. I was a terrible dreamer, I would dream for three months on end, tucked away in my corner, and you may believe me that at those moments I had no resemblance to the gentleman who, in the perturbation of his chicken heart, put a collar of German beaver on his great-coat. I suddenly became a hero. I would not have admitted my six-foot lieutenant even if he had called on me. I could not even picture him before me then. What were my dreams and how I could satisfy myself with them—it is hard to say now, but at the time I was satisfied with them. Though, indeed, even now, I am to some extent satisfied with them. Dreams were particularly sweet and vivid after a spell of dissipation; they came with remorse and with tears, with curses and transports. There were moments of such positive intoxication, of such happiness, that there was not the faintest trace of irony within me, on my honour. I had faith, hope, love. I believed blindly at such times that by some miracle, by some external circumstance, all *this* would suddenly open out, expand; that suddenly a vista of suitable activity—beneficent, good, and, above all, READY MADE (what sort of activity I had no idea, but the great thing was that it should be all ready for me)—would rise up before me—and I should come out into the light of day, almost riding a white horse and crowned with laurel. Anything but the foremost place I could not conceive for myself, and for that very reason I quite contentedly occupied the lowest in reality. Either to be a hero or to grovel in the mud—there was nothing between. That was my ruin, for when I was in the mud I comforted myself with the thought that at other times I was a hero, and the hero was a cloak for the mud: for an ordinary man it was shameful to defile himself, but a hero was too lofty to be utterly defiled, and so he might defile himself. It is worth noting that these attacks of the "sublime and the beautiful" visited me

even during the period of dissipation and just at the times when I was touching the bottom. They came in separate spurts, as though reminding me of themselves, but did not banish the dissipation by their appearance. On the contrary, they seemed to add a zest to it by contrast, and were only sufficiently present to serve as an appetising sauce. That sauce was made up of contradictions and sufferings, of agonising inward analysis, and all these pangs and pin-pricks gave a certain piquancy, even a significance to my dissipation—in fact, completely answered the purpose of an appetising sauce. There was a certain depth of meaning in it. And I could hardly have resigned myself to the simple, vulgar, direct debauchery of a clerk and have endured all the filthiness of it. What could have allured me about it then and have drawn me at night into the street? No, I had a lofty way of getting out of it all.

And what loving-kindness, oh Lord, what loving-kindness I felt at times in those dreams of mine! in those "flights into the sublime and the beautiful"; though it was fantastic love, though it was never applied to anything human in reality, yet there was so much of this love that one did not feel afterwards even the impulse to apply it in reality; that would have been superfluous. Everything, however, passed satisfactorily by a lazy and fascinating transition into the sphere of art, that is, into the beautiful forms of life, lying ready, largely stolen from the poets and novelists and adapted to all sorts of needs and uses. I, for instance, was triumphant over everyone; everyone, of course, was in dust and ashes, and was forced spontaneously to recognise my superiority, and I forgave them all. I was a poet and a grand gentleman, I fell in love; I came in for countless millions and immediately devoted them to humanity, and at the same time I confessed before all the people my shameful deeds, which, of course, were not merely shameful, but had in them much that was "sublime and beautiful," something in the Manfred style. Everyone would kiss me and weep (what idiots they would be if they did not), while I should go barefoot and hungry preaching new ideas and fighting a victorious Austerlitz against the obscurantists. Then the band would play a march, an amnesty would be declared, the Pope would agree to retire from Rome to

Brazil; then there would be a ball for the whole of Italy at the Villa Borghese on the shores of Lake Como, Lake Como being for that purpose transferred to the neighbourhood of Rome; then would come a scene in the bushes, and so on, and so on—as though you did not know all about it? You will say that it is vulgar and contemptible to drag all this into public after all the tears and transports which I have myself confessed. But why is it contemptible? Can you imagine that I am ashamed of it all, and that it was stupider than anything in your life, gentlemen? And I can assure you that some of these fancies were by no means badly composed. . . . It did not all happen on the shores of Lake Como. And yet you are right—it really is vulgar and contemptible. And most contemptible of all it is that now I am attempting to justify myself to you. And even more contemptible than that is my making this remark now. But that's enough, or there will be no end to it; each step will be more contemptible than the last. . . .

I could never stand more than three months of dreaming at a time without feeling an irresistible desire to plunge into society. To plunge into society meant to visit my superior at the office, Anton Antonitch Syetotchkin. He was the only permanent acquaintance I have had in my life, and I wonder at the fact myself now. But I only went to see him when that phase came over me, and when my dreams had reached such a point of bliss that it became essential at once to embrace my fellows and all mankind; and for that purpose I needed, at least, one human being, actually existing. I had to call on Anton Antonitch, however, on Tuesday—his at-home day; so I had always to time my passionate desire to embrace humanity so that it might fall on a Tuesday.

This Anton Antonitch lived on the fourth storey in a house in Five Corners, in four low-pitched rooms, one smaller than the other, of a particularly frugal and sallow appearance. He had two daughters and their aunt, who used to pour out the tea. Of the daughters one was thirteen and another fourteen, they both had snub noses, and I was awfully shy of them because they were always whispering and giggling together. The master of the house usually sat in his study on a leather couch in front of the table

with some grey-headed gentleman, usually a colleague from our office or some other department. I never saw more than two or three visitors there, always the same. They talked about the excise duty; about business in the senate, about salaries, about promotions, about His Excellency, and the best means of pleasing him, and so on. I had the patience to sit like a fool beside these people for four hours at a stretch, listening to them without knowing what to say to them or venturing to say a word. I became stupefied, several times I felt myself perspiring, I was overcome by a sort of paralysis; but this was pleasant and good for me. On returning home I deferred for a time my desire to embrace all mankind.

I had however one other acquaintance of a sort, Simonov, who was an old schoolfellow. I had a number of schoolfellows, indeed, in Petersburg, but I did not associate with them and had even given up nodding to them in the street. I believe I had transferred into the department I was in simply to avoid their company and to cut off all connection with my hateful childhood. Curses on that school and all those terrible years of penal servitude! In short, I parted from my schoolfellows as soon as I got out into the world. There were two or three left to whom I nodded in the street. One of them was Simonov, who had in no way been distinguished at school, was of a quiet and equable disposition; but I discovered in him a certain independence of character and even honesty; I don't even suppose that he was particularly stupid. I had at one time spent some rather soulful moments with him, but these had not lasted long and had somehow been suddenly clouded over. He was evidently uncomfortable at these reminiscences, and was, I fancy, always afraid that I might take up the same tone again. I suspected that he had an aversion for me, but still I went on going to see him, not being quite certain of it.

And so on one occasion, unable to endure my solitude and knowing that as it was Thursday Anton Antonitch's door would be closed, I thought of Simonov. Climbing up to his fourth storey I was thinking that the man disliked me and that it was a mistake to go and see him. But as it always happened that such reflections impelled me, as though purposely, to put myself into a false

position, I went in. It was almost a year since I had last seen Simonov.

3

I found two of my old schoolfellows with him. They seemed to be discussing an important matter. All of them took scarcely any notice of my entrance, which was strange, for I had not met them for years. Evidently they looked upon me as something on the level of a common fly. I had not been treated like that even at school, though they all hated me. I knew, of course, that they must despise me now for my lack of success in the service, and for my having let myself sink so low, going about badly dressed and so on—which seemed to them a sign of my incapacity and insignificance. But I had not expected such contempt. Simonov was positively surprised at my turning up. Even in old days he had always seemed surprised at my coming. All this disconcerted me: I sat down, feeling rather miserable, and began listening to what they were saying.

They were engaged in warm and earnest conversation about a farewell dinner which they wanted to arrange for the next day to a comrade of theirs called Zverkov, an officer in the army, who was going away to a distant province. This Zverkov had been all the time at school with me too. I had begun to hate him particularly in the upper forms. In the lower forms he had simply been a pretty, playful boy whom everybody liked. I had hated him, however, even in the lower forms, just because he was a pretty and playful boy. He was always bad at his lessons and got worse and worse as he went on; however, he left with a good certificate, as he had powerful interests. During his last year at school he came in for an estate of two hundred serfs, and as almost all of us were poor he took up a swaggering tone among us. He was vulgar in the extreme, but at the same time he was a good-natured fellow, even in his swaggering. In spite of superficial, fantastic and sham notions of honour and dignity, all but very few of us positively grovelled before Zverkov, and the more so the more he swaggered. And it was not from any interested motive that they

grovelled, but simply because he had been favoured by the gifts of nature. Moreover, it was, as it were, an accepted idea among us that Zverkov was a specialist in regard to tact and the social graces. This last fact particularly infuriated me. I hated the abrupt self-confident tone of his voice, his admiration of his own witticisms, which were often frightfully stupid, though he was bold in his language; I hated his handsome, but stupid face (for which I would, however, have gladly exchanged my *intelligent* one), and the free-and-easy military manners in fashion in the "forties." I hated the way in which he used to talk of his future conquests of women (he did not venture to begin his attack upon women until he had the epaulettes of an officer, and was looking forward to them with impatience), and boasted of the duels he would constantly be fighting. I remember how I, invariably so taciturn, suddenly fastened upon Zverkov, when one day talking at a leisure moment with his schoolfellows of his future relations with the fair sex, and growing as sportive as a puppy in the sun, he all at once declared that he would not leave a single village girl on his estate unnoticed, that that was his DROIT DE SEIGNEUR, and that if the peasants dared to protest he would have them all flogged and double the tax on them, the bearded rascals. Our servile rabble applauded, but I attacked him, not from compassion for the girls and their fathers, but simply because they were applauding such an insect. I got the better of him on that occasion, but though Zverkov was stupid he was lively and impudent, and so laughed it off, and in such a way that my victory was not really complete; the laugh was on his side. He got the better of me on several occasions afterwards, but without malice, jestingly, casually. I remained angrily and contemptuously silent and would not answer him. When we left school he made advances to me; I did not rebuff them, for I was flattered, but we soon parted and quite naturally. Afterwards I heard of his barrack-room success as a lieutenant, and of the fast life he was leading. Then there came other rumours—of his successes in the service. By then he had taken to cutting me in the street, and I suspected that he was afraid of compromising himself by greeting a personage as insignificant as me. I saw him once in the theatre, in

the third tier of boxes. By then he was wearing shoulder-straps. He was twisting and twirling about, ingratiating himself with the daughters of an ancient General. In three years he had gone off considerably, though he was still rather handsome and adroit. One could see that by the time he was thirty he would be corpulent. So it was to this Zverkov that my schoolfellows were going to give a dinner on his departure. They had kept up with him for those three years, though privately they did not consider themselves on an equal footing with him, I am convinced of that.

Of Simonov's two visitors, one was Ferfitchkin, a Russianised German—a little fellow with the face of a monkey, a blockhead who was always deriding everyone, a very bitter enemy of mine from our days in the lower forms—a vulgar, impudent, swaggering fellow, who affected a most sensitive feeling of personal honour, though, of course, he was a wretched little coward at heart. He was one of those worshippers of Zverkov who made up to the latter from interested motives, and often borrowed money from him. Simonov's other visitor, Trudolyubov, was a person in no way remarkable—a tall young fellow, in the army, with a cold face, fairly honest, though he worshipped success of every sort, and was only capable of thinking of promotion. He was some sort of distant relation of Zverkov's, and this, foolish as it seems, gave him a certain importance among us. He always thought me of no consequence whatever; his behaviour to me, though not quite courteous, was tolerable.

"Well, with seven roubles each," said Trudolyubov, "twenty-one roubles between the three of us, we ought to be able to get a good dinner. Zverkov, of course, won't pay."

95

"Of course not, since we are inviting him," Simonov decided.

"Can you imagine," Ferfitchkin interrupted hotly and conceitedly, like some insolent flunkey boasting of his master the General's decorations, "can you imagine that Zverkov will let us pay alone? He will accept from delicacy, but he will order half a dozen bottles of champagne."

"Do we want half a dozen for the four of us?" observed Trudolyubov, taking notice only of the half dozen.

"So the three of us, with Zverkov for the fourth, twenty-one roubles, at the Hotel de Paris at five o'clock tomorrow," Simonov, who had been asked to make the arrangements, concluded finally.

"How twenty-one roubles?" I asked in some agitation, with a show of being offended; "if you count me it will not be twenty-one, but twenty-eight roubles."

100

It seemed to me that to invite myself so suddenly and unexpectedly would be positively graceful, and that they would all be conquered at once and would look at me with respect.

"Do you want to join, too?" Simonov observed, with no appearance of pleasure, seeming to avoid looking at me. He knew me through and through.

It infuriated me that he knew me so thoroughly.

"Why not? I am an old schoolfellow of his, too, I believe, and I must own I feel hurt that you have left me out," I said, boiling over again.

"And where were we to find you?" Ferfitchkin put in roughly.

105

"You never were on good terms with Zverkov," Trudolyubov added, frowning.

But I had already clutched at the idea and would not give it up.

"It seems to me that no one has a right to form an opinion upon that," I retorted in a shaking voice, as though something tremendous had happened. "Perhaps that is just my reason for wishing it now, that I have not always been on good terms with him."

"Oh, there's no making you out . . . with these refinements," Trudolyubov jeered.

"We'll put your name down," Simonov decided, addressing me. "Tomorrow at five-o'clock at the Hotel de Paris."

110

"What about the money?" Ferfitchkin began in an undertone, indicating me to Simonov, but he broke off, for even Simonov was embarrassed.

"That will do," said Trudolyubov, getting up. "If he wants to come so much, let him."

"But it's a private thing, between us friends," Ferfitchkin said crossly, as he, too, picked up his hat. "It's not an official gathering."

"We do not want at all, perhaps . . ."

They went away. Ferfitchkin did not greet me in any way as he went out, Trudolyubov barely nodded. Simonov, with whom I was left TETE-A-TETE, was in a state of vexation and perplexity, and looked at me queerly. He did not sit down and did not ask me to.

115

"H'm . . . yes . . . tomorrow, then. Will you pay your subscription now? I just ask so as to know," he muttered in embarrassment.

I flushed crimson, as I did so I remembered that I had owed Simonov fifteen roubles for ages—which I had, indeed, never forgotten, though I had not paid it.

"You will understand, Simonov, that I could have no idea when I came here. . . . I am very much vexed that I have forgotten. . . ."

"All right, all right, that doesn't matter. You can pay tomorrow after the dinner. I simply wanted to know. . . . Please don't. . ."

He broke off and began pacing the room still more vexed. As he walked he began to stamp with his heels.

120

"Am I keeping you?" I asked, after two minutes of silence.

"Oh!" he said, starting, "that is—to be truthful—yes. I have to go and see someone . . . not far from here," he added in an apologetic voice, somewhat abashed.

"My goodness, why didn't you say so?" I cried, seizing my cap, with an astonishingly free-and-easy air, which was the *last thing* I should have expected of myself.

"It's close by . . . not two paces away," Simonov repeated, accompanying me to the front door with a fussy air which did not suit him at all. "So five o'clock, punctually, tomorrow," he called down the stairs after me. He was very glad to get rid of me. I was in a fury.

"What possessed me, what possessed me to force myself upon them?" I wondered, grinding my teeth as I strode along the street, "for a scoundrel, a pig like that Zverkov! Of course I had better not go; of course, I must just snap my fingers at them. I am not bound in any way. I'll send Simonov a note by tomorrow's post. . . ."

125

But what made me furious was that I knew for certain that I should go, that I should make a point of going; and the more tactless, the more unseemly my going would be, the more certainly I would go.

And there was a positive obstacle to my going: I had no money. All I had was nine roubles, I had to give seven of that to my servant, Apollon, for his monthly wages. That was all I paid him—he had to keep himself.

Not to pay him was impossible, considering his character. But I will talk about that fellow, about that plague of mine, another time.

However, I knew I should go and should not pay him his wages.

That night I had the most hideous dreams. No wonder; all the evening I had been oppressed by memories of my miserable days at school, and I could not shake them off. I was sent to the school by distant relations, upon whom I was dependent and of whom I have heard nothing since—they sent me there a forlorn, silent boy, already crushed by their reproaches, already troubled by doubt, and looking with savage distrust at everyone. My schoolfellows met me with spiteful and merciless jibes because I was not like any of them. But I could not endure their taunts; I could not give in to them with the ignoble readiness with which they gave in to one another. I hated them from the first, and shut myself away from everyone in timid, wounded and disproportionate pride. Their coarseness revolted me. They laughed cynically at my face, at my clumsy figure; and yet what stupid faces they had themselves. In our school the boys' faces seemed in a special way to degenerate and grow stupider. How many fine-looking boys came to us! In a few years they became repulsive. Even at sixteen I wondered at them morosely; even then I was struck by the pettiness of their thoughts, the stupidity of their pursuits, their games, their conversations. They had no understanding of such essential things, they took no interest in such striking, impressive subjects, that I could not help considering them inferior to myself. It was not wounded vanity that drove me to it, and for God's sake do not thrust upon me your

hackneyed remarks, repeated to nausea, that "I was only a dreamer," while they even then had an understanding of life. They understood nothing, they had no idea of real life, and I swear that that was what made me most indignant with them. On the contrary, the most obvious, striking reality they accepted with fantastic stupidity and even at that time were accustomed to respect success. Everything that was just, but oppressed and looked down upon, they laughed at heartlessly and shamefully. They took rank for intelligence; even at sixteen they were already talking about a snug berth. Of course, a great deal of it was due to their stupidity, to the bad examples with which they had always been surrounded in their childhood and boyhood. They were monstrously depraved. Of course a great deal of that, too, was superficial and an assumption of cynicism; of course there were glimpses of youth and freshness even in their depravity; but even that freshness was not attractive, and showed itself in a certain rakishness. I hated them horribly, though perhaps I was worse than any of them. They repaid me in the same way, and did not conceal their aversion for me. But by then I did not desire their affection: on the contrary, I continually longed for their humiliation. To escape from their derision I purposely began to make all the progress I could with my studies and forced my way to the very top. This impressed them. Moreover, they all began by degrees to grasp that I had already read books none of them could read, and understood things (not forming part of our school curriculum) of which they had not even heard. They took a savage and sarcastic view of it, but were morally impressed, especially as the teachers began to notice me on those grounds. The mockery ceased, but the hostility remained, and cold and strained relations became permanent between us. In the end I could not put up with it: with years a craving for society, for friends, developed in me. I attempted to get on friendly terms with some of my schoolfellows; but somehow or other my intimacy with them was always strained and soon ended of itself. Once, indeed, I did have a friend. But I was already a tyrant at heart; I wanted to exercise unbounded sway over him; I tried to instill into him a contempt for his surroundings; I required of him

a disdainful and complete break with those surroundings. I frightened him with my passionate affection; I reduced him to tears, to hysterics. He was a simple and devoted soul; but when he devoted himself to me entirely I began to hate him immediately and repulsed him—as though all I needed him for was to win a victory over him, to subjugate him and nothing else. But I could not subjugate all of them; my friend was not at all like them either, he was, in fact, a rare exception. The first thing I did on leaving school was to give up the special job for which I had been destined so as to break all ties, to curse my past and shake the dust from off my feet. . . . And goodness knows why, after all that, I should go trudging off to Simonov's!

Early next morning I roused myself and jumped out of bed with excitement, as though it were all about to happen at once. But I believed that some radical change in my life was coming, and would inevitably come that day. Owing to its rarity, perhaps, any external event, however trivial, always made me feel as though some radical change in my life were at hand. I went to the office, however, as usual, but sneaked away home two hours earlier to get ready. The great thing, I thought, is not to be the first to arrive, or they will think I am overjoyed at coming. But there were thousands of such great points to consider, and they all agitated and overwhelmed me. I polished my boots a second time with my own hands; nothing in the world would have induced Apollon to clean them twice a day, as he considered that it was more than his duties required of him. I stole the brushes to clean them from the passage, being careful he should not detect it, for fear of his contempt. Then I minutely examined my clothes and thought that everything looked old, worn and threadbare. I had let myself get too slovenly. My uniform, perhaps, was tidy, but I could not go out to dinner in my uniform. The worst of it was that on the knee of my trousers was a big yellow stain. I had a foreboding that that stain would deprive me of nine-tenths of my personal dignity. I knew, too, that it was very poor to think so. "But this is no time for thinking: now I am in for the real thing," I thought, and my heart sank. I knew, too, perfectly well even then, that I was monstrously exaggerating the facts. But how could I

help it? I could not control myself and was already shaking with fever. With despair I pictured to myself how coldly and disdainfully that "scoundrel" Zverkov would meet me; with what dull-witted, invincible contempt the blockhead Trudolyubov would look at me; with what impudent rudeness the insect Ferfitchkin would snigger at me in order to curry favour with Zverkov; how completely Simonov would take it all in, and how he would despise me for the abjectness of my vanity and lack of spirit—and, worst of all, how paltry, UNLITERARY, commonplace it would all be. Of course, the best thing would be not to go at all. But that was most impossible of all: if I feel impelled to do anything, I seem to be pitchforked into it. I should have jeered at myself ever afterwards: "So you funk'd it, you funk'd it, you funk'd the REAL THING!" On the contrary, I passionately longed to show all that "rabble" that I was by no means such a spiritless creature as I seemed to myself. What is more, even in the acutest paroxysm of this cowardly fever, I dreamed of getting the upper hand, of dominating them, carrying them away, making them like me—if only for my "elevation of thought and unmistakable wit." They would abandon Zverkov, he would sit on one side, silent and ashamed, while I should crush him. Then, perhaps, we would be reconciled and drink to our everlasting friendship; but what was most bitter and humiliating for me was that I knew even then, knew fully and for certain, that I needed nothing of all this really, that I did not really want to crush, to subdue, to attract them, and that I did not care a straw really for the result, even if I did achieve it. Oh, how I prayed for the day to pass quickly! In unutterable anguish I went to the window, opened the movable pane and looked out into the troubled darkness of the thickly falling wet snow. At last my wretched little clock hissed out five. I seized my hat and, trying not to look at Apollon, who had been all day expecting his month's wages, but in his foolishness was unwilling to be the first to speak about it, I slipped between him and the door and, jumping into a high-class sledge, on which I spent my last half rouble, I drove up in grand style to the Hotel de Paris.

I had been certain the day before that I should be the first to arrive. But it was not a question of being the first to arrive. Not only were they not there, but I had difficulty in finding our room. The table was not laid even. What did it mean? After a good many questions I elicited from the waiters that the dinner had been ordered not for five, but for six o'clock. This was confirmed at the buffet too. I felt really ashamed to go on questioning them. It was only twenty-five minutes past five. If they changed the dinner hour they ought at least to have let me know—that is what the post is for, and not to have put me in an absurd position in my own eyes and . . . and even before the waiters. I sat down; the servant began laying the table; I felt even more humiliated when he was present. Towards six o'clock they brought in candles, though there were lamps burning in the room. It had not occurred to the waiter, however, to bring them in at once when I arrived. In the next room two gloomy, angry-looking persons were eating their dinners in silence at two different tables. There was a great deal of noise, even shouting, in a room further away; one could hear the laughter of a crowd of people, and nasty little shrieks in French: there were ladies at the dinner. It was sickening, in fact. I rarely passed more unpleasant moments, so much so that when they did arrive all together punctually at six I was overjoyed to see them, as though they were my deliverers, and even forgot that it was incumbent upon me to show resentment.

Zverkov walked in at the head of them; evidently he was the leading spirit. He and all of them were laughing; but, seeing me, Zverkov drew himself up a little, walked up to me deliberately with a slight, rather jaunty bend from the waist. He shook hands with me in a friendly, but not over-friendly, fashion, with a sort of circumspect courtesy like that of a General, as though in giving me his hand he were warding off something. I had imagined, on the contrary, that on coming in he would at once break into his habitual thin, shrill laugh and fall to making his insipid jokes and witticisms. I had been preparing for them ever since the previous day, but I had not expected such condescension, such high-official

courtesy. So, then, he felt himself ineffably superior to me in every respect! If he only meant to insult me by that high-official tone, it would not matter, I thought—I could pay him back for it one way or another. But what if, in reality, without the least desire to be offensive, that sheephead had a notion in earnest that he was superior to me and could only look at me in a patronising way? The very supposition made me gasp.

"I was surprised to hear of your desire to join us," he began, lisping and drawling, which was something new. "You and I seem to have seen nothing of one another. You fight shy of us. You shouldn't. We are not such terrible people as you think. Well, anyway, I am glad to renew our acquaintance."

And he turned carelessly to put down his hat on the window.

135

"Have you been waiting long?" Trudolyubov inquired.

"I arrived at five o'clock as you told me yesterday," I answered aloud, with an irritability that threatened an explosion.

"Didn't you let him know that we had changed the hour?" said Trudolyubov to Simonov.

"No, I didn't. I forgot," the latter replied, with no sign of regret, and without even apologising to me he went off to order the HORS D'OEUVRE.

"So you've been here a whole hour? Oh, poor fellow!" Zverkov cried ironically, for to his notions this was bound to be extremely funny. That rascal Ferfitchkin followed with his nasty little snigger like a puppy yapping. My position struck him, too, as exquisitely ludicrous and embarrassing.

140

"It isn't funny at all!" I cried to Ferfitchkin, more and more irritated. "It wasn't my fault, but other people's. They neglected to let me know. It was . . . it was . . . it was simply absurd."

"It's not only absurd, but something else as well," muttered Trudolyubov, naively taking my part. "You are not hard enough upon it. It was simply rudeness—unintentional, of course. And how could Simonov . . . h'm!"

"If a trick like that had been played on me," observed Ferfitchkin, "I should . . ."

"But you should have ordered something for yourself," Zverkov interrupted, "or simply asked for dinner without waiting

for us."

"You will allow that I might have done that without your permission," I rapped out. "If I waited, it was . . ."

145

"Let us sit down, gentlemen," cried Simonov, coming in. "Everything is ready; I can answer for the champagne; it is capitally frozen. . . . You see, I did not know your address, where was I to look for you?" he suddenly turned to me, but again he seemed to avoid looking at me. Evidently he had something against me. It must have been what happened yesterday.

All sat down; I did the same. It was a round table. Trudolyubov was on my left, Simonov on my right, Zverkov was sitting opposite, Ferfitchkin next to him, between him and Trudolyubov.

"Tell me, are you . . . in a government office?" Zverkov went on attending to me. Seeing that I was embarrassed he seriously thought that he ought to be friendly to me, and, so to speak, cheer me up.

"Does he want me to throw a bottle at his head?" I thought, in a fury. In my novel surroundings I was unnaturally ready to be irritated.

"In the N—— office," I answered jerkily, with my eyes on my plate.

150

"And ha-ave you a go-od berth? I say, what ma-a-de you leave your original job?"

"What ma-a-de me was that I wanted to leave my original job," I drawled more than he, hardly able to control myself. Ferfitchkin went off into a guffaw. Simonov looked at me ironically. Trudolyubov left off eating and began looking at me with curiosity.

Zverkov winced, but he tried not to notice it.

"And the remuneration?"

"What remuneration?"

155

"I mean, your sa-a-lary?"

"Why are you cross-examining me?" However, I told him at once what my salary was. I turned horribly red.

"It is not very handsome," Zverkov observed majestically.

"Yes, you can't afford to dine at cafes on that," Ferfitchkin added insolently.

"To my thinking it's very poor," Trudolyubov observed gravely. 160

"And how thin you have grown! How you have changed!" added Zverkov, with a shade of venom in his voice, scanning me and my attire with a sort of insolent compassion.

"Oh, spare his blushes," cried Ferfitchkin, sniggering.

"My dear sir, allow me to tell you I am not blushing," I broke out at last; "do you hear? I am dining here, at this cafe, at my own expense, not at other people's—note that, Mr. Ferfitchkin."

"Wha-at? Isn't every one here dining at his own expense? You would seem to be . . ." Ferfitchkin flew out at me, turning as red as a lobster, and looking me in the face with fury.

"Tha-at," I answered, feeling I had gone too far, "and I imagine it would be better to talk of something more intelligent." 165

"You intend to show off your intelligence, I suppose?"

"Don't disturb yourself, that would be quite out of place here."

"Why are you clacking away like that, my good sir, eh? Have you gone out of your wits in your office?"

"Enough, gentlemen, enough!" Zverkov cried, authoritatively.

"How stupid it is!" muttered Simonov. 170

"It really is stupid. We have met here, a company of friends, for a farewell dinner to a comrade and you carry on an altercation," said Trudolyubov, rudely addressing himself to me alone. "You invited yourself to join us, so don't disturb the general harmony."

"Enough, enough!" cried Zverkov. "Give over, gentlemen, it's out of place. Better let me tell you how I nearly got married the day before yesterday. . . ."

And then followed a burlesque narrative of how this gentleman had almost been married two days before. There was not a word about the marriage, however, but the story was adorned with generals, colonels and kammer-junkers, while Zverkov almost took the lead among them. It was greeted with approving laughter; Ferfitchkin positively squealed.

No one paid any attention to me, and I sat crushed and humiliated.

"Good Heavens, these are not the people for me!" I thought. "And what a fool I have made of myself before them! I let Ferfitchkin go too far, though. The brutes imagine they are doing me an honour in letting me sit down with them. They don't understand that it's an honour to them and not to me! I've grown thinner! My clothes! Oh, damn my trousers! Zverkov noticed the yellow stain on the knee as soon as he came in. . . . But what's the use! I must get up at once, this very minute, take my hat and simply go without a word . . . with contempt! And tomorrow I can send a challenge. The scoundrels! As though I cared about the seven roubles. They may think. . . . Damn it! I don't care about the seven roubles. I'll go this minute!"

175

Of course I remained. I drank sherry and Lafitte by the glassful in my discomfiture. Being unaccustomed to it, I was quickly affected. My annoyance increased as the wine went to my head. I longed all at once to insult them all in a most flagrant manner and then go away. To seize the moment and show what I could do, so that they would say, "He's clever, though he is absurd," and . . . and . . . in fact, damn them all!

I scanned them all insolently with my drowsy eyes. But they seemed to have forgotten me altogether. *They* were noisy, vociferous, cheerful. Zverkov was talking all the time. I began listening. Zverkov was talking of some exuberant lady whom he had at last led on to declaring her love (of course, he was lying like a horse), and how he had been helped in this affair by an intimate friend of his, a Prince Kolya, an officer in the hussars, who had three thousand serfs.

"And yet this Kolya, who has three thousand serfs, has not put in an appearance here tonight to see you off," I cut in suddenly.

For one minute everyone was silent. "You are drunk already." Trudolyubov deigned to notice me at last, glancing contemptuously in my direction. Zverkov, without a word, examined me as though I were an insect. I dropped my eyes. Simonov made haste to fill up the glasses with champagne.

Trudolyubov raised his glass, as did everyone else but me.

180

"Your health and good luck on the journey!" he cried to Zverkov. "To old times, to our future, hurrah!"

They all tossed off their glasses, and crowded round Zverkov to kiss him. I did not move; my full glass stood untouched before me.

"Why, aren't you going to drink it?" roared Trudolyubov, losing patience and turning menacingly to me.

"I want to make a speech separately, on my own account . . . and then I'll drink it, Mr. Trudolyubov."

"Spiteful brute!" muttered Simonov. I drew myself up in my chair and feverishly seized my glass, prepared for something extraordinary, though I did not know myself precisely what I was going to say.

"SILENCE!" cried Ferfitchkin. "Now for a display of wit!"

Zverkov waited very gravely, knowing what was coming.

"Mr. Lieutenant Zverkov," I began, "let me tell you that I hate phrases, phrasemongers and men in corsets . . . that's the first point, and there is a second one to follow it."

There was a general stir.

"The second point is: I hate ribaldry and ribald talkers. Especially ribald talkers! The third point: I love justice, truth and honesty." I went on almost mechanically, for I was beginning to shiver with horror myself and had no idea how I came to be talking like this. "I love thought, *Monsieur Zverkov*; I love true comradeship, on an equal footing and not . . . H'm . . . I love . . . But, however, why not? I will drink your health, too, Mr. Zverkov. Seduce the Circassian girls, shoot the enemies of the fatherland and . . . and . . . to your health, *Monsieur Zverkov*!"

Zverkov got up from his seat, bowed to me and said:

"I am very much obliged to you." He was frightfully offended and turned pale.

"Damn the fellow!" roared Trudolyubov, bringing his fist down on the table.

"Well, he wants a punch in the face for that," squealed Ferfitchkin.

"We ought to turn him out," muttered Simonov.

185

190

195

"Not a word, gentlemen, not a movement!" cried Zverkov solemnly, checking the general indignation. "I thank you all, but I can show him for myself how much value I attach to his words."

"Mr. Ferfitchkin, you will give me satisfaction tomorrow for your words just now!" I said aloud, turning with dignity to Ferfitchkin.

"A duel, you mean? Certainly," he answered. But probably I was so ridiculous as I challenged him and it was so out of keeping with my appearance that everyone including Ferfitchkin was prostrate with laughter.

"Yes, let him alone, of course! He is quite drunk," Trudolyubov said with disgust.

"I shall never forgive myself for letting him join us," Simonov muttered again.

"Now is the time to throw a bottle at their heads," I thought to myself. I picked up the bottle . . . and filled my glass. . . . "No, I'd better sit on to the end," I went on thinking; "you would be pleased, my friends, if I went away. Nothing will induce me to go. I'll go on sitting here and drinking to the end, on purpose, as a sign that I don't think you of the slightest consequence. I will go on sitting and drinking, because this is a public-house and I paid my entrance money. I'll sit here and drink, for I look upon you as so many pawns, as inanimate pawns. I'll sit here and drink . . . and sing if I want to, yes, sing, for I have the right to . . . to sing . . . H'm!"

But I did not sing. I simply tried not to look at any of them. I assumed most unconcerned attitudes and waited with impatience for them to speak FIRST. But alas, they did not address me! And oh, how I wished, how I wished at that moment to be reconciled to them! It struck eight, at last nine. They moved from the table to the sofa. Zverkov stretched himself on a lounge and put one foot on a round table. Wine was brought there. He did, as a fact, order three bottles on his own account. I, of course, was not invited to join them. They all sat round him on the sofa. They listened to him, almost with reverence. It was evident that they were fond of him. "What for? What for?" I wondered. From time to time they were moved to drunken enthusiasm and kissed each other. They

talked of the Caucasus, of the nature of true passion, of snug berths in the service, of the income of an hussar called Podharzhevsky, whom none of them knew personally, and rejoiced in the largeness of it, of the extraordinary grace and beauty of a Princess D., whom none of them had ever seen; then it came to Shakespeare's being immortal.

I smiled contemptuously and walked up and down the other side of the room, opposite the sofa, from the table to the stove and back again. I tried my very utmost to show them that I could do without them, and yet I purposely made a noise with my boots, thumping with my heels. But it was all in vain. They paid no attention. I had the patience to walk up and down in front of them from eight o'clock till eleven, in the same place, from the table to the stove and back again. "I walk up and down to please myself and no one can prevent me." The waiter who came into the room stopped, from time to time, to look at me. I was somewhat giddy from turning round so often; at moments it seemed to me that I was in delirium. During those three hours I was three times soaked with sweat and dry again. At times, with an intense, acute pang I was stabbed to the heart by the thought that ten years, twenty years, forty years would pass, and that even in forty years I would remember with loathing and humiliation those filthiest, most ludicrous, and most awful moments of my life. No one could have gone out of his way to degrade himself more shamelessly, and I fully realised it, fully, and yet I went on pacing up and down from the table to the stove. "Oh, if you only knew what thoughts and feelings I am capable of, how cultured I am!" I thought at moments, mentally addressing the sofa on which my enemies were sitting. But my enemies behaved as though I were not in the room. Once—only once—they turned towards me, just when Zverkov was talking about Shakespeare, and I suddenly gave a contemptuous laugh. I laughed in such an affected and disgusting way that they all at once broke off their conversation, and silently and gravely for two minutes watched me walking up and down from the table to the stove, **TAKING NO NOTICE OF THEM.** But nothing came of it: they said nothing, and two minutes later they ceased to notice me again. It struck eleven.

"Friends," cried Zverkov getting up from the sofa, "let us all be off now, THERE!"

"Of course, of course," the others assented. I turned sharply to Zverkov. I was so harassed, so exhausted, that I would have cut my throat to put an end to it. I was in a fever; my hair, soaked with perspiration, stuck to my forehead and temples.

205

"Zverkov, I beg your pardon," I said abruptly and resolutely. "Ferfitchkin, yours too, and everyone's, everyone's: I have insulted you all!"

"Aha! A duel is not in your line, old man," Ferfitchkin hissed venomously.

It sent a sharp pang to my heart.

"No, it's not the duel I am afraid of, Ferfitchkin! I am ready to fight you tomorrow, after we are reconciled. I insist upon it, in fact, and you cannot refuse. I want to show you that I am not afraid of a duel. You shall fire first and I shall fire into the air."

"He is comforting himself," said Simonov.

210

"He's simply raving," said Trudolyubov.

"But let us pass. Why are you barring our way? What do you want?" Zverkov answered disdainfully.

They were all flushed, their eyes were bright: they had been drinking heavily.

"I ask for your friendship, Zverkov; I insulted you, but . . ."

"Insulted? YOU insulted ME? Understand, sir, that you never, under any circumstances, could possibly insult ME."

215

"And that's enough for you. Out of the way!" concluded Trudolyubov.

"Olympia is mine, friends, that's agreed!" cried Zverkov.

"We won't dispute your right, we won't dispute your right," the others answered, laughing.

I stood as though spat upon. The party went noisily out of the room. Trudolyubov struck up some stupid song. Simonov remained behind for a moment to tip the waiters. I suddenly went up to him.

"Simonov! give me six roubles!" I said, with desperate resolution.

220

He looked at me in extreme amazement, with vacant eyes. He, too, was drunk.

"You don't mean you are coming with us?"

"Yes."

"I've no money," he snapped out, and with a scornful laugh he went out of the room.

I clutched at his overcoat. It was a nightmare.

225

"Simonov, I saw you had money. Why do you refuse me? Am I a scoundrel? Beware of refusing me: if you knew, if you knew why I am asking! My whole future, my whole plans depend upon it!"

Simonov pulled out the money and almost flung it at me.

"Take it, if you have no sense of shame!" he pronounced pitilessly, and ran to overtake them.

I was left for a moment alone. Disorder, the remains of dinner, a broken wine-glass on the floor, spilt wine, cigarette ends, fumes of drink and delirium in my brain, an agonising misery in my heart and finally the waiter, who had seen and heard all and was looking inquisitively into my face.

"I am going *there*!" I cried. "Either they shall all go down on their knees to beg for my friendship, or I will give Zverkov a slap in the face!"

230

5

"So this is it, this is it at last—contact with real life," I muttered as I ran headlong downstairs. "This is very different from the Pope's leaving Rome and going to Brazil, very different from the ball on Lake Como!"

"You are a scoundrel," a thought flashed through my mind, "if you laugh at this now."

"No matter!" I cried, answering myself. "Now everything is lost!"

There was no trace to be seen of them, but that made no difference—I knew where they had gone.

At the steps was standing a solitary night sledge-driver in a rough peasant coat, powdered over with the still falling, wet, and

235

as it were warm, snow. It was hot and steamy. The little shaggy piebald horse was also covered with snow and coughing, I remember that very well. I made a rush for the roughly made sledge; but as soon as I raised my foot to get into it, the recollection of how Simonov had just given me six roubles seemed to double me up and I tumbled into the sledge like a sack.

"No, I must do a great deal to make up for all that," I cried. "But I will make up for it or perish on the spot this very night. Start!"

We set off. There was a perfect whirl in my head.

"They won't go down on their knees to beg for my friendship. That is a mirage, cheap mirage, revolting, romantic and fantastical—that's another ball on Lake Como. And so I am *bound* to slap Zverkov's face! It is my duty to. And so it is settled; I am flying to give him a slap in the face. Hurry up!"

The driver tugged at the reins.

"As soon as I go in I'll give it him. Ought I before giving him the slap to say a few words by way of preface? No. I'll simply go in and give it him. They will all be sitting in the drawing-room, and he with Olympia on the sofa. That damned Olympia! She laughed at my looks on one occasion and refused me. I'll pull Olympia's hair, pull Zverkov's ears! No, better one ear, and pull him by it round the room. Maybe they will all begin beating me and will kick me out. That's most likely, indeed. No matter! Anyway, I shall first slap him; the initiative will be mine; and by the laws of honour that is everything; he will be branded and cannot wipe off the slap by any blows, by nothing but a duel. He will be forced to fight. And let them beat me now. Let them, the ungrateful wretches! Trudolyubov will beat me hardest, he is so strong; Ferfitchkin will be sure to catch hold sideways and tug at my hair. But no matter, no matter! That's what I am going for. The blockheads will be forced at last to see the tragedy of it all! When they drag me to the door I shall call out to them that in reality they are not worth my little finger. Get on, driver, get on!" I cried to the driver. He started and flicked his whip, I shouted so savagely.

"We shall fight at daybreak, that's a settled thing. I've done with the office. Ferfitchkin made a joke about it just now. But where can I get pistols? Nonsense! I'll get my salary in advance and buy them. And powder, and bullets? That's the second's business. And how can it all be done by daybreak? and where am I to get a second? I have no friends. Nonsense!" I cried, lashing myself up more and more. "It's of no consequence! The first person I meet in the street is bound to be my second, just as he would be bound to pull a drowning man out of water. The most eccentric things may happen. Even if I were to ask the director himself to be my second tomorrow, he would be bound to consent, if only from a feeling of chivalry, and to keep the secret! Anton Antonitch. . . ."

The fact is, that at that very minute the disgusting absurdity of my plan and the other side of the question was clearer and more vivid to my imagination than it could be to anyone on earth. But .

. . .

"Get on, driver, get on, you rascal, get on!"

"Ugh, sir!" said the son of toil.

Cold shivers suddenly ran down me. Wouldn't it be better . . . to go straight home? My God, my God! Why did I invite myself to this dinner yesterday? But no, it's impossible. And my walking up and down for three hours from the table to the stove? No, they, they and no one else must pay for my walking up and down! They must wipe out this dishonour! Drive on!

And what if they give me into custody? They won't dare! They'll be afraid of the scandal. And what if Zverkov is so contemptuous that he refuses to fight a duel? He is sure to; but in that case I'll show them . . . I will turn up at the posting station when he's setting off tomorrow, I'll catch him by the leg, I'll pull off his coat when he gets into the carriage. I'll get my teeth into his hand, I'll bite him. "See what lengths you can drive a desperate man to!" He may hit me on the head and they may belabour me from behind. I will shout to the assembled multitude: "Look at this young puppy who is driving off to captivate the Circassian girls after letting me spit in his face!"

Of course, after that everything will be over! The office will have vanished off the face of the earth. I shall be arrested, I shall be tried, I shall be dismissed from the service, thrown in prison, sent to Siberia. Never mind! In fifteen years when they let me out of prison I will trudge off to him, a beggar, in rags. I shall find him in some provincial town. He will be married and happy. He will have a grown-up daughter. . . . I shall say to him: "Look, monster, at my hollow cheeks and my rags! I've lost everything—my career, my happiness, art, science, THE WOMAN I LOVED, and all through you. Here are pistols. I have come to discharge my pistol and . . . and I . . . forgive you. Then I shall fire into the air and he will hear nothing more of me. . . ."

I was actually on the point of tears, though I knew perfectly well at that moment that all this was out of Pushkin's *SILVIO* and Lermontov's *MASQUERADE*. And all at once I felt horribly ashamed, so ashamed that I stopped the horse, got out of the sledge, and stood still in the snow in the middle of the street. The driver gazed at me, sighing and astonished.

What was I to do? I could not go on *there*—it was evidently stupid, and I could not leave things as they were, because that would seem as though . . . Heavens, how could I leave things! And after such insults! "No!" I cried, throwing myself into the sledge again. "It is ordained! It is fate! Drive on, drive on!"

And in my impatience I punched the sledge-driver on the back of the neck.

250

"What are you up to? What are you hitting me for?" the peasant shouted, but he whipped up his nag so that it began kicking.

The wet snow was falling in big flakes; I unbuttoned myself, regardless of it. I forgot everything else, for I had finally decided on the slap, and felt with horror that it was going to happen NOW, AT ONCE, and that NO FORCE COULD STOP IT. The deserted street lamps gleamed sullenly in the snowy darkness like torches at a funeral. The snow drifted under my great-coat, under my coat, under my cravat, and melted there. I did not wrap myself up—all was lost, anyway.

At last we arrived. I jumped out, almost unconscious, ran up the steps and began knocking and kicking at the door. I felt fearfully weak, particularly in my legs and knees. The door was opened quickly as though they knew I was coming. As a fact, Simonov had warned them that perhaps another gentleman would arrive, and this was a place in which one had to give notice and to observe certain precautions. It was one of those "millinery establishments" which were abolished by the police a good time ago. By day it really was a shop; but at night, if one had an introduction, one might visit it for other purposes.

I walked rapidly through the dark shop into the familiar drawing-room, where there was only one candle burning, and stood still in amazement: there was no one there. "Where are they?" I asked somebody. But by now, of course, they had separated. Before me was standing a person with a stupid smile, the "madam" herself, who had seen me before. A minute later a door opened and another person came in.

Taking no notice of anything I strode about the room, and, I believe, I talked to myself. I felt as though I had been saved from death and was conscious of this, joyfully, all over: I should have given that slap, I should certainly, certainly have given it! But now they were not here and . . . everything had vanished and changed! I looked round. I could not realise my condition yet. I looked mechanically at the girl who had come in: and had a glimpse of a fresh, young, rather pale face, with straight, dark eyebrows, and with grave, as it were wondering, eyes that attracted me at once; I should have hated her if she had been smiling. I began looking at her more intently and, as it were, with effort. I had not fully collected my thoughts. There was something simple and good-natured in her face, but something strangely grave. I am sure that this stood in her way here, and no one of those fools had noticed her. She could not, however, have been called a beauty, though she was tall, strong-looking, and well built. She was very simply dressed. Something loathsome stirred within me. I went straight up to her.

I chanced to look into the glass. My harassed face struck me as revolting in the extreme, pale, angry, abject, with dishevelled hair.

"No matter, I am glad of it," I thought; "I am glad that I shall seem repulsive to her; I like that."

6

Somewhere behind a screen a clock began wheezing, as though oppressed by something, as though someone were strangling it. After an unnaturally prolonged wheezing there followed a shrill, nasty, and as it were unexpectedly rapid, chime—as though someone were suddenly jumping forward. It struck two. I woke up, though I had indeed not been asleep but lying half-conscious.

It was almost completely dark in the narrow, cramped, low-pitched room, cumbered up with an enormous wardrobe and piles of cardboard boxes and all sorts of frippery and litter. The candle end that had been burning on the table was going out and gave a faint flicker from time to time. In a few minutes there would be complete darkness.

I was not long in coming to myself; everything came back to my mind at once, without an effort, as though it had been in ambush to pounce upon me again. And, indeed, even while I was unconscious a point seemed continually to remain in my memory unforgotten, and round it my dreams moved drearily. But strange to say, everything that had happened to me in that day seemed to me now, on waking, to be in the far, far away past, as though I had long, long ago lived all that down.

My head was full of fumes. Something seemed to be hovering over me, rousing me, exciting me, and making me restless. Misery and spite seemed surging up in me again and seeking an outlet. Suddenly I saw beside me two wide open eyes scrutinising me curiously and persistently. The look in those eyes was coldly detached, sullen, as it were utterly remote; it weighed upon me.

A grim idea came into my brain and passed all over my body, as a horrible sensation, such as one feels when one goes into a damp and mouldy cellar. There was something unnatural in those two eyes, beginning to look at me only now. I recalled, too, that during those two hours I had not said a single word to this

creature, and had, in fact, considered it utterly superfluous; in fact, the silence had for some reason gratified me. Now I suddenly realised vividly the hideous idea—revolting as a spider—of vice, which, without love, grossly and shamelessly begins with that in which true love finds its consummation. For a long time we gazed at each other like that, but she did not drop her eyes before mine and her expression did not change, so that at last I felt uncomfortable.

"What is your name?" I asked abruptly, to put an end to it.

"Liza," she answered almost in a whisper, but somehow far from graciously, and she turned her eyes away.

I was silent.

"What weather! The snow . . . it's disgusting!" I said, almost to myself, putting my arm under my head despondently, and gazing at the ceiling.

265

She made no answer. This was horrible.

"Have you always lived in Petersburg?" I asked a minute later, almost angrily, turning my head slightly towards her.

"No."

"Where do you come from?"

"From Riga," she answered reluctantly.

270

"Are you a German?"

"No, Russian."

"Have you been here long?"

"Where?"

"In this house?"

275

"A fortnight."

She spoke more and more jerkily. The candle went out; I could no longer distinguish her face.

"Have you a father and mother?"

"Yes . . . no . . . I have."

"Where are they?"

280

"There . . . in Riga."

"What are they?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Nothing? Why, what class are they?"

"Tradespeople."

285

"Have you always lived with them?"

"Yes."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty."

"Why did you leave them?"

290

"Oh, for no reason."

That answer meant "Let me alone; I feel sick, sad."

We were silent.

God knows why I did not go away. I felt myself more and more sick and dreary. The images of the previous day began of themselves, apart from my will, flitting through my memory in confusion. I suddenly recalled something I had seen that morning when, full of anxious thoughts, I was hurrying to the office.

"I saw them carrying a coffin out yesterday and they nearly dropped it," I suddenly said aloud, not that I desired to open the conversation, but as it were by accident.

295

"A coffin?"

"Yes, in the Haymarket; they were bringing it up out of a cellar."

"From a cellar?"

"Not from a cellar, but a basement. Oh, you know . . . down below . . . from a house of ill-fame. It was filthy all round . . . Egg-shells, litter . . . a stench. It was loathsome."

Silence.

300

"A nasty day to be buried," I began, simply to avoid being silent.

"Nasty, in what way?"

"The snow, the wet." (I yawned.)

"It makes no difference," she said suddenly, after a brief silence.

"No, it's horrid." (I yawned again). "The gravediggers must have sworn at getting drenched by the snow. And there must have been water in the grave."

305

"Why water in the grave?" she asked, with a sort of curiosity, but speaking even more harshly and abruptly than before.

I suddenly began to feel provoked.

"Why, there must have been water at the bottom a foot deep. You can't dig a dry grave in Volkovo Cemetery."

"Why?"

"Why? Why, the place is waterlogged. It's a regular marsh. So they bury them in water. I've seen it myself . . . many times."

310

(I had never seen it once, indeed I had never been in Volkovo, and had only heard stories of it.)

"Do you mean to say, you don't mind how you die?"

"But why should I die?" she answered, as though defending herself.

"Why, some day you will die, and you will die just the same as that dead woman. She was . . . a girl like you. She died of consumption."

"A wench would have died in hospital . . ." (She knows all about it already: she said "wench," not "girl.")

315

"She was in debt to her madam," I retorted, more and more provoked by the discussion; "and went on earning money for her up to the end, though she was in consumption. Some sledge-drivers standing by were talking about her to some soldiers and telling them so. No doubt they knew her. They were laughing. They were going to meet in a pot-house to drink to her memory."

A great deal of this was my invention. Silence followed, profound silence. She did not stir.

"And is it better to die in a hospital?"

"Isn't it just the same? Besides, why should I die?" she added irritably.

"If not now, a little later."

320

"Why a little later?"

"Why, indeed? Now you are young, pretty, fresh, you fetch a high price. But after another year of this life you will be very different—you will go off."

"In a year?"

"Anyway, in a year you will be worth less," I continued malignantly. "You will go from here to something lower, another house; a year later—to a third, lower and lower, and in seven years you will come to a basement in the Haymarket. That will be if you were lucky. But it would be much worse if you got some

disease, consumption, say . . . and caught a chill, or something or other. It's not easy to get over an illness in your way of life. If you catch anything you may not get rid of it. And so you would die."

"Oh, well, then I shall die," she answered, quite vindictively, and she made a quick movement. 325

"But one is sorry."

"Sorry for whom?"

"Sorry for life." Silence.

"Have you been engaged to be married? Eh?"

"What's that to you?" 330

"Oh, I am not cross-examining you. It's nothing to me. Why are you so cross? Of course you may have had your own troubles. What is it to me? It's simply that I felt sorry."

"Sorry for whom?"

"Sorry for you."

"No need," she whispered hardly audibly, and again made a faint movement.

That incensed me at once. What! I was so gentle with her, and she. . . . 335

"Why, do you think that you are on the right path?"

"I don't think anything."

"That's what's wrong, that you don't think. Realise it while there is still time. There still is time. You are still young, good-looking; you might love, be married, be happy. . . ."

"Not all married women are happy," she snapped out in the rude abrupt tone she had used at first.

"Not all, of course, but anyway it is much better than the life here. Infinitely better. Besides, with love one can live even without happiness. Even in sorrow life is sweet; life is sweet, however one lives. But here what is there but . . . foulness? Phew!" 340

I turned away with disgust; I was no longer reasoning coldly. I began to feel myself what I was saying and warmed to the subject. I was already longing to expound the cherished ideas I had brooded over in my corner. Something suddenly flared up in me. An object had appeared before me.

"Never mind my being here, I am not an example for you. I am, perhaps, worse than you are. I was drunk when I came here, though," I hastened, however, to say in self-defence. "Besides, a man is no example for a woman. It's a different thing. I may degrade and defile myself, but I am not anyone's slave. I come and go, and that's an end of it. I shake it off, and I am a different man. But you are a slave from the start. Yes, a slave! You give up everything, your whole freedom. If you want to break your chains afterwards, you won't be able to; you will be more and more fast in the snares. It is an accursed bondage. I know it. I won't speak of anything else, maybe you won't understand, but tell me: no doubt you are in debt to your madam? There, you see," I added, though she made no answer, but only listened in silence, entirely absorbed, "that's a bondage for you! You will never buy your freedom. They will see to that. It's like selling your soul to the devil. . . . And besides . . . perhaps, I too, am just as unlucky—how do you know—and wallow in the mud on purpose, out of misery? You know, men take to drink from grief; well, maybe I am here from grief. Come, tell me, what is there good here? Here you and I . . . came together . . . just now and did not say one word to one another all the time, and it was only afterwards you began staring at me like a wild creature, and I at you. Is that loving? Is that how one human being should meet another? It's hideous, that's what it is!"

"Yes!" she assented sharply and hurriedly.

I was positively astounded by the promptitude of this "Yes." So the same thought may have been straying through her mind when she was staring at me just before. So she, too, was capable of certain thoughts? "Damn it all, this was interesting, this was a point of likeness!" I thought, almost rubbing my hands. And indeed it's easy to turn a young soul like that!

It was the exercise of my power that attracted me most.

345

She turned her head nearer to me, and it seemed to me in the darkness that she propped herself on her arm. Perhaps she was scrutinising me. How I regretted that I could not see her eyes. I heard her deep breathing.

"Why have you come here?" I asked her, with a note of authority already in my voice.

"Oh, I don't know."

"But how nice it would be to be living in your father's house! It's warm and free; you have a home of your own."

"But what if it's worse than this?"

350

"I must take the right tone," flashed through my mind. "I may not get far with sentimentality." But it was only a momentary thought. I swear she really did interest me. Besides, I was exhausted and moody. And cunning so easily goes hand-in-hand with feeling.

"Who denies it!" I hastened to answer. "Anything may happen. I am convinced that someone has wronged you, and that you are more sinned against than sinning. Of course, I know nothing of your story, but it's not likely a girl like you has come here of her own inclination. . . ."

"A girl like me?" she whispered, hardly audibly; but I heard it.

Damn it all, I was flattering her. That was horrid. But perhaps it was a good thing. . . . She was silent.

"See, Liza, I will tell you about myself. If I had had a home from childhood, I shouldn't be what I am now. I often think that. However bad it may be at home, anyway they are your father and mother, and not enemies, strangers. Once a year at least, they'll show their love of you. Anyway, you know you are at home. I grew up without a home; and perhaps that's why I've turned so . . . unfeeling."

355

I waited again. "Perhaps she doesn't understand," I thought, "and, indeed, it is absurd—it's moralising."

"If I were a father and had a daughter, I believe I should love my daughter more than my sons, really," I began indirectly, as though talking of something else, to distract her attention. I must confess I blushed.

"Why so?" she asked.

Ah! so she was listening!

"I don't know, Liza. I knew a father who was a stern, austere man, but used to go down on his knees to his daughter, used to kiss her hands, her feet, he couldn't make enough of her, really."

360

When she danced at parties he used to stand for five hours at a stretch, gazing at her. He was mad over her: I understand that! She would fall asleep tired at night, and he would wake to kiss her in her sleep and make the sign of the cross over her. He would go about in a dirty old coat, he was stingy to everyone else, but would spend his last penny for her, giving her expensive presents, and it was his greatest delight when she was pleased with what he gave her. Fathers always love their daughters more than the mothers do. Some girls live happily at home! And I believe I should never let my daughters marry."

"What next?" she said, with a faint smile.

"I should be jealous, I really should. To think that she should kiss anyone else! That she should love a stranger more than her father! It's painful to imagine it. Of course, that's all nonsense, of course every father would be reasonable at last. But I believe before I should let her marry, I should worry myself to death; I should find fault with all her suitors. But I should end by letting her marry whom she herself loved. The one whom the daughter loves always seems the worst to the father, you know. That is always so. So many family troubles come from that."

"Some are glad to sell their daughters, rather than marrying them honourably."

Ah, so that was it!

"Such a thing, Liza, happens in those accursed families in which there is neither love nor God," I retorted warmly, "and where there is no love, there is no sense either. There are such families, it's true, but I am not speaking of them. You must have seen wickedness in your own family, if you talk like that. Truly, you must have been unlucky. H'm! . . . that sort of thing mostly comes about through poverty."

"And is it any better with the gentry? Even among the poor, honest people who live happily?"

"H'm . . . yes. Perhaps. Another thing, Liza, man is fond of reckoning up his troubles, but does not count his joys. If he counted them up as he ought, he would see that every lot has enough happiness provided for it. And what if all goes well with the family, if the blessing of God is upon it, if the husband is a

good one, loves you, cherishes you, never leaves you! There is happiness in such a family! Even sometimes there is happiness in the midst of sorrow; and indeed sorrow is everywhere. If you marry YOU WILL FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF. But think of the first years of married life with one you love: what happiness, what happiness there sometimes is in it! And indeed it's the ordinary thing. In those early days even quarrels with one's husband end happily. Some women get up quarrels with their husbands just because they love them. Indeed, I knew a woman like that: she seemed to say that because she loved him, she would torment him and make him feel it. You know that you may torment a man on purpose through love. Women are particularly given to that, thinking to themselves 'I will love him so, I will make so much of him afterwards, that it's no sin to torment him a little now.' And all in the house rejoice in the sight of you, and you are happy and gay and peaceful and honourable. . . . Then there are some women who are jealous. If he went off anywhere—I knew one such woman, she couldn't restrain herself, but would jump up at night and run off on the sly to find out where he was, whether he was with some other woman. That's a pity. And the woman knows herself it's wrong, and her heart fails her and she suffers, but she loves—it's all through love. And how sweet it is to make up after quarrels, to own herself in the wrong or to forgive him! And they both are so happy all at once—as though they had met anew, been married over again; as though their love had begun afresh. And no one, no one should know what passes between husband and wife if they love one another. And whatever quarrels there may be between them they ought not to call in their own mother to judge between them and tell tales of one another. They are their own judges. Love is a holy mystery and ought to be hidden from all other eyes, whatever happens. That makes it holier and better. They respect one another more, and much is built on respect. And if once there has been love, if they have been married for love, why should love pass away? Surely one can keep it! It is rare that one cannot keep it. And if the husband is kind and straightforward, why should not love last? The first phase of married love will pass, it is true, but then there will come

a love that is better still. Then there will be the union of souls, they will have everything in common, there will be no secrets between them. And once they have children, the most difficult times will seem to them happy, so long as there is love and courage. Even toil will be a joy, you may deny yourself bread for your children and even that will be a joy, They will love you for it afterwards; so you are laying by for your future. As the children grow up you feel that you are an example, a support for them; that even after you die your children will always keep your thoughts and feelings, because they have received them from you, they will take on your semblance and likeness. So you see this is a great duty. How can it fail to draw the father and mother nearer? People say it's a trial to have children. Who says that? It is heavenly happiness! Are you fond of little children, Liza? I am awfully fond of them. You know—a little rosy baby boy at your bosom, and what husband's heart is not touched, seeing his wife nursing his child! A plump little rosy baby, sprawling and snuggling, chubby little hands and feet, clean tiny little nails, so tiny that it makes one laugh to look at them; eyes that look as if they understand everything. And while it sucks it clutches at your bosom with its little hand, plays. When its father comes up, the child tears itself away from the bosom, flings itself back, looks at its father, laughs, as though it were fearfully funny, and falls to sucking again. Or it will bite its mother's breast when its little teeth are coming, while it looks sideways at her with its little eyes as though to say, 'Look, I am biting!' Is not all that happiness when they are the three together, husband, wife and child? One can forgive a great deal for the sake of such moments. Yes, Liza, one must first learn to live oneself before one blames others!"

"It's by pictures, pictures like that one must get at you," I thought to myself, though I did speak with real feeling, and all at once I flushed crimson. "What if she were suddenly to burst out laughing, what should I do then?" That idea drove me to fury. Towards the end of my speech I really was excited, and now my vanity was somehow wounded. The silence continued. I almost nudged her.

"Why are you—" she began and stopped. But I understood: there was a quiver of something different in her voice, not abrupt, harsh and unyielding as before, but something soft and shamefaced, so shamefaced that I suddenly felt ashamed and guilty.

"What?" I asked, with tender curiosity.

370

"Why, you. . ."

"What?"

"Why, you . . . speak somehow like a book," she said, and again there was a note of irony in her voice.

That remark sent a pang to my heart. It was not what I was expecting.

I did not understand that she was hiding her feelings under irony, that this is usually the last refuge of modest and chaste-souled people when the privacy of their soul is coarsely and intrusively invaded, and that their pride makes them refuse to surrender till the last moment and shrink from giving expression to their feelings before you. I ought to have guessed the truth from the timidity with which she had repeatedly approached her sarcasm, only bringing herself to utter it at last with an effort. But I did not guess, and an evil feeling took possession of me.

375

"Wait a bit!" I thought.

7

"Oh, hush, Liza! How can you talk about being like a book, when it makes even me, an outsider, feel sick? Though I don't look at it as an outsider, for, indeed, it touches me to the heart. . . . Is it possible, is it possible that you do not feel sick at being here yourself? Evidently habit does wonders! God knows what habit can do with anyone. Can you seriously think that you will never grow old, that you will always be good-looking, and that they will keep you here for ever and ever? I say nothing of the loathsomeness of the life here. . . . Though let me tell you this about it—about your present life, I mean; here though you are young now, attractive, nice, with soul and feeling, yet you know as soon as I came to myself just now I felt at once sick at being

here with you! One can only come here when one is drunk. But if you were anywhere else, living as good people live, I should perhaps be more than attracted by you, should fall in love with you, should be glad of a look from you, let alone a word; I should hang about your door, should go down on my knees to you, should look upon you as my betrothed and think it an honour to be allowed to. I should not dare to have an impure thought about you. But here, you see, I know that I have only to whistle and you have to come with me whether you like it or not. I don't consult your wishes, but you mine. The lowest labourer hires himself as a workman, but he doesn't make a slave of himself altogether; besides, he knows that he will be free again presently. But when are you free? Only think what you are giving up here? What is it you are making a slave of? It is your soul, together with your body; you are selling your soul which you have no right to dispose of! You give your love to be outraged by every drunkard! Love! But that's everything, you know, it's a priceless diamond, it's a maiden's treasure, love—why, a man would be ready to give his soul, to face death to gain that love. But how much is your love worth now? You are sold, all of you, body and soul, and there is no need to strive for love when you can have everything without love. And you know there is no greater insult to a girl than that, do you understand? To be sure, I have heard that they comfort you, poor fools, they let you have lovers of your own here. But you know that's simply a farce, that's simply a sham, it's just laughing at you, and you are taken in by it! Why, do you suppose he really loves you, that lover of yours? I don't believe it. How can he love you when he knows you may be called away from him any minute? He would be a low fellow if he did! Will he have a grain of respect for you? What have you in common with him? He laughs at you and robs you—that is all his love amounts to! You are lucky if he does not beat you. Very likely he does beat you, too. Ask him, if you have got one, whether he will marry you. He will laugh in your face, if he doesn't spit in it or give you a blow—though maybe he is not worth a bad halfpenny himself. And for what have you ruined your life, if you come to think of it? For the coffee they give you to drink and the plentiful

meals? But with what object are they feeding you up? An honest girl couldn't swallow the food, for she would know what she was being fed for. You are in debt here, and, of course, you will always be in debt, and you will go on in debt to the end, till the visitors here begin to scorn you. And that will soon happen, don't rely upon your youth—all that flies by express train here, you know. You will be kicked out. And not simply kicked out; long before that she'll begin nagging at you, scolding you, abusing you, as though you had not sacrificed your health for her, had not thrown away your youth and your soul for her benefit, but as though you had ruined *her*, beggared her, robbed her. And don't expect anyone to take your part: the others, your companions, will attack you, too, win her favour, for all are in slavery here, and have lost all conscience and pity here long ago. They have become utterly vile, and nothing on earth is viler, more loathsome, and more insulting than their abuse. And you are laying down everything here, unconditionally, youth and health and beauty and hope, and at twenty-two you will look like a woman of five-and-thirty, and you will be lucky if you are not diseased, pray to God for that! No doubt you are thinking now that you have a gay time and no work to do! Yet there is no work harder or more dreadful in the world or ever has been. One would think that the heart alone would be worn out with tears. And you won't dare to say a word, not half a word when they drive you away from here; you will go away as though you were to blame. You will change to another house, then to a third, then somewhere else, till you come down at last to the Haymarket. There you will be beaten at every turn; that is good manners there, the visitors don't know how to be friendly without beating you. You don't believe that it is so hateful there? Go and look for yourself some time, you can see with your own eyes. Once, one New Year's Day, I saw a woman at a door. They had turned her out as a joke, to give her a taste of the frost because she had been crying so much, and they shut the door behind her. At nine o'clock in the morning she was already quite drunk, dishevelled, half-naked, covered with bruises, her face was powdered, but she had a black-eye, blood was trickling from her nose and her teeth; some cabman

had just given her a drubbing. She was sitting on the stone steps, a salt fish of some sort was in her hand; she was crying, wailing something about her luck and beating with the fish on the steps, and cabmen and drunken soldiers were crowding in the doorway taunting her. You don't believe that you will ever be like that? I should be sorry to believe it, too, but how do you know; maybe ten years, eight years ago that very woman with the salt fish came here fresh as a cherub, innocent, pure, knowing no evil, blushing at every word. Perhaps she was like you, proud, ready to take offence, not like the others; perhaps she looked like a queen, and knew what happiness was in store for the man who should love her and whom she should love. Do you see how it ended? And what if at that very minute when she was beating on the filthy steps with that fish, drunken and dishevelled—what if at that very minute she recalled the pure early days in her father's house, when she used to go to school and the neighbour's son watched for her on the way, declaring that he would love her as long as he lived, that he would devote his life to her, and when they vowed to love one another for ever and be married as soon as they were grown up! No, Liza, it would be happy for you if you were to die soon of consumption in some corner, in some cellar like that woman just now. In the hospital, do you say? You will be lucky if they take you, but what if you are still of use to the madam here? Consumption is a queer disease, it is not like fever. The patient goes on hoping till the last minute and says he is all right. He deludes himself. And that just suits your madam. Don't doubt it, that's how it is; you have sold your soul, and what is more you owe money, so you daren't say a word. But when you are dying, all will abandon you, all will turn away from you, for then there will be nothing to get from you. What's more, they will reproach you for cumbering the place, for being so long over dying. However you beg you won't get a drink of water without abuse: 'Whenever are you going off, you nasty hussy, you won't let us sleep with your moaning, you make the gentlemen sick.' That's true, I have heard such things said myself. They will thrust you dying into the filthiest corner in the cellar—in the damp and darkness; what will your thoughts be, lying there alone? When

you die, strange hands will lay you out, with grumbling and impatience; no one will bless you, no one will sigh for you, they only want to get rid of you as soon as may be; they will buy a coffin, take you to the grave as they did that poor woman today, and celebrate your memory at the tavern. In the grave, sleet, filth, wet snow—no need to put themselves out for you—'Let her down, Vanuha; it's just like her luck—even here, she is head-foremost, the hussy. Shorten the cord, you rascal.' 'It's all right as it is.' 'All right, is it? Why, she's on her side! She was a fellow-creature, after all! But, never mind, throw the earth on her.' And they won't care to waste much time quarrelling over you. They will scatter the wet blue clay as quick as they can and go off to the tavern . . . and there your memory on earth will end; other women have children to go to their graves, fathers, husbands. While for you neither tear, nor sigh, nor remembrance; no one in the whole world will ever come to you, your name will vanish from the face of the earth—as though you had never existed, never been born at all! Nothing but filth and mud, however you knock at your coffin lid at night, when the dead arise, however you cry: 'Let me out, kind people, to live in the light of day! My life was no life at all; my life has been thrown away like a dish-clout; it was drunk away in the tavern at the Haymarket; let me out, kind people, to live in the world again.'"

And I worked myself up to such a pitch that I began to have a lump in my throat myself, and . . . and all at once I stopped, sat up in dismay and, bending over apprehensively, began to listen with a beating heart. I had reason to be troubled.

I had felt for some time that I was turning her soul upside down and rending her heart, and—and the more I was convinced of it, the more eagerly I desired to gain my object as quickly and as effectually as possible. It was the exercise of my skill that carried me away; yet it was not merely sport. . . .

I knew I was speaking stiffly, artificially, even bookishly; in fact, I could not speak except "like a book." But that did not trouble me: I knew, I felt that I should be understood and that this very bookishness might be an assistance. But now, having attained my effect, I was suddenly panic-stricken. Never before

had I witnessed such despair! She was lying on her face, thrusting her face into the pillow and clutching it in both hands. Her heart was being torn. Her youthful body was shuddering all over as though in convulsions. Suppressed sobs rent her bosom and suddenly burst out in weeping and wailing, then she pressed closer into the pillow: she did not want anyone here, not a living soul, to know of her anguish and her tears. She bit the pillow, bit her hand till it bled (I saw that afterwards), or, thrusting her fingers into her dishevelled hair, seemed rigid with the effort of restraint, holding her breath and clenching her teeth. I began saying something, begging her to calm herself, but felt that I did not dare; and all at once, in a sort of cold shiver, almost in terror, began fumbling in the dark, trying hurriedly to get dressed to go. It was dark; though I tried my best I could not finish dressing quickly. Suddenly I felt a box of matches and a candlestick with a whole candle in it. As soon as the room was lighted up, Liza sprang up, sat up in bed, and with a contorted face, with a half insane smile, looked at me almost senselessly. I sat down beside her and took her hands; she came to herself, made an impulsive movement towards me, would have caught hold of me, but did not dare, and slowly bowed her head before me.

"Liza, my dear, I was wrong . . . forgive me, my dear," I began, but she squeezed my hand in her fingers so tightly that I felt I was saying the wrong thing and stopped.

"This is my address, Liza, come to me."

"I will come," she answered resolutely, her head still bowed.

"But now I am going, good-bye . . . till we meet again."

I got up; she, too, stood up and suddenly flushed all over, gave a shudder, snatched up a shawl that was lying on a chair and muffled herself in it to her chin. As she did this she gave another sickly smile, blushed and looked at me strangely. I felt wretched; I was in haste to get away—to disappear.

"Wait a minute," she said suddenly, in the passage just at the doorway, stopping me with her hand on my overcoat. She put down the candle in hot haste and ran off; evidently she had thought of something or wanted to show me something. As she ran away she flushed, her eyes shone, and there was a smile on

her lips—what was the meaning of it? Against my will I waited: she came back a minute later with an expression that seemed to ask forgiveness for something. In fact, it was not the same face, not the same look as the evening before: sullen, mistrustful and obstinate. Her eyes now were imploring, soft, and at the same time trustful, caressing, timid. The expression with which children look at people they are very fond of, of whom they are asking a favour. Her eyes were a light hazel, they were lovely eyes, full of life, and capable of expressing love as well as sullen hatred.

Making no explanation, as though I, as a sort of higher being, must understand everything without explanations, she held out a piece of paper to me. Her whole face was positively beaming at that instant with naive, almost childish, triumph. I unfolded it. It was a letter to her from a medical student or someone of that sort—a very high-flown and flowery, but extremely respectful, love-letter. I don't recall the words now, but I remember well that through the high-flown phrases there was apparent a genuine feeling, which cannot be feigned. When I had finished reading it I met her glowing, questioning, and childishly impatient eyes fixed upon me. She fastened her eyes upon my face and waited impatiently for what I should say. In a few words, hurriedly, but with a sort of joy and pride, she explained to me that she had been to a dance somewhere in a private house, a family of "very nice people, WHO KNEW NOTHING, absolutely nothing, for she had only come here so lately and it had all happened . . . and she hadn't made up her mind to stay and was certainly going away as soon as she had paid her debt. . ." and at that party there had been the student who had danced with her all the evening. He had talked to her, and it turned out that he had known her in old days at Riga when he was a child, they had played together, but a very long time ago—and he knew her parents, but ABOUT THIS he knew nothing, nothing whatever, and had no suspicion! And the day after the dance (three days ago) he had sent her that letter through the friend with whom she had gone to the party . . . and . . . well, that was all.

She dropped her shining eyes with a sort of bashfulness as she finished.

The poor girl was keeping that student's letter as a precious treasure, and had run to fetch it, her only treasure, because she did not want me to go away without knowing that she, too, was honestly and genuinely loved; that she, too, was addressed respectfully. No doubt that letter was destined to lie in her box and lead to nothing. But none the less, I am certain that she would keep it all her life as a precious treasure, as her pride and justification, and now at such a minute she had thought of that letter and brought it with naive pride to raise herself in my eyes that I might see, that I, too, might think well of her. I said nothing, pressed her hand and went out. I so longed to get away . . . I walked all the way home, in spite of the fact that the melting snow was still falling in heavy flakes. I was exhausted, shattered, in bewilderment. But behind the bewilderment the truth was already gleaming. The loathsome truth.

8

It was some time, however, before I consented to recognise that truth. Waking up in the morning after some hours of heavy, leaden sleep, and immediately realising all that had happened on the previous day, I was positively amazed at my last night's SENTIMENTALITY with Liza, at all those "outcries of horror and pity." "To think of having such an attack of womanish hysteria, pah!" I concluded. And what did I thrust my address upon her for? What if she comes? Let her come, though; it doesn't matter. . . . But OBVIOUSLY, that was not now the chief and the most important matter: I had to make haste and at all costs save my reputation in the eyes of Zverkov and Simonov as quickly as possible; that was the chief business. And I was so taken up that morning that I actually forgot all about Liza.

390

First of all I had at once to repay what I had borrowed the day before from Simonov. I resolved on a desperate measure: to borrow fifteen roubles straight off from Anton Antonitch. As luck would have it he was in the best of humours that morning, and

gave it to me at once, on the first asking. I was so delighted at this that, as I signed the IOU with a swaggering air, I told him casually that the night before "I had been keeping it up with some friends at the Hotel de Paris; we were giving a farewell party to a comrade, in fact, I might say a friend of my childhood, and you know—a desperate rake, fearfully spoilt—of course, he belongs to a good family, and has considerable means, a brilliant career; he is witty, charming, a regular Lovelace, you understand; we drank an extra 'half-dozen' and . . ."

And it went off all right; all this was uttered very easily, unconstrainedly and complacently.

On reaching home I promptly wrote to Simonov.

To this hour I am lost in admiration when I recall the truly gentlemanly, good-humoured, candid tone of my letter. With tact and good-breeding, and, above all, entirely without superfluous words, I blamed myself for all that had happened. I defended myself, "if I really may be allowed to defend myself," by alleging that being utterly unaccustomed to wine, I had been intoxicated with the first glass, which I said, I had drunk before they arrived, while I was waiting for them at the Hotel de Paris between five and six o'clock. I begged Simonov's pardon especially; I asked him to convey my explanations to all the others, especially to Zverkov, whom "I seemed to remember as though in a dream" I had insulted. I added that I would have called upon all of them myself, but my head ached, and besides I had not the face to. I was particularly pleased with a certain lightness, almost carelessness (strictly within the bounds of politeness, however), which was apparent in my style, and better than any possible arguments, gave them at once to understand that I took rather an independent view of "all that unpleasantness last night"; that I was by no means so utterly crushed as you, my friends, probably imagine; but on the contrary, looked upon it as a gentleman serenely respecting himself should look upon it. "On a young hero's past no censure is cast!"

"There is actually an aristocratic playfulness about it!" I thought admiringly, as I read over the letter. "And it's all because I am an intellectual and cultivated man! Another man in my place

would not have known how to extricate himself, but here I have got out of it and am as jolly as ever again, and all because I am 'a cultivated and educated man of our day.' And, indeed, perhaps, everything was due to the wine yesterday. H'm!" . . . No, it was not the wine. I did not drink anything at all between five and six when I was waiting for them. I had lied to Simonov; I had lied shamelessly; and indeed I wasn't ashamed now. . . . Hang it all though, the great thing was that I was rid of it.

I put six roubles in the letter, sealed it up, and asked Apollon to take it to Simonov. When he learned that there was money in the letter, Apollon became more respectful and agreed to take it. Towards evening I went out for a walk. My head was still aching and giddy after yesterday. But as evening came on and the twilight grew denser, my impressions and, following them, my thoughts, grew more and more different and confused. Something was not dead within me, in the depths of my heart and conscience it would not die, and it showed itself in acute depression. For the most part I jostled my way through the most crowded business streets, along Myeshtchansky Street, along Sadovy Street and in Yusupov Garden. I always liked particularly sauntering along these streets in the dusk, just when there were crowds of working people of all sorts going home from their daily work, with faces looking cross with anxiety. What I liked was just that cheap bustle, that bare prose. On this occasion the jostling of the streets irritated me more than ever, I could not make out what was wrong with me, I could not find the clue, something seemed rising up continually in my soul, painfully, and refusing to be appeased. I returned home completely upset, it was just as though some crime were lying on my conscience.

The thought that Liza was coming worried me continually. It seemed queer to me that of all my recollections of yesterday this tormented me, as it were, especially, as it were, quite separately. Everything else I had quite succeeded in forgetting by the evening; I dismissed it all and was still perfectly satisfied with my letter to Simonov. But on this point I was not satisfied at all. It was as though I were worried only by Liza. "What if she comes," I thought incessantly, "well, it doesn't matter, let her come! H'm!

it's horrid that she should see, for instance, how I live. Yesterday I seemed such a hero to her, while now, h'm! It's horrid, though, that I have let myself go so, the room looks like a beggar's. And I brought myself to go out to dinner in such a suit! And my American leather sofa with the stuffing sticking out. And my dressing-gown, which will not cover me, such tatters, and she will see all this and she will see Apollon. That beast is certain to insult her. He will fasten upon her in order to be rude to me. And I, of course, shall be panic-stricken as usual, I shall begin bowing and scraping before her and pulling my dressing-gown round me, I shall begin smiling, telling lies. Oh, the beastliness! And it isn't the beastliness of it that matters most! There is something more important, more loathsome, viler! Yes, viler! And to put on that dishonest lying mask again! . . ."

When I reached that thought I fired up all at once.

"Why dishonest? How dishonest? I was speaking sincerely last night. I remember there was real feeling in me, too. What I wanted was to excite an honourable feeling in her. . . . Her crying was a good thing, it will have a good effect."

Yet I could not feel at ease. All that evening, even when I had come back home, even after nine o'clock, when I calculated that Liza could not possibly come, still she haunted me, and what was worse, she came back to my mind always in the same position. One moment out of all that had happened last night stood vividly before my imagination; the moment when I struck a match and saw her pale, distorted face, with its look of torture. And what a pitiful, what an unnatural, what a distorted smile she had at that moment! But I did not know then, that fifteen years later I should still in my imagination see Liza, always with the pitiful, distorted, inappropriate smile which was on her face at that minute.

Next day I was ready again to look upon it all as nonsense, due to over-excited nerves, and, above all, as EXAGGERATED. I was always conscious of that weak point of mine, and sometimes very much afraid of it. "I exaggerate everything, that is where I go wrong," I repeated to myself every hour. But, however, "Liza will very likely come all the same," was the refrain with which all my reflections ended. I was so uneasy that I sometimes flew into a

fury: "She'll come, she is certain to come!" I cried, running about the room, "if not today, she will come tomorrow; she'll find me out! The damnable romanticism of these pure hearts! Oh, the vileness—oh, the silliness—oh, the stupidity of these 'wretched sentimental souls!' Why, how fail to understand? How could one fail to understand? . . ."

But at this point I stopped short, and in great confusion, indeed.

And how few, how few words, I thought, in passing, were needed; how little of the idyllic (and affectedly, bookishly, artificially idyllic too) had sufficed to turn a whole human life at once according to my will. That's virginity, to be sure! Freshness of soil!

At times a thought occurred to me, to go to her, "to tell her all," and beg her not to come to me. But this thought stirred such wrath in me that I believed I should have crushed that "damned" Liza if she had chanced to be near me at the time. I should have insulted her, have spat at her, have turned her out, have struck her!

One day passed, however, another and another; she did not come and I began to grow calmer. I felt particularly bold and cheerful after nine o'clock, I even sometimes began dreaming, and rather sweetly: I, for instance, became the salvation of Liza, simply through her coming to me and my talking to her. . . . I develop her, educate her. Finally, I notice that she loves me, loves me passionately. I pretend not to understand (I don't know, however, why I pretend, just for effect, perhaps). At last all confusion, transfigured, trembling and sobbing, she flings herself at my feet and says that I am her saviour, and that she loves me better than anything in the world. I am amazed, but. . . . "Liza," I say, "can you imagine that I have not noticed your love? I saw it all, I divined it, but I did not dare to approach you first, because I had an influence over you and was afraid that you would force yourself, from gratitude, to respond to my love, would try to rouse in your heart a feeling which was perhaps absent, and I did not wish that . . . because it would be tyranny . . . it would be indelicate (in short, I launch off at that point into European,

inexplicably lofty subtleties a la George Sand), but now, now you are mine, you are my creation, you are pure, you are good, you are my noble wife.

Into my house come bold and free,
Its rightful mistress there to be.

Then we begin living together, go abroad and so on, and so on. In fact, in the end it seemed vulgar to me myself, and I began putting out my tongue at myself.

Besides, they won't let her out, "the hussy!" I thought. They don't let them go out very readily, especially in the evening (for some reason I fancied she would come in the evening, and at seven o'clock precisely). Though she did say she was not altogether a slave there yet, and had certain rights; so, h'm! Damn it all, she will come, she is sure to come!

It was a good thing, in fact, that Apollon distracted my attention at that time by his rudeness. He drove me beyond all patience! He was the bane of my life, the curse laid upon me by Providence. We had been squabbling continually for years, and I hated him. My God, how I hated him! I believe I had never hated anyone in my life as I hated him, especially at some moments. He was an elderly, dignified man, who worked part of his time as a tailor. But for some unknown reason he despised me beyond all measure, and looked down upon me insufferably. Though, indeed, he looked down upon everyone. Simply to glance at that flaxen, smoothly brushed head, at the tuft of hair he combed up on his forehead and oiled with sunflower oil, at that dignified mouth, compressed into the shape of the letter V, made one feel one was confronting a man who never doubted of himself. He was a pedant, to the most extreme point, the greatest pedant I had met on earth, and with that had a vanity only befitting Alexander of Macedon. He was in love with every button on his coat, every nail on his fingers—absolutely in love with them, and he looked it! In his behaviour to me he was a perfect tyrant, he spoke very little to me, and if he chanced to glance at me he gave me a firm, majestically self-confident and invariably ironical look that drove

me sometimes to fury. He did his work with the air of doing me the greatest favour, though he did scarcely anything for me, and did not, indeed, consider himself bound to do anything. There could be no doubt that he looked upon me as the greatest fool on earth, and that "he did not get rid of me" was simply that he could get wages from me every month. He consented to do *nothing* for me for seven roubles a month. Many sins should be forgiven me for what I suffered from him. My hatred reached such a point that sometimes his very step almost threw me into convulsions. What I loathed particularly was his lisp. His tongue must have been a little too long or something of that sort, for he continually lisped, and seemed to be very proud of it, imagining that it greatly added to his dignity. He spoke in a slow, measured tone, with his hands behind his back and his eyes fixed on the ground. He maddened me particularly when he read aloud the psalms to himself behind his partition. Many a battle I waged over that reading! But he was awfully fond of reading aloud in the evenings, in a slow, even, sing-song voice, as though over the dead. It is interesting that that is how he has ended: he hires himself out to read the psalms over the dead, and at the same time he kills rats and makes blacking. But at that time I could not get rid of him, it was as though he were chemically combined with my existence. Besides, nothing would have induced him to consent to leave me. I could not live in furnished lodgings: my lodging was my private solitude, my shell, my cave, in which I concealed myself from all mankind, and Apollon seemed to me, for some reason, an integral part of that flat, and for seven years I could not turn him away.

To be two or three days behind with his wages, for instance, was impossible. He would have made such a fuss, I should not have known where to hide my head. But I was so exasperated with everyone during those days, that I made up my mind for some reason and with some object to PUNISH Apollon and not to pay him for a fortnight the wages that were owing him. I had for a long time—for the last two years—been intending to do this, simply in order to teach him not to give himself airs with me, and to show him that if I liked I could withhold his wages. I purposed to say nothing to him about it, and was purposely silent indeed, in

order to score off his pride and force him to be the first to speak of his wages. Then I would take the seven roubles out of a drawer, show him I have the money put aside on purpose, but that I won't, I won't, I simply won't pay him his wages, I won't just because that is "what I wish," because "I am master, and it is for me to decide," because he has been disrespectful, because he has been rude; but if he were to ask respectfully I might be softened and give it to him, otherwise he might wait another fortnight, another three weeks, a whole month. . . .

But angry as I was, yet he got the better of me. I could not hold out for four days. He began as he always did begin in such cases, for there had been such cases already, there had been attempts (and it may be observed I knew all this beforehand, I knew his nasty tactics by heart). He would begin by fixing upon me an exceedingly severe stare, keeping it up for several minutes at a time, particularly on meeting me or seeing me out of the house. If I held out and pretended not to notice these stares, he would, still in silence, proceed to further tortures. All at once, A PROPOS of nothing, he would walk softly and smoothly into my room, when I was pacing up and down or reading, stand at the door, one hand behind his back and one foot behind the other, and fix upon me a stare more than severe, utterly contemptuous. If I suddenly asked him what he wanted, he would make me no answer, but continue staring at me persistently for some seconds, then, with a peculiar compression of his lips and a most significant air, deliberately turn round and deliberately go back to his room. Two hours later he would come out again and again present himself before me in the same way. It had happened that in my fury I did not even ask him what he wanted, but simply raised my head sharply and imperiously and began staring back at him. So we stared at one another for two minutes; at last he turned with deliberation and dignity and went back again for two hours.

If I were still not brought to reason by all this, but persisted in my revolt, he would suddenly begin sighing while he looked at me, long, deep sighs as though measuring by them the depths of my moral degradation, and, of course, it ended at last by his

triumphing completely: I raged and shouted, but still was forced to do what he wanted.

This time the usual staring manoeuvres had scarcely begun when I lost my temper and flew at him in a fury. I was irritated beyond endurance apart from him.

"Stay," I cried, in a frenzy, as he was slowly and silently turning, with one hand behind his back, to go to his room. "Stay! Come back, come back, I tell you!" and I must have bawled so unnaturally, that he turned round and even looked at me with some wonder. However, he persisted in saying nothing, and that infuriated me.

"How dare you come and look at me like that without being sent for? Answer!"

After looking at me calmly for half a minute, he began turning round again.

415

"Stay!" I roared, running up to him, "don't stir! There. Answer, now: what did you come in to look at?"

"If you have any order to give me it's my duty to carry it out," he answered, after another silent pause, with a slow, measured lisp, raising his eyebrows and calmly twisting his head from one side to another, all this with exasperating composure.

"That's not what I am asking you about, you torturer!" I shouted, turning crimson with anger. "I'll tell you why you came here myself: you see, I don't give you your wages, you are so proud you don't want to bow down and ask for it, and so you come to punish me with your stupid stares, to worry me and you have no sus-pic-ion how stupid it is—stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid! . . ."

He would have turned round again without a word, but I seized him.

"Listen," I shouted to him. "Here's the money, do you see, here it is," (I took it out of the table drawer); "here's the seven roubles complete, but you are not going to have it, you . . . are . . . not . . . going . . . to . . . have it until you come respectfully with bowed head to beg my pardon. Do you hear?"

420

"That cannot be," he answered, with the most unnatural self-confidence.

"It shall be so," I said, "I give you my word of honour, it shall be!"

"And there's nothing for me to beg your pardon for," he went on, as though he had not noticed my exclamations at all. "Why, besides, you called me a 'torturer,' for which I can summon you at the police-station at any time for insulting behaviour."

"Go, summon me," I roared, "go at once, this very minute, this very second! You are a torturer all the same! a torturer!"

But he merely looked at me, then turned, and regardless of my loud calls to him, he walked to his room with an even step and without looking round.

425

"If it had not been for Liza nothing of this would have happened," I decided inwardly. Then, after waiting a minute, I went myself behind his screen with a dignified and solemn air, though my heart was beating slowly and violently.

"Apollon," I said quietly and emphatically, though I was breathless, "go at once without a minute's delay and fetch the police-officer."

He had meanwhile settled himself at his table, put on his spectacles and taken up some sewing. But, hearing my order, he burst into a guffaw.

"At once, go this minute! Go on, or else you can't imagine what will happen."

"You are certainly out of your mind," he observed, without even raising his head, lisping as deliberately as ever and threading his needle. "Whoever heard of a man sending for the police against himself? And as for being frightened—you are upsetting yourself about nothing, for nothing will come of it."

430

"Go!" I shrieked, clutching him by the shoulder. I felt I should strike him in a minute.

But I did not notice the door from the passage softly and slowly open at that instant and a figure come in, stop short, and begin staring at us in perplexity. I glanced, nearly swooned with shame, and rushed back to my room. There, clutching at my hair with both hands, I leaned my head against the wall and stood motionless in that position.

Two minutes later I heard Apollon's deliberate footsteps. "There is some woman asking for you," he said, looking at me with peculiar severity. Then he stood aside and let in Liza. He would not go away, but stared at us sarcastically.

"Go away, go away," I commanded in desperation. At that moment my clock began whirring and wheezing and struck seven.

9

Into my house come bold and free,
Its rightful mistress there to be.

I stood before her crushed, crestfallen, revoltingly confused, and I believe I smiled as I did my utmost to wrap myself in the skirts of my ragged wadded dressing-gown—exactly as I had imagined the scene not long before in a fit of depression. After standing over us for a couple of minutes Apollon went away, but that did not make me more at ease. What made it worse was that she, too, was overwhelmed with confusion, more so, in fact, than I should have expected. At the sight of me, of course.

435

"Sit down," I said mechanically, moving a chair up to the table, and I sat down on the sofa. She obediently sat down at once and gazed at me open-eyed, evidently expecting something from me at once. This naivete of expectation drove me to fury, but I restrained myself.

She ought to have tried not to notice, as though everything had been as usual, while instead of that, she . . . and I dimly felt that I should make her pay dearly for ALL THIS.

"You have found me in a strange position, Liza," I began, stammering and knowing that this was the wrong way to begin. "No, no, don't imagine anything," I cried, seeing that she had suddenly flushed. "I am not ashamed of my poverty. . . . On the contrary, I look with pride on my poverty. I am poor but honourable. . . . One can be poor and honourable," I muttered. "However . . . would you like tea? . . ."

"No," she was beginning.

"Wait a minute."

I leapt up and ran to Apollon. I had to get out of the room somehow.

"Apollon," I whispered in feverish haste, flinging down before him the seven roubles which had remained all the time in my clenched fist, "here are your wages, you see I give them to you; but for that you must come to my rescue: bring me tea and a dozen rusks from the restaurant. If you won't go, you'll make me a miserable man! You don't know what this woman is. . . . This is—everything! You may be imagining something. . . . But you don't know what that woman is! . . ."

Apollon, who had already sat down to his work and put on his spectacles again, at first glanced askance at the money without speaking or putting down his needle; then, without paying the slightest attention to me or making any answer, he went on busying himself with his needle, which he had not yet threaded. I waited before him for three minutes with my arms crossed A LA NAPOLEON. My temples were moist with sweat. I was pale, I felt it. But, thank God, he must have been moved to pity, looking at me. Having threaded his needle he deliberately got up from his seat, deliberately moved back his chair, deliberately took off his spectacles, deliberately counted the money, and finally asking me over his shoulder: "Shall I get a whole portion?" deliberately walked out of the room. As I was going back to Liza, the thought occurred to me on the way: shouldn't I run away just as I was in my dressing-gown, no matter where, and then let happen what would?

I sat down again. She looked at me uneasily. For some minutes we were silent.

"I will kill him," I shouted suddenly, striking the table with my fist so that the ink spurted out of the inkstand.

"What are you saying!" she cried, starting.

"I will kill him! kill him!" I shrieked, suddenly striking the table in absolute frenzy, and at the same time fully understanding how stupid it was to be in such a frenzy. "You don't know, Liza, what that torturer is to me. He is my torturer. . . . He has gone now to fetch some rusks; he . . ."

And suddenly I burst into tears. It was an hysterical attack. How ashamed I felt in the midst of my sobs; but still I could not restrain them.

She was frightened.

"What is the matter? What is wrong?" she cried, fussing about me.

450

"Water, give me water, over there!" I muttered in a faint voice, though I was inwardly conscious that I could have got on very well without water and without muttering in a faint voice. But I was, what is called, PUTTING IT ON, to save appearances, though the attack was a genuine one.

She gave me water, looking at me in bewilderment. At that moment Apollon brought in the tea. It suddenly seemed to me that this commonplace, prosaic tea was horribly undignified and paltry after all that had happened, and I blushed crimson. Liza looked at Apollon with positive alarm. He went out without a glance at either of us.

"Liza, do you despise me?" I asked, looking at her fixedly, trembling with impatience to know what she was thinking.

She was confused, and did not know what to answer.

"Drink your tea," I said to her angrily. I was angry with myself, but, of course, it was she who would have to pay for it. A horrible spite against her suddenly surged up in my heart; I believe I could have killed her. To revenge myself on her I swore inwardly not to say a word to her all the time. "She is the cause of it all," I thought.

455

Our silence lasted for five minutes. The tea stood on the table; we did not touch it. I had got to the point of purposely refraining from beginning in order to embarrass her further; it was awkward for her to begin alone. Several times she glanced at me with mournful perplexity. I was obstinately silent. I was, of course, myself the chief sufferer, because I was fully conscious of the disgusting meanness of my spiteful stupidity, and yet at the same time I could not restrain myself.

"I want to. . . get away . . . from there altogether," she began, to break the silence in some way, but, poor girl, that was just what she ought not to have spoken about at such a stupid moment to a

man so stupid as I was. My heart positively ached with pity for her tactless and unnecessary straightforwardness. But something hideous at once stifled all compassion in me; it even provoked me to greater venom. I did not care what happened. Another five minutes passed.

"Perhaps I am in your way," she began timidly, hardly audibly, and was getting up.

But as soon as I saw this first impulse of wounded dignity I positively trembled with spite, and at once burst out.

"Why have you come to me, tell me that, please?" I began, gasping for breath and regardless of logical connection in my words. I longed to have it all out at once, at one burst; I did not even trouble how to begin. "Why have you come? Answer, answer," I cried, hardly knowing what I was doing. "I'll tell you, my good girl, why you have come. You've come because I talked sentimental stuff to you then. So now you are soft as butter and longing for *fine sentiments* again. So you may as well know that I was laughing at you then. And I am laughing at you now. Why are you shuddering? Yes, I was laughing at you! I had been insulted just before, at dinner, by the fellows who came that evening before me. I came to you, meaning to thrash one of them, an officer; but I didn't succeed, I didn't find him; I had to avenge the insult on someone to get back my own again; you turned up, I vented my spleen on you and laughed at you. I had been humiliated, so I wanted to humiliate; I had been treated like a rag, so I wanted to show my power. . . . That's what it was, and you imagined I had come there on purpose to save you. Yes? You imagined that? You imagined that?"

460

I knew that she would perhaps be muddled and not take it all in exactly, but I knew, too, that she would grasp the gist of it, very well indeed. And so, indeed, she did. She turned white as a handkerchief, tried to say something, and her lips worked painfully; but she sank on a chair as though she had been felled by an axe. And all the time afterwards she listened to me with her lips parted and her eyes wide open, shuddering with awful terror. The cynicism, the cynicism of my words overwhelmed her. . . .

"Save you!" I went on, jumping up from my chair and running up and down the room before her. "Save you from what? But perhaps I am worse than you myself. Why didn't you throw it in my teeth when I was giving you that sermon: 'But what did *you* come here yourself for? was it to read us a sermon?' Power, power was what I wanted then, sport was what I wanted, I wanted to wring out your tears, your humiliation, your hysteria—that was what I wanted then! Of course, I couldn't keep it up then, because I am a wretched creature, I was frightened, and, the devil knows why, gave you my address in my folly. Afterwards, before I got home, I was cursing and swearing at you because of that address, I hated you already because of the lies I had told you. Because I only like playing with words, only dreaming, but, do you know, what I really want is that you should all go to hell. That is what I want. I want peace; yes, I'd sell the whole world for a farthing, straight off, so long as I was left in peace. Is the world to go to pot, or am I to go without my tea? I say that the world may go to pot for me so long as I always get my tea. Did you know that, or not? Well, anyway, I know that I am a blackguard, a scoundrel, an egoist, a sluggard. Here I have been shuddering for the last three days at the thought of your coming. And do you know what has worried me particularly for these three days? That I posed as such a hero to you, and now you would see me in a wretched torn dressing-gown, beggarly, loathsome. I told you just now that I was not ashamed of my poverty; so you may as well know that I *am* ashamed of it; I am more ashamed of it than of anything, more afraid of it than of being found out if I were a thief, because I am as vain as though I had been skinned and the very air blowing on me hurt. Surely by now you must realise that I shall never forgive you for having found me in this wretched dressing-gown, just as I was flying at Apollon like a spiteful cur. The saviour, the former hero, was flying like a mangy, unkempt sheep-dog at his lackey, and the lackey was jeering at him! And I shall never forgive you for the tears I could not help shedding before you just now, like some silly woman put to shame! And for what I am confessing to you now, I shall never forgive you either! Yes—you must answer for it all because you turned up like this, because I am a

blackguard, because I am the nastiest, stupidest, absurdest and most envious of all the worms on earth, who are not a bit better than I am, but, the devil knows why, are never put to confusion; while I shall always be insulted by every louse, that is my doom! And what is it to me that you don't understand a word of this! And what do I care, what do I care about you, and whether you go to ruin there or not? Do you understand? How I shall hate you now after saying this, for having been here and listening. Why, it's not once in a lifetime a man speaks out like this, and then it is in hysterics! . . . What more do you want? Why do you still stand confronting me, after all this? Why are you worrying me? Why don't you go?"

But at this point a strange thing happened. I was so accustomed to think and imagine everything from books, and to picture everything in the world to myself just as I had made it up in my dreams beforehand, that I could not all at once take in this strange circumstance. What happened was this: Liza, insulted and crushed by me, understood a great deal more than I imagined. She understood from all this what a woman understands first of all, if she feels genuine love, that is, that I was myself unhappy.

The frightened and wounded expression on her face was followed first by a look of sorrowful perplexity. When I began calling myself a scoundrel and a blackguard and my tears flowed (the tirade was accompanied throughout by tears) her whole face worked convulsively. She was on the point of getting up and stopping me; when I finished she took no notice of my shouting: "Why are you here, why don't you go away?" but realised only that it must have been very bitter to me to say all this. Besides, she was so crushed, poor girl; she considered herself infinitely beneath me; how could she feel anger or resentment? She suddenly leapt up from her chair with an irresistible impulse and held out her hands, yearning towards me, though still timid and not daring to stir. . . . At this point there was a revulsion in my heart too. Then she suddenly rushed to me, threw her arms round me and burst into tears. I, too, could not restrain myself, and sobbed as I never had before.

"They won't let me . . . I can't be good!" I managed to articulate; then I went to the sofa, fell on it face downwards, and sobbed on it for a quarter of an hour in genuine hysterics. She came close to me, put her arms round me and stayed motionless in that position. But the trouble was that the hysterics could not go on for ever, and (I am writing the loathsome truth) lying face downwards on the sofa with my face thrust into my nasty leather pillow, I began by degrees to be aware of a far-away, involuntary but irresistible feeling that it would be awkward now for me to raise my head and look Liza straight in the face. Why was I ashamed? I don't know, but I was ashamed. The thought, too, came into my overwrought brain that our parts now were completely changed, that she was now the heroine, while I was just a crushed and humiliated creature as she had been before me that night—four days before. . . . And all this came into my mind during the minutes I was lying on my face on the sofa.

My God! surely I was not envious of her then.

I don't know, to this day I cannot decide, and at the time, of course, I was still less able to understand what I was feeling than now. I cannot get on without domineering and tyrannising over someone, but . . . there is no explaining anything by reasoning and so it is useless to reason.

I conquered myself, however, and raised my head; I had to do so sooner or later . . . and I am convinced to this day that it was just because I was ashamed to look at her that another feeling was suddenly kindled and flamed up in my heart . . . a feeling of mastery and possession. My eyes gleamed with passion, and I gripped her hands tightly. How I hated her and how I was drawn to her at that minute! The one feeling intensified the other. It was almost like an act of vengeance. At first there was a look of amazement, even of terror on her face, but only for one instant. She warmly and rapturously embraced me.

10

A quarter of an hour later I was rushing up and down the room in frenzied impatience, from minute to minute I went up to the

screen and peeped through the crack at Liza. She was sitting on the ground with her head leaning against the bed, and must have been crying. But she did not go away, and that irritated me. This time she understood it all. I had insulted her finally, but . . . there's no need to describe it. She realised that my outburst of passion had been simply revenge, a fresh humiliation, and that to my earlier, almost causeless hatred was added now a PERSONAL HATRED, born of envy. . . . Though I do not maintain positively that she understood all this distinctly; but she certainly did fully understand that I was a despicable man, and what was worse, incapable of loving her.

I know I shall be told that this is incredible—but it is incredible to be as spiteful and stupid as I was; it may be added that it was strange I should not love her, or at any rate, appreciate her love. Why is it strange? In the first place, by then I was incapable of love, for I repeat, with me loving meant tyrannising and showing my moral superiority. I have never in my life been able to imagine any other sort of love, and have nowadays come to the point of sometimes thinking that love really consists in the right—freely given by the beloved object—to tyrannise over her.

Even in my underground dreams I did not imagine love except as a struggle. I began it always with hatred and ended it with moral subjugation, and afterwards I never knew what to do with the subjugated object. And what is there to wonder at in *that*, since I had succeeded in so corrupting myself, since I was so out of touch with "real life," as to have actually thought of reproaching her, and putting her to shame for having come to me to hear "fine sentiments"; and did not even guess that she had come not to hear fine sentiments, but to love me, because to a woman all reformation, all salvation from any sort of ruin, and all moral renewal is included in love and can only show itself in that form?

I did not hate her so much, however, when I was running about the room and peeping through the crack in the screen. I was only insufferably oppressed by her being here. I wanted her to disappear. I wanted "peace," to be left alone in my underground

world. Real life oppressed me with its novelty so much that I could hardly breathe.

But several minutes passed and she still remained, without stirring, as though she were unconscious. I had the shamelessness to tap softly at the screen as though to remind her. . . . She started, sprang up, and flew to seek her kerchief, her hat, her coat, as though making her escape from me. . . . Two minutes later she came from behind the screen and looked with heavy eyes at me. I gave a spiteful grin, which was forced, however, to KEEP UP APPEARANCES, and I turned away from her eyes.

"Good-bye," she said, going towards the door.

I ran up to her, seized her hand, opened it, thrust something in it and closed it again. Then I turned at once and dashed away in haste to the other corner of the room to avoid seeing, anyway. . . .

475

I did mean a moment since to tell a lie—to write that I did this accidentally, not knowing what I was doing through foolishness, through losing my head. But I don't want to lie, and so I will say straight out that I opened her hand and put the money in it . . . from spite. It came into my head to do this while I was running up and down the room and she was sitting behind the screen. But this I can say for certain: though I did that cruel thing purposely, it was not an impulse from the heart, but came from my evil brain. This cruelty was so affected, so purposely made up, so completely a product of the brain, of *books*, that I could not even keep it up a minute—first I dashed away to avoid seeing her, and then in shame and despair rushed after Liza. I opened the door in the passage and began listening.

"Liza! Liza!" I cried on the stairs, but in a low voice, not boldly. There was no answer, but I fancied I heard her footsteps, lower down on the stairs.

"Liza!" I cried, more loudly.

No answer. But at that minute I heard the stiff outer glass door open heavily with a creak and slam violently; the sound echoed up the stairs.

She had gone. I went back to my room in hesitation. I felt horribly oppressed.

480

I stood still at the table, beside the chair on which she had sat and looked aimlessly before me. A minute passed, suddenly I started; straight before me on the table I saw. . . . In short, I saw a crumpled blue five-rouble note, the one I had thrust into her hand a minute before. It was the same note; it could be no other, there was no other in the flat. So she had managed to fling it from her hand on the table at the moment when I had dashed into the further corner.

Well! I might have expected that she would do that. Might I have expected it? No, I was such an egoist, I was so lacking in respect for my fellow-creatures that I could not even imagine she would do so. I could not endure it. A minute later I flew like a madman to dress, flinging on what I could at random and ran headlong after her. She could not have got two hundred paces away when I ran out into the street.

It was a still night and the snow was coming down in masses and falling almost perpendicularly, covering the pavement and the empty street as though with a pillow. There was no one in the street, no sound was to be heard. The street lamps gave a disconsolate and useless glimmer. I ran two hundred paces to the cross-roads and stopped short.

Where had she gone? And why was I running after her?

Why? To fall down before her, to sob with remorse, to kiss her feet, to entreat her forgiveness! I longed for that, my whole breast was being rent to pieces, and never, never shall I recall that minute with indifference. But—what for? I thought. Should I not begin to hate her, perhaps, even tomorrow, just because I had kissed her feet today? Should I give her happiness? Had I not recognised that day, for the hundredth time, what I was worth? Should I not torture her?

I stood in the snow, gazing into the troubled darkness and pondered this.

"And will it not be better?" I mused fantastically, afterwards at home, stifling the living pang of my heart with fantastic dreams. "Will it not be better that she should keep the resentment of the insult for ever? Resentment—why, it is purification; it is a most stinging and painful consciousness! Tomorrow I should have

defiled her soul and have exhausted her heart, while now the feeling of insult will never die in her heart, and however loathsome the filth awaiting her—the feeling of insult will elevate and purify her . . . by hatred . . . h'm! . . . perhaps, too, by forgiveness. . . . Will all that make things easier for her though? . . ."

And, indeed, I will ask on my own account here, an idle question: which is better—cheap happiness or exalted sufferings? Well, which is better?

So I dreamed as I sat at home that evening, almost dead with the pain in my soul. Never had I endured such suffering and remorse, yet could there have been the faintest doubt when I ran out from my lodging that I should turn back half-way? I never met Liza again and I have heard nothing of her. I will add, too, that I remained for a long time afterwards pleased with the *phrase* about the benefit from resentment and hatred in spite of the fact that I almost fell ill from misery.

Even now, so many years later, all this is somehow a very evil memory. I have many evil memories now, but . . . hadn't I better end my "Notes" here? I believe I made a mistake in beginning to write them, anyway I have felt ashamed all the time I've been writing this story; so it's hardly literature so much as a corrective punishment. Why, to tell long stories, showing how I have spoiled my life through morally rotting in my corner, through lack of fitting environment, through divorce from real life, and rankling spite in my underground world, would certainly not be interesting; a novel needs a hero, and all the traits for an anti-hero are EXPRESSLY gathered together here, and what matters most, it all produces an unpleasant impression, for we are all divorced from life, we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less. We are so divorced from it that we feel at once a sort of loathing for real life, and so cannot bear to be reminded of it. Why, we have come almost to looking upon real life as an effort, almost as hard work, and we are all privately agreed that it is better in books. And why do we fuss and fume sometimes? Why are we perverse and ask for something else? We don't know what ourselves. It would be the worse for us if our petulant prayers were answered.

Come, try, give any one of us, for instance, a little more independence, untie our hands, widen the spheres of our activity, relax the control and we . . . yes, I assure you . . . we should be begging to be under control again at once. I know that you will very likely be angry with me for that, and will begin shouting and stamping. Speak for yourself, you will say, and for your miseries in your underground holes, and don't dare to say all of us—excuse me, gentlemen, I am not justifying myself with that "all of us." As for what concerns me in particular I have only in my life carried to an extreme what you have not dared to carry halfway, and what's more, you have taken your cowardice for good sense, and have found comfort in deceiving yourselves. So that perhaps, after all, there is more life in me than in you. Look into it more carefully! Why, we don't even know what living means now, what it is, and what it is called! Leave us alone without books and we shall be lost and in confusion at once. We shall not know what to join on to, what to cling to, what to love and what to hate, what to respect and what to despise. We are oppressed at being men—men with a real *individual* body and blood, we are ashamed of it, we think it a disgrace and try to contrive to be some sort of impossible generalised man. We are stillborn, and for generations past have been begotten, not by living fathers, and that suits us better and better. We are developing a taste for it. Soon we shall contrive to be born somehow from an idea. But enough; I don't want to write more from "Underground."

[The notes of this paradoxalist do not end here, however. He could not refrain from going on with them, but it seems to us that we may stop here.]

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)

Selected Poems

French

Realism

Like the work of so many transitional authors, Charles Baudelaire's poetry cannot be classified easily. In 1861, Gustave Flaubert wrote a letter to Baudelaire complimenting him on his poetic style: "You have found a way to inject new life into Romanticism. You are unlike anyone else" (Flaubert). Baudelaire is believed to have coined the term "modernity" (*modernité*), which does not necessarily carry the same connotations as being a modern poet or a product of Modernism, focusing as it does on the urban experience. Nonetheless, Baudelaire was an early inspiration for later Modernist (and Symbolist) poets, even though his poetry is now most often classified as Realism. Baudelaire saw himself as a poet of the urban life in Paris, claiming that beauty can be found in the ugliest images and most depraved situations. His most famous book of poetry, provocatively titled *The Flowers of Evil*, was published in 1857. Audiences were shocked by Baudelaire's directness in his poems about sex, death, and depression, to name a few of the topics. Baudelaire, his publisher, and his printer were charged with and found guilty of public indecency, and six of the poems were banned from subsequent editions (the ban on the six poems, which discuss lesbians and vampires, was not lifted in France until 1949). Baudelaire's life was provocative as well; he cultivated the image of a "cursed poet" (*poète maudit*) with a life of drugs, prostitutes, mistresses, and wasteful spending. He squandered roughly half of his inheritance in the first two years, so his family convinced a judge to remove control of his finances and give him an allowance. Despite the many setbacks in his life, Baudelaire's literary fame grew as time passed. He continued to innovate in his writing, experimenting with prose poetry in his later years. Those poems were published posthumously in *Paris Spleen* (1869), adding to Baudelaire's influence on Modernist writers.

Consider while reading:

1. Charles Baudelaire has been cited as the source for the family name of the Baudelaire orphans, the heroes in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* book series. Looking at Baudelaire's life and works, in what ways does he serve as an inspiration for the series? How would Baudelaire's translations of Edgar Allen Poe contribute to that inspiration?
2. Is Baudelaire's poetry more or less shocking than the explicit song lyrics in contemporary music? Explain.

Written by Laura Getty

CORRESPONDENCES

License: Public Domain

Charles Baudelaire

In Nature's temple living pillars rise, And words are murmured none have
understood.
And man must wander through a tangled wood Of symbols watching him with
friendly eyes.

As long-drawn echoes heard far-off and dim Mingle to one deep sound and fade
away;
Vast as the night and brilliant as the day, Colour and sound and perfume speak to
him.

Some perfumes are as fragrant as a child, Sweet as the sound of hautboys,
meadow-green; Others, corrupted, rich, exultant, wild,

Have all the expansion of things infinite: As amber, incense, musk, and benzoin,
Which sing the sense's and the soul's delight.

THE CORPSE

License: Public Domain

Charles Baudelaire

Remember, my Beloved, what thing we met By the roadside on that sweet summer day;
There on a grassy couch with pebbles set, A loathsome body lay.

The wanton limbs stiff-stretched into the air, Steaming with exhalations vile and dank,
In ruthless cynic fashion had laid bare The swollen side and flank.

On this decay the sun shone hot from heaven As though with chemic heat to broil and burn,
And unto Nature all that she had given A hundredfold return.

The sky smiled down upon the horror there As on a flower that opens to the day;
So awful an infection smote the air,
Almost you swooned away.

The swarming flies hummed on the putrid side, Whence poured the maggots in a darkling stream,
That ran along these tatters of life's pride With a liquescent gleam.

And like a wave the maggots rose and fell, The murmuring flies swirled round in busy strife:
It seemed as though a vague breath came to swell And multiply with life

The hideous corpse. From all this living world A music as of wind and water ran,
Or as of grain in rhythmic motion swirled By the swift winnower's fan.

And then the vague forms like a dream died out, Or like some distant scene that slowly falls
Upon the artist's canvas, that with doubt He only half recalls.

A homeless dog behind the boulders lay And watched us both with angry eyes forlorn,
Waiting a chance to come and take away The morsel she had torn.

And you, even you, will be like this drear thing, A vile infection man may not endure;
Star that I yearn to! Sun that lights my spring!
O passionate and pure!

Yes, such will you be, Queen of every grace!

When the last sacramental words are said; And beneath grass and flowers that
lovely face Moulders among the dead.

Then, O Beloved, whisper to the worm That crawls up to devour you with a kiss,
That I still guard in memory the dear form Of love that comes to this!

SPLEEN

License: Public Domain

Charles Baudelaire

Translated by Cyril Scott

The rainy moon of all the world is weary, And from its urn a gloomy cold
pours down, Upon the pallid inmates of the mortuary, And on the
neighbouring outskirts of the town.

My wasted cat, in searching for a litter, Bestirs its mangy paws from post to
post; (A poet's soul that wanders in the gutter, With the jaded voice of a
shiv'ring ghost).

The smoking pine-log, while the drone laments, Accompanies the wheezy
pendulum,

The while amidst a haze of dirty scents, —Those fatal remnants of a sick
man's room— The gallant knave of hearts and queen of spades Relate
their ancient amorous escapades.

HYMN TO BEAUTY

License: Public Domain

Charles Baudelaire

Translated by Cyril Scott

O Beauty! dost thou generate from Heaven or from Hell?
Within thy glance, so diabolic and divine,
Confusedly both wickedness and goodness dwell,
And hence one might compare thee unto sparkling wine.

Thy look containeth both the dawn and sunset stars, Thy perfumes, as upon a
sultry night exhale,
Thy kiss a philter, and thy mouth a Grecian vase,
That renders heroes cowardly and infants hale.

Yea, art thou from the planets, or the fiery womb?
The demon follows in thy train, with magic fraught, Thou scatter'st seeds
haphazardly of joy and doom, Thou govern'st everything, but answer'st unto
nought.

O Loveliness! thou spurnest corpses with delight, Among thy jewels, Horror hath
such charms for thee, And Murder 'mid thy mostly cherished trinkets bright,
Upon thy massive bosom dances amorously.

The blinded, fluttering moth towards the candle flies, Then frizzles, falls, and
falters—"Blessings unto thee"— The panting swain that o'er his beauteous
mistress sighs, Seems like the Sick, that stroke their gravestones lovingly.

What matter, if thou comest from the Heavens or Hell, O Beauty, frightful ghoul,
ingenuous and obscure!
So long thine eyes, thy smile, to me the way can tell Towards that Infinite I love,
but never saw.

From God or Satan? Angel, Mermaid, Proserpine?
What matter if thou makest—blithe, voluptuous sprite— With rhythms, perfumes,
visions—O mine only queen!— The universe less hideous and the hours less
trite.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

The Death of Ivan Ilyich

Russian

Realism

This Russian writer was born in a privileged class and chose to abandon his privilege for a simple life. Beloved for the radical transformation in his work and in his life, he has become one of the most famous writers in literature. His writing reflects his life, in fact, in its simplicity and realism. As a young man in school, Tolstoy excelled in linguistics, and he mastered several languages. When he traveled through Europe, therefore, he was able to absorb the political and social climate through conversations with the common people he met. At home in Russia, Tolstoy sympathized with the serfs, who bore the brunt of fierce poverty brought about by war and famine. His experience in the Crimean War led to his great novel *War and Peace* (1869), a realistic and gruesome account of battle. Another of his great novels, *Anna Karenina* (1873-77), introduces the audience to the reality of relationship among corrupt human beings. Tolstoy continually treats realism as a means of admonishing others to moral righteousness.

In his mid-50's, Tolstoy experienced a religious conversion that led to his abandoning the Russian Orthodox Church in favor of the simple faith and a purer form of Christianity. Instead of living in his estate house, he lived and worked alongside the peasants, worshipping with them instead of observing religious ritual. Of course, he was consequently excommunicated from the Orthodox Church. His change of lifestyle, however, endeared him to a wide audience in both Russia and Europe. He professed a religious system in which human beings are born pure, but are eventually and inevitably corrupted by society. His characters search for happiness in social success, but they only find peace in an objective and realistic acceptance of life.

Tolstoy also became interested in educational theory; subsequently, he opened a school in his family manor house for the children of the country peasants who worked the land. He taught a method of instruction that influenced educators in Europe and America, who modeled Tolstoy's approach to learning in the early stages of public education.

Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886) demonstrates the self-centeredness and shallowness of people in high society. Ilyich makes all the right moves to gain wealth and social acceptance: he marries a well-connected woman he does not really love; he neglects his wife and children in favor of his career; and, as a judge, he treats the prisoners in his court with disdain and indifference. When Ilyich must come to terms with the reality of death, he learns that the only comfort he receives is from a servant who represents the naturalness of the common people.

Consider while reading:

1. Describe Ivan Ilyich's wife's reaction to his illness and death.
2. Describe his associates' reactions to his death.
3. What is the significance of the black bag?
4. How does Ilyich finally let go of life and embrace death?

Written by Karen Dodson

THE DEATH OF IVAN ILYCH

License: Public Domain

Leo Tolstoy

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude

I

During an interval in the Melvinski trial in the large building of the Law Courts the members and public prosecutor met in Ivan Egorovich Shebek's private room, where the conversation turned on the celebrated Krasovski case. Fedor Vasilievich warmly maintained that it was not subject to their jurisdiction, Ivan Egorovich maintained the contrary, while Peter Ivanovich, not having entered into the discussion at the start, took no part in it but looked through the *Gazette* which had just been handed in.

"Gentlemen," he said, "Ivan Ilych has died!"

"You don't say so!"

"Here, read it yourself," replied Peter Ivanovich, handing Fedor Vasilievich the paper still damp from the press. Surrounded by a black border were the words: "Praskovya Fedorovna Golovina, with profound sorrow, informs relatives and friends of the demise of her beloved husband Ivan Ilych Golovin, Member of the Court of Justice, which occurred on February the 4th of this year 1882. The funeral will take place on Friday at one o'clock in the afternoon."

Ivan Ilych had been a colleague of the gentlemen present and was liked by them all. He had been ill for some weeks with an illness said to be incurable. His post had been kept open for him, but there had been conjectures that in case of his death Alexeev might receive his appointment, and that either Vinnikov or Shtabel would succeed Alexeev. So on receiving the news of Ivan Ilych's death the first thought of each of the gentlemen in that private room was of the changes and promotions it might occasion among themselves or their acquaintances.

"I shall be sure to get Shtabel's place or Vinnikov's," thought Fedor Vasilievich. "I was promised that long ago, and the

promotion means an extra eight hundred rubles a year for me besides the allowance."

"Now I must apply for my brother-in-law's transfer from Kaluga," thought Peter Ivanovich. "My wife will be very glad, and then she won't be able to say that I never do anything for her relations."

"I thought he would never leave his bed again," said Peter Ivanovich aloud. "It's very sad."

"But what really was the matter with him?"

"The doctors couldn't say—at least they could, but each of them said something different. When last I saw him I thought he was getting better." 10

"And I haven't been to see him since the holidays. I always meant to go."

"Had he any property?"

"I think his wife had a little—but something quite trifling."

"We shall have to go to see her, but they live so terribly far away."

"Far away from you, you mean. Everything's far away from your place." 15

"You see, he never can forgive my living on the other side of the river," said Peter Ivanovich, smiling at Shebek. Then, still talking of the distances between different parts of the city, they returned to the Court.

Besides considerations as to the possible transfers and promotions likely to result from Ivan Ilych's death, the mere fact of the death of a near acquaintance aroused, as usual, in all who heard of it the complacent feeling that, "it is he who is dead and not I."

Each one thought or felt, "Well, he's dead but I'm alive!" But the more intimate of Ivan Ilych's acquaintances, his so-called friends, could not help thinking also that they would now have to fulfill the very tiresome demands of propriety by attending the funeral service and paying a visit of condolence to the widow.

Fedor Vasilievich and Peter Ivanovich had been his nearest acquaintances. Peter Ivanovich had studied law with Ivan Ilych and had considered himself to be under obligations to him.

Having told his wife at dinner-time of Ivan Ilych's death, and of his conjecture that it might be possible to get her brother transferred to their circuit, Peter Ivanovich sacrificed his usual nap, put on his evening clothes and drove to Ivan Ilych's house.

At the entrance stood a carriage and two cabs. Leaning against the wall in the hall downstairs near the cloakstand was a coffin-lid covered with cloth of gold, ornamented with gold cord and tassels, that had been polished up with metal powder. Two ladies in black were taking off their fur cloaks. Peter Ivanovich recognized one of them as Ivan Ilych's sister, but the other was a stranger to him. His colleague Schwartz was just coming downstairs, but on seeing Peter Ivanovich enter he stopped and winked at him, as if to say: "Ivan Ilych has made a mess of things—not like you and me."

Schwartz's face with his Piccadilly whiskers, and his slim figure in evening dress, had as usual an air of elegant solemnity which contrasted with the playfulness of his character and had a special piquancy here, or so it seemed to Peter Ivanovich.

Peter Ivanovich allowed the ladies to precede him and slowly followed them upstairs. Schwartz did not come down but remained where he was, and Peter Ivanovich understood that he wanted to arrange where they should play bridge that evening. The ladies went upstairs to the widow's room, and Schwartz with seriously compressed lips but a playful look in his eyes, indicated by a twist of his eyebrows the room to the right where the body lay.

Peter Ivanovich, like everyone else on such occasions, entered feeling uncertain what he would have to do. All he knew was that at such times it is always safe to cross oneself. But he was not quite sure whether one should make obeisances while doing so. He therefore adopted a middle course. On entering the room he began crossing himself and made a slight movement resembling a bow. At the same time, as far as the motion of his head and arm allowed, he surveyed the room. Two young men—apparently nephews, one of whom was a high-school pupil—were leaving the room, crossing themselves as they did so. An old woman was standing motionless, and a lady with strangely arched eyebrows

was saying something to her in a whisper. A vigorous, resolute Church Reader, in a frock-coat, was reading something in a loud voice with an expression that precluded any contradiction. The butler's assistant, Gerasim, stepping lightly in front of Peter Ivanovich, was strewing something on the floor. Noticing this, Peter Ivanovich was immediately aware of a faint odour of a decomposing body.

The last time he had called on Ivan Ilych, Peter Ivanovich had seen Gerasim in the study. Ivan Ilych had been particularly fond of him and he was performing the duty of a sick nurse.

25

Peter Ivanovich continued to make the sign of the cross slightly inclining his head in an intermediate direction between the coffin, the Reader, and the icons on the table in a corner of the room. Afterwards, when it seemed to him that this movement of his arm in crossing himself had gone on too long, he stopped and began to look at the corpse.

The dead man lay, as dead men always lie, in a specially heavy way, his rigid limbs sunk in the soft cushions of the coffin, with the head forever bowed on the pillow. His yellow waxen brow with bald patches over his sunken temples was thrust up in the way peculiar to the dead, the protruding nose seeming to press on the upper lip. He was much changed and grown even thinner since Peter Ivanovich had last seen him, but, as is always the case with the dead, his face was handsomer and above all more dignified than when he was alive. The expression on the face said that what was necessary had been accomplished, and accomplished rightly. Besides this there was in that expression a reproach and a warning to the living. This warning seemed to Peter Ivanovich out of place, or at least not applicable to him. He felt a certain discomfort and so he hurriedly crossed himself once more and turned and went out of the door—too hurriedly and too regardless of propriety, as he himself was aware.

Schwartz was waiting for him in the adjoining room with legs spread wide apart and both hands toying with his top-hat behind his back. The mere sight of that playful, well-groomed, and elegant figure refreshed Peter Ivanovich. He felt that Schwartz was above all these happenings and would not surrender to any

depressing influences. His very look said that this incident of a church service for Ivan Ilych could not be a sufficient reason for infringing the order of the session—in other words, that it would certainly not prevent his unwrapping a new pack of cards and shuffling them that evening while a footman placed fresh candles on the table: in fact, that there was no reason for supposing that this incident would hinder their spending the evening agreeably. Indeed he said this in a whisper as Peter Ivanovich passed him, proposing that they should meet for a game at Fedor Vasilievich's. But apparently Peter Ivanovich was not destined to play bridge that evening. Praskovya Fedorovna (a short, fat woman who despite all efforts to the contrary had continued to broaden steadily from her shoulders downwards and who had the same extraordinarily arched eyebrows as the lady who had been standing by the coffin), dressed all in black, her head covered with lace, came out of her own room with some other ladies, conducted them to the room where the dead body lay, and said: "The service will begin immediately. Please go in."

Schwartz, making an indefinite bow, stood still, evidently neither accepting nor declining this invitation. Praskovya Fedorovna recognizing Peter Ivanovich, sighed, went close up to him, took his hand, and said: "I know you were a true friend to Ivan Ilych..." and looked at him awaiting some suitable response. And Peter Ivanovich knew that, just as it had been the right thing to cross himself in that room, so what he had to do here was to press her hand, sigh, and say, "Believe me..." So he did all this and as he did it felt that the desired result had been achieved: that both he and she were touched.

"Come with me. I want to speak to you before it begins," said the widow. "Give me your arm."

Peter Ivanovich gave her his arm and they went to the inner rooms, passing Schwartz who winked at Peter Ivanovich compassionately.

"That does for our bridge! Don't object if we find another player. Perhaps you can cut in when you do escape," said his playful look.

Peter Ivanovich sighed still more deeply and despondently, and Praskovya Fedorovna pressed his arm gratefully. When they reached the drawing-room, upholstered in pink cretonne and lighted by a dim lamp, they sat down at the table—she on a sofa and Peter Ivanovich on a low pouffe, the springs of which yielded spasmodically under his weight. Praskovya Fedorovna had been on the point of warning him to take another seat, but felt that such a warning was out of keeping with her present condition and so changed her mind. As he sat down on the pouffe Peter Ivanovich recalled how Ivan Ilych had arranged this room and had consulted him regarding this pink cretonne with green leaves. The whole room was full of furniture and knick-knacks, and on her way to the sofa the lace of the widow's black shawl caught on the edge of the table. Peter Ivanovich rose to detach it, and the springs of the pouffe, relieved of his weight, rose also and gave him a push. The widow began detaching her shawl herself, and Peter Ivanovich again sat down, suppressing the rebellious springs of the pouffe under him. But the widow had not quite freed herself and Peter Ivanovich got up again, and again the pouffe rebelled and even creaked. When this was all over she took out a clean cambric handkerchief and began to weep. The episode with the shawl and the struggle with the pouffe had cooled Peter Ivanovich's emotions and he sat there with a sullen look on his face. This awkward situation was interrupted by Sokolov, Ivan Ilych's butler, who came to report that the plot in the cemetery that Praskovya Fedorovna had chosen would cost two hundred rubles. She stopped weeping and, looking at Peter Ivanovich with the air of a victim, remarked in French that it was very hard for her. Peter Ivanovich made a silent gesture signifying his full conviction that it must indeed be so.

"Please smoke," she said in a magnanimous yet crushed voice, and turned to discuss with Sokolov the price of the plot for the grave.

Peter Ivanovich while lighting his cigarette heard her inquiring very circumstantially into the prices of different plots in the cemetery and finally decide which she would take. When that was

done she gave instructions about engaging the choir. Sokolov then left the room.

"I look after everything myself," she told Peter Ivanovich, shifting the albums that lay on the table; and noticing that the table was endangered by his cigarette-ash, she immediately passed him an ash-tray, saying as she did so: "I consider it an affectation to say that my grief prevents my attending to practical affairs. On the contrary, if anything can—I won't say console me, but—distract me, it is seeing to everything concerning him." She again took out her handkerchief as if preparing to cry, but suddenly, as if mastering her feeling, she shook herself and began to speak calmly. "But there is something I want to talk to you about."

Peter Ivanovich bowed, keeping control of the springs of the pouffe, which immediately began quivering under him.

"He suffered terribly the last few days."

"Did he?" said Peter Ivanovich.

"Oh, terribly! He screamed unceasingly, not for minutes but for hours. For the last three days he screamed incessantly. It was unendurable. I cannot understand how I bore it; you could hear him three rooms off. Oh, what I have suffered!"

40

"Is it possible that he was conscious all that time?" asked Peter Ivanovich.

"Yes," she whispered. "To the last moment. He took leave of us a quarter of an hour before he died, and asked us to take Volodya away."

The thought of the suffering of this man he had known so intimately, first as a merry little boy, then as a schoolmate, and later as a grown-up colleague, suddenly struck Peter Ivanovich with horror, despite an unpleasant consciousness of his own and this woman's dissimulation. He again saw that brow, and that nose pressing down on the lip, and felt afraid for himself.

"Three days of frightful suffering and the death! Why, that might suddenly, at any time, happen to me," he thought, and for a moment felt terrified. But—he did not himself know how—the customary reflection at once occurred to him that this had happened to Ivan Ilych and not to him, and that it should not and

could not happen to him, and that to think that it could would be yielding to depression, which he ought not to do, as Schwartz's expression plainly showed. After which reflection Peter Ivanovich felt reassured, and began to ask with interest about the details of Ivan Ilych's death, as though death was an accident natural to Ivan Ilych but certainly not to himself.

After many details of the really dreadful physical sufferings Ivan Ilych had endured (which details he learnt only from the effect those sufferings had produced on Praskovya Fedorovna's nerves) the widow apparently found it necessary to get to business.

45

"Oh, Peter Ivanovich, how hard it is! How terribly, terribly hard!" and she again began to weep.

Peter Ivanovich sighed and waited for her to finish blowing her nose. When she had done so he said, "Believe me... " and she again began talking and brought out what was evidently her chief concern with him—namely, to question him as to how she could obtain a grant of money from the government on the occasion of her husband's death. She made it appear that she was asking Peter Ivanovich's advice about her pension, but he soon saw that she already knew about that to the minutest detail, more even than he did himself. She knew how much could be got out of the government in consequence of her husband's death, but wanted to find out whether she could not possibly extract something more. Peter Ivanovich tried to think of some means of doing so, but after reflecting for a while and, out of propriety, condemning the government for its niggardliness, he said he thought that nothing more could be got. Then she sighed and evidently began to devise means of getting rid of her visitor. Noticing this, he put out his cigarette, rose, pressed her hand, and went out into the anteroom.

In the dining-room where the clock stood that Ivan Ilych had liked so much and had bought at an antique shop, Peter Ivanovich met a priest and a few acquaintances who had come to attend the service, and he recognized Ivan Ilych's daughter, a handsome young woman. She was in black and her slim figure appeared slimmer than ever. She had a gloomy, determined, almost angry expression, and bowed to Peter Ivanovich as though he were in

some way to blame. Behind her, with the same offended look, stood a wealthy young man, an examining magistrate, whom Peter Ivanovich also knew and who was her fiance, as he had heard. He bowed mournfully to them and was about to pass into the death-chamber, when from under the stairs appeared the figure of Ivan Ilych's schoolboy son, who was extremely like his father. He seemed a little Ivan Ilych, such as Peter Ivanovich remembered when they studied law together. His tear-stained eyes had in them the look that is seen in the eyes of boys of thirteen or fourteen who are not pure-minded. When he saw Peter Ivanovich he scowled morosely and shamefacedly. Peter Ivanovich nodded to him and entered the death-chamber. The service began: candles, groans, incense, tears, and sobs. Peter Ivanovich stood looking gloomily down at his feet. He did not look once at the dead man, did not yield to any depressing influence, and was one of the first to leave the room. There was no one in the anteroom, but Gerasim darted out of the dead man's room, rummaged with his strong hands among the fur coats to find Peter Ivanovich's and helped him on with it.

"Well, friend Gerasim," said Peter Ivanovich, so as to say something. "It's a sad affair, isn't it?"

"It's God's will. We shall all come to it some day," said Gerasim, displaying his teeth—the even white teeth of a healthy peasant—and, like a man in the thick of urgent work, he briskly opened the front door, called the coachman, helped Peter Ivanovich into the sledge, and sprang back to the porch as if in readiness for what he had to do next.

Peter Ivanovich found the fresh air particularly pleasant after the smell of incense, the dead body, and carbolic acid.

"Where to sir?" asked the coachman.

"It's not too late even now.... I'll call round on Fedor Vasilievich."

He accordingly drove there and found them just finishing the first rubber, so that it was quite convenient for him to cut in.

II

Ivan Ilych's life had been most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible.

He had been a member of the Court of Justice, and died at the age of forty-five. His father had been an official who after serving in various ministries and departments in Petersburg had made the sort of career which brings men to positions from which by reason of their long service they cannot be dismissed, though they are obviously unfit to hold any responsible position, and for whom therefore posts are specially created, which though fictitious carry salaries of from six to ten thousand rubles that are not fictitious, and in receipt of which they live on to a great age.

Such was the Privy Councillor and superfluous member of various superfluous institutions, Ilya Epimovich Golovin.

He had three sons, of whom Ivan Ilych was the second. The eldest son was following in his father's footsteps only in another department, and was already approaching that stage in the service at which a similar sinecure would be reached. The third son was a failure. He had ruined his prospects in a number of positions and was now serving in the railway department. His father and brothers, and still more their wives, not merely disliked meeting him, but avoided remembering his existence unless compelled to do so. His sister had married Baron Greff, a Petersburg official of her father's type. Ivan Ilych was *le phenix de la famille* as people said. He was neither as cold and formal as his elder brother nor as wild as the younger, but was a happy mean between them—an intelligent polished, lively and agreeable man. He had studied with his younger brother at the School of Law, but the latter had failed to complete the course and was expelled when he was in the fifth class. Ivan Ilych finished the course well. Even when he was at the School of Law he was just what he remained for the rest of his life: a capable, cheerful, good-natured, and sociable man, though strict in the fulfillment of what he considered to be his duty: and he considered his duty to be what was so considered by those in authority. Neither as a boy nor as a man was he a toady, but from early youth was by nature attracted to people of high station as a fly is drawn to the light, assimilating their ways and views of life and establishing friendly relations with them.

All the enthusiasms of childhood and youth passed without leaving much trace on him; he succumbed to sensuality, to vanity, and latterly among the highest classes to liberalism, but always within limits which his instinct unfailingly indicated to him as correct.

At school he had done things which had formerly seemed to him very horrid and made him feel disgusted with himself when he did them; but when later on he saw that such actions were done by people of good position and that they did not regard them as wrong, he was able not exactly to regard them as right, but to forget about them entirely or not be at all troubled at remembering them.

Having graduated from the School of Law and qualified for the tenth rank of the civil service, and having received money from his father for his equipment, Ivan Ilych ordered himself clothes at Scharmer's, the fashionable tailor, hung a medallion inscribed *respice finem* on his watch-chain, took leave of his professor and the prince who was patron of the school, had a farewell dinner with his comrades at Donon's first-class restaurant, and with his new and fashionable portmanteau, linen, clothes, shaving and other toilet appliances, and a travelling rug, all purchased at the best shops, he set off for one of the provinces where through his father's influence, he had been attached to the governor as an official for special service.

60

In the province Ivan Ilych soon arranged as easy and agreeable a position for himself as he had had at the School of Law. He performed his official task, made his career, and at the same time amused himself pleasantly and decorously. Occasionally he paid official visits to country districts where he behaved with dignity both to his superiors and inferiors, and performed the duties entrusted to him, which related chiefly to the sectarians, with an exactness and incorruptible honesty of which he could not but feel proud.

In official matters, despite his youth and taste for frivolous gaiety, he was exceedingly reserved, punctilious, and even severe; but in society he was often amusing and witty, and always good-natured, correct in his manner, and *bon enfant*, as the governor

and his wife—with whom he was like one of the family—used to say of him.

In the province he had an affair with a lady who made advances to the elegant young lawyer, and there was also a milliner; and there were carousals with aides-de-camp who visited the district, and after-supper visits to a certain outlying street of doubtful reputation ; and there was too some obsequiousness to his chief and even to his chief's wife, but all this was done with such a tone of good breeding that no hard names could be applied to it. It all came under the heading of the French saying: "*Il faut que jeunesse se passe.*" It was all done with clean hands, in clean linen, with French phrases, and above all among people of the best society and consequently with the approval of people of rank.

So Ivan Ilych served for five years and then came a change in his official life. The new and reformed judicial institutions were introduced, and new men were needed. Ivan Ilych became such a new man. He was offered the post of examining magistrate, and he accepted it though the post was in another province and obliged him to give up the connexions he had formed and to make new ones. His friends met to give him a send-off; they had a group photograph taken and presented him with a silver cigarette-case, and he set off to his new post.

As examining magistrate Ivan Ilych was just as *comme il faut* and decorous a man, inspiring general respect and capable of separating his official duties from his private life, as he had been when acting as an official on special service. His duties now as examining magistrate were far more interesting and attractive than before. In his former position it had been pleasant to wear an undress uniform made by Scharmer, and to pass through the crowd of petitioners and officials who were timorously awaiting an audience with the governor, and who envied him as with free and easy gait he went straight into his chief's private room to have a cup of tea and a cigarette with him. But not many people had then been directly dependent on him—only police officials and the sectarians when he went on special missions—and he liked to treat them politely, almost as comrades, as if he were letting them

feel that he who had the power to crush them was treating them in this simple, friendly way. There were then but few such people. But now, as an examining magistrate, Ivan Ilych felt that everyone without exception, even the most important and self-satisfied, was in his power, and that he need only write a few words on a sheet of paper with a certain heading, and this or that important, self-satisfied person would be brought before him in the role of an accused person or a witness, and if he did not choose to allow him to sit down, would have to stand before him and answer his questions. Ivan Ilych never abused his power; he tried on the contrary to soften its expression, but the consciousness of it and the possibility of softening its effect, supplied the chief interest and attraction of his office. In his work itself, especially in his examinations, he very soon acquired a method of eliminating all considerations irrelevant to the legal aspect of the case, and reducing even the most complicated case to a form in which it would be presented on paper only in its externals, completely excluding his personal opinion of the matter, while above all observing every prescribed formality. The work was new and Ivan Ilych was one of the first men to apply the new Code of 1864.

On taking up the post of examining magistrate in a new town, he made new acquaintances and connexions, placed himself on a new footing and assumed a somewhat different tone. He took up an attitude of rather dignified aloofness towards the provincial authorities, but picked out the best circle of legal gentlemen and wealthy gentry living in the town and assumed a tone of slight dissatisfaction with the government, of moderate liberalism, and of enlightened citizenship. At the same time, without at all altering the elegance of his toilet, he ceased shaving his chin and allowed his beard to grow as it pleased.

Ivan Ilych settled down very pleasantly in this new town. The society there, which inclined towards opposition to the governor was friendly, his salary was larger, and he began to play *vint* [a form of bridge], which he found added not a little to the pleasure of life, for he had a capacity for cards, played good-humouredly, and calculated rapidly and astutely, so that he usually won.

After living there for two years he met his future wife, Praskovya Fedorovna Mikhel, who was the most attractive, clever, and brilliant girl of the set in which he moved, and among other amusements and relaxations from his labours as examining magistrate, Ivan Ilych established light and playful relations with her.

While he had been an official on special service he had been accustomed to dance, but now as an examining magistrate it was exceptional for him to do so. If he danced now, he did it as if to show that though he served under the reformed order of things, and had reached the fifth official rank, yet when it came to dancing he could do it better than most people. So at the end of an evening he sometimes danced with Praskovya Fedorovna, and it was chiefly during these dances that he captivated her. She fell in love with him. Ivan Ilych had at first no definite intention of marrying, but when the girl fell in love with him he said to himself: "Really, why shouldn't I marry?"

Praskovya Fedorovna came of a good family, was not bad looking, and had some little property. Ivan Ilych might have aspired to a more brilliant match, but even this was good. He had his salary, and she, he hoped, would have an equal income. She was well connected, and was a sweet, pretty, and thoroughly correct young woman. To say that Ivan Ilych married because he fell in love with Praskovya Fedorovna and found that she sympathized with his views of life would be as incorrect as to say that he married because his social circle approved of the match. He was swayed by both these considerations: the marriage gave him personal satisfaction, and at the same time it was considered the right thing by the most highly placed of his associates.

So Ivan Ilych got married.

The preparations for marriage and the beginning of married life, with its conjugal caresses, the new furniture, new crockery, and new linen, were very pleasant until his wife became pregnant—so that Ivan Ilych had begun to think that marriage would not impair the easy, agreeable, gay and always decorous character of his life, approved of by society and regarded by himself as natural, but would even improve it. But from the first months of

his wife's pregnancy, something new, unpleasant, depressing, and unseemly, and from which there was no way of escape, unexpectedly showed itself.

His wife, without any reason—*de gaiete de coeur* as Ivan Ilych expressed it to himself—began to disturb the pleasure and propriety of their life. She began to be jealous without any cause, expected him to devote his whole attention to her, found fault with everything, and made coarse and ill-mannered scenes.

At first Ivan Ilych hoped to escape from the unpleasantness of this state of affairs by the same easy and decorous relation to life that had served him heretofore: he tried to ignore his wife's disagreeable moods, continued to live in his usual easy and pleasant way, invited friends to his house for a game of cards, and also tried going out to his club or spending his evenings with friends. But one day his wife began upbraiding him so vigorously, using such coarse words, and continued to abuse him every time he did not fulfill her demands, so resolutely and with such evident determination not to give way till he submitted—that is, till he stayed at home and was bored just as she was—that he became alarmed. He now realized that matrimony—at any rate with Praskovya Fedorovna—was not always conducive to the pleasures and amenities of life, but on the contrary often infringed both comfort and propriety, and that he must therefore entrench himself against such infringement. And Ivan Ilych began to seek for means of doing so. His official duties were the one thing that imposed upon Praskovya Fedorovna, and by means of his official work and the duties attached to it he began struggling with his wife to secure his own independence.

With the birth of their child, the attempts to feed it and the various failures in doing so, and with the real and imaginary illnesses of mother and child, in which Ivan Ilych's sympathy was demanded but about which he understood nothing, the need of securing for himself an existence outside his family life became still more imperative.

As his wife grew more irritable and exacting and Ivan Ilych transferred the center of gravity of his life more and more to his

official work, so did he grow to like his work better and became more ambitious than before.

Very soon, within a year of his wedding, Ivan Ilych had realized that marriage, though it may add some comforts to life, is in fact a very intricate and difficult affair towards which in order to perform one's duty, that is, to lead a decorous life approved of by society, one must adopt a definite attitude just as towards one's official duties.

And Ivan Ilych evolved such an attitude towards married life. He only required of it those conveniences—dinner at home, housewife, and bed—which it could give him, and above all that propriety of external forms required by public opinion. For the rest he looked for lighthearted pleasure and propriety, and was very thankful when he found them, but if he met with antagonism and querulousness he at once retired into his separate fenced-off world of official duties, where he found satisfaction.

Ivan Ilych was esteemed a good official, and after three years was made Assistant Public Prosecutor. His new duties, their importance, the possibility of indicting and imprisoning anyone he chose, the publicity his speeches received, and the success he had in all these things, made his work still more attractive.

More children came. His wife became more and more querulous and ill-tempered, but the attitude Ivan Ilych had adopted towards his home life rendered him almost impervious to her grumbling.

80

After seven years' service in that town he was transferred to another province as Public Prosecutor. They moved, but were short of money and his wife did not like the place they moved to. Though the salary was higher the cost of living was greater, besides which two of their children died and family life became still more unpleasant for him.

Praskovya Fedorovna blamed her husband for every inconvenience they encountered in their new home. Most of the conversations between husband and wife, especially as to the children's education, led to topics which recalled former disputes, and these disputes were apt to flare up again at any moment. There remained only those rare periods of amorousness which

still came to them at times but did not last long. These were islets at which they anchored for a while and then again set out upon that ocean of veiled hostility which showed itself in their aloofness from one another. This aloofness might have grieved Ivan Ilych had he considered that it ought not to exist, but he now regarded the position as normal, and even made it the goal at which he aimed in family life. His aim was to free himself more and more from those unpleasantnesses and to give them a semblance of harmlessness and propriety. He attained this by spending less and less time with his family, and when obliged to be at home he tried to safeguard his position by the presence of outsiders. The chief thing however was that he had his official duties. The whole interest of his life now centered in the official world and that interest absorbed him. The consciousness of his power, being able to ruin anybody he wished to ruin, the importance, even the external dignity of his entry into court, or meetings with his subordinates, his success with superiors and inferiors, and above all his masterly handling of cases, of which he was conscious—all this gave him pleasure and filled his life, together with chats with his colleagues, dinners, and bridge. So that on the whole Ivan Ilych's life continued to flow as he considered it should do—pleasantly and properly.

So things continued for another seven years. His eldest daughter was already sixteen, another child had died, and only one son was left, a schoolboy and a subject of dissension. Ivan Ilych wanted to put him in the School of Law, but to spite him Praskovya Fedorovna entered him at the High School. The daughter had been educated at home and had turned out well: the boy did not learn badly either.

III

So Ivan Ilych lived for seventeen years after his marriage. He was already a Public Prosecutor of long standing, and had declined several proposed transfers while awaiting a more desirable post, when an unanticipated and unpleasant occurrence quite upset the peaceful course of his life. He was expecting to be

offered the post of presiding judge in a University town, but Happe somehow came to the front and obtained the appointment instead. Ivan Ilych became irritable, reproached Happe, and quarrelled both with him and with his immediate superiors—who became colder to him and again passed him over when other appointments were made.

This was in 1880, the hardest year of Ivan Ilych's life. It was then that it became evident on the one hand that his salary was insufficient for them to live on, and on the other that he had been forgotten, and not only this, but that what was for him the greatest and most cruel injustice appeared to others a quite ordinary occurrence. Even his father did not consider it his duty to help him. Ivan Ilych felt himself abandoned by everyone, and that they regarded his position with a salary of 3,500 rubles as quite normal and even fortunate. He alone knew that with the consciousness of the injustices done him, with his wife's incessant nagging, and with the debts he had contracted by living beyond his means, his position was far from normal.

85

In order to save money that summer he obtained leave of absence and went with his wife to live in the country at her brother's place.

In the country, without his work, he experienced *ennui* for the first time in his life, and not only *ennui* but intolerable depression, and he decided that it was impossible to go on living like that, and that it was necessary to take energetic measures.

Having passed a sleepless night pacing up and down the veranda, he decided to go to Petersburg and bestir himself, in order to punish those who had failed to appreciate him and to get transferred to another ministry.

Next day, despite many protests from his wife and her brother, he started for Petersburg with the sole object of obtaining a post with a salary of five thousand rubles a year. He was no longer bent on any particular department, or tendency, or kind of activity. All he now wanted was an appointment to another post with a salary of five thousand rubles, either in the administration, in the banks, with the railways in one of the Empress Marya's Institutions, or even in the customs—but it had to carry with it a

salary of five thousand rubles and be in a ministry other than that in which they had failed to appreciate him.

And this quest of Ivan Ilych's was crowned with remarkable and unexpected success. At Kursk an acquaintance of his, F. I. Ilyin, got into the first-class carriage, sat down beside Ivan Ilych, and told him of a telegram just received by the governor of Kursk announcing that a change was about to take place in the ministry: Peter Ivanovich was to be superseded by Ivan Semonovich.

90

The proposed change, apart from its significance for Russia, had a special significance for Ivan Ilych, because by bringing forward a new man, Peter Petrovich, and consequently his friend Zachar Ivanovich, it was highly favourable for Ivan Ilych, since Sachar Ivanovich was a friend and colleague of his.

In Moscow this news was confirmed, and on reaching Petersburg Ivan Ilych found Zachar Ivanovich and received a definite promise of an appointment in his former Department of Justice.

A week later he telegraphed to his wife: "Zachar in Miller's place. I shall receive appointment on presentation of report."

Thanks to this change of personnel, Ivan Ilych had unexpectedly obtained an appointment in his former ministry which placed him two states above his former colleagues besides giving him five thousand rubles salary and three thousand five hundred rubles for expenses connected with his removal. All his ill humour towards his former enemies and the whole department vanished, and Ivan Ilych was completely happy.

He returned to the country more cheerful and contented than he had been for a long time. Praskovya Fedorovna also cheered up and a truce was arranged between them. Ivan Ilych told of how he had been feted by everybody in Petersburg, how all those who had been his enemies were put to shame and now fawned on him, how envious they were of his appointment, and how much everybody in Petersburg had liked him.

95

Praskovya Fedorovna listened to all this and appeared to believe it. She did not contradict anything, but only made plans for their life in the town to which they were going. Ivan Ilych saw with delight that these plans were his plans, that he and his wife

agreed, and that, after a stumble, his life was regaining its due and natural character of pleasant lightheartedness and decorum.

Ivan Ilych had come back for a short time only, for he had to take up his new duties on the 10th of September. Moreover, he needed time to settle into the new place, to move all his belongings from the province, and to buy and order many additional things: in a word, to make such arrangements as he had resolved on, which were almost exactly what Praskovya Fedorovna too had decided on.

Now that everything had happened so fortunately, and that he and his wife were at one in their aims and moreover saw so little of one another, they got on together better than they had done since the first years of marriage. Ivan Ilych had thought of taking his family away with him at once, but the insistence of his wife's brother and her sister-in-law, who had suddenly become particularly amiable and friendly to him and his family, induced him to depart alone.

So he departed, and the cheerful state of mind induced by his success and by the harmony between his wife and himself, the one intensifying the other, did not leave him. He found a delightful house, just the thing both he and his wife had dreamt of. Spacious, lofty reception rooms in the old style, a convenient and dignified study, rooms for his wife and daughter, a study for his son—it might have been specially built for them. Ivan Ilych himself superintended the arrangements, chose the wallpapers, supplemented the furniture (preferably with antiques which he considered particularly *comme il faut*), and supervised the upholstering. Everything progressed and progressed and approached the ideal he had set himself: even when things were only half completed they exceeded his expectations. He saw what a refined and elegant character, free from vulgarity, it would all have when it was ready. On falling asleep he pictured to himself how the reception room would look. Looking at the yet unfinished drawing room he could see the fireplace, the screen, the what-not, the little chairs dotted here and there, the dishes and plates on the walls, and the bronzes, as they would be when everything was in place. He was pleased by the thought of how

his wife and daughter, who shared his taste in this matter, would be impressed by it. They were certainly not expecting as much. He had been particularly successful in finding, and buying cheaply, antiques which gave a particularly aristocratic character to the whole place. But in his letters he intentionally understated everything in order to be able to surprise them. All this so absorbed him that his new duties—though he liked his official work—interested him less than he had expected. Sometimes he even had moments of absent-mindedness during the court sessions and would consider whether he should have straight or curved cornices for his curtains. He was so interested in it all that he often did things himself, rearranging the furniture, or rehangng the curtains. Once when mounting a step-ladder to show the upholsterer, who did not understand, how he wanted the hangings draped, he made a false step and slipped, but being a strong and agile man he clung on and only knocked his side against the knob of the window frame. The bruised place was painful but the pain soon passed, and he felt particularly bright and well just then. He wrote: "I feel fifteen years younger." He thought he would have everything ready by September, but it dragged on till mid-October. But the result was charming not only in his eyes but to everyone who saw it.

In reality it was just what is usually seen in the houses of people of moderate means who want to appear rich, and therefore succeed only in resembling others like themselves: there are damasks, dark wood, plants, rugs, and dull and polished bronzes—all the things people of a certain class have in order to resemble other people of that class. His house was so like the others that it would never have been noticed, but to him it all seemed to be quite exceptional. He was very happy when he met his family at the station and brought them to the newly furnished house all lit up, where a footman in a white tie opened the door into the hall decorated with plants, and when they went on into the drawing-room and the study uttering exclamations of delight. He conducted them everywhere, drank in their praises eagerly, and beamed with pleasure. At tea that evening, when Praskovya Fedorovna among others things asked him about his fall, he

laughed, and showed them how he had gone flying and had frightened the upholsterer.

"It's a good thing I'm a bit of an athlete. Another man might have been killed, but I merely knocked myself, just here; it hurts when it's touched, but it's passing off already—it's only a bruise."

So they began living in their new home—in which, as always happens, when they got thoroughly settled in they found they were just one room short—and with the increased income, which as always was just a little (some five hundred rubles) too little, but it was all very nice.

Things went particularly well at first, before everything was finally arranged and while something had still to be done: this thing bought, that thing ordered, another thing moved, and something else adjusted. Though there were some disputes between husband and wife, they were both so well satisfied and had so much to do that it all passed off without any serious quarrels. When nothing was left to arrange it became rather dull and something seemed to be lacking, but they were then making acquaintances, forming habits, and life was growing fuller.

Ivan Ilych spent his mornings at the law court and came home to dinner, and at first he was generally in a good humour, though he occasionally became irritable just on account of his house. (Every spot on the tablecloth or the upholstery, and every broken window-blind string, irritated him. He had devoted so much trouble to arranging it all that every disturbance of it distressed him.) But on the whole his life ran its course as he believed life should do: easily, pleasantly, and decorously.

He got up at nine, drank his coffee, read the paper, and then put on his undress uniform and went to the law courts. There the harness in which he worked had already been stretched to fit him and he donned it without a hitch: petitioners, inquiries at the chancery, the chancery itself, and the sittings public and administrative. In all this the thing was to exclude everything fresh and vital, which always disturbs the regular course of official business, and to admit only official relations with people, and then only on official grounds. A man would come, for instance, wanting some information. Ivan Ilych, as one in whose

sphere the matter did not lie, would have nothing to do with him: but if the man had some business with him in his official capacity, something that could be expressed on officially stamped paper, he would do everything, positively everything he could within the limits of such relations, and in doing so would maintain the semblance of friendly human relations, that is, would observe the courtesies of life. As soon as the official relations ended, so did everything else. Ivan Ilych possessed this capacity to separate his real life from the official side of affairs and not mix the two, in the highest degree, and by long practice and natural aptitude had brought it to such a pitch that sometimes, in the manner of a virtuoso, he would even allow himself to let the human and official relations mingle. He let himself do this just because he felt that he could at any time he chose resume the strictly official attitude again and drop the human relation. And he did it all easily, pleasantly, correctly, and even artistically. In the intervals between the sessions he smoked, drank tea, chatted a little about politics, a little about general topics, a little about cards, but most of all about official appointments. Tired, but with the feelings of a virtuoso—one of the first violins who has played his part in an orchestra with precision—he would return home to find that his wife and daughter had been out paying calls, or had a visitor, and that his son had been to school, had done his homework with his tutor, and was surely learning what is taught at High Schools. Everything was as it should be. After dinner, if they had no visitors, Ivan Ilych sometimes read a book that was being much discussed at the time, and in the evening settled down to work, that is, read official papers, compared the depositions of witnesses, and noted paragraphs of the Code applying to them. This was neither dull nor amusing. It was dull when he might have been playing bridge, but if no bridge was available it was at any rate better than doing nothing or sitting with his wife. Ivan Ilych's chief pleasure was giving little dinners to which he invited men and women of good social position, and just as his drawing-room resembled all other drawing-rooms so did his enjoyable little parties resemble all other such parties.

Once they even gave a dance. Ivan Ilych enjoyed it and everything went off well, except that it led to a violent quarrel with his wife about the cakes and sweets. Praskovya Fedorovna had made her own plans, but Ivan Ilych insisted on getting everything from an expensive confectioner and ordered too many cakes, and the quarrel occurred because some of those cakes were left over and the confectioner's bill came to forty-five rubles. It was a great and disagreeable quarrel. Praskovya Fedorovna called him "a fool and an imbecile," and he clutched at his head and made angry allusions to divorce.

But the dance itself had been enjoyable. The best people were there, and Ivan Ilych had danced with Princess Trufonova, a sister of the distinguished founder of the Society "Bear My Burden."

The pleasures connected with his work were pleasures of ambition; his social pleasures were those of vanity; but Ivan Ilych's greatest pleasure was playing bridge. He acknowledged that whatever disagreeable incident happened in his life, the pleasure that beamed like a ray of light above everything else was to sit down to bridge with good players, not noisy partners, and of course to four-handed bridge (with five players it was annoying to have to stand out, though one pretended not to mind), to play a clever and serious game (when the cards allowed it) and then to have supper and drink a glass of wine. After a game of bridge, especially if he had won a little (to win a large sum was unpleasant), Ivan Ilych went to bed in a specially good humour.

So they lived. They formed a circle of acquaintances among the best people and were visited by people of importance and by young folk. In their views as to their acquaintances, husband, wife and daughter were entirely agreed, and tacitly and unanimously kept at arm's length and shook off the various shabby friends and relations who, with much show of affection, gushed into the drawing-room with its Japanese plates on the walls. Soon these shabby friends ceased to obtrude themselves and only the best people remained in the Golovins' set.

Young men made up to Lisa, and Petrishchev, an examining magistrate and Dmitri Ivanovich Petrishchev's son and sole heir, began to be so attentive to her that Ivan Ilych had already spoken

to Praskovya Fedorovna about it, and considered whether they should not arrange a party for them, or get up some private theatricals.

So they lived, and all went well, without change, and life flowed pleasantly.

IV

They were all in good health. It could not be called ill health if Ivan Ilych sometimes said that he had a queer taste in his mouth and felt some discomfort in his left side.

But this discomfort increased and, though not exactly painful, grew into a sense of pressure in his side accompanied by ill humour. And his irritability became worse and worse and began to mar the agreeable, easy, and correct life that had established itself in the Golovin family. Quarrels between husband and wife became more and more frequent, and soon the ease and amenity disappeared and even the decorum was barely maintained. Scenes again became frequent, and very few of those islets remained on which husband and wife could meet without an explosion. Praskovya Fedorovna now had good reason to say that her husband's temper was trying. With characteristic exaggeration she said he had always had a dreadful temper, and that it had needed all her good nature to put up with it for twenty years. It was true that now the quarrels were started by him. His bursts of temper always came just before dinner, often just as he began to eat his soup. Sometimes he noticed that a plate or dish was chipped, or the food was not right, or his son put his elbow on the table, or his daughter's hair was not done as he liked it, and for all this he blamed Praskovya Fedorovna. At first she retorted and said disagreeable things to him, but once or twice he fell into such a rage at the beginning of dinner that she realized it was due to some physical derangement brought on by taking food, and so she restrained herself and did not answer, but only hurried to get the dinner over. She regarded this self-restraint as highly praiseworthy. Having come to the conclusion that her husband had a dreadful temper and made her life miserable, she began to

feel sorry for herself, and the more she pitied herself the more she hated her husband. She began to wish he would die; yet she did not want him to die because then his salary would cease. And this irritated her against him still more. She considered herself dreadfully unhappy just because not even his death could save her, and though she concealed her exasperation, that hidden exasperation of hers increased his irritation also.

After one scene in which Ivan Ilych had been particularly unfair and after which he had said in explanation that he certainly was irritable but that it was due to his not being well, she said that if he was ill it should be attended to, and insisted on his going to see a celebrated doctor.

He went. Everything took place as he had expected and as it always does. There was the usual waiting and the important air assumed by the doctor, with which he was so familiar (resembling that which he himself assumed in court), and the sounding and listening, and the questions which called for answers that were foregone conclusions and were evidently unnecessary, and the look of importance which implied that "if only you put yourself in our hands we will arrange everything—we know indubitably how it has to be done, always in the same way for everybody alike." It was all just as it was in the law courts. The doctor put on just the same air towards him as he himself put on towards an accused person.

115

The doctor said that so-and-so indicated that there was so-and-so inside the patient, but if the investigation of so-and-so did not confirm this, then he must assume that and that. If he assumed that and that, then... and so on. To Ivan Ilych only one question was important: was his case serious or not? But the doctor ignored that inappropriate question. From his point of view it was not the one under consideration, the real question was to decide between a floating kidney, chronic catarrh, or appendicitis. It was not a question the doctor solved brilliantly, as it seemed to Ivan Ilych, in favour of the appendix, with the reservation that should an examination of the urine give fresh indications the matter would be reconsidered. All this was just what Ivan Ilych had himself brilliantly accomplished a thousand times in dealing with

men on trial. The doctor summed up just as brilliantly, looking over his spectacles triumphantly and even gaily at the accused. From the doctor's summing up Ivan Ilych concluded that things were bad, but that for the doctor, and perhaps for everybody else, it was a matter of indifference, though for him it was bad. And this conclusion struck him painfully, arousing in him a great feeling of pity for himself and of bitterness towards the doctor's indifference to a matter of such importance.

He said nothing of this, but rose, placed the doctor's fee on the table, and remarked with a sigh: "We sick people probably often put inappropriate questions. But tell me, in general, is this complaint dangerous, or not?... "

The doctor looked at him sternly over his spectacles with one eye, as if to say: "Prisoner, if you will not keep to the questions put to you, I shall be obliged to have you removed from the court."

"I have already told you what I consider necessary and proper. The analysis may show something more." And the doctor bowed.

Ivan Ilych went out slowly, seated himself disconsolately in his sledge, and drove home. All the way home he was going over what the doctor had said, trying to translate those complicated, obscure, scientific phrases into plain language and find in them an answer to the question: "Is my condition bad? Is it very bad? Or is there as yet nothing much wrong?" And it seemed to him that the meaning of what the doctor had said was that it was very bad. Everything in the streets seemed depressing. The cabmen, the houses, the passers-by, and the shops, were dismal. His ache, this dull gnawing ache that never ceased for a moment, seemed to have acquired a new and more serious significance from the doctor's dubious remarks. Ivan Ilych now watched it with a new and oppressive feeling.

He reached home and began to tell his wife about it. She listened, but in the middle of his account his daughter came in with her hat on, ready to go out with her mother. She sat down reluctantly to listen to this tedious story, but could not stand it long, and her mother too did not hear him to the end.

"Well, I am very glad," she said. "Mind now to take your medicine regularly. Give me the prescription and I'll send Gerasim to the chemist's." And she went to get ready to go out.

While she was in the room Ivan Ilych had hardly taken time to breathe, but he sighed deeply when she left it.

"Well," he thought, "perhaps it isn't so bad after all."

He began taking his medicine and following the doctor's directions, which had been altered after the examination of the urine. But then it happened that there was a contradiction between the indications drawn from the examination of the urine and the symptoms that showed themselves. It turned out that what was happening differed from what the doctor had told him, and that he had either forgotten or blundered, or hidden something from him. He could not, however, be blamed for that, and Ivan Ilych still obeyed his orders implicitly and at first derived some comfort from doing so.

From the time of his visit to the doctor, Ivan Ilych's chief occupation was the exact fulfillment of the doctor's instructions regarding hygiene and the taking of medicine, and the observation of his pain and his excretions. His chief interest came to be people's ailments and people's health. When sickness, deaths, or recoveries were mentioned in his presence, especially when the illness resembled his own, he listened with agitation which he tried to hide, asked questions, and applied what he heard to his own case.

The pain did not grow less, but Ivan Ilych made efforts to force himself to think that he was better. And he could do this so long as nothing agitated him. But as soon as he had any unpleasantness with his wife, any lack of success in his official work, or held bad cards at bridge, he was at once acutely sensible of his disease. He had formerly borne such mischances, hoping soon to adjust what was wrong, to master it and attain success, or make a grand slam. But now every mischance upset him and plunged him into despair. He would say to himself: "there now, just as I was beginning to get better and the medicine had begun to take effect, comes this accursed misfortune, or unpleasantness..." And he was furious with the mishap, or with the people who were causing

the unpleasantness and killing him, for he felt that this fury was killing him but he could not restrain it. One would have thought that it should have been clear to him that this exasperation with circumstances and people aggravated his illness, and that he ought therefore to ignore unpleasant occurrences. But he drew the very opposite conclusion: he said that he needed peace, and he watched for everything that might disturb it and became irritable at the slightest infringement of it. His condition was rendered worse by the fact that he read medical books and consulted doctors. The progress of his disease was so gradual that he could deceive himself when comparing one day with another—the difference was so slight. But when he consulted the doctors it seemed to him that he was getting worse, and even very rapidly. Yet despite this he was continually consulting them.

That month he went to see another celebrity, who told him almost the same as the first had done but put his questions rather differently, and the interview with this celebrity only increased Ivan Ilych's doubts and fears. A friend of a friend of his, a very good doctor, diagnosed his illness again quite differently from the others, and though he predicted recovery, his questions and suppositions bewildered Ivan Ilych still more and increased his doubts. A homeopathist diagnosed the disease in yet another way, and prescribed medicine which Ivan Ilych took secretly for a week. But after a week, not feeling any improvement and having lost confidence both in the former doctor's treatment and in this one's, he became still more despondent. One day a lady acquaintance mentioned a cure effected by a wonder-working icon. Ivan Ilych caught himself listening attentively and beginning to believe that it had occurred. This incident alarmed him. "Has my mind really weakened to such an extent?" he asked himself. "Nonsense! It's all rubbish. I mustn't give way to nervous fears but having chosen a doctor must keep strictly to his treatment. That is what I will do. Now it's all settled. I won't think about it, but will follow the treatment seriously till summer, and then we shall see. From now there must be no more of this wavering!" This was easy to say but impossible to carry out. The pain in his side oppressed him and seemed to grow worse and

more incessant, while the taste in his mouth grew stranger and stranger. It seemed to him that his breath had a disgusting smell, and he was conscious of a loss of appetite and strength. There was no deceiving himself: something terrible, new, and more important than anything before in his life, was taking place within him of which he alone was aware. Those about him did not understand or would not understand it, but thought everything in the world was going on as usual. That tormented Ivan Ilych more than anything. He saw that his household, especially his wife and daughter who were in a perfect whirl of visiting, did not understand anything of it and were annoyed that he was so depressed and so exacting, as if he were to blame for it. Though they tried to disguise it he saw that he was an obstacle in their path, and that his wife had adopted a definite line in regard to his illness and kept to it regardless of anything he said or did. Her attitude was this: "You know," she would say to her friends, "Ivan Ilych can't do as other people do, and keep to the treatment prescribed for him. One day he'll take his drops and keep strictly to his diet and go to bed in good time, but the next day unless I watch him he'll suddenly forget his medicine, eat sturgeon—which is forbidden—and sit up playing cards till one o'clock in the morning."

"Oh, come, when was that?" Ivan Ilych would ask in vexation. "Only once at Peter Ivanovich's."

"And yesterday with Shebek."

130

"Well, even if I hadn't stayed up, this pain would have kept me awake."

"Be that as it may you'll never get well like that, but will always make us wretched."

Praskovya Fedorovna's attitude to Ivan Ilych's illness, as she expressed it both to others and to him, was that it was his own fault and was another of the annoyances he caused her. Ivan Ilych felt that this opinion escaped her involuntarily—but that did not make it easier for him.

At the law courts too, Ivan Ilych noticed, or thought he noticed, a strange attitude towards himself. It sometimes seemed to him that people were watching him inquisitively as a man

whose place might soon be vacant. Then again, his friends would suddenly begin to chaff him in a friendly way about his low spirits, as if the awful, horrible, and unheard-of thing that was going on within him, incessantly gnawing at him and irresistibly drawing him away, was a very agreeable subject for jests. Schwartz in particular irritated him by his jocularities, vivacity, and *savoir-faire*, which reminded him of what he himself had been ten years ago.

Friends came to make up a set and they sat down to cards. They dealt, bending the new cards to soften them, and he sorted the diamonds in his hand and found he had seven. His partner said "No trumps" and supported him with two diamonds. What more could be wished for? It ought to be jolly and lively. They would make a grand slam. But suddenly Ivan Ilych was conscious of that gnawing pain, that taste in his mouth, and it seemed ridiculous that in such circumstances he should be pleased to make a grand slam.

He looked at his partner Mikhail Mikhaylovich, who rapped the table with his strong hand and instead of snatching up the tricks pushed the cards courteously and indulgently towards Ivan Ilych that he might have the pleasure of gathering them up without the trouble of stretching out his hand for them. "Does he think I am too weak to stretch out my arm?" thought Ivan Ilych, and forgetting what he was doing he over-trumped his partner, missing the grand slam by three tricks. And what was most awful of all was that he saw how upset Mikhail Mikhaylovich was about it but did not himself care. And it was dreadful to realize why he did not care.

They all saw that he was suffering, and said: "We can stop if you are tired. Take a rest." Lie down? No, he was not at all tired, and he finished the rubber. All were gloomy and silent. Ivan Ilych felt that he had diffused this gloom over them and could not dispel it. They had supper and went away, and Ivan Ilych was left alone with the consciousness that his life was poisoned and was poisoning the lives of others, and that this poison did not weaken but penetrated more and more deeply into his whole being.

With this consciousness, and with physical pain besides the terror, he must go to bed, often to lie awake the greater part of the night. Next morning he had to get up again, dress, go to the law courts, speak, and write; or if he did not go out, spend at home those twenty-four hours a day each of which was a torture. And he had to live thus all alone on the brink of an abyss, with no one who understood or pitied him.

V

So one month passed and then another. Just before the New Year his brother-in-law came to town and stayed at their house. Ivan Ilych was at the law courts and Praskovya Fedorovna had gone shopping. When Ivan Ilych came home and entered his study he found his brother-in-law there—a healthy, florid man—unpacking his portmanteau himself. He raised his head on hearing Ivan Ilych's footsteps and looked up at him for a moment without a word. That stare told Ivan Ilych everything. His brother-in-law opened his mouth to utter an exclamation of surprise but checked himself, and that action confirmed it all.

"I have changed, eh?"

140

"Yes, there is a change."

And after that, try as he would to get his brother-in-law to return to the subject of his looks, the latter would say nothing about it. Praskovya Fedorovna came home and her brother went out to her. Ivan Ilych locked the door and began to examine himself in the glass, first full face, then in profile. He took up a portrait of himself taken with his wife, and compared it with what he saw in the glass. The change in him was immense. Then he bared his arms to the elbow, looked at them, drew the sleeves down again, sat down on an ottoman, and grew blacker than night.

"No, no, this won't do!" he said to himself, and jumped up, went to the table, took up some law papers and began to read them, but could not continue. He unlocked the door and went into the reception-room. The door leading to the drawing-room was shut. He approached it on tiptoe and listened.

"No, you are exaggerating!" Praskovya Fedorovna was saying.

"Exaggerating! Don't you see it? Why, he's a dead man! Look at his eyes—there's no life in them. But what is it that is wrong with him?"

145

"No one knows. Nikolaevich [that was another doctor] said something, but I don't know what. And Seshchetitsky [this was the celebrated specialist] said quite the contrary... "

Ivan Ilych walked away, went to his own room, lay down, and began musing; "The kidney, a floating kidney." He recalled all the doctors had told him of how it detached itself and swayed about. And by an effort of imagination he tried to catch that kidney and arrest it and support it. So little was needed for this, it seemed to him. "No, I'll go to see Peter Ivanovich again." [That was the friend whose friend was a doctor.] He rang, ordered the carriage, and got ready to go.

"Where are you going, *Jean*?" asked his wife with a specially sad and exceptionally kind look.

This exceptionally kind look irritated him. He looked morosely at her.

"I must go to see Peter Ivanovich."

150

He went to see Peter Ivanovich, and together they went to see his friend, the doctor. He was in, and Ivan Ilych had a long talk with him.

Reviewing the anatomical and physiological details of what in the doctor's opinion was going on inside him, he understood it all.

There was something, a small thing, in the vermiform appendix. It might all come right. Only stimulate the energy of one organ and check the activity of another, then absorption would take place and everything would come right. He got home rather late for dinner, ate his dinner, and conversed cheerfully, but could not for a long time bring himself to go back to work in his room. At last, however, he went to his study and did what was necessary, but the consciousness that he had put something aside—an important, intimate matter which he would revert to when his work was done—never left him. When he had finished his work he remembered that this intimate matter was the thought of his vermiform appendix. But he did not give himself up to it, and

went to the drawing-room for tea. There were callers there, including the examining magistrate who was a desirable match for his daughter, and they were conversing, playing the piano, and singing. Ivan Ilych, as Praskovya Fedorovna remarked, spent that evening more cheerfully than usual, but he never for a moment forgot that he had postponed the important matter of the appendix. At eleven o'clock he said goodnight and went to his bedroom. Since his illness he had slept alone in a small room next to his study. He undressed and took up a novel by Zola, but instead of reading it he fell into thought, and in his imagination that desired improvement in the vermiform appendix occurred. There was the absorption and evacuation and the re-establishment of normal activity. "Yes, that's it!" he said to himself. "One need only assist nature, that's all." He remembered his medicine, rose, took it, and lay down on his back watching for the beneficent action of the medicine and for it to lessen the pain. "I need only take it regularly and avoid all injurious influences. I am already feeling better, much better." He began touching his side: it was not painful to the touch. "There, I really don't feel it. It's much better already." He put out the light and turned on his side... "The appendix is getting better, absorption is occurring." Suddenly he felt the old, familiar, dull, gnawing pain, stubborn and serious. There was the same familiar loathsome taste in his mouth. His heart sank and he felt dazed. "My God! My God!" he muttered. "Again, again! And it will never cease." And suddenly the matter presented itself in a quite different aspect. "Vermiform appendix! Kidney!" he said to himself. "It's not a question of appendix or kidney, but of life and... death. Yes, life was there and now it is going, going and I cannot stop it. Yes. Why deceive myself? Isn't it obvious to everyone but me that I'm dying, and that it's only a question of weeks, days... it may happen this moment. There was light and now there is darkness. I was here and now I'm going there! Where?" A chill came over him, his breathing ceased, and he felt only the throbbing of his heart.

"When I am not, what will there be? There will be nothing. Then where shall I be when I am no more? Can this be dying? No, I don't want to!" He jumped up and tried to light the candle,

felt for it with trembling hands, dropped candle and candlestick on the floor, and fell back on his pillow.

"What's the use? It makes no difference," he said to himself, staring with wide-open eyes into the darkness. "Death. Yes, death. And none of them knows or wishes to know it, and they have no pity for me. Now they are playing." (He heard through the door the distant sound of a song and its accompaniment.) "It's all the same to them, but they will die too! Fools! I first, and they later, but it will be the same for them. And now they are merry... the beasts!"

155

Anger choked him and he was agonizingly, unbearably miserable. "It is impossible that all men have been doomed to suffer this awful horror!" He raised himself.

"Something must be wrong. I must calm myself—must think it all over from the beginning." And he again began thinking. "Yes, the beginning of my illness: I knocked my side, but I was still quite well that day and the next. It hurt a little, then rather more. I saw the doctors, then followed despondency and anguish, more doctors, and I drew nearer to the abyss. My strength grew less and I kept coming nearer and nearer, and now I have wasted away and there is no light in my eyes. I think of the appendix—but this is death! I think of mending the appendix, and all the while here is death! Can it really be death?" Again terror seized him and he gasped for breath. He leant down and began feeling for the matches, pressing with his elbow on the stand beside the bed. It was in his way and hurt him, he grew furious with it, pressed on it still harder, and upset it. Breathless and in despair he fell on his back, expecting death to come immediately.

Meanwhile the visitors were leaving. Praskovya Fedorovna was seeing them off. She heard something fall and came in.

"What has happened?"

"Nothing. I knocked it over accidentally."

160

She went out and returned with a candle. He lay there panting heavily, like a man who has run a thousand yards, and stared upwards at her with a fixed look.

"What is it, *Jean*?"

"No... o... thing. I upset it." ("Why speak of it? She won't understand," he thought.)

And in truth she did not understand. She picked up the stand, lit his candle, and hurried away to see another visitor off. When she came back he still lay on his back, looking upwards.

"What is it? Do you feel worse?"

165

"Yes."

She shook her head and sat down.

"Do you know, *Jean*, I think we must ask Leshchetitsky to come and see you here."

This meant calling in the famous specialist, regardless of expense. He smiled malignantly and said "No." She remained a little longer and then went up to him and kissed his forehead.

While she was kissing him he hated her from the bottom of his soul and with difficulty refrained from pushing her away.

170

"Good night. Please God you'll sleep."

"Yes."

VI

Ivan Ilych saw that he was dying, and he was in continual despair.

In the depth of his heart he knew he was dying, but not only was he not accustomed to the thought, he simply did not and could not grasp it.

The syllogism he had learnt from Kiesewetter's Logic: "Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal," had always seemed to him correct as applied to Caius, but certainly not as applied to himself. That Caius—man in the abstract—was mortal, was perfectly correct, but he was not Caius, not an abstract man, but a creature quite, quite separate from all others. He had been little Vanya, with a mamma and a papa, with Mitya and Volodya, with the toys, a coachman and a nurse, afterwards with Katenka and will all the joys, griefs, and delights of childhood, boyhood, and youth. What did Caius know of the smell of that striped leather ball Vanya had been so fond of? Had Caius kissed his mother's hand like that, and did the silk of her dress rustle so for

175

Caius? Had he rioted like that at school when the pastry was bad? Had Caius been in love like that? Could Caius preside at a session as he did? "Caius really was mortal, and it was right for him to die; but for me, little Vanya, Ivan Ilych, with all my thoughts and emotions, it's altogether a different matter. It cannot be that I ought to die. That would be too terrible."

Such was his feeling.

"If I had to die like Caius I would have known it was so. An inner voice would have told me so, but there was nothing of the sort in me and I and all my friends felt that our case was quite different from that of Caius. And now here it is!" he said to himself. "It can't be. It's impossible! But here it is. How is this? How is one to understand it?"

He could not understand it, and tried to drive this false, incorrect, morbid thought away and to replace it by other proper and healthy thoughts. But that thought, and not the thought only but the reality itself, seemed to come and confront him.

And to replace that thought he called up a succession of others, hoping to find in them some support. He tried to get back into the former current of thoughts that had once screened the thought of death from him. But strange to say, all that had formerly shut off, hidden, and destroyed his consciousness of death, no longer had that effect. Ivan Ilych now spent most of his time in attempting to re-establish that old current. He would say to himself: "I will take up my duties again—after all I used to live by them." And banishing all doubts he would go to the law courts, enter into conversation with his colleagues, and sit carelessly as was his wont, scanning the crowd with a thoughtful look and leaning both his emaciated arms on the arms of his oak chair; bending over as usual to a colleague and drawing his papers nearer he would interchange whispers with him, and then suddenly raising his eyes and sitting erect would pronounce certain words and open the proceedings. But suddenly in the midst of those proceedings the pain in his side, regardless of the stage the proceedings had reached, would begin its own gnawing work. Ivan Ilych would turn his attention to it and try to drive the thought of it away, but without success. *It* would come and stand before him and look at

him, and he would be petrified and the light would die out of his eyes, and he would again begin asking himself whether *It* alone was true. And his colleagues and subordinates would see with surprise and distress that he, the brilliant and subtle judge, was becoming confused and making mistakes. He would shake himself, try to pull himself together, manage somehow to bring the sitting to a close, and return home with the sorrowful consciousness that his judicial labours could not as formerly hide from him what he wanted them to hide, and could not deliver him from *It*. And what was worst of all was that *It* drew his attention to itself not in order to make him take some action but only that he should look at *It*, look it straight in the face: look at it and without doing anything, suffer inexpressibly.

And to save himself from this condition Ivan Ilych looked for consolations—new screens—and new screens were found and for a while seemed to save him, but then they immediately fell to pieces or rather became transparent, as if *It* penetrated them and nothing could veil *It*.

180

In these latter days he would go into the drawing-room he had arranged—that drawing-room where he had fallen and for the sake of which (how bitterly ridiculous it seemed) he had sacrificed his life—for he knew that his illness originated with that knock. He would enter and see that something had scratched the polished table. He would look for the cause of this and find that it was the bronze ornamentation of an album, that had got bent. He would take up the expensive album which he had lovingly arranged, and feel vexed with his daughter and her friends for their untidiness—for the album was torn here and there and some of the photographs turned upside down. He would put it carefully in order and bend the ornamentation back into position. Then it would occur to him to place all those things in another corner of the room, near the plants. He would call the footman, but his daughter or wife would come to help him. They would not agree, and his wife would contradict him, and he would dispute and grow angry. But that was all right, for then he did not think about *It*. *It* was invisible.

But then, when he was moving something himself, his wife would say: "Let the servants do it. You will hurt yourself again." And suddenly *It* would flash through the screen and he would see it. It was just a flash, and he hoped it would disappear, but he would involuntarily pay attention to his side. "It sits there as before, gnawing just the same!" And he could no longer forget *It*, but could distinctly see it looking at him from behind the flowers. "What is it all for?"

"It really is so! I lost my life over that curtain as I might have done when storming a fort. Is that possible? How terrible and how stupid. It can't be true! It can't, but it is."

He would go to his study, lie down, and again be alone with *It*: face to face with *It*. And nothing could be done with *It* except to look at it and shudder.

VII

How it happened it is impossible to say because it came about step by step, unnoticed, but in the third month of Ivan Ilych's illness, his wife, his daughter, his son, his acquaintances, the doctors, the servants, and above all he himself, were aware that the whole interest he had for other people was whether he would soon vacate his place, and at last release the living from the discomfort caused by his presence and be himself released from his sufferings.

185

He slept less and less. He was given opium and hypodermic injections of morphine, but this did not relieve him. The dull depression he experienced in a somnolent condition at first gave him a little relief, but only as something new, afterwards it became as distressing as the pain itself or even more so.

Special foods were prepared for him by the doctors' orders, but all those foods became increasingly distasteful and disgusting to him.

For his excretions also special arrangements had to be made, and this was a torment to him every time—a torment from the uncleanness, the unseemliness, and the smell, and from knowing that another person had to take part in it.

But just through his most unpleasant matter, Ivan Ilych obtained comfort. Gerasim, the butler's young assistant, always came in to carry the things out. Gerasim was a clean, fresh peasant lad, grown stout on town food and always cheerful and bright. At first the sight of him, in his clean Russian peasant costume, engaged on that disgusting task embarrassed Ivan Ilych.

Once when he got up from the commode to weak to draw up his trousers, he dropped into a soft armchair and looked with horror at his bare, enfeebled thighs with the muscles so sharply marked on them.

190

Gerasim with a firm light tread, his heavy boots emitting a pleasant smell of tar and fresh winter air, came in wearing a clean Hessian apron, the sleeves of his print shirt tucked up over his strong bare young arms; and refraining from looking at his sick master out of consideration for his feelings, and restraining the joy of life that beamed from his face, he went up to the commode.

"Gerasim!" said Ivan Ilych in a weak voice.

Gerasim started, evidently afraid he might have committed some blunder, and with a rapid movement turned his fresh, kind, simple young face which just showed the first downy signs of a beard.

"Yes, sir?"

"That must be very unpleasant for you. You must forgive me. I am helpless."

195

"Oh, why, sir," and Gerasim's eyes beamed and he showed his glistening white teeth, "what's a little trouble? It's a case of illness with you, sir."

And his deft strong hands did their accustomed task, and he went out of the room stepping lightly. Five minutes later he as lightly returned.

Ivan Ilych was still sitting in the same position in the armchair.

"Gerasim," he said when the latter had replaced the freshly-washed utensil. "Please come here and help me." Gerasim went up to him. "Lift me up. It is hard for me to get up, and I have sent Dmitri away."

Gerasim went up to him, grasped his master with his strong arms deftly but gently, in the same way that he stepped—lifted

200

him, supported him with one hand, and with the other drew up his trousers and would have set him down again, but Ivan Ilych asked to be led to the sofa. Gerasim, without an effort and without apparent pressure, led him, almost lifting him, to the sofa and placed him on it.

"Thank you. How easily and well you do it all!"

Gerasim smiled again and turned to leave the room. But Ivan Ilych felt his presence such a comfort that he did not want to let him go.

"One thing more, please move up that chair. No, the other one—under my feet. It is easier for me when my feet are raised."

Gerasim brought the chair, set it down gently in place, and raised Ivan Ilych's legs on it. It seemed to Ivan Ilych that he felt better while Gerasim was holding up his legs.

"It's better when my legs are higher," he said. "Place that cushion under them." 205

Gerasim did so. He again lifted the legs and placed them, and again Ivan Ilych felt better while Gerasim held his legs. When he set them down Ivan Ilych fancied he felt worse.

"Gerasim," he said. "Are you busy now?"

"Not at all, sir," said Gerasim, who had learnt from the townsfolk how to speak to gentlefolk.

"What have you still to do?"

"What have I to do? I've done everything except chopping the logs for tomorrow." 210

"Then hold my legs up a bit higher, can you?"

"Of course I can. Why not?" and Gerasim raised his master's legs higher and Ivan Ilych thought that in that position he did not feel any pain at all.

"And how about the logs?"

"Don't trouble about that, sir. There's plenty of time."

Ivan Ilych told Gerasim to sit down and hold his legs, and began to talk to him. And strange to say it seemed to him that he felt better while Gerasim held his legs up. 215

After that Ivan Ilych would sometimes call Gerasim and get him to hold his legs on his shoulders, and he liked talking to him. Gerasim did it all easily, willingly, simply, and with a good nature

that touched Ivan Ilych. Health, strength, and vitality in other people were offensive to him, but Gerasim's strength and vitality did not mortify but soothed him.

What tormented Ivan Ilych most was the deception, the lie, which for some reason they all accepted, that he was not dying but was simply ill, and he only need keep quiet and undergo a treatment and then something very good would result. He however knew that do what they would nothing would come of it, only still more agonizing suffering and death. This deception tortured him—their not wishing to admit what they all knew and what he knew, but wanting to lie to him concerning his terrible condition, and wishing and forcing him to participate in that lie. Those lies—lies enacted over him on the eve of his death and destined to degrade this awful, solemn act to the level of their visitings, their curtains, their sturgeon for dinner—were a terrible agony for Ivan Ilych. And strangely enough, many times when they were going through their antics over him he had been within a hairbreadth of calling out to them: "Stop lying! You know and I know that I am dying. Then at least stop lying about it!" But he had never had the spirit to do it. The awful, terrible act of his dying was, he could see, reduced by those about him to the level of a casual, unpleasant, and almost indecorous incident (as if someone entered a drawing room defusing an unpleasant odour) and this was done by that very decorum which he had served all his life long. He saw that no one felt for him, because no one even wished to grasp his position. Only Gerasim recognized it and pitied him. And so Ivan Ilych felt at ease only with him. He felt comforted when Gerasim supported his legs (sometimes all night long) and refused to go to bed, saying: "Don't you worry, Ivan Ilych. I'll get sleep enough later on," or when he suddenly became familiar and exclaimed: "If you weren't sick it would be another matter, but as it is, why should I grudge a little trouble?" Gerasim alone did not lie; everything showed that he alone understood the facts of the case and did not consider it necessary to disguise them, but simply felt sorry for his emaciated and enfeebled master. Once when Ivan Ilych was sending him away he even said straight out: "We shall all of us die, so why should I grudge a little

trouble?"—expressing the fact that he did not think his work burdensome, because he was doing it for a dying man and hoped someone would do the same for him when his time came.

Apart from this lying, or because of it, what most tormented Ivan Ilych was that no one pitied him as he wished to be pitied. At certain moments after prolonged suffering he wished most of all (though he would have been ashamed to confess it) for someone to pity him as a sick child is pitied. He longed to be petted and comforted. He knew he was an important functionary, that he had a beard turning grey, and that therefore what he longed for was impossible, but still he longed for it. And in Gerasim's attitude towards him there was something akin to what he wished for, and so that attitude comforted him. Ivan Ilych wanted to weep, wanted to be petted and cried over, and then his colleague Shebek would come, and instead of weeping and being petted, Ivan Ilych would assume a serious, severe, and profound air, and by force of habit would express his opinion on a decision of the Court of Cassation and would stubbornly insist on that view. This falsity around him and within him did more than anything else to poison his last days.

VIII

It was morning. He knew it was morning because Gerasim had gone, and Peter the footman had come and put out the candles, drawn back one of the curtains, and begun quietly to tidy up. Whether it was morning or evening, Friday or Sunday, made no difference, it was all just the same: the gnawing, unmitigated, agonizing pain, never ceasing for an instant, the consciousness of life inexorably waning but not yet extinguished, the approach of that ever dreaded and hateful Death which was the only reality, and always the same falsity. What were days, weeks, hours, in such a case?

"Will you have some tea, sir?"

220

"He wants things to be regular, and wishes the gentlefolk to drink tea in the morning," thought Ivan Ilych, and only said "No."

"Wouldn't you like to move onto the sofa, sir?"

"He wants to tidy up the room, and I'm in the way. I am uncleanliness and disorder," he thought, and said only:

"No, leave me alone."

The man went on bustling about. Ivan Ilych stretched out his hand. Peter came up, ready to help.

225

"What is it, sir?"

"My watch."

Peter took the watch which was close at hand and gave it to his master.

"Half-past eight. Are they up?"

"No sir, except Vladimir Ivanovich" (the son) "who has gone to school. Praskovya Fedorovna ordered me to wake her if you asked for her. Shall I do so?"

230

"No, there's no need to." "Perhaps I'd better have some tea," he thought, and added aloud: "Yes, bring me some tea."

Peter went to the door, but Ivan Ilych dreaded being left alone. "How can I keep him here? Oh yes, my medicine." "Peter, give me my medicine." "Why not? Perhaps it may still do some good." He took a spoonful and swallowed it. "No, it won't help. It's all tomfoolery, all deception," he decided as soon as he became aware of the familiar, sickly, hopeless taste. "No, I can't believe in it any longer. But the pain, why this pain? If it would only cease just for a moment!" And he moaned. Peter turned towards him. "It's all right. Go and fetch me some tea."

Peter went out. Left alone Ivan Ilych groaned not so much with pain, terrible thought that was, as from mental anguish. Always and for ever the same, always these endless days and nights. If only it would come quicker! If only *what* would come quicker? Death, darkness?... No, no! Anything rather than death!

When Peter returned with the tea on a tray, Ivan Ilych stared at him for a time in perplexity, not realizing who and what he was. Peter was disconcerted by that look and his embarrassment brought Ivan Ilych to himself.

"Oh, tea! All right, put it down. Only help me to wash and put on a clean shirt."

235

And Ivan Ilych began to wash. With pauses for rest, he washed his hands and then his face, cleaned his teeth, brushed his hair,

looked in the glass. He was terrified by what he saw, especially by the limp way in which his hair clung to his pallid forehead.

While his shirt was being changed he knew that he would be still more frightened at the sight of his body, so he avoided looking at it. Finally he was ready. He drew on a dressing-gown, wrapped himself in a plaid, and sat down in the armchair to take his tea. For a moment he felt refreshed, but as soon as he began to drink the tea he was again aware of the same taste, and the pain also returned. He finished it with an effort, and then lay down stretching out his legs, and dismissed Peter.

Always the same. Now a spark of hope flashes up, then a sea of despair rages, and always pain; always pain, always despair, and always the same. When alone he had a dreadful and distressing desire to call someone, but he knew beforehand that with others present it would be still worse. "Another dose of morphine—to lose consciousness. I will tell him, the doctor, that he must think of something else. It's impossible, impossible, to go on like this."

An hour and another pass like that. But now there is a ring at the door bell. Perhaps it's the doctor? It is. He comes in fresh, hearty, plump, and cheerful, with that look on his face that seems to say: "There now, you're in a panic about something, but we'll arrange it all for you directly!" The doctor knows this expression is out of place here, but he has put it on once for all and can't take it off—like a man who has put on a frock-coat in the morning to pay a round of calls.

The doctor rubs his hands vigorously and reassuringly.

240

"Brr! How cold it is! There's such a sharp frost; just let me warm myself!" he says, as if it were only a matter of waiting till he was warm, and then he would put everything right.

"Well now, how are you?"

Ivan Ilych feels that the doctor would like to say: "Well, how are our affairs?" but that even he feels that this would not do, and says instead: "What sort of a night have you had?"

Ivan Ilych looks at him as much as to say: "Are you really never ashamed of lying?" But the doctor does not wish to understand this question, and Ivan Ilych says: "Just as terrible as

ever. The pain never leaves me and never subsides. If only something... "

"Yes, you sick people are always like that.... There, now I think I am warm enough. Even Praskovya Fedorovna, who is so particular, could find no fault with my temperature. Well, now I can say good-morning," and the doctor presses his patient's hand.

245

Then dropping his former playfulness, he begins with a most serious face to examine the patient, feeling his pulse and taking his temperature, and then begins the sounding and auscultation.

Ivan Ilych knows quite well and definitely that all this is nonsense and pure deception, but when the doctor, getting down on his knee, leans over him, putting his ear first higher then lower, and performs various gymnastic movements over him with a significant expression on his face, Ivan Ilych submits to it all as he used to submit to the speeches of the lawyers, though he knew very well that they were all lying and why they were lying.

The doctor, kneeling on the sofa, is still sounding him when Praskovya Fedorovna's silk dress rustles at the door and she is heard scolding Peter for not having let her know of the doctor's arrival.

She comes in, kisses her husband, and at once proceeds to prove that she has been up a long time already, and only owing to a misunderstanding failed to be there when the doctor arrived.

Ivan Ilych looks at her, scans her all over, sets against her the whiteness and plumpness and cleanness of her hands and neck, the gloss of her hair, and the sparkle of her vivacious eyes. He hates her with his whole soul. And the thrill of hatred he feels for her makes him suffer from her touch.

250

Her attitude towards him and his diseases is still the same. Just as the doctor had adopted a certain relation to his patient which he could not abandon, so had she formed one towards him—that he was not doing something he ought to do and was himself to blame, and that she reproached him lovingly for this—and she could not now change that attitude.

"You see he doesn't listen to me and doesn't take his medicine at the proper time. And above all he lies in a position that is no doubt bad for him—with his legs up."

She described how he made Gerasim hold his legs up.

The doctor smiled with a contemptuous affability that said: "What's to be done? These sick people do have foolish fancies of that kind, but we must forgive them."

When the examination was over the doctor looked at his watch, and then Praskovya Fedorovna announced to Ivan Ilych that it was of course as he pleased, but she had sent today for a celebrated specialist who would examine him and have a consultation with Michael Danilovich (their regular doctor).

"Please don't raise any objections. I am doing this for my own sake," she said ironically, letting it be felt that she was doing it all for his sake and only said this to leave him no right to refuse. He remained silent, knitting his brows. He felt that he was surrounded and involved in a mesh of falsity that it was hard to unravel anything.

Everything she did for him was entirely for her own sake, and she told him she was doing for herself what she actually was doing for herself, as if that was so incredible that he must understand the opposite.

At half-past eleven the celebrated specialist arrived. Again the sounding began and the significant conversations in his presence and in another room, about the kidneys and the appendix, and the questions and answers, with such an air of importance that again, instead of the real question of life and death which now alone confronted him, the question arose of the kidney and appendix which were not behaving as they ought to and would now be attached by Michael Danilovich and the specialist and forced to amend their ways.

The celebrated specialist took leave of him with a serious though not hopeless look, and in reply to the timid question Ivan Ilych, with eyes glistening with fear and hope, put to him as to whether there was a chance of recovery, said that he could not vouch for it but there was a possibility. The look of hope with which Ivan Ilych watched the doctor out was so pathetic that Praskovya Fedorovna, seeing it, even wept as she left the room to hand the doctor his fee.

The gleam of hope kindled by the doctor's encouragement did not last long. The same room, the same pictures, curtains, wall-paper, medicine bottles, were all there, and the same aching suffering body, and Ivan Ilych began to moan. They gave him a subcutaneous injection and he sank into oblivion.

It was twilight when he came to. They brought him his dinner and he swallowed some beef tea with difficulty, and then everything was the same again and night was coming on.

After dinner, at seven o'clock, Praskovya Fedorovna came into the room in evening dress, her full bosom pushed up by her corset, and with traces of powder on her face. She had reminded him in the morning that they were going to the theatre. Sarah Bernhardt was visiting the town and they had a box, which he had insisted on their taking. Now he had forgotten about it and her toilet offended him, but he concealed his vexation when he remembered that he had himself insisted on their securing a box and going because it would be an instructive and aesthetic pleasure for the children.

Praskovya Fedorovna came in, self-satisfied but yet with a rather guilty air. She sat down and asked how he was, but, as he saw, only for the sake of asking and not in order to learn about it, knowing that there was nothing to learn—and then went on to what she really wanted to say: that she would not on any account have gone but that the box had been taken and Helen and their daughter were going, as well as Petrishchev (the examining magistrate, their daughter's fiance) and that it was out of the question to let them go alone; but that she would have much preferred to sit with him for a while; and he must be sure to follow the doctor's orders while she was away.

"Oh, and Fedor Petrovich" (the fiance) "would like to come in. May he? And Lisa?"

"All right."

Their daughter came in in full evening dress, her fresh young flesh exposed (making a show of that very flesh which in his own case caused so much suffering), strong, healthy, evidently in love, and impatient with illness, suffering, and death, because they interfered with her happiness.

Fedor Petrovich came in too, in evening dress, his hair curled *a la Capoul*, a tight stiff collar round his long sinewy neck, an enormous white shirt-front and narrow black trousers tightly stretched over his strong thighs. He had one white glove tightly drawn on, and was holding his opera hat in his hand.

Following him the schoolboy crept in unnoticed, in a new uniform, poor little fellow, and wearing gloves. Terribly dark shadows showed under his eyes, the meaning of which Ivan Ilych knew well.

His son had always seemed pathetic to him, and now it was dreadful to see the boy's frightened look of pity. It seemed to Ivan Ilych that Vasya was the only one besides Gerasim who understood and pitied him.

They all sat down and again asked how he was. A silence followed. Lisa asked her mother about the opera glasses, and there was an altercation between mother and daughter as to who had taken them and where they had been put. This occasioned some unpleasantness.

270

Fedor Petrovich inquired of Ivan Ilych whether he had ever seen Sarah Bernhardt. Ivan Ilych did not at first catch the question, but then replied: "No, have you seen her before?"

"Yes, in *Adrienne Lecouvreur*."

Praskovya Fedorovna mentioned some roles in which Sarah Bernhardt was particularly good. Her daughter disagreed. Conversation sprang up as to the elegance and realism of her acting—the sort of conversation that is always repeated and is always the same.

In the midst of the conversation Fedor Petrovich glanced at Ivan Ilych and became silent. The others also looked at him and grew silent. Ivan Ilych was staring with glittering eyes straight before him, evidently indignant with them. This had to be rectified, but it was impossible to do so. The silence had to be broken, but for a time no one dared to break it and they all became afraid that the conventional deception would suddenly become obvious and the truth become plain to all. Lisa was the first to pluck up courage and break that silence, but by trying to hide what everybody was feeling, she betrayed it.

"Well, if we are going it's time to start," she said, looking at her watch, a present from her father, and with a faint and significant smile at Fedor Petrovich relating to something known only to them. She got up with a rustle of her dress.

275

They all rose, said good-night, and went away.

When they had gone it seemed to Ivan Ilych that he felt better; the falsity had gone with them. But the pain remained—that same pain and that same fear that made everything monotonously alike, nothing harder and nothing easier. Everything was worse.

Again minute followed minute and hour followed hour. Everything remained the same and there was no cessation. And the inevitable end of it all became more and more terrible.

"Yes, send Gerasim here," he replied to a question Peter asked.

IX

His wife returned late at night. She came in on tiptoe, but he heard her, opened his eyes, and made haste to close them again. She wished to send Gerasim away and to sit with him herself, but he opened his eyes and said: "No, go away."

280

"Are you in great pain?"

"Always the same."

"Take some opium."

He agreed and took some. She went away.

Till about three in the morning he was in a state of stupefied misery. It seemed to him that he and his pain were being thrust into a narrow, deep black sack, but though they were pushed further and further in they could not be pushed to the bottom. And this, terrible enough in itself, was accompanied by suffering. He was frightened yet wanted to fall through the sack, he struggled but yet co-operated. And suddenly he broke through, fell, and regained consciousness. Gerasim was sitting at the foot of the bed dozing quietly and patiently, while he himself lay with his emaciated stockinged legs resting on Gerasim's shoulders; the same shaded candle was there and the same unceasing pain.

285

"Go away, Gerasim," he whispered.

"It's all right, sir. I'll stay a while."

"No. Go away."

He removed his legs from Gerasim's shoulders, turned sideways onto his arm, and felt sorry for himself. He only waited till Gerasim had gone into the next room and then restrained himself no longer but wept like a child. He wept on account of his helplessness, his terrible loneliness, the cruelty of man, the cruelty of God, and the absence of God.

"Why hast Thou done all this? Why hast Thou brought me here? Why, why dost Thou torment me so terribly?" 290

He did not expect an answer and yet wept because there was no answer and could be none. The pain again grew more acute, but he did not stir and did not call. He said to himself: "Go on! Strike me! But what is it for? What have I done to Thee? What is it for?"

Then he grew quiet and not only ceased weeping but even held his breath and became all attention. It was as though he were listening not to an audible voice but to the voice of his soul, to the current of thoughts arising within him.

"What is it you want?" was the first clear conception capable of expression in words, that he heard.

"What do you want? What do you want?" he repeated to himself.

"What do I want? To live and not to suffer," he answered. 295

And again he listened with such concentrated attention that even his pain did not distract him.

"To live? How?" asked his inner voice.

"Why, to live as I used to—well and pleasantly."

"As you lived before, well and pleasantly?" the voice repeated.

And in imagination he began to recall the best moments of his pleasant life. But strange to say none of those best moments of his pleasant life now seemed at all what they had then seemed—none of them except the first recollections of childhood. There, in childhood, there had been something really pleasant with which it would be possible to live if it could return. But the child who had experienced that happiness existed no longer, it was like a reminiscence of somebody else. 300

As soon as the period began which had produced the present Ivan Ilych, all that had then seemed joys now melted before his sight and turned into something trivial and often nasty.

And the further he departed from childhood and the nearer he came to the present the more worthless and doubtful were the joys. This began with the School of Law. A little that was really good was still found there—there was light-heartedness, friendship, and hope. But in the upper classes there had already been fewer of such good moments. Then during the first years of his official career, when he was in the service of the governor, some pleasant moments again occurred: they were the memories of love for a woman. Then all became confused and there was still less of what was good; later on again there was still less that was good, and the further he went the less there was. His marriage, a mere accident, then the disenchantment that followed it, his wife's bad breath and the sensuality and hypocrisy: then that deadly official life and those preoccupations about money, a year of it, and two, and ten, and twenty, and always the same thing. And the longer it lasted the more deadly it became. "It is as if I had been going downhill while I imagined I was going up. And that is really what it was. I was going up in public opinion, but to the same extent life was ebbing away from me. And now it is all done and there is only death.

"Then what does it mean? Why? It can't be that life is so senseless and horrible. But if it really has been so horrible and senseless, why must I die and die in agony? There is something wrong!

"Maybe I did not live as I ought to have done," it suddenly occurred to him. "But how could that be, when I did everything properly?" he replied, and immediately dismissed from his mind this, the sole solution of all the riddles of life and death, as something quite impossible.

"Then what do you want now? To live? Live how? Live as you lived in the law courts when the usher proclaimed, 'The judge is coming!' The judge is coming, the judge!" he repeated to himself. "Here he is, the judge. But I am not guilty!" he exclaimed angrily. "What is it for?" And he ceased crying, but turning his face to the

wall continued to ponder on the same question: Why, and for what purpose, is there all this horror? But however much he pondered he found no answer. And whenever the thought occurred to him, as it often did, that it all resulted from his not having lived as he ought to have done, he at once recalled the correctness of his whole life and dismissed so strange an idea.

X

Another fortnight passed. Ivan Ilych now no longer left his sofa. He would not lie in bed but lay on the sofa, facing the wall nearly all the time. He suffered ever the same unceasing agonies and in his loneliness pondered always on the same insoluble question: "What is this? Can it be that it is Death?" And the inner voice answered: "Yes, it is Death."

"Why these sufferings?" And the voice answered, "For no reason—they just are so." Beyond and besides this there was nothing.

From the very beginning of his illness, ever since he had first been to see the doctor, Ivan Ilych's life had been divided between two contrary and alternating moods: now it was despair and the expectation of this uncomprehended and terrible death, and now hope and an intently interested observation of the functioning of his organs. Now before his eyes there was only a kidney or an intestine that temporarily evaded its duty, and now only that incomprehensible and dreadful death from which it was impossible to escape.

These two states of mind had alternated from the very beginning of his illness, but the further it progressed the more doubtful and fantastic became the conception of the kidney, and the more real the sense of impending death.

He had but to call to mind what he had been three months before and what he was now, to call to mind with what regularity he had been going downhill, for every possibility of hope to be shattered.

Latterly during the loneliness in which he found himself as he lay facing the back of the sofa, a loneliness in the midst of a

populous town and surrounded by numerous acquaintances and relations but that yet could not have been more complete anywhere—either at the bottom of the sea or under the earth—during that terrible loneliness Ivan Ilych had lived only in memories of the past. Pictures of his past rose before him one after another. They always began with what was nearest in time and then went back to what was most remote—to his childhood—and rested there. If he thought of the stewed prunes that had been offered him that day, his mind went back to the raw shrivelled French plums of his childhood, their peculiar flavour and the flow of saliva when he sucked their stones, and along with the memory of that taste came a whole series of memories of those days: his nurse, his brother, and their toys. "No, I mustn't think of that.... It is too painful," Ivan Ilych said to himself, and brought himself back to the present—to the button on the back of the sofa and the creases in its morocco. "Morocco is expensive, but it does not wear well: there had been a quarrel about it. It was a different kind of quarrel and a different kind of morocco that time when we tore father's portfolio and were punished, and mamma brought us some tarts...." And again his thoughts dwelt on his childhood, and again it was painful and he tried to banish them and fix his mind on something else.

Then again together with that chain of memories another series passed through his mind—of how his illness had progressed and grown worse. There also the further back he looked the more life there had been. There had been more of what was good in life and more of life itself. The two merged together. "Just as the pain went on getting worse and worse, so my life grew worse and worse," he thought. "There is one bright spot there at the back, at the beginning of life, and afterwards all becomes blacker and blacker and proceeds more and more rapidly—in inverse ratio to the square of the distance from death," thought Ivan Ilych. And the example of a stone falling downwards with increasing velocity entered his mind. Life, a series of increasing sufferings, flies further and further towards its end—the most terrible suffering. "I am flying...." He shuddered, shifted himself, and tried to resist, but was already aware that resistance was

impossible, and again with eyes weary of gazing but unable to cease seeing what was before them, he stared at the back of the sofa and waited—awaiting that dreadful fall and shock and destruction.

"Resistance is impossible!" he said to himself. "If I could only understand what it is all for! But that too is impossible. An explanation would be possible if it could be said that I have not lived as I ought to. But it is impossible to say that," and he remembered all the legality, correctitude, and propriety of his life. "That at any rate can certainly not be admitted," he thought, and his lips smiled ironically as if someone could see that smile and be taken in by it. "There is no explanation! Agony, death.... What for?"

XI

Another two weeks went by in this way and during that fortnight an event occurred that Ivan Ilych and his wife had desired. Petrishchev formally proposed. It happened in the evening. The next day Praskovya Fedorovna came into her husband's room considering how best to inform him of it, but that very night there had been a fresh change for the worse in his condition. She found him still lying on the sofa but in a different position. He lay on his back, groaning and staring fixedly straight in front of him.

She began to remind him of his medicines, but he turned his eyes towards her with such a look that she did not finish what she was saying; so great an animosity, to her in particular, did that look express.

"For Christ's sake let me die in peace!" he said.

She would have gone away, but just then their daughter came in and went up to say good morning. He looked at her as he had done at his wife, and in reply to her inquiry about his health said dryly that he would soon free them all of himself. They were both silent and after sitting with him for a while went away.

"Is it our fault?" Lisa said to her mother. "It's as if we were to blame! I am sorry for papa, but why should we be tortured?"

The doctor came at his usual time. Ivan Ilych answered "Yes" and "No," never taking his angry eyes from him, and at last said: "You know you can do nothing for me, so leave me alone."

"We can ease your sufferings."

320

"You can't even do that. Let me be."

The doctor went into the drawing room and told Praskovya Fedorovna that the case was very serious and that the only resource left was opium to allay her husband's sufferings, which must be terrible.

It was true, as the doctor said, that Ivan Ilych's physical sufferings were terrible, but worse than the physical sufferings were his mental sufferings which were his chief torture.

His mental sufferings were due to the fact that that night, as he looked at Gerasim's sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, the question suddenly occurred to him: "What if my whole life has been wrong?"

It occurred to him that what had appeared perfectly impossible before, namely that he had not spent his life as he should have done, might after all be true. It occurred to him that his scarcely perceptible attempts to struggle against what was considered good by the most highly placed people, those scarcely noticeable impulses which he had immediately suppressed, might have been the real thing, and all the rest false. And his professional duties and the whole arrangement of his life and of his family, and all his social and official interests, might all have been false. He tried to defend all those things to himself and suddenly felt the weakness of what he was defending. There was nothing to defend.

325

"But if that is so," he said to himself, "and I am leaving this life with the consciousness that I have lost all that was given me and it is impossible to rectify it—what then?"

He lay on his back and began to pass his life in review in quite a new way. In the morning when he saw first his footman, then his wife, then his daughter, and then the doctor, their every word and movement confirmed to him the awful truth that had been revealed to him during the night. In them he saw himself—all that for which he had lived—and saw clearly that it was not real at all,

but a terrible and huge deception which had hidden both life and death. This consciousness intensified his physical suffering tenfold. He groaned and tossed about, and pulled at his clothing which choked and stifled him. And he hated them on that account.

He was given a large dose of opium and became unconscious, but at noon his sufferings began again. He drove everybody away and tossed from side to side.

His wife came to him and said:

"Jean, my dear, do this for me. It can't do any harm and often helps. Healthy people often do it."

330

He opened his eyes wide.

"What? Take communion? Why? It's unnecessary! However..."

She began to cry.

"Yes, do, my dear. I'll send for our priest. He is such a nice man."

"All right. Very well," he muttered.

335

When the priest came and heard his confession, Ivan Ilych was softened and seemed to feel a relief from his doubts and consequently from his sufferings, and for a moment there came a ray of hope. He again began to think of the vermiform appendix and the possibility of correcting it. He received the sacrament with tears in his eyes.

When they laid him down again afterwards he felt a moment's ease, and the hope that he might live awoke in him again. He began to think of the operation that had been suggested to him. "To live! I want to live!" he said to himself.

His wife came in to congratulate him after his communion, and when uttering the usual conventional words she added:

"You feel better, don't you?"

Without looking at her he said "Yes."

340

Her dress, her figure, the expression of her face, the tone of her voice, all revealed the same thing. "This is wrong, it is not as it should be. All you have lived for and still live for is falsehood and deception, hiding life and death from you." And as soon as he admitted that thought, his hatred and his agonizing physical suffering again sprang up, and with that suffering a consciousness

of the unavoidable, approaching end. And to this was added a new sensation of grinding shooting pain and a feeling of suffocation.

The expression of his face when he uttered that "Yes" was dreadful. Having uttered it, he looked her straight in the eyes, turned on his face with a rapidity extraordinary in his weak state and shouted:

"Go away! Go away and leave me alone!"

XII

From that moment the screaming began that continued for three days, and was so terrible that one could not hear it through two closed doors without horror. At the moment he answered his wife realized that he was lost, that there was no return, that the end had come, the very end, and his doubts were still unsolved and remained doubts.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" he cried in various intonations. He had begun by screaming "I won't!" and continued screaming on the letter "O".

345

For three whole days, during which time did not exist for him, he struggled in that black sack into which he was being thrust by an invisible, resistless force. He struggled as a man condemned to death struggles in the hands of the executioner, knowing that he cannot save himself. And every moment he felt that despite all his efforts he was drawing nearer and nearer to what terrified him. He felt that his agony was due to his being thrust into that black hole and still more to his not being able to get right into it. He was hindered from getting into it by his conviction that his life had been a good one. That very justification of his life held him fast and prevented his moving forward, and it caused him most torment of all.

Suddenly some force struck him in the chest and side, making it still harder to breathe, and he fell through the hole and there at the bottom was a light. What had happened to him was like the sensation one sometimes experiences in a railway carriage when

one thinks one is going backwards while one is really going forwards and suddenly becomes aware of the real direction.

"Yes, it was not the right thing," he said to himself, "but that's no matter. It can be done. But what *is* the right thing?" he asked himself, and suddenly grew quiet.

This occurred at the end of the third day, two hours before his death. Just then his schoolboy son had crept softly in and gone up to the bedside. The dying man was still screaming desperately and waving his arms. His hand fell on the boy's head, and the boy caught it, pressed it to his lips, and began to cry.

At that very moment Ivan Ilych fell through and caught sight of the light, and it was revealed to him that though his life had not been what it should have been, this could still be rectified. He asked himself, "What *is* the right thing?" and grew still, listening. Then he felt that someone was kissing his hand. He opened his eyes, looked at his son, and felt sorry for him. His wife came up to him and he glanced at her. She was gazing at him open-mouthed, with undried tears on her nose and cheek and a despairing look on her face. He felt sorry for her too.

"Yes, I am making them wretched," he thought. "They are sorry, but it will be better for them when I die." He wished to say this but had not the strength to utter it. "Besides, why speak? I must act," he thought. With a look at his wife he indicated his son and said: "Take him away... sorry for him... sorry for you too...." He tried to add, "Forgive me," but said "Forego" and waved his hand, knowing that He whose understanding mattered would understand.

And suddenly it grew clear to him that what had been oppressing him and would not leave him was all dropping away at once from two sides, from ten sides, and from all sides. He was sorry for them, he must act so as not to hurt them: release them and free himself from these sufferings. "How good and how simple!" he thought. "And the pain?" he asked himself. "What has become of it? Where are you, pain?"

He turned his attention to it.

"Yes, here it is. Well, what of it? Let the pain be."

"And death... where is it?"

He sought his former accustomed fear of death and did not find it. "Where is it? What death?" There was no fear because there was no death.

In place of death there was light.

"So that's what it is!" he suddenly exclaimed aloud. "What joy!"

To him all this happened in a single instant, and the meaning of that instant did not change. For those present his agony continued for another two hours. Something rattled in his throat, his emaciated body twitched, then the gasping and rattle became less and less frequent.

"It is finished!" said someone near him.

360

He heard these words and repeated them in his soul.

"Death is finished," he said to himself. "It is no more!"

He drew in a breath, stopped in the midst of a sigh, stretched out, and died.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)

A Doll's House

Norwegian

Realism

Henrik Ibsen is called both "the father of Realism" and "the father of modern theater" in Europe, which is to say that he was the first playwright to use Realism on stage. Ibsen's impact on theater makes him the most influential European playwright since Shakespeare. For Ibsen, art should be both challenging and a force for social change; his plays often expose what he saw as the moral hypocrisy of society. In particular, Ibsen's plays peel back the veneer of respectability of the Norwegian middle class, revealing what happens when people only pretend to be moral. No group or ideology was safe from his criticism, and often there are no characters in a play who are completely without blame. For example, in *An Enemy of the People* (1882), the outright villains may be the businessmen who are poisoning the local water source, but the locals are equally at fault for refusing to believe the truth for selfish reasons, and the supposed hero of the story makes matters worse with his stubborn temper. In *Ghosts* (1881), Ibsen broke several taboos in his depiction of how a husband's repeated infidelities lead to passing on syphilis to his unborn son. As guilty as the husband was, everyone from the pastor to the wife bear some responsibility for looking the other way, even after the husband's death. Ibsen's goals for *A Doll's House* (1879) are every bit as broad as his other works. Nora and Torvald try to live up to their society's ideals for how men and women should behave, but both of them become victims to society's unrealistic expectations. The truth in this case is a lit match that leads to a metaphorical explosion. The fact that Nora and Torvald do not agree on the definition of what is right appears to be a product of which gender holds the power in society, rather than an actual gender issue. *A Doll's House* does not offer a conventional happy ending, which so shocked audiences that some theaters actually rewrote the ending when staging it. The ending is also complicated by the fact that Nora's rebellion against expectations has no guarantee of success in a society where women could not even borrow money without a

man's signature. A common theme in Ibsen's plays, therefore, is that truth does not always set you free; in fact, sometimes the very best intentions are doomed to failure if society refuses to listen or change. It is a problem that Ibsen faced himself, since his efforts to influence change were invariably seen as shocking and controversial. It is a testament to his persistence and talent that audiences now expect the theater to address social issues.

Consider while reading:

1. What are the possible interpretations for the play's title?
2. Does Nora change during the course of the play? Explain.
3. Do you agree with what Kristine does? Why or why not?
4. How do the time period and the location affect the play? How would the play be different if it were set in another time period or location?

Written by Laura Getty

A DOLL'S HOUSE

Henrik Ibsen

Public Domain

Translated by William Archer

[Visit here](#) to read this work.

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

Public Domain

Henrik Ibsen

Translated by R. Farquharson Sharp

Dramatis Personae:

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN, MEDICAL OFFICER OF THE MUNICIPAL BATHS

MRS. STOCKMANN, HIS WIFE

PETRA (THEIR DAUGHTER) A TEACHER

EJLIF AND MORTEN (THEIR SONS, AGED 13 AND 10, RESPECTIVELY)

PETER STOCKMANN (THE DOCTOR'S ELDER BROTHER), MAYOR OF THE TOWN AND CHIEF
CONSTABLE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BATHS' COMMITTEE, ETC.

MORTEN KIIL, A TANNER (MRS. STOCKMANN'S ADOPTIVE FATHER)

HOVSTAD, EDITOR OF THE "PEOPLE'S MESSENGER"

BILLING, SUB-EDITOR

CAPTAIN HORSTER

ASLAKSEN, A PRINTER

MEN OF VARIOUS CONDITIONS AND OCCUPATIONS, A FEW WOMEN, AND A TROOP OF
SCHOOLBOYS—THE AUDIENCE AT A PUBLIC MEETING

[THE ACTION TAKES PLACE IN A COASTAL TOWN IN SOUTHERN NORWAY.]

ACT I

[DR. STOCKMANN'S SITTING-ROOM. IT IS EVENING. THE ROOM IS
PLAINLY BUT NEATLY APPOINTED AND FURNISHED. IN THE RIGHT-
HAND WALL ARE TWO DOORS; THE FARTHER LEADS OUT TO THE
HALL, THE NEARER TO THE DOCTOR'S STUDY. IN THE LEFT-HAND
WALL, OPPOSITE THE DOOR LEADING TO THE HALL, IS A DOOR
LEADING TO THE OTHER ROOMS OCCUPIED BY THE FAMILY. IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE SAME WALL STANDS THE STOVE, AND, FURTHER
FORWARD, A COUCH WITH A LOOKING-GLASS HANGING OVER IT
AND AN OVAL TABLE IN FRONT OF IT. ON THE TABLE, A LIGHTED
LAMP, WITH A LAMPSHADE. AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM, AN OPEN
DOOR LEADS TO THE DINING-ROOM. BILLING IS SEEN SITTING AT
THE DINING TABLE, ON WHICH A LAMP IS BURNING. HE HAS A
NAPKIN TUCKED UNDER HIS CHIN, AND MRS. STOCKMANN IS
STANDING BY THE TABLE HANDING HIM A LARGE PLATE-FULL OF
ROAST BEEF. THE OTHER PLACES AT THE TABLE ARE EMPTY, AND
THE TABLE SOMEWHAT IN DISORDER, EVIDENTLY A MEAL HAVING
RECENTLY BEEN FINISHED.]

MRS. STOCKMANN

You see, if you come an hour late, Mr. Billing, you have to put up with cold meat.

BILLING

[*AS HE EATS.*] It is uncommonly good, thank you—remarkably good.

MRS. STOCKMANN

My husband makes such a point of having his meals punctually, you know.

BILLING

That doesn't affect me a bit. Indeed, I almost think I enjoy a meal all the better when I can sit down and eat all by myself, and undisturbed.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh well, as long as you are enjoying it—[*Turns to the hall door, listening.*] I expect that is Mr. Hovstad coming too.

BILLING

Very likely.

[*PETER STOCKMANN comes in. He wears an overcoat and his official hat, and carries a stick.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Good evening, Katherine.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*Coming forward into the sitting-room.*] Ah, good evening—is it you? How good of you to come up and see us!

PETER STOCKMANN

I happened to be passing, and so—[*Looks into the dining-room.*] But you have company with you, I see.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*A little embarrassed.*] Oh, no—it was quite by chance he came in. [*Hurriedly.*] Won't you come in and have something, too?

PETER STOCKMANN

I! No, thank you. Good gracious—hot meat at night! Not with my digestion.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh, but just once in a way—

PETER STOCKMANN

No, no, my dear lady; I stick to my tea and bread and butter. It is much more wholesome in the long run—and a little more economical, too.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*Smiling.*] Now you mustn't think that Thomas and I are spendthrifts.

PETER STOCKMANN

Not you, my dear; I would never think that of you. [*POINTS TO THE DOCTOR'S STUDY.*] Is he not at home?

MRS. STOCKMANN

No, he went out for a little turn after supper—he and the boys.

PETER STOCKMANN

I doubt if that is a wise thing to do. [*LISTENS.*] I fancy I hear him coming now.

MRS. STOCKMANN

No, I don't think it is he. [*A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE DOOR.*] Come in! [*HOVSTAD COMES IN FROM THE HALL.*] Oh, it is you, Mr. Hovstad!

HOVSTAD

Yes, I hope you will forgive me, but I was delayed at the printers. Good evening, Mr. Mayor.

PETER STOCKMANN

[*BOWING A LITTLE DISTANTLY.*] Good evening. You have come on business, no doubt.

HOVSTAD

Partly. It's about an article for the paper.

PETER STOCKMANN

So I imagined. I hear my brother has become a prolific contributor to the "People's Messenger."

HOVSTAD

Yes, he is good enough to write in the "People's Messenger" when he has any home truths to tell.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*TO HOVSTAD.*] But won't you—? [*POINTS TO THE DINING-ROOM.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Quite so, quite so. I don't blame him in the least, as a writer, for addressing himself to the quarters where he will find the readiest sympathy. And, besides that, I personally have no reason to bear any ill will to your paper, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

I quite agree with you.

PETER STOCKMANN

Taking one thing with another, there is an excellent spirit of toleration in the town—an admirable municipal spirit. And it all springs from the fact of our having a great common interest to unite us—an interest that is in an equally high degree the concern of every right-minded citizen.

HOVSTAD

The Baths, yes.

PETER STOCKMANN

Exactly—our fine, new, handsome Baths. Mark my words, Mr. Hovstad—the Baths will become the focus of our municipal life! Not a doubt of it!

MRS. STOCKMANN

That is just what Thomas says.

PETER STOCKMANN

Think how extraordinarily the place has developed within the last year or two! Money has been flowing in, and there is some life and some business doing in the town. Houses and landed property are rising in value every day.

HOVSTAD

And unemployment is diminishing,

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, that is another thing. The burden on the poor rates has been lightened, to the great relief of the propertied classes; and that relief will be even greater if only we get a really good summer this year, and lots of visitors—plenty of invalids, who will make the Baths talked about.

HOVSTAD

And there is a good prospect of that, I hear.

PETER STOCKMANN

It looks very promising. Inquiries about apartments and that sort of thing are reaching us, every day.

HOVSTAD

Well, the doctor's article will come in very suitably.

PETER STOCKMANN

Has he been writing something just lately?

HOVSTAD

This is something he wrote in the winter; a recommendation of the Baths—an account of the excellent sanitary conditions here. But I held the article over, temporarily.

PETER STOCKMANN

Ah,—some little difficulty about it, I suppose?

HOVSTAD

No, not at all; I thought it would be better to wait until the spring, because it is just at this time that people begin to think seriously about their summer quarters.

PETER STOCKMANN

Quite right; you were perfectly right, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

Yes, Thomas is really indefatigable when it is a question of the Baths.

PETER STOCKMANN

Well remember, he is the Medical Officer to the Baths.

HOVSTAD

Yes, and what is more, they owe their existence to him.

PETER STOCKMANN

To him? Indeed! It is true I have heard from time to time that some people are of that opinion. At the same time I must say I imagined that I took a modest part in the enterprise.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, that is what Thomas is always saying.

HOVSTAD

But who denies it, Mr. Stockmann? You set the thing going and made a practical concern of it; we all know that. I only meant that the idea of it came first from the doctor.

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, ideas yes! My brother has had plenty of them in his time—unfortunately. But when it is a question of putting an idea into practical shape, you have to apply to a man of different mettle. Mr. Hovstad. And I certainly should have thought that in this house at least...

MRS. STOCKMANN

My dear Peter—

HOVSTAD

How can you think that—?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Won't you go in and have something, Mr. Hovstad? My husband is sure to be back directly.

HOVSTAD

Thank you, perhaps just a morsel. [*GOES INTO THE DINING-ROOM.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

[*LOWERING HIS VOICE A LITTLE.*] It is a curious thing that these farmers' sons never seem to lose their want of tact.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Surely it is not worth bothering about! Cannot you and Thomas share the credit as brothers?

PETER STOCKMANN

I should have thought so; but apparently some people are not satisfied with a share.

MRS. STOCKMANN

What nonsense! You and Thomas get on so capitally together. [*LISTENS.*] There he is at last, I think. [*GOES OUT AND OPENS THE DOOR LEADING TO THE HALL.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LAUGHING AND TALKING OUTSIDE.*] Look here—here is another guest for you, Katherine. Isn't that jolly! Come in, Captain Horster; hang your coat up on this peg. Ah, you don't wear an overcoat. Just think, Katherine; I met him in the street and could hardly persuade him to come up! [*CAPTAIN HORSTER COMES INTO THE ROOM AND GREETES MRS. STOCKMANN. HE IS FOLLOWED BY DR. STOCKMANN.*] Come along in, boys. They are ravenously hungry again, you know. Come along, Captain Horster; you must have a slice of beef. [*PUSHES HORSTER INTO THE DINING-ROOM. ERLIF AND MORTEN GO IN AFTER THEM.*]

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, Thomas, don't you see—?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*TURNING IN THE DOORWAY.*] Oh, is it you, Peter? [*SHAKES HANDS WITH HIM.*] Now that is very delightful.

PETER STOCKMANN

Unfortunately I must go in a moment—

DR. STOCKMANN

Rubbish! There is some toddy just coming in. You haven't forgotten the toddy, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Of course not; the water is boiling now. [*GOES INTO THE DINING-ROOM.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Toddy too!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, sit down and we will have it comfortably.

PETER STOCKMANN

Thanks, I never care about an evening's drinking.

DR. STOCKMANN

But this isn't an evening's drinking.

PETER STOCKMANN

It seems to me—[*LOOKS TOWARDS THE DINING-ROOM.*] It is extraordinary how they can put away all that food.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*RUBBING HIS HANDS.*] Yes, isn't it splendid to see young people eat? They have always got an appetite, you know! That's as it should be. Lots of food—to build up their strength! They are the people who are going to stir up the fermenting forces of the future, Peter.

PETER STOCKMANN

May I ask what they will find here to "stir up," as you put it?

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah, you must ask the young people that—when the times comes. We shan't be able to see it, of course. That stands to reason—two old fogies, like us.

PETER STOCKMANN

Really, really! I must say that is an extremely odd expression to—

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, you mustn't take me too literally, Peter. I am so heartily happy and contented, you know. I think it is such an extraordinary piece of good fortune to be in the middle of all this growing, germinating life. It is a splendid time to live in! It is as if a whole new world were being created around one.

PETER STOCKMANN

Do you really think so?

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah, naturally you can't appreciate it as keenly as I. You have lived all your life in these surroundings, and your impressions have been blunted. But I, who have been buried all these years in my little corner up north, almost without ever seeing a stranger who might bring new ideas with him—well, in my case it has just the same effect as if I had been transported into the middle of a crowded city.

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, a city—!

DR. STOCKMANN

I know, I know; it is all cramped enough here, compared with many other places. But there is life here—there is promise—there are innumerable things to work for and fight for; and that is the main thing. [*CALLS.*] Katherine, hasn't the postman been here?

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*FROM THE DINING-ROOM.*] No.

DR. STOCKMANN

And then to be comfortably off, Peter! That is something one learns to value, when one has been on the brink of starvation, as we have.

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, surely—

DR. STOCKMANN

Indeed I can assure you we have often been very hard put to it, up there. And now to be able to live like a lord! Today, for instance, we had roast beef for dinner—and, what is more, for supper too. Won't you come and have a little bit? Or let me show it you, at any rate? Come here—

PETER STOCKMANN

No, no—not for worlds!

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, but just come here then. Do you see, we have got a table-cover?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, I noticed it.

DR. STOCKMANN

And we have got a lamp-shade too. Do you see? All out of Katherine's savings! It makes the room so cosy. Don't you think so? Just stand here for a moment—no, no, not there—just here, that's it! Look now, when you get the light on it altogether. I really think it looks very nice, doesn't it?

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, if you can afford luxuries of this kind—

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, I can afford it now. Katherine tells me I earn almost as much as we spend.

PETER STOCKMANN

Almost—yes!

DR. STOCKMANN

But a scientific man must live in a little bit of style. I am quite sure an ordinary civil servant spends more in a year than I do.

PETER STOCKMANN

I daresay. A civil servant—a man in a well-paid position...

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, any ordinary merchant, then! A man in that position spends two or three times as much as—

PETER STOCKMANN

It just depends on circumstances.

DR. STOCKMANN

At all events I assure you I don't waste money unprofitably. But I can't find it in my heart to deny myself the pleasure of entertaining my friends. I need that sort of thing, you know. I have lived for so long shut out of it all, that it is a necessity of life to me to mix with young, eager, ambitious men, men of liberal and active minds; and that describes every one of those fellows who are enjoying their supper in there. I wish you knew more of Hovstad.

PETER STOCKMANN

By the way, Hovstad was telling me he was going to print another article of yours.

DR. STOCKMANN

An article of mine?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, about the Baths. An article you wrote in the winter.

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, that one! No, I don't intend that to appear just for the present.

PETER STOCKMANN

Why not? It seems to me that this would be the most opportune moment.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, very likely—under normal conditions. [*CROSSES THE ROOM.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

[*FOLLOWING HIM WITH HIS EYES.*] Is there anything abnormal about the present conditions?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*STANDING STILL.*] To tell you the truth, Peter, I can't say just at this moment—at all events not tonight. There may be much that is very abnormal about the present conditions—and it is possible there may be nothing abnormal about them at all. It is quite possible it may be merely my imagination.

PETER STOCKMANN

I must say it all sounds most mysterious. Is there something going on that I am to be kept in ignorance of? I should have imagined that I, as Chairman of the governing body of the Baths—

DR. STOCKMANN

And I should have imagined that I—Oh, come, don't let us fly out at one another, Peter.

PETER STOCKMANN

Heaven forbid! I am not in the habit of flying out at people, as you call it. But I am entitled to request most emphatically that all arrangements shall be made in a businesslike manner, through the proper channels, and shall be dealt with by the legally constituted authorities. I can allow no going behind our backs by any roundabout means.

DR. STOCKMANN

Have I ever at any time tried to go behind your backs?

PETER STOCKMANN

You have an ingrained tendency to take your own way, at all events; and, that is almost equally inadmissible in a well ordered community. The individual ought undoubtedly to acquiesce in subordinating himself to the community—or, to speak more accurately, to the authorities who have the care of the community's welfare.

DR. STOCKMANN

Very likely. But what the deuce has all this got to do with me?

PETER STOCKMANN

That is exactly what you never appear to be willing to learn, my dear Thomas. But, mark my words, some day you will have to suffer for it—sooner or later. Now I have told you. Good-bye.

DR. STOCKMANN

Have you taken leave of your senses? You are on the wrong scent altogether.

PETER STOCKMANN

I am not usually that. You must excuse me now if I—*[CALLS INTO THE DINING-ROOM.]* Good night, Katherine. Good night, gentlemen. *[GOES OUT.]*

MRS. STOCKMANN

[COMING FROM THE DINING-ROOM.] Has he gone?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and in such a bad temper.

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, dear Thomas, what have you been doing to him again?

DR. STOCKMANN

Nothing at all. And, anyhow, he can't oblige me to make my report before the proper time.

MRS. STOCKMANN

What have you got to make a report to him about?

DR. STOCKMANN

Hm! Leave that to me, Katherine. It is an extraordinary thing that the postman doesn't come.

[HOVSTAD, BILLING AND HORSTER HAVE GOT UP FROM THE TABLE AND COME INTO THE SITTING-ROOM. EJLIF AND MORTEN COME IN AFTER THEM.]

BILLING

[STRETCHING HIMSELF.] Ah!—one feels a new man after a meal like that.

HOVSTAD

The mayor wasn't in a very sweet temper tonight, then.

DR. STOCKMANN

It is his stomach; he has wretched digestion.

HOVSTAD

I rather think it was us two of the "People's Messenger" that he couldn't digest.

MRS. STOCKMANN

I thought you came out of it pretty well with him.

HOVSTAD

Oh yes; but it isn't anything more than a sort of truce.

BILLING

That is just what it is! That word sums up the situation.

DR. STOCKMANN

We must remember that Peter is a lonely man, poor chap. He has no home comforts of any kind; nothing but everlasting business. And all that infernal weak tea wash that he pours into himself! Now then, my boys, bring chairs up to the table. Aren't we going to have that toddy, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN

[GOING INTO THE DINING-ROOM.] I am just getting it.

DR. STOCKMANN

Sit down here on the couch beside me, Captain Horster. We so seldom see you. Please sit down, my friends. [*THEY SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE. MRS. STOCKMANN BRINGS A TRAY, WITH A SPIRIT-LAMP, GLASSES, BOTTLES, ETC., UPON IT.*]

MRS. STOCKMANN

There you are! This is arrack, and this is rum, and this one is the brandy. Now every one must help themselves.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*TAKING A GLASS.*] We will. [*THEY ALL MIX THEMSELVES SOME TODDY.*] And let us have the cigars. Ejlif, you know where the box is. And you, Morten, can fetch my pipe. [*THE TWO BOYS GO INTO THE ROOM ON THE RIGHT.*] I have a suspicion that Ejlif pockets a cigar now and then!—but I take no notice of it. [*CALLS OUT.*] And my smoking-cap too, Morten. Katherine, you can tell him where I left it. Ah, he has got it. [*THE BOYS BRING THE VARIOUS THINGS.*] Now, my friends. I stick to my pipe, you know. This one has seen plenty of bad weather with me up north. [*TOUCHES GLASSES WITH THEM.*] Your good health! Ah, it is good to be sitting snug and warm here.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*WHO SITS KNITTING.*] Do you sail soon, Captain Horster?

HORSTER

I expect to be ready to sail next week.

MRS. STOCKMANN

I suppose you are going to America?

HORSTER

Yes, that is the plan.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Then you won't be able to take part in the coming election?

HORSTER

Is there going to be an election?

BILLING

Didn't you know?

HORSTER

No, I don't mix myself up with those things.

BILLING

But do you not take an interest in public affairs?

HORSTER

No, I don't know anything about politics.

BILLING

All the same, one ought to vote, at any rate.

HORSTER

Even if one doesn't know anything about what is going on?

BILLING

Doesn't know! What do you mean by that? A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.

HORSTER

Maybe that is all very well on shore; but on board ship it wouldn't work.

HOVSTAD

It is astonishing how little most sailors care about what goes on on shore.

BILLING

Very extraordinary.

DR. STOCKMANN

Sailors are like birds of passage; they feel equally at home in any latitude. And that is only an additional reason for our being all the more keen, Hovstad. Is there to be anything of public interest in tomorrow's "Messenger"?

HOVSTAD

Nothing about municipal affairs. But the day after tomorrow I was thinking of printing your article—

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah, devil take it—my article! Look here, that must wait a bit.

HOVSTAD

Really? We had just got convenient space for it, and I thought it was just the opportune moment—

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, very likely you are right; but it must wait all the same. I will explain to you later. [*PETRA COMES IN FROM THE HALL, IN HAT AND CLOAK AND WITH A BUNDLE OF EXERCISE BOOKS UNDER HER ARM.*]

PETRA

Good evening.

DR. STOCKMANN

Good evening, Petra; come along.

[*MUTUAL GREETINGS; PETRA TAKES OFF HER THINGS AND PUTS THEM DOWN ON A CHAIR BY THE DOOR.*]

PETRA

And you have all been sitting here enjoying yourselves, while I have been out slaving!

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, come and enjoy yourself too!

BILLING

May I mix a glass for you?

PETRA

[COMING TO THE TABLE.] Thanks, I would rather do it; you always mix it too strong. But I forgot, father—I have a letter for you. [GOES TO THE CHAIR WHERE SHE HAS LAID HER THINGS.]

DR. STOCKMANN

A letter? From whom?

PETRA

[LOOKING IN HER COAT POCKET.] The postman gave it to me just as I was going out.

DR. STOCKMANN

[GETTING UP AND GOING TO HER.] And you only give to me now!

PETRA

I really had not time to run up again. There it is!

DR. STOCKMANN

[SEIZING THE LETTER.] Let's see, let's see, child! [LOOKS AT THE ADDRESS.] Yes, that's all right!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Is it the one you have been expecting go anxiously, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, it is. I must go to my room now and—Where shall I get a light, Katherine? Is there no lamp in my room again?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, your lamp is already lit on your desk.

DR. STOCKMANN

Good, good. Excuse me for a moment—[GOES INTO HIS STUDY.]

PETRA

What do you suppose it is, mother?

MRS. STOCKMANN

I don't know; for the last day or two he has always been asking if the postman has not been.

BILLING

Probably some country patient.

PETRA

Poor old dad!—he will overwork himself soon. [*MIXES A GLASS FOR HERSELF.*] There, that will taste good!

HOVSTAD

Have you been teaching in the evening school again today?

PETRA

[*SIPPING FROM HER GLASS.*] Two hours.

BILLING

And four hours of school in the morning?

PETRA

Five hours.

MRS. STOCKMANN

And you have still got exercises to correct, I see.

PETRA

A whole heap, yes.

HORSTER

You are pretty full up with work too, it seems to me.

PETRA

Yes—but that is good. One is so delightfully tired after it.

BILLING

Do you like that?

PETRA

Yes, because one sleeps so well then.

MORTEN

You must be dreadfully wicked, Petra.

PETRA

Wicked?

MORTEN

Yes, because you work so much. Mr. Rorlund says work is a punishment for our sins.

EJLIF

Pooh, what a duffer, you are, to believe a thing like that!

MRS. STOCKMANN
Come, come, Ejlif!

BILLING
[LAUGHING.] That's capital!

HOVSTAD
Don't you want to work as hard as that, Morten?

MORTEN
No, indeed I don't.

HOVSTAD
What do you want to be, then?

MORTEN
I should like best to be a Viking,

EJLIF
You would have to be a pagan then.

MORTEN
Well, I could become a pagan, couldn't I?

BILLING
I agree with you, Morten! My sentiments, exactly.

MRS. STOCKMANN
[SIGNALLING TO HIM.] I am sure that is not true, Mr. Billing.

BILLING
Yes, I swear it is! I am a pagan, and I am proud of it. Believe me, before long we shall all be pagans.

MORTEN
And then shall be allowed to do anything we like?

BILLING
Well, you'll see, Morten.

MRS. STOCKMANN
You must go to your room now, boys; I am sure you have some lessons to learn for tomorrow.

EJLIF
I should like so much to stay a little longer—

MRS. STOCKMANN
No, no; away you go, both of you, [THE BOYS SAY GOOD NIGHT AND GO INTO THE ROOM ON THE LEFT.]

HOVSTAD

Do you really think it can do the boys any harm to hear such things?

MRS. STOCKMANN

I don't know; but I don't like it.

PETRA

But you know, mother, I think you really are wrong about it.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Maybe, but I don't like it—not in our own home.

PETRA

There is so much falsehood both at home and at school. At home one must not speak, and at school we have to stand and tell lies to the children.

HORSTER

Tell lies?

PETRA

Yes, don't you suppose we have to teach them all sorts of things that we don't believe?

BILLING

That is perfectly true.

PETRA

If only I had the means, I would start a school of my own; and it would be conducted on very different lines.

BILLING

Oh, bother the means—!

HORSTER

Well if you are thinking of that, Miss Stockmann, I shall be delighted to provide you with a schoolroom. The great big old house my father left me is standing almost empty; there is an immense dining-room downstairs—

PETRA

[LAUGHING.] Thank you very much; but I am afraid nothing will come of it.

HOVSTAD

No, Miss Petra is much more likely to take to journalism, I expect. By the way, have you had time to do anything with that English story you promised to translate for us?

PETRA

No, not yet, but you shall have it in good time.

[DR. STOCKMANN COMES IN FROM HIS ROOM WITH AN OPEN
LETTER IN HIS HAND.]

DR. STOCKMANN

[WAVING THE LETTER.] Well, now the town will have something new to talk about, I can tell you!

BILLING

Something new?

MRS. STOCKMANN

What is this?

DR. STOCKMANN

A great discovery, Katherine.

HOVSTAD

Really?

MRS. STOCKMANN

A discovery of yours?

DR. STOCKMANN

A discovery of mine. [WALKS UP AND DOWN.] Just let them come saying, as usual, that it is all fancy and a crazy man's imagination! But they will be careful what they say this time, I can tell you!

PETRA

But, father, tell us what it is.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, yes—only give me time, and you shall know all about it. If only I had Peter here now! It just shows how we men can go about forming our judgments, when in reality we are as blind as any moles—

HOVSTAD

What are you driving at, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN

[STANDING STILL BY THE TABLE.] Isn't it the universal opinion that our town is a healthy spot?

HOVSTAD

Certainly.

DR. STOCKMANN

Quite an unusually healthy spot, in fact—a place that deserves to be recommended in the warmest possible manner either for invalids or for people who are well—

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, but my dear Thomas—

DR. STOCKMANN

And we have been recommending it and praising it—I have written and written, both in the "Messenger" and in pamphlets...

HOVSTAD

Well, what then?

DR. STOCKMANN

And the Baths—we have called them the "main artery of the town's life-blood," the "nerve-centre of our town," and the devil knows what else—

BILLING

"The town's pulsating heart" was the expression I once used on an important occasion.

DR. STOCKMANN

Quite so. Well, do you know what they really are, these great, splendid, much praised Baths, that have cost so much money—do you know what they are?

HOVSTAD

No, what are they?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, what are they?

DR. STOCKMANN

The whole place is a pest-house!

PETRA

The Baths, father?

MRS. STOCKMANN

[AT THE SAME TIME.] Our Baths?

HOVSTAD

But, Doctor—

BILLING

Absolutely incredible!

DR. STOCKMANN

The whole Bath establishment is a whited, poisoned sepulchre, I tell you—the gravest possible danger to the public health! All the nastiness up at Molledal, all that stinking filth, is infecting the water in the conduit-pipes leading to the reservoir; and the same cursed, filthy poison oozes out on the shore too—

HORSTER

Where the bathing-place is?

DR. STOCKMANN

Just there.

HOVSTAD

How do you come to be so certain of all this, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN

I have investigated the matter most conscientiously. For a long time past I have suspected something of the kind. Last year we had some very strange cases of illness among the visitors—typhoid cases, and cases of gastric fever—

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, that is quite true.

DR. STOCKMANN

At the time, we supposed the visitors had been infected before they came; but later on, in the winter, I began to have a different opinion; and so I set myself to examine the water, as well as I could.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Then that is what you have been so busy with?

DR. STOCKMANN

Indeed I have been busy, Katherine. But here I had none of the necessary scientific apparatus; so I sent samples, both of the drinking-water and of the sea-water, up to the University, to have an accurate analysis made by a chemist.

HOVSTAD

And have you got that?

DR. STOCKMANN

[SHOWING HIM THE LETTER.] Here it is! It proves the presence of decomposing organic matter in the water—it is full of infusoria. The water is absolutely dangerous to use, either internally or externally.

MRS. STOCKMANN

What a mercy you discovered it in time.

DR. STOCKMANN

You may well say so.

HOVSTAD

And what do you propose to do now, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN

To see the matter put right, naturally.

HOVSTAD

Can that be done?

DR. STOCKMANN

It must be done. Otherwise the Baths will be absolutely useless and wasted. But we need not anticipate that; I have a very clear idea what we shall have to do.

MRS. STOCKMANN

But why have you kept this all so secret, dear?

DR. STOCKMANN

Do you suppose I was going to run about the town gossiping about it, before I had absolute proof? No, thank you. I am not such a fool.

PETRA

Still, you might have told us—

DR. STOCKMANN

Not a living soul. But tomorrow you may run around to the old Badger—

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh, Thomas! Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, to your grandfather, then. The old boy will have something to be astonished at! I know he thinks I am cracked—and there are lots of other people who think so too, I have noticed. But now these good folks shall see—they shall just see! [*WALKS ABOUT, RUBBING HIS HANDS.*] There will be a nice upset in the town, Katherine; you can't imagine what it will be. All the conduit-pipes will have to be relaid.

HOVSTAD

[*GETTING UP.*] All the conduit-pipes—?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, of course. The intake is too low down; it will have to be lifted to a position much higher up.

PETRA

Then you were right after all.

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah, you remember, Petra—I wrote opposing the plans before the work was begun. But at that time no one would listen to me. Well, I am going to let them have it now. Of course I have prepared a report for the Baths Committee; I have had it ready for a week, and was only waiting for this to come. [*SHOWS THE LETTER.*] Now it

shall go off at once. [*GOES INTO HIS ROOM AND COMES BACK WITH SOME PAPERS.*] Look at that! Four closely written sheets!—and the letter shall go with them. Give me a bit of paper, Katherine—something to wrap them up in. That will do! Now give it to-to-*[STAMPS HIS FOOT.]*—what the deuce is her name?—give it to the maid, and tell her to take it at once to the Mayor.

[MRS. STOCKMANN TAKES THE PACKET AND GOES OUT THROUGH THE DINING-ROOM.]

PETRA

What do you think Uncle Peter will say, father?

DR. STOCKMANN

What is there for him to say? I should think he would be very glad that such an important truth has been brought to light.

HOVSTAD

Will you let me print a short note about your discovery in the "Messenger?"

DR. STOCKMANN

I shall be very much obliged if you will.

HOVSTAD

It is very desirable that the public should be informed of it without delay.

DR. STOCKMANN

Certainly.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[COMING BACK.] She has just gone with it.

BILLING

Upon my soul, Doctor, you are going to be the foremost man in the town!

DR. STOCKMANN

[WALKING ABOUT HAPPILY.] Nonsense! As a matter of fact I have done nothing more than my duty. I have only made a lucky find—that's all. Still, all the same...

BILLING

Hovstad, don't you think the town ought to give Dr. Stockmann some sort of testimonial?

HOVSTAD

I will suggest it, anyway.

BILLING

And I will speak to Aslaksen about it.

DR. STOCKMANN

No, my good friends, don't let us have any of that nonsense. I won't hear anything of the kind. And if the Baths Committee should think of voting me an increase of salary, I will not accept it. Do you hear, Katherine?—I won't accept it.

MRS. STOCKMANN

You are quite right, Thomas.

PETRA

[*LIFTING HER GLASS.*] Your health, father!

HOVSTAD AND BILLING

Your health, Doctor! Good health!

HORSTER

[*TOUCHES GLASSES WITH DR. STOCKMANN.*] I hope it will bring you nothing but good luck.

DR. STOCKMANN

Thank you, thank you, my dear fellows! I feel tremendously happy! It is a splendid thing for a man to be able to feel that he has done a service to his native town and to his fellow-citizens. Hurrah, Katherine! [*HE PUTS HIS ARMS ROUND HER AND WHIRLS HER ROUND AND ROUND, WHILE SHE PROTESTS WITH LAUGHING CRIES. THEY ALL LAUGH, CLAP THEIR HANDS, AND CHEER THE DOCTOR. THE BOYS PUT THEIR HEADS IN AT THE DOOR TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON.*]

ACT II

[*THE SAME. THE DOOR INTO THE DINING ROOM IS SHUT. IT IS MORNING. MRS. STOCKMANN, WITH A SEALED LETTER IN HER HAND, COMES IN FROM THE DINING ROOM, GOES TO THE DOOR OF THE DOCTOR'S STUDY, AND PEEPS IN.*]

MRS. STOCKMANN

Are you in, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*FROM WITHIN HIS ROOM.*] Yes, I have just come in. [*COMES INTO THE ROOM.*] What is it?

MRS. STOCKMANN

A letter from your brother.

DR. STOCKMANN

Aha, let us see! [*OPENS THE LETTER AND READS.*] "I return herewith the manuscript you sent me" [*READS ON IN A LOW MURMUR.*] H'm!—

MRS. STOCKMANN

What does he say?

DR. STOCKMANN

[PUTTING THE PAPERS IN HIS POCKET.] Oh, he only writes that he will come up here himself about midday.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Well, try and remember to be at home this time.

DR. STOCKMANN

That will be all right; I have got through all my morning visits.

MRS. STOCKMANN

I am extremely curious to know how he takes it.

DR. STOCKMANN

You will see he won't like it's having been I, and not he, that made the discovery.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Aren't you a little nervous about that?

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, he really will be pleased enough, you know. But, at the same time, Peter is so confoundedly afraid of anyone's doing any service to the town except himself.

MRS. STOCKMANN

I will tell you what, Thomas—you should be good natured, and share the credit of this with him. Couldn't you make out that it was he who set you on the scent of this discovery?

DR. STOCKMANN

I am quite willing. If only I can get the thing set right. I—

[MORTEN KIIL PUTS HIS HEAD IN THROUGH THE DOOR LEADING
FROM THE HALL, LOOKS AROUND IN AN ENQUIRING MANNER, AND
CHUCKLES.]

MORTEN KIIL

[SLYLY.] Is it—is it true?

MRS. STOCKMANN

[GOING TO THE DOOR.] Father!—is it you?

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah, Mr. Kiil—good morning, good morning!

MRS. STOCKMANN

But come along in.

MORTEN KIIL

If it is true, I will; if not, I am off.

DR. STOCKMANN

If what is true?

MORTEN KIIL

This tale about the water supply, is it true?

DR. STOCKMANN

Certainly it is true, but how did you come to hear it?

MORTEN KIIL

[COMING IN.] Petra ran in on her way to the school—

DR. STOCKMANN

Did she?

MORTEN KIIL

Yes; and she declares that—I thought she was only making a fool of me—but it isn't like Petra to do that.

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course not. How could you imagine such a thing!

MORTEN KIIL

Oh well, it is better never to trust anybody; you may find you have been made a fool of before you know where you are. But it is really true, all the same?

DR. STOCKMANN

You can depend upon it that it is true. Won't you sit down? [SETTLES HIM ON THE COUCH.] Isn't it a real bit of luck for the town—

MORTEN KIIL

[SUPPRESSING HIS LAUGHTER.] A bit of luck for the town?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, that I made the discovery in good time.

MORTEN KIIL

[AS BEFORE.] Yes, yes, Yes!—But I should never have thought you the sort of man to pull your own brother's leg like this!

DR. STOCKMANN

Pull his leg!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Really, father dear—

MORTEN KIIL

[RESTING HIS HANDS AND HIS CHIN ON THE HANDLE OF HIS STICK AND WINKING SLYLY AT THE DOCTOR.] Let me see, what was the story? Some kind of beast that had got into the water-pipes,

wasn't it?

DR. STOCKMANN
Infusoria—yes.

MORTEN KIIL
And a lot of these beasts had got in, according to Petra—a tremendous lot.

DR. STOCKMANN
Certainly; hundreds of thousands of them, probably.

MORTEN KIIL
But no one can see them— isn't that so?

DR. STOCKMANN
Yes; you can't see them,

MORTEN KIIL
[WITH A QUIET CHUCKLE.] Damn—it's the finest story I have ever heard!

DR. STOCKMANN
What do you mean?

MORTEN KIIL
But you will never get the Mayor to believe a thing like that.

DR. STOCKMANN
We shall see.

MORTEN KIIL
Do you think he will be fool enough to—?

DR. STOCKMANN
I hope the whole town will be fools enough.

MORTEN KIIL
The whole town! Well, it wouldn't be a bad thing. It would just serve them right, and teach them a lesson. They think themselves so much cleverer than we old fellows. They hounded me out of the council; they did, I tell you—they hounded me out. Now they shall pay for it. You pull their legs too, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN
Really, I—

MORTEN KIIL
You pull their legs! [GETS UP.] If you can work it so that the Mayor and his friends all swallow the same bait, I will give ten pounds to a charity—like a shot!

DR. STOCKMANN

That is very kind of you.

MORTEN KIIL

Yes, I haven't got much money to throw away, I can tell you; but, if you can work this, I will give five pounds to a charity at Christmas.

[HOVSTAD COMES IN BY THE HALL DOOR.]

HOVSTAD

Good morning! *[STOPS.]* Oh, I beg your pardon

DR. STOCKMANN

Not at all; come in.

MORTEN KIIL

[WITH ANOTHER CHUCKLE.] Oho!—is he in this too?

HOVSTAD

What do you mean?

DR. STOCKMANN

Certainly he is.

MORTEN KIIL

I might have known it! It must get into the papers. You know how to do it, Thomas! Set your wits to work. Now I must go.

DR. STOCKMANN

Won't you stay a little while?

MORTEN KIIL

No, I must be off now. You keep up this game for all it is worth; you won't repent it, I'm damned if you will!

[HE GOES OUT; MRS. STOCKMANN FOLLOWS HIM INTO THE HALL.]

DR. STOCKMANN

[LAUGHING.] Just imagine—the old chap doesn't believe a word of all this about the water supply.

HOVSTAD

Oh that was it, then?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, that was what we were talking about. Perhaps it is the same thing that brings you here?

HOVSTAD

Yes, it is, Can you spare me a few minutes, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN

As long as you like, my dear fellow.

HOVSTAD

Have you heard from the Mayor yet?

DR. STOCKMANN

Not yet. He is coming here later.

HOVSTAD

I have given the matter a great deal of thought since last night.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well?

HOVSTAD

From your point of view, as a doctor and a man of science, this affair of the water supply is an isolated matter. I mean, you do not realise that it involves a great many other things.

DR. STOCKMANN

How, do you mean?—Let us sit down, my dear fellow. No, sit here on the couch.

[*HOVSTAD SITS DOWN ON THE COUCH, DR. STOCKMANN ON A CHAIR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE.*] Now then. You mean that—?

HOVSTAD

You said yesterday that the pollution of the water was due to impurities in the soil.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, unquestionably it is due to that poisonous morass up at Molledal.

HOVSTAD

Begging your pardon, Doctor, I fancy it is due to quite another morass altogether.

DR. STOCKMANN

What morass?

HOVSTAD

The morass that the whole life of our town is built on and is rotting in.

DR. STOCKMANN

What the deuce are you driving at, Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

The whole of the town's interests have, little by little, got into the hands of a pack of officials.

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, come!—they are not all officials.

HOVSTAD

No, but those that are not officials are at any rate the officials' friends and adherents; it is the wealthy folk, the old families in the town, that have got us entirely in their hands.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, but after all they are men of ability and knowledge.

HOVSTAD

Did they show any ability or knowledge when they laid the conduit pipes where they are now?

DR. STOCKMANN

No, of course that was a great piece of stupidity on their part. But that is going to be set right now.

HOVSTAD

Do you think that will be all such plain sailing?

DR. STOCKMANN

Plain sailing or no, it has got to be done, anyway.

HOVSTAD

Yes, provided the press takes up the question.

DR. STOCKMANN

I don't think that will be necessary, my dear fellow, I am certain my brother—

HOVSTAD

Excuse me, doctor; I feel bound to tell you I am inclined to take the matter up.

DR. STOCKMANN

In the paper?

HOVSTAD

Yes. When I took over the "People's Messenger" my idea was to break up this ring of self-opinionated old fossils who had got hold of all the influence.

DR. STOCKMANN

But you know you told me yourself what the result had been; you nearly ruined your paper.

HOVSTAD

Yes, at the time we were obliged to climb down a peg or two, it is quite true—because there was a danger of the whole project of the Baths coming to nothing if

they failed us. But now the scheme has been carried through, and we can dispense with these grand gentlemen.

DR. STOCKMANN

Dispense with them, yes; but, we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

HOVSTAD

That shall be recognised ungrudgingly, But a journalist of my democratic tendencies cannot let such an opportunity as this slip. The bubble of official infallibility must be pricked. This superstition must be destroyed, like any other.

DR. STOCKMANN

I am whole-heartedly with you in that, Mr. Hovstad; if it is a superstition, away with it!

HOVSTAD

I should be very reluctant to bring the Mayor into it, because he is your brother. But I am sure you will agree with me that truth should be the first consideration.

DR. STOCKMANN

That goes without saying. [*WITH SUDDEN EMPHASIS.*] Yes, but—but—

HOVSTAD

You must not misjudge me. I am neither more self-interested nor more ambitious than most men.

DR. STOCKMANN

My dear fellow—who suggests anything of the kind?

HOVSTAD

I am of humble origin, as you know; and that has given me opportunities of knowing what is the most crying need in the humbler ranks of life. It is that they should be allowed some part in the direction of public affairs, Doctor. That is what will develop their faculties and intelligence and self respect—

DR. STOCKMANN

I quite appreciate that.

HOVSTAD

Yes—and in my opinion a journalist incurs a heavy responsibility if he neglects a favourable opportunity of emancipating the masses—the humble and oppressed. I know well enough that in exalted circles I shall be called an agitator, and all that sort of thing; but they may call what they like. If only my conscience doesn't reproach me, then—

DR. STOCKMANN

Quite right! Quite right, Mr. Hovstad. But all the same—devil take it! [*A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE DOOR.*] Come in!

[*ASLAKSEN APPEARS AT THE DOOR. HE IS POORLY BUT DECENTLY DRESSED, IN BLACK, WITH A SLIGHTLY CRUMPLED WHITE NECKCLOTH; HE WEARS GLOVES AND HAS A FELT HAT IN HIS HAND.*]

ASLAKSEN

[*BOWING.*] Excuse my taking the liberty, Doctor—

DR. STOCKMANN

[*GETTING UP.*] Ah, it is you, Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN

Yes, Doctor.

HOVSTAD

[*STANDING UP.*] Is it me you want, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN

No; I didn't know I should find you here. No, it was the Doctor I—

DR. STOCKMANN

I am quite at your service. What is it?

ASLAKSEN

Is what I heard from Mr. Billing true, sir—that you mean to improve our water supply?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, for the Baths.

ASLAKSEN

Quite so, I understand. Well, I have come to say that I will back that up by every means in my power.

HOVSTAD

[*TO THE DOCTOR.*] You see!

DR. STOCKMANN

I shall be very grateful to you, but—

ASLAKSEN

Because it may be no bad thing to have us small tradesmen at your back. We form, as it were, a compact majority in the town—if we choose. And it is always a good thing to have the majority with you, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

That is undeniably true; but I confess I don't see why such unusual precautions should be necessary in this case. It seems to me that such a plain, straightforward thing.

ASLAKSEN

Oh, it may be very desirable, all the same. I know our local authorities so well; officials are not generally very ready to act on proposals that come from other people. That is why I think it would not be at all amiss if we made a little demonstration.

HOVSTAD

That's right.

DR. STOCKMANN

Demonstration, did you say? What on earth are you going to make a demonstration about?

ASLAKSEN

We shall proceed with the greatest moderation, Doctor. Moderation is always my aim; it is the greatest virtue in a citizen—at least, I think so.

DR. STOCKMANN

It is well known to be a characteristic of yours, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

Yes, I think I may pride myself on that. And this matter of the water supply is of the greatest importance to us small tradesmen. The Baths promise to be a regular gold-mine for the town. We shall all make our living out of them, especially those of us who are householders. That is why we will back up the project as strongly as possible. And as I am at present Chairman of the Householders' Association.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes—?

ASLAKSEN

And, what is more, local secretary of the Temperance Society—you know, sir, I suppose, that I am a worker in the temperance cause?

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course, of course.

ASLAKSEN

Well, you can understand that I come into contact with a great many people. And as I have the reputation of a temperate and law-abiding citizen—like yourself, Doctor—I have a certain influence in the town, a little bit of power, if I may be allowed to say so.

DR. STOCKMANN

I know that quite well, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

So you see it would be an easy matter for me to set on foot some testimonial, if necessary.

DR. STOCKMANN

A testimonial?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, some kind of an address of thanks from the townsmen for your share in a matter of such importance to the community. I need scarcely say that it would have to be drawn up with the greatest regard to moderation, so as not to offend the authorities—who, after all, have the reins in their hands. If we pay strict attention to that, no one can take it amiss, I should think!

HOVSTAD

Well, and even supposing they didn't like it—

ASLAKSEN

No, no, no; there must be no discourtesy to the authorities, Mr. Hovstad. It is no use falling foul of those upon whom our welfare so closely depends. I have done that in my time, and no good ever comes of it. But no one can take exception to a reasonable and frank expression of a citizen's views.

DR. STOCKMANN

[SHAKING HIM BY THE HAND.] I can't tell you, dear Mr. Aslaksen, how extremely pleased I am to find such hearty support among my fellow-citizens. I am delighted—delighted! Now, you will take a small glass of sherry, eh?

ASLAKSEN

No, thank you; I never drink alcohol of that kind.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, what do you say to a glass of beer, then?

ASLAKSEN

Nor that either, thank you, Doctor. I never drink anything as early as this. I am going into town now to talk this over with one or two householders, and prepare the ground.

DR. STOCKMANN

It is tremendously kind of you, Mr. Aslaksen; but I really cannot understand the necessity for all these precautions. It seems to me that the thing should go of itself.

ASLAKSEN

The authorities are somewhat slow to move, Doctor. Far be it from me to seem to blame them—

HOVSTAD

We are going to stir them up in the paper tomorrow, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

But not violently, I trust, Mr. Hovstad. Proceed with moderation, or you will do nothing with them. You may take my advice; I have gathered my experience in the school of life. Well, I must say goodbye, Doctor. You know now that we small tradesmen are at your back at all events, like a solid wall. You have the compact majority on your side Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

I am very much obliged, dear Mr. Aslaksen, [*SHAKES HANDS WITH HIM.*] Goodbye, goodbye.

ASLAKSEN

Are you going my way, towards the printing-office. Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

I will come later; I have something to settle up first.

ASLAKSEN

Very well. [*BOWS AND GOES OUT; STOCKMANN FOLLOWS HIM INTO THE HALL.*]

HOVSTAD

[*AS STOCKMANN COMES IN AGAIN.*] Well, what do you think of that, Doctor? Don't you think it is high time we stirred a little life into all this slackness and vacillation and cowardice?

DR. STOCKMANN

Are you referring to Aslaksen?

HOVSTAD

Yes, I am. He is one of those who are floundering in a bog—decent enough fellow though he may be, otherwise. And most of the people here are in just the same case—see-sawing and edging first to one side and then to the other, so overcome with caution and scruple that they never dare to take any decided step.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, but Aslaksen seemed to me so thoroughly well-intentioned.

HOVSTAD

There is one thing I esteem higher than that; and that is for a man to be self-reliant and sure of himself.

DR. STOCKMANN

I think you are perfectly right there.

HOVSTAD

That is why I want to seize this opportunity, and try if I cannot manage to put a little virility into these well-intentioned people for once. The idol of Authority must be shattered in this town. This gross and inexcusable blunder about the water supply must be brought home to the mind of every municipal voter.

DR. STOCKMANN

Very well; if you are of opinion that it is for the good of the community, so be it. But not until I have had a talk with my brother.

HOVSTAD

Anyway, I will get a leading article ready; and if the Mayor refuses to take the matter up—

DR. STOCKMANN

How can you suppose such a thing possible!

HOVSTAD

It is conceivable. And in that case—

DR. STOCKMANN

In that case I promise you—Look here, in that case you may print my report—every word of it.

HOVSTAD

May I? Have I your word for it?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*GIVING HIM THE MS.*] Here it is; take it with you. It can do no harm for you to read it through, and you can give it me back later on.

HOVSTAD

Good, good! That is what I will do. And now goodbye, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

Goodbye, goodbye. You will see everything will run quite smoothly, Mr. Hovstad—quite smoothly.

HOVSTAD

Hm!—we shall see. [*BOWS AND GOES OUT.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[OPENS THE DINING-ROOM DOOR AND LOOKS IN.] Katherine! Oh, you are back, Petra?

PETRA

[COMING IN.] Yes, I have just come from the school.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[COMING IN.] Has he not been here yet?

DR. STOCKMANN

Peter? No, but I have had a long talk with Hovstad. He is quite excited about my discovery, I find it has a much wider bearing than I at first imagined. And he has put his paper at my disposal if necessity should arise.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Do you think it will?

DR. STOCKMANN

Not for a moment. But at all events it makes me feel proud to know that I have the liberal-minded independent press on my side. Yes, and just imagine—I have had a visit from the Chairman of the Householders' Association!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh! What did he want?

DR. STOCKMANN

To offer me his support too. They will support me in a body if it should be necessary. Katherine—do you know what I have got behind me?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Behind you? No, what have you got behind you?

DR. STOCKMANN

The compact majority.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Really? Is that a good thing for you Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN

I should think it was a good thing. [WALKS UP AND DOWN RUBBING HIS HANDS.] By Jove, it's a fine thing to feel this bond of brotherhood between oneself and one's fellow citizens!

PETRA

And to be able to do so much that is good and useful, father!

DR. STOCKMANN

And for one's own native town into the bargain, my child!

MRS. STOCKMANN

That was a ring at the bell.

DR. STOCKMANN

It must be he, then. [*A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE DOOR.*] Come in!

PETER STOCKMANN

[*COMES IN FROM THE HALL.*] Good morning.

DR. STOCKMANN

Glad to see you, Peter!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Good morning, Peter, How are you?

PETER STOCKMANN

So so, thank you. [*To DR. STOCKMANN.*] I received from you yesterday, after office hours, a report dealing with the condition of the water at the Baths.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes. Have you read it?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, I have,

DR. STOCKMANN

And what have you to say to it?

PETER STOCKMANN

[*WITH A SIDELONG GLANCE.*] Hm!—

MRS. STOCKMANN

Come along, Petra. [*SHE AND PETRA GO INTO THE ROOM ON THE LEFT.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

[*AFTER A PAUSE.*] Was it necessary to make all these investigations behind my back?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, because until I was absolutely certain about it—

PETER STOCKMANN

Then you mean that you are absolutely certain now?

DR. STOCKMANN

Surely you are convinced of that.

PETER STOCKMANN

Is it your intention to bring this document before the Baths Committee as a sort of official communication?

DR. STOCKMANN

Certainly. Something must be done in the matter—and that quickly.

PETER STOCKMANN

As usual, you employ violent expressions in your report. You say, amongst other things, that what we offer visitors in our Baths is a permanent supply of poison.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, can you describe it any other way, Peter? Just think—water that is poisonous, whether you drink it or bathe in it! And this we offer to the poor sick folk who come to us trustfully and pay us at an exorbitant rate to be made well again!

PETER STOCKMANN

And your reasoning leads you to this conclusion, that we must build a sewer to draw off the alleged impurities from Molledal and must relay the water conduits.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes. Do you see any other way out of it? I don't.

PETER STOCKMANN

I made a pretext this morning to go and see the town engineer, and, as if only half seriously, broached the subject of these proposals as a thing we might perhaps have to take under consideration some time later on.

DR. STOCKMANN

Some time later on!

PETER STOCKMANN

He smiled at what he considered to be my extravagance, naturally. Have you taken the trouble to consider what your proposed alterations would cost? According to the information I obtained, the expenses would probably mount up to fifteen or twenty thousand pounds.

DR. STOCKMANN

Would it cost so much?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes; and the worst part of it would be that the work would take at least two years.

DR. STOCKMANN

Two years? Two whole years?

PETER STOCKMANN

At least. And what are we to do with the Baths in the meantime? Close them? Indeed we should be obliged to. And do you suppose anyone would come near the

place after it had got out that the water was dangerous?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes but, Peter, that is what it is.

PETER STOCKMANN

And all this at this juncture—just as the Baths are beginning to be known. There are other towns in the neighbourhood with qualifications to attract visitors for bathing purposes. Don't you suppose they would immediately strain every nerve to divert the entire stream of strangers to themselves? Unquestionably they would; and then where should we be? We should probably have to abandon the whole thing, which has cost us so much money—and then you would have ruined your native town.

DR. STOCKMANN

I—should have ruined—!

PETER STOCKMANN

It is simply and solely through the Baths that the town has before it any future worth mentioning. You know that just as well as I.

DR. STOCKMANN

But what do you think ought to be done, then?

PETER STOCKMANN

Your report has not convinced me that the condition of the water at the Baths is as bad as you represent it to be.

DR. STOCKMANN

I tell you it is even worse!—or at all events it will be in summer, when the warm weather comes.

PETER STOCKMANN

As I said, I believe you exaggerate the matter considerably. A capable physician ought to know what measures to take—he ought to be capable of preventing injurious influences or of remedying them if they become obviously persistent.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well? What more?

PETER STOCKMANN

The water supply for the Baths is now an established fact, and in consequence must be treated as such. But probably the Committee, at its discretion, will not be disinclined to consider the question of how far it might be possible to introduce certain improvements consistently with a reasonable expenditure.

DR. STOCKMANN

And do you suppose that I will have anything to do with such a piece of trickery as that?

PETER STOCKMANN

Trickery!!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, it would be a trick—a fraud, a lie, a downright crime towards the public, towards the whole community!

PETER STOCKMANN

I have not, as I remarked before, been able to convince myself that there is actually any imminent danger.

DR. STOCKMANN

You have! It is impossible that you should not be convinced. I know I have represented the facts absolutely truthfully and fairly. And you know it very well, Peter, only you won't acknowledge it. It was owing to your action that both the Baths and the water conduits were built where they are; and that is what you won't acknowledge—that damnable blunder of yours. Pooh!—do you suppose I don't see through you?

PETER STOCKMANN

And even if that were true? If I perhaps guard my reputation somewhat anxiously, it is in the interests of the town. Without moral authority I am powerless to direct public affairs as seems, to my judgment, to be best for the common good. And on that account—and for various other reasons too—it appears to me to be a matter of importance that your report should not be delivered to the Committee. In the interests of the public, you must withhold it. Then, later on, I will raise the question and we will do our best, privately; but, nothing of this unfortunate affair not a single word of it—must come to the ears of the public.

DR. STOCKMANN

I am afraid you will not be able to prevent that now, my dear Peter.

PETER STOCKMANN

It must and shall be prevented.

DR. STOCKMANN

It is no use, I tell you. There are too many people that know about it.

PETER STOCKMANN

That know about it? Who? Surely you don't mean those fellows on the "People's Messenger"?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, they know. The liberal-minded independent press is going to see that you do your duty.

PETER STOCKMANN

[AFTER A SHORT PAUSE.] You are an extraordinarily independent man, Thomas. Have you given no thought to the consequences this may have for yourself?

DR. STOCKMANN

Consequences?—for me?

PETER STOCKMANN

For you and yours, yes.

DR. STOCKMANN

What the deuce do you mean?

PETER STOCKMANN

I believe I have always behaved in a brotherly way to you—haven't I always been ready to oblige or to help you?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, you have, and I am grateful to you for it.

PETER STOCKMANN

There is no need. Indeed, to some extent I was forced to do so—for my own sake. I always hoped that, if I helped to improve your financial position, I should be able to keep some check on you.

DR. STOCKMANN

What! Then it was only for your own sake—!

PETER STOCKMANN

Up to a certain point, yes. It is painful for a man in an official position to have his nearest relative compromising himself time after time.

DR. STOCKMANN

And do you consider that I do that?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, unfortunately, you do, without even being aware of it. You have a restless, pugnacious, rebellious disposition. And then there is that disastrous propensity of yours to want to write about every sort of possible and impossible thing. The moment an idea comes into your head, you must needs go and write a newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, but is it not the duty of a citizen to let the public share in any new ideas he may have?

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old established ideas it already has.

DR. STOCKMANN

And that is your honest opinion?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, and for once I must talk frankly to you. Hitherto I have tried to avoid doing so, because I know how irritable you are; but now I must tell you the truth, Thomas. You have no conception what an amount of harm you do yourself by your impetuosity. You complain of the authorities, you even complain of the government—you are always pulling them to pieces; you insist that you have been neglected and persecuted. But what else can such a cantankerous man as you expect?

DR. STOCKMANN

What next! Cantankerous, am I?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, Thomas, you are an extremely cantankerous man to work with—I know that to my cost. You disregard everything that you ought to have consideration for. You seem completely to forget that it is me you have to thank for your appointment here as medical officer to the Baths.

DR. STOCKMANN

I was entitled to it as a matter of course!—I and nobody else! I was the first person to see that the town could be made into a flourishing watering-place, and I was the only one who saw it at that time. I had to fight single-handed in support of the idea for many years; and I wrote and wrote—

PETER STOCKMANN

Undoubtedly. But things were not ripe for the scheme then—though, of course, you could not judge of that in your out-of-the-way corner up north. But as soon as the opportune moment came I—and the others—took the matter into our hands.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and made this mess of all my beautiful plan. It is pretty obvious now what clever fellows you were!

PETER STOCKMANN

To my mind the whole thing only seems to mean that you are seeking another outlet for your combativeness. You want to pick a quarrel with your superiors—an old habit of yours. You cannot put up with any authority over you. You look askance at anyone who occupies a superior official position; you regard him as a personal enemy, and then any stick is good enough to beat him with. But now I have called your attention to the fact that the town's interests are at stake—and, incidentally, my own too. And therefore, I must tell you, Thomas, that you will find me inexorable with regard to what I am about to require you to do.

DR. STOCKMANN
And what is that?

PETER STOCKMANN
As you have been so indiscreet as to speak of this delicate matter to outsiders, despite the fact that you ought to have treated it as entirely official and confidential, it is obviously impossible to hush it up now. All sorts of rumours will get about directly, and everybody who has a grudge against us will take care to embellish these rumours. So it will be necessary for you to refute them publicly.

DR. STOCKMANN
I! How? I don't understand.

PETER STOCKMANN
What we shall expect is that, after making further investigations, you will come to the conclusion that the matter is not by any means as dangerous or as critical as you imagined in the first instance.

DR. STOCKMANN
Oho!—so that is what you expect!

PETER STOCKMANN
And, what is more, we shall expect you to make public profession of your confidence in the Committee and in their readiness to consider fully and conscientiously what steps may be necessary to remedy any possible defects.

DR. STOCKMANN
But you will never be able to do that by patching and tinkering at it—never! Take my word for it, Peter; I mean what I say, as deliberately and emphatically as possible.

PETER STOCKMANN
As an officer under the Committee, you have no right to any individual opinion.

DR. STOCKMANN
[AMAZED.] No right?

PETER STOCKMANN

In your official capacity, no. As a private person, it is quite another matter. But as a subordinate member of the staff of the Baths, you have no right to express any opinion which runs contrary to that of your superiors.

DR. STOCKMANN

This is too much! I, a doctor, a man of science, have no right to—!

PETER STOCKMANN

The matter in hand is not simply a scientific one. It is a complicated matter, and has its economic as well as its technical side.

DR. STOCKMANN

I don't care what it is! I intend to be free to express my opinion on any subject under the sun.

PETER STOCKMANN

As you please—but not on any subject concerning the Baths. That we forbid.

DR. STOCKMANN

[SHOUTING.] You forbid—! You! A pack of—

PETER STOCKMANN

I forbid it—I, your chief; and if I forbid it, you have to obey.

DR. STOCKMANN

[CONTROLLING HIMSELF.] Peter—if you were not my brother—

PETRA

[THROWING OPEN THE DOOR.] Father, you shan't stand this!

MRS. STOCKMANN

[COMING IN AFTER HER.] Petra, Petra!

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, so you have been eavesdropping.

MRS. STOCKMANN

You were talking so loud, we couldn't help it!

PETRA

Yes, I was listening.

PETER STOCKMANN

Well, after all, I am very glad—

DR. STOCKMANN

[GOING UP TO HIM.] You were saying something about forbidding and obeying?

PETER STOCKMANN

You obliged me to take that tone with you.

DR. STOCKMANN

And so I am to give myself the lie, publicly?

PETER STOCKMANN

We consider it absolutely necessary that you should make some such public statement as I have asked for.

DR. STOCKMANN

And if I do not—obey?

PETER STOCKMANN

Then we shall publish a statement ourselves to reassure the public.

DR. STOCKMANN

Very well; but in that case I shall use my pen against you. I stick to what I have said; I will show that I am right and that you are wrong. And what will you do then?

PETER STOCKMANN

Then I shall not be able to prevent your being dismissed.

DR. STOCKMANN

What—?

PETRA

Father—dismissed!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Dismissed!

PETER STOCKMANN

Dismissed from the staff of the Baths. I shall be obliged to propose that you shall immediately be given notice, and shall not be allowed any further participation in the Baths' affairs.

DR. STOCKMANN

You would dare to do that!

PETER STOCKMANN

It is you that are playing the daring game.

PETRA

Uncle, that is a shameful way to treat a man like father!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Do hold your tongue, Petra!

PETER STOCKMANN

[*LOOKING AT PETRA.*] Oh, so we volunteer our opinions already, do we? Of course. [*To MRS. STOCKMANN.*] Katherine, I imagine you are the most sensible person in this house. Use any influence you may have over your husband, and make him see what this will entail for his family as well as—

DR. STOCKMANN

My family is my own concern and nobody else's!

PETER STOCKMANN

—for his own family, as I was saying, as well as for the town he lives in.

DR. STOCKMANN

It is I who have the real good of the town at heart! I want to lay bare the defects that sooner or later must come to the light of day. I will show whether I love my native town.

PETER STOCKMANN

You, who in your blind obstinacy want to cut off the most important source of the town's welfare?

DR. STOCKMANN

The source is poisoned, man! Are you mad? We are making our living by retailing filth and corruption! The whole of our flourishing municipal life derives its sustenance from a lie!

PETER STOCKMANN

All imagination—or something even worse. The man who can throw out such offensive insinuations about his native town must be an enemy to our community.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*GOING UP TO HIM.*] Do you dare to—!

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*THROWING HERSELF BETWEEN THEM.*] Thomas!

PETRA

[*CATCHING HER FATHER BY THE ARM.*] Don't lose your temper, father!

PETER STOCKMANN

I will not expose myself to violence. Now you have had a warning; so reflect on what you owe to yourself and your family. Goodbye. [*GOES OUT.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[WALKING UP AND DOWN.] Am I to put up with such treatment as this? In my own house, Katherine! What do you think of that!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Indeed it is both shameful and absurd, Thomas—

PETRA

If only I could give uncle a piece of my mind—

DR. STOCKMANN

It is my own fault. I ought to have flown out at him long ago!—shown my teeth!—bitten! To hear him call me an enemy to our community! Me! I shall not take that lying down, upon my soul!

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, dear Thomas, your brother has power on his side.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, but I have right on mine, I tell you.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh yes, right—right. What is the use of having right on your side if you have not got might?

PETRA

Oh, mother!—how can you say such a thing!

DR. STOCKMANN

Do you imagine that in a free country it is no use having right on your side? You are absurd, Katherine. Besides, haven't I got the liberal-minded, independent press to lead the way, and the compact majority behind me? That is might enough, I should think!

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, good heavens, Thomas, you don't mean to?

DR. STOCKMANN

Don't mean to what?

MRS. STOCKMANN

To set yourself up in opposition to your brother.

DR. STOCKMANN

In God's name, what else do you suppose I should do but take my stand on right and truth?

PETRA

Yes, I was just going to say that.

MRS. STOCKMANN

But it won't do you any earthly good. If they won't do it, they won't.

DR. STOCKMANN

Oho, Katherine! Just give me time, and you will see how I will carry the war into their camp.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, you carry the war into their camp, and you get your dismissal—that is what you will do.

DR. STOCKMANN

In any case I shall have done my duty towards the public—towards the community, I, who am called its enemy!

MRS. STOCKMANN

But towards your family, Thomas? Towards your own home! Do you think that is doing your duty towards those you have to provide for?

PETRA

Ah, don't think always first of us, mother.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh, it is easy for you to talk; you are able to shift for yourself, if need be. But remember the boys, Thomas; and think a little of yourself too, and of me—

DR. STOCKMANN

I think you are out of your senses, Katherine! If I were to be such a miserable coward as to go on my knees to Peter and his damned crew, do you suppose I should ever know an hour's peace of mind all my life afterwards?

MRS. STOCKMANN

I don't know anything about that; but God preserve us from the peace of mind we shall have, all the same, if you go on defying him! You will find yourself again without the means of subsistence, with no income to count upon. I should think we had had enough of that in the old days. Remember that, Thomas; think what that means.

DR. STOCKMANN

[COLLECTING HIMSELF WITH A STRUGGLE AND CLENCHING HIS FISTS.] And this is what this slavery can bring upon a free, honourable man! Isn't it horrible, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, it is sinful to treat you so, it is perfectly true. But, good heavens, one has to put up with so much injustice in this world. There are the boys, Thomas! Look at

them! What is to become of them? Oh, no, no, you can never have the heart—

[EJLIF AND MORTEN HAVE COME IN, WHILE SHE WAS SPEAKING, WITH THEIR SCHOOL BOOKS IN THEIR HANDS.]

DR. STOCKMANN

The boys—I [RECOVERS HIMSELF SUDDENLY.] No, even if the whole world goes to pieces, I will never bow my neck to this yokel [GOES TOWARDS HIS ROOM.]

MRS. STOCKMANN

[FOLLOWING HIM.] Thomas—what are you going to do!

DR. STOCKMANN

[AT HIS DOOR.] I mean to have the right to look my sons in the face when they are grown men. [GOES INTO HIS ROOM.]

MRS. STOCKMANN

[BURSTING INTO TEARS.] God help us all!

PETRA

Father is splendid! He will not give in.

[THE BOYS LOOK ON IN AMAZEMENT; PETRA SIGNS TO THEM NOT TO SPEAK.]

ACT III

[THE EDITORIAL OFFICE OF THE "PEOPLE'S MESSENGER." THE ENTRANCE DOOR IS ON THE LEFT-HAND SIDE OF THE BACK WALL; ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE IS ANOTHER DOOR WITH GLASS PANELS THROUGH WHICH THE PRINTING ROOM CAN BE SEEN. ANOTHER DOOR IN THE RIGHT-HAND WALL. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM IS A LARGE TABLE COVERED WITH PAPERS, NEWSPAPERS AND BOOKS. IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE LEFT A WINDOW, BEFORE WHICH STANDS A DESK AND A HIGH STOOL. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF EASY CHAIRS BY THE TABLE, AND OTHER CHAIRS STANDING ALONG THE WALL. THE ROOM IS DINGY AND UNCOMFORTABLE; THE FURNITURE IS OLD, THE CHAIRS STAINED AND TORN. IN THE PRINTING ROOM THE COMPOSITORS ARE SEEN AT WORK, AND A PRINTER IS WORKING A HANDPRESS. HOVSTAD IS SITTING AT THE DESK, WRITING. BILLING COMES IN FROM THE RIGHT WITH DR. STOCKMANN'S MANUSCRIPT IN HIS HAND.]

BILLING

Well, I must say!

HOVSTAD

[STILL WRITING.] Have you read it through?

BILLING

[LAYING THE MS. ON THE DESK.] Yes, indeed I have.

HOVSTAD

Don't you think the Doctor hits them pretty hard?

BILLING

Hard? Bless my soul, he's crushing! Every word falls like—how shall I put it?—like the blow of a sledgehammer.

HOVSTAD

Yes, but they are not the people to throw up the sponge at the first blow.

BILLING

That is true; and for that reason we must strike blow upon blow until the whole of this aristocracy tumbles to pieces. As I sat in there reading this, I almost seemed to see a revolution in being.

HOVSTAD

[*TURNING ROUND.*] Hush!—Speak so that Aslaksen cannot hear you.

BILLING

[*LOWERING HIS VOICE.*] Aslaksen is a chicken-hearted chap, a coward; there is nothing of the man in him. But this time you will insist on your own way, won't you? You will put the Doctor's article in?

HOVSTAD

Yes, and if the Mayor doesn't like it—

BILLING

That will be the devil of a nuisance.

HOVSTAD

Well, fortunately we can turn the situation to good account, whatever happens. If the Mayor will not fall in with the Doctor's project, he will have all the small tradesmen down on him—the whole of the Householders' Association and the rest of them. And if he does fall in with it, he will fall out with the whole crowd of large shareholders in the Baths, who up to now have been his most valuable supporters—

BILLING

Yes, because they will certainly have to fork out a pretty penny—

HOVSTAD

Yes, you may be sure they will. And in this way the ring will be broken up, you see, and then in every issue of the paper we will enlighten the public on the Mayor's incapability on one point and another, and make it clear that all the positions of trust in the town, the whole control of municipal affairs, ought to be put in the hands of the Liberals.

BILLING

That is perfectly true! I see it coming—I see it coming; we are on the threshold of a revolution!

[A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE DOOR.]

HOVSTAD

Hush! [CALLS OUT.] Come in! [DR. STOCKMANN COMES IN BY THE STREET DOOR. HOVSTAD GOES TO MEET HIM.] Ah, it is you, Doctor! Well?

DR. STOCKMANN

You may set to work and print it, Mr. Hovstad!

HOVSTAD

Has it come to that, then?

BILLING

Hurrah!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, print away. Undoubtedly it has come to that. Now they must take what they get. There is going to be a fight in the town, Mr. Billing!

BILLING

War to the knife, I hope! We will get our knives to their throats, Doctor!

DR. STOCKMANN

This article is only a beginning. I have already got four or five more sketched out in my head. Where is Aslaksen?

BILLING

[CALLS INTO THE PRINTING-ROOM.] Aslaksen, just come here for a minute!

HOVSTAD

Four or five more articles, did you say? On the same subject?

DR. STOCKMANN

No—far from it, my dear fellow. No, they are about quite another matter. But they all spring from the question of the water supply and the drainage. One thing leads to another, you know. It is like beginning to pull down an old house, exactly.

BILLING

Upon my soul, it's true; you find you are not done till you have pulled all the old rubbish down.

ASLAKSEN

[COMING IN.] Pulled down? You are not thinking of pulling down the Baths surely, Doctor?

HOVSTAD

Far from it, don't be afraid.

DR. STOCKMANN

No, we meant something quite different. Well, what do you think of my article, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

I think it is simply a masterpiece.

DR. STOCKMANN

Do you really think so? Well, I am very pleased, very pleased.

HOVSTAD

It is so clear and intelligible. One need have no special knowledge to understand the bearing of it. You will have every enlightened man on your side.

ASLAKSEN

And every prudent man too, I hope?

BILLING

The prudent and the imprudent—almost the whole town.

ASLAKSEN

In that case we may venture to print it.

DR. STOCKMANN

I should think so!

HOVSTAD

We will put it in tomorrow morning.

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course—you must not lose a single day. What I wanted to ask you, Mr. Aslaksen, was if you would supervise the printing of it yourself.

ASLAKSEN

With pleasure.

DR. STOCKMANN

Take care of it as if it were a treasure! No misprints—every word is important. I will look in again a little later; perhaps you will be able to let me see a proof. I can't tell you how eager I am to see it in print, and see it burst upon the public—

BILLING

Burst upon them—yes, like a flash of lightning!

DR. STOCKMANN

—and to have it submitted to the judgment of my intelligent fellow townsmen. You cannot imagine what I have gone through today. I have been threatened first with one thing and then with another; they have tried to rob me of my most elementary rights as a man—

BILLING

What! Your rights as a man!

DR. STOCKMANN

—they have tried to degrade me, to make a coward of me, to force me to put personal interests before my most sacred convictions.

BILLING

That is too much—I'm damned if it isn't.

HOVSTAD

Oh, you mustn't be surprised at anything from that quarter.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, they will get the worst of it with me; they may assure themselves of that. I shall consider the "People's Messenger" my sheet-anchor now, and every single day I will bombard them with one article after another, like bombshells—

ASLAKSEN

Yes, but

BILLING

Hurrah!—it is war, it is war!

DR. STOCKMANN

I shall smite them to the ground—I shall crush them—I shall break down all their defenses, before the eyes of the honest public! That is what I shall do!

ASLAKSEN

Yes, but in moderation, Doctor—proceed with moderation.

BILLING

Not a bit of it, not a bit of it! Don't spare the dynamite!

DR. STOCKMANN

Because it is not merely a question of water-supply and drains now, you know. No—it is the whole of our social life that we have got to purify and disinfect—

BILLING

Spoken like a deliverer!

DR. STOCKMANN

All the incapables must be turned out, you understand—and that in every walk of life! Endless vistas have opened themselves to my mind's eye today. I cannot see it all quite clearly yet, but I shall in time. Young and vigorous standard-bearers—those are what we need and must seek, my friends; we must have new men in command at all our outposts.

BILLING

Hear hear!

DR. STOCKMANN

We only need to stand by one another, and it will all be perfectly easy. The revolution will be launched like a ship that runs smoothly off the stocks. Don't you think so?

HOVSTAD

For my part I think we have now a prospect of getting the municipal authority into the hands where it should lie.

ASLAKSEN

And if only we proceed with moderation, I cannot imagine that there will be any risk.

DR. STOCKMANN

Who the devil cares whether there is any risk or not! What I am doing, I am doing in the name of truth and for the sake of my conscience.

HOVSTAD

You are a man who deserves to be supported, Doctor.

ASLAKSEN

Yes, there is no denying that the Doctor is a true friend to the town—a real friend to the community, that he is.

BILLING

Take my word for it, Aslaksen, Dr. Stockmann is a friend of the people.

ASLAKSEN

I fancy the Householders' Association will make use of that expression before long.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*AFFECTED, GRASPS THEIR HANDS.*] Thank you, thank you, my dear staunch friends. It is very refreshing to me to hear you say that; my brother called me something quite different. By Jove, he shall have it back, with interest! But now I must be off to see a poor devil—I will come back, as I said. Keep a very careful eye on the manuscript, Aslaksen, and don't for worlds leave out any of my notes of

exclamation! Rather put one or two more in! Capital, capital! Well, good-bye for the present—goodbye, goodbye! [*THEY SHOW HIM TO THE DOOR, AND BOW HIM OUT.*]

HOVSTAD

He may prove an invaluable useful man to us.

ASLAKSEN

Yes, so long as he confines himself to this matter of the Baths. But if he goes farther afield, I don't think it would be advisable to follow him.

HOVSTAD

Hm!—that all depends—

BILLING

You are so infernally timid, Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN

Timid? Yes, when it is a question of the local authorities, I am timid, Mr. Billing; it is a lesson I have learned in the school of experience, let me tell you. But try me in higher politics, in matters that concern the government itself, and then see if I am timid.

BILLING

No, you aren't, I admit. But this is simply contradicting yourself.

ASLAKSEN

I am a man with a conscience, and that is the whole matter. If you attack the government, you don't do the community any harm, anyway; those fellows pay no attention to attacks, you see—they go on just as they are, in spite of them. But local authorities are different; they can be turned out, and then perhaps you may get an ignorant lot into office who may do irreparable harm to the householders and everybody else.

HOVSTAD

But what of the education of citizens by self government—don't you attach any importance to that?

ASLAKSEN

When a man has interests of his own to protect, he cannot think of everything, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

Then I hope I shall never have interests of my own to protect!

BILLING

Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN

[*WITH A SMILE.*] Hm! [*POINTS TO THE DESK.*] Mr. Sheriff Stensgaard was your predecessor at that editorial desk.

BILLING

[*SPITTING.*] Bah! That turncoat.

HOVSTAD

I am not a weathercock—and never will be.

ASLAKSEN

A politician should never be too certain of anything, Mr. Hovstad. And as for you, Mr. Billing, I should think it is time for you to be taking in a reef or two in your sails, seeing that you are applying for the post of secretary to the Bench.

BILLING

I—!

HOVSTAD

Are you, Billing?

BILLING

Well, yes—but you must clearly understand I am only doing it to annoy the bigwigs.

ASLAKSEN

Anyhow, it is no business of mine. But if I am to be accused of timidity and of inconsistency in my principles, this is what I want to point out: my political past is an open book. I have never changed, except perhaps to become a little more moderate, you see. My heart is still with the people; but I don't deny that my reason has a certain bias towards the authorities—the local ones, I mean. [*GOES INTO THE PRINTING ROOM.*]

BILLING

Oughtn't we to try and get rid of him, Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

Do you know anyone else who will advance the money for our paper and printing bill?

BILLING

It is an infernal nuisance that we don't possess some capital to trade on.

HOVSTAD

[*SITTING DOWN AT HIS DESK.*] Yes, if we only had that, then—

BILLING

Suppose you were to apply to Dr. Stockmann?

HOVSTAD

[TURNING OVER SOME PAPERS.] What is the use? He has got nothing.

BILLING

No, but he has got a warm man in the background, old Morten Kiil—"the Badger," as they call him.

HOVSTAD

[WRITING.] Are you so sure he has got anything?

BILLING

Good Lord, of course he has! And some of it must come to the Stockmanns. Most probably he will do something for the children, at all events.

HOVSTAD

[TURNING HALF ROUND.] Are you counting on that?

BILLING

Counting on it? Of course I am not counting on anything.

HOVSTAD

That is right. And I should not count on the secretaryship to the Bench either, if I were you; for I can assure you—you won't get it.

BILLING

Do you think I am not quite aware of that? My object is precisely not to get it. A slight of that kind stimulates a man's fighting power—it is like getting a supply of fresh bile—and I am sure one needs that badly enough in a hole-and-corner place like this, where it is so seldom anything happens to stir one up.

HOVSTAD

[WRITING.] Quite so, quite so.

BILLING

Ah, I shall be heard of yet!—Now I shall go and write the appeal to the Householders' Association. [GOES INTO THE ROOM ON THE RIGHT.]

HOVSTAD

[SITTING AT HIS DESK, BITING HIS PENHOLDER, SAYS SLOWLY.] Hm!—that's it, is it. [A KNOCK IS HEARD.] Come in! [PETRA COMES IN BY THE OUTER DOOR. HOVSTAD GETS UP.] What, you!—here?

PETRA

Yes, you must forgive me—

HOVSTAD

[PULLING A CHAIR FORWARD.] Won't you sit down?

PETRA

No, thank you; I must go again in a moment.

HOVSTAD

Have you come with a message from your father, by any chance?

PETRA

No, I have come on my own account. [*TAKES A BOOK OUT OF HER COAT POCKET.*] Here is the English story.

HOVSTAD

Why have you brought it back?

PETRA

Because I am not going to translate it.

HOVSTAD

But you promised me faithfully.

PETRA

Yes, but then I had not read it, I don't suppose you have read it either?

HOVSTAD

No, you know quite well I don't understand English; but—

PETRA

Quite so. That is why I wanted to tell you that you must find something else. [*LAYS THE BOOK ON THE TABLE.*] You can't use this for the "People's Messenger."

HOVSTAD

Why not?

PETRA

Because it conflicts with all your opinions.

HOVSTAD

Oh, for that matter—

PETRA

You don't understand me. The burden of this story is that there is a supernatural power that looks after the so-called good people in this world and makes everything happen for the best in their case—while all the so-called bad people are punished.

HOVSTAD

Well, but that is all right. That is just what our readers want.

PETRA

And are you going to be the one to give it to them? For myself, I do not believe a word of it. You know quite well that things do not happen so in reality.

HOVSTAD

You are perfectly right; but an editor cannot always act as he would prefer. He is often obliged to bow to the wishes of the public in unimportant matters. Politics are the most important thing in life—for a newspaper, anyway; and if I want to carry my public with me on the path that leads to liberty and progress, I must not frighten them away. If they find a moral tale of this sort in the serial at the bottom of the page, they will be all the more ready to read what is printed above it; they feel more secure, as it were.

PETRA

For shame! You would never go and set a snare like that for your readers; you are not a spider!

HOVSTAD

[*SMILING.*] Thank you for having such a good opinion of me. No; as a matter of fact that is Billing's idea and not mine.

PETRA

Billing's!

HOVSTAD

Yes; anyway, he propounded that theory here one day. And it is Billing who is so anxious to have that story in the paper; I don't know anything about the book.

PETRA

But how can Billing, with his emancipated views—

HOVSTAD

Oh, Billing is a many-sided man. He is applying for the post of secretary to the Bench, too, I hear.

PETRA

I don't believe it, Mr. Hovstad. How could he possibly bring himself to do such a thing?

HOVSTAD

Ah, you must ask him that.

PETRA

I should never have thought it of him.

HOVSTAD

[*LOOKING MORE CLOSELY AT HER.*] No? Does it really surprise you so much?

PETRA

Yes. Or perhaps not altogether. Really, I don't quite know

HOVSTAD

We journalists are not much worth, Miss Stockmann.

PETRA

Do you really mean that?

HOVSTAD

I think so sometimes.

PETRA

Yes, in the ordinary affairs of everyday life, perhaps; I can understand that. But now, when you have taken a weighty matter in hand—

HOVSTAD

This matter of your father's, you mean?

PETRA

Exactly. It seems to me that now you must feel you are a man worth more than most.

HOVSTAD

Yes, today I do feel something of that sort.

PETRA

Of course you do, don't you? It is a splendid vocation you have chosen—to smooth the way for the march of unappreciated truths, and new and courageous lines of thought. If it were nothing more than because you stand fearlessly in the open and take up the cause of an injured man—

HOVSTAD

Especially when that injured man is—ahem!—I don't rightly know how to—

PETRA

When that man is so upright and so honest, you mean?

HOVSTAD

[*MORE GENTLY.*] Especially when he is your father I meant.

PETRA

[*SUDDENLY CHECKED.*] That?

HOVSTAD

Yes, Petra—Miss Petra.

PETRA

Is it that, that is first and foremost with you? Not the matter itself? Not the truth?—not my father's big generous heart?

HOVSTAD

Certainly—of course—that too.

PETRA

No, thank you; you have betrayed yourself, Mr. Hovstad, and now I shall never trust you again in anything.

HOVSTAD

Can you really take it so amiss in me that it is mostly for your sake—?

PETRA

What I am angry with you for, is for not having been honest with my father. You talked to him as if the truth and the good of the community were what lay nearest to your heart. You have made fools of both my father and me. You are not the man you made yourself out to be. And that I shall never forgive you—never!

HOVSTAD

You ought not to speak so bitterly, Miss Petra—least of all now.

PETRA

Why not now, especially?

HOVSTAD

Because your father cannot do without my help.

PETRA

[LOOKING HIM UP AND DOWN.] Are you that sort of man too? For shame!

HOVSTAD

No, no, I am not. This came upon me so unexpectedly—you must believe that.

PETRA

I know what to believe. Goodbye.

ASLAKSEN

[COMING FROM THE PRINTING ROOM, HURRIEDLY AND WITH AN AIR OF MYSTERY.] Damnation, Hovstad!—

[SEES PETRA.] Oh, this is awkward—

PETRA

There is the book; you must give it to some one else. [GOES TOWARDS THE DOOR.]

HOVSTAD

[FOLLOWING HER.] But, Miss Stockmann—

PETRA

Goodbye. [*GOES OUT.*]

ASLAKSEN

I say—Mr. Hovstad—

HOVSTAD

Well well!—what is it?

ASLAKSEN

The Mayor is outside in the printing room.

HOVSTAD

The Mayor, did you say?

ASLAKSEN

Yes he wants to speak to you. He came in by the back door—didn't want to be seen, you understand.

HOVSTAD

What can he want? Wait a bit—I will go myself. [*GOES TO THE DOOR OF THE PRINTING ROOM, OPENS IT, BOWS AND INVITES PETER STOCKMANN IN.*] Just see, Aslaksen, that no one—

ASLAKSEN

Quite so. [*GOES INTO THE PRINTING-ROOM.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

You did not expect to see me here, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

No, I confess I did not.

PETER STOCKMANN

[*LOOKING ROUND.*] You are very snug in here—very nice indeed.

HOVSTAD

Oh—

PETER STOCKMANN

And here I come, without any notice, to take up your time!

HOVSTAD

By all means, Mr. Mayor. I am at your service. But let me relieve you of your—
[*TAKES STOCKMANN'S HAT AND STICK AND PUTS THEM ON A CHAIR.*] Won't you sit down?

PETER STOCKMANN

[*SITTING DOWN BY THE TABLE.*] Thank you. [*HOVSTAD SITS DOWN.*] I have had an extremely annoying experience to-day, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

Really? Ah well, I expect with all the various business you have to attend to—

PETER STOCKMANN

The Medical Officer of the Baths is responsible for what happened today.

HOVSTAD

Indeed? The Doctor?

PETER STOCKMANN

He has addressed a kind of report to the Baths Committee on the subject of certain supposed defects in the Baths.

HOVSTAD

Has he indeed?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes—has he not told you? I thought he said—

HOVSTAD

Ah, yes—it is true he did mention something about—

ASLAKSEN

[*COMING FROM THE PRINTING-ROOM.*] I ought to have that copy.

HOVSTAD

[*ANGRILY.*] Ahem!—there it is on the desk.

ASLAKSEN

[*TAKING IT.*] Right.

PETER STOCKMANN

But look there—that is the thing I was speaking of!

ASLAKSEN

Yes, that is the Doctor's article, Mr. Mayor.

HOVSTAD

Oh, is THAT what you were speaking about?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, that is it. What do you think of it?

HOVSTAD

Oh, I am only a layman—and I have only taken a very cursory glance at it.

PETER STOCKMANN

But you are going to print it?

HOVSTAD

I cannot very well refuse a distinguished man.

ASLAKSEN

I have nothing to do with editing the paper, Mr. Mayor—

PETER STOCKMANN

I understand.

ASLAKSEN

I merely print what is put into my hands.

PETER STOCKMANN

Quite so.

ASLAKSEN

And so I must—*[MOVES OFF TOWARDS THE PRINTING-ROOM.]*

PETER STOCKMANN

No, but wait a moment, Mr. Aslaksen. You will allow me, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

If you please, Mr. Mayor.

PETER STOCKMANN

You are a discreet and thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

I am delighted to hear you think so, sir.

PETER STOCKMANN

And a man of very considerable influence.

ASLAKSEN

Chiefly among the small tradesmen, sir.

PETER STOCKMANN

The small tax-payers are the majority—here as everywhere else.

ASLAKSEN

That is true.

PETER STOCKMANN

And I have no doubt you know the general trend of opinion among them, don't you?

ASLAKSEN

Yes I think I may say I do, Mr. Mayor.

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes. Well, since there is such a praiseworthy spirit of self-sacrifice among the less wealthy citizens of our town—

ASLAKSEN

What?

HOVSTAD

Self-sacrifice?

PETER STOCKMANN

It is pleasing evidence of a public-spirited feeling, extremely pleasing evidence. I might almost say I hardly expected it. But you have a closer knowledge of public opinion than I.

ASLAKSEN

But, Mr. Mayor—

PETER STOCKMANN

And indeed it is no small sacrifice that the town is going to make.

HOVSTAD

The town?

ASLAKSEN

But I don't understand. Is it the Baths—?

PETER STOCKMANN

At a provisional estimate, the alterations that the Medical Officer asserts to be desirable will cost somewhere about twenty thousand pounds.

ASLAKSEN

That is a lot of money, but—

PETER STOCKMANN

Of course it will be necessary to raise a municipal loan.

HOVSTAD

[GETTING UP.] Surely you never mean that the town must pay—?

ASLAKSEN

Do you mean that it must come out of the municipal funds?—out of the ill-filled pockets of the small tradesmen?

PETER STOCKMANN

Well, my dear Mr. Aslaksen, where else is the money to come from?

ASLAKSEN

The gentlemen who own the Baths ought to provide that.

PETER STOCKMANN

The proprietors of the Baths are not in a position to incur any further expense.

ASLAKSEN

Is that absolutely certain, Mr. Mayor?

PETER STOCKMANN

I have satisfied myself that it is so. If the town wants these very extensive alterations, it will have to pay for them.

ASLAKSEN

But, damn it all—I beg your pardon—this is quite another matter, Mr. Hovstad!

HOVSTAD

It is, indeed.

PETER STOCKMANN

The most fatal part of it is that we shall be obliged to shut the Baths for a couple of years.

HOVSTAD

Shut them? Shut them altogether?

ASLAKSEN

For two years?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, the work will take as long as that—at least.

ASLAKSEN

I'm damned if we will stand that, Mr. Mayor! What are we householders to live upon in the meantime?

PETER STOCKMANN

Unfortunately, that is an extremely difficult question to answer, Mr. Aslaksen. But what would you have us do? Do you suppose we shall have a single visitor in the town, if we go about proclaiming that our water is polluted, that we are living over a plague spot, that the entire town—

ASLAKSEN

And the whole thing is merely imagination?

PETER STOCKMANN

With the best will in the world, I have not been able to come to any other conclusion.

ASLAKSEN

Well then I must say it is absolutely unjustifiable of Dr. Stockmann—I beg your pardon, Mr. Mayor.

PETER STOCKMANN

What you say is lamentably true, Mr. Aslaksen. My brother has unfortunately always been a headstrong man.

ASLAKSEN

After this, do you mean to give him your support, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

Can you suppose for a moment that I—?

PETER STOCKMANN

I have drawn up a short resume of the situation as it appears from a reasonable man's point of view. In it I have indicated how certain possible defects might suitably be remedied without outrunning the resources of the Baths Committee.

HOVSTAD

Have you got it with you, Mr. Mayor?

PETER STOCKMANN

[*FUMBLING IN HIS POCKET.*] Yes, I brought it with me in case you should—

ASLAKSEN

Good Lord, there he is!

PETER STOCKMANN

Who? My brother?

HOVSTAD

Where? Where?

ASLAKSEN

He has just gone through the printing room.

PETER STOCKMANN

How unlucky! I don't want to meet him here, and I had still several things to speak to you about.

HOVSTAD

[*POINTING TO THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT.*] Go in there for the present.

PETER STOCKMANN

But—?

HOVSTAD

You will only find Billing in there.

ASLAKSEN

Quick, quick, Mr. Mayor—he is just coming.

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, very well; but see that you get rid of him quickly. *[GOES OUT THROUGH THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT, WHICH ASLAKSEN OPENS FOR HIM AND SHUTS AFTER HIM.]*

HOVSTAD

Pretend to be doing something, Aslaksen. *[SITS DOWN AND WRITES. ASLAKSEN BEGINS FORAGING AMONG A HEAP OF NEWSPAPERS THAT ARE LYING ON A CHAIR.]*

DR. STOCKMANN

[COMING IN FROM THE PRINTING ROOM.] Here I am again. *[PUTS DOWN HIS HAT AND STICK.]*

HOVSTAD

[WRITING.] Already, Doctor? Hurry up with what we were speaking about, Aslaksen. We are very pressed for time today.

DR. STOCKMANN

[TO ASLAKSEN.] No proof for me to see yet, I hear.

ASLAKSEN

[WITHOUT TURNING ROUND.] You couldn't expect it yet, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

No, no; but I am impatient, as you can understand. I shall not know a moment's peace of mind until I see it in print.

HOVSTAD

Hm!—It will take a good while yet, won't it, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, I am almost afraid it will.

DR. STOCKMANN

All right, my dear friends; I will come back. I do not mind coming back twice if necessary. A matter of such great importance—the welfare of the town at stake—it is no time to shirk trouble, *[IS JUST GOING, BUT STOPS AND COMES BACK.]* Look here—there is one thing more I want to speak to you about.

HOVSTAD

Excuse me, but could it not wait till some other time?

DR. STOCKMANN

I can tell you in half a dozen words. It is only this. When my article is read tomorrow and it is realised that I have been quietly working the whole winter for the welfare of the town—

HOVSTAD

Yes but, Doctor—

DR. STOCKMANN

I know what you are going to say. You don't see how on earth it was any more than my duty—my obvious duty as a citizen. Of course it wasn't; I know that as well as you. But my fellow citizens, you know—! Good Lord, think of all the good souls who think so highly of me—!

ASLAKSEN

Yes, our townsfolk have had a very high opinion of you so far, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and that is just why I am afraid they—Well, this is the point; when this reaches them, especially the poorer classes, and sounds in their ears like a summons to take the town's affairs into their own hands for the future...

HOVSTAD

[GETTING UP.] Ahem I Doctor, I won't conceal from you the fact—

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah I—I knew there was something in the wind! But I won't hear a word of it. If anything of that sort is being set on foot—

HOVSTAD

Of what sort?

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, whatever it is—whether it is a demonstration in my honour, or a banquet, or a subscription list for some presentation to me—whatever it is, you most promise me solemnly and faithfully to put a stop to it. You too, Mr. Aslaksen; do you understand?

HOVSTAD

You must forgive me, Doctor, but sooner or later we must tell you the plain truth

[HE IS INTERRUPTED BY THE ENTRANCE OF MRS. STOCKMANN,
WHO COMES IN FROM THE STREET DOOR.]

MRS. STOCKMANN

[SEEING HER HUSBAND.] Just as I thought!

HOVSTAD

[GOING TOWARDS HER.] You too, Mrs. Stockmann?

DR. STOCKMANN

What on earth do you want here, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN

I should think you know very well what I want.

HOVSTAD

Won't you sit down? Or perhaps—

MRS. STOCKMANN

No, thank you; don't trouble. And you must not be offended at my coming to fetch my husband; I am the mother of three children, you know.

DR. STOCKMANN

Nonsense!—we know all about that.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Well, one would not give you credit for much thought for your wife and children today; if you had had that, you would not have gone and dragged us all into misfortune.

DR. STOCKMANN

Are you out of your senses, Katherine! Because a man has a wife and children, is he not to be allowed to proclaim the truth—is he not to be allowed to be an actively useful citizen—is he not to be allowed to do a service to his native town!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, Thomas—in reason.

ASLAKSEN

Just what I say. Moderation in everything.

MRS. STOCKMANN

And that is why you wrong us, Mr. Hovstad, in enticing my husband away from his home and making a dupe of him in all this.

HOVSTAD

I certainly am making a dupe of no one—

DR. STOCKMANN

Making a dupe of me! Do you suppose I should allow myself to be duped!

MRS. STOCKMANN

It is just what you do. I know quite well you have more brains than anyone in the town, but you are extremely easily duped, Thomas. *[To HOVSTAD.]* Please do realise that he loses his post at the Baths if you print what he has written.

ASLAKSEN

What!

HOVSTAD

Look here, Doctor!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LAUGHING.*] Ha-ha!—just let them try! No, no—they will take good care not to. I have got the compact majority behind me, let me tell you!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, that is just the worst of it—your having any such horrid thing behind you.

DR. STOCKMANN

Rubbish, Katherine!—Go home and look after your house and leave me to look after the community. How can you be so afraid, when I am so confident and happy? [*WALKS UP AND DOWN, RUBBING HIS HANDS.*] Truth and the People will win the fight, you may be certain! I see the whole of the broad-minded middle class marching like a victorious army—! [*STOPS BESIDE A CHAIR.*] What the deuce is that lying there?

ASLAKSEN

Good Lord!

HOVSTAD

Ahem!

DR. STOCKMANN

Here we have the topmost pinnacle of authority! [*TAKES THE MAYOR'S OFFICIAL HAT CAREFULLY BETWEEN HIS FINGER-TIPS AND HOLDS IT UP IN THE AIR.*]

MRS. STOCKMANN

The Mayor's hat!

DR. STOCKMANN

And here is the staff of office too. How in the name of all that's wonderful—?

HOVSTAD

Well, you see—

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, I understand. He has been here trying to talk you over. Ha-ha!—he made rather a mistake there! And as soon as he caught sight of me in the printing room. [*BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.*] Did he run away, Mr. Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN

[*HURRIEDLY.*] Yes, he ran away, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

Ran away without his stick or his—Fiddlesticks! Peter doesn't run away and leave his belongings behind him. But what the deuce have you done with him? Ah!—in there, of course. Now you shall see, Katherine!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Thomas—please don't—!

ASLAKSEN

Don't be rash, Doctor.

[DR. STOCKMANN HAS PUT ON THE MAYOR'S HAT AND TAKEN HIS STICK IN HIS HAND. HE GOES UP TO THE DOOR, OPENS IT, AND STANDS WITH HIS HAND TO HIS HAT AT THE SALUTE. PETER STOCKMANN COMES IN, RED WITH ANGER. BILLING FOLLOWS HIM.]

PETER STOCKMANN

What does this tomfoolery mean?

DR. STOCKMANN

Be respectful, my good Peter. I am the chief authority in the town now. [WALKS UP AND DOWN.]

MRS. STOCKMANN

[ALMOST IN TEARS.] Really, Thomas!

PETER STOCKMANN

[FOLLOWING HIM ABOUT.] Give me my hat and stick.

DR. STOCKMANN

[IN THE SAME TONE AS BEFORE.] If you are chief constable, let me tell you that I am the Mayor—I am the master of the whole town, please understand!

PETER STOCKMANN

Take off my hat, I tell you. Remember it is part of an official uniform.

DR. STOCKMANN

Pooh! Do you think the newly awakened lionhearted people are going to be frightened by an official hat? There is going to be a revolution in the town tomorrow, let me tell you. You thought you could turn me out; but now I shall turn you out—turn you out of all your various offices. Do you think I cannot? Listen to me. I have triumphant social forces behind me. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the "People's Messenger," and Aslaksen will take the field at the head of the whole Householders' Association—

ASLAKSEN

That I won't, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course you will—

PETER STOCKMANN

Ah!—may I ask then if Mr. Hovstad intends to join this agitation?

HOVSTAD

No, Mr. Mayor.

ASLAKSEN

No, Mr. Hovstad is not such a fool as to go and ruin his paper and himself for the sake of an imaginary grievance.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LOOKING ROUND HIM.*] What does this mean?

HOVSTAD

You have represented your case in a false light, Doctor, and therefore I am unable to give you my support.

BILLING

And after what the Mayor was so kind as to tell me just now, I—

DR. STOCKMANN

A false light! Leave that part of it to me. Only print my article; I am quite capable of defending it.

HOVSTAD

I am not going to print it. I cannot and will not and dare not print it.

DR. STOCKMANN

You dare not? What nonsense!—you are the editor; and an editor controls his paper, I suppose!

ASLAKSEN

No, it is the subscribers, Doctor.

PETER STOCKMANN

Fortunately, yes.

ASLAKSEN

It is public opinion—the enlightened public—householders and people of that kind; they control the newspapers.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*COMPOSEDLY.*] And I have all these influences against me?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, you have. It would mean the absolute ruin of the community if your article were to appear.

DR. STOCKMANN

Indeed.

PETER STOCKMANN

My hat and stick, if you please. [*DR. STOCKMANN TAKES OFF THE HAT AND LAYS IT ON THE TABLE WITH THE STICK. PETER STOCKMANN TAKES THEM UP.*] Your authority as mayor has come to an untimely end.

DR. STOCKMANN

We have not got to the end yet. [*TO HOVSTAD.*] Then it is quite impossible for you to print my article in the "People's Messenger"?

HOVSTAD

Quite impossible—out of regard for your family as well.

MRS. STOCKMANN

You need not concern yourself about his family, thank you, Mr. Hovstad.

PETER STOCKMANN

[*TAKING A PAPER FROM HIS POCKET.*] It will be sufficient, for the guidance of the public, if this appears. It is an official statement. May I trouble you?

HOVSTAD

[*TAKING THE PAPER.*] Certainly; I will see that it is printed.

DR. STOCKMANN

But not mine. Do you imagine that you can silence me and stifle the truth! You will not find it so easy as you suppose. Mr. Aslaksen, kindly take my manuscript at once and print it as a pamphlet—at my expense. I will have four hundred copies—no, five or six hundred.

ASLAKSEN

If you offered me its weight in gold, I could not lend my press for any such purpose, Doctor. It would be flying in the face of public opinion. You will not get it printed anywhere in the town.

DR. STOCKMANN

Then give it me back.

HOVSTAD

[*GIVING HIM THE MS..*] Here it is.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*TAKING HIS HAT AND STICK.*] It shall be made public all the same. I will read it out at a mass meeting of the townspeople. All my fellow-citizens shall hear the voice of truth!

PETER STOCKMANN

You will not find any public body in the town that will give you the use of their hall for such a purpose.

ASLAKSEN

Not a single one, I am certain.

BILLING

No, I'm damned if you will find one.

MRS. STOCKMANN

But this is too shameful! Why should every one turn against you like that?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*ANGRILY.*] I will tell you why. It is because all the men in this town are old women—like you; they all think of nothing but their families, and never of the community.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*PUTTING HER ARM INTO HIS.*] Then I will show them that an old woman can be a man for once. I am going to stand by you, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

Bravely said, Katherine! It shall be made public—as I am a living soul! If I can't hire a hall, I shall hire a drum, and parade the town with it and read it at every street-corner.

PETER STOCKMANN

You are surely not such an errant fool as that!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, I am.

ASLAKSEN

You won't find a single man in the whole town to go with you.

BILLING

No, I'm damned if you will.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Don't give in, Thomas. I will tell the boys to go with you.

DR. STOCKMANN

That is a splendid idea!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Morten will be delighted; and Ejlif will do whatever he does.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and Petra!—and you too, Katherine!

MRS. STOCKMANN

No, I won't do that; but I will stand at the window and watch you, that's what I will do.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*PUTS HIS ARMS ROUND HER AND KISSES HER.*] Thank you, my dear! Now you and I are going to try a fall, my fine gentlemen! I am going to see whether a pack of cowards can succeed in gagging a patriot who wants to purify society! [*HE AND HIS WIFE GO OUT BY THE STREET DOOR.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

[*SHAKING HIS HEAD SERIOUSLY.*] Now he has sent her out of her senses, too.

ACT IV

[*A BIG OLD-FASHIONED ROOM IN CAPTAIN HORSTER'S HOUSE. AT THE BACK FOLDING-DOORS, WHICH ARE STANDING OPEN, LEAD TO AN ANTE-ROOM. THREE WINDOWS IN THE LEFT-HAND WALL. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OPPOSITE WALL A PLATFORM HAS BEEN ERECTED. ON THIS IS A SMALL TABLE WITH TWO CANDLES, A WATER-BOTTLE AND GLASS, AND A BELL. THE ROOM IS LIT BY LAMPS PLACED BETWEEN THE WINDOWS. IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE LEFT THERE IS A TABLE WITH CANDLES AND A CHAIR. TO THE RIGHT IS A DOOR AND SOME CHAIRS STANDING NEAR IT. THE ROOM IS NEARLY FILLED WITH A CROWD OF TOWNSPEOPLE OF ALL SORTS, A FEW WOMEN AND SCHOOLBOYS BEING AMONGST THEM. PEOPLE ARE STILL STREAMING IN FROM THE BACK, AND THE ROOM IS SOON FILLED.*]

1ST CITIZEN

[*MEETING ANOTHER.*] Hullo, Lamstad! You here too?

2ND CITIZEN

I go to every public meeting, I do.

3RD CITIZEN

Brought your whistle too, I expect!

2ND CITIZEN

I should think so. Haven't you?

3RD CITIZEN

Rather! And old Evensen said he was going to bring a cow-horn, he did.

2ND CITIZEN

Good old Evensen! [*LAUGHTER AMONG THE CROWD.*]

4TH CITIZEN

[*COMING UP TO THEM.*] I say, tell me what is going on here tonight?

2ND CITIZEN

Dr. Stockmann is going to deliver an address attacking the Mayor.

4TH CITIZEN

But the Mayor is his brother.

1ST CITIZEN

That doesn't matter; Dr. Stockmann's not the chap to be afraid.

PETER STOCKMANN

For various reasons, which you will easily understand, I must beg to be excused. But fortunately we have amongst us a man who I think will be acceptable to you all. I refer to the President of the Householders' Association, Mr. Aslaksen.

SEVERAL VOICES

Yes—Aslaksen! Bravo Aslaksen!

*[DR. STOCKMANN TAKES UP HIS MS. AND WALKS UP AND DOWN
THE PLATFORM.]*

ASLAKSEN

Since my fellow-citizens choose to entrust me with this duty, I cannot refuse.

[LOUD APPLAUSE. ASLAKSEN MOUNTS THE PLATFORM.]

BILLING

[WRITING.] "Mr. Aslaksen was elected with enthusiasm."

ASLAKSEN

And now, as I am in this position, I should like to say a few brief words. I am a quiet and peaceable man, who believes in discreet moderation, and—and—in moderate discretion. All my friends can bear witness to that.

SEVERAL VOICES

That's right! That's right, Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN

I have learned in the school of life and experience that moderation is the most valuable virtue a citizen can possess—

PETER STOCKMANN

Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN

—And moreover, that discretion and moderation are what enable a man to be of most service to the community. I would therefore suggest to our esteemed fellow-citizen, who has called this meeting, that he should strive to keep strictly within the bounds of moderation.

A MAN BY THE DOOR

Three cheers for the Moderation Society!

A VOICE

Shame!

SEVERAL VOICES

Sh!-Sh!

ASLAKSEN

No interruptions, gentlemen, please! Does anyone wish to make any remarks?

PETER STOCKMANN

Mr. Chairman.

ASLAKSEN

The Mayor will address the meeting.

PETER STOCKMANN

In consideration of the close relationship in which, as you all know, I stand to the present Medical Officer of the Baths, I should have preferred not to speak this evening. But my official position with regard to the Baths and my solicitude for the vital interests of the town compel me to bring forward a motion. I venture to presume that there is not a single one of our citizens present who considers it desirable that unreliable and exaggerated accounts of the sanitary condition of the Baths and the town should be spread abroad.

SEVERAL VOICES

No, no! Certainly not! We protest against it!

PETER STOCKMANN

Therefore, I should like to propose that the meeting should not permit the Medical Officer either to read or to comment on his proposed lecture.

DR. STOCKMANN

[IMPATIENTLY.] Not permit—! What the devil—!

MRS. STOCKMANN

[COUGHING.] Ahem!-ahem!

DR. STOCKMANN

[COLLECTING HIMSELF.] Very well, Go ahead!

PETER STOCKMANN

In my communication to the "People's Messenger," I have put the essential facts before the public in such a way that every fair-minded citizen can easily form his own opinion. From it you will see that the main result of the Medical Officer's proposals—apart from their constituting a vote of censure on the leading men of

the town—would be to saddle the ratepayers with an unnecessary expenditure of at least some thousands of pounds.

[SOUNDS OF DISAPPROVAL AMONG THE AUDIENCE, AND SOME CAT-CALLS.]

ASLAKSEN

[RINGING HIS BELL.] Silence, please, gentlemen! I beg to support the Mayor's motion. I quite agree with him that there is something behind this agitation started by the Doctor. He talks about the Baths; but it is a revolution he is aiming at—he wants to get the administration of the town put into new hands. No one doubts the honesty of the Doctor's intentions—no one will suggest that there can be any two opinions as to that, I myself am a believer in self-government for the people, provided it does not fall too heavily on the ratepayers. But that would be the case here; and that is why I will see Dr. Stockmann damned—I beg your pardon—before I go with him in the matter. You can pay too dearly for a thing sometimes; that is my opinion.

[LOUD APPLAUSE ON ALL SIDES.]

HOVSTAD

I, too, feel called upon to explain my position. Dr. Stockmann's agitation appeared to be gaining a certain amount of sympathy at first, so I supported it as impartially as I could. But presently we had reason to suspect that we had allowed ourselves to be misled by misrepresentation of the state of affairs—

DR. STOCKMANN

Misrepresentation—!

HOVSTAD

Well, let us say a not entirely trustworthy representation. The Mayor's statement has proved that. I hope no one here has any doubt as to my liberal principles; the attitude of the "People's Messenger" towards important political questions is well known to everyone. But the advice of experienced and thoughtful men has convinced me that in purely local matters a newspaper ought to proceed with a certain caution.

ASLAKSEN

I entirely agree with the speaker.

HOVSTAD

And, in the matter before us, it is now an undoubted fact that Dr. Stockmann has public opinion against him. Now, what is an editor's first and most obvious duty, gentlemen? Is it not to work in harmony with his readers? Has he not received a sort of tacit mandate to work persistently and assiduously for the welfare of those whose opinions he represents? Or is it possible I am mistaken in that?

VOICES FROM THE CROWD

No, no! You are quite right!

HOVSTAD

It has cost me a severe struggle to break with a man in whose house I have been lately a frequent guest—a man who till today has been able to pride himself on the undivided goodwill of his fellow-citizens—a man whose only, or at all events whose essential, failing is that he is swayed by his heart rather than his head.

A FEW SCATTERED VOICES

That is true! Bravo, Stockmann!

HOVSTAD

But my duty to the community obliged me to break with him. And there is another consideration that impels me to oppose him, and, as far as possible, to arrest him on the perilous course he has adopted; that is, consideration for his family—

DR. STOCKMANN

Please stick to the water-supply and drainage!

HOVSTAD

—consideration, I repeat, for his wife and his children for whom he has made no provision.

MORTEN

Is that us, mother?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Hush!

ASLAKSEN

I will now put the Mayor's proposition to the vote.

DR. STOCKMANN

There is no necessity! Tonight I have no intention of dealing with all that filth down at the Baths. No; I have something quite different to say to you.

PETER STOCKMANN

[*ASIDE.*] What is coming now?

A DRUNKEN MAN

[*BY THE ENTRANCE DOOR.*] I am a ratepayer! And therefore, I have a right to speak too! And my entire—firm—inconceivable opinion is—

A NUMBER OF VOICES

Be quiet, at the back there!

OTHERS

He is drunk! Turn him out! [*THEY TURN HIM OUT.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

Am I allowed to speak?

ASLAKSEN

[*RINGING HIS BELL.*] Dr. Stockmann will address the meeting.

DR. STOCKMANN

I should like to have seen anyone, a few days ago, dare to attempt to silence me as has been done tonight! I would have defended my sacred rights as a man, like a lion! But now it is all one to me; I have something of even weightier importance to say to you. [*THE CROWD PRESSES NEARER TO HIM, MORTEN KIL CONSPICUOUS AMONG THEM.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[*CONTINUING.*] I have thought and pondered a great deal, these last few days—pondered over such a variety of things that in the end my head seemed too full to hold them—

PETER STOCKMANN

[*WITH A COUGH.*] Ahem!

DR. STOCKMANN

—but I got them clear in my mind at last, and then I saw the whole situation lucidly. And that is why I am standing here to-night. I have a great revelation to make to you, my fellow-citizens! I will impart to you a discovery of a far wider scope than the trifling matter that our water supply is poisoned and our medicinal Baths are standing on pestiferous soil.

A NUMBER OF VOICES

[*SHOUTING.*] Don't talk about the Baths! We won't hear you! None of that!

DR. STOCKMANN

I have already told you that what I want to speak about is the great discovery I have made lately—the discovery that all the sources of our moral life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civic community is founded on the pestiferous soil of falsehood.

VOICES OF DISCONCERTED CITIZENS

What is that he says?

PETER STOCKMANN

Such an insinuation—!

ASLAKSEN

[*WITH HIS HAND ON HIS BELL.*] I call upon the speaker to moderate his language.

DR. STOCKMANN

I have always loved my native town as a man only can love the home of his youthful days. I was not old when I went away from here; and exile, longing and memories cast as it were an additional halo over both the town and its inhabitants.

[*SOME CLAPPING AND APPLAUSE.*] And there I stayed, for many years, in a horrible hole far away up north. When I came into contact with some of the people that lived scattered about among the rocks, I often thought it would of been more service to the poor half-starved creatures if a veterinary doctor had been sent up there, instead of a man like me. [*MURMURS AMONG THE CROWD.*]

BILLING

[*LAYING DOWN HIS PEN.*] I'm damned if I have ever heard—!

HOVSTAD

It is an insult to a respectable population!

DR. STOCKMANN

Wait a bit! I do not think anyone will charge me with having forgotten my native town up there. I was like one of the eider-ducks brooding on its nest, and what I hatched was the plans for these Baths. [*APPLAUSE AND PROTESTS.*] And then when fate at last decreed for me the great happiness of coming home again—I assure you, gentlemen, I thought I had nothing more in the world to wish for. Or rather, there was one thing I wished for—eagerly, untiringly, ardently—and that was to be able to be of service to my native town and the good of the community.

PETER STOCKMANN

[*LOOKING AT THE CEILING.*] You chose a strange way of doing it—ahem!

DR. STOCKMANN

And so, with my eyes blinded to the real facts, I revelled in happiness. But yesterday morning—no, to be precise, it was yesterday afternoon—the eyes of my mind were opened wide, and the first thing I realised was the colossal stupidity of the authorities—[*UPROAR, SHOUTS AND LAUGHTER, MRS. STOCKMANN COUGHS PERSISTENTLY.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Mr. Chairman!

ASLAKSEN

[*RINGING HIS BELL.*] By virtue of my authority—!

DR. STOCKMANN

It is a petty thing to catch me up on a word, Mr. Aslaksen. What I mean is only that I got scent of the unbelievable piggishness our leading men had been responsible for down at the Baths. I can't stand leading men at any price!—I have had enough of such people in my time. They are like billy-goats on a young

plantation; they do mischief everywhere. They stand in a free man's way, whichever way he turns, and what I should like best would be to see them exterminated like any other vermin—[*UPROAR.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Mr. Chairman, can we allow such expressions to pass?

ASLAKSEN

[*WITH HIS HAND ON HIS BELL.*] Doctor—!

DR. STOCKMANN

I cannot understand how it is that I have only now acquired a clear conception of what these gentry are, when I had almost daily before my eyes in this town such an excellent specimen of them—my brother Peter—slow-witted and hide-bound in prejudice—[*LAUGHTER, UPROAR AND HISSES. MRS. STOCKMANN SITS COUGHING ASSIDUOUSLY. ASLAKSEN RINGS HIS BELL VIOLENTLY.*]

THE DRUNKEN MAN

[*WHO HAS GOT IN AGAIN.*] Is it me he is talking about? My name's Petersen, all right—but devil take me if I—

ANGRY VOICES

Turn out that drunken man! Turn him out. [*HE IS TURNED OUT AGAIN.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Who was that person?

1ST CITIZEN

I don't know who he is, Mr. Mayor.

2ND CITIZEN

He doesn't belong here.

3RD CITIZEN

I expect he is a navvy from over at—[*THE REST IS INAUDIBLE.*]

ASLAKSEN

He had obviously had too much beer. Proceed, Doctor; but please strive to be moderate in your language.

DR. STOCKMANN

Very well, gentlemen, I will say no more about our leading men. And if anyone imagines, from what I have just said, that my object is to attack these people this evening, he is wrong—absolutely wide of the mark. For I cherish the comforting conviction that these parasites—all these venerable relics of a dying school of thought—are most admirably paving the way for their own extinction; they need

no doctor's help to hasten their end. Nor is it folk of that kind who constitute the most pressing danger to the community. It is not they who are most instrumental in poisoning the sources of our moral life and infecting the ground on which we stand. It is not they who are the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom amongst us.

SHOUTS FROM ALL SIDES

Who then? Who is it? Name! Name!

DR. STOCKMANN

You may depend upon it—I shall name them! That is precisely the great discovery I made yesterday. *[RAISES HIS VOICE.]* The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact Liberal majority—that is it! Now you know! *[TREMENDOUS UPROAR. MOST OF THE CROWD ARE SHOUTING, STAMPING AND*

HISSING. SOME OF THE OLDER MEN AMONG THEM EXCHANGE STOLEN GLANCES AND SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THEMSELVES.

MRS. STOCKMANN GETS UP, LOOKING ANXIOUS. EJLIF AND MORTEN ADVANCE THREATENINGLY UPON SOME SCHOOLBOYS WHO ARE PLAYING PRANKS. ASLAKSEN RINGS HIS BELL AND BEGS FOR SILENCE. HOVSTAD AND BILLING BOTH TALK AT ONCE, BUT ARE INAUDIBLE. AT LAST QUIET IS RESTORED.]

ASLAKSEN

As Chairman, I call upon the speaker to withdraw the ill-considered expressions he has just used.

DR. STOCKMANN

Never, Mr. Aslaksen! It is the majority in our community that denies me my freedom and seeks to prevent my speaking the truth.

HOVSTAD

The majority always has right on its side.

BILLING

And truth too, by God!

DR. STOCKMANN

The majority never has right on its side. Never, I say! That is one of these social lies against which an independent, intelligent man must wage war. Who is it that constitute the majority of the population in a country? Is it the clever folk, or the stupid? I don't imagine you will dispute the fact that at present the stupid people are in an absolutely overwhelming majority all the world over. But, good Lord!—you can never pretend that it is right that the stupid folk should govern the clever ones I *[UPROAR AND CRIES.]* Oh, yes—you can shout me down, I know! But you cannot answer me. The majority has might on its side—unfortunately; but right it has not. I am in the right—I and a few other scattered individuals. The minority is always in the right. *[RENEWED UPROAR.]*

HOVSTAD

Aha!—so Dr. Stockmann has become an aristocrat since the day before yesterday!

DR. STOCKMANN

I have already said that I don't intend to waste a word on the puny, narrow-chested, short-winded crew whom we are leaving astern. Pulsating life no longer concerns itself with them. I am thinking of the few, the scattered few amongst us, who have absorbed new and vigorous truths. Such men stand, as it were, at the outposts, so far ahead that the compact majority has not yet been able to come up with them; and there they are fighting for truths that are too newly-born into the world of consciousness to have any considerable number of people on their side as yet.

HOVSTAD

So the Doctor is a revolutionary now!

DR. STOCKMANN

Good heavens—of course I am, Mr. Hovstad! I propose to raise a revolution against the lie that the majority has the monopoly of the truth. What sort of truths are they that the majority usually supports? They are truths that are of such advanced age that they are beginning to break up. And if a truth is as old as that, it is also in a fair way to become a lie, gentlemen. *[LAUGHTER AND MOCKING CRIES.]* Yes, believe me or not, as you like; but truths are by no means as long-lived at Methuselah—as some folk imagine. A normally constituted truth lives, let us say, as a rule seventeen or eighteen, or at most twenty years—seldom longer. But truths as aged as that are always worn frightfully thin, and nevertheless it is only then that the majority recognises them and recommends them to the community as wholesome moral nourishment. There is no great nutritive value in that sort of fare, I can assure you; and, as a doctor, I ought to know. These "majority truths" are like last year's cured meat—like rancid, tainted ham; and they are the origin of the moral scurvy that is rampant in our communities.

ASLAKSEN

It appears to me that the speaker is wandering a long way from his subject.

PETER STOCKMANN

I quite agree with the Chairman.

DR. STOCKMANN

Have you gone clean out of your senses, Peter? I am sticking as closely to my subject as I can; for my subject is precisely this, that it is the masses, the majority—this infernal compact majority—that poisons the sources of our moral life and infects the ground we stand on.

HOVSTAD

And all this because the great, broadminded majority of the people is prudent enough to show deference only to well-ascertained and well-approved truths?

DR. STOCKMANN

Ah, my good Mr. Hovstad, don't talk nonsense about well-ascertained truths! The truths of which the masses now approve are the very truths that the fighters at the outposts held to in the days of our grandfathers. We fighters at the outposts nowadays no longer approve of them; and I do not believe there is any other well-ascertained truth except this, that no community can live a healthy life if it is nourished only on such old marrowless truths.

HOVSTAD

But, instead of standing there using vague generalities, it would be interesting if you would tell us what these old marrowless truths are, that we are nourished on.

[APPLAUSE FROM MANY QUARTERS.]

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, I could give you a whole string of such abominations; but to begin with I will confine myself to one well-approved truth, which at bottom is a foul lie, but upon which nevertheless Mr. Hovstad and the "People's Messenger" and all the "Messenger's" supporters are nourished.

HOVSTAD

And that is—?

DR. STOCKMANN

That is, the doctrine you have inherited from your forefathers and proclaim thoughtlessly far and wide—the doctrine that the public, the crowd, the masses, are the essential part of the population—that they constitute the People—that the common folk, the ignorant and incomplete element in the community, have the same right to pronounce judgment and to, approve, to direct and to govern, as the isolated, intellectually superior personalities in it.

BILLING

Well, damn me if ever I—

HOVSTAD

[AT THE SAME TIME, SHOUTING OUT.] Fellow-citizens, take good note of that!

A NUMBER OF VOICES

[ANGRILY.] Oho!—we are not the People! Only the superior folk are to govern, are they!

A WORKMAN

Turn the fellow out for talking such rubbish!

ANOTHER
Out with him!

ANOTHER
[CALLING OUT.] Blow your horn, Evensen!

[A HORN IS BLOWN LOUDLY, AMIDST HISSES AND AN ANGRY UPROAR.]

DR. STOCKMANN
[WHEN THE NOISE HAS SOMEWHAT ABATED.] Be reasonable! Can't you stand hearing the voice of truth for once? I don't in the least expect you to agree with me all at once; but I must say I did expect Mr. Hovstad to admit I was right, when he had recovered his composure a little. He claims to be a freethinker—

VOICES
[IN MURMURS OF ASTONISHMENT.] Freethinker, did he say? Is Hovstad a freethinker?

HOVSTAD
[SHOUTING.] Prove it, Dr. Stockmann! When have I said so in print?

DR. STOCKMANN
[REFLECTING.] No, confound it, you are right!—you have never had the courage to. Well, I won't put you in a hole, Mr. Hovstad. Let us say it is I that am the freethinker, then. I am going to prove to you, scientifically, that the "People's Messenger" leads you by the nose in a shameful manner when it tells you that you—that the common people, the crowd, the masses, are the real essence of the People. That is only a newspaper lie, I tell you! The common people are nothing more than the raw material of which a People is made. [GROANS, LAUGHTER AND UPROAR.] Well, isn't that the case? Isn't there an enormous difference between a well-bred and an ill-bred strain of animals? Take, for instance, a common barn-door hen. What sort of eating do you get from a shrivelled up old scrag of a fowl like that? Not much, do you! And what sort of eggs does it lay? A fairly good crow or a raven can lay pretty nearly as good an egg. But take a well-bred Spanish or Japanese hen, or a good pheasant or a turkey—then you will see the difference. Or take the case of dogs, with whom we humans are on such intimate terms. Think first of an ordinary common cur—I mean one of the horrible, coarse-haired, low-bred curs that do nothing but run about the streets and befoul the walls of the houses. Compare one of these curs with a poodle whose sires for many generations have been bred in a gentleman's house, where they have had the best of food and had the opportunity of hearing soft voices and music. Do you not think that the poodle's brain is developed to quite a different degree from that of the cur? Of course it is. It is puppies of well-bred poodles like that, that showmen train to do incredibly clever tricks—things that a common cur could never learn to do even if it stood on its head. [UPROAR AND MOCKING CRIES.]

A CITIZEN

[CALLS OUT.] Are you going to make out we are dogs, now?

ANOTHER CITIZEN

We are not animals, Doctor!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes but, bless my soul, we are, my friend! It is true we are the finest animals anyone could wish for; but, even among us, exceptionally fine animals are rare. There is a tremendous difference between poodle-men and cur-men. And the amusing part of it is, that Mr. Hovstad quite agrees with me as long as it is a question of four-footed animals—

HOVSTAD

Yes, it is true enough as far as they are concerned.

DR. STOCKMANN

Very well. But as soon as I extend the principle and apply it to two-legged animals, Mr. Hovstad stops short. He no longer dares to think independently, or to pursue his ideas to their logical conclusion; so, he turns the whole theory upside down and proclaims in the "People's Messenger" that it is the barn-door hens and street curs that are the finest specimens in the menagerie. But that is always the way, as long as a man retains the traces of common origin and has not worked his way up to intellectual distinction.

HOVSTAD

I lay no claim to any sort of distinction, I am the son of humble country-folk, and I am proud that the stock I come from is rooted deep among the common people he insults.

VOICES

Bravo, Hovstad! Bravo! Bravo!

DR. STOCKMANN

The kind of common people I mean are not only to be found low down in the social scale; they crawl and swarm all around us—even in the highest social positions. You have only to look at your own fine, distinguished Mayor! My brother Peter is every bit as plebeian as anyone that walks in two shoes—[LAUGHTER AND HISSES.]

PETER STOCKMANN

I protest against personal allusions of this kind.

DR. STOCKMANN

[IMPERTURBABLY.]—and that, not because he is like myself, descended from some old rascal of a pirate from Pomerania or thereabouts—because that is who we are descended from—

PETER STOCKMANN

An absurd legend. I deny it!

DR. STOCKMANN

—but because he thinks what his superiors think, and holds the same opinions as they, People who do that are, intellectually speaking, common people; and, that is why my magnificent brother Peter is in reality so very far from any distinction—and consequently also so far from being liberal-minded.

PETER STOCKMANN

Mr. Chairman—!

HOVSTAD

So it is only the distinguished men that are liberal-minded in this country? We are learning something quite new! [LAUGHTER.]

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, that is part of my new discovery too. And another part of it is that broad-mindedness is almost precisely the same thing as morality. That is why I maintain that it is absolutely inexcusable in the "People's Messenger" to proclaim, day in and day out, the false doctrine that it is the masses, the crowd, the compact majority, that have the monopoly of broad-mindedness and morality—and that vice and corruption and every kind of intellectual depravity are the result of culture, just as all the filth that is draining into our Baths is the result of the tanneries up at Molledal! [UPROAR AND INTERRUPTIONS. DR. STOCKMANN IS UNDISTURBED, AND GOES ON, CARRIED AWAY BY HIS ARDOUR, WITH A SMILE.] And yet this same "People's Messenger" can go on preaching that the masses ought to be elevated to higher conditions of life! But, bless my soul, if the "Messenger's" teaching is to be depended upon, this very raising up the masses would mean nothing more or less than setting them straightway upon the paths of depravity! Happily the theory that culture demoralises is only an old falsehood that our forefathers believed in and we have inherited. No, it is ignorance, poverty, ugly conditions of life, that do the devil's work! In a house which does not get aired and swept every day—my wife Katherine maintains that the floor ought to be scrubbed as well, but that is a debatable question—in such a house, let me tell you, people will lose within two or three years the power of thinking or acting in a moral manner. Lack of oxygen weakens the conscience. And there must be a plentiful lack of oxygen in very many houses in this town, I should think, judging from the fact that the whole

compact majority can be unconscientious enough to wish to build the town's prosperity on a quagmire of falsehood and deceit.

ASLAKSEN

We cannot allow such a grave accusation to be flung at a citizen community.

A CITIZEN

I move that the Chairman direct the speaker to sit down.

VOICES

[*ANGRILY.*] Hear, hear! Quite right! Make him sit down!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LOSING HIS SELF-CONTROL.*] Then I will go and shout the truth at every street corner! I will write it in other towns' newspapers! The whole country shall know what is going on here!

HOVSTAD

It almost seems as if Dr. Stockmann's intention were to ruin the town.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, my native town is so dear to me that I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie.

ASLAKSEN

This is really serious. [*UPROAR AND CAT-CALLS MRS. STOCKMANN COUGHS, BUT TO NO PURPOSE; HER HUSBAND DOES NOT LISTEN TO HER ANY LONGER.*]

HOVSTAD

[*SHOUTING ABOVE THE DIN.*] A man must be a public enemy to wish to ruin a whole community!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*WITH GROWING FERVOR.*] What does the destruction of a community matter, if it lives on lies? It ought to be razed to the ground. I tell you—All who live by lies ought to be exterminated like vermin! You will end by infecting the whole country; you will bring about such a state of things that the whole country will deserve to be ruined. And if things come to that pass, I shall say from the bottom of my heart: Let the whole country perish, let all these people be exterminated!

VOICES FROM THE CROWD

That is talking like an out-and-out enemy of the people!

BILLING

There sounded the voice of the people, by all that's holy!

THE WHOLE CROWD

[SHOUTING.] Yes, yes! He is an enemy of the people! He hates his country! He hates his own people!

ASLAKSEN

Both as a citizen and as an individual, I am profoundly disturbed by what we have had to listen to. Dr. Stockmann has shown himself in a light I should never have dreamed of. I am unhappily obliged to subscribe to the opinion which I have just heard my estimable fellow-citizens utter; and I propose that we should give expression to that opinion in a resolution. I propose a resolution as follows: "This meeting declares that it considers Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Baths, to be an enemy of the people." [A STORM OF CHEERS AND APPLAUSE. A NUMBER OF MEN

SURROUND THE DOCTOR AND HISS HIM. MRS. STOCKMANN AND PETRA HAVE GOT UP FROM THEIR SEATS.

MORTEN AND EJLIF ARE FIGHTING THE OTHER SCHOOLBOYS FOR HISSING; SOME OF THEIR ELDERS SEPARATE THEM.]

DR. STOCKMANN

[TO THE MEN WHO ARE HISSING HIM.] Oh, you fools! I tell you that—

ASLAKSEN

[RINGING HIS BELL.] We cannot hear you now, Doctor. A formal vote is about to be taken; but, out of regard for personal feelings, it shall be by ballot and not verbal. Have you any clean paper, Mr. Billing?

BILLING

I have both blue and white here.

ASLAKSEN

[GOING TO HIM.] That will do nicely; we shall get on more quickly that way. Cut it up into small strips—yes, that's it. [TO THE MEETING.] Blue means no; white means yes. I will come round myself and collect votes. [PETER STOCKMANN LEAVES THE HALL. ASLAKSEN AND ONE OR TWO OTHERS GO ROUND THE ROOM WITH THE SLIPS OF PAPER IN THEIR HATS.]

1ST CITIZEN

[TO HOVSTAD.] I say, what has come to the Doctor? What are we to think of it?

HOVSTAD

Oh, you know how headstrong he is.

2ND CITIZEN

[TO BILLING.] Billing, you go to their house—have you ever noticed if the fellow drinks?

BILLING

Well I'm hanged if I know what to say. There are always spirits on the table when you go.

3RD CITIZEN

I rather think he goes quite off his head sometimes.

1ST CITIZEN

I wonder if there is any madness in his family?

BILLING

I shouldn't wonder if there were.

4TH CITIZEN

No, it is nothing more than sheer malice; he wants to get even with somebody for something or other.

BILLING

Well certainly he suggested a rise in his salary on one occasion lately, and did not get it.

THE CITIZENS

[TOGETHER.] Ah!—then it is easy to understand how it is!

THE DRUNKEN MAN

[WHO HAS GOT AMONG THE AUDIENCE AGAIN.] I want a blue one, I do! And I want a white one too!

VOICES

It's that drunken chap again! Turn him out!

MORTEN KIIL

[GOING UP TO DR. STOCKMANN.] Well, Stockmann, do you see what these monkey tricks of yours lead to?

DR. STOCKMANN

I have done my duty.

MORTEN KIIL

What was that you said about the tanneries at Molledal?

DR. STOCKMANN

You heard well enough. I said they were the source of all the filth.

MORTEN KIIL

My tannery too?

DR. STOCKMANN

Unfortunately your tannery is by far the worst.

MORTEN KIIL

Are you going to put that in the papers?

DR. STOCKMANN

I shall conceal nothing.

MORTEN KIIL

That may cost you dearly, Stockmann. *[GOES OUT.]*

A STOUT MAN

[GOING UP TO CAPTAIN HORSTER, WITHOUT TAKING ANY NOTICE OF THE LADIES.] Well, Captain, so you lend your house to enemies of the people?

HORSTER

I imagine I can do what I like with my own possessions, Mr. Vik.

THE STOUT MAN

Then you can have no objection to my doing the same with mine.

HORSTER

What do you mean, sir?

THE STOUT MAN

You shall hear from me in the morning. *[TURNS HIS BACK ON HIM AND MOVES OFF.]*

PETRA

Was that not your owner, Captain Horster?

HORSTER

Yes, that was Mr. Vik the shipowner.

ASLAKSEN

[WITH THE VOTING-PAPERS IN HIS HANDS, GETS UP ON TO THE PLATFORM AND RINGS HIS BELL.] Gentlemen, allow me to announce the result. By the votes of every one here except one person—

A YOUNG MAN

That is the drunk chap!

ASLAKSEN

By the votes of everyone here except a tipsy man, this meeting of citizens declares Dr. Thomas Stockmann to be an enemy of the people. *[SHOUTS AND APPLAUSE.]* Three cheers for our ancient and honourable citizen community! *[RENEWED APPLAUSE.]* Three cheers for our able and energetic Mayor, who has so loyally suppressed the promptings of family feeling! *[CHEERS.]* The meeting is dissolved. *[GETS DOWN.]*

BILLING

Three cheers for the Chairman!

THE WHOLE CROWD

Three cheers for Aslaksen! Hurrah!

DR. STOCKMANN

My hat and coat, Petra! Captain, have you room on your ship for passengers to the New World?

HORSTER

For you and yours we will make room, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

[AS PETRA HELPS HIM INTO HIS COAT.] Good. Come, Katherine! Come, boys!

MRS. STOCKMANN

[IN AN UNDERTONE.] Thomas, dear, let us go out by the back way.

DR. STOCKMANN

No back ways for me, Katherine, [RAISING HIS VOICE.] You will hear more of this enemy of the people, before he shakes the dust off his shoes upon you! I am not so forgiving as a certain Person; I do not say: "I forgive you, for ye know not what ye do."

ASLAKSEN

[SHOUTING.] That is a blasphemous comparison, Dr. Stockmann!

BILLING

It is, by God! It's dreadful for an earnest man to listen to.

A COARSE VOICE

Threatens us now, does he!

OTHER VOICES

[EXCITEDLY.] Let's go and break his windows! Duck him in the fjord!

ANOTHER VOICE

Blow your horn, Evensen! Pip, pip!

[HORN-BLOWING, HISSES, AND WILD CRIES. DR. STOCKMANN
GOES OUT THROUGH THE HALL WITH HIS FAMILY, HORSTER
ELBOWING A WAY FOR THEM.]

THE WHOLE CROWD

[HOWLING AFTER THEM AS THEY GO.] Enemy of the People! Enemy of the People!

BILLING

[AS HE PUTS HIS PAPERS TOGETHER.] Well, I'm damned if I go and drink toddy with the Stockmanns tonight!

[THE CROWD PRESS TOWARDS THE EXIT. THE UPROAR CONTINUES
OUTSIDE; SHOUTS OF "ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!" ARE HEARD
FROM WITHOUT.]

ACT V

[DR. STOCKMANN'S STUDY. BOOKCASES AND CABINETS CONTAINING SPECIMENS, LINE THE WALLS. AT THE BACK IS A DOOR LEADING TO THE HALL; IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE LEFT, A DOOR LEADING TO THE SITTING-ROOM. IN THE RIGHTHAND WALL ARE TWO WINDOWS, OF WHICH ALL THE PANES ARE BROKEN. THE DOCTOR'S DESK, LITTERED WITH BOOKS AND PAPERS, STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, WHICH IS IN DISORDER. IT IS MORNING. DR. STOCKMANN IN DRESSING-GOWN, SLIPPERS AND A SMOKING-CAP, IS BENDING DOWN AND RAKING WITH AN UMBRELLA UNDER ONE OF THE CABINETS. AFTER A LITTLE WHILE HE RAKES OUT A STONE.]

DR. STOCKMANN

[CALLING THROUGH THE OPEN SITTING-ROOM DOOR.] Katherine, I have found another one.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[FROM THE SITTING-ROOM.] Oh, you will find a lot more yet, I expect.

DR. STOCKMANN

[ADDING THE STONE TO A HEAP OF OTHERS ON THE TABLE.] I shall treasure these stones as relics. Ejlif and Morten shall look at them every day, and when they are grown up they shall inherit them as heirlooms. [RAKES ABOUT UNDER A BOOKCASE.] Hasn't—what the deuce is her name?—the girl, you know—hasn't she been to fetch the glazier yet?

MRS. STOCKMANN

[COMING IN.] Yes, but he said he didn't know if he would be able to come today.

DR. STOCKMANN

You will see he won't dare to come.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Well, that is just what Randine thought—that he didn't dare to, on account of the neighbours. [CALLS INTO THE SITTING-ROOM.] What is it you want, Randine? Give it to me. [GOES IN, AND COMES OUT AGAIN DIRECTLY.] Here is a letter for you, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

Let me see it. [OPENS AND READS IT.] Ah!—of course.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Who is it from?

DR. STOCKMANN

From the landlord. Notice to quit.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Is it possible? Such a nice man

DR. STOCKMANN

[LOOKING AT THE LETTER.] Does not dare do otherwise, he says. Doesn't like doing it, but dare not do otherwise—on account of his fellow-citizens—out of regard for public opinion. Is in a dependent position—dares not offend certain influential men.

MRS. STOCKMANN

There, you see, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, I see well enough; the whole lot of them in the town are cowards; not a man among them dares do anything for fear of the others. [THROWS THE LETTER ON TO THE TABLE.] But it doesn't matter to us, Katherine. We are going to sail away to the New World, and—

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, Thomas, are you sure we are well advised to take this step?

DR. STOCKMANN

Are you suggesting that I should stay here, where they have pilloried me as an enemy of the people—branded me—broken my windows! And just look here, Katherine—they have torn a great rent in my black trousers too!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Oh, dear!—and they are the best pair you have got!

DR. STOCKMANN

You should never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth. It is not that I care so much about the trousers, you know; you can always sew them up again for me. But that the common herd should dare to make this attack on me, as if they were my equals—that is what I cannot, for the life of me, swallow!

MRS. STOCKMANN

There is no doubt they have behaved very ill toward you, Thomas; but is that sufficient reason for our leaving our native country for good and all?

DR. STOCKMANN

If we went to another town, do you suppose we should not find the common people just as insolent as they are here? Depend upon it, there is not much to choose between them. Oh, well, let the curs snap—that is not the worst part of it. The worst is that, from one end of this country to the other, every man is the slave of his Party. Although, as far as that goes, I daresay it is not much better in the free West either; the compact majority, and liberal public opinion, and all that infernal old bag of tricks are probably rampant there too. But there things are done on a larger scale, you see. They may kill you, but they won't put you to death by slow torture. They don't squeeze a free man's soul in a vice, as they do here. And, if

need be, one can live in solitude. [*WALKS UP AND DOWN.*] If only I knew where there was a virgin forest or a small South Sea island for sale, cheap—

MRS. STOCKMANN

But think of the boys, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*STANDING STILL.*] What a strange woman you are, Katherine! Would you prefer to have the boys grow up in a society like this? You saw for yourself last night that half the population are out of their minds; and if the other half have not lost their senses, it is because they are mere brutes, with no sense to lose.

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, Thomas dear, the imprudent things you said had something to do with it, you know.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, isn't what I said perfectly true? Don't they turn every idea topsy-turvy? Don't they make a regular hotchpotch of right and wrong? Don't they say that the things I know are true, are lies? The craziest part of it all is the fact of these "liberals," men of full age, going about in crowds imagining that they are the broad-minded party! Did you ever hear anything like it, Katherine!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, it's mad enough of them, certainly; but—[*PETRA COMES IN FROM THE SILTING-ROOM.*] Back from school already?

PETRA

Yes. I have been given notice of dismissal.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Dismissal?

DR. STOCKMANN

You too?

PETRA

Mrs. Busk gave me my notice; so I thought it was best to go at once.

DR. STOCKMANN

You were perfectly right, too!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Who would have thought Mrs. Busk was a woman like that!

PETRA

Mrs. Busk isn't a bit like that, mother; I saw quite plainly how it hurt her to do it. But she didn't dare do otherwise, she said; and so I got my notice.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LAUGHING AND RUBBING HIS HANDS.*] She didn't dare do otherwise, either! It's delicious!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Well, after the dreadful scenes last night—

PETRA

It was not only that. Just listen to this, father!

DR. STOCKMANN

Well?

PETRA

Mrs. Busk showed me no less than three letters she received this morning—

DR. STOCKMANN

Anonymous, I suppose?

PETRA

Yes.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, because they didn't dare to risk signing their names, Katherine!

PETRA

And two of them were to the effect that a man, who has been our guest here, was declaring last night at the Club that my views on various subjects are extremely emancipated—

DR. STOCKMANN

You did not deny that, I hope?

PETRA

No, you know I wouldn't. Mrs. Busk's own views are tolerably emancipated, when we are alone together; but now that this report about me is being spread, she dare not keep me on any longer.

MRS. STOCKMANN

And someone who had been a guest of ours! That shows you the return you get for your hospitality, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

We won't live in such a disgusting hole any longer. Pack up as quickly as you can, Katherine; the sooner we can get away, the better.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Be quiet—I think I hear someone in the hall. See who it is, Petra.

PETRA

[*OPENING THE DOOR.*] Oh, it's you, Captain Horster! Do come in.

HORSTER

[*COMING IN.*] Good morning. I thought I would just come in and see how you were.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*SHAKING HIS HAND.*] Thanks—that is really kind of you.

MRS. STOCKMANN

And thank you, too, for helping us through the crowd, Captain Horster.

PETRA

How did you manage to get home again?

HORSTER

Oh, somehow or other. I am fairly strong, and there is more sound than fury about these folk.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, isn't their swinish cowardice astonishing? Look here, I will show you something! There are all the stones they have thrown through my windows. Just look at them! I'm hanged if there are more than two decently large bits of hard stone in the whole heap; the rest are nothing but gravel—wretched little things. And yet they stood out there bawling and swearing that they would do me some violence; but as for doing anything—you don't see much of that in this town.

HORSTER

Just as well for you this time, doctor!

DR. STOCKMANN

True enough. But it makes one angry all the same; because if some day it should be a question of a national fight in real earnest, you will see that public opinion will be in favour of taking to one's heels, and the compact majority will turn tail like a flock of sheep, Captain Horster. That is what is so mournful to think of; it gives me so much concern, that—No, devil take it, it is ridiculous to care about it! They have called me an enemy of the people, so an enemy of the people let me be!

MRS. STOCKMANN

You will never be that, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

Don't swear to that, Katherine. To be called an ugly name may have the same effect as a pin-scratch in the lung. And that hateful name—I can't get quit of it. It is sticking here in the pit of my stomach, eating into me like a corrosive acid. And no magnesia will remove it.

PETRA

Bah!—you should only laugh at them, father,

HORSTER

They will change their minds some day, Doctor.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, Thomas, as sure as you are standing here.

DR. STOCKMANN

Perhaps, when it is too late. Much good may it do them! They may wallow in their filth then and rue the day when they drove a patriot into exile. When do you sail, Captain Horster?

HORSTER

Hm!—that was just what I had come to speak about—

DR. STOCKMANN

Why, has anything gone wrong with the ship?

HORSTER

No; but what has happened is that I am not to sail in it.

PETRA

Do you mean that you have been dismissed from your command?

HORSTER

[SMILING.] Yes, that's just it.

PETRA

You too.

MRS. STOCKMANN

There, you see, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

And that for the truth's sake! Oh, if I had thought such a thing possible—

HORSTER

You mustn't take it to heart; I shall be sure to find a job with some ship-owner or other, elsewhere.

DR. STOCKMANN

And that is this man Vik—a wealthy man, independent of everyone and everything—! Shame on him!

HORSTER

He is quite an excellent fellow otherwise; he told me himself he would willingly have kept me on, if only he had dared—

DR. STOCKMANN

But he didn't dare? No, of course not.

HORSTER

It is not such an easy matter, he said, for a party man—

DR. STOCKMANN

The worthy man spoke the truth. A party is like a sausage machine; it mashes up all sorts of heads together into the same mincemeat—fatheads and blockheads, all in one mash!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Come, come, Thomas dear!

PETRA

[*TO HORSTER.*] If only you had not come home with us, things might not have come to this pass.

HORSTER

I do not regret it.

PETRA

[*HOLDING OUT HER HAND TO HIM.*] Thank you for that!

HORSTER

[*TO DR. STOCKMANN.*] And so what I came to say was that if you are determined to go away, I have thought of another plan—

DR. STOCKMANN

That's splendid!—if only we can get away at once.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Hush!—wasn't that some one knocking?

PETRA

That is uncle, surely.

DR. STOCKMANN

Aha! [*CALLS OUT.*] Come in!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Dear Thomas, promise me definitely—[*PETER STOCKMANN COMES IN FROM THE HALL.*]

PETER STOCKMANN

Oh, you are engaged. In that case, I will—

DR. STOCKMANN

No, no, come in.

PETER STOCKMANN

But I wanted to speak to you alone.

MRS. STOCKMANN

We will go into the sitting-room in the meanwhile.

HORSTER

And I will look in again later.

DR. STOCKMANN

No, go in there with them, Captain Horster; I want to hear more about—

HORSTER

Very well, I will wait, then. [*HE FOLLOWS MRS. STOCKMANN AND PETRA INTO THE SITTING-ROOM.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

I daresay you find it rather draughty here today. Put your hat on.

PETER STOCKMANN

Thank you, if I may. [*DOES SO.*] I think I caught cold last night; I stood and shivered—

DR. STOCKMANN

Really? I found it warm enough.

PETER STOCKMANN

I regret that it was not in my power to prevent those excesses last night.

DR. STOCKMANN

Have you anything in particular to say to me besides that?

PETER STOCKMANN

[*TAKING A BIG LETTER FROM HIS POCKET.*] I have this document for you, from the Baths Committee.

DR. STOCKMANN

My dismissal?

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, dating from today. [*LAYS THE LETTER ON THE TABLE.*] It gives us pain to do it; but, to speak frankly, we dared not do otherwise on account of public opinion.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*SMILING.*] Dared not? I seem to have heard that word before, today.

PETER STOCKMANN

I must beg you to understand your position clearly. For the future you must not count on any practice whatever in the town.

DR. STOCKMANN

Devil take the practice! But why are you so sure of that?

PETER STOCKMANN

The Householders' Association is circulating a list from house to house. All right-minded citizens are being called upon to give up employing you; and I can assure you that not a single head of a family will risk refusing his signature. They simply dare not.

DR. STOCKMANN

No, no; I don't doubt it. But what then?

PETER STOCKMANN

If I might advise you, it would be best to leave the place for a little while—

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, the propriety of leaving the place has occurred to me.

PETER STOCKMANN

Good. And then, when you have had six months to think things over, if, after mature consideration, you can persuade yourself to write a few words of regret, acknowledging your error—

DR. STOCKMANN

I might have my appointment restored to me, do you mean?

PETER STOCKMANN

Perhaps. It is not at all impossible.

DR. STOCKMANN

But what about public opinion, then? Surely you would not dare to do it on account of public feeling...

PETER STOCKMANN

Public opinion is an extremely mutable thing. And, to be quite candid with you, it is a matter of great importance to us to have some admission of that sort from you in writing.

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, that's what you are after, is it! I will just trouble you to remember what I said to you lately about foxy tricks of that sort!

PETER STOCKMANN

Your position was quite different then. At that time you had reason to suppose you had the whole town at your back—

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and now I feel I have the whole town ON my back—[*FLARING UP.*] I would not do it if I had the devil and his dam on my back—! Never—never, I tell you!

PETER STOCKMANN

A man with a family has no right to behave as you do. You have no right to do it, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

I have no right! There is only one single thing in the world a free man has no right to do. Do you know what that is?

PETER STOCKMANN

No.

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course you don't, but I will tell you. A free man has no right to soil himself with filth; he has no right to behave in a way that would justify his spitting in his own face.

PETER STOCKMANN

This sort of thing sounds extremely plausible, of course; and if there were no other explanation for your obstinacy—But as it happens that there is.

DR. STOCKMANN

What do you mean?

PETER STOCKMANN

You understand, very well what I mean. But, as your brother and as a man of discretion, I advise you not to build too much upon expectations and prospects that may so very easily fail you.

DR. STOCKMANN

What in the world is all this about?

PETER STOCKMANN

Do you really ask me to believe that you are ignorant of the terms of Mr. Kiil's will?

DR. STOCKMANN

I know that the small amount he possesses is to go to an institution for indigent old workpeople. How does that concern me?

PETER STOCKMANN

In the first place, it is by no means a small amount that is in question. Mr. Kiil is a fairly wealthy man.

DR. STOCKMANN

I had no notion of that!

PETER STOCKMANN

Hm!—hadn't you really? Then I suppose you had no notion, either, that a considerable portion of his wealth will come to your children, you and your wife having a life-rent of the capital. Has he never told you so?

DR. STOCKMANN

Never, on my honour! Quite the reverse; he has consistently done nothing but fume at being so unconscionably heavily taxed. But are you perfectly certain of this, Peter?

PETER STOCKMANN

I have it from an absolutely reliable source.

DR. STOCKMANN

Then, thank God, Katherine is provided for—and the children too! I must tell her this at once—*[CALLS OUT.]* Katherine, Katherine!

PETER STOCKMANN

[RESTRAINING HIM.] Hush, don't say a word yet!

MRS. STOCKMANN

[OPENING THE DOOR.] What is the matter?

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, nothing, nothing; you can go back. *[SHE SHUTS THE DOOR. DR. STOCKMANN WALKS UP AND DOWN IN HIS EXCITEMENT.]* Provided for!—Just think of it, we are all provided for! And for life! What a blessed feeling it is to know one is provided for!

PETER STOCKMANN

Yes, but that is just exactly what you are not. Mr. Kiil can alter his will any day he likes.

DR. STOCKMANN

But he won't do that, my dear Peter. The "Badger" is much too delighted at my attack on you and your wise friends.

PETER STOCKMANN

[STARTS AND LOOKS INTENTLY AT HIM.] Ali, that throws a light on various things.

DR. STOCKMANN

What things?

PETER STOCKMANN

I see that the whole thing was a combined manoeuvre on your part and his. These violent, reckless attacks that you have made against the leading men of the town, under the pretence that it was in the name of truth—

DR. STOCKMANN

What about them?

PETER STOCKMANN

I see that they were nothing else than the stipulated price for that vindictive old man's will.

DR. STOCKMANN

[ALMOST SPEECHLESS.] Peter—you are the most disgusting plebeian I have ever met in all my life.

PETER STOCKMANN

All is over between us. Your dismissal is irrevocable—we have a weapon against you now. [GOES OUT.]

DR. STOCKMANN

For shame! For shame! [CALLS OUT.] Katherine, you must have the floor scrubbed after him! Let—what's her name—devil take it, the girl who has always got soot on her nose—

MRS. STOCKMANN

[IN THE SITTING-ROOM.] Hush, Thomas, be quiet!

PETRA

[COMING TO THE DOOR.] Father, grandfather is here, asking if he may speak to you alone.

DR. STOCKMANN

Certainly he may. [GOING TO THE DOOR.] Come in, Mr. Kiil. [MORTEN KIIL COMES IN. DR. STOCKMANN SHUTS THE DOOR AFTER HIM.] What can I do for you? Won't you sit down?

MORTEN KIIL

I won't sit. [LOOKS AROUND.] You look very comfortable here today, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, don't we!

MORTEN KIIL

Very comfortable—plenty of fresh air. I should think you have got enough to-day of that oxygen you were talking about yesterday. Your conscience must be in splendid order to-day, I should think.

DR. STOCKMANN

It is.

MORTEN KIIL

So I should think. [*TAPS HIS CHEST.*] Do you know what I have got here?

DR. STOCKMANN

A good conscience, too, I hope.

MORTEN KIIL

Bah!—No, it is something better than that. [*HE TAKES A THICK POCKET-BOOK FROM HIS BREAST-POCKET, OPENS IT, AND DISPLAYS A PACKET OF PAPERS.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LOOKING AT HIM IN ASTONISHMENT.*] Shares in the Baths?

MORTEN KIIL

They were not difficult to get today.

DR. STOCKMANN

And you have been buying—?

MORTEN KIIL

As many as I could pay for.

DR. STOCKMANN

But, my dear Mr. Kiil—consider the state of the Baths' affairs!

MORTEN KIIL

If you behave like a reasonable man, you can soon set the Baths on their feet again.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, you can see for yourself that I have done all I can, but—They are all mad in this town!

MORTEN KIIL

You said yesterday that the worst of this pollution came from my tannery. If that is true, then my grandfather and my father before me, and I myself, for many years past, have been poisoning the town like three destroying angels. Do you think I am going to sit quiet under that reproach?

DR. STOCKMANN

Unfortunately I am afraid you will have to.

MORTEN KIIL

No, thank you. I am jealous of my name and reputation. They call me "the Badger," I am told. A badger is a kind of pig, I believe; but I am not going to give them the right to call me that. I mean to live and die a clean man.

DR. STOCKMANN

And how are you going to set about it?

MORTEN KIIL

You shall cleanse me, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

I!

MORTEN KIIL

Do you know what money I have bought these shares with? No, of course you can't know—but I will tell you. It is the money that Katherine and Petra and the boys will have when I am gone. Because I have been able to save a little bit after all, you know.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*FLARING UP.*] And you have gone and taken Katherine's money for this!

MORTEN KIIL

Yes, the whole of the money is invested in the Baths now. And now I just want to see whether you are quite stark, staring mad, Thomas! If you still make out that these animals and other nasty things of that sort come from my tannery, it will be exactly as if you were to flay broad strips of skin from Katherine's body, and Petra's, and the boys'; and no decent man would do that—unless he were mad.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*WALKING UP AND DOWN.*] Yes, but I am mad; I am mad!

MORTEN KIIL

You cannot be so absurdly mad as all that, when it is a question of your wife and children.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*STANDING STILL IN FRONT OF HIM.*] Why couldn't you consult me about it, before you went and bought all that trash?

MORTEN KIIL

What is done cannot be undone.

DR. STOCKMANN

[WALKS ABOUT UNEASILY.] If only I were not so certain about it—! But I am absolutely convinced that I am right.

MORTEN KIIL

[WEIGHING THE POCKET-BOOK IN HIS HAND.] If you stick to your mad idea, this won't be worth much, you know. [PUTS THE POCKET-BOOK IN HIS POCKET.]

DR. STOCKMANN

But, hang it all! It might be possible for science to discover some prophylactic, I should think—or some antidote of some kind—

MORTEN KIIL

To kill these animals, do you mean?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, or to make them innocuous.

MORTEN KIIL

Couldn't you try some rat's-bane?

DR. STOCKMANN

Don't talk nonsense! They all say it is only imagination, you know. Well, let it go at that! Let them have their own way about it! Haven't the ignorant, narrow-minded curs reviled me as an enemy of the people?—and haven't they been ready to tear the clothes off my back too?

MORTEN KIIL

And broken all your windows to pieces!

DR. STOCKMANN

And then there is my duty to my family. I must talk it over with Katherine; she is great on those things.

MORTEN KIIL

That is right; be guided by a reasonable woman's advice.

DR. STOCKMANN

[ADVANCING TOWARDS HIM.] To think you could do such a preposterous thing! Risking Katherine's money in this way, and putting me in such a horribly painful dilemma! When I look at you, I think I see the devil himself—

MORTEN KIIL

Then I had better go. But I must have an answer from you before two o'clock—yes or no. If it is no, the shares go to a charity, and that this very day.

DR. STOCKMANN

And what does Katherine get?

MORTEN KIIL

Not a halfpenny. [*THE DOOR LEADING TO THE HALL OPENS, AND HOVSTAD AND ASLAKSEN MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE.*] Look at those two!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*STARING AT THEM.*] What the devil!—have YOU actually the face to come into my house?

HOVSTAD

Certainly.

ASLAKSEN

We have something to say to you, you see.

MORTEN KIIL

[*IN A WHISPER.*] Yes or no—before two o'clock.

ASLAKSEN

[*GLANCING AT HOVSTAD.*] Aha! [*MORTEN KIIL GOES OUT.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, what do you want with me? Be brief.

HOVSTAD

I can quite understand that you are annoyed with us for our attitude at the meeting yesterday.

DR. STOCKMANN

Attitude, do you call it? Yes, it was a charming attitude! I call it weak, womanish—damnably shameful!

HOVSTAD

Call it what you like, we could not do otherwise.

DR. STOCKMANN

You DARED not do otherwise— isn't that it?

HOVSTAD

Well, if you like to put it that way.

ASLAKSEN

But why did you not let us have word of it beforehand?—just a hint to Mr. Hovstad or to me?

DR. STOCKMANN

A hint? Of what?

ASLAKSEN

Of what was behind it all.

DR. STOCKMANN

I don't understand you in the least—

ASLAKSEN

[*WITH A CONFIDENTIAL NOD.*] Oh yes, you do, Dr. Stockmann.

HOVSTAD

It is no good making a mystery of it any longer.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LOOKING FIRST AT ONE OF THEM AND THEN AT THE OTHER.*] What the devil do you both mean?

ASLAKSEN

May I ask if your father-in-law is not going round the town buying up all the shares in the Baths?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, he has been buying Baths shares today; but—

ASLAKSEN

It would have been more prudent to get someone else to do it—someone less nearly related to you.

HOVSTAD

And you should not have let your name appear in the affair. There was no need for anyone to know that the attack on the Baths came from you. You ought to have consulted me, Dr. Stockmann.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*LOOKS IN FRONT OF HIM; THEN A LIGHT SEEMS TO DAWN ON HIM AND HE SAYS IN AMAZEMENT.*] Are such things conceivable? Are such things possible?

ASLAKSEN

[*WITH A SMILE.*] Evidently they are. But it is better to use a little finesse, you know.

HOVSTAD

And it is much better to have several persons in a thing of that sort; because the responsibility of each individual is lessened, when there are others with him.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*COMPOSEDLY.*] Come to the point, gentlemen. What do you want?

ASLAKSEN

Perhaps Mr. Hovstad had better—

HOVSTAD

No, you tell him, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

Well, the fact is that, now we know the bearings of the whole affair, we think we might venture to put the "People's Messenger" at your disposal.

DR. STOCKMANN

Do you dare do that now? What about public opinion? Are you not afraid of a storm breaking upon our heads?

HOVSTAD

We will try to weather it.

ASLAKSEN

And you must be ready to go off quickly on a new tack, Doctor. As soon as your invective has done its work—

DR. STOCKMANN

Do you mean, as soon as my father-in-law and I have got hold of the shares at a low figure?

HOVSTAD

Your reasons for wishing to get the control of the Baths are mainly scientific, I take it.

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course; it was for scientific reasons that I persuaded the old "Badger" to stand in with me in the matter. So we will tinker at the conduit-pipes a little, and dig up a little bit of the shore, and it shan't cost the town a sixpence. That will be all right—eh?

HOVSTAD

I think so—if you have the "People's Messenger" behind you.

ASLAKSEN

The Press is a power in a free community. Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

Quite so. And so is public opinion. And you, Mr. Aslaksen—I suppose you will be answerable for the Householders' Association?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, and for the Temperance Society. You may rely on that.

DR. STOCKMANN

But, gentlemen—I really am ashamed to ask the question—but, what return do you—?

HOVSTAD

We should prefer to help you without any return whatever, believe me. But the "People's Messenger" is in rather a shaky condition; it doesn't go really well; and I should be very unwilling to suspend the paper now, when there is so much work to do here in the political way.

DR. STOCKMANN

Quite so; that would be a great trial to such a friend of the people as you are. *[FLARES UP.]* But I am an enemy of the people, remember! *[WALKS ABOUT THE ROOM.]* Where have I put my stick? Where the devil is my stick?

HOVSTAD

What's that?

ASLAKSEN

Surely you never mean—

DR. STOCKMANN

[STANDING STILL.] And suppose I don't give you a single penny of all I get out of it? Money is not very easy to get out of us rich folk, please to remember!

HOVSTAD

And you please to remember that this affair of the shares can be represented in two ways!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and you are just the man to do it. If I don't come to the rescue of the "People's Messenger," you will certainly take an evil view of the affair; you will hunt me down, I can well imagine—pursue me—try to throttle me as a dog does a hare.

HOVSTAD

It is a natural law; every animal must fight for its own livelihood.

ASLAKSEN

And get its food where it can, you know.

DR. STOCKMANN

[WALKING ABOUT THE ROOM.] Then you go and look for yours in the gutter; because I am going to show you which is the strongest animal of us three! *[FINDS AN UMBRELLA AND BRANDISHES IT ABOVE HIS HEAD.]* Ah, now—!

HOVSTAD

You are surely not going to use violence!

ASLAKSEN

Take care what you are doing with that umbrella.

DR. STOCKMANN

Out of the window with you, Mr. Hovstad!

HOVSTAD

[*EDGING TO THE DOOR.*] Are you quite mad!

DR. STOCKMANN

Out of the window, Mr. Aslaksen! Jump, I tell you! You will have to do it, sooner or later.

ASLAKSEN

[*RUNNING ROUND THE WRITING-TABLE.*] Moderation, Doctor—I am a delicate man—I can stand so little—[*CALLS OUT.*] help, help!

[*MRS. STOCKMANN, PETRA AND HORSTER COME IN FROM THE SITTING-ROOM.*]

MRS. STOCKMANN

Good gracious, Thomas! What is happening?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*BRANDISHING THE UMBRELLA.*] Jump out, I tell you! Out into the gutter!

HOVSTAD

An assault on an unoffending man! I call you to witness, Captain Horster. [*HURRIES OUT THROUGH THE HALL.*]

ASLAKSEN

[*IRRESOLUTELY.*] If only I knew the way about here—[*STEALS OUT THROUGH THE SITTING-ROOM.*]

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*HOLDING HER HUSBAND BACK.*] Control yourself, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*THROWING DOWN THE UMBRELLA.*] Upon my soul, they have escaped after all.

MRS. STOCKMANN

What did they want you to do?

DR. STOCKMANN

I will tell you later on; I have something else to think about now. [*GOES TO THE TABLE AND WRITES SOMETHING ON A CALLING-CARD.*] Look there, Katherine; what is written there?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Three big Noes; what does that mean.

DR. STOCKMANN

I will tell you that too, later on. [*HOLDS OUT THE CARD TO PETRA.*] There, Petra; tell sooty-face to run over to the "Badger's" with that, as quick as she can. Hurry up! [*PETRA*

TAKES THE CARD AND GOES OUT TO THE HALL.]

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, I think I have had a visit from every one of the devil's messengers to-day! But now I am going to sharpen my pen till they can feel its point; I shall dip it in venom and gall; I shall hurl my inkpot at their heads!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, but we are going away, you know, Thomas.

[PETRA COMES BACK.]

DR. STOCKMANN

Well?

PETRA

She has gone with it.

DR. STOCKMANN

Good.—Going away, did you say? No, I'll be hanged if we are going away! We are going to stay where we are, Katherine!

PETRA

Stay here?

MRS. STOCKMANN

Here, in the town?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, here. This is the field of battle—this is where the fight will be. This is where I shall triumph! As soon as I have had my trousers sewn up I shall go out and look for another house. We must have a roof over our heads for the winter.

HORSTER

That you shall have in my house.

DR. STOCKMANN

Can I?

HORSIER

Yes, quite well. I have plenty of room, and I am almost never at home.

MRS. STOCKMANN

How good of you, Captain Horster!

PETRA

Thank you!

DR. STOCKMANN

[GRASPING HIS HAND.] Thank you, thank you! That is one trouble over! Now I can set to work in earnest at once. There is an endless amount of things to look through here, Katherine! Luckily I shall have all my time at my disposal; because I have been dismissed from the Baths, you know.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[WITH A SIGH.] Oh yes, I expected that.

DR. STOCKMANN

And they want to take my practice away from me too. Let them! I have got the poor people to fall back upon, anyway—those that don't pay anything; and, after all, they need me most, too. But, by Jove, they will have to listen to me; I shall preach to them in season and out of season, as it says somewhere.

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, dear Thomas, I should have thought events had showed you what use it is to preach.

DR. STOCKMANN

You are really ridiculous, Katherine. Do you want me to let myself be beaten off the field by public opinion and the compact majority and all that devilry? No, thank you! And what I want to do is so simple and clear and straightforward. I only want to drum into the heads of these curs the fact that the liberals are the most insidious enemies of freedom—that party programmes strangle every young and vigorous truth—that considerations of expediency turn morality and justice upside down—and that they will end by making life here unbearable. Don't you think, Captain Horster, that I ought to be able to make people understand that?

HORSTER

Very likely; I don't know much about such things myself.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, look here—I will explain! It is the party leaders that must be exterminated. A party leader is like a wolf, you see—like a voracious wolf. He requires a certain number of smaller victims to prey upon every year, if he is to live. Just look at Hovstad and Aslaksen! How many smaller victims have they not put an end to—or at any rate maimed and mangled until they are fit for nothing except to be householders or subscribers to the "People's Messenger"! [SITS DOWN ON THE EDGE OF THE TABLE.] Come here, Katherine—look how beautifully the sun shines to-day! And this lovely spring air I am drinking in!

MRS. STOCKMANN

Yes, if only we could live on sunshine and spring air, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, you will have to pinch and save a bit—then we shall get along. That gives me very little concern. What is much worse is, that I know of no one who is liberal-minded and high-minded enough to venture to take up my work after me.

PETRA

Don't think about that, father; you have plenty of time before you.—Hello, here are the boys already!

[EJLIF AND MORTEN COME IN FROM THE SITTING-ROOM.]

MRS. STOCKMANN

Have you got a holiday?

MORTEN

No; but we were fighting with the other boys between lessons—

EJLIF

That isn't true; it was the other boys were fighting with us.

MORTEN

Well, and then Mr. Rorlund said we had better stay at home for a day or two.

DR. STOCKMANN

[SNAPPING HIS FINGERS AND GETTING UP FROM THE TABLE.] I have it! I have it, by Jove! You shall never set foot in the school again!

THE BOYS

No more school!

MRS. STOCKMANN

But, Thomas—

DR. STOCKMANN

Never, I say. I will educate you myself; that is to say, you shan't learn a blessed thing—

MORTEN

Hooray!

DR. STOCKMANN

—but I will make liberal-minded and high-minded men of you. You must help me with that, Petra.

PETRA

Yes, father, you may be sure I will.

DR. STOCKMANN

And my school shall be in the room where they insulted me and called me an enemy of the people. But we are too few as we are; I must have at least twelve

boys to begin with.

MRS. STOCKMANN

You will certainly never get them in this town.

DR. STOCKMANN

We shall. *[To THE BOYS.]* Don't you know any street urchins—regular ragamuffins—?

MORTEN

Yes, father, I know lots!

DR. STOCKMANN

That's capital! Bring me some specimens of them. I am going to experiment with curs, just for once; there may be some exceptional heads among them.

MORTEN

And what are we going to do, when you have made liberal-minded and high-minded men of us?

DR. STOCKMANN

Then you shall drive all the wolves out of the country, my boys!

*[EJLIF LOOKS RATHER DOUBTFUL ABOUT IT; MORTEN JUMPS
ABOUT CRYING "HURRAH!"]*

MRS. STOCKMANN

Let us hope it won't be the wolves that will drive you out of the country, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

Are you out of your mind, Katherine? Drive me out! Now—when I am the strongest man in the town!

MRS. STOCKMANN

The strongest—now?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and I will go so far as to say that now I am the strongest man in the whole world.

MORTEN

I say!

DR. STOCKMANN

[LOWERING HIS VOICE.] Hush! You mustn't say anything about it yet; but I have made a great discovery.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Another one?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes. [*GATHERS THEM ROUND HIM, AND SAYS CONFIDENTIALLY.*] It is this, let me tell you—that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*SMILING AND SHAKING HER HEAD.*] Oh, Thomas, Thomas!

PETRA

[*ENCOURAGINGLY, AS SHE GRASPS HER FATHER'S HANDS.*] Father!

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Selected Poems

American

Realism

Now one of the best-known American poets, Emily Dickinson was not known during her lifetime; ten poems were published anonymously, and the rest were published after her death. Dickinson's poetry resists easy categorization within literary movements. Traditionally Romantic themes such as nature and passion are presented in the startlingly direct—or even blunt—manner of Realism; while not truly Transcendentalist, the poems concern themselves with finding meaning in one's self, rather than in material possessions or earthly concerns; her unconventional use of language, punctuation, and approximate rhyme (or "slant rhyme") rejects traditional styles in the way that later Modernists would embrace. In fact, it was only with the advent of Modernism that Dickinson's poems received the kind of widespread acclaim for their innovation and daring that would mark her as one of the most significant poets of the 19th century. Although she spent most of her adult life in seclusion in her family's home in Amherst, Massachusetts, Dickinson maintained contact with the outside world through her letters, over a thousand of which have survived. After her death, Dickinson's family published the almost 1800 poems that she had written; most of the poems were not titled, and editors have had to choose how to organize the poems. The poems often use common meter as a starting point (a pattern of an eight syllable line followed by a six syllable line, sometimes referred to as hymn meter), but develop other patterns—or lack of pattern—from there. Dickinson's poems often surprise the reader: the poem "A Bird came down the Walk" begins with a Romantic subject—nature—but switches quickly to a slightly gross realism. Poems such as "Because I could not stop for Death" approach serious subjects with unexpected humor. Her unusual approaches to common themes such as love, death, nature, and identity remain engaging to readers to the present day.

Consider while reading:

1. How does Dickinson use humor in her poetry? What is most surprising about the humor, when she uses it?
2. How does Dickinson portray nature?
3. Which details in the poems seem to be examples of Romanticism, and which do not?
4. What kinds of relationships does Dickinson value?

Written by Laura Getty

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death, He kindly stopped for me; The carriage held
but just ourselves And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste, And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too, For his civility.

We passed the school where children played, Their lessons scarcely done; We
passed the fields of gazing grain, We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed A swelling of the ground; The roof was
scarcely visible, The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each Feels shorter than the day I first surmised the
horses' heads Were toward eternity.

A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

A bird came down the walk: He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves And ate the fellow, raw.
And then he drank a dew From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall To let a beetle pass.
He glanced with rapid eyes That hurried all abroad,— They looked like frightened
beads, I thought; He stirred his velvet head Like one in danger; cautious, I offered
him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers And rowed him softer home Than oars divide the
ocean, Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon, Leap, plashless, as they swim.

THE BRAIN IS WIDER THAN THE SKY

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

The brain is wider than the sky, For, put them side by side, The one the other will
include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea, For, hold them, blue to blue, The one the other
will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God, For, lift them, pound for pound, And they will
differ, if they do, As syllable from sound.

HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul, And sings the tune
without the words, And never stops at all,
And sweetest in the gale is heard; And sore must be the storm That could
abash the little bird That kept so many warm.
I 've heard it in the chillest land, And on the strangest sea; Yet, never, in
extremity, It asked a crumb of me.

I DIED FOR BEAUTY, BUT WAS SCARCE

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

I died for beauty, but was scarce Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain In an adjoining room.
He questioned softly why I failed?
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth,—the two are one; We brethren are," he said.
And so, as kinsmen met a night, We talked between the rooms, Until the moss had
reached our lips, And covered up our names.

I HEARD A FLY BUZZ WHEN I DIED

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

I heard a fly buzz when I died; The stillness round my form Was like the stillness
in the air Between the heavens of storm.

The eyes beside had wrung them dry, And breaths were gathering sure For that last
onset, when the king Be witnessed in his power.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away What portion of me I
Could make assignable,—and then There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz, Between the light and me; And then the
windows failed, and then I could not see to see.

IF I CAN STOP ONE HEART FROM BREAKING

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain; If I can ease
one life the aching, Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin Unto his nest again, I shall not live in vain.

MY LIFE CLOSED TWICE BEFORE ITS CLOSE

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

My life closed twice before its close; It yet remains to see If Immortality
unveil

A third event to me, So huge, so hopeless to conceive, As these that
twice befell.

Parting is all we know of heaven, And all we need of hell.

THE SOUL SELECTS HER OWN SOCIETY

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

The soul selects her own society, Then shuts the door; On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing At her low gate;

Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation Choose one;

Then close the valves of her attention Like stone.

SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

Success is counted sweetest By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.
Not one of all the purple host Who took the flag to-day Can tell the definition, So
clear, of victory,
As he, defeated, dying, On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph Break, agonized and clear!

'THERE'S A CERTAIN SLANT OF LIGHT

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

There's a certain slant of light, On winter afternoons,
That oppresses, like the weight Of cathedral tunes.
Heavenly hurt it gives us; We can find no scar,
But internal difference Where the meanings are.
None may teach it anything, 'T is the seal, despair,— An imperial affliction Sent
us of the air.
When it comes, the landscape listens, Shadows hold their breath; When it goes, 't
is like the distance On the look of death.

WILD NIGHTS! WILD NIGHTS!

License: Public Domain

Emily Dickinson

Wild nights! Wild nights!

Were I with thee, Wild nights should be Our luxury!

Futile the winds To a heart in port,— Done with the compass, Done with the chart.

Rowing in Eden!

Ah! the sea!

Might I but moor To-night in thee!

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Goblin Market

British

Realism

Christina Rossetti was born the youngest child in a famous and accomplished family of artists, poets and scholars. Educated at home, she was by nature reserved and pious, like her mother. A devout evangelical Christian, she rejected suitors she considered not sufficiently serious in their faith. She suffered from neuralgia and angina for much of her life and lived very quietly, working for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and writing mostly devotional poetry.

The long poem "Goblin Market" (1862) is Rossetti's best known work and is markedly different in style and content from any of her other poems. Published in 1862 and illustrated by her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the well-known Pre-Raphael poet, the poem was controversial from the first. While she informed her publisher that the poem was not intended for children, Rossetti often insisted in public that it was intended for children. The plot of the long narrative poem is very similar to a fairy tale: the brave and steadfast sister, Lizzie, saves her impulsive sister Laura from a deadly enchantment that has resulted from Laura succumbing to the temptation of eating goblin fruit. The poem's dark undertones of sexuality, commodification, and religious ritual have fascinated readers since its publication.

Consider while reading:

1. Note both the description of the fruits the goblin men offer, and their abundance. What is Rossetti suggesting about the fruit here? What's wrong with it? What's appealing about it?
2. The climax of the poem is in Lizzie's sacrificial act on her sister's behalf. What kinds of associations does the line, "Eat me, drink me, love me" set up?
3. In what way might we describe this poem as an "initiation" experience. Consider especially the last part of the poem and the "moral" of the

narrative.

Written by Anita Turlington

AFTER DEATH

License: Public Domain

Christina Rossetti

The curtains were half drawn, the floor was swept And strewn with rushes,
 rosemary and may Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay, Where through the
 lattice ivy-shadows crept.

He leaned above me, thinking that I slept

 And could not hear him; but I heard him say: "Poor child, poor child": and as
 he turned away Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.

He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold That hid my face, or take my hand in
 his, Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head: He did not love me living; but
 once dead He pitied me; and very sweet it is

To know he still is warm though I am cold.

UP-HILL

Christina Rossetti

License: Public Domain

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

GOBLIN MARKET

License: Public Domain

Christina Rossetti

Morning and evening Maids heard the goblins cry: "Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches, Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries, Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine, Pomegranates full and fine, Dates and sharp
bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries, Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye; Come buy, come buy."
Evening by evening Among the brookside rushes, Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips, With tingling cheeks and finger-tips.
"Lie close," Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head: "We must not look at goblin men, We must not buy
their fruits: Who knows upon what soil they fed Their hungry thirsty roots?"
"Come buy," call the goblins Hobbling down the glen.
"O," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura, You should not peep at goblin men."
Lizzie covered up her eyes, Covered close lest they should look; Laura reared her
glossy head, And whispered like the restless brook: "Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.

One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds' weight.
How fair the vine must grow Whose grapes are so luscious; How warm the wind
must blow Through those fruit bushes."
"No," said Lizzie, "no, no, no; Their offers should not charm us, Their evil gifts
would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger In each ear, shut eyes and ran: Curious Laura chose to
linger Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace, One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry, One like a ratel tumbled hurry-
scurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves In the pleasant weather.
Laura stretched her gleaming neck Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch, Like a vessel at the launch When its last restraint is
gone.
Backwards up the mossy glen Turned and trooped the goblin men, With their shrill
repeated cry, "Come buy, come buy."
When they reached where Laura was They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother; Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown (Men sell not such in any town); One
heaved the golden weight Of dish and fruit to offer her: "Come buy, come buy,"
was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir, Longed but had no money:
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste In tones as smooth as honey, The cat-
faced purr'd,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard; One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly";— One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste: "Good folk, I have no coin; To take were to purloin:

I have no copper in my purse, I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze That shakes in windy weather Above the rusty heather."

"You have much gold upon your head,"

They answered altogether:

"Buy from us with a golden curl."

She clipped a precious golden lock, She dropped a tear more rare than pearl, Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red: Sweeter than honey from the rock, Stronger than man-rejoicing wine, Clearer than water flowed that juice; She never tasted such before, How should it cloy with length of use?

She sucked and sucked and sucked the more Fruits which that unknown orchard bore; She sucked until her lips were sore; Then flung the emptied rinds away, But gathered up one kernel stone, And knew not was it night or day As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate Full of wise upbraidings:

"Dear, you should not stay so late, Twilight is not good for maidens; Should not loiter in the glen In the haunts of goblin men.

Do you not remember Jeanie, How she met them in the moonlight, Took their gifts both choice and many, Ate their fruits and wore their flowers Plucked from bowers

Where summer ripens at all hours?

But ever in the noonlight

She pined and pined away;

Sought them by night and day, Found them no more, but dwindled and grew gray, Then fell with the first snow, While to this day no grass will grow Where she lies low:

I planted daisies there a year ago That never blow.

You should not loiter so."

"Nay, hush," said Laura:

"Nay, hush, my sister:

I ate and ate my fill,

Yet my mouth waters still;

To-morrow night I will

Buy more,"—and kissed her.

"Have done with sorrow;

I'll bring you plums to-morrow Fresh on their mother twigs, Cherries worth getting;

You cannot think what figs

My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap, Pellucid grapes without one seed: Odorous
indeed must be the mead Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink, With
lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."
Golden head by golden head, Like two pigeons in one nest Folded in each other's
wings, They lay down in their curtained bed: Like two blossoms on one stem, Like
two flakes of new-fallen snow, Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them, Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly, Not a bat flapped to and fro Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast Locked together in one nest.
Early in the morning When the first cock crowed his warning, Neat like bees, as
sweet and busy, Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetched in honey, milked the cows, Aired and set to rights the house, Kneaded
cakes of whitest wheat, Cakes for dainty mouths to eat, Next churned butter,
whipped up cream, Fed their poultry, sat and sewed; Talked as modest maidens
should: Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part; One warbling for the mere bright day's delight, One
longing for the night.
At length slow evening came: They went with pitchers to the reedy brook; Lizzie
most placid in her look, Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep; Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden
flags, Then turning homeward said: "The sunset flushes Those furthest loftiest
crag; Come, Laura, not another maiden lags, No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loitered still among the rushes And said the bank was steep.
And said the hour was early still, The dew not fallen, the wind not chill: Listening
ever, but not catching The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling; Let alone
the herds
That used to tramp along the glen, In groups or single,

Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged: "O Laura, come; I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look: You should not loiter longer at this brook: Come with me home.

The stars rise, the moon bends her arc, Each glow-worm winks her spark, Let us get home before the night grows dark; For clouds may gather

Though this is summer weather, Put out the lights and drench us through; Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

Laura turned cold as stone To find her sister heard that cry alone, That goblin cry, "Come buy our fruits, come buy."

Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?

Must she no more such succous pasture find, Gone deaf and blind?

Her tree of life drooped from the root: She said not one word in her heart's sore ache; But peering thro' the dimness, naught discerning, Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way; So crept to bed, and lay

Silent till Lizzie slept;

Then sat up in a passionate yearning, And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night, Laura kept watch in vain,

In sullen silence of exceeding pain.

She never caught again the goblin cry: "Come buy, come buy";— She never spied the goblin men Hawking their fruits along the glen: But when the noon waxed bright Her hair grew thin and gray; She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn To swift decay, and burn

Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone She set it by a wall that faced the south; Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root, Watched for a waxing shoot, But there came none;

It never saw the sun,

It never felt the trickling moisture run: While with sunk eyes and faded mouth She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees False waves in desert drouth With shade of leaf-crowned trees, And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house, Tended the fowls or cows,

Fetches honey, kneaded cakes of wheat, Brought water from the brook: But sat down listless in the chimney-nook And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear To watch her sister's cankerous care, Yet not to share. She night and morning

Caught the goblins' cry:

"Come buy our orchard fruits, Come buy, come buy:"— Beside the brook, along the glen, She heard the tramp of goblin men, The voice and stir

Poor Laura could not hear;

Longed to buy fruit to comfort her, But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave, Who should have been a bride; But who for
joys brides hope to have Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter-time,
With the first glazing rime, With the first snow-fall of crisp winter-time.
Till Laura, dwindling, Seemed knocking at Death's door: Then Lizzie weighed no
more Better and worse,
But put a silver penny in her purse, Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps
of furze At twilight, halted by the brook; And for the first time in her life Began to
listen and look.
Laughed every goblin When they spied her peeping: Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing, Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler, Helter-skelter, hurry-skurry, Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her;
Squeezed and caressed her;
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers and plates:
"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."—

"Good folk," said Lizzie, Mindful of Jeanie,
"Give me much and many";—
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honor and eat with us,"
They answered grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly, Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavor would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us, Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."— "Thank you," said Lizzie; "but one waits At home
alone for me:
So, without further parleying, If you will not sell me any Of your fruits though
much and many, Give me back my silver penny I tossed you for a fee."— They
began to scratch their pates, No longer wagging, purring, But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking, Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots, Stamped upon her tender feet, Held her hands
and squeezed their fruits Against her mouth to make her eat.
White and golden Lizzie stood, Like a lily in a flood,— Like a rock of blue-veined
stone Lashed by tides obstreperously,— Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree White with blossoms honey-sweet Sore beset by
wasp and bee,— Like a royal virgin town

Topped with gilded dome and spire Close beleaguered by a fleet Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water, Twenty cannot make him drink.

Though the goblins cuffed and caught her, Coaxed and fought her,

Bullied and besought her,

Scratched her, pinched her black as ink, Kicked and knocked her,

Mauled and mocked her,

Lizzie uttered not a word;

Would not open lip from lip Lest they should cram a mouthful in; But laughed in heart to feel the drip Of juice that syrugged all her face, And lodged in dimples of her chin, And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.

At last the evil people,

Worn out by her resistance, Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit Along whichever road they took, Not leaving root or stone or shoot.

Some writhed into the ground, Some dived into the brook

With ring and ripple,

Some scudded on the gale without a sound, Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle, Lizzie went her way;

Knew not was it night or day; Sprang up the bank, tore through the furze,

Threaded copse and dingle,

And heard her penny jingle

Bouncing in her purse,—

Its bounce was music to her ear.

She ran and ran

As if she feared some goblin man Dogged her with gibe or curse Or something worse:

But not one goblin skurried after, Nor was she pricked by fear; The kind heart made her windy-paced That urged her home quite out of breath with haste And inward laughter.

She cried "Laura," up the garden, "Did you miss me?

Come and kiss me.

Never mind my bruises,

Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices Squeezed from goblin fruits for you, Goblin pulp and goblin dew.

Eat me, drink me, love me;

Laura, make much of me:

For your sake I have braved the glen And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair, Flung her arms up in the air, Clutched her hair:

"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted For my sake the fruit forbidden?

Must your light like mine be hidden, Your young life like mine be wasted, Undone
in mine undoing
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"— She clung about her sister, Kissed and kissed
and kissed her: Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes, Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain, She kissed and kissed her with a hungry
mouth.
Her lips began to scorch, That juice was wormwood to her tongue, She loathed the
feast:
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung, Rent all her robe, and wrung Her
hands in lamentable haste, And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch Borne by a racer at full speed, Or like the mane
of horses in their flight, Or like an eagle when she stems the light Straight toward
the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed, Or like a flying flag when armies run.
Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart, Met the fire smouldering
there And overbore its lesser flame; She gorged on bitterness without a name: Ah!
fool, to choose such part Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife: Like the watch-tower of a town Which an
earthquake shatters down, Like a lightning-stricken mast, Like a wind-uprooted
tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped water-spout Cast down headlong in the sea, She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past, Is it death or is it life?
Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her, Counted her pulse's flagging stir, Felt for
her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face With tears and fanning leaves: But
when the first birds chirped about their eaves, And early reapers plodded to the
place Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass, And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream, Laura awoke as from a dream, Laughed in
the innocent old way, Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice; Her gleaming locks
showed not one thread of gray, Her breath was sweet as May, And light danced in
her eyes.
Days, weeks, months, years Afterwards, when both were wives With children of
their own; Their mother-hearts beset with fears, Their lives bound up in tender

lives; Laura would call the little ones And tell them of her early prime, Those
pleasant days long gone Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen, The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men, Their
fruits like honey to the throat, But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town;) Would tell them how her sister stood In deadly
peril to do her good, And win the fiery antidote: Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together, "For there is no friend like a sister, In calm or
stormy weather,
To cheer one on the tedious way, To fetch one if one goes astray, To lift one if one
totters down, To strengthen whilst one stands."

"No, THANK YOU, JOHN"

License: Public Domain

Christina Rossetti

I never said I loved you, John: Why will you tease me, day by day, And wax a
weariness to think upon
With always "do" and "pray"?

You know I never loved you, John; No fault of mine made me your toast: Why
will you haunt me with a face as wan As shows an hour-old ghost?

I dare say Meg or Moll would take Pity upon you, if you'd ask:
And pray don't remain single for my sake Who can't perform that task.

I have no heart?—Perhaps I have not; But then you're mad to take offence That I
don't give you what I have not got: Use your own common sense.

Let bygones be bygones:
Don't call me false, who owed not to be true: I'd rather answer "No" to fifty
Johns Than answer "Yes" to you.

Let's mar our pleasant days no more, Song-birds of passage, days of youth: Catch
at to-day, forget the days before: I'll wink at your untruth.

Let us strike hands as hearty friends; No more, no less: and friendship's good:
Only don't keep in view ulterior ends, And points not understood

In open treaty. Rise above Quibbles and shuffling off and on: Here's friendship for
you if you like; but love,— No, thank you, John.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894)

The Poison Tree

Indian

Realism

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was an Indian author born in Bengal. His education was largely British, and he was one of the first to graduate from the University of Calcutta. His writing is groundbreaking for his work using European style prose in the Bengali language, something that had not been done before. He incorporates nationalist themes into his writing. He wrote *Anandamath*, a novel widely considered one of the most important works of literature in India, which contained "Bande Mataram" ("Hail to Thee, Mother"). "Bande Mataram" was so inspiring to the people that it was adopted by the nationalist movement. In his efforts, he combined Hindu heroes and patriotism that, in turn, inspired national pride in some of his countrymen, but did alienate some Muslim Indians. He serialized some of his writing in monthly magazine he founded, *Bangodarshan*. His novel *The Poison Tree (Bishabriksha)* first appeared serialized in that publication in 1873. His novel explores the moral dilemma of a love triangle between a man, his wife, and a young widow, which also explores of idea of widow remarriage.

Consider while reading:

1. How does Chatterjee's protagonist incorporate Hindu ideas and beliefs? Why is that significant?
2. What social norms is Chatterjee questioning in his work? Why?
3. What alternative does Chatterjee offer for widows? Why is that significant?

Written by Laura Ng

THE POISON TREE

A Tale of Hindu Life in Bengal

License: Public Domain

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

Translated by Miriam S. Knight

For the assistance of the reader, the names of the principal characters in the tale are given—

NAGENDRA NATHA DATTA: A WEALTHY ZEMINDAR

SURJA MUKHI: HIS WIFE

DEBENDRA DATTA: COUSIN TO NAGENDRA

SRISH CHANDRA MITTRA: ACCOUNTANT IN A MERCHANT'S OFFICE

KAMAL MANI: HIS WIFE, SISTER TO NAGENDRA

SATISH: THEIR BABY BOY

TARA CHARAN: ADOPTED BROTHER OF SURJA MUKHI

KUNDA NANDINI: AN ORPHAN GIRL

HIRA: SERVANT IN NAGENDRA'S HOUSEHOLD

Chapter I

Nagendra's Journey by Boat

Nagendra Natha Datta is about to travel by boat. It is the month *Joisto* (May—June), the time of storms. His wife, Surja Mukhi, had adjured him, saying, "Be careful; if a storm arises be sure you fasten the boat to the shore. Do not remain in the boat." Nagendra had consented to this, otherwise Surja Mukhi would not have permitted him to leave home; and unless he went to Calcutta his suits in the Courts would not prosper.

Nagendra Natha was a young man, about thirty years of age, a wealthy *zemindar* (landholder) in Zillah Govindpur. He dwelt in a small village which we shall call Haripur. He was travelling in his own boat. The first day or two passed without obstacle. The river flowed smoothly on—leaped, danced, cried out, restless, unending, playful. On shore, herdsmen were grazing their oxen—one sitting under a tree singing, another smoking, some fighting, others eating. Inland, husbandmen were driving the plough,

beating the oxen, lavishing abuse upon them, in which the owner shared. The wives of the husbandmen, bearing vessels of water, some carrying a torn quilt, or a dirty mat, wearing a silver amulet round the neck, a ring in the nose, bracelets of brass on the arm, with unwashed garments, their skins blacker than ink, their hair unkempt, formed a chattering crowd. Among them one beauty was rubbing her head with mud, another beating a child, a third speaking with a neighbour in abuse of some nameless person, a fourth beating clothes on a plank. Further on, ladies from respectable villages adorned the *gháts* (landing-steps) with their appearance—the elders conversing, the middle-aged worshipping *Siva*, the younger covering their faces and plunging into the water; the boys and girls screaming, playing with mud, stealing the flowers offered in worship, swimming, throwing water over every one, sometimes stepping up to a lady, snatching away the image of *Siva* from her, and running off with it. The Brahmans, good tranquil men, recited the praises of *Ganga* (the sacred river Ganges) and performed their worship, sometimes, as they wiped their streaming hair, casting glances at the younger women.

In the sky, the white clouds float in the heated air. Below them fly the birds, like black dots. In the cocoanut trees, kites, like ministers of state, look around to see on what they can pounce; the cranes, being only small fry, stand raking in the mud; the *dahuk* (coloured herons), merry creatures, dive in the water; other birds of a lighter kind merely fly about. Market-boats sail along at good speed on their own behalf; ferry-boats creep along at elephantine pace to serve the needs of others only: cargo boats make no progress at all—that is the owners' concern.

On the third day of Nagendra's journey clouds arose and gradually covered the sky. The river became black, the tree-tops drooped, the paddy birds flew aloft, the water became motionless. Nagendra ordered the *manji* (boatman) to run the boat in shore and make it fast. At that moment the steersman, Rahamat Mullah, was saying his prayers, so he made no answer. Rahamat knew nothing of his business. His mother's father's sister was the daughter of a boatman; on that plea he had become a hanger-on of boatmen, and accident favoured his wishes; but he learned

nothing, his work was done as fate willed. Rahamat was not backward in speech, and when his prayers were ended he turned to the Babu and said, "Do not be alarmed, sir, there is no cause for fear." Rahamat was thus brave because the shore was close at hand, and could be reached without delay, and in a few minutes the boat was secured.

Surely the gods must have had a quarrel with Rahamat Mullah, for a great storm came up quickly. First came the wind; then the wind, having wrestled for some moments with the boughs of the trees, called to its brother the rain, and the two began a fine game. Brother Rain, mounting on brother Wind's shoulders, flew along. The two together, seizing the tree-tops, bent them down, broke the boughs, tore off the creepers, washed away the flowers, cast up the river in great waves, and made a general tumult. One brother flew off with Rahamat Mullah's head-gear; the other made a fountain of his beard. The boatmen lowered the sail, the Babu closed the windows, and the servants put the furniture under shelter.

Nagendra was in a great strait. If, in fear of the storm, he should leave the boat, the men would think him a coward; if he remained he would break his word to Surja Mukhi. Some may ask, What harm if he did? We know not, but Nagendra thought it harm. At this moment Rahamat Mullah said, "Sir, the rope is old; I do not know what may happen. The storm has much increased; it will be well to leave the boat." Accordingly Nagendra got out.

No one can stand on the river bank without shelter in a heavy storm of rain. There was no sign of abatement; therefore Nagendra, thinking it necessary to seek for shelter, set out to walk to the village, which was at some distance from the river, through miry paths. Presently the rain ceased, the wind abated slightly, but the sky was still thickly covered with clouds; therefore both wind and rain might be expected at night. Nagendra went on, not turning back.

Though it was early in the evening, there was thick darkness, because of the clouds. There was no sign of village, house, plain, road, or river; but the trees, being surrounded by myriads of fireflies, looked like artificial trees studded with diamonds. The

lightning goddess also still sent quick flashes through the now silent black and white clouds. A woman's anger does not die away suddenly. The assembled frogs, rejoicing in the newly fallen rain, held high festival; and if you listened attentively the voice of the cricket might be heard, like the undying crackle of [Ravana's](#) funeral pyre. Amid the sounds might be distinguished the fall of the rain-drops on the leaves of the trees, and that of the leaves into the pools beneath; the noise of jackals' feet on the wet paths, occasionally that of the birds on the trees shaking the water from their drenched feathers, and now and then the moaning of the almost subdued wind. Presently Nagendra saw a light in the distance. Traversing the flooded earth, drenched by the drippings from the trees, and frightening away the jackals, he approached the light; and on nearing it with much difficulty, saw that it proceeded from an old brick-built house, the door of which was open. Leaving his servant outside, Nagendra entered the house, which he found in a frightful condition.

It was not quite an ordinary house, but it had no sign of prosperity. The door-frames were broken and dirty; there was no trace of human occupation—only owls, mice, reptiles, and insects gathered there. The light came only from one side. Nagendra saw some articles of furniture for human use; but everything indicated poverty. One or two cooking vessels, a broken oven, three or four brass dishes—these were the sole ornaments of the place. The walls were black; spiders' webs hung in the corners; cockroaches, spiders, lizards, and mice, scampered about everywhere. On a dilapidated bedstead lay an old man who seemed to be at death's door; his eyes were sunk, his breath hurried, his lips trembling. By the side of his bed stood an earthen lamp upon a fragment of brick taken from the ruins of the house. In it the oil was deficient; so also was it in the body of the man. Another lamp shone by the bedside—a girl of faultlessly fair face, of soft, starry beauty.

Whether because the light from the oil-less lamp was dim, or because the two occupants of the house were absorbed in thinking of their approaching separation, Nagendra's entrance was unseen. Standing in the doorway, he heard the last sorrowful words that issued from the mouth of the old man. These two, the old man

and the young girl, were friendless in this densely-peopled world. Once they had had wealth, relatives, men and maid servants—abundance of all kinds; but by the fickleness of fortune, one after another, all had gone. The mother of the family, seeing the faces of her son and daughter daily fading like the dew-drenched lotus from the pinch of poverty, had early sunk upon the bed of death. All the other stars had been extinguished with that moon. The support of the race, the jewel of his mother's eye, the hope of his father's age, even he had been laid on the pyre before his father's eyes. No one remained save the old man and this enchanting girl. They dwelt in this ruined, deserted house in the midst of the forest. Each was to the other the only helper.

Kunda Nandini was of marriageable age; but she was the staff of her father's blindness, his only bond to this world. While he lived he could give her up to no one. "There are but a few more days; if I give away Kunda where can I abide?" were the old man's thoughts when the question of giving her in marriage arose in his mind. Had it never occurred to him to ask himself what would become of Kunda when his summons came? Now the messenger of death stood at his bedside; he was about to leave the world; where would Kunda be on the morrow?

The deep, indescribable suffering of this thought expressed itself in every failing breath. Tears streamed from his eyes, ever restlessly closing and opening, while at his head sat the thirteen-year-old girl, like a stone figure, firmly looking into her father's face, covered with the shadows of death. Forgetting herself, forgetting to think where she would go on the morrow, she gazed only on the face of her departing parent. Gradually the old man's utterance became obscure, the breath left the throat, the eyes lost their light, the suffering soul obtained release from pain. In that dark place, by that glimmering lamp, the solitary Kunda Nandini, drawing her father's dead body on to her lap, remained sitting. The night was extremely dark; even now rain-drops fell, the leaves of the trees rustled, the wind moaned, the windows of the ruined house flapped noisily. In the house, the fitful light of the lamp flickered momentarily on the face of the dead, and again left it in darkness. The lamp had long been exhausted of oil; now,

after two or three flashes, it went out. Then Nagendra, with noiseless steps, went forth from the doorway.

Chapter II

"Coming Events Cast Their Shadows Before"

It was night. In the ruined house Kunda Nandini sat by her father's corpse. She called "Father!" No one made reply. At one moment Kunda thought her father slept, again that he was dead, but she could not bring that thought clearly into her mind. At length she could no longer call, no longer think. The fan still moved in her hand in the direction where her father's once living body now lay dead. At length she resolved that he slept, for if he were dead what would become of her?

After days and nights of watching amid such sorrow, sleep fell upon her. In that exposed, bitterly cold house, the palm-leaf fan in her hand, Kunda Nandini rested her head upon her arm, more beauteous than the lotus-stalk, and slept; and in her sleep she saw a vision. It seemed as if the night were bright and clear, the sky of a pure blue—that glorious blue when the moon is encircled by a halo. Kunda had never seen the halo so large as it seemed in her vision. The light was splendid, and refreshing to the eyes. But in the midst of that magnificent halo there was no moon; in its place Kunda saw the figure of a goddess of unparalleled brilliance. It seemed as if this brilliant goddess-ruled halo left the upper sky and descended gradually lower, throwing out a thousand rays of light, until it stood over Kunda's head. Then she saw that the central beauty, crowned with golden hair, and decked with jewels, had the form of a woman. The beautiful, compassionate face had a loving smile upon its lips. Kunda recognized, with mingled joy and fear, in this compassionate being the features of her long-dead mother. The shining, loving being, raising Kunda from the earth, took her into her bosom, and the orphan girl could for a long period do nought but utter the sweet word "Mother!"

Then the shining figure, kissing Kunda's face, said to her: "Child, thou hast suffered much, and I know thou hast yet more to suffer; thou so young, thy tender frame cannot endure such

sorrow. Therefore abide not here; leave the earth and come with me."

Kunda seemed to reply: "Whither shall I go?"

Then the mother, with uplifted finger indicating the shining constellations, answered, "There!"

Kunda seemed, in her dream, to gaze into the timeless, shoreless ocean of stars, and to say, "I have no strength; I cannot go so far."

Hearing this, the mother's kind and cheerful but somewhat grave face saddened, her brows knitted a little, as she said in grave, sweet tones:

"Child, follow thy own will, but it would be well for thee to go with me. The day will come when thou wilt gaze upon the stars, and long bitterly to go thither. I will once more appear to thee; when, bowed to the dust with affliction, thou rememberest me, and weepst to come to me, I will return. Then do thou come. But now do thou, looking on the horizon, follow the design of my finger. I will show thee two human figures. These two beings are in this world the arbiters of thy destiny. If possible, when thou meetest them turn away as from venomous snakes. In their paths walk thou not."

20

Then the shining figure pointed to the opposite sky. Kunda, following the indication, saw traced on the blue vault the figure of a man more beautiful than a god. Beholding his high, capacious forehead, his sincere kindly glance, his swan-like neck a little bent, and other traits of a fine man, no one would have believed that from him there was anything to be feared.

Then the figure dissolving as a cloud in the sky, the mother said—

"Forget not this god-like form. Though benevolent, he will be the cause of thy misery; therefore avoid him as a snake."

Again pointing to the heavens she continued—

"Look hither."

25

Kunda, looking, saw a second figure sketched before her, not this time that of a man, but a young woman of bright complexion and lotus-shaped eyes. At this sight she felt no fear; but the mother said—

"This dark figure in a woman's dress is a [*Rakshasi*](#). When thou seest her, flee from her."

As she thus spoke the heavens suddenly became dark, the halo disappeared from the sky, and with it the bright figure in its midst.

Then Kunda awoke from her sleep.

Nagendra went to the village, the name of which he heard was Jhunjhunpur. At his recommendation and expense, some of the villagers performed the necessary rites for the dead, one of the female neighbours remaining with the bereaved girl. When Kunda saw that they had taken her father away, she became convinced of his death, and gave way to ceaseless weeping.

30

In the morning the neighbour returned to her own house, but sent her daughter Champa to comfort Kunda Nandini.

Champa was of the same age as Kunda, and her friend. She strove to divert her mind by talking of various matters, but she saw that Kunda did not attend. She wept constantly, looking up every now and then into the sky as though in expectation.

Champa jestingly asked, "What do you see that you look into the sky a hundred times?"

Kunda replied, "My mother appeared to me yesterday, and bade me go with her, but I feared to do so; now I mourn that I did not. If she came again I would go: therefore I look constantly into the sky."

Champa said, "How can the dead return?"

35

To which Kunda replied by relating her vision.

Greatly astonished, Champa asked, "Are you acquainted with the man and woman whose forms you saw in the sky?"

"No, I had never seen them. There cannot be anywhere a man so handsome; I never saw such beauty."

On rising in the morning, Nagendra inquired of the people in the village what would become of the dead man's daughter, where she would live, and whether she had any relatives. He was told that there was no dwelling-place for her, and that she had no relatives.

Then Nagendra said, "Will not some of you receive her and give her in marriage? I will pay the expense, and so long as she

40

remains amongst you I will pay so much a month for her board and lodging."

If he had offered ready money many would have consented to his proposal; but after he had gone away Kunda would have been reduced to servitude, or turned out of the house. Nagendra did not act in so foolish a manner; therefore, money not being forthcoming, no one consented to his suggestion.

At length one, seeing him at the end of his resources, observed: "A sister of her mother's lives at Sham Bazar; Binod Ghosh is the husband's name. You are on your way to Calcutta; if you take her with you and place her with her aunt, then this *Kaystha* girl will be cared for, and you will have done your duty to your caste."

Seeing no other plan, Nagendra adopted this suggestion, and sent for Kunda to acquaint her with the arrangement.

Champa accompanied Kunda. As they were coming, Kunda, seeing Nagendra from afar, suddenly stood still like one stunned. Her feet refused to move; she stood looking at him with eyes full of astonishment.

Champa asked, "Why do you stand thus?"

Kunda, pointing with her finger, said, "It is he!"

"He! Who?" said Champa.

"He whom last night my mother pictured in the heavens."

Then Champa also stood frightened and astonished. Seeing that the girls shrank from approaching, Nagendra came near and explained everything. Kunda was unable to reply; she could only gaze with eyes full of surprise.

45

Chapter III Of Many Subjects

Reluctantly did Nagendra Natha take Kunda with him to Calcutta. On arriving there he made much search for her aunt's husband, but he found no one in Sham Bazar named Binod Ghosh. He found a Binod Das, who admitted no relationship. Thus Kunda remained as a burthen upon Nagendra.

50

Nagendra had one sister, younger than himself, named Kamal Mani, whose father-in-law's house was in Calcutta. Her husband's name was Srish Chandra Mittra. Srish Babu was accountant in the house of Plunder, Fairly, and Co. It was a great house, and Srish Chandra was wealthy. He was much attached to his brother-in-law. Nagendra took Kunda Nandini thither, and imparted her story to Kamal Mani.

Kamal was about eighteen years of age. In features she resembled Nagendra; both brother and sister were very handsome. But, in addition to her beauty, Kamal was famed for her learning. Nagendra's father, engaging an English teacher, had had Kamal Mani and Surja Mukhi well instructed. Kamal's mother-in-law was living, but she dwelt in Srish Chandra's ancestral home. In Calcutta Kamal Mani was house-mistress.

When he had finished the story of Kunda Nandini, Nagendra said, "Unless you will keep her here, there is no place for her. Later, when I return home, I will take her to Govindpur with me."

Kamal was very mischievous. When Nagendra had turned away, she snatched up Kunda in her arms and ran off with her. A tub of not very hot water stood in an adjoining room, and suddenly Kamal threw Kunda into it. Kunda was quite frightened. Then Kamal, laughing, took some scented soap and proceeded to wash Kunda. An attendant, seeing Kamal thus employed, bustled up, saying, "I will do it! I will do it!" but Kamal, sprinkling some of the hot water over the woman, sent her running away. Kamal having bathed and rubbed Kunda, she appeared like a dew-washed lotus. Then Kamal, having robed her in a beautiful white garment, dressed her hair with scented oil, and decorated her with ornaments, said to her: "Now go and salute the *Dada Babu* (elder brother), and return, but mind you do not thus to the master of the house: if he should see you he will want to marry you."

Nagendra Natha wrote Kunda's history to Surja Mukhi. Also when writing to an intimate friend of his living at a distance, named Hara Deb Ghosal, he spoke of Kunda in the following terms:

"Tell me what you consider to be the age of beauty in woman. You will say after forty, because your Brahmini is a year or two

more than that. The girl Kunda, whose history I have given you, is thirteen. On looking at her, it seems as if that were the age of beauty. The sweetness and simplicity that precede the budding-time of youth are never seen afterwards. This Kunda's simplicity is astonishing; she understands nothing. To-day she even wished to run into the streets to play with the boys. On being forbidden, she was much frightened, and desisted. Kamal is teaching her, and says she shows much aptitude in learning, but she does not understand other things. For instance, her large blue eyes—eyes swimming ever like the autumn lotus in clear water—these two eyes may be fixed upon my face, but they say nothing. I lose my senses gazing on them; I cannot explain better. You will laugh at this history of my mental stability; but if I could place you in front of those eyes, I should see what your firmness is worth. Up to this time I have been unable to determine what those eyes are like. I have not seen them look twice the same; I think there are no other such eyes in the world, they seem as if they scarcely saw the things of earth, but were ever seeking something in space. It is not that Kunda is faultlessly beautiful. Her features, if compared with those of many others, would not be highly praised; yet I think I never saw such rare beauty. It is as if there were in Kunda Nandini something not of this world, as though she were not made of flesh and blood, but of moonbeams and the scent of flowers. Nothing presents itself to my mind at this moment to which to liken her. Incomparable being! her whole person seems to breathe peace. If in some clear pool you have observed the sheen produced by the rays of the autumn moon, you have seen something resembling her. I can think of no other simile."

Surja Mukhi's reply to Nagendra's letter came in a few days. It was after this manner:

"I know not what fault your servant has committed. If it is necessary you should stay so long in Calcutta, why am I not with you to attend upon you? This is my earnest wish; the moment I receive your consent, I will set out.

"In picking up a little girl, have you forgotten me? Many unripe things are esteemed. People like green guavas, and green cucumbers; green cocoa-nuts are cooling. This low-born female is

also, I think, very young, else in meeting with her why should you forget me? Joking apart, have you given up all right over this girl? if not, I beg her from you. It is my business to arrange for her. In whatever becomes yours I have the right to share, but in this case I see your sister has entire possession. Still, I shall not vex myself much if Kamal usurps my rights.

"Do you ask what do I want with the girl? I wish to give her in marriage with Tara Charan. You know how much I have sought for a suitable wife for him. If Providence has sent us a good girl, do not disappoint me. If Kamal will give her up, bring Kunda Nandini with you when you come. I have written to Kamal also recommending this. I am having ornaments fashioned, and am making other preparations for the marriage. Do not linger in Calcutta. Is it not true that if a man stays six months in that city he becomes quite stupid? If you design to marry Kunda, bring her with you, and I will give her to you. Only say that you propose to marry her, and I will arrange the marriage-basket."

60

Who Tara Charan was will be explained later. Whoever he was, both Nagendra and Kamal Mani consented to Surja Mukhi's proposal. Therefore it was resolved that when Nagendra went home Kunda Nandini should accompany him. Every one consented with delight, and Kamal also prepared some ornaments. How blind is man to the future! Some years later there came a day when Nagendra and Kamal Mani bowed to the dust, and, striking their foreheads in grief, murmured: "In how evil a moment did we find Kunda Nandini! in how evil an hour did we agree to Surja Mukhi's letter!" Now Kamal Mani, Surja Mukhi, and Nagendra, together have sowed the poison seed; later they will all repent it with wailing.

Causing his boat to be got ready, Nagendra returned to Govindpur with Kunda Nandini. Kunda had almost forgotten her dream; while journeying with Nagendra it recurred to her memory, but thinking of his benevolent face and kindly character, Kunda could not believe that any harm would come to her from him. In like manner there are many insects who, seeing a destructive flame, enter therein.

Chapter IV

Tara Charan

The Poet Kalidas was supplied with flowers by a *Malini* (flower-girl). He, being a poor Brahmin, could not pay for the flowers, but in place of that he used to read some of his own verses to the *Malini*. One day there bloomed in the *Malini's* tank a lily of unparalleled beauty. Plucking it, the *Malini* offered it to Kalidas. As a reward the poet read to her some verses from the *Megha Duta* (Cloud Messenger). That poem is an ocean of wit, but every one knows that its opening lines are tasteless. The *Malini* did not relish them, and being annoyed she rose to go.

The poet asked: "Oh! friend *Malini*, are you going?"

"Your verses have no flavour," replied the *Malini*.

"*Malini*! you will never reach heaven."

"Why so?"

"There is a staircase to heaven. By ascending millions of steps heaven is reached. My poem has also a staircase; these tasteless verses are the steps. If you can't climb these few steps, how will you ascend the heavenly ladder?"

The *Malini* then, in fear of losing heaven through the Brahmin's curse, listened to the *Megha Duta* from beginning to end. She admired the poem; and next day, binding a wreath of flowers in the name of Cupid, she crowned the poet's temples therewith.

This ordinary poem of mine is not heaven; neither has it a staircase of a million steps. Its flavour is faint and the steps are few. These few tasteless chapters are the staircase. If among my readers there is one of the *Malini's* disposition, I warn him that without climbing these steps he will not arrive at the pith of the story.

Surja Mukhi's father's house was in Konnagar. Her father was a *Kaystha* of good position. He was cashier in some house at Calcutta. Surja Mukhi was his only child. In her infancy a *Kaystha* widow named Srimati lived in her father's house as a servant, and looked after Surja Mukhi. Srimati had one child named Tara Charan, of the same age as Surja Mukhi. With him

Surja Mukhi had played, and on account of this childish association she felt towards him the affection of a sister.

Srimati was a beautiful woman, and therefore soon fell into trouble. A wealthy man of the village, of evil character, having cast his eyes upon her, she forsook the house of Surja Mukhi's father. Whither she went no one exactly knew, but she did not return. Tara Charan, forsaken by his mother, remained in the house of Surja Mukhi's father, who was a very kind-hearted man, and brought up this deserted boy as his own child; not keeping him in slavery as an unpaid servant, but having him taught to read and write. Tara Charan learned English at a free mission-school. Afterwards Surja Mukhi was married, and some years later her father died. By this time Tara Charan had learned English after a clumsy fashion, but he was not qualified for any business. Rendered homeless by the death of Surja Mukhi's father, he went to her house. At her instigation Nagendra opened a school in the village, and Tara Charan was appointed master. Nowadays, by means of the grant-in-aid system in many villages, sleek-haired, song-singing, harmless Master Babus appear; but at that time such a being as a Master Babu was scarcely to be seen. Consequently, Tara Charan appeared as one of the village gods; especially as it was known in the bazaar that he had read the *Citizen of the World*, the *Spectator*, and three books of *Euclid*. On account of these gifts he was received into the *Brahmo Samaj* of Debendra Babu, the zemindar of Debipur, and reckoned as one of that Babu's retinue.

Tara Charan wrote many essays on widow-marriage, on the education of women, and against idol-worship; read them weekly in the *Samaj*, and delivered many discourses beginning with "Oh, most merciful God!" Some of these he took from the [*Tattwa Bodhini*](#), and some he caused to be written for him by the school *pandit*. He was forever preaching: "Abandon idol-worship, give choice in marriage, give women education; why do you keep them shut up in a cage? let women come out." There was a special cause for this liberality on the subject of women, inasmuch as in his own house there was no woman. Up to this time he had not married. Surja Mukhi had made great efforts to

get him married, but as his mother's story was known in Govindpur, no respectable *Kaystha* consented to give him his daughter. Many a common, disreputable *Kaystha* girl he might have had; but Surja Mukhi, regarding Tara Charan as a brother, would not give her consent, since she did not choose to call such a girl sister-in-law. While she was seeking for a respectable *Kaystha* girl, Nagendra's letter came, describing Kunda Nandini's gifts and beauty. She resolved to give her to Tara Charan in marriage.

Chapter V

Oh! Lotus-eyed, Who Art Thou?

Kunda arrived safely with Nagendra at Govindpur. At the sight of Nagendra's dwelling she became speechless with wonder, for she had never seen one so grand. There were three divisions without and three within. Each division was a large city. The outer *mahal* (division) was entered by an iron gate, and was surrounded on all sides by a handsome lofty iron railing. From the gate a broad, red, well-metalled path extended, on each side of which were beds of fresh grass that would have formed a paradise for cows. In the midst of each plat was a circle of shrubs, all blooming with variously coloured flowers. In front rose the lofty demi-upper-roomed *boita khana* (reception-hall), approached by a broad flight of steps, the verandah of which was supported by massive fluted pillars. The floor of the lower part of this house was of marble. Above the parapet, in its centre, an enormous clay lion, with dependent mane, hung out its red tongue. This was Nagendra's *boita khana*. To left and right of the grass plats stood a row of one-storied buildings, containing on one side the *daftar khana* (accountant's office) and *kacheri* (court-house); on the other the storehouse, treasury, and servants' dwellings. On both sides of the gate were the doorkeepers' lodges. This first *mahal* was named the *kacheri bari* (house of business); the next to it was the *puja mahal* (division for worship). The large hall of worship formed one side of the *puja mahal*; on the other three sides were two-storied houses. No one lived in this *mahal*. At the festival of

Durga it was thronged; but now grass sprouted between the tiles of the court, pigeons frequented the halls, the houses were full of furniture, and the doors were kept locked. Beside this was the *thakur bari* (room assigned to the family deity): in it on one side was the temple of the gods, the handsome stone-built dancing-hall; on the remaining sides, the kitchen for the gods, the dwelling-rooms of the priests, and a guest-house. In this *mahal* there was no lack of people. The tribe of priests, with garlands on their necks and sandal-wood marks on their foreheads; a troop of cooks; people bearing baskets of flowers for the altars; some bathing the gods, some ringing bells, chattering, pounding sandal-wood, cooking; men and women servants bearing water, cleaning floors, washing rice, quarrelling with the cooks. In the guest-house an ascetic, with ash-smeared, loose hair, is lying sleeping; one with upraised arm (stiffened thus through years) is distributing drugs and charms to the servants of the house; a white-bearded, red-robed *Brahmachari*, swinging his chaplet of beads, is reading from a manuscript copy of the *Bhagavat-gita* in the *Nagari* character; holy mendicants are quarrelling for their share of *ghi* and flour. Here a company of emaciated *Boiragis*, with wreaths of *tulsi* (a sacred plant) round their necks and the marks of their religion painted on their foreheads, the bead fastened into the knot of hair on their heads shaking with each movement, are beating the drums as they sing:

"I could not get the opportunity to speak,
The elder brother Dolai was with me."

The wives of the *Boiragis*, their hair braided in a manner pleasing to their husbands, are singing the tune of *Govinda Adhi Kari* to the accompaniment of the tambourine. Young *Boisnavis* singing with elder women of the same class, the middle-aged trying to bring their voices into unison with those of the old. In the midst of the court-yard idle boys fighting, and abusing each other's parents.

These three were the outer *mahals*. Behind these came the three inner ones. The inner *mahal* behind the *kacheri bari* was for

Nagendra's private use. In that only himself, his wife, and their personal attendants were allowed; also the furniture for their use. This place was new, built by Nagendra himself, and very well arranged. Next to it, and behind the *puja bari*, came another *mahal*; this was old, ill-built, the rooms low, small, and dirty. Here was a whole city-full of female relations, mother's sister and mother's cousin, father's sister and cousin; mother's widowed sister, mother's married sister; father's sister's son's wife, mother's sister's son's daughter. All these female relatives cawing day and night like a set of crows in a banian tree; at every moment screams, laughter, quarrelling, bad reasoning, gossip, reproach, the scuffling of boys, the crying of girls. "Bring water!" "Give the clothes!" "Cook the rice!" "The child does not eat!" "Where is the milk?" etc., is heard as an ocean of confused sounds. Next to it, behind the *Thakur bari*, was the cook-house. Here a woman, having placed the rice-pot on the fire, gathering up her feet, sits gossiping with her neighbour on the details of her son's marriage. Another, endeavouring to light a fire with green wood, her eyes smarting with the smoke, is abusing the *gomashta* (factor), and producing abundant proof that he has supplied this wet wood to pocket part of the price. Another beauty, throwing fish into the hot oil, closes her eyes and twists her ten fingers, making a grimace, for oil leaping forth has burnt her skin. One having bathed her long hair, plentifully besmeared with oil, braiding it in a curve on the temples and fastening it in a knot on the top of her head, stirs the pulse cooking in an earthen pot, like Krishna prodding the cows with a stick. Here Bami, Kaymi, Gopal's mother, Nipal's mother, are shredding with a big knife vegetable pumpkins, brinjals, the sound of the cutting steel mingling with abuse of the neighbours, of the masters, of everybody: that Golapi has become a widow very young; that Chandi's husband is a great drunkard; that Koylash's husband has secured a fine appointment as writer to the *Darogah*; that there could not be in the world such a flying journey as that of Gopal, nor such a wicked child as Parvati's; how the English must be of the race of *Ravan* (the ten-headed king of Ceylon); how *Bhagirati* had brought *Ganga*; how Sham Biswas was the lover of the daughter of the Bhattacharjyas;

with many other subjects. A dark, stout-bodied woman, placing a large *bonti* (a fish-cutter) on a heap of ashes in the court, is cutting fish; the kites, frightened at her gigantic size and her quick-handedness, keeping away, yet now and again darting forward to peck at the fish. Here a white-haired woman is bringing water; there one with powerful hand is grinding spices. Here, in the storehouse, a servant, a cook, and the store-keeper are quarrelling together; the store-keeper maintaining, "The *ghi* (clarified butter) I have given is the right quantity;" the cook disputing it; the servant saying, "We could manage with the quantity you give if you left the storehouse unlocked." In the hope of receiving doles of rice, many children and beggars with their dogs are sitting waiting. The cats do not flatter any one; they watch their opportunity, steal in, and help themselves. Here a cow without an owner is feasting with closed eyes upon the husks of pumpkins, other vegetables, and fruit.

Behind these three inner *mahals* is the flower-garden; and further yet a broad tank, blue as the sky. This tank is walled in. The inner house (the women's) has three divisions, and in the flower-garden is a private path, and at each end of the path two doors; these doors are private, they give entrance to the three *mahals* of the inner house. Outside the house are the stables, the elephant-house, the kennels, the cow-house, the aviaries, etc.

Kunda Nandini, full of astonishment at Nagendra's unbounded wealth, was borne in a palanquin to the inner apartments, where she saluted Surja Mukhi, who received her with a blessing.

Having recognized in Nagendra the likeness of the man she had seen in her dream, Kunda Nandini doubted whether his wife would not resemble the female figure she had seen later; but the sight of Surja Mukhi removed this doubt. Surja Mukhi was of a warm, golden colour, like the full moon; the figure in the dream was dark. Surja Mukhi's eyes were beautiful, but not like those in the dream. They were long deer-eyes, extending to the side hair; the eye-brows joined in a beautiful curve over the dilated, densely black pupils, full but steady. The eyes of the dark woman in the dream were not so enchanting. Then Surja Mukhi's features were not similar. The dream figure was dwarfish; Surja Mukhi rather

tall, her figure swaying with the beauty of the honeysuckle creeper. The dream figure was beautiful, but Surja Mukhi was a hundredfold more so. The dream figure was not more than twenty years of age; Surja Mukhi was nearly twenty-six. Kunda saw clearly that there was no resemblance between the two. Surja Mukhi conversed pleasantly with Kunda, and summoned the attendants, to the chief among whom she said, "This is Kunda with whom I shall give Tara Charan in marriage; therefore see that you treat her as my brother's wife."

The servant expressed her assent, and took Kunda aside with her to another place. At sight of her Kunda's flesh crept; a cold moisture came over her from head to foot. The female figure which Kunda in her dream had seen her mother's fingers trace upon the heavens, this servant was that lotus-eyed, dark-complexioned woman.

Kunda, agitated with fear, breathing with difficulty, asked, "Who are you?"

The servant answered, "My name is Hira."

80

Chapter VI

The Reader Has Cause for Great Displeasure

At this point the reader will be much annoyed. It is a custom with novelists to conclude with a wedding, but we are about to begin with the marriage of Kunda Nandini. By another custom that has existed from ancient times, whoever shall marry the heroine must be extremely handsome, adorned with all virtues, himself a hero, and devoted to his mistress. Poor Tara Charan possessed no such advantages; his beauty consisted in a copper-tinted complexion and a snub nose; his heroism found exercise only in the schoolroom; and as for his love, I cannot say how much he had for Kunda Nandini, but he had some for a pet monkey.

However that may be, soon after Kunda Nandini's arrival at the house of Nagendra she was married to Tara Charan. Tara Charan took home his beautiful wife; but in marrying a beautiful wife he brought himself into a difficulty.

The reader will remember that Tara Charan had delivered some essays in the house of Debendra Babu on the subjects of women's education and the opening of the zenana. In the discussions that ensued, the Master Babu had said vauntingly: "Should the opportunity ever be given me, I will be the first to set an example of reform in these matters. Should I marry, I will bring my wife out into society."

Now he was married, and the fame of Kunda's beauty had spread through the district. All the neighbours now, quoting an old song, said, "Where now is his pledge?" Debendra said, "What, are you now also in the troop of old fools? Why do you not introduce us to your wife?"

Tara Charan was covered with shame; he could not escape from Debendra's banter and taunts. He consented to allow Debendra to make the acquaintance of his wife. Then fear arose lest Surja Mukhi should be displeased. A year passed in evasion and procrastination; when, seeing that this could be carried on no longer, he made an excuse that his house was in need of repair, and sent Kunda Nandini to Nagendra's house. When the repairs of the house were completed, Kunda Nandini returned home. A few days after, Debendra, with some of his friends, called upon Tara Charan, and jeered him for his false boasting. Driven thus, as it were, into a corner, Tara Charan persuaded Kunda Nandini to dress in suitable style, and brought her forth to converse with Debendra Babu. How could she do so? She remained standing veiled before him for a few seconds, then fled weeping. But Debendra was enchanted with her youthful grace and beauty. He never forgot it.

Soon after that, some kind of festival was held in Debendra's house, and a little girl was sent thence to Kunda to invite her attendance. But Surja Mukhi hearing of this, forbade her to accept the invitation, and she did not go. Later, Debendra again going to Tara Charan's house, had an interview with Kunda. Surja Mukhi hearing of this through others, gave to Tara Charan such a scolding, that from that time Debendra's visits were stopped.

In this manner three years passed after the marriage; then Kunda Nandini became a widow. Tara Charan died of fever. Surja

Mukhi took Kunda to live with her, and selling the house she had given to Tara Charan, gave the proceeds in Government paper to Kunda.

The reader is no doubt much displeased, but in fact the tale is only begun. Of the poison tree the seed only has thus far been sown.

90

Chapter VII

Haridasi Boisnavi

The widow Kunda Nandini passed some time in Nagendra's house. One afternoon the whole household of ladies were sitting together in the other division of the house, all occupied according to their tastes in the simple employment of village women. All ages were there, from the youngest girl to the grey-haired woman. One was binding another's hair, the other suffering it to be bound; one submitting to have her white hairs extracted, another extracting them by the aid of a grain of rice; one beauty sewing together shreds of cloth into a quilt for her boy, another suckling her child; one lovely being dressing the plaits of her hair; another beating her child, who now cried aloud, now quietly sobbed, by turns. Here one is sewing carpet-work, another leaning over it in admiring examination. There one of artistic taste, thinking of some one's marriage, is drawing a design on the wooden seats to be used by the bridal pair. One learned lady is reading Dasu Rai's poetry. An old woman is delighting the ears of her neighbours with complaints of her son; a humorous young one, in a voice half bursting with laughter, relates in the ears of her companions whose husbands are absent some jocose story of her husband's, to beguile the pain of separation. Some are reproaching the *Grihini* (house-mistress), some the *Korta* (master), some the neighbours; some reciting their own praises. She who may have received a gentle scolding in the morning from Surja Mukhi on account of her stupidity, is bringing forward many examples of her remarkable acuteness of understanding. She in whose cooking the flavours can never be depended upon, is dilating at great length upon her proficiency in the art. She whose husband is proverbial

in the village for his ignorance, is astounding her companions by her praises of his superhuman learning. She whose children are dark and repulsive-looking, is pluming herself on having given birth to jewels of beauty. Surja Mukhi was not of the company. She was a little proud, and did not sit much with these people; if she came amongst them her presence was a restraint upon the enjoyment of the rest. All feared her somewhat, and were reserved towards her. Kunda Nandini associated with them; she was amongst them now, teaching a little boy his letters at his mother's request. During the lesson the pupil's eyes were fixed upon the sweetmeat in another child's hand, consequently his progress was not great. At this moment there appeared amongst them a *Boisnavi* (female mendicant), exclaiming, "*Jai [Radhika](#)!*" (Victory to Radhika).

A constant stream of guests was served in Nagendra's *Thakur bari*, and every Sunday quantities of rice were distributed in the same place, but neither *Boisnavis* nor others were allowed to come to the women's apartments to beg; accordingly, on hearing the cry "*Jai Radha!*" in these forbidden precincts, one of the inmates exclaimed: "What, woman! do you venture to intrude here? go to the *Thakur bari*." But even as she spoke, turning to look at the *Boisnavi*, she could not finish her speech, but said instead: "Oh, ma, what *Boisnavi* are you?"

Looking up, all saw with astonishment that the *Boisnavi* was young and of exceeding beauty; in that group of beautiful women there was none, excepting Kunda Nandini, so beautiful as she. Her trembling lips, well-formed nose, large lotus-eyes, pencilled brows, smooth, well-shaped forehead, arms like the lotus-stalk, and complexion like the *champak* flower, were rare among women. But had there been present any critic of loveliness, he would have said there was a want of sweetness in her beauty, while in her walk and in her movements there was a masculine character.

The [sandal mark](#) on the *Boisnavi*'s nose was long and fine, her hair was braided, she wore a *sari* with a coloured border, and carried a small tambourine in her hand. She wore brass bracelets, and over them others made of black glass.

One of the elder women addressed her saying, "Who are you?"

The *Boisnavi* replied, "My name is Haridasi. Will the ladies like a song?"

The cry, "Yes, yes! sing!" sounded on all sides from old and young. Raising her tambourine, the *Boisnavi* seated herself near the ladies, where Kunda was teaching the little boy. Kunda was very fond of music; on hearing that the *Boisnavi* would sing she came nearer. Her pupil seized the opportunity to snatch the sweetmeat from the other child's hand, and eat it himself.

The *Boisnavi* asking what she should sing, the listeners gave a number of different orders. One called for the strains of *Govinda Adhikari*, another *Gopale Ure*. She who was reading Dasu Rai's poem desired to have it sung. Two or three asked for the old stories about Krishna; they were divided as to whether they would hear about the companions or about the separation. Some wanted to hear of his herding the cows in his youth. One shameless girl called out, "If you do not sing such and such a passage I will not listen." One mere child, by way of teaching the *Boisnavi*, sang some nonsensical syllables. The *Boisnavi*, listening to the different demands, gave a momentary glance at Kunda, saying: "Have you no commands to give?"

Kunda, ashamed, bent her head smiling, but did not speak aloud; she whispered in the ear of a companion, "Mention some hymn."

The companion said, "Kunda desires that you will sing a hymn." The *Boisnavi* then began a hymn. Kunda, seeing that the *Boisnavi* had neglected all other commands to obey hers, was much abashed. Haridasi, striking gently on her tambourine as if in sport, recited in a gentle voice some few notes like the murmuring of a bee in early spring, or a bashful bride's first loving speech to her husband. Then suddenly she produced from that insignificant tambourine, as though with the fingers of a powerful musician, sounds like the crashing of the clouds in thunder, making the frames of her hearers shrink within them as she sang in tones more melodious than those of the *Apsharas* (celestial singing women).

The ladies, astonished and enchanted, heard the *Boisnavi's* unequalled voice filling the court with sound that ascended to the skies. What could secluded women understand of the method of that singing? An intelligent person would have comprehended that this perfect singing was not due to natural gifts alone. The *Boisnavi*, whoever she might be, had received a thorough scientific training in music, and, though young, she was very proficient.

The *Boisnavi*, having finished her song, was urged by the ladies to sing again. Haridasi, looking with thirsty eyes at Kunda, sang the following song from Krishna's address to Radhika:

The Boisnavi's Song

"To see thy beauteous lily face
I come expectant to this place;
Let me, oh Rai! thy feet embrace.
To deprecate thy sullen ire,
Therefore I come in strange attire;
Revive me, Radha, kindness speak,
Clasping thy feet my home I'd seek.
Of thy fair form to catch a ray
From door to door with flute I stray;
When thy soft name it murmurs low
Mine eyes with sudden tears o'erflow.
If thou wilt not my pardon speak
The banks of Jumna's stream I'll seek,
Will break my flute and yield my life;
Oh! cease thy wrath, and end the strife.
The joys of Braj I've cast aside
A slave before thy feet t' abide;
Thine anklets round my neck I'll bind,
In Jumna's stream I'll refuge find."

The song over, the *Boisnavi*, looking at Kunda, said, "Singing has made me thirsty; give me some water."

Kunda brought water in a vessel; but the *Boisnavi* said, "I will not touch your vessel; come near and pour some water into my hands. I was not born a *Boisnavi*." By this she gave it to be understood that she was formerly of some unholy caste, and had since become a *Boisnavi*.

In reply to her words, Kunda went behind her so as to pour the water into her hands. They were at such a distance from the rest that words spoken gently could not be heard by any of them. Kunda poured the water, and the *Boisnavi* washed her hands and face. 105

While thus engaged the latter murmured, "Are you not Kunda?"

In astonishment Kunda replied, "Why do you ask?"

"Have you ever seen your mother-in-law?"

"No."

Kunda had heard that her mother-in-law, having lost her good name, had left the place. 110

Then said the *Boisnavi*: "Your mother-in-law is here now. She is in my house, and is crying bitterly to be allowed to see you for once. She dare not show her face to the mistress of this house. Why should you not go with me to see her? Notwithstanding her fault, she is still your mother-in-law."

Although Kunda was simple, she understood quite well that she should not acknowledge any connection with such a relation. Therefore she merely shook her head at the *Boisnavi*'s words and refused her assent. But the *Boisnavi* would not take a refusal; again she urged the matter.

Kunda replied, "I cannot go without the *Grihini*'s permission."

This Haridasi forbade. "You must not speak to the house-mistress, she will not let you go; it may be she will send for your *Sasuri* (mother-in-law). In that case your mother-in-law would flee the country."

The more the *Boisnavi* insisted, the more Kunda refused to go without the *Grihini*'s permission. 115

Haridasi having no other resource, said: "Very well, put the thing nicely to the *Grihini*; I will come another day and take you. Mind you put it prudently, and shed some tears also, else she will not consent."

Even to this Kunda did not consent; she would not say either "yes" or "no."

Haridasi, having finished purifying her face and hands, turned to the ladies and asked for contributions. At this moment Surja

Mukhi came amongst them, the desultory talk ceased, and the younger women, all pretending some occupation, sat down.

Surja Mukhi, examining the *Boisnavi* from head to foot, inquired, "Who are you?"

An aunt of Nagendra's explained: "She is a *Boisnavi* who came to sing. I never heard such beautiful singing! Will you let her sing for you? Sing something about the goddesses." 120

Haridasi, having sung a beautiful piece about Sham, Surja Mukhi, enchanted, dismissed her with a handsome present. The *Boisnavi*, making a profound salute, cast one more glance at Kunda and went away. Once out of the range of Surja Mukhi's eyes, she made a few gentle taps on the tambourine, singing softly

"Ah, my darling!
I'll give you honey to eat, golden robes to wear;
I'll fill your flask with *attar*,
And your jar with water of rose,
Your box with spice prepared by my own hand."

The *Boisnavi* being gone, the women could talk of nothing else for some time. First they praised her highly, then began to point out her defects.

Biraj said, "She is beautiful, but her nose is somewhat flat."

Bama remarked, "Her complexion is too pale."

Chandra Mukhi added, "Her hair is like tow." 125

Kapal said, "Her forehead is too high."

Kamala said, "Her lips are thick."

Harani observed, "Her figure is very wooden."

Pramada added, "The woman's bust is like that of a play actor, it has no grace."

In this manner it soon appeared that the beautiful *Boisnavi* was of unparalleled ugliness. 130

Then Lalita said, "Whatever her looks may be, she sings beautifully."

But even this was not admitted. Chandra Mukhi said the singing was coarse; Mukta Keshi confirmed this criticism.

Ananga said, "The woman does not know any songs; she could not even give us one of Dasu Rai's songs."

Kanak said, "She does not understand time."

Thus it appeared that Haridasi *Boisnavi* was not only extremely ugly, but that her singing was of the worst description.

135

Chapter VIII

The Babu

Haridasi *Boisnavi*, having left the house of the Datta family, went to Debipur. At this place there is a flower-garden surrounded by painted iron railings. It is well stocked with fruit trees and flowering shrubs. In the centre is a tank, upon the edge of which stands a garden-house. Entering a private room in this house, Haridasi threw off her dress. Suddenly that dense mass of hair fell from the head; the locks were borrowed. The bust also fell away; it was made of cloth. After putting on suitable apparel and removing the *Boisnavi* garments, there stood forth a strikingly handsome young man of about five and twenty years of age. Having no hair on his face he looked quite a youth; in feature he was very handsome. This young man was Debendra Babu, of whom we have before had some slight knowledge.

Debendra and Nagendra were sprung from the same family, but between the two branches there had been feud for successive generations, so that the members of the Debipur family were not on speaking terms with those of Govindpur. From generation to generation there had been lawsuits between the two houses. At length, in an important suit, the grandfather of Nagendra had defeated the grandfather of Debendra, and since that time the Debipur family had been powerless. All their money was swallowed up in law expenses, and the Govindpur house had bought up all their estates. From that time the position of the Debipur family had declined, that of the other increased, the two branches no longer united.

Debendra's father had sought in one way to restore the fallen fortunes of his house. Another zemindar, named Ganesh, dwelt in the Haripur district; he had one unmarried daughter, Hembati,

who was given to Debendra in marriage. Hembati had many virtues; she was ugly, ill-tempered, unamiable, selfish. Up to the time of his marriage with her, Debendra's character had been without stain. He had been very studious, and was by nature steady and truth-loving. But that marriage had been fatal to him. When Debendra came to years of discretion he perceived that on account of his wife's disposition there was no hope of domestic happiness for him. With manhood there arose in him a love for beauty, but in his own house this was denied to him; with manhood there came a desire for conjugal affection, but the mere sight of the unamiable Hembati quenched the desire. Putting happiness out of the question, Debendra perceived that it would be difficult to stay in the house to endure the venom of Hembati's tongue. One day Hembati poured forth abuse on her husband; he had endured much, he could endure no more, he dragged Hembati by the hair and kicked her. From that day, deserting his home, he went to Calcutta, leaving orders that a small house should be built for him in the garden. Before this occurred the father of Debendra had died, therefore he was independent. In Calcutta he plunged into vicious pursuits to allay his unsatisfied desires, and then strove to wash away his heart's reproaches in wine; after that he ceased to feel any remorse, he took delight in vice. When he had learned what Calcutta could teach him in regard to luxury, Debendra returned to his native place, and, taking up his abode in the garden-house, gave himself up to the indulgence of his recently acquired tastes. Debendra had learned many peculiar fashions in Calcutta; on returning to Debipur he called himself a Reformer. First he established a *Brahmo Samaj*; many such Brahmos as Tara Charan were attracted to it, and to the speech-making there was no limit. He also thought of opening a female school; but this required too much effort, he could not do it. About widow marriage he was very zealous. One or two such marriages had been arranged, the widows being of low caste; but the credit of these was due, not to him, but to the contracting parties. He had been of one mind with Tara Charan about breaking the chains of the zenana; both had said, "Let women

come out." In this matter Debendra was very successful, but then this emancipation had in his mind a special meaning.

When Debendra, on his return from Govindpur, had thrown off his disguise and resumed his natural appearance, he took his seat in the next room. His servant, having prepared the pain-relieving *huka*, placed the snake in front of him. Debendra spent some time in the service of that fatigue-destroying goddess, Tobacco. He is not worthy to be called a man who does not know the luxury of tobacco. Oh, satisfier of the hearts of all! oh, world enchantress! may we ever be devoted to thee! Your vehicles, the *huka*, the pipe, let them ever remain before us. At the mere sight of them we shall obtain heavenly delight. Oh, *huka*! thou that sendest forth volumes of curling smoke, that hast a winding tube shaming the serpent! oh, bowl that beautifies thy top! how graceful are the chains of thy turban; how great is the beauty of thy curved mouthpiece; how sonorous the murmur of the ice-cool water in thy depths! Oh, world enchantress! oh, soother of the fatigues of man, employer of the idle, comforter of the henpecked husband's heart, encourager of timid dependents, who can know thy glory! Soother of the sorrowing! thou givest courage to the timid, intellect to the stupid, peace to the angry! Oh, bestower of blessings, giver of all happiness, appear in undiminished power in my room! Let your sweet scent increase daily, let your cool waters continue to rumble in your depths, let your mouthpiece ever be glued to my lips!

Pleasure-loving Debendra enjoyed the favour of this great goddess as long as he would, but yet he was not satisfied; he proceeded to worship another great power. In the hand of his servant was displayed a number of straw-covered bottles. Then on that white, soft, spacious bed, a gold-coloured mat being laid, a spirit-stand was placed thereon, and the sunset-coloured liquid goddess poured into the power-giving decanter. A cut-glass tumbler and plated jug served as utensils for worship. From the kitchen a black, ugly priest came, bearing hot dishes of roast mutton and cutlets to take the place of the sacred flowers. Then Debendra, as a devoted worshipper, sat down to perform the rites.

Then came a troop of singers and musicians, and concluded the ceremonies with their music and songs.

At length a young man of about Debendra's age, of a placid countenance, came and sat with him. This was his cousin, Surendra. Surendra was in every respect the opposite of Debendra, yet the latter was much attached to his cousin; he heeded no one in the world but him. Every night Surendra came to see him, but, fearing the wine, he would only sit a few minutes.

When all were gone, Surendra asked Debendra, "How are you to-day?"

"The body," replied Debendra, "is the temple of disease."

"Yours is, especially," said his cousin, "Have you fever to-day?" 145

"No."

"Is your liver out of order?"

"It is as before."

"Would it not be better to refrain from these excesses?"

"What, drinking? How often will you speak of that? Wine is my constant companion," said Debendra. 150

"But why should it be?" replied Surendra. "Wine was not born with you; you can't take it away with you. Many give it up, why should not you do so?"

"What have I to gain by giving it up? Those who do so have some happiness in prospect, and therefore give it up. For me there is no happiness."

"Then to save your life give it up."

"Those to whom life brings happiness may give up wine; but what have I to gain by living?"

Surendra's eyes filled with tears. Full of love for his friend, he urged: 155

"Then for my sake give it up."

Tears came into the eyes of Debendra as he said: "No one but yourself urges me to walk in virtuous paths. If I ever do give it up it will be for your sake, and—"

"And what?"

"If ever I hear that my wife is dead I will give up drink. Otherwise, whether I live or die, I care not."

Surendra, with moist eyes, mentally anathematising Hembati, took his leave.

160

Chapter IX Surja Mukhi's Letter

"Dearest Srimati Kamal Mani Dasi, long may you live!

"I am ashamed to address you any longer with a blessing. You have become a woman, and the mistress of a house. Still I cannot think of you otherwise than as my younger sister. I have brought you up to womanhood, I taught you your letters; but now when I see your writing I am ashamed to send this scrawl. But of what use to be ashamed? My day is over; were it not so how should I be in this condition? What condition?—it is a thing I cannot speak of to any one; should I do so there will be sorrow and shame; yet if I do not tell some one of my heart's trouble I cannot endure it. To whom can I speak? You are my beloved sister; except you no one loves me. Also it concerns your brother. I can speak of it to no one but you.

"I have prepared my own funeral pyre. If I had not cared for Kunda Nandini, and she had died, would that have been any loss to me? God cares for so many others—would He not have cared for her? Why did I bring her home to my own destruction! When you saw that unfortunate being she was a child, now she is seventeen or eighteen. I admit she is beautiful; her beauty is fatal to me. If I have any happiness on earth it is in my husband; if I care about anything in this world it is for my husband; if there is any wealth belonging to me it is my husband: this husband Kunda Nandini is snatching from me. If I have a desire on earth it is for my husband's love: of that love Kunda Nandini is cheating me. Do not think evil of your brother; I am not reproaching him. He is virtuous, not even his enemies can find a fault in him. I can see daily that he tries to subdue his heart. Wherever Kunda Nandini may happen to be, from that spot, if possible, he averts his eyes; unless there is absolute necessity he does not speak her name. He is even harsh towards her; I have heard him scold her when she has committed no fault. Then why am I writing all this trash?

Should a man ask this question it would be difficult to make him understand, but you being a woman will comprehend. If Kunda Nandini is in his eyes but as other women, why is he so careful not to look towards her? why take such pains to avoid speaking her name? He is conscious of guilt towards Kunda Nandini, therefore he scolds her without cause; that anger is not with her, but with himself; that scolding is not for her, but for himself. This I can understand. I who have been so long devoted to him, who within and without see only him, if I but see his shadow I can tell his thoughts. What can he hide from me? Occasionally when his mind is absent his eyes wander hither and thither; do I not know what they are seeking? If he meets it, again becoming troubled he withdraws his eyes; can I not understand that? For whose voice is he listening at meal-times when he pauses in the act of carrying food to his mouth? and when Kunda's tones reach his ear, and he fastens to eat his meal, can one not understand that? My beloved always had a gracious countenance; why is he now always so absent-minded? If one speaks to him he does not hear, but gives an absent answer. If, becoming angry, I say, 'May I die?' paying no attention he answers, 'Yes.' If I ask where his thoughts are, he says with his lawsuits; but I know they have no place in his mind; when he speaks of his lawsuits he is always merry. Another point. One day the old women of the neighbourhood were speaking of Kunda Nandini, pitying her young widowhood, her unprotected condition. Your brother came up; from within I saw his eyes fill with tears; he turned away and left them quickly. The other day I engaged a new servant; her name is Kumuda. Sometimes the Babu calls Kumuda; when so doing he often slips out the name Kunda instead of Kumuda, then how confused he is—why should he be confused? I cannot say he is neglectful of me, or unaffectionate; rather he is more attentive than before, more affectionate. The reason of this I fully understand: he is conscious of fault towards me; but I know that I have no longer a place in his heart. Attention is one thing, love quite another; the difference between these two we women can easily understand.

"There is another amusing matter. A learned *pandit* in Calcutta, named Iswara Chandra Bidya Sagar, has published a

book on the marriage of widows. If he who would establish the custom of marrying widows is a *pandit*, then who can be called a dunce? Just now, the Brahman Bhattacharjya bringing the book into the *boita khana*, there was a great discussion.

"After much talk in favour of widow-marriage, the Brahman, taking ten rupees from the Babu for the repairs of the *Tote*, went his way. On the following day Sharbabhoum Thakur replied on the same subject. I had some golden bracelets made for his daughter's wedding. No one else was in favour of widow-marriage.

"I have taken up much time in wearying you with my sorrows. Do I not know how vexed you will be? but what can I do, sister? If I do not tell you my sorrows, to whom shall I tell them? I have not said all yet, but hoping for some relief from you has calmed me a little. Say nothing of this to anyone; above all, I conjure you, show not this letter to your husband. Will you not come and see me? if you will come now your presence will heal many of my troubles. Send me quickly news of your husband and of your child.

"Surja Mukhi.

"P.S.—Another word. If I can get rid of this girl I may be happy once more; but how to get rid of her? Can you take her? Would you not fear to do so?"

Kamal Mani replied—

"You have become quite foolish, else how can you doubt your husband's heart? Do not lose faith in him; if you really cannot trust him you had better drown yourself. I, Kamal Mani, tell you you had better drown yourself. She who can no longer trust her husband had better die."

Chapter X The Sprout

In the course of a short time Nagendra's whole nature was changed. As at eventime, in the hot season, the clear sky becomes

suddenly veiled in cloud, so Nagendra's mind became clouded. Surja Mukhi wept secretly.

She thought to herself, "I will take Kamal Mani's advice. Why should I doubt my husband's heart? His heart is firm as the hills. I am under a delusion. Perhaps he is suffering in health." Alas! Surja Mukhi was building a bridge of sand.

170

In the house there dwelt a sort of doctor. Surja Mukhi was the house-mistress. Sitting behind the *purdah* (a half-transparent screen) she held converse with everyone, the person addressed remaining in the verandah. Calling the doctor, Surja Mukhi said —

"The Babu is not well; why do you not give him medicine?"

"Is he ill? I did not know of it; I have heard nothing."

"Has not the Babu told you?"

"No; what is the matter?"

175

"What is the matter? Are you a doctor, and do you ask that? Do I know?"

The doctor was nonplussed, and saying, "I will go and inquire," he was about to leave; but Surja Mukhi, calling him back, said, "Do not ask the Babu about it; give him some medicine."

The doctor thought this a peculiar sort of treatment; but there was no lack of medicine in the house, and going to the dispensary, he composed a draught of soda, port-wine, and some simple drugs, and, filling a bottle, labelled it, "To be taken twice a day."

Surja Mukhi took the physic to her husband, and requested him to drink it. Nagendra, taking the bottle, read the inscription, and, hurling it away, struck a cat with it. The cat fled, her tail drenched with the physic.

Surja Mukhi said: "If you will not take the medicine, at least tell me what is your complaint."

180

Nagendra, annoyed, said, "What complaint have I?"

"Look at yourself," replied Surja Mukhi, "and see how thin you have become," and she held a mirror before him.

Nagendra, taking the mirror from her, threw it down and smashed it to atoms.

Surja Mukhi began to weep. With an angry look Nagendra went away. Meeting a servant in the outer room, the Babu struck him for no fault. Surja Mukhi felt as if *she* had received the blow. Formerly Nagendra had been of a very calm temper; now the least thing made him angry.

Nor was this all. One night, the hour for the meal being already past, Nagendra had not come in. Surja Mukhi sat expecting him. At length, when he appeared, she was astonished at his looks. His face and eyes were inflamed—he had been drinking, and as he had never been given to drinking before his wife was shocked. From that time it became a daily custom.

185

One day Surja Mukhi, casting herself at his feet, choking down the sobs in her throat, with much humility entreated, "For my sake give this up."

Nagendra asked angrily, "What is my fault?"

Surja Mukhi said: "If you do not know what is the fault, how can I? I only beg that for my sake you will give it up."

Nagendra replied: "Surja Mukhi, I am a drunkard! If devotion should be paid to a drunkard, pay it to me; otherwise it is not called for."

Surja Mukhi left the room to conceal her tears, since her weeping irritated her husband, and led him to strike the servants.

190

Soon after, the *Dewan* sent word to the mistress that the estate was going to ruin.

She asked, "Why?"

"Because the Babu will not see to things. The people on the estates do just as they please. Since the *Karta* is so careless, no one heeds what I say."

Surja Mukhi answered: "If the owner looks after the estate, it will be preserved; if not, let it go to ruin. I shall be thankful if I can only save my own property" (meaning her husband).

Formerly Nagendra had carefully looked after all his affairs.

195

One day some hundreds of his *ryots* came to the *kacheri*, and with joined palms stood at the door. "Give us justice," they said, "O your highness; we cannot survive the tyranny of the *naib* (a law officer) and the *gomashta*. We are being robbed of everything. If you do not save us, to whom shall we go?"

Nagendra gave orders to drive them away.

Formerly, when one of his *gomashtas* had beaten a *ryot* and taken a rupee from him, Nagendra had cut ten rupees from the *gomashta's* pay and given it to the *ryot*.

Hara Deb Ghosal wrote to Nagendra: "What has happened to you? I cannot imagine what you are doing. I receive no letters from you, or, if I do, they contain but two or three lines without any meaning. Have you taken offence with me? If so, why do you not tell me? Have you lost your lawsuit? Then why not say so? If you do not tell me anything else, at least give me news of your health."

Nagendra replied: "Do not be angry with me. I am going to destruction."

200

Hara Deb was very wise. On reading this letter he thought to himself: "What is this? Anxiety about money? A quarrel with some friend? Debendra Datta? Nothing of the kind. Is this love?"

Kamal Mani received another letter from Surja Mukhi. It concluded thus: "Come, Kamal Mani, sister; except you I have no friend. Come to me."

Kamal Mani was agitated; she could contain herself no longer. She felt that she must consult her husband.

Srish Chandra, sitting in the inner apartments, was looking over the office account-books. Beside him on the bed, Satish Chandra, a child of a year old, was rejoicing in the possession of an English newspaper. He had first tried to eat it; but, failing in that, had spread it out and was now sitting upon it. Kamal Mani, approaching her husband, brought the end of her *sari* round her neck, threw herself down, bending her forehead to the floor, and, folding her hands, said, "I pay my devotions to you, O great king." Just before this time, a play had been performed in the house, from whence she borrowed this inflated speech.

Srish said, laughing, "Have the cucumbers been stolen again?"

205

"Neither cucumbers nor melons; this time a most valuable thing has been stolen."

"Where is the robbery?" asked Srish.

"The robbery took place at Govindpur. My elder brother had a broken shell in a golden box. Some one has stolen it."

Srish, not understanding the metaphor, said "Your brother's golden casket is Surja Mukhi. What is the broken shell?"

"Surja Mukhi's wits," replied Kamal.

210

"People say if one has a mind to play he can do so, though the shells are broken" (referring to a game played with shells). "If Surja Mukhi's understanding is defective, yet with it she gained your brother's heart, and with all your wisdom, you could not bring him over to your side. Who has stolen the broken shell?"

"That I know not; but, from reading her letter, I perceive it is gone—else how could a woman write such a letter?"

"May I see the letter?" asked Srish.

Kamal Mani placed the letter in her husband's hand, saying: "Surja Mukhi forbade my telling you all this; but while I keep it from you I am quite uneasy. I can neither sleep nor eat, and I fear I may lose my senses."

"If you have been forbidden to tell me of the matter I cannot read this letter, nor do I wish to hear its contents. Tell me what has to be done."

215

"This is what must be done," replied Kamal. "Surja Mukhi's wits are scattered, and must be restored. There is no one that can do this except Satish Babu. His aunt has written requesting that he may be sent to Govindpur."

Satish Babu had in the meantime upset a vase of flowers, and was now aiming at the inkstand. Watching him, Srish Chandra said: "Yes; he is well fitted to act as physician. I understand now. He is invited to his aunt's house; if he goes, his mother must go also. Surja Mukhi's wits must be lost, or she could not have sent such an invitation."

"Not Satish Babu only; we are all invited."

"Why am I invited?" asked Srish.

"Can I go alone?" replied Kamal. "Who will look after the luggage?"

220

"It is very unreasonable in Surja Mukhi if she wants her husband's brother-in-law only that he may look after the luggage. I can find some one else to perform that office for a couple of days."

Kamal Mani was angry; she frowned, mocked at Srish Chandra, and, snatching the paper on which he was writing out of his hand, tore it to pieces.

Srish Chandra, smiling, said, "It serves you right."

Kamal, affecting anger, said, "I will speak in that way if I wish!"

Srish, in the same tone, replied, "And I shall speak as I choose!" 225

Then a playful scuffle ensued; Kamal pretended to strike her husband, who in return pulled down her hair; whereupon she threw away his ink. Then they exchanged angry kisses. Satish Babu was delighted at this performance; he knew that kisses were his special property, so when he saw them scattered in this lavish manner he stood up, supporting himself by his mother's dress, to claim his royal share, crowing joyously. How sweetly that laugh fell on the ears of Kamal Mani! She took him in her lap, and showered kisses upon him. Srish Chandra followed her example. Then Satish Babu, having received his dues, got down and made for his father's brightly coloured pencil, which soon found its way into his mouth.

In the [battle between the Kurus and Pandus](#) there was a great struggle between Bhagadatta and Arjuna. In this fight, Bhagadatta being invincible, and Arjuna vulnerable, the latter called Krishna to his aid, who, receiving the charge of Bhagadatta on his breast, blunted the force of the weapons. In like manner, Satish Chandra having received these attacks on his face, peace was restored. But their peace and war was like the dropping of clouds, fitful.

Then Srish asked, "Must you really go to Govindpur? What am I to do alone?"

"Do you think I can go alone?" answered his wife. "We must both go. Arrange matters in the morning when you go to business, and come home quickly. If you are long, Satish and I will sit crying for you."

"I cannot go," replied Srish. "This is the season for buying linseed. You must go without me." 230

"Come, Satish," was Kamal's reply; "we two will go and weep."

At the sound of his mother's voice Satish ceased to gnaw the pencil, and raised another shout of joyous laughter. So Kamal's cry did not come off this time; in place of it the kissing performance was gone through as before.

At its close Kamal said, "Now what are your orders?"

Srish repeated that she must go without him, as he could not leave; whereupon she sat down sulking. Srish went behind her and began to mark her forehead with the ink from his pen.

Then with a laugh she embraced him, saying, "Oh, dearer than life, how I love you!" 235

He was obliged to return the embrace, when the ink transferred itself from her face to his.

The quarrel thus ended, Kamal said, "If you really will not go, then make arrangements for me."

"When will you come back?"

"Need you ask?" said Kamal; "if you don't go, can I stay there long?"

Srish Chandra sent Kamal Mani to Govindpur, but it is certain that Srish Chandra's employers did not do much in linseed at that time. The other clerks have privately informed us that this was the fault of Srish Chandra, who did not give his mind to it, but sat at home in meditation. 240

Srish hearing himself thus accused, remarked, "It may be so, my wife was absent at that time."

The hearers shook their heads, saying, "He is under petticoat government!" which so delighted Srish Chandra that he called to his servant, "Prepare dinner; these gentlemen will dine with me to-day."

Chapter XI Caught at Last

It was as though a flower had bloomed in the family house at Govindpur. The sight of Kamal Mani's smiling face dried the tears in the eyes of Surja Mukhi. The moment she set foot in the house Kamal took in hand the dressing of her sister-in-law's hair, for Surja Mukhi had neglected herself lately.

Kamal said, "Shall I put in a flower or two?"

Surja Mukhi pinched her cheek, and forbade it.

245

So Kamal Mani did it slyly. When people came in she said, "Do you see the old woman wearing flowers in her hair?"

But even Kamal's bright face did not dispel the dark clouds from that of Nagendra. When he met her he only said, "Where do you come from, Kamal?"

She bent before him, saying bashfully, "Baby has brought me."

"Indeed! I'll beat the rascal," replied Nagendra, taking the child in his arms, and spending an hour in play with him, in return for which the grateful child made free with his moustache.

Kamal Mani playfully accosted Kunda with the words, "Ha, Kundi, Kundi! Nundi, Dundi! are you quite well, Kundi?"

250

The girl was silent in astonishment, but presently she said, "I am well."

"Call me *Didi* (elder sister); if you do not I will burn your hair when you are asleep, or else I will give your body to the cockroaches."

Kunda obeyed. When she had been in Calcutta she had not addressed Kamal by any name; indeed she had rarely spoken; but seeing that Kamal was very loving-hearted, she had become fond of her. In the years that had intervened without a meeting she had a little forgotten Kamal; but now, both being amiable, their affection was born afresh, and became very close.

When Kamal Mani talked of returning home, Surja Mukhi said, "Nay, sister, stay a little longer. I shall be wretched when you are gone. It relieves me to talk to you of my trouble."

"I shall not go without arranging your affairs."

255

"What affairs?" said Surja Mukhi.

"Your *Shradda*" (funeral ceremonies), replied Kamal; but mentally she said, "Extracting the thorns from your path."

When Kunda heard that Kamal talked of going, she went to her room and wept. Kamal going quietly after her found her with her head on the pillow, weeping. Kamal sat down to dress Kunda's hair, an occupation of which she was very fond. When she had finished she drew Kunda's head on to her lap, and wiped away the tears. Then she said, "Kunda, why do you weep?"

"Why do you go away?" was the reply.

"Why should you weep for that?"

260

"Because you love me."

"Does no one else love you?"

Kunda did not reply; and Kamal went on: "Does not the *Bou* (Surja Mukhi) love you? No? Don't hide it from me." (Still no answer.) "Does not my brother love you?" (Still silence.) "Since I love you and you love me, shall we not go together?" (Yet Kunda spoke not.) "Will you go?"

Kunda shook her head, saying, "I will not go."

Kamal's joyous face became grave; she thought, "This does not sound well. The girl has the same complaint as my brother, but he suffers the more deeply. My husband is not here, with whom can I take counsel?" Then Kamal Mani drew Kunda's head lovingly on her breast, and taking hold of her face caressingly, said, "Kunda, will you tell me the truth?"

265

"About what?" said the girl.

"About what I shall ask thee. I am thy elder, I love thee as a sister; do not hide it from me, I will tell no one." In her mind she thought, "If I tell any one it will be my husband and my baby."

After a pause Kunda asked, "What shall I tell you?"

"You love my brother dearly, don't you?"

Kunda gave no answer.

270

Kamal Mani wept in her heart; aloud she said: "I understand. It is so. Well that does not hurt you, but many others suffer from it."

Kunda Nandini, raising her head, fixed a steadfast look on the face of Kamal Mani.

Kamal, understanding the silent question, replied, "Ah, unhappy one! dost thou not see that my brother loves thee?"

Kunda's head again sank on Kamal's breast, which she watered with her tears. Both wept silently for many minutes.

What the passion of love is the golden Kamal Mani knew very well. In her innermost heart she sympathized with Kunda, both in her joy and in her sorrow. Wiping Kunda's eyes she said again, "Kunda, will you go with me?"

275

Kunda's eyes again tilled with tears.

More earnestly, Kamal said: "If you are out of sight my brother will forget you, and you will forget him; otherwise, you will be lost, my brother will be lost and his wife—the house will go to ruin."

Kunda continued weeping.

Again Kamal asked, "Will you go? Only consider my brother's condition, his wife's."

Kunda, after a long interval, wiped her eyes, sat up, and said, "I will go." 280

Why this consent after so long an interval? Kamal understood that Kunda had offered up her own life on the temple of the household peace. Her own peace? Kamal felt that Kunda did not comprehend what was for her own peace.

Chapter XII Hira

On this occasion, Haridasi *Boisnavi* entering, sang—

"I went into the thorny forest to pluck a soiled flower—
Yes, my friend, a soiled flower;
I wore it twined about my head, I hung it in my ears—
Friends, a soiled flower."

This day Surja Mukhi was present. She sent to call Kamal to hear the singing. Kamal came, bringing Kunda Nandini with her. The *Boisnavi* sang—

"I would die for this blooming thorn,
I will steal its honied sweets,
I go to seek where it doth bloom,
This fresh young bud."

Kamal Mani frowned, and said: "*Boisnavi* Didi, may ashes be thrown on your face! Can you not sing something else?"

Haridasi asked, "Why?"

Kamal, more angrily, said: "Why? Bring a bough of the *babla* tree, and show her how pleasant it is to be pierced by thorns." 285

Surja Mukhi said gently: "We do not like songs of that sort; sing something suitable for the home circle."

The *Boisnavi*, saying "Very well," began to sing—

"By clasping the Pandit's feet, I shall become learned in the Shastras;
Learning thus the holy Shastras, who will dare speak ill of me?"

Kamal, frowning, said: "Listen to this singing if it pleases you, sister. I shall go away."

She went, and Surja Mukhi also left, with a displeased countenance. Of the rest of the women, those who relished the song remained, the others left; Kunda Nandini stayed. She did not understand the hidden meaning of the songs, she scarcely even heard them. Her thoughts were absent, so she remained where she was seated. Haridasi sang no more, but talked on trivial subjects. Seeing that there would be no more singing, all left except Kunda Nandini, whose feet seemed as though they would not move. Thus, finding herself alone with Kunda, the *Boisnavi* talked much to her. Kunda heard something of her talk, but not all.

290

Surja Mukhi saw all this from a distance, and when the two showed signs of being deep in conversation she called Kamal and pointed them out to her.

Kamal said: "What of that? they are only talking. She is a woman, not a man."

"Who knows?" said Surja. "I think it is a man in disguise; but I will soon find out. How wicked Kunda must be!"

"Stay a moment," said Kamal, "I will fetch a *babla* branch, and let her feel its thorns."

Thus saying, Kamal went in search of a bough. On the way she saw Satish, who had got possession of his aunt's vermilion, and was seated, daubing neck, nose, chin, and breast with the red powder. At this sight Kamal forgot the *Boisnavi*, the bough, Kunda Nandini, and everything else.

295

Surja Mukhi sent for the servant Hira.

Hira's name has been mentioned once; it is now needful to give a particular account of her. Nagendra and his father always took special care that the female servants of the household should be of

good character. With this design they offered good wages, and sought to engage servants of a superior class. The women servants of the house dwelt in happiness and esteem, therefore many respectable women of small means took service with them. Amongst these Hira was the principal. Many maid-servants are of the Kaystha caste. Hira was a Kaystha. Her grandmother had first been engaged as a servant, and Hira, being then a child, had come with her. When Hira became capable the old woman gave up service, built herself a house out of her savings, and dwelt in Govindpur. Hira entered the service of the Datta family. She was then about twenty years of age, younger than most of the other servants, but in intelligence and in mental qualities their superior. Hira had been known in Govindpur from childhood as a widow, but no one had ever heard anything of her husband, neither had any one heard of any stain upon her character. She was something of a shrew. She dressed and adorned herself as one whose husband is living. She was beautiful, of brilliant complexion, lotus-eyed, short in stature, her face like the moon covered with clouds, her hair raised in front like a snake-hood.

Hira was sitting alone singing. She made quarrels among the maids for her own amusement. She would frighten the cook in the dark, incite the boys to tease their parents to give them in marriage; if she saw any one sleeping she would paint the face with lime and ink. Truly she had many faults, as will appear by degrees. At present I will only add that if she saw attar or rose-water she would steal it.

Surja Mukhi, calling Hira, said, "Do you know that *Boisnavi*?"

"No," replied Hira. "I was never out of the neighbourhood, how should I know a *Boisnavi* beggar-man. Ask the women of the *Thakur bari*; Karuna or Sitala may know her."

"This is not a *Thakur bari Boisnavi*. I want to know who she is, where her home is, and why she talks so much with Kunda. If you find all this out for me I will give you a new Benares *sari*, and send you to see the play."

At this offer Hira became very zealous, and asked, "When may I go to make inquiry?"

"When you like; but if you do not follow her now you will not be able to trace her. Be careful that neither the *Boisnavi* nor any one else suspects you."

At this moment Kamal returned, and, approving of Surja Mukhi's design, said to Hira, "And if you can, prick her with *babla* thorns."

Hira said: "I will do all, but only a Benares *sari* will not content me." 305

"What do you want?" asked Surja.

"She wants a husband," said Kamal. "Give her in marriage."

"Very well," said Surja. "Would you like to have the [*Thakur Jamai*](#)? Say so, and Kamal will arrange it."

"Then I will see," said Hira; "but there is already in the house a husband suited to my mind."

"Who is it?" asked Surja.

"Death," was Hira's reply. 310

Chapter XIII

No!

On the evening of that day, Kunda was sitting near the [*talao*](#) in the middle of the garden. The *talao* was broad; its water pure and always blue. The reader will remember that behind this *talao* was a flower-garden, in the midst of which stood a white marble house covered with creepers. In front, a flight of steps led down to the water. The steps were built of brick to resemble stone, very broad and clean. On either side grew an aged *bakul* tree. Beneath these trees sat Kunda Nandini, alone in the darkening evening, gazing at the reflection of the sky and stars in the clear water. Here and there lotus flowers could be dimly seen. On the other three sides of the *talao*, mango, jak, plum, orange, lichi, cocoanut, kul, bel, and other fruit-trees grew thickly in rows, looking in the darkness like a wall with an uneven top. Occasionally the harsh voice of a bird in the branches broke the silence. The cool wind blowing over the *talao* caused the water slightly to wet the lotus flowers, gave the reflected sky an appearance of trembling, and murmured in the leaves above Kunda Nandini's head. The scent of the

flowers of the *bakul* tree pervaded the air, mingled with that of jasmine and other blossoms. Everywhere fireflies flew in the darkness over the clear water, dancing, sparkling, becoming extinguished. Flying foxes talked to each other; jackals howled to keep off other animals. A few clouds having lost their way wandered over the sky; one or two stars fell as though overwhelmed with grief. Kunda Nandini sat brooding over her troubles. Thus ran her thoughts: "All my family is gone. My mother, my brother, my father, all died. Why did I not die? If I could not die, why did I come here? Does the good man become a star when he dies?" Kunda no longer remembered the vision she had seen on the night of her father's death. It did not recur to her mind even now. Only a faint memory of the scene came to her with the idea that, since she had seen her mother in vision, that mother must have become a star. So she asked herself: "Do the good become stars after death? and if so, are all I loved become stars? Then which are they among those hosts? how can I determine? Can they see me—I who have wept so much? Let them go, I will think of them no more. It makes me weep; what is the use of weeping? Is it my fate to weep? If not, my mother—again these thoughts! let them go. Would it not be well to die? How to do it? Shall I drown myself? Should I become a star if I did that? Should I see? Should I see every day—whom? Can I not say whom? why can I not pronounce the name? there is no one here who could hear it. Shall I please myself by uttering it for once? only in thought can I say it—Nagendra, my Nagendra! Oh, what do I say? my Nagendra! What am I? Surja Mukhi's Nagendra. How often have I uttered this name, and what is the use? If he could have married me instead of Surja Mukhi! Let it go! I shall drown myself. If I were to do that what would happen? To-morrow I should float on the water; all would hear of it. Nagendra—again I say it, Nagendra; if Nagendra heard of it what would he say? It will not do to drown myself; my body would swell, I should look ugly if he should see me! Can I take poison? What poison? Where should I get it? Who would bring it for me? Could I take it? I could, but not to-day. Let me please myself with the thought that he loves me. Is it true? Kamal Didi said so; but

how can she know it? my conscience will not let me ask. Does he love me? How does he love me? What does he love—my beauty or me? Beauty? let me see." She went to examine the reflection of her face in the water, but, failing to see anything, returned to her former place. "It cannot be; why do I think of that? Surja Mukhi is more beautiful than I. Haro Mani, Bishu, Mukta, Chandra, Prasunna, Bama, Pramada, are all more beautiful. Even Hira is more beautiful; yes, notwithstanding her dark complexion, her face is more beautiful. Then if it is not beauty, is it disposition? Let me think. I can't find any attraction in myself. Kamal said it to satisfy me. Why should he love me? Yet why should Kamal try to flatter me? Who knows? But I will not die; I will think of that. Though it is false I will ponder over it; I will think that true which is false. But I cannot go to Calcutta; I should not see him. I cannot, cannot go; yet if not, what shall I do? If Kamal's words are true, then those who have done so much for me are being made to suffer through me. I can see that there is something in Surja Mukhi's mind. True or false I will have to go; but I cannot! Then I must drown myself. If I must die I will die! Oh, my father! did you leave me here to such a fate?" Then Kunda, putting her hands to her face, gave way to weeping. Suddenly the vision flashed into her mind; she started as if at a flash of lightning. "I had forgotten it all," she exclaimed. "Why had I forgotten it? My mother showed me my destiny, and bade me evade it by ascending to the stars. Why did I not go? Why did I not die? Why do I delay now? I will delay no longer." So saying, she began slowly to descend the steps. Kunda was but a woman, timid and cowardly; at each step she feared, at each step she shivered. Nevertheless she proceeded slowly with unshaken purpose to obey her mother's command. At this moment some one from behind touched her very gently on the shoulder. Some one said, "Kunda!" Kunda looked round. In the darkness she at once recognized Nagendra. Kunda thought no more that day of dying.

And Nagendra, is this the stainless character you have preserved so long? Is this the return for your Surja Mukhi's devotion? Shame! shame! you are a thief; you are worse than a thief. What could a thief have done to Surja Mukhi? He might

have stolen her ornaments, her wealth, but you have come to destroy her heart. Surja Mukhi never bestowed anything upon the thief, therefore if he stole, he was but a thief. But to you Surja Mukhi gave her all; therefore you are committing the worst of thefts. Nagendra, it were better for you to die. If you have the courage, drown yourself.

Shame! shame! Kunda Nandini; why do you tremble at the touch of a thief? Why are the words of a thief as a thorn in the flesh? See, Kunda Nandini! the water is pure, cool, pleasant; will you plunge into it? will you not die?

Kunda Nandini did not wish to die.

315

The robber said: "Kunda, will you go to-morrow to Calcutta? Do you go willingly?"

Willingly—alas! alas! Kunda wiped her eyes, but did not speak.

"Kunda, why do you weep? Listen. With much difficulty I have endured so long; I cannot bear it longer. I cannot say how I have lived through it. Though I have struggled so hard, yet see how degraded I am. I have become a drunkard. I can struggle no longer; I cannot let you go. Listen, Kunda. Now widow marriage is allowed I will marry you, if you consent."

This time Kunda spoke; she said "No."

"Why, Kunda? do you think widow marriage unholy?"

320

"No."

"Then why not? Say, say, will you be my wife or not? will you love me or no?"

"No."

Then Nagendra, as though he had a thousand tongues, entreated her with heart-piercing words. Still Kunda said "No."

Nagendra looked at the pure, cold water, and asked himself, "Can I lie there?"

325

To herself Kunda said: "No, widow marriage is allowed in the Shastras; it is not on that account."

Why, then, did she not seek the water?

Haridasi *Boisnavi*, returning to the garden-house, suddenly became Debendra Babu, and sat down and smoked his *huka*, drinking brandy freely at intervals until he became intoxicated.

Then Surendra entered, sat down by Debendra, and after inquiring after his health, said, "Where have you been to-day again?"

"Have you heard of this so soon?" said Debendra.

330

"This is another mistake of yours. You imagine that what you do is hidden, that no one can know anything about it; but it is known all over the place."

"I have no desire to hide anything," said Debendra.

"It reflects no credit upon you. So long as you show the least shame we have some hope of you. If you had any shame left, would you expose yourself in the village as a *Boisnavi*?"

Said Debendra, laughing, "What a jolly *Boisnavi* I was! Were you not charmed with my get-up?"

"I did not see you in that base disguise," replied Surendra, "or I would have given you a taste of the whip." Then snatching the glass from Debendra's hand, he said, "Now do listen seriously while you are in your senses; after that, drink if you will."

335

"Speak, brother," said Debendra; "why are you angry to-day? I think the atmosphere of Hembati has corrupted you."

Surendra, lending no ear to his evil words, said, "Whose destruction are you seeking to compass by assuming this disguise?"

"Do you not know?" was the reply. "Don't you remember the schoolmaster's marriage to a goddess? This goddess is now a widow, and lives with the Datta family in that village. I went to see her."

"Have you not gone far enough in vice? Are you not satisfied yet, that you wish to ruin that unprotected girl? See, Debendra, you are so sinful, so cruel, so destructive, that we can hardly associate with you any longer."

Surendra said this with so much firmness that Debendra was quite stunned. Then he said, seriously: "Do not be angry with me; my heart is not under my own control. I can give up everything else but the hope of possessing this woman. Since the day I first

340

saw her in Tara Charan's house I have been under the power of her beauty. In my eyes there is no such beauty anywhere. As in fever the patient is burned with thirst, from that day my passion for her has burned within me. I cannot relate the many attempts I have made to see her. Until now I had not succeeded. By means of this *Boisnavi* dress I have accomplished my desire. There is no cause for you to fear. She is a virtuous woman."

"Then why do you go?" asked his friend.

"Only to see her. I cannot describe what satisfaction I have found in seeing her, talking with her, singing to her."

"I am speaking seriously, not jesting. If you do not abandon this evil purpose, then our intercourse must end. More than that, I shall become your enemy."

"You are my only friend," said Debendra; "I would lose half of what I possess rather than lose you. Still, I confess I would rather lose you than give up the hope of seeing Kunda Nandini."

"Then it must be so. I can no longer associate with you."

345

Thus saying, Surendra departed with a sorrowful heart.

Debendra, greatly afflicted at losing his one friend, sat some time in repentant thought. At length he said: "Let it go! in this world who cares for any one? Each for himself!"

Then filling his glass he drank, and under the influence of the liquor his heart quickly became joyous. Closing his eyes, he began to sing some doggerel beginning—

"My name is Hira, the flower girl."

Presently a voice answered from without—

"My name is Hira Malini.

He is talking in his cups; I can't bear to see it."

350

Debendra, hearing the voice, called out noisily, "Who are you—a male or female spirit?"

Then, jingling her bangles, the spirit entered and sat down by Debendra. The spirit was covered with a *sari*, bracelets on her

arms, on her neck a charm, ornaments in her ears, silver chain round her waist, on her ankles rings. She was scented with attar.

Debendra held a light near to the face of the spirit. He did not know her.

Gently he said, "Who are you? and from whence do you come?" Then holding the light in another direction, he asked, "Whose spirit are you?" At last, finding he could not steady himself, he said, "Go for to-day; I will worship you with cakes and flesh of goat on the night of the [dark moon](#)."

Then the spirit, laughing, said, "Are you well, *Boisnavi Didi*?"

355

"Good heavens!" said the tipsy one, "are you a spirit from the Datta family?" Thus saying, he again held the lamp near her face; moving it hither and thither all round, he gravely examined the woman. At last, throwing down the lamp, he began to sing, "Who are you? Surely I know you. Where have I seen you?"

The woman replied, "I am Hira."

"Hurrah! Three cheers for Hira!" Exclaiming thus, the drunken man began to jump about. Then, falling flat on the floor, he saluted Hira, and with glass in hand began to sing in her praise.

Hira had discovered during the day that Haridasi *Boisnavi* and Debendra Babu were one and the same person. But with what design Debendra had entered the house of the Dattas it was not so easy to discover. To find this out, Hira had come to Debendra's house; only Hira would have had courage for such a deed. She now said:

"What is my purpose? To day a thief entered the Datta's house and committed a robbery—I have come to seize the robber."

360

Hearing this, the Babu said: "It is true I went to steal; but, Hira, I went not to steal jewels or pearls, but to seek flowers and fruits."

"What flower? Kunda?"

"Hurrah! Yes, Kunda. Three cheers for Kunda Nandini! I adore her."

"I have come from Kunda Nandini."

"Hurrah! Speak! speak! What has she sent you to say? Yes, I remember; why should it not be? For three years we have loved each other."

365

Hira was astonished, but wishing to hear more, she said: "I did not know you had loved so long. How did you first make love to her?"

"There is no difficulty in that. From my friendship with Tara Charan, I asked him to introduce me to his wife. He did so, and from that time I have loved her."

"After that what happened?" asked Hira.

"After that, because of your mistress's anger, I did not see Kunda for many days. Then I entered the house as a *Boisnavi*. The girl is very timid, she will not speak; but the way in which I coaxed her to-day is sure to take effect. Why should it not succeed? Am I not Debendra? Learn well, oh lover! the art of winning hearts!"

Then Hira said: "It has become very late; now good-bye," and smiling gently she arose and departed.

370

Debendra fell into a drunken sleep.

Early the next morning Hira related to Surja Mukhi all that she had heard from Debendra—his three years' passion, and his present attempt to play the lover to Kunda Nandini in the disguise of a *Boisnavi*.

Then Surja Mukhi's blue eyes grew inflamed with anger, the crimson veins on her temples stood out. Kamal also heard it all.

Surja Mukhi sent for Kunda Nandini, and when she came said to her—

"Kunda, we have learned who Haridasi *Boisnavi* is. We know that he is your paramour. I now know your true character. We give no place in our house to such a woman. Take yourself away from here, otherwise Hira shall drive you away with a broom."

375

Kunda trembled. Kamal saw that she was about to fall, and led her away to her own chamber. Remaining there, she comforted Kunda as well as she could, saying, "Let the *Bou* (wife) say what she will, I do not believe a word of it."

Chapter XV The Forlorn One

In the depth of night, when all were sleeping, Kunda Nandini opened the door of her chamber and went forth. With but one dress, the seventeen-year-old girl left the house of Surja Mukhi, and leaped alone into the ocean of the world. Kunda had never set foot outside the house; she could not tell in which direction to go.

The dark body of the large house loomed against the sky. Kunda wandered for some time in the dark; then she remembered that a light was usually to be seen from Nagendra's room. She knew how to reach the spot; and thinking that she would refresh her eyes by seeking that light, she went to that side of the house. The shutters were open, the sash closed. In the darkness three lights gleamed; insects were hovering near trying to reach the light, but the glass repelled them. Kunda in her heart sympathized with these insects. Her infatuated eyes dwelt upon the light; she could not bring herself to leave it. She sat beneath some casuarina-trees near the window, every now and then watching the fireflies dancing in the trees. In the sky black clouds chased each other, only a star or two being visible at intervals. All round the house rows of casuarina-trees raising their heads into the clouds, stood like apparitions of the night. At the touch of the wind these giant-faced apparitions whispered in their ghost language over Kunda Nandini's head. The very ghosts, in their fear of the terrible night, spoke in low voices. Occasionally the open shutters of the window flapped against the walls. Black owls hooted as they sat upon the house; sometimes a dog seeing another animal rushed after it; sometimes a twig or a fruit fell to the ground. In the distance the cocoanut palms waved their heads, the rustling of the leaves of the fan palm reached the ear. Over all the light streamed, and the insect troop came and went. Kunda sat there gazing.

A sash is gently opened; the figure of a man appears against the light. Alas! it is Nagendra's figure. Nagendra, what if you should discover the flower, Kunda, under the trees? What if, seeing you in the window, the sound of her beating heart should make itself heard? What if, hearing this sound, she should know that if you move and become invisible her happiness will be gone? Nagendra, you are standing out of the light; move it so that

she can see you. Kunda is very wretched; stand there that the clear water of the pool with the stars reflected in it may not recur to her mind. Listen! the black owl hoots! Should you move, Kunda will be terrified by the lightning. See there! the black clouds, pressed by the wind, meet as though in battle. There will be a rainstorm: who will shelter Kunda? See there! you have opened the sash, swarms of insects are rushing into your room. Kunda thinks, "If I am virtuous, shall I be born again as an insect?" Kunda thinks she would like to share the fate of the insects. "I have scorched myself, why do I not die?"

Nagendra, shutting the sash, moves away. Cruel! what harm you have done. You have no business waking in the night; go to sleep. Kunda Nandini is dying; let her die!—she would gladly do so to save you a headache. Now the lightened window has become dark. Looking—looking—wiping her eyes, Kunda Nandini arose and took the path before her. The ghost-like shrubs, murmuring, asked, "Whither goest thou?" the fan palms rustled, "Whither dost thou go?" the owl's deep voice asked the same question. The window said, "Let her go—no more will I show to her *Nagendra*." Then foolish Kunda Nandini gazed once more in that direction.

Oh, iron-hearted Surja Mukhi, arise! think what you have done. Make the forlorn one return.

Kunda went on, on, on; again the clouds clashed, the sky became as night, the lightning flashed, the wind moaned, the clouds thundered. Kunda! Kunda! whither goest thou? The storm came—first the sound, then clouds of dust, then leaves torn from the trees borne by the wind; at last, plash, plash, the rain. Kunda, with thy one garment, whither goest thou?

By the flashes of lightning Kunda saw a hut: its walls were of mud, supporting a low roof. She sat down within the doorway, resting against the door. In doing this she made some noise. The house owner being awake heard the noise, but thought it was made by the storm; but a dog, who slept within near the door, barking loudly, alarmed the householder, who timidly opened the door, and seeing only a desolate woman, asked, "Who is there?" No reply. "Who are you, woman?"

Kunda said, "I am standing here because of the storm."

"What? What? Speak again."

385

Kunda repeated her words.

The householder recognizing the voice, drew Kunda indoors, and, making a fire, discovered herself to be Hira. She comforted Kunda, saying, "I understand—you have run away from the scolding; have no fear, I will tell no one. You shall stay with me for a couple of days."

Hira's dwelling was surrounded by a wall. Inside were a couple of clean mud-built huts. The walls of the rooms were decorated with figures of flowers, birds, and gods. In the court-yard grew red-leaved vegetables, and near them jasmine and roses. The gardener from the Babu's house had planted them. If Hira had wished, he would have given her anything from the Babu's garden. His profit in this was that Hira with her own hand prepared his *huka* and handed it to him.

In one of the huts Hira slept; in the other her grandmother. Hira made up a bed for Kunda beside her own. Kunda lay there, but did not sleep. Kunda desired to remain hidden, and therefore consented to be locked in the room on the following day when Hira went to her work, so that she should not be seen by the grandmother. At noon, when the grandmother went to bathe, Hira, coming home, permitted Kunda to bathe and eat. After this meal Kunda was again locked in, and Hira returned to her work till night, when she again made up the beds as before.

Creak, creak, creak—the sound of the chain of the outer door gently shaken. Hira was astonished. One person only, the gatekeeper, sometimes shook the chain to give warning at night. But in his hand the chain did not speak so sweetly; it spoke threateningly, as though to say, "If you do not open, I will break the door." Now it seemed to say, "How are you, my Hira? Arise, my jewel of a Hira!" Hira arose, and opening the outer door saw a woman. At first she was puzzled, but in a moment, recognizing the visitor, she exclaimed, "Oh, [*Ganga jal*](#)! how fortunate I am!"

390

Hira's *Ganga jal* was Malati the milk-woman, whose home was at Debipur, near Debendra Babu's house. She was a merry woman, from thirty to thirty-two years of age, dressed in a *sari*

and wearing shell bracelets, her lips red from the spices she ate; her complexion was almost fair, with red spots on her cheeks; her nose flat, her temples tattooed, a quid of tobacco in her cheek. Malati was not a servant of Debendra's, not even a dependent, but yet a follower; the services that others refused to perform, he obtained from her.

At sight of this woman the cunning Hira said: "Sister *Ganga jal!* may I meet you at my last moment; but why have you come now?"

Malati whispered, "Debendra Babu wants you."

Hira, with a laugh: "Are you not to get anything?"

Malati answered, "You best know what you mean. Come at once."

395

As Hira desired to go, she told Kunda that she was called to her master's house, and must go to see what was wanted. Then extinguishing the light, she put on her dress and ornaments, and accompanied *Ganga jal*, the two singing as they went some love song.

Hira went alone into Debendra's *boita khana*. He had been drinking, but not heavily; he was quite sensible. His manner to Hira was altogether changed; he paid her no compliments, but said: "I had taken so much that evening that I did not understand what you said. Why did you come that night? it is to know this that I have sent for you. You told me Kunda Nandini sent you, but you did not give her message. I suppose that was because you found me so much overcome; but you can tell me now."

"Kunda Nandini did not send me to say anything."

"Then why did you come?" replied Debendra.

"I only came to see you."

400

Debendra laughed. "You are very intelligent. Nagendra Babu is fortunate in possessing such a servant. I thought the talk about Kunda Nandini was a mere pretence. You came to inquire after Haridasi *Boisnavi*. You came to know my design in wearing the *Boisnavi* garb; why I went to the Datta house: this you came to learn, and in part you accomplished your purpose. I do not seek to hide the matter. You did your master's work, and have received

your reward from him, no doubt. I have a commission for you; do it, and I also will reward you."

It would be an unpleasant task to relate in detail the speech of a man so deeply sunk in vice. Debendra, promising Hira an abundant reward, proposed to buy Kunda Nandini.

At his words Hira's eyes reddened, her ears became like fire. When he had finished she rose and said—

"Sir, addressing me as a servant, you have said this to me. It is not for me to reply. I will tell my master, and he will give you a suitable answer." Then she went quickly out.

For some moments Debendra sat puzzled and cowed. Then to revive himself he returned to the brandy, and the songs in which he usually indulged.

405

Chapter XVI

Hira's Envy

Rising in the morning, Hira went to her work. For the past two days there had been a great tumult in the Datta house, because Kunda Nandini was not to be found. It was known to all the household that she had gone away in anger. It was also known to some of the neighbours. Nagendra heard that Kunda had gone, but no one told him the reason. He thought to himself, "Kunda has left because she does not think it right to remain in the house after what I said to her. If so, why does she not go with Kamal?" Nagendra's brow was clouded. No one ventured to come near him. He knew not what fault Surja Mukhi had committed, yet he held no intercourse with her, but sent a female spy into the neighbourhood to make search for Kunda Nandini.

Surja Mukhi was much distressed on hearing of Kunda's flight, especially as Kamal Mani had assured her that what Debendra had said was not worthy of credit: for if she had had any bond with Debendra during three years, it could not have remained unknown; and Kunda's disposition gave no reason for suspicion of such a thing. Debendra was a drunkard, and in his cups he spoke falsely. Thinking over this, Surja Mukhi's distress increased. In addition to that, her husband's displeasure hurt her

severely. A hundred times she abused Kunda—a thousand times she blamed herself. She also sent people in search of Kunda.

Kamal's postponed her departure for Calcutta. She abused no one. She did not use a word of scolding to Surja Mukhi. Loosening her necklace from her throat, she showed it to all the household, saying, "I will give this to whomsoever will bring Kunda back."

The guilty Hira heard and saw all this, but said nothing. Seeing the necklace she coveted it, but repressed her desire. On the second day, arranging her work, she went at noon, at which hour her grandmother would be bathing, to give Kunda her meal. At night the two made their bed, and laid down together. Neither Hira nor Kunda slept: Kunda was kept awake by her sorrow; Hira by the mingled happiness and trouble of her thoughts. But whatever her thoughts were she did not give them words—they remained hidden.

Oh, Hira! Hira! you have not an evil countenance, you too are young; why this vice in your heart? Why did the Creator betray her? Because the Creator betrayed her, does she therefore wish to betray others? If Hira were in Surja Mukhi's place, would she be so deceitful? Hira says "No!" But sitting in Hira's place she speaks as Hira. People say all evil that occurs is brought about by the wicked. Wicked people say, "I should have been virtuous, but through the faults of others have become evil." Some say, "Why has not five become seven?" Five says, "I would have been seven, but two and five make seven. If the Creator or the Creator's creatures had given me two more, I should have been seven." So thought Hira.

Hira said to herself: "Now what shall I do? Since the Creator has given me the opportunity, why should I lose it through my own fault? On the one side, if I take Kunda home to the Dattas, Kamal will give me the necklace, and the *Grihini* also will give me something. Shall I spare the Babu? On the other hand, if I give Kunda to Debendra Babu, I shall get a large sum of money at once. But I can't do that. Why does Debendra think Kunda so beautiful? If I had good food, dressed well, took my ease like a fine lady in a picture, I could be the same. So simple a creature as

Kunda can never understand the merits of Debendra Babu. If there were no mud there would be no lotus, and Kunda is the only woman who can excite love in Debendra Babu. Every one to their destiny! But why am I angry? Why should I trouble myself? I used to jest at love—I used to say it is mere talk, a mere story. Now I laugh no longer. I used to say, 'If anyone loves let him love; I shall never love any one.' Fate said, 'Wait, you will see by and by.' In trying to seize the robber of other's wealth, I have lost my own heart. What a face! what a neck! what a figure! is there another man like him? That the fellow should tell *me* to bring Kunda to him! Could he set no one else this task? I could have struck him in the face! I have come to love him so dearly, I could even find pleasure in striking him. But let that pass. In that path there is danger; I must not think of it. I have long ceased to look for joy or sorrow in this life. Nevertheless, I cannot give Kunda into Debendra's hand; the thought of it torments me. Rather I will so manage that she shall not fall in his way. How shall I effect that? I will place Kunda where she was before, thus she will escape him. Whether he dress as *Boisnavi* or [*Vasudeva*](#), he will not obtain admission into that house; therefore it will be well to take Kunda back there. But she will not go! Her face is set against the house. But if all coax her she must go. Another design I have in my mind; will God permit me to carry it out? Why am I so angry with Surja Mukhi? She never did me any harm; on the contrary, she loves me and is kind to me. Why, then, am I angry? Because Surja Mukhi is happy, and I am miserable; she is great, I am mean; she is mistress, I am servant; therefore my anger against her is strong. If, you say, God made her great, how is that her fault? Why should I hurt her? I reply, God has done me harm. Is that my fault? I do not wish to hurt her, but if hurting her benefits me, why should I not do it? Who does not seek his own advantage? Now I want money; I can't endure servitude any longer. Where will money come from? From the Datta house—where else? To get the Datta money, then, must be my object. Every one knows that Nagendra Babu's eyes have fallen on Kunda; the Babu worships her. What great people wish, they can accomplish. The only obstacle is Surja Mukhi. If the two should

quarrel, then the great Surja Mukhi's wish will no longer be regarded. Now, let me see if I cannot bring about a quarrel. If that is done, the Babu will be free to worship Kunda. At present Kunda is but an innocent, but I will make her wise; I will soon bring her into subjection. She can be of much assistance to me. If I give my mind to it, I can make her do what I will. If the Babu devotes himself to Kunda, he will do what she bids him; and she shall do what I bid her. So shall I receive the fruits of his devotion. If I am not to serve longer, this is the way it must be brought about. I will give Kunda Nandini to Nagendra, but not suddenly. I will hide her for a few days and see what happens. Love is deepened by separation. If I keep them apart the Babu's love will ripen. Then I will bring out Kunda and give her to him. Then if Surja Mukhi's fate is not broken, it must be a very strong fate. In the meantime I will mould Kunda to my will. But, first, I must send my grandmother to Kamarghat, else I cannot keep Kunda hidden."

With this design, Hira set about her arrangements. On some pretext she induced her grandmother to go to the house of a relative in the village of Kamarghat, and kept Kunda closely concealed in her own house. Kunda, seeing all her zeal and care, thought to herself, "There is no one living so good as Hira. Even Kamal does not love me so much."

Chapter XVII

Hira's Quarrel. The Bud of the Poison Tree

"Yes, that will do. Kunda shall submit. But if we do not make Surja Mukhi appear as poison in the eyes of Nagendra, nothing can be accomplished."

So Hira set herself to divide the hearts hitherto undivided.

One morning early, the wicked Hira came into her mistress's house ready for work. There was a servant in the Datta household named Kousalya, who hated Hira because she was head servant and enjoyed the favour of the mistress. Hira said to her: "Sister Kushi, I feel very strange to-day; will you do my work for me?"

Kousalya feared Hira, therefore she said: "Of course I will do it; we are all subject to illness, and all the subjects of one mistress."

It had been Hira's wish that Kousalya should give no reply, and she would make that a pretext for a quarrel. So, shaking her head, she said: "You presume so far as to abuse me?"

Astonished, Kousalya said: "When did I abuse any one?"

"What!" said Hira, angrily, "you deny it? Why did you speak of my illness? Do you think I am going to die? You hope that I am ill that you may show people how good you are to me. May you be ill yourself."

"Be it so! Why are you angry, sister? You must die some day; Death will not forget you, nor will he forget me."

420

"May Death never forget you! You envy me! May you die of envy! May your life be short! Go to destruction! May blindness seize upon you!"

Kousalya could bear no more. She began to return these good wishes in similar terms. In the act of quarrelling Kousalya was the superior. Therefore Hira got her deserts.

Then Hira went to complain to her mistress. If any one could have looked at her as she went, they would have seen no signs of anger on her face, but rather a smile on her lips. But when she reached her mistress, her face expressed great anger, and she began by using the weapon given by God to woman—that is to say, she shed a flood of tears.

Surja Mukhi inquired into the cause. On hearing the complaint, she judged that Hira was in fault. Nevertheless, for her sake, she scolded Kousalya slightly.

Not being satisfied with that, Hira said: "You must dismiss that woman, or I will not remain."

425

Then Surja Mukhi was much vexed with Hira, and said: "You are very encroaching, Hira; you began the quarrel, the fault was entirely yours, and now you want me to dismiss the woman. I will do nothing so unjust. Go, if you will. I will not bid you stay."

This was just what Hira wanted. Saying "Very well, I go," her eyes streaming with tears, she presented herself before the Babu in the outer apartments.

The Babu was alone in the *boita khana*—he was usually alone now. Seeing Hira weeping, he asked, "Why do you weep, Hira?"

"I have been told to come for my wages."

Nagendra, astonished, asked: "What has happened?"

430

"I am dismissed. *Ma Thakurani* (the mistress) has dismissed me."

"What have you done?" asked Nagendra.

"Kushi abused me; I complained: the mistress believes her account and dismisses me."

Nagendra, shaking his head and laughing, said: "That is not a likely story, Hira; tell the truth."

Hira then, speaking plainly, said: "The truth is I will not stay."

435

"Why?"

"The mistress has become quite altered. One never knows what to expect from her."

Nagendra, frowning, said in a sharp voice: "What does that mean?"

Hira now brought in the fact she had wished to report.

"What did she not say that day to Kunda Nandini Thakurani? On hearing it, Kunda left the house. Our fear is that some day something of the same kind should be said to us. We could not endure that, therefore I chose to anticipate it."

440

"What are you talking about?" asked Nagendra.

"I cannot tell you for shame."

Nagendra's brow became dark. He said: "Go home for to-day; I will call you to-morrow."

Hira's desire was accomplished. With this design she had quarrelled with Kousalya.

Nagendra rose and went to Surja Mukhi. Stepping lightly, Hira followed him.

445

Taking Surja Mukhi aside, he asked, "Have you dismissed Hira?"

Surja Mukhi replied, "Yes," and then related the particulars.

On hearing them, Nagendra said: "Let her go. What did you say to Kunda Nandini?"

Nagendra saw that Surja Mukhi turned pale.

"What did I say to her?" she stammered.

450

"Yes; what evil words did you use to her?"

Surja Mukhi remained silent some moments. Then she said—

"You are my all, my present and my future; why should I hide anything from you? I did speak harshly to Kunda; then, fearing you would be angry, I said nothing to you about it. Forgive me that offence; I am telling you all."

Then she related the whole matter frankly, from the discovery of the *Boisnavi* Haridasi to the reproof she had given to Kunda. At the end she said—

"I am deeply sorrowful that I have driven Kunda Nandini away. I have sent everywhere in search of her. If I had found her, I would have brought her back."

455

Nagendra said—

"Your fault is not great. Could any respectable man's wife, hearing of such a stain, give refuge to the guilty person? But would it not have been well to think a little whether the charge was true? Did you not know of the talk about Tara Charan's house? Had you not heard that Debendra had been introduced to Kunda three years before? Why did you believe a drunkard's words?"

"I did not think of that at the time. Now I do. My mind was wandering." As she spoke the faithful wife sank at Nagendra's feet, and clasping them with her hands, wetted them with her tears. Then raising her face, she said: "Oh, dearer than life, I will conceal nothing that is in my mind."

Nagendra said: "You need not speak; I know that you suspect me of feeling love for Kunda Nandini."

Surja Mukhi, hiding her face at the feet of her husband, wept. Again raising her face, sad and tearful as the dew-drenched lily, and looking into the face of him who could remove all her sorrows, she said: "What can I say? Can I tell you what I have suffered? Only lest my death might increase your sorrow, I do not die. Otherwise, when I knew that another shared your heart, I wished to die. But people cannot die by wishing to do so."

460

Nagendra remained long silent; then, with a heavy sigh, he said—

"Surja Mukhi, the fault is entirely mine, not yours at all. I have indeed been unfaithful to you; in truth, forgetting you, my heart has gone out towards Kunda Nandini. What I have suffered, what I do suffer, how can I tell you? You think I have not tried to conquer it; but you must not think so. You could never reproach me so bitterly as I have reproached myself. I am sinful; I cannot rule my own heart."

Surja Mukhi could endure no more. With clasped hands, she entreated bitterly—

"Tell me no more; keep it to yourself. Every word you say pierces my breast like a dart. What was written in my destiny has befallen me. I wish to hear no more; it is not fit for me to hear."

"Not so, Surja Mukhi," replied Nagendra; "you must listen. Let me speak what I have long striven to say. I will leave this house; I will not die, but I will go elsewhere. Home and family no longer give me happiness. I have no pleasure with you. I am not fit to be your husband. I will trouble you no longer. I will find Kunda Nandini, and will go with her to another place. Do you remain mistress of this house. Regard yourself as a widow—since your husband is so base, are you not a widow? But, base as I am, I will not deceive you. Now I go: if I am able to forget Kunda, I will come again; if not, this is my last hour with you."

465

What could Surja Mukhi say to these heart-piercing words? For some moments she stood like a statue, gazing on the ground. Then she cast herself down, hid her face, and wept.

As the murderous tiger gazes at the dying agonies of his prey, Nagendra stood calmly looking on. He was thinking, "She will die to-day or to-morrow, as God may will. What can I do? If I willed it, could I die instead of her? I might die; but would that save Surja Mukhi?"

No, Nagendra, your dying would not save Surja Mukhi; but it would be well for you to die.

After a time Surja Mukhi sat up; again clasping her husband's feet, she said: "Grant me one boon."

"What is it?"

470

"Remain one month longer at home. If in that time we do not find Kunda Nandini, then go; I will not keep you."

Nagendra went out without reply. Mentally he consented to remain for a month; Surja Mukhi understood that. She stood looking after his departing figure, thinking within herself: "My darling, I would give my life to extract the thorns from your feet. You would leave your home on account of this wretched Surja Mukhi. Are you or I the greater?"

Chapter XVIII The Caged Bird

Hira had lost her place, but her relation with the Datta family was not ended. Ever greedy for news from that house, whenever she met any one belonging to it Hira entered into a gossip. In this way she endeavoured to ascertain the disposition of Nagendra towards Surja Mukhi. If she met no one she found some pretext for going to the house, where, in the servants' quarters, while talking of all sorts of matters, she would learn what she wished and depart. Thus some time passed; but one day an unpleasant event occurred. After Hira's interview with Debendra, Malati the milk-woman became a constant visitor at Hira's dwelling. Malati perceived that Hira was not pleased at this; also that one room remained constantly closed. The door was secured by a chain and padlock on the outside; but Malati coming in unexpectedly, perceived that the padlock was absent. Malati removed the chain and pushed the door, but it was fastened inside, and she guessed that some one must be in the room. She asked herself who it could be? At first she thought of a lover; but then, whose lover? Malati knew everything that went on, so she dismissed this idea. Then the thought flashed across her that it might be Kunda, of whose expulsion from the house of Nagendra she had heard. She speedily determined upon a means of resolving her doubt.

Hira had brought from Nagendra's house a young deer, which, because of its restlessness, she kept tied up. Malati, pretending to feed the creature, loosened the fastening, and it instantly bounded away. Hira ran after it.

Seizing the opportunity of Hira's absence, Malati began to call out in a voice of distress: "Hira! Hira! What has happened to my

Hira?" Then rapping at Kunda's door, she exclaimed: "Kunda Thakurun, come out quickly; something has happened to Hira!"

In alarm Kunda opened the door; whereupon Malati, with a laugh of triumph, ran away. Kunda again shut herself in. She did not say anything of the circumstance to Hira, lest she should be scolded.

Malati went with her news to Debendra, who resolved to visit Hira's house on the following day, and bring the matter to a conclusion.

Kunda was now a caged bird, ever restless. Two currents uniting become a powerful stream. So it was in Kunda's heart. On one side shame, insult, expulsion by Surja Mukhi; on the other, passion for Nagendra. By the union of these two streams that of passion was increased, the smaller was swallowed up in the larger. The pain of the taunts and the insults began to fade; Surja Mukhi no longer found place in Kunda's mind, Nagendra occupied it entirely. She began to think, "Why was I so hasty in leaving the house? What harm did a few words do to me? I used to see Nagendra, now I never see him. Could I go back there? if she would not drive me away I would go." Day and night Kunda revolved these thoughts; she soon determined that she must return to the Datta house or she would die; that even if Surja Mukhi should again drive her away, she must make the attempt. Yet on what pretext could she present herself in the court-yard of the house? She would be ashamed to go thither alone. If Hira would accompany her she might venture; but she was ashamed to open her mouth to Hira.

Her heart could no longer endure not to see its lord. One morning, about four o'clock, while Hira was still sleeping, Kunda Nandini arose, and opening the door noiselessly, stepped out of the house. The dark fortnight being ended, the slender moon floated in the sky like a beautiful maiden on the ocean. Darkness lurked in masses amid the trees. The air was so still that the lotus in the weed-covered pool bordering the road did not shed its seed; the dogs were sleeping by the wayside; nature was full of sweet pensiveness. Kunda, guessing the road, went with doubtful steps to the front of the Datta house; she had no design in going, except

that she might by a happy chance see Nagendra. Her return to his house might come about; let it occur when it would, what harm was there in the meantime in trying to see him secretly? While she remained shut up in Hira's house she had no chance of doing so. Now, as she walked, she thought, "I will go round the house; I may see him at the window, in the palace, in the garden, or in the path." Nagendra was accustomed to rise early; it was possible Kunda might obtain a glimpse of him, after which she meant to return to Hira's dwelling. But when she arrived at the house she saw nothing of Nagendra, neither in the path, nor on the roof, nor at the window. Kunda thought, "He has not risen yet, it is not time; I will sit down." She sat waiting amid the darkness under the trees; a fruit or a twig might be heard, in the silence, loosening itself with a slight cracking sound and falling to the earth. The birds in the boughs shook their wings overhead, and occasionally the sound of the watchmen knocking at the doors and giving their warning cry was to be heard. At length the cool wind blew, forerunner of the dawn, and the *papiya* (a bird) filled the air with its musical voice. Presently the cuckoo uttered his cry, and at length all the birds uniting raised a chorus of song. Then Kunda's hope was extinguished; she could no longer sit under the trees, for the dawn had come and she might be seen by any one. She rose to return. One hope had been strong in her mind. There was a flower-garden attached to the inner apartments, where sometimes Nagendra took the air. He might be walking there now; Kunda could not go away without seeing if it were so. But the garden was walled in, and unless the inner door was open there was no entrance. Going thither, Kunda found the door open, and, stepping boldly in, hid herself within the boughs of a *bakul* tree growing in the midst. Thickly-planted rows of creeper-covered trees decked the garden, between which were fine stone-made paths, and here and there flowering shrubs of various hues—red, white, blue, and yellow. Above them hovered troops of insects, coveting the morning honey, now poisoning, now flying, humming as they went; and, following the example of man, settling in flocks on some specially attractive flower. Many-coloured birds of small size, flower-like themselves, hovered over the blossoms,

sipping the sweet juices and pouring forth a flood of melody. The flower-weighted branches swayed in the gentle breeze, the flowerless boughs remaining still, having nothing to weigh them down. The cuckoo, proud bird, concealing his dark colour in the tufts of the *bakul* tree, triumphed over every one with his song.

In the middle of the garden stood a creeper-covered arbour of white stone, surrounded by flowering shrubs. Kunda Nandini, looking forth from the *bakul* tree, saw not Nagendra's tall and god-like form. She saw some one lying on the floor of the arbour, and concluded that it was he. She went forward to obtain a better new. Unfortunately the person arose and came out, and poor Kunda saw that it was not Nagendra, but Surja Mukhi. Frightened, Kunda stood still, she could neither advance nor recede. She saw that Surja Mukhi was walking about gathering flowers. Gradually Nagendra's wife approaching the *bakul* tree, saw some one lurking within its branches. Not recognizing Kunda, Surja Mukhi said, "Who are you?"

Kunda could not speak for fear; her feet refused to move.

At length Surja Mukhi saw who it was, and exclaimed, "Is it not Kunda?"

Kunda could not answer; but Surja Mukhi, seizing her hand, said, "Come, sister, I will not say anything more to you!" and took her indoors.

Chapter XIX Descent

On the night of that day, Debendra Datta, alone, in disguise, excited by wine, went to Hira's house in search of Kunda Nandini. He looked in the two huts, but Kunda was not there. Hira, covering her face with her *sari*, laughed at his discomfiture. Annoyed, Debendra said, "Why do you laugh?"

"At your disappointment. The bird has fled; should you search my premises you will not find it."

Then, in reply to Debendra's questions, Hira told all she knew, concluding with the words, "When I missed her in the morning I

sought her everywhere, and at last found her in the Babu's house receiving much kindness."

Debendra's hopes thus destroyed, he had nothing to detain him; but the doubt in his mind was not dispelled, he wished to sit a little and obtain further information. Noting a cloud or two in the sky he moved restlessly, saying, "I think it is going to rain."

It was Hira's wish that he should sit awhile; but she was a woman, living alone; it was night, she could not bid him stay, if she did she would be taking another step in the downward course. Yet that was in her destiny.

Debendra said, "Have you an umbrella?" There was no such thing in Hira's house. Then he asked, "Will it cause remark if I sit here until the rain is past?"

"People will remark upon it, certainly; but the mischief has been done already in your coming to my house at night."

490

"Then I may sit down?"

Hira did not answer, but made a comfortable seat for him on the bench, took a silver-mounted *huka* from a chest, prepared it for use and handed it to him.

Debendra drew a flask of brandy from his pocket, and drank some of it undiluted. Under the influence of this spirit he perceived that Hira's eyes were beautiful. In truth they were so—large, dark, brilliant, and seductive. He said, "Your eyes are heavenly!" Hira smiled. Debendra saw in a corner a broken violin. Humming a tune, he took the violin and touched it with the bow. "Where did you get this instrument?" he asked.

"I bought it of a beggar."

Debendra made it perform a sort of accompaniment to his voice, as he sang some song in accordance with his mood.

495

Hira's eyes shone yet more brilliantly. For a few moments she forgot self, forgot Debendra's position and her own. She thought, "He is the husband, I am the wife; the Creator, making us for each other, designed long ago to bring us together, that we might both enjoy happiness." The thoughts of the infatuated Hira found expression in speech. Debendra discovered from her half-spoken words that she had given her heart to him. The words were hardly

uttered when Hira recovered consciousness. Then, with the wild look of a frantic creature, she exclaimed, "Go from my house!"

Astonished, Debendra said, "What is the matter, Hira?"

"You must go at once, or I shall."

"Why do you drive me away?" said Debendra.

"Go, go, else I will call some one. Why should you destroy me?" 500

"Is this woman's nature?" asked Debendra.

Hira, enraged, answered: "The nature of woman is not evil. The nature of such a man as you is very evil. You have no religion, you care nothing for the fate of others; you go about seeking only your own delight, thinking only what woman you can destroy. Otherwise, why are you sitting in my house? Was it not your design to compass my destruction? You thought me to be a courtesan, else you would not have had the boldness to sit down here. But I am not a courtesan; I am a poor woman, and live by my labour. I have no leisure for such evil doings. If I had been a rich man's wife, I can't say how it would have been."

Debendra frowned.

Then Hira softened; she looked full at Debendra and said: "The sight of your beauty and your gifts has made me foolish, but you are not to think of me as a courtesan. The sight of you makes me happy, and on that account I wished you to stay. I could not forbid you; but I am a woman. If I were too weak to forbid you, ought you to have sat down? You are very wicked; you entered my house in order to destroy me. Now leave the place!"

Debendra, taking another draught of brandy, said: "Well done, Hira! you have made a capital speech. Will you give a lecture in our Brahmo Samaj?" 505

Stung to the quick by this mockery, Hira said, bitterly: "I am not to be made a jest of by you. Even if I loved so base a man as you, such love would be no fit subject for a jest. I am not virtuous; I don't understand virtue; my mind is not turned in that direction. The reason I told you I was not a courtesan is because I am resolved not to bring a stain upon my character in the hope of winning your love. If you had a spark of love for me, I would have made no such pledge to myself. I am not speaking of virtue;

I should think nothing of infamy compared with the treasure of your love; but you do not love me. For what reward should I incur ill-fame? For what gain should I give up my independence? If a young woman falls into your hands, you will not let her go. If I were to give you my worship, you would accept it; but to-morrow you would forget me, or, if you remembered, it would be to jest over my words with your companions. Why, then, should I become subject to you? Should the day come when you can love me, I will be your devoted servant."

In this manner Debendra discovered Hira's affection for himself. He thought: "Now I know you, I can make you dance to my measure, and whenever I please effect my designs through you."

With these thoughts in his mind, he departed. But Debendra did not yet know Hira.

Chapter XX Good News

It is mid-day. Srish Babu is at office. The people in his house are all taking the noon siesta after their meal. The *boita khana* is locked. A mongrel terrier is sleeping on the door-mat outside, his head between his paws. A couple of servants are seizing the opportunity to chat together in whispers.

Kamal Mani is sitting in her sleeping chamber at her ease, needle in hand, sewing at some canvas work, her hair all loose; no one about but Satish Babu, indulging in many noises. Satish Babu at first tried to snatch away his mother's wool; but finding it securely guarded, he gave his mind to sucking the head of a clay tiger. In the distance a cat with outstretched paws sits watching them both. Her disposition was grave, her face indicated much wisdom and a heart void of fickleness. She is thinking: "The condition of human creatures is frightful; their minds are ever given to sewing canvas, playing with dolls, or some such silly employment. Their thoughts are not turned to good works, nor to providing suitable food for cats. What will become of them hereafter?" Elsewhere, a lizard on the wall with upraised face is

watching a fly. No doubt he is pondering the evil disposition of flies. A butterfly is flying about. In the spot where Satish Babu sits eating sweets, the flies collect in swarms; the ants also do their share towards removing the sweet food. In a few moments the lizard, not being able to catch the fly, moves elsewhere. The cat also, seeing no means by which she could improve the disposition of mankind, heaving a sigh, slowly departs. The butterfly wings its way out of the room. Kamal Mani, tired of her work, puts it down, and turns to talk with Satish Babu.

"Oh, Satu Babu, can you tell me why men go to office?"

"Sli-li-bli," was the child's only answer.

"Satu Babu," said his mother, "mind you never go to office."

"Hama," said Satu.

"What do you mean by Hama? You must not go to office to do hama. Do not go at all. If you do, the *Bou* will sit crying at home before the day is half done."

515

Satish Babu understood the word *Bou*, because Kamal Mani kept him in order by saying that the *Bou* would come and beat him; so he said, "*Bou* will beat."

"Remember that, then; if you go to office, the *Bou* will beat you."

How long this sort of conversation would have continued does not appear, for at that moment a maid-servant entered, rubbing her sleepy eyes, and gave a letter to Kamal Mani. Kamal saw it was from Surja Mukhi; she read it twice through, then sat silent and dejected. This was the letter:

"Dearest,—Since you returned to Calcutta you have forgotten me; else why have I had only one letter from you? Do you not know that I always long for news of you? You ask for news of Kunda. You will be delighted to hear that she is found. Besides that, I have another piece of good news for you. My husband is about to be married to Kunda. I have arranged this marriage. Widow-marriage is allowed in the Shastras, so what fault can be found with it? The wedding will take place in a couple of days; but you will not be able to attend, otherwise I would have invited you. Come, if you can, in time for the ceremony of [*Phul Saja*](#). I have a great desire to see you."

Kamal could not understand the meaning of this letter. She proceeded to take counsel with Satish Babu, who sat in front of her nibbling at the corners of a book. Kamal read the letter to him and said—

520

"Now, Satish Babu, tell me the meaning of this."

Satish understood the joke; he stood up ready to cover his mother with kisses.

Then for some moments Kamal forgot Surja Mukhi; but presently she returned to the letter, reflecting—

"This work is beyond Satish Babu, it needs the help of my minister; will he never come in? Come, baby, we are very angry."

In due time Srish Chandra returned from office and changed his dress. Kamal Mani attended to his wants and then threw herself on the couch in a fume, the baby by her side. Srish Chandra, seeing the state of things, smiled, and seated himself, with his *huka*, on a distant couch. Invoking the *huka* as a witness he said—

525

"O *huka*! thou hast cool water in thy belly but a fire in thy head, be thou a witness. Let her who is angry with me talk to me, else I will sit smoking for hours."

At this Kamal Mani sat up, and in gentle anger turning to him her blue lotus eyes, said—

"It is no use speaking to you while you smoke; you will not attend."

Then she rose from the couch and took away the *huka*.

Kamal Mani's fit of sulking thus broken through, she gave Surja Mukhi's letter to be read, by way of explanation saying—

530

"Tell me the meaning of this, or I shall cut your pay."

"Rather give me next month's pay in advance, then I will explain."

Kamal Mani brought her mouth close to that of Srish Chandra, who took the coin he wished. After reading the letter he said—

"This is a joke!"

"What is? your words, or the letter?"

535

"The letter."

"I shall discharge you to-day. Have you not a spark of understanding? Is this a matter a woman could jest about?"

"It is impossible it can be meant in earnest."

"I fear it is true."

"Nonsense! How can it be true?"

540

"I fear my brother is forcing on this marriage."

Srish Chandra mused a while; then said, "I cannot understand this at all. What do you say? Shall I write to Nagendra?"

Kamal Mani assented. Srish made a grimace, but he wrote the letter.

Nagendra's reply was as follows:—

545

"Do not despise me, brother. Yet what is the use of such a petition; the despicable must be despised. I must effect this marriage. Should all the world abandon me I must do it, otherwise I shall go mad: I am not far short of it now. After this there seems nothing more to be said. You will perceive it is useless to try to turn me from it; but if you have anything to say I am ready to argue with you. If any one says that widow-marriage is contrary to religion, I will give him Vidya Sagar's essay to read. When so learned a teacher affirms that widow-marriage is approved by the Shastras, who can contradict? And if you say that though allowed by the Shastras it is not countenanced by society, that if I carry out this marriage I shall be excluded from society, the answer is, 'Who in Govindpur can exclude me from society? In a place where I constitute society, who is there to banish me?' Nevertheless, for your sakes I will effect the marriage secretly; no one shall know anything about it. You will not make the foregoing objections; you will say a double marriage is contrary to morals. Brother, how do you know that it is opposed to morality? You have learned this from the English; it was not held so in India formerly. Are the English infallible? They have taken this idea from [the law of Moses](#); but we do not hold Moses' law to be the word of God, therefore why should we say that for a man to marry two wives is immoral? You will say if a man may marry two wives why should not a woman have two husbands? The answer is, if a woman had two husbands certain evils would follow which would not result from a man's having two wives. If a woman has two husbands the children have no protector; should there be uncertainty about the father, society would be much

disordered; but no such uncertainty arises when a man has two wives. Many other such objections might be pointed out. Whatever is injurious to the many is contrary to morals. If you think a man's having two wives opposed to morality, point out in what way it is injurious to the majority. You will instance to me discord in the family. I will give you a reason: I am childless. If I die my family name will become extinct; if I marry I may expect children: is this unreasonable? The final objection—Surja Mukhi: Why do I distress a loving wife with a rival? The answer is, Surja Mukhi is not troubled by this marriage: she herself suggested it; she prepared me for it; she is zealous for it. What objection then remains? and why should I be blamed?"

Kamal Mani having read the letter, said—

"In what respect he is to blame God knows; but what delusions he cherishes! I think men understand nothing. Be that as it may, arrange your affairs, husband; we must go to Govindpur."

"But," replied Srish, "can you stop the marriage?"

"If not, I will die at my brother's feet."

"Nay, you can't do that; but we may bring the new wife away. Let us try."

550

Then both prepared for the journey to Govindpur. Early the next day they started by boat, and arrived there in due time. Before entering the house they met the women-servants and some neighbours, who had come to bring Kamal Mani from the *ghat*. Both she and her husband were extremely anxious to know if the marriage had taken place, but neither could put a single question. How could they speak to strangers of such a shameful subject?

Hurriedly Kamal Mani entered the women's apartments; she even forgot Satish Babu, who remained lingering behind. Indistinctly, and dreading the answer, she asked the servants—

"Where is Surja Mukhi?"

She feared lest they should say the marriage was accomplished, or that Surja Mukhi was dead. The women replied that their mistress was in her bed-room. Kamal Mani darted thither. For a minute or two she searched hither and thither, finding no one. At last she saw a woman sitting near a window, her head bowed down. Kamal Mani could not see her face, but

she knew it was Surja Mukhi, who, now hearing footsteps, arose and came forward. Not even yet could Kamal ask if the marriage had taken place. Surja Mukhi had lost flesh; her figure, formerly straight as a pine, had become bent like a bow; her laughing eyes were sunk; her lily face had lost its roundness.

Kamal Mani comprehended that the marriage was accomplished. She inquired, "When was it?"

555

Surja Mukhi answered, "Yesterday."

Then the two sat down together, neither speaking. Surja Mukhi hid her face in the other's lap, and wept. Kamal Mani's tears fell on Surja Mukhi's unbound hair.

Of what was Nagendra thinking at that time as he sat in the *boita khana*? His thoughts said: "Kunda Nandini! Kunda is mine; Kunda is my wife! Kunda! Kunda! she is mine!"

Srish Chandra sat down beside him, but Nagendra could say little; he could think only, "Surja Mukhi herself hastened to give Kunda to me in marriage; who then can object to my enjoying this happiness?"

Chapter XXI

Surja Mukhi and Kamal Mani

Then, in the evening, the two gained self-control to talk together, Surja Mukhi related the affair of the marriage from beginning to end.

560

Astonished, Kamal Mani said—

"This marriage has been brought about by your exertions! Why have you thus sacrificed yourself?"

Surja Mukhi smiled, a faint smile indeed, like the pale flashes of lightning after rain; then answered—

"What am I? Look upon your brother's face, radiant with happiness, then you will know what joy is his. If I have been able with my own eyes to see him so happy, has not my life answered its purpose? What joy could I hope for in denying happiness to him? He for whom I would die rather than see him unhappy for a single hour; him I saw day and night suffering anguish, ready to abandon all joys and become a wanderer—what happiness would

have remained to me? I said to him, 'My lord, your joy is my joy! Do you marry Kunda; I shall be happy.' And so he married her."

"And are you happy?" asked Kamal.

565

"Why do you still ask about me? what am I? If I had ever seen my husband hurt his foot by walking on a stony path, I should have reproached myself that I had not laid my body down over the stones that he might have stepped upon me."

Surja Mukhi remained some moments silent, her dress drenched with her tears. Suddenly raising her face, she asked—

"Kamal, in what country are females destroyed at birth?"

Kamal understanding her thought, replied—

"What does it matter in what country it happens? it is according to destiny."

570

"Whose destiny could be better than mine was? Who so fortunate as myself? Who ever had such a husband? Beauty, wealth, these are small matters; but in virtues, whose husband equals mine? Mine was a splendid destiny; how has it changed thus?"

"That also is destiny," said Kamal.

"Then why do I suffer on this account?"

"But just now you said you were happy in the sight of your husband's joyous face; yet you speak of suffering so much. Can both be true?"

"Both are true. I am happy in his joy. But that he should thrust me away; that he has thrust me away, and yet is so glad—"

575

Surja could say no more, she was choking. But Kamal, understanding the meaning of her unfinished sentence, said—

"Because of that your heart burns within you; then why do you say, 'What am I?' With half of your heart you still think of your own rights; else why, having sacrificed yourself, do you repent?"

"I do not repent," replied Surja. "That I have done right I do not doubt; but in dying there is suffering. I felt that I must give way, and I did so voluntarily. Still, may I not weep over that suffering with you?"

Kamal Mani drew Surja Mukhi's head on to her breast; their thoughts were not expressed by words, but they conversed in their hearts. Kamal Mani understood the wretchedness of Surja Mukhi;

Surja Mukhi comprehended that Kamal appreciated her suffering. They checked their sobs and ceased to weep.

Surja Mukhi, setting her own affairs on one side, spoke of others, desired that Satish Babu should be brought, and talked to him. With Kamal she spoke long of Srish Chandra and of Satish, of the education of Satish and of his marriage. Thus they talked until far in the night, when Surja Mukhi embraced Kamal with much affection, and taking Satish into her lap kissed him lovingly.

580

When they came to part, Surja Mukhi was again drowned in tears. She blessed Satish, saying—

"I wish that thou mayst be rich in the imperishable virtues of thy mother's brother; I know no greater blessing than this."

Surja Mukhi spoke in her natural, gentle voice; nevertheless Kamal was astonished at its broken accents. "*Bon!!*" she exclaimed, "what is in your mind? tell me."

"Nothing," replied Surja.

"Do not hide it from me," said Kamal.

585

"I have nothing to conceal," said Surja.

Pacified, Kamal went to her room. But Surja Mukhi had a purpose to conceal. This Kamal learned in the morning. At dawn she went to Surja Mukhi's room in search of her; Surja Mukhi was not there, but upon the undisturbed bed there lay a letter. At the sight of it Kamal became dizzy; she could not read it. Without doing so she understood all, understood that Surja Mukhi had fled. She had no desire to read the letter, but crushed it in her hand. Striking her forehead, she sat down upon the bed, exclaiming: "I am a fool! how could I allow myself to be put off last night when parting from her?"

Satish Babu, standing near, joined his tears with his mother's.

The first passion of grief having spent itself, Kamal Mani opened and read the letter. It was addressed to herself, and ran as follows:

"On the day on which I heard from my husband's mouth that he no longer had any pleasure in me, that for Kunda Nandini he was losing his senses or must die—on that day I resolved, if I could find Kunda Nandini, to give her to my husband and to make him happy; and that when I had done so I would leave my home,

590

for I am not able to endure to see my husband become Kunda Nandini's. Now I have done these things.

"I wished to have gone on the night of the wedding-day, but I had a desire to see my husband's happiness, to give him which I had sacrificed myself; also, I desired to see you once more. Now these desires are fulfilled, and I have left.

"When you receive this letter I shall be far distant. My reason for not telling you beforehand is that you would not have allowed me to go. Now I beg this boon from you, that you will make no search for me. I have no hope that I shall ever see you again. While Kunda Nandini remains I shall not return to this place, and should I be sought for I shall not be found. I am now a poor wanderer. In the garb of a beggar I shall go from place to place. In begging I shall pass my life; who wilt know me? I might have brought some money with me, but I was not willing. I have left my husband—would I take his money?

"Do one thing for me. Make a million salutations in my name at my husband's feet. I strove to write to him, but I could not; I could not see to write for tears, the paper was spoilt. Tearing it up, I wrote again and again, but in vain; what I have to say I could not write in any letter. Break the intelligence to him in any manner you think proper. Make him understand that I have not left him in anger; I am not angry, am never angry, shall never be angry with him. Could I be angry with him whom it is my joy to think upon? To him whom I love so devotedly, I remain constant so long as I remain on earth. Why not? since I cannot forget his thousand graces. No one has so many graces as he. If I could forget his numerous virtues on account of one fault, I should not be worthy to be his wife. I have taken a last farewell of him. In doing this I have given up all I possess.

"From you also I have taken a last farewell, wishing you the blessing that your husband and son may live long. May you long be happy! Another blessing I wish you—that on the day you lose your husband's love your life may end. No one has conferred this blessing on me."

Chapter XXII

What Is the Poison Tree?

595

The poison tree, the narrative of whose growth we have given from the sowing of the seed to the production of its fruit, is to be found in every house. Its seed is sown in every field. There is no human being, however wise, whose heart is not touched by the passions of anger, envy, and desire. Some are able to subdue their passions as they arise; these are great men. Others have not this power, and here the poison tree springs up. The want of self-control is the germ of the poison tree, and also the cause of its growth. This tree is very vigorous; once nourished it cannot be destroyed. Its appearance is very pleasant to the eye; from a distance its variegated leaves and opening buds charm the sight. But its fruit is poisonous; who eats it dies.

In different soils the poison tree bears different fruits. In some natures it bears sickness, in some sorrow, and other fruits. To keep the passions in subjection will is needed, and also power. The power must be natural, the will must be educated. Nature also is influenced by education; therefore education is the root of self-control. I speak not of such education as the schoolmaster can give. The most effectual teacher of the heart is suffering.

Nagendra had never had this education. The Creator sent him into the world the possessor of every kind of happiness. Beauty of form, unlimited wealth, physical health, great learning, an amiable disposition, a devoted wife—all these seldom fall to the lot of one person; all had been bestowed on Nagendra. Most important of all, Nagendra was of a happy disposition: he was truthful and candid, yet agreeable: benevolent, yet just; generous, yet prudent; loving, yet firm in his duty. During the lifetime of his parents he was devoted to them. Attached to his wife, kind to his friends, considerate to his servants, a protector of his dependants, and peaceable towards his enemies, wise in counsel, trustworthy in act, gentle in conversation, ready at a jest. The natural reward of such a nature was unalloyed happiness. Since Nagendra's infancy it had been so: honour at home, fame abroad, devoted servants, an attached tenantry; from Surja Mukhi, unwavering,

unbounded, unstained love. If so much happiness had not been allotted to him he could not have suffered so keenly. Had he not suffered he had not given way to his passion. Before he had cast the eyes of desire upon Kunda Nandini he had never fallen into this snare, because he had never known the want of love. Therefore he had never felt the necessity of putting a rein upon his inclinations. Accordingly, when the need of self-control arose he had not the power to exercise it. Unqualified happiness is often the source of suffering; and unless there has been suffering, permanent happiness cannot exist.

It cannot be said that Nagendra was faultless. His fault was very heavy. A severe expiation had begun.

Chapter XXIII The Search

It is needless to say that when the news of Surja Mukhi's flight had spread through the house, people were sent in great haste in search of her. Nagendra sent people in all directions, Srish Chandra sent, and Kamal Mani sent. The upper servants among the women threw down their water-jars and started off; the Hindustani *Durwans* of the North-West Provinces, carrying bamboo staves, wearing cotton-quilted chintz coats, clattered along in shoes of undressed leather; the *khansamahs*, with towel on the shoulder and silver chain round the waist, went in search of the mistress. Some relatives drove in carriages along the public roads. The villagers searched the fields and *gháts*; some sat smoking in council under a tree; some went to the *barowari puja* house, to the verandah of Siva's temple, and to the schools of the professors of logic, and in other similar places sat and discussed the matter. Old and young women formed a small cause court on the *gháts*; to the boys of the place it was cause of great excitement; many of them hoped to escape going to school.

At first Srish Chandra and Kamal Mani comforted Nagendra, saying, "She has never been accustomed to walk; how far can she go? Half a mile, or a mile at the most; hence she must be sitting somewhere near at hand, we shall find her immediately."

But when two or three hours had passed without bringing news of Surja Mukhi, Nagendra himself went forth. After some stay in the broiling sun he said to himself, "I am looking here, when no doubt she has been found by this time;" and he returned home. Then finding no news of her he went out again, again to return, and again to go forth. So the day passed.

In fact, Srish Chandra's words were true—Surja Mukhi had never walked; how far could she go? About a mile from the house she was lying in a mango garden at the edge of a tank. A *khansamah* who was accustomed to serve in the women's apartment came to that place in his search, and recognizing her, said, "Will you not please to come home?"

Surja Mukhi made no answer.

Again he said, "Pray come home, the whole household is anxious."

Then, in an angry voice, Surja Mukhi said, "Who are you to take me back?"

605

The *khansamah* was frightened; nevertheless he remained standing.

Then Surja Mukhi said, "If you stay there I shall drown myself in the tank."

The *khansamah*, finding he was unable to do anything, ran swiftly with the news to Nagendra. Nagendra came with a palanquin for her; but Surja Mukhi was no longer there. He searched all about, but found no trace.

Surja Mukhi had wandered thence into a wood. There she met an old woman who had come to gather sticks. She had heard of a reward being offered for finding Surja Mukhi, therefore on seeing her she asked—

"Are you not our mistress?"

610

"No, mother," replied Surja Mukhi.

"Yes, you must be our mistress."

"Who is your mistress?"

"The lady of the Babu's house."

"Am I wearing any gold ornaments that I should be the lady of the Babu's house?"

615

The old woman thought, "That is true," and went further into the wood gathering sticks.

Thus the day passed vainly; the night brought no more success. The two following days brought no tidings, though nothing was neglected in the search. Of the male searchers, scarcely any one knew Surja Mukhi by sight; so they seized many poor women and brought them before Nagendra. At length the daughters of respectable people feared to walk along the roads or on the *gháts*. If one was seen alone, the devoted Hindustani *Durwans* followed, calling out "*Ma Thakurani*," and, preventing them from bathing, brought a palki. Many of those who were not accustomed to travel in a palki seized the opportunity of doing so free of expense.

Srish Chandra could not remain longer. Returning to Calcutta, he began a search there. Kamal Mani, remaining in Govindpur, continued to look for the lost one.

Chapter XXIV Every Sort of Happiness Is Fleeting

The happiness for which Kunda Nandini had never ventured to hope was now hers; she had become the wife of Nagendra. On the marriage day she thought, "This joy is boundless; it can never end!"

But after the flight of Surja Mukhi, repentance came to Kunda Nandini. She thought: "Surja Mukhi rescued me in my time of distress, when but for her I should have been lost; now on my account she is an outcast. If I am not to be happy, it were better I had died." She perceived that happiness has limits.

It is evening. Nagendra is lying on the couch; Kunda Nandini sits at his head fanning him. Both are silent. This is not a good sign. No one else is present, yet they do not speak. This was not like perfect happiness; but since the flight of Surja Mukhi, where had there been perfect happiness? Kunda's thoughts were constantly seeking some means by which things could be restored to their former state, and she now ventured to ask Nagendra what could be done.

Nagendra, somewhat disturbed, replied: "Do you wish things to be as they were before? do you repent having married me?"

Kunda Nandini felt hurt. She said: "I never hoped that you would make me happy by marrying me. I am not saying I repent it. I am asking what can be done to induce Surja Mukhi to return."

"Never speak of that. To hear the name of Surja Mukhi from your lips gives me pain; on your account Surja Mukhi has abandoned me."

This was known to Kunda, yet to hear Nagendra say it hurt her. She asked herself: "Is this censure? How evil is my fate, yet I have committed no fault; Surja Mukhi brought about the marriage." She did not utter these thoughts aloud, but continued fanning.

625

Noticing her silence, Nagendra said: "Why do you not talk? Are you angry?"

"No," she replied.

"Is a bare 'no' all you can say? Do you not longer love me?"

"Do I not love you!"

"Do I not love you!" Words to soothe a boy. Kunda, I believe you never loved me."

630

"I have always loved you," said Kunda, earnestly.

Wise as Nagendra was, he did not comprehend the difference between Surja Mukhi and Kunda Nandini. It was not that Kunda did not feel the love for him that Surja Mukhi felt, but that she knew not how to express it. She was a girl of a timid nature; she had not the gift of words. What more could she say? But Nagendra, not understanding this, said: "Surja Mukhi always loved me. Why hang pearls on a monkey's neck? an iron chain were better."

At this Kunda Nandini could not restrain her tears. Slowly rising, she went out of the room. There was no one now to whom she could look for sympathy. Kunda had not sought Kamal Mani since her arrival. Imagining herself the one chiefly to blame in the marriage, Kunda had not dared to show herself to Kamal Mani; but now, wounded to the quick, she longed to go to her compassionate, loving friend, who on a former occasion had soothed and shared her grief and wiped away her tears. But now

things were altered. When Kamal saw Kunda Nandini approaching she was displeased, but she made no remark. Kunda, sitting down, began to weep; but Kamal did not inquire into the cause of her grief, so Kunda remained silent. Presently, Kamal Mani, saying "I am busy," went away. Kunda Nandini perceived that all joy is fleeting.

Chapter XXV The Fruit of the Poison Tree

Nagendra's letter to Hara Deb Ghosal:

"You wrote that of all the acts I have done in my life, my marriage with Kunda Nandini is the most erroneous. I admit it. By doing this I have lost Surja Mukhi. I was very fortunate in obtaining Surja Mukhi for a wife. Every one digs for jewels, but only one finds the Koh-i-nur. Surja Mukhi is the Koh-i-nur. In no respect can Kunda Nandini fill her place. Why, then, did I instal Kunda Nandini in her seat? Delusion, delusion; now I am sensible of it. I have waked up from my dream to realize my loss. Now where shall I find Surja Mukhi? Why did I marry Kunda Nandini? Did I love her? Certainly I loved her; I lost my senses for her; my life was leaving me. But now I know this was but the love of the eye; or else, when I have been only fifteen days married, why do I say, 'Did I love her?' I love her still; but where is my Surja Mukhi?

635

"I meant to have written much more to-day; but I cannot, it is very difficult."

Hara Deb Ghosal's reply:

"I understand your state of mind. It is not that you do not love Kunda Nandini; you do love her, but when you said it was the love of the eye only, you spoke the truth. Towards Surja Mukhi your love is deep, but for a couple of days it has been covered by the shadow of Kunda Nandini. Now you understand that you have lost Surja Mukhi. So long as the sun remains unclouded, we are warmed by his beams and we love the clouds; but when the sun is gone we know that he was the eye of the world. Not understanding your own heart, you have committed this great

error. I will not reproach you more, because you fell into it under a delusion which it was very difficult to resist.

"The mind has many different affections; men call them all love, but only that condition of heart which is ready to sacrifice its own happiness to secure that of another is true love. The passion for beauty is not love. The unstable lust for beauty is no more love than the desire of the hungry for rice. True love is the offspring of reason. When the qualities of a lovable person are perceived by the understanding, the heart being charmed by these qualities is drawn towards the possessor; it desires union with that treasury of virtues and becomes devoted to it. The fruits of this love are expansion of the heart, self-forgetfulness, self-denial. This is true love. Shakespeare, Valmiki, Madame de Staël, are its poets; as Kalidas, Byron, Jayadeva are of the other species of love. The effect on the heart produced by the sight of beauty is dulled by repetition. But love caused by the good qualities of a person does not lose its charm, because beauty has but one appearance, because virtues display themselves anew in every fresh act. If beauty and virtues are found together, love is quickly generated; but if once the intelligence be the cause for love, it is of no importance whether beauty exists or not. Towards an ugly husband or an ugly wife love of this kind holds a firm place. The love produced by virtue as virtue is lasting certainly, but it takes time to know these virtues; therefore this love never becomes suddenly strong, it is of gradual growth. The infatuation for beauty springs into full force at first sight; its first strength is so uncontrollable that all other faculties are destroyed by it. Whether it be a lasting love there is no means of knowing. It thinks itself undying. So you have thought. In the first strength of this infatuation your enduring love for Surja Mukhi became invisible to your eyes. This delusion is inherent in man's nature; therefore I do not censure you, rather I counsel you to strive to be happy in this state.

"Do not despair; Surja Mukhi will certainly return. How long can she exist without seeing you? So long as she remains absent, do you cherish Kunda Nandini. So far as I understand your letters she is not without attractive qualities. When the infatuation for

her beauty is lessened, there may remain something to create a lasting love; if that is so, you will be able to make yourself happy with her; and should you not again see your elder wife you may forget her, especially as the younger one loves you. Be not careless about love; for in love is man's only spotless and imperishable joy, the final means by which his nature can be elevated. Without love man could not dwell in this world that he has made so evil."

Nagendra Natha's reply:

"I have not answered your letter until now because of the trouble of my mind. I understand all you have written, and I know your counsel is good. But I cannot resolve to stay at home. A month ago my Surja Mukhi left me, and I have had no news of her. I design to follow her; I will wander from place to place in search of her. If I find her I will bring her home, otherwise I shall not return. I cannot remain with Kunda Nandini; she has become a pain to my eyes. It is not her fault, it is mine, but I cannot endure to see her face. Formerly I said nothing to her, but now I am perpetually finding fault with her. She weeps—what can I do? I shall soon be with you."

As Nagendra wrote so he acted. Placing the care of everything in the hands of the *Dewan* during his temporary absence, he set forth on his wanderings. Kamal Mani had previously gone to Calcutta; therefore of the people mentioned in this narrative, Kunda Nandini alone was left in the Datta mansion, and the servant Hira remained in attendance upon her.

Darkness fell on the large household. As a brilliantly-lighted, densely-crowded dancing-hall, resounding with song and music, becomes dark, silent, and empty when the performance is over, so that immense household became when abandoned by Surja Mukhi and Nagendra Natha.

As a child, having played for a day with a gaily painted doll, breaks and throws it away, and by degrees, earth accumulating, grass springs over it, so Kunda Nandini, abandoned by Nagendra Natha, remained untended and alone amid the crowd of people in that vast house.

As when the forest is on fire the nests of young birds are consumed in the flames, and the mother-bird bringing food, and seeing neither tree, nor nest, nor young ones, with cries of anguish whirls in circles round the fire seeking her nest, so did Nagendra wander from place to place in search of Surja Mukhi.

As in the fathomless depths of the boundless ocean, a jewel having fallen cannot again be seen, so Surja Mukhi was lost to sight.

Chapter XXVI The Signs of Love

As a cotton rag placed near fire becomes burnt, so the heart of Hira became ever more inflamed by the remarkable beauty of Debendra. Many a time Hira's virtue and good name would have been endangered by passion, but that Debendra's character for sensuality without love came to her mind and proved a safeguard. Hira had great power of self-control, and it was through this power that she, though not very virtuous, had hitherto easily preserved her chastity. The more certainly to rule her heart, Hira determined to go again to service. She felt that in daily work her mind would be distracted, and she would be able to forget this unfortunate passion which stung like the bite of a scorpion. Thus when Nagendra, leaving Kunda Nandini at Govindpur, was about to set forth, Hira, on the strength of past service, begged to be re-engaged, and Nagendra consented. There was another cause for Hira's resolve to resume service. In her greed for money, anticipating that Kunda would become the favourite of Nagendra, she had taken pains to bring her under her own sway. "Nagendra's wealth," she had reflected, "will fall into Kunda's hands, and when it is Kunda's it will be Hira's." Now Kunda had become the mistress of Nagendra's house, but she had not obtained possession of any special wealth. But at this time Hira's mind was not dwelling on this matter. Hira was not thinking of wealth; even had she done so, money obtained from Kunda would have been as poison to her.

Hira was able to endure the pain of her own unsatisfied passion, but she could not bear Debendra's passion for Kunda. When Hira heard that Nagendra was journeying abroad, and that Kunda would remain as *grihini* (house-mistress), then, remembering Haridasi *Boisnavi*, she became much alarmed, and stationed herself as a sentinel to place obstacles in the path of Debendra. It was not from a desire to secure the welfare of Kunda Nandini that Hira conceived this design. Under the influence of jealousy Hira had become so enraged with Kunda, that far from wishing her well she would gladly have seen her go to destruction. But in jealous fear lest Debendra should gain access to Kunda, Hira constituted herself the guardian of Nagendra's wife.

Thus the servant Hira became the cause of suffering to Kunda, who saw that Hira's zeal and attention did not arise from affection. She perceived that Hira, though a servant, showed want of trust in her, and continually scolded and insulted her. Kunda was of a very peaceful disposition; though rendered ill by Hira's conduct she said nothing to her. Kunda's nature was calm, Hira's passionate. Thus Kunda, though the master's wife, submitted as if she were a dependant; Hira lorded it over her as if she were the mistress. Sometimes the other ladies of the house, seeing Kunda suffer, scolded Hira, but they could not stand before Hira's eloquence.

650

The *Dewan* hearing of her doings, said to Hira: "Go away; I dismiss you."

Hira replied, with flaming eyes: "Who are you to dismiss me? I was placed here by the master, and except at his command I will not go. I have as much power to dismiss you as you have to dismiss me."

The *Dewan*, fearing further insult, said not another word. Except Surja Mukhi, no one could rule Hira.

One day, after the departure of Nagendra, Hira was lying alone in the creeper-covered summer-house in the flower-garden near to the women's apartments. Since it had been abandoned by Surja Mukhi and Nagendra, Hira had taken possession of this summer-house. It was evening, an almost full moon shone in the heavens.

Her rays shining through the branches of the trees fell on the white marble, and danced upon the wind-moved waters of the *talao* close by. The air was filled with the intoxicating perfume of the scented shrubs. There is nothing in nature so intoxicating as flower-perfumed air. Hira suddenly perceived the figure of a man in a grove of trees; a second glance showed it to be Debendra. He was not disguised, but wore his own apparel.

Hira exclaimed in astonishment: "You are very bold, sir; should you be discovered you will be beaten!" 655

"Where Hira is, what cause have I for fear?" Thus saying, Debendra sat down by Hira, who, after a little silent enjoyment this pleasure, said—

"Why have you come here? You will not be able to see her whom you hoped to see."

"I have already attained my hope. I came to see you."

Hira, not deceived by the sweet, flattering words she coveted, said with a laugh: "I did not know I was destined to such pleasure; still, since it has befallen me, let us go where I can satisfy myself by beholding you without interruption. Here there are many obstacles."

"Where shall we go?" said Debendra. 660

"Into that summer-house; there we need fear nothing."

"Do not fear for me."

"If there is nothing to fear for you, there is for me. If I am seen with you what will be my position?"

Shrinking at this, Debendra said: "Let us go. Would it not be well that I should renew acquaintance with your new *grihini*?"

The burning glance of hate cast on him by Hira at these words, Debendra failed to see in the uncertain light. 665

Hira said: "How will you get to see her?"

"By your kindness it will be accomplished," said Debendra.

"Then do you remain here on the watch; I will bring her to you."

With these words Hira went out of the summer-house. Proceeding some distance, she stopped beneath the shelter of a tree and gave way to a burst of sobbing: then went on into the

house—not to Kunda Nandini, but to the *darwans* (gatekeepers), to whom she said—

"Come quickly; there is a thief in the garden."

670

Then Dobe, Chobe, Paure, and Teowari, taking thick bamboo sticks in their hands, started off for the flower-garden. Debendra, hearing from afar the sound of their clumsy, clattering shoes, and seeing their black, napkin-swathed chins, leaped from the summer-house and fled in haste. Teowari and Co. ran some distance, but they could not catch him; yet he did not get off scot-free. We cannot certainly say whether he tasted the bamboo, but we have heard that he was pursued by some very abusive terms from the mouths of the *darwans*; and that his servant, having had a little of his brandy, in gossip the next day with a female friend remarked—

"To-day, when I was rubbing the Babu with oil, I saw a bruise on his back."

Returning home, Debendra made two resolutions: the first, that while Hira remained he would never again enter the Datta house; the second, that he would retaliate upon Hira. In the end he had a frightful revenge upon her. Hira's venial fault received a heavy punishment, so heavy that at sight of it even Debendra's stony heart was lacerated. We will relate it briefly later.

Chapter XXVII By the Roadside

It is one of the worst days of the rainy season; not once had the sun appeared, only a continuous downpour of rain. The well metalled road to Benares was a mass of slush. But one traveller was to be seen, his dress was that of a *Brahmachari* (an ascetic): yellow garments, a bead chaplet on his neck, the mark on the forehead, the bald crown surrounded by only a few white hairs, a palm leaf umbrella in one hand, in the other a brass drinking-vessel. Thus the *Brahmachari* travelled in the soaking rain through the dark day, followed by a night as black as though the earth were full of ink. He could not distinguish between road and no road; nevertheless he continued his way, for he had renounced

the world, he was a *Brahmachari*. To those who have given up worldly pleasures, light and darkness, a good and a bad road, are all one. It was now far on in the night; now and then it lightened; the darkness itself was preferable, was less frightful than those flashes of light.

"Friend!"

675

Plodding along in the darkness the *Brahmachari* heard suddenly in the pathway some such sound, followed by a long sigh. The sound was muffled, nevertheless it seemed to come from a human throat, from some one in pain. The *Brahmachari* stood waiting, the lightning flashed brightly; he saw something lying at the side of the road—was it a human being? Still he waited; the next flash convinced him that his conjecture was correct. He called out, "Who are you lying by the roadside?" No one made reply. Again he asked. This time an indistinct sound of distress caught his ear. Then the *Brahmachari* laid his umbrella and drinking-vessel on the ground, and extending his hands began to feel about. Ere long he touched a soft body; then as his hand came in contact with a knot of hair he exclaimed, "Oh, *Durga*, it is a woman!"

Leaving umbrella and drinking-vessel, he raised the dying or senseless woman in his arms, and, leaving the road, crossed the plain towards a village; he was familiar with the neighbourhood, and could make his way through the darkness. His frame was not powerful, yet he carried this dying creature like a child through this difficult path. Those who are strong in goodwill to others are not sensible of bodily weakness.

Bearing the unconscious woman in his arms, the *Brahmachari* stopped at the door of a leaf-thatched hut at the entrance of the village, and called to one within, "Haro, child, are you at home?"

A woman replied, "Do I hear the *Thakur's* voice? When did the *Thakur* come?"

"But now. Open the door quickly; I am in a great difficulty."

680

Haro Mani opened the door. The *Brahmachari*, bidding her light a lamp, laid his burden on the floor of the hut. Haro lit the lamp, and bringing it near the dying woman, they both examined her carefully. They saw that she was not old, but in the condition

of her body it was difficult to guess her age. She was extremely emaciated, and seemed struck with mortal illness. At one time she certainly must have had beauty, but she had none now. Her wet garments were greatly soiled, and torn in a hundred places; her wet, unbound hair was much tangled; her closed eyes deeply sunk. She breathed, but was not conscious; she seemed near death.

Haro Mani asked: "Who is this? where did you find her?"

The *Brahmachari* explained, and added, "I see she is near death, yet if we could but renew the warmth of her body she might live; do as I tell you and let us see."

Then Haro Mani, following the *Brahmachari's* directions, changed the woman's wet clothes for dry garments, and dried her wet hair. Then lighting a fire, they endeavoured to warm her.

The *Brahmachari* said: "Probably she has been long without food; if there is milk in the house, give her a little at a time." 685

Haro Mani possessed a cow, and had milk at hand; warming some, she administered it slowly. After a while the woman opened her eyes; when Haro Mani said, "Where have you come from, mother?"

Reviving, the woman asked, "Where am I?"

The *Brahmachari* answered, "Finding you dying by the roadside, I brought you hither. Where are you going?"

"Very far."

Haro Mani said: "You still wear your bracelet; is your husband living?" 690

The sick woman's brow darkened. Haro Mani was perplexed.

The *Brahmachari* asked "What shall we call you? what is your name?"

The desolate creature, moving a little restlessly, replied, "My name is Surja Mukhi."

Chapter XXVIII Is There Hope?

There was apparently no hope of Surja Mukhi's life. The *Brahmachari*, not understanding her symptoms, next morning

called in the village doctor. Ram Krishna Rai was very learned, particularly in medicine. He was renowned in the village for his skill. On seeing the symptoms, he said—

"This is consumption, and on this fever has set in. It is, I fear, a mortal sickness; still she may live."

695

These words were not said in the presence of Surja Mukhi.

The doctor administered physic, and seeing the destitute condition of the woman he said nothing about fees. He was not an avaricious man.

Dismissing the physician, the *Brahmachari* sent Haro Mani about other work, and entered into conversation with Surja Mukhi, who said—

"Thakur, why have you taken so much trouble about me? There is no need to do so on my account."

"What trouble have I taken?" replied the *Brahmachari*; "this is my work. To assist others is my vocation; if I had not been occupied with you, some one else in similar circumstances would have required my services."

700

"Then leave me, and attend to others. You can assist others, you cannot help me."

"Wherefore?" asked the *Brahmachari*.

"To restore me to health will not help me. Death alone will give me peace. Last night, when I fell down by the roadside, I hoped that I should die. Why did you save me?"

"I knew not that you were in such deep trouble. But however deep it is, self-destruction is a great sin. Never be guilty of such an act. To kill one's self is as sinful as to kill another."

"I have not tried to kill myself; death has approached voluntarily, therefore I hoped; but even in dying I have no joy." Saying these words, Surja Mukhi's voice broke, and she began to weep.

705

The *Brahmachari* said: "Whenever you speak of dying I see you weep; you wish to die. Mother, I am like a son to you; look upon me as such, and tell me your wish. If there is any remedy for your trouble, tell me, and I will bring it about. Wishing to say this, I have sent Haro Mani away, and am sitting alone with you. From your speech I infer that you belong to a very respectable

family. That you are in a state of very great anxiety, I perceive. Why should you not tell me what it is? Consider me as your son, and speak."

Surja Mukhi, with wet eyes, said: "I am dying; why should I feel shame at such a time? I have no other trouble than this, that I am dying without seeing my husband's face. If I could but see him once I should die happy."

The *Brahmachari* wiped his eyes also, and said:

"Where is your husband? It is impossible for you to go to him now; but if he, on receiving the news, could come here, I would let him know by letter."

Surja Mukhi's wan face expanded into a smile; then again becoming dejected, she said: "He could come, but I cannot tell if he would. I am guilty of a great offence against him, but he is full of kindness to me; he might forgive me, but he is far from here. Can I live till he comes?"

Finding, on further inquiry, that the Babu lived at Haripur Zillah, the *Brahmachari* brought pen and paper, and, taking Surja Mukhi's instructions, wrote as follows:

Sir,—I am a stranger to you. I am a Brahman, leading the life of a *Brahmachari*. I do not even know who you are; this only I know, that Srimati Surja Mukhi Dasi is your wife. She is lying in a dangerous state of illness in the house of the *Boisnavi* Haro Mani, in the village of Madhupur. She is under medical treatment, but it appears uncertain whether she will recover. Her last desire is to see you once more and die. If you are able to pardon her offence, whatever it may be, then pray come hither quickly. I address her as 'Mother.' As a son I write this letter by her direction. She has no strength to write herself. If you come, do so by way of Ranigunj. Inquire in Ranigunj for Sriman Madhab Chandra, and on mentioning my name he will send some one with you. In this way you will not have to search Madhupur for the house. If you come, come quickly, or it may be too late. Receive my blessing.

(Signed) Siva Prasad.

The letter ended, the *Brahmachari* asked, "What address shall I write?"

Surja Mukhi replied, "When Haro Mani comes [I will tell you.](#)"

Haro Mani, having arrived, addressed the letter to Nagendra Natha Datta, and took it to the post-office. When the *Brahmachari* had gone, Surja Mukhi, with tearful eyes, joined

hands, and upturned face, put up her petition to the Creator, saying, "Oh, supreme God, if you are faithful, then, as I am a true wife, may this letter accomplish its end. I knew nothing during my life save the feet of my husband. I do not desire heaven as the reward of my devotion; this only I desire, that I may see my husband ere I die."

But the letter did not reach Nagendra. He had left Govindpur long before it arrived there. The messenger gave the letter to the *Dewan*, and went away. Nagendra had said to the *Dewan*, "When I stay at any place I shall write thence to you. When you receive my instructions, forward any letters that may have arrived for me."

715

In due time Nagendra reached Benares, whence he wrote to the *Dewan*, who sent Siva Prasad's epistle with the rest of the letters. On receiving this letter Nagendra was struck to the heart, and, pressing his forehead, exclaimed in distress, "Lord of all the world, preserve my senses for one moment!"

This prayer reached the ear of God, and for a time his senses were preserved. Calling his head servant, he said, "I must go to-night to Ranigunj; make all arrangements."

The man went to do his bidding; then Nagendra fell senseless on the floor.

That night Nagendra left Benares behind him. Oh, world-enchanting Benares! what happy man could have quitted thee on such an autumn night with satiated eyes? It is a moonless night. From the Ganges stream, in whatever direction you look you will see the sky studded with stars—from endless ages ever-burning stars, resting never. Below, a second sky reflected in the deep blue water; on shore, flights of steps, and tall houses showing a thousand lights; these again reflected in the river. Seeing this, Nagendra closed his eyes. To-night he could not endure the beauty of earth. He knew that Siva Prasad's letter had been delayed many days. Where was Surja Mukhi now?

Chapter XXIX Hira's Poison Tree Has Blossomed

On the day when the *durwans* had driven out Debendra Babu with bamboos, Hira had laughed heartily within herself. But later she had felt much remorse. She thought, "I have not done well to disgrace him; I know not how much I have angered him. Now I shall have no place in his thoughts; all my hopes are destroyed."

Debendra also was occupied in devising a plan of vengeance upon Hira for the punishment she had caused to be inflicted on him. At last he sent for Hira, and after one or two days of doubt she came. Debendra showed no displeasure, and made no allusion to what had occurred. Avoiding that, he entered into pleasant conversation with her. As the spider spreads his net for the fly, so Debendra spread his net for Hira.

In the hope of obtaining her desire, Hira easily fell into the snare. Intoxicated with Debendra's sweet words, she was imposed upon by his crafty speech. She thought, "Surely this is love! Debendra loves me."

Hira was cunning, but now her cunning did not serve her. The power which the ancient poets describe as having been used to disturb the meditations of Siva, who had renounced passion—by that power Hira had lost her cunning.

Then Debendra took his guitar, and, stimulated by wine, began to sing. His rich and cultivated voice gave forth such honied waves of song, that Hira was as one enchanted. Her heart became restless, and melted with love of Debendra. Then in her eyes Debendra seemed the perfection of beauty, the essence of all that was adorable to a woman. Her eyes overflowed with tears springing from love.

Putting down his guitar, Debendra wiped away her tears. Hira shivered. Then Debendra began such pleasant jesting, mingled with loving speeches, and adorned his conversation with such ambiguous phrases, that Hira, entranced, thought, "This is heavenly joy!" Never had she heard such words. If her senses had not been bewildered she would have thought, "This is hell."

Debendra had never known real love; but he was very learned in the love language of the old poets. Hearing from Debendra songs in praise of the inexpressible delights of love, Hira thought of giving herself up to him. She became steeped in love from

head to foot. Then again Debendra sang with the voice of the first bird of spring. Hira, inspired by love, joined in with her feminine voice. Debendra urged her to sing. Hira, with sparkling eyes and smiling face, impelled by her happy feelings, sang a love song, a petition for love. Then, sitting in that evil room, with sinful hearts, the two, under the influence of evil desires, bound themselves to live in sin.

Hira knew how to subdue her heart, but having no inclination to do so she entered the flame as easily as an insect. Her belief that Debendra did not love her had been her protection until now. When her love for Debendra was but in the germ she smilingly confessed it to herself, but turned away from him without hesitation. When the full-grown passion pierced her heart she took service to distract her thoughts. But when she imagined he loved her she had no desire to resist. Therefore she now had to eat the fruit of the poison tree.

People say that you do not see sin punished in this world. Be that true or not, you may be sure that those who do not rule their own hearts will have to bear the consequences.

Chapter XXX News of Surja Mukhi

It is late autumn. The waters from the fields are drying up; the rice crop is ripening; the lotus flowers have disappeared from the tanks. At dawn, dew falls from the boughs of the trees; at evening, mist rises over the plains. One day at dawn a palanquin was borne along the Madhupur road. At this sight all the boys of the place assembled in a row; all the daughters and wives, old and young, resting their water-vessels on the hip, stood awhile to gaze. The husbandmen, leaving the rice crop, sickle in hand and with turbaned heads, stood staring at the palanquin. The influential men of the village sat in committee. A booted foot was set down from the palanquin: the general opinion was that an English gentleman had arrived; the children thought it was Bogie.

When Nagendra Natha had descended from the palanquin, half a dozen people saluted him because he wore pantaloons and a

smoking-cap. Some thought he was the police inspector; others that he was a constable. Addressing an old man in the crowd, Nagendra inquired for Siva Prasad *Brahmachari*.

The person addressed felt certain that this must be a case of investigation into a murder, and that therefore it would not be well to give a truthful answer. He replied, "Sir, I am but a child; I do not know as much as that."

Nagendra perceived that unless he could meet with an educated man he would learn nothing. There were many in the village, therefore Nagendra went to a house of superior class. It proved to be that of Ram Kristo Rai, who, noticing the arrival of a strange gentleman, requested him to sit down. Nagendra, inquiring for Siva Prasad *Brahmachari*, was informed that he had left the place.

Much dejected, Nagendra asked, "Where is he gone?"

"That I do not know; he never remains long in one place."

"Does any one know when he will return?" asked Nagendra.

735

"I have some business with him, therefore I also made that inquiry, but no one can tell me."

"How long is it since he left?"

"About a month."

"Could any one show me the house of Haro Mani *Boisnavi*, of this village?"

"Haro Mani's house stood by the roadside; but it exists no longer, it has been destroyed by fire."

740

Nagendra pressed his forehead. In a weak voice he asked, "Where is Haro Mani?"

"No one can say. Since the night her house was burned she has fled somewhere. Some even say that she herself set fire to it."

In a broken voice Nagendra asked, "Did any other woman live in her house?"

"No. In the month *Sraban* a stranger, falling sick, stayed in her house. She was placed there by the *Brahmachari*. I heard her name was Surja Mukhi. She was ill of consumption; I attended her, had almost cured her. Now—"

Breathing hard, Nagendra repeated, "Now?"

745

"In the destruction of Haro Mani's house the woman was burnt."

Nagendra fell from his chair, striking his head severely. The blow stunned him. The doctor attended to his needs.

Who would live in a world so full of sorrow? The poison tree grows in every one's court. Who would love? to have one's heart torn in pieces. Oh, Creator! why hast Thou not made this a happy world? Thou hadst the power if Thou hadst wished to make it a world of joy! Why is there so much sorrow in it?

When, at evening, Nagendra Natha left Madhupur in his palanquin, he said to himself—

"Now I have lost all. What is lost—happiness? that was lost on the day when Surja Mukhi left home. Then what is lost now—hope? So long as hope remains to man all is not lost; when hope dies, all dies."

750

Now, therefore, he resolved to go to Govindpur, not with the purpose of remaining, but to arrange all his affairs and bid farewell to the house. The zemindari, the family house, and the rest of his landed property of his own acquiring, he would make over by deed to his nephew, Satish Chandra. The deed would need to be drawn up by a lawyer, or it would not stand. The movable wealth he would send to Kamal Mani in Calcutta, sending Kunda Nandini there also. A certain amount of money he would reserve for his own support in Government securities. The account-books of the estate he would place in the hands of Srish Chandra.

He would not give Surja Mukhi's ornaments to his sister, but would keep them beside him wherever he went, and when his time came would die looking at them. After completing the needful arrangements he would leave home, revisit the spot where Surja Mukhi had died, and then resume his wandering life. So long as he should live he would hide in some corner of the earth.

Such were Nagendra's thoughts as he was borne on in his palanquin; its doors were open, the night was lightened by the October moon, stars shone in the sky. The telegraph-wires by the wayside hummed in the wind; but on that night not even a star could seem beautiful in the eyes of Nagendra, even the moonlight

seemed harsh. All things seemed to give pain. The earth was cruel. Why should everything that seemed beautiful in days of happiness seem to-day so ugly? Those long slender moonbeams by which the heart was wont to be refreshed, why did they now seem so glaring? The sky is to-day as blue, the clouds as white, the stars as bright, the wind as playful; the animal creation, as ever, rove at will. Man is as smiling and joyous, the earth pursues its endless course, family affairs follow their daily round. The world's hardness is unendurable. Why did not the earth open and swallow up Nagendra in his palanquin?

Thus thinking, Nagendra perceived that he was himself to blame for all. He had reached his thirty-third year only, yet he had lost all. God had given him everything that makes the happiness of man. Riches, greatness, prosperity, honour—all these he had received from the beginning in unwonted measure. Without intelligence these had been nothing, but God had given that also without stint. His education had not been neglected by his parents; who was so well instructed as himself? Beauty, strength, health, lovableness—these also nature had given to him with liberal hand. That gift which is priceless in the world, a loving, faithful wife, even this had been granted to him; who on this earth had possessed more of the elements of happiness? who was there on earth to-day more wretched? If by giving up everything, riches, honour, beauty, youth, learning, intelligence, he could have changed conditions with one of his palanquin-bearers, he would have considered it a heavenly happiness. "Yet why a bearer?" thought he; "is there a prisoner in the gaols of this country who is not more happy than I? not more holy than I? They have slain others; I have slain Surja Mukhi. If I had ruled my passions, would she have been brought to die such a death in a strange place? I am her murderer. What slayer of father, mother, or son, is a greater sinner than I? Was Surja Mukhi my wife only? She was my all. In relation a wife, in friendship a brother, in care a sister, abounding in hospitality, in love a mother, in devotion a daughter, in pleasure a friend, in counsel a teacher, in attendance a servant! My Surja Mukhi! who else possesses such a wife? A helper in domestic affairs, a fortune in the house, a religion in the

heart, an ornament round the neck, the pupil of my eyes, the blood of my heart, the life of my body, the smile of my happiness, my comfort in dejection, the enlightener of my mind, my spur in work, the light of my eyes, the music of my ears, the breath of my life, the world to my touch! My present delight, the memory of my past, the hope of my future, my salvation in the next world! I am a swine—how should I recognize a pearl?"

Suddenly it occurred to him that he was being borne in a palanquin at his ease, while Surja Mukhi had worn herself out by travelling on foot. At this thought Nagendra leaped from the palanquin and proceeded on foot, his bearers carrying the empty vehicle in the rear. When he reached the bazaar where he had arrived in the morning he dismissed the men with their palanquin, resolving to finish his journey on foot.

"I will devote my life to expiating the death of Surja Mukhi. What expiation? All the joys of which Surja Mukhi was deprived in leaving her home, I will henceforth give up. Wealth, servants, friends, none of these will I retain. I will subject myself to all the sufferings she endured. From the day I leave Govindpur I will go on foot, live upon rice, sleep beneath a tree or in a hut. What further expiation? Whenever I see a helpless woman I will serve her to the utmost of my power. Of the wealth I reserve to myself I will take only enough to sustain life; the rest I will devote to the service of helpless women. Even of that portion of my wealth that I give to Satish, I will direct that half of it shall be devoted during my life to the support of destitute women. Expiation! Sin may be expiated, sorrow cannot be. The only expiation for sorrow is death. In dying, sorrow leaves you: why do I not seek that expiation?"

Then covering his face with his hands, and remembering his Creator, Nagendra Natha put from him the desire to seek death.

Chapter XXXI

Though All Else Dies, Suffering Dies Not

Srish Chandra was sitting alone in his *boita khana* one evening, when Nagendra entered, carpet-bag in hand, and

throwing the bag to a distance, silently took a seat. Srish Chandra, seeing his distressed and wearied condition, was alarmed, but knew not how to ask an explanation. He knew that Nagendra had received the *Brahmachari's* letter at Benares, and had gone thence to Madhupur. As he saw that Nagendra would not begin to speak, Srish Chandra took his hand and said—

"Brother Nagendra, I am distressed to see you thus silent. Did you not go to Madhupur?"

Nagendra only said, "I went."

760

"Did you not meet the *Brahmachari*?"

"No."

"Did you find Surja Mukhi? Where is she?"

Pointing upwards with his finger, Nagendra said, "In heaven."

Both sat silent for some moments; then Nagendra, looking up, said, "You do not believe in heaven. I do."

765

Srish Chandra knew that formerly Nagendra had not believed in a heaven, and understood why he now did so—understood that this heaven was the creation of love.

Not being able to endure the thought that Surja Mukhi no longer existed, he said to himself, "She is in heaven," and in this thought found comfort.

Still they remained silent, for Srish Chandra felt that this was not the time to offer consolation; that words from others would be as poison, their society also. So he went away to prepare a chamber for Nagendra. He did not venture to ask him to eat; he would leave that task to Kamal.

But when Kamal Mani heard that Surja Mukhi was no more, she would undertake no duty. Leaving Satish Chandra, for that night she became invisible. The servants, seeing Kamal Mani bowed to the ground with hair unbound, left Satish and hurried to her. But Satish would not be left; he at first stood in silence by his weeping mother, and then, with his little finger under her chin, he tried to raise her face. Kamal looked up, but did not speak. Satish, wishing to comfort his mother, kissed her. Kamal caressed, but did not kiss him, nor did she speak. Satish put his hand on his mother's throat, crept into her lap, and began to cry. Except the

Creator, who could enter into that child's heart and discern the cause of his crying?

The unfortunate Srish Chandra, left to his own resources, took some food to Nagendra, who said: "I do not want food. Sit down, I have much to say to you; for that I came hither." He then related all that he had heard from Ram Kristo Rai, and detailed his designs for the future.

770

After listening to the narration, Srish Chandra said: "It is surprising that you should not have met the *Brahmachari*, as it is only yesterday he left Calcutta for Madhupur in search of you."

"What?" said Nagendra; "how did you meet with the *Brahmachari*?"

"He is a very noble person," answered Srish. "Not receiving a reply to his letter to you, he went to Govindpur in search of you. There he learned that his letter would be sent on to Benares. This satisfied him, and without remark to any one he went on his business to Purushuttam. Returning thence, he again went to Govindpur. Still hearing nothing of you, he was informed that I might have news. He came to me the next day, and I showed him your letter. Yesterday he started for Govindpur, expecting to meet you last night at Ranigunj."

"I was not at Ranigunj last night," said Nagendra. "Did he tell you anything of Surja Mukhi?"

"I will tell you all that to-morrow," said Srish.

775

"You think my suffering will be increased by hearing it. Tell me all," entreated Nagendra.

Then Srish Chandra repeated what the *Brahmachari* had told him of his meeting Surja Mukhi by the roadside, her illness, medical treatment, and improvement in health. Omitting many painful details, he concluded with the words: "Ram Kristo Kai did not relate all that Surja Mukhi had suffered."

On hearing this, Nagendra rushed out of the house. Srish Chandra would have gone with him, but Nagendra would not allow it. The wretched man wandered up and down the road like a madman for hours. He wished to forget himself in the crowd, but at that time there was no crowd; and who can forget himself? Then he returned to the house, and sat down with Srish Chandra,

to whom he said: "The *Brahmachari* must have learned from her where she went, and what she did. Tell me all he said to you."

"Why talk of it now?" said Srish; "take some rest."

Nagendra frowned, and commanded Srish Chandra to speak.

780

Srish perceived that Nagendra had become like a madman. His face was dark as a thunder-cloud. Afraid to oppose him, he consented to speak, and Nagendra's face relaxed. He began—

"Walking slowly from Govindpur, Surja Mukhi came first in this direction."

"What distance did she walk daily?" interrupted Nagendra.

"Two or three miles."

"She did not take a farthing from home; how did she live?"

785

"Some days fasting, some days begging—are you mad?" with these words Srish Chandra threatened Nagendra, who had clutched at his own throat as though to strangle himself, saying—

"If I die, shall I meet Surja Mukhi?"

Srish Chandra held the hands of Nagendra, who then desired him to continue his narrative.

"If you will not listen calmly, I will tell you no more," said Srish.

But Nagendra heard no more; he had lost consciousness. With closed eyes he sought the form of the heaven-ascended Surja Mukhi; he saw her seated as a queen upon a jewelled throne. The perfumed wind played in her hair, all around flower-like birds sang with the voice of the lute; at her feet bloomed hundreds of red water-lilies; in the canopy of her throne a hundred moons were shining, surrounded by hundreds of stars. He saw himself in a place full of darkness, pain in all his limbs, demons inflicting blows upon him, Surja Mukhi forbidding them with her outstretched finger.

790

With much difficulty Srish Chandra restored Nagendra to consciousness; whereupon Nagendra cried loudly—

"Surja Mukhi, dearer to me than life, where art thou?"

At this cry, Srish Chandra, stupefied and frightened, sat down in silence.

At length, recovering his natural state, Nagendra said, "Speak."

"What can I say?" asked Srish.

795

"Speak!" said Nagendra. "If you do not I shall die before your eyes."

Then Srish said: "Surja Mukhi did not endure this suffering many days. A wealthy Brahman, travelling with his family, had to come as far as Calcutta by boat, on his way to Benares. One day as Surja Mukhi was lying under a tree on the river's bank, the Brahman family came there to cook. The *grihini* entered into conversation with Surja Mukhi, and, pitying her condition, took her into the boat, as she had said that she also was going to Benares."

"What is the name of that Brahman? where does he live?" asked Nagendra, thinking that by some means he would find out the man and reward him. He then bade Srish Chandra continue.

"Surja Mukhi," continued Srish, "travelled as one of the family as far as Barhi; to Calcutta by boat, to Raniganj by rail, from Raniganj by bullock train—so far Surja Mukhi proceeded in comfort."

"After that did the Brahman dismiss her?" asked Nagendra.

800

"No," replied Srish; "Surja Mukhi herself took leave. She went no further than Benares. How many days could she go on without seeing you? With that purpose she returned from Barhi on foot."

As Srish Chandra spoke tears came into his eyes, the sight of which was an infinite comfort to Nagendra, who rested his head on the shoulder of Srish and wept. Since entering the house Nagendra had not wept, his grief had been beyond tears; but now the stream of sorrow found free vent. He cried like a boy, and his suffering was much lessened thereby. The grief that cannot weep is the messenger of death!

As Nagendra became calmer, Srish Chandra said, "We will speak no more of this to-day."

"What more is there to say?" said Nagendra. "The rest that happened I have seen with my own eyes. From Barhi she walked alone to Madhupur. From fatigue, fasting, sun, rain, despair, and grief, Surja Mukhi, seized by illness, fell to the ground ready to die."

Srish Chandra was silent for a time; at length he said: "Brother, why dwell upon this any longer? You are not in fault; you did

805

nothing to oppose or vex her. There is no cause to repent of that which has come about without fault of our own."

Nagendra did not understand. He knew himself to blame for all. Why had he not torn up the seed of the poison tree from his heart?

Chapter XXXII The Fruit of Hira's Poison Tree

Hira has sold her precious jewel in exchange for a cownie. Virtue may be preserved with much pains for a long time; yet a day's carelessness may lose it. So it was with Hira. The wealth to gain which she had sold her precious jewel was but a broken shell; for such love as Debendra's is like the bore in the river, as muddy as transient. In three days the flood subsided, and Hira was left in the mud. As the miser, or the man greedy of fame, having long preserved his treasure, at the marriage of a son, or some other festival, spends all in one day's enjoyment, Hira, who had so long preserved her chastity, had now lost it for a day's delight, and like the ruined miser was left standing in the path of endless regret.

Abandoned by Debendra, as a boy throws away an unripe mango not to his taste, Hira at first suffered frightfully. It was not only that she had been cast adrift by Debendra, but that, having been degraded and wounded by him, she had sunk to so low a position among women. It was this she found so unendurable. When, in her last interview, embracing Debendra's feet, she had said, "Do not cast me off!" he had replied, "It has only been in the hope of obtaining Kunda Nandini that I have honoured you so long. If you can secure me her society I will continue to live with you; otherwise not. I have given you the fitting reward of your pride; now, with the ink of this stain upon you, you may go home."

Everything seemed dark around Hira in her anger. When her head ceased to swim she stood in front of Debendra, her brows knitted, her eyes inflamed, and as with a hundred tongues she gave vent to her temper. Abuse such as the foulest women use she

poured upon him, till he, losing patience, kicked her out of the pleasure-garden. Hira was a sinner; Debendra a sinner and a brute.

Thus ended the promise of eternal love.

810

Hira, thus abused, did not go home. In Govindpur there was a low-caste doctor who attended only low-caste people. He had no knowledge of treatment or of drugs; he knew only the poisonous pills by which life is destroyed. Hira knew that for the preparation of these pills he kept vegetable, mineral, snake, and other life-destroying poisons. That night she went to his house, and calling him aside said—

"I am troubled every day by a jackal who eats from my cooking-vessels. Unless I can kill this jackal I cannot remain here. If I mix some poison with the rice to-day he will eat it and die. You keep many poisons; can you sell me one that will instantly destroy life?"

The *Chandal* (outcast) did not believe the jackal story. He said

—
"I have what you want, but I cannot sell it. Should I be known to sell poison the police would seize me."

"Be not anxious about that," said Hira; "no one shall know that you have sold it. I will swear to you by my patron deity, and by the Ganges, if you wish. Give me enough to kill two jackals, and I will pay you fifty rupees."

815

The *Chandal* felt certain that a murder was intended, but he could not resist the fifty rupees, and consented to sell the poison.

Hira fetched the money from her house and gave it to him. The *Chandal* twisted up a pungent life-destroying poison in paper, and gave it to her.

In departing, Hira said, "Mind you betray this to no one, else we shall both suffer."

The *Chandal* answered, "I do not even know you, mother."

Thus freed from fear, Hira went home. When there she held the poison in her hand, weeping bitterly; then, wiping her eyes, she said—

820

"What fault have I committed that I should die? Why should I die without killing him who has struck me? I will not take this

poison. He who has reduced me to this condition shall eat it, or, if not, I will give it to his beloved Kunda Nandini. After one of these two are dead, if necessary I also will take it."

Chapter XXXIII Hira's Grandmother

"Hira's old grandmother
Walks about picking up
A basket of cowdung.
With her teeth cracking pebbles.
Eating *jak* fruit by the hundred."

Hira's grandmother hobbled along with the help of a stick, followed by boys reciting the above unrivalled verses, clapping their hands and dancing as they went. Whether any special taunt was meant by these verses is doubtful, but the old woman became furious, and desired the boys to go to destruction, wishing that their fathers might eat refuse (a common form of abuse). This was a daily occurrence.

Arriving at the door of Nagendra's house, the grandmother escaped from her enemies, who at sight of the fierce black moustaches of the *durwans* fled from the battlefield, one crying—

"Bama Charn Dobé
Goes to bed early,
And when the thief comes he runs away."

Another—

"Ram Sing Paré
With a stick marches boldly,
But at sight of a thief he flies to the tank."

A third—

"Lal Chand Sing
Doth briskly dance and sing,
Is death on the food,
But at work is no good."

The boys fled, attacked by the *durwans* with a shower of words not to be found in any dictionary.

Hira's grandmother, plodding along, arrived at the dispensary attached to Nagendra's dwelling. Perceiving the doctor, she said, "Oh, father, where is the doctor, father?"

"I am he."

"Oh, father, I am getting blind. I am twenty-eight or eighty years old; how shall I speak of my troubles? I had a son; he is dead. I had a granddaughter; she also—" Here the old woman broke down, and began to whine like a cat.

The doctor asked, "What has happened to you?"

830

Without answering this question, the woman began to relate the history of her life; and when, amid much crying, she had finished, the doctor again asked, "What do you want now? What has happened to you?" Again she began the unequalled story of her life; but the doctor showing much impatience, she changed it for that of Hira, of Hira's mother, and Hira's husband.

With much difficulty the doctor at last arrived at her meaning, to which all this talking and crying was quite irrelevant. The old woman desired some medicine for Hira. Her complaint, she said, was a species of lunacy. Before Hira's birth, her mother had been mad, had continued so for some time, and had died in that condition. Hira had not hitherto shown any sign of her mother's disorder; but now the old woman felt some doubts about her. Hira would now laugh, now weep, now, closing the door, she would dance. Sometimes she screamed, and sometimes became unconscious. Therefore her grandmother wanted medicine for her. After some reflection the doctor said, "Your daughter has hysteria."

"Well, doctor, is there no medicine for that disease?"

"Certainly there is: keep her very warm; take this dose of castor-oil, give it to her early to-morrow morning. Later I will

come and give her another medicine."

With the bottle of castor-oil in her hand, the old woman hobbled forth. On the road she was met by a neighbour, who said, "Oh, Hira's grandmother, what have you in your hand?"

835

The old woman answered, "Hira has become hysterical; the doctor has given me some castor-oil for her; do you think that will be good for hysterics?"

"It may be; castor-oil is the god of all. But what has made your granddaughter so jolly lately?"

After much reflection the old woman said, "It is the fault of her age;" whereupon the neighbour prescribed a remedy, and they parted.

On arriving at home, the old woman remembered that the doctor had said Hira must be kept warm; therefore she placed a pan of fire before her granddaughter.

"Fire!" exclaimed Hira. "What is this for?"

840

"The doctor told me to keep you warm," replied the old woman.

Chapter XXXIV A Dark House: A Dark Life

In the absence of Nagendra and Surja Mukhi from their spacious home, all was darkness therein. The clerks sat in the office, and Kunda Nandini dwelt in the inner apartments with the poor relations. But how can stars dispel the darkness of a moonless night?

In the corners hung spiders' webs; in the rooms stood dust in heaps; pigeons built their nests in the cornices and sparrows in the beams. Heaps of withered leaves lay rotting in the garden; weeds grew over the tanks; the flower-beds were hidden by jungle. There were jackals in the court-yard, and rats in the granary; mould and fungus were everywhere to be seen; musk-rats and centipedes swarmed in the rooms; bats flew about night and day. Nearly all Surja Mukhi's pet birds had been eaten by cats; their soiled feathers lay scattered around. The ducks had been killed by the jackals, the peacocks had flown into the woods; the cows had

become emaciated, and no longer gave milk. Nagendra's dogs had no spirit left in them, they neither played nor barked; they were never let loose; some had died, some had gone mad, some had escaped. The horses were diseased, or had become ill from want of work; the stables were littered with stubble, grass, and feathers. The horses were sometimes fed, sometimes neglected. The grooms were never to be found in the stables. The cornice of the house was broken in places, as were the sashes, the shutters, and the railings. The matting was soaked with rain; there was dust on the painted walls. Over the bookcases were the dwellings of insects; straws from the sparrows' nests on the glass of the chandeliers. In the house there was no mistress, and without a mistress paradise itself would be a ruin.

As in an untended garden overgrown with grass a single rose or lily will bloom, so in this house Kunda Nandini lived alone. Wherever a few joined in a meal Kunda partook of it. If any one addressed her as house-mistress, Kunda thought, "They are mocking me." If the *Dewan* sent to ask her about anything her heart beat with fear. There was a reason for this. As Nagendra did not write to Kunda, she had been accustomed to send to the *Dewan* for the letters received by him. She did not return the letters, and she lived in fear that the *Dewan* would claim them; and in fact the man no longer sent them to her, but only suffered her to read them as he held them in his hand.

The suffering felt by Surja Mukhi was endured in equal measure by Kunda Nandini. Surja Mukhi loved her husband; did not Kunda love him? In that little heart there was inexhaustible love, and because it could find no expression, like obstructed breathing it wounded her heart. From childhood, before her first marriage, Kunda had loved Nagendra; she had told no one, no one knew it. She had had no desire to obtain Nagendra, no hope of doing so; her despair she had borne in silence. To have striven for it would have been like striving to reach the moon in the sky. Now where was that moon? For what fault had Nagendra thrust her from him? Kunda revolved these thoughts in her mind night and day; night and day she wept. Well! let Nagendra not love her. It was her good fortune to love him. Why might she not even see

him? Nor that only: he regarded Kunda as the root of his troubles; every one considered her so. Kunda thought, "Why should I be blamed for all this?"

In an evil moment Nagendra had married Kunda. As every one who sits under the upas-tree must die, so every one who had been touched by the shadow of this marriage was ruined.

Then again Kunda thought, "Surja Mukhi has come to this condition through me. Surja Mukhi protected me, loved me as a sister; I have made her a beggar by the roadside. Who is there more unfortunate than I? Why did I not die by the roadside? Why do I not die now? I will not die now; let him come, let me see him again. Will he not come?" Kunda had not received the news of Surja Mukhi's death, therefore she thought, "What is the use of dying now? Should Surja Mukhi return, then I will die; I will no longer be a thorn in her path."

Chapter XXXV The Return

The work required to be done in Calcutta was finished. The deed of gift was drawn up. In it special rewards were indicated for the *Brahmachari* and the unknown Brahman. The deed would have to be registered at Haripur, therefore Nagendra went to Govindpur, taking it with him. He had instructed his brother-in-law to follow. Srish Chandra had striven to prevent his executing this deed, also to restrain him from making the journey on foot, but in vain. His efforts thus defeated, he followed by boat; and as Kamal Mani could not endure to be parted from her husband, she and Satish simply accompanied him without asking any questions.

When Kunda saw Kamal Mani she thought that once more a star had risen in the sky. Since the flight of Surja Mukhi, Kamal's anger against Kunda had been inflexible; she had always refused to see her. But now, at the sight of Kunda's emaciated figure, Kamal's anger departed. She endeavoured to cheer her with the news that Nagendra was coming, which brought a smile to the

girl's face; but at the news of Surja Mukhi's death Kunda Nandini wept.

Many fair readers will smile at this, thinking, "The cat weeps over the death of the fish." But Kunda was very stupid; that she had cause to rejoice never entered her head: this silly woman actually cried over her rival's death.

Kamal Mani not only cheered Kunda, she herself felt comforted. She had already wept much, and now she began to think, "What is the use of weeping? If I do, Srish Chandra will be miserable and Satish will cry. Weeping will not bring back Surja Mukhi." So she gave up weeping, and became her natural self.

Kamal Mani said to Srish Chandra, "The goddess of this paradise has abandoned it; when my brother comes he will have only a bed of straw to lie upon." They resolved to put the place in order; so the coolies, the lamp cleaners, and the gardeners were set to work. Under Kamal Mani's vigorous treatment the muskrats, bats, and mice, departed squeaking; the pigeons flew from cornice to cornice; the sparrows fled in distress. Where the windows were closed, the sparrows, taking them for open doorways, pecked at them with their beaks till they were ready to drop. The women-servants, broom in hand, were victorious everywhere. Before long the place again wore a smiling appearance, and at length Nagendra arrived.

It was evening. As a river courses swiftly when at flood, but at ebb the deep water is calm, so Nagendra's violent grief was now changed into a quiet gravity. His sorrow was not lessened, but he was no longer restless. In a quiet manner he conversed with the household, making inquiries from each one. In the presence of none of them did he mention the name of Surja Mukhi, but all were grieved at the sorrow expressed by his grave countenance. The old servants, saluting him, went aside and wept. One person only did Nagendra wound. With the long-sorrowing Kunda he did not speak.

By the orders of Nagendra the servants prepared his bed in Surja Mukhi's room. At this order Kamal Mani shook her head. At midnight, when all the household had retired, Nagendra went to Surja Mukhi's chamber, not to lie down, but to weep. Surja

Mukhi's room was spacious and beautiful; it was the temple of all Nagendra's joys, therefore he had adorned it with care. The room was wide and lofty, the floor inlaid with white and black marble, the walls painted in floral designs, blue, yellow, and red. Above the flowers hovered various birds. On one side stood a costly bedstead, beautifully carved and inlaid with ivory; elsewhere, seats in variously coloured coverings, a large mirror, and other suitable furniture. Some pictures, not English, hung upon the walls. Surja Mukhi and Nagendra together had chosen the subjects, and caused them to be painted by a native artist, who had been taught by an Englishman, and could draw well. Nagendra had framed the pictures handsomely, and hung them on the walls. One picture was taken from the Birth of Kartika: Siva, sunk in meditation, on the summit of the hill; Nandi at the door of the arbour. On the left Hembatra, finger on lip, is hushing the sounds of the garden. All is still, the bees hid among the leaves, the deer reposing. At this moment Madan (Cupid) enters to interrupt the meditation of Siva; with him comes Spring. In advance, Parvati, wreathed with flowers, has come to salute Siva. Uma's joyous face is bent in salutation, one knee resting on the earth. This is the position depicted in the painting. As she bends her head, one or two flowers escape from the wreaths fastened in her hair. In the distance Cupid, half hidden by the woods, one knee touching earth, his beauteous bow bent, is fitting to it the flower-wreathed arrow.

In another picture, Ram, returning from Lanka with Janaki, both sitting in a jewelled chariot, is coursing through the sky. Ram has one hand on the shoulders of Janaki, with the other is pointing out the beauties of the earth below. Around the chariot many-coloured clouds, blue, red, and white, sail past in purple waves. Below, the broad blue ocean heaves its billows, shining like heaps of diamonds in the sun's rays. In the distance, opal-crowned Lanka, its rows of palaces like golden peaks in the sun's light; the opposite shore beautiful with tamal and palm trees. In the mid distance flocks of swans are flying.

Another picture represents Subhadra with Arjuna in the chariot. Countless Yadav soldiers, their flags streaming out

against the gloomy sky, are running after the chariot. Subhadra herself is driving, the horses grinding the clouds with their hoofs. Subhadra, proud of her skill, is looking round towards Arjuna, biting her lower lip with her ivory teeth, her hair streaming in the chariot-created wind; two or three braids moistened with perspiration lie in a curve on her temples.

In another, Sakuntala, with the desire of seeing Dushmanta, is pretending to take a thorn from her foot. Anasuya and Priamboda are smiling. Sakuntala, between anger and shame will not raise her face. She cannot look at Dushmanta, nor yet can she leave the spot.

In another, Prince Abhimaya, armed for battle, and, like the young lion, eager for glory, is taking leave of Uttora that he may go to the field. Uttora, saying that she will not let him go, is standing against the closed door weeping, with her hands over her eyes.

It was past twelve when Nagendra entered the room. The night was fearful. Late in the evening some rain had fallen; now the wind had risen and was blowing fiercely, the rain continuing at intervals. Wherever the shutters were not fastened they flapped to and fro with the noise of thunder-claps, the sashes rattling continuously. When Nagendra closed the door the noise was less noticeable. There was another door near the bedstead, but as the wind did not blow in that direction he left it open. Nagendra sat on the sofa, weeping bitterly. How often had he sat there with Surja Mukhi; what pleasant talks they had had! Again and again Nagendra embraced that senseless seat; then raising his face he looked at the pictures so dear to Surja Mukhi. In the fitful light of the lamp the figures in the pictures seemed to be alive; in each picture Nagendra saw Surja Mukhi. He remembered that one day she expressed a wish to be decked with flowers like Uma in the picture. He had gone forth, brought in flowers from the garden, and with them decked her person. What beauty decked with jewels had ever felt the pleasure felt by Surja Mukhi at that moment? Another day she had desired to drive Nagendra's carriage in imitation of Subhadra; whereupon he had brought a small carriage drawn by ponies to the inner garden. They both got

in, Surja Mukhi taking the reins; like Subhadra, she turned her face towards Nagendra, biting her lower lip and laughing. The ponies, taking advantage of her inattention, went through an open gate into the road. Then Surja Mukhi, afraid of being seen by the people, drew her *sari* over her face, and Nagendra, seeing her distress, took the reins and brought the carriage back into the garden. They went into the chamber laughing over the adventure, and Surja Mukhi shook her fist at Subhadra in the picture, saying, "You are the cause of this misfortune."

How bitterly Nagendra wept over this remembrance! Unable longer to endure his suffering he walked about; but look where he would there were signs of Surja Mukhi. On the wall where the artist had drawn twining plants she had sketched a copy of one of them; the sketch remained there still. One day during the Dol festival she had thrown a ball of red powder at her husband; she had missed her aim and struck the wall, where still the stain was visible. When the room was finished, Surja Mukhi had written in one spot—

860

In the year 1910 of Vikramaditya
This room was prepared
For my Guardian Deity, my husband,
By his servant
Surja Mukhi.

Nagendra read this inscription repeatedly. He could not satisfy his desire to read it. Though the tears filled his eyes so that he could not see, he would not desist. As he read he perceived the light becoming dim, and found the lamp ready to expire. With a sigh he laid down; but scarcely had he done so ere the wind began to rage furiously. The lamp, void of oil, was on the point of extinction, only a faint spark like that of a firefly remained. In that dim light a remarkable circumstance occurred. Astonished by the noise of the shutters, Nagendra looked towards the door near the bed. In that open doorway, shown by the dim light, a shadowy form appeared. The shape was that of a woman; but what he saw further made his hair stand on end, he trembled from head to foot. The woman's face had the features of Surja Mukhi! Nagendra

started to his feet and hastened to the figure. But the light went out, the form became invisible; with a loud cry Nagendra fell senseless to the ground.

When Nagendra recovered consciousness thick darkness filled the room. By degrees he collected his senses. As he remembered what had caused the swoon, surprise was added to surprise. He had fallen senseless on the floor, then whence came the pillow on which his head was resting? Was it a pillow? or was it the lap of some one—of Kunda Nandini?

To solve his doubt he said, "Who are you?" But the supporter of his head made no reply. Only a hot drop or two fell on his forehead, by which he understood that the person was weeping. He tried to identify the person by touch. Suddenly he became quite bewildered; he remained motionless for some moments, then with labouring breath raised his head and sat up. The rain had ceased, the clouds had disappeared, light began to peep into the room. Nagendra rose and seated himself. He perceived that the woman had also risen, and was slowly making towards the door. Then Nagendra guessed that it was not Kunda Nandini. There was not light enough to recognize any one, but something might be guessed from form and gait. Nagendra studied these for a moment, then falling at the feet of the standing figure, in troubled tones he said—

"Whether thou art a god or a human being, I am at thy feet; speak to me, or I shall die!"

What the woman said he could not understand, but no sooner had the sound of her voice entered his ear than he sprang to his feet and tried to grasp the form. But mind and body again became benumbed, and, like the creeper from the tree, he sank at the feet of the enchantress; he could not speak. Again the woman, sitting down, took his head upon her lap. When Nagendra once more recovered from stupor it was day. The birds were singing in the adjacent garden. The rays of the newly risen sun were shining into the room. Without raising his eyes Nagendra said—

"Kunda, when did you come? This whole night I have been dreaming of Surja Mukhi. In my dream I saw myself with my

head on Surja Mukhi's lap. If you could be Surja Mukhi, how joyful it would be!"

The woman answered, "If it would delight you so much to see that unhappy being, then I am she."

Nagendra started up, wiped his eyes, sat holding his temples, again rubbed his eyes and gazed; then bowing his head, he said in a low voice—

"Am I demented, or is Surja Mukhi living? Is this the end of my destiny, that I should go mad?"

Then the woman, clasping his feet, wept over them, saying, "Arise, arise, my all! I have suffered so much. To-day all my sorrow is ended. I am not dead. Again I have come to serve you."

870

Could delusion last longer? Nagendra embraced Surja Mukhi, and laid his head upon her breast. Together they wept; but how joyous was that weeping!

Chapter XXXVI Explanation

In due time Surja Mukhi satisfied Nagendra's inquiries, saying —

"I did not die. What the *Kabiraj* said of my dying was not true. He did not know. When I had become strong through his treatment, I was extremely anxious to come to Govindpur to see you. I teased the *Brahmachari* till he consented to take me. On arriving here, we learned you were not in the place. The *Brahmachari* took me to a spot six miles from here, placed me in the house of a Brahmin to attend on his daughter, and then went in search of you: first to Calcutta, where he had an interview with Srish Chandra, from whom he heard that you were gone to Madhupur. At that place he learned that on the day we left Haro Mani's house it was burned, and Haro Mani in it. In the morning people could not recognize the body. They reasoned that as of the two people in the house one was sick and one was well, that the former could not have escaped from want of strength; therefore that Haro Mani must have escaped and the dead person must be myself. What was at first a supposition became established by

report. Ram Krishna heard the report, and repeated it to you. The *Brahmachari* heard all this, and also that you had been there, had heard of my death, and had come hither. He came after you, arriving last night at Protappur. I also heard that in a day or two you were expected home. In that belief I came here the day before yesterday. It does not trouble me now to walk a few miles. As you had not come I went back, saw the *Brahmachari*, and returned yesterday, arriving at one this morning. The window being open, I entered the house and hid under the stairs without being seen. When all slept I ascended; I thought you would certainly sleep in this room. I peeped in, and saw you sitting with your head in your hands. I longed to throw myself at your feet, but I feared you would not forgive my sin against you, so I refrained. From within the window I looked, thinking, 'Now I will let him see me.' I came in, but you fell senseless, and since then I have sat with your head on my lap. I knew not that such joy was in my destiny. But, fie! you love me not; when you put your hand upon me you did not recognize me! I should have known you by your breath."

Chapter XXXVII

The Simpleton and the Serpent

While in the sleeping-chamber, bathed in a sea of joy, Nagendra and Surja Mukhi held loving converse, in another apartment of that same house a fatal dialogue was being held. Before relating it, it is necessary to record what occurred on the previous night. As we know, Nagendra had held no converse with Kunda Nandini on his return. In her own room, with her head on the pillow, Kunda had wept the whole night, not the easy tears of girlhood, but from a mortal wound. Whosoever in childhood has in all sincerity delivered the priceless treasure of her heart to any one, and has in exchange received only neglect, can imagine the piercing pain of that weeping. "Why have I preserved my life," she asked herself, "with the desire to see my husband? Now what happiness remains to be hoped for?" With the dawn sleep came, and in that sleep, for the second time, a frightful vision. The bright figure assuming the form of her mother, which she had

seen four years before by her dead father's bedside, now appeared above Kunda's head; but this time it was not surrounded by a shining halo, it descended upon a dense cloud ready to fall in rain. From the midst of the thick cloud another face smiled, while every now and then flashes of lightning broke forth. Kunda perceived with alarm that the incessantly smiling face resembled that of Hira, while her mother's compassionate countenance was very grave. The mother said: "Kunda, when I came before you did not listen, you did not come with me; now you see what trouble has befallen you." Kunda wept. The mother continued: "I told you I would come once more, and here I am. If now you are satisfied with the joy that the world can give, come with me."

"Take me with you, mother; I do not desire to stay here longer."

875

The mother, much pleased, repeated, "Come, then!" and vanished from sight.

Kunda woke, and, remembering her vision, desired of the gods that this time her dream might be fulfilled.

At dawn, when Hira entered the room to wait upon Kunda, she perceived that the girl was crying. Since the arrival of Kamal Mani, Hira had resumed a respectful demeanour towards Kunda, because she heard that Nagendra was returning. As though in atonement for her past behaviour, Hira became even more obedient and affectionate than formerly. Any one else would have easily penetrated this craftiness, but Kunda was unusually simple, and easily appeased. She felt no suspicion of this new affection; she imagined Hira to be sour-tempered, but not unfaithful. The woman said—

"Why do you weep, *Ma Thakurani*?"

Kunda did not speak, but only looked at Hira, who saw that her eyes were swollen and the pillow soaked.

880

"What is this? you have been crying all night. Has the Babu said anything to you?"

"Nothing," said Kunda, sobbing with greater violence than before.

Hira's heart swam with joy at the sight of Kunda's distress. With a melancholy face she asked—

"Has the Babu had any talk with you since he came home? I am only a servant, you need not mind telling me."

"I have had no talk with him."

885

"How is that, Ma? After so many days' absence has he nothing to say to you?"

"He has not been near me," and with these words fresh tears burst forth.

Hira was delighted. She said, smiling, "Ma, why do you weep in this way? Many people are over head and ears in trouble, yet you cry incessantly over one sorrow. If you had as much to bear as I have, you would have destroyed yourself before this time."

Suicide! this disastrous word struck heavily on the ear of Kunda; shuddering, she sat down. During the night she had frequently contemplated this step, and these words from Hira's mouth seemed to confirm her purpose.

Hira continued: "Now hear what my troubles are. I also loved a man more than my own life. He was not my husband, but why should I hide my sin from my mistress? it is better to confess it plainly."

890

These shameless words did not enter Kunda's ear; in it the word "suicide" was repeating itself, as though a demon kept whispering, "Would it not be better for you to destroy yourself than to endure this misery?"

Hira continued: "He was not my husband, but I loved him better than the best husband. I knew he did not love me; he loved another sinner, a hundred times less attractive than I." At this point, Hira cast a sharp, angry glance from under her eyelids at Kunda, then went on: "Knowing this, I did not run after him, but one day we were both wicked."

Beginning thus, Hira briefly related the terrible history. She mentioned no name, neither that of Debendra nor that of Kunda. She said nothing from which it could be inferred whom she had loved, or who was beloved by him. At length, after speaking of the abuse she had received, she said—

"Now what do you suppose I did?"

"What did you do?"

895

"I went to a *Kabiraj*. He has all sorts of poisons by which life can be destroyed."

In low tones Kunda said, "After that?"

"I intended to kill myself. I bought some poison, but afterwards I thought, 'Why should I die for another?' so I have kept the poison in a box."

Hira brought from the corner of the room a box in which she kept the treasures received as rewards from her employers, and also what she got by less fair means. Opening it, she showed the poison to Kunda, who eyed it as a cat does cream. Then Hira, leaving the box open as though from absence of mind, began to console Kunda. At this moment, suddenly, in the early dawn, sounds of happiness and rejoicing were heard in the household. Hira darted forth in astonishment. The ill-fated Kunda Nandini seized the opportunity to steal the poison from the box.

Chapter XXXVIII The Catastrophe

Hira could not at first understand the cause of the joyous sounds she heard. She saw in one of the large rooms all the women of the house, the boys and the girls surrounding some one and making a great noise. Of the person surrounded, Hira could see nothing but the hair, which Kousalya and the other attendants were dressing with scented oil and arranging becomingly. Of the by-standers encircling them some were laughing, some weeping, some talking, some uttering blessings. The girls and boys were dancing, singing, and clapping their hands. Kamal Mani was going round directing that shells should be blown and other joyous demonstrations, laughing, crying, and even dancing.

Hira was astonished. Stepping into the throng, she stretched her neck and peeped about. What were her feelings on beholding Surja Mukhi seated on the floor, a loving smile upon her lips; submitting to be decked with all her ornaments, so long laid aside, speaking kindly to all, a little shamefaced.

Hira could not all at once believe that Surja Mukhi who had died was now amongst them smiling so pleasantly. Stammeringly

she asked one of the throng of women, "Who is that?"

Kousalya heard the question, and answered, "Don't you know? The goddess of our house, and your executioner."

Kousalya had lived all this time in fear of Hira. Now in her day of triumph she vented her spleen.

The dressing being completed and all kindly greetings exchanged, Surja Mukhi said in a low voice to Kamal Mani, "Let us go and see Kunda. She is not guilty of any fault towards me. I am not angry with her; she is now my younger sister."

Only they two went. They were long away. At last Kamal Mani came out of Kunda's room with a countenance full of fear and distress, and in great haste sent for Nagendra.

On his arrival the ladies told him he was wanted in Kunda's room. At the door he met Surja Mukhi weeping.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"Destruction! I have long known I was destined not to have a single day of happiness, else how is it that in the first moment of joy this calamity comes upon me?"

"What has happened?"

"I brought up Kunda to womanhood, and now that I have come hither with the desire to cherish her as my little sister, my desire has turned to ashes: Kunda has taken poison!"

"What do you say?" "Do you remain with her. I will go for a doctor."

Surja Mukhi went on her errand, and Nagendra to Kunda's room alone. He found Kunda's face darkened, her eyes lustreless, her body relaxed.

Chapter XXXIX Kunda's Tongue Is Loosened

Kunda Nandini was seated on the floor, her head resting against the the bed-post. At sight of Nagendra the tears came into her eyes. As he stood beside her, Kunda, like a severed branch of a twining plant, laid her head at his feet. In a stifled voice he said

"What is this, Kunda? for what fault are you leaving me?"

905

910

915

Kunda had not been used to answer her husband, but now, at her last hour, her tongue was loosened. She said, "For what fault did you leave me?"

Silenced, Nagendra sat beside Kunda with bent head.

She went on: "If on coming home yesterday you had called for me, if you had once come and sat by me in this way, I had not died. I have had you but a short time, even to day my desire to see you is not satisfied. I would not have died."

At these loving, heart-piercing words, Nagendra let his head fall upon his knees, and remained speechless.

Then Kunda spoke again. To day she was eloquent, for it was her last day with her husband. She said, "Fie! do not sit thus silent; if I see not your face smiling as I die, I shall not die happy."

Surja Mukhi also had thus spoken. In death all are equal.

Struck to the heart, Nagendra said in troubled tones, "Why have you done this? Why did you not send for me?"

Kunda, with many a smile transient as a flash of lightning, said, "Think not of that; what I said, I said in the hurry of my mind. Before you came I had determined that after I had seen you I would die. I had resolved that if the *Didi* (Surja Mukhi) returned, I would leave you with her and die. I would no longer be a thorn in her path of happiness. I had determined to die, but on seeing you I was not willing."

Nagendra made no answer. To-day he was without reply to the formerly speechless Kunda Nandini. Kunda remained silent for some time; she was losing the power of speech, death was taking possession. Then Nagendra saw the death-shadowed face full of love. Its gentle light shining in her troubled face, remained stamped on Nagendra's heart to his latest day. After a rest, she said, with great difficulty—

"My thirst for speech has not been satisfied. I knew you to be a god; I never had the courage to speak, my desire was not extinguished. Death is approaching, my mouth is dry, my tongue falters, I have no more time."

She rested her head upon Nagendra, closed her eyes, and remained speechless. The doctor came but he gave her no

medicine. Seeing that there was no hope, he withdrew with a sad countenance. Feeling that the last hour was come, Kunda wished to see Surja Mukhi and Kamal Mani. Both came; Kunda took the dust from their feet, they weeping loudly. Then Kunda hid her face between her husband's feet. She spoke no more, consciousness gradually departed. Her face lying on her husband's feet, the youthful Kunda Nandini's spirit departed, the blooming flower died.

Surja Mukhi, checking her sobs, looked at her dead companion-wife, and said, "May thy happy fate be mine; may I die thus, my head on my husband's feet." Then taking her weeping husband's hand, she led him away.

Afterwards, Nagendra, recovering his firmness, took Kunda to the riverside, performed the last rites, and bade farewell to the lovely form.

Chapter XL The End

After Kunda Nandini's death, people asked where she obtained the poison, and all began to suspect that it was Hira's work.

Nagendra directed that Hira should be called, but she was not to be found; since Kunda's death she had disappeared. From that time no one ever saw Hira in that part of the country; her name was no longer heard in Govindpur.

Once only, a year later, she showed herself to Debendra. The poison tree planted by Debendra had by that time borne fruit; he was seized with a malignant disease, and as he did not cease drinking, the disease became incurable. During the first year after Kunda's death, Debendra's summons came. Two or three days before his death, as he lay on his bed without power to rise, there suddenly arose a great noise at the door.

In answer to Debendra's inquiries, the servant said, "A mad woman wants to see you, sir; she will not be forbidden."

He gave orders that she should be admitted. The woman appeared. Debendra saw that she was reduced by want, but observed no sign of madness; he thought her a wretched beggar-

woman. She was young, and retained the signs of former beauty, but now she was a sight indeed. Her apparel soiled, ragged, patched, and so scanty that it barely reached her knees, while her back and head remained uncovered; her hair unkempt, dishevelled, covered with dust and matted together; her body never oiled, withered-looking, covered with mud. As she approached, she cast so wild a glance on Debendra that he saw the servants were right—she was truly a mad-woman.

After gazing at him some time, she said, "Do you not know me? I am Hira."

Recognizing her, Debendra asked in astonishment, "Who has brought you to this condition?"

Hira, with a glance full of rage, biting her lip and clenching her fist, approached to strike Debendra; but restraining herself she said, "Ask again who has brought me to this condition: this is your doing. You don't know me now, but once you took your pleasure of me. You don't remember it, but one day you sang this song"—bursting forth into a love-song.

In this manner reminding him of many things, she said: "On the day you drove me out I became mad. I went to take poison. Then a thought of delight came to me; instead of taking it myself, I would cause either you or Kunda Nandini to do so. In that hope I hid my illness for a time; it comes and goes; when it was on me I stayed at home, when well I worked. Finally, having poisoned your Kunda, my trouble was soothed; but after seeing her death my illness increased. Finding that I could not hide it any longer, I left the place. Now I have no food. Who gives food to a mad woman? Since then I have begged. When well I beg; when the disease presses I stay under a tree. Hearing of your approaching death, I have come to delight myself in seeing you. I give you my blessing, that even hell may find no place for you."

Thus saying, the mad-woman uttered a loud laugh. Alarmed, Debendra moved to the other side of the bed; then Hira danced out of the house, singing the old love-song.

From that time Debendra's bed of death was full of thorns. He died delirious, uttering words of the love-song.

After his death the night-watch heard with a beating heart the familiar strain from the mad-woman in the garden.

940

The "Poison Tree" is finished. We trust it will yield nectar in many a house.

GLOSSARY OF HINDU WORDS

Attar: Commonly called in England *Otto* of Roses.

Bari: The Hindu home.

Bhagirati: A river, branch of the Ganges.

Boiragi: A religious devotee.

Boisnavi: A female mendicant; a votary of Vishnu.

Boroari: A Hindu festival.

Boita khana: The sitting-room of the male members of the household, and their guests.

Bonti: A fish knife.

Bou: The wife.

Brahmachari: A student of the Vedas.

Brahman: An officiating Hindu priest

Brahmo Somaj: The church of the Theistic sect or Brahmos.

Dada Babu: Elder brother.

Dahuk: A bird of the Crane species.

Didi: Elder sister.

Duftur Khana: Accountant's office.

Durga: A Hindu goddess.

Darwan: A doorkeeper.

Ghat: Landing steps to a river or tank.

Ghi: Clarified butter.

Gomashta: Factor or agent; a rent-collector.

Grihini: The house-mistress.

Ganga: The river Ganges.

Joisto: The Hindu month corresponding to May—June.

Kabiraj: A Hindu physician.

Kacheri: Courthouse, or Revenue-office.

Kayasta: The writer caste.

Khansamah: A Mahomedan butler.

Korta: The master of the house.

Ma Thakurani: A title of respect to the mistress.
Mahal: A division of a house.
Malini: A flower girl.
Manji: A boatman.
Naib: A deputy, representing the Zemindar.
Pandit: A learned Brahman.
Papiya: A bird.
Puja: Hindu worship.
Puja Mahal: The division of the house devoted to worship.
Pardah: A screen or curtain.
Ryot: A tiller of the soil.
Sari: A woman's garment.
Shastras: Hindu sacred books.
Shradda: An obsequial ceremony, in which food and water are offered to deceased ancestors.
Siva: A Hindu Cod.
Sraban: The Hindu months corresponding to July—August.
Talao: A tank or enclosed pond
Thakur: The Deity; sometimes applied as a title of honour to the master of the house.
Thakur Ban: The chamber occupied by the family deity.
Tulsi: A plant held sacred by the Hindus.
Zemindar: A landholder.
Zillah: A district or local division.

FOOTNOTES

Ravana

King of Lanka (Ceylon), whose remains were to burn without ceasing. [\[back\]](#)

Rakshasi

A female demon. [\[back\]](#)

Tattwa Bodhini

A religious periodical published in Calcutta. [\[back\]](#)

Radhika

Wife of Krishna. [\[back\]](#)

sandal mark

The caste mark, made with sandal-wood powder. [\[back\]](#)

Tote

The village school in which Sanscrit is taught. [\[back\]](#)

battle between the Kurus and Pandus

An illustration drawn from the *Mahabharat*. [\[back\]](#)

Thakur Jamai

Kamal Mani's husband. [\[back\]](#)

talao

Usually rendered "tank" in English; but the word scarcely does justice to these reservoirs, which with their handsome flights of steps are quite ornamental. [\[back\]](#)

dark moon

At the time of the dark moon the Hindus worship Kalee and her attendant spirits. [\[back\]](#)

Ganga jal

Ganges water; a pet name given by Hira to Malati. To receive this at the moment of death is essential to salvation; therefore Hira expresses the hope to meet Malati in the hour of death. [\[back\]](#)

Vasudeva

The father of Krishna. [\[back\]](#)

Phul Saja

On the day following the wedding, the bride's father sends flowers and sweetmeats to the friends. [\[back\]](#)

the law of Moses

The writer is mistaken in supposing that the Christian doctrine of monogamy is derived from the Mosaic law. [\[back\]](#)

"I will tell you"

The wife does not utter the name of her husband except under stress of necessity. [\[back\]](#)

Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)

The Necklace ("La Parure")

Boule de Suif ("Tallow Ball")

French

Realism

The oldest of two children, Maupassant's parents separated when he was 11 years old. His father arranged his education. However, Maupassant did not care for the first seminary school he attended, and was expelled in 1868. He went on to study law in Paris, but stopped his studies to serve in the Franco-German War. He returned to law school afterwards. His introduction to the literary world was mainly due to his mother's friendship with Gustave Flaubert. She arranged for Flaubert to act as a mentor to Maupassant. The two met often when Flaubert was in Paris. Flaubert introduced Maupassant to prominent writers and intellectuals such as, Émile Zola and Henry James. Both Zola and James influenced Maupassant's work. His short story, "Boule de Suif" or "Tallow Ball" (1880), is an ironic tale of generosity and shallowness set against the harsh reality of the Franco-Prussian War. "The Necklace" (1884), is an exploration of materialism and the schism between appearance and reality. He completed over 300 short stories and is regarded as one of the most brilliant French short-story writers in literary history.

Consider while reading:

1. What points is Maupassant making about social class and appearance in these works?
2. How do nationality and social class come into conflict in "Boule de Suif"?
3. To what effect does Maupassant use conspicuous consumption?
4. What elements of naturalism does Maupassant incorporate into his works?

Written by Laura Ng

BOULE DE SUIF

License: Public Domain

Guy de Maupassant

For several days in succession fragments of a defeated army had passed through the town. They were mere disorganized bands, not disciplined forces. The men wore long, dirty beards and tattered uniforms; they advanced in listless fashion, without a flag, without a leader. All seemed exhausted, worn out, incapable of thought or resolve, marching onward merely by force of habit, and dropping to the ground with fatigue the moment they halted. One saw, in particular, many enlisted men, peaceful citizens, men who lived quietly on their income, bending beneath the weight of their rifles; and little active volunteers, easily frightened but full of enthusiasm, as eager to attack as they were ready to take to flight; and amid these, a sprinkling of red-breeched soldiers, the pitiful remnant of a division cut down in a great battle; somber artillerymen, side by side with nondescript foot-soldiers; and, here and there, the gleaming helmet of a heavy-footed dragoon who had difficulty in keeping up with the quicker pace of the soldiers of the line. Legions of irregulars with high-sounding names "Avengers of Defeat," "Citizens of the Tomb," "Brethren in Death"—passed in their turn, looking like banditti. Their leaders, former drapers or grain merchants, or tallow or soap chandlers—warriors by force of circumstances, officers by reason of their mustachios or their money—covered with weapons, flannel and gold lace, spoke in an impressive manner, discussed plans of campaign, and behaved as though they alone bore the fortunes of dying France on their braggart shoulders; though, in truth, they frequently were afraid of their own men—scoundrels often brave beyond measure, but pillagers and debauchees.

Rumor had it that the Prussians were about to enter Rouen.

The members of the National Guard, who for the past two months had been reconnoitering with the utmost caution in the neighboring woods, occasionally shooting their own sentinels, and making ready for fight whenever a rabbit rustled in the undergrowth, had now returned to their homes. Their arms, their uniforms, all the death-dealing paraphernalia with which they had

terrified all the milestones along the highroad for eight miles round, had suddenly and marvellously disappeared.

The last of the French soldiers had just crossed the Seine on their way to Pont-Audemer, through Saint-Sever and Bourg-Achard, and in their rear the vanquished general, powerless to do aught with the forlorn remnants of his army, himself dismayed at the final overthrow of a nation accustomed to victory and disastrously beaten despite its legendary bravery, walked between two orderlies.

Then a profound calm, a shuddering, silent dread, settled on the city. Many a round-paunched citizen, emasculated by years devoted to business, anxiously awaited the conquerors, trembling lest his roasting-jacks or kitchen knives should be looked upon as weapons.

Life seemed to have stopped short; the shops were shut, the streets deserted. Now and then an inhabitant, awed by the silence, glided swiftly by in the shadow of the walls. The anguish of suspense made men even desire the arrival of the enemy.

In the afternoon of the day following the departure of the French troops, a number of uhlans, coming no one knew whence, passed rapidly through the town. A little later on, a black mass descended St. Catherine's Hill, while two other invading bodies appeared respectively on the Darnetal and the Boisguillaume roads. The advance guards of the three corps arrived at precisely the same moment at the Square of the Hotel de Ville, and the German army poured through all the adjacent streets, its battalions making the pavement ring with their firm, measured tread.

Orders shouted in an unknown, guttural tongue rose to the windows of the seemingly dead, deserted houses; while behind the fast-closed shutters eager eyes peered forth at the victors-masters now of the city, its fortunes, and its lives, by "right of war." The inhabitants, in their darkened rooms, were possessed by that terror which follows in the wake of cataclysms, of deadly upheavals of the earth, against which all human skill and strength are vain. For the same thing happens whenever the established order of things is upset, when security no longer exists, when all

those rights usually protected by the law of man or of Nature are at the mercy of unreasoning, savage force. The earthquake crushing a whole nation under falling roofs; the flood let loose, and engulfing in its swirling depths the corpses of drowned peasants, along with dead oxen and beams torn from shattered houses; or the army, covered with glory, murdering those who defend themselves, making prisoners of the rest, pillaging in the name of the Sword, and giving thanks to God to the thunder of cannon—all these are appalling scourges, which destroy all belief in eternal justice, all that confidence we have been taught to feel in the protection of Heaven and the reason of man.

Small detachments of soldiers knocked at each door, and then disappeared within the houses; for the vanquished saw they would have to be civil to their conquerors.

At the end of a short time, once the first terror had subsided, calm was again restored. In many houses the Prussian officer ate at the same table with the family. He was often well-bred, and, out of politeness, expressed sympathy with France and repugnance at being compelled to take part in the war. This sentiment was received with gratitude; besides, his protection might be needful some day or other. By the exercise of tact the number of men quartered in one's house might be reduced; and why should one provoke the hostility of a person on whom one's whole welfare depended? Such conduct would savor less of bravery than of fool-hardiness. And foolhardiness is no longer a failing of the citizens of Rouen as it was in the days when their city earned renown by its heroic defenses. Last of all—final argument based on the national politeness—the folk of Rouen said to one another that it was only right to be civil in one's own house, provided there was no public exhibition of familiarity with the foreigner. Out of doors, therefore, citizen and soldier did not know each other; but in the house both chatted freely, and each evening the German remained a little longer warming himself at the hospitable hearth.

Even the town itself resumed by degrees its ordinary aspect. The French seldom walked abroad, but the streets swarmed with Prussian soldiers. Moreover, the officers of the Blue Hussars, who

arrogantly dragged their instruments of death along the pavements, seemed to hold the simple townsmen in but little more contempt than did the French cavalry officers who had drunk at the same cafes the year before.

But there was something in the air, a something strange and subtle, an intolerable foreign atmosphere like a penetrating odor—the odor of invasion. It permeated dwellings and places of public resort, changed the taste of food, made one imagine one's self in far-distant lands, amid dangerous, barbaric tribes.

The conquerors exacted money, much money. The inhabitants paid what was asked; they were rich. But, the wealthier a Norman tradesman becomes, the more he suffers at having to part with anything that belongs to him, at having to see any portion of his substance pass into the hands of another.

Nevertheless, within six or seven miles of the town, along the course of the river as it flows onward to Croisset, Dieppedalle and Biessart, boat-men and fishermen often hauled to the surface of the water the body of a German, bloated in his uniform, killed by a blow from knife or club, his head crushed by a stone, or perchance pushed from some bridge into the stream below. The mud of the river-bed swallowed up these obscure acts of vengeance—savage, yet legitimate; these unrecorded deeds of bravery; these silent attacks fraught with greater danger than battles fought in broad day, and surrounded, moreover, with no halo of romance. For hatred of the foreigner ever arms a few intrepid souls, ready to die for an idea.

At last, as the invaders, though subjecting the town to the strictest discipline, had not committed any of the deeds of horror with which they had been credited while on their triumphal march, the people grew bolder, and the necessities of business again animated the breasts of the local merchants. Some of these had important commercial interests at Havre—occupied at present by the French army—and wished to attempt to reach that port by overland route to Dieppe, taking the boat from there.

Through the influence of the German officers whose acquaintance they had made, they obtained a permit to leave town from the general in command.

A large four-horse coach having, therefore, been engaged for the journey, and ten passengers having given in their names to the proprietor, they decided to start on a certain Tuesday morning before daybreak, to avoid attracting a crowd.

The ground had been frozen hard for some time-past, and about three o'clock on Monday afternoon—large black clouds from the north shed their burden of snow uninterruptedly all through that evening and night.

At half-past four in the morning the travellers met in the courtyard of the Hotel de Normandie, where they were to take their seats in the coach.

They were still half asleep, and shivering with cold under their wraps. They could see one another but indistinctly in the darkness, and the mountain of heavy winter wraps in which each was swathed made them look like a gathering of obese priests in their long cassocks. But two men recognized each other, a third accosted them, and the three began to talk. "I am bringing my wife," said one. "So am I." "And I, too." The first speaker added: "We shall not return to Rouen, and if the Prussians approach Havre we will cross to England." All three, it turned out, had made the same plans, being of similar disposition and temperament.

20

Still the horses were not harnessed. A small lantern carried by a stable-boy emerged now and then from one dark doorway to disappear immediately in another. The stamping of horses' hoofs, deadened by the dung and straw of the stable, was heard from time to time, and from inside the building issued a man's voice, talking to the animals and swearing at them. A faint tinkle of bells showed that the harness was being got ready; this tinkle soon developed into a continuous jingling, louder or softer according to the movements of the horse, sometimes stopping altogether, then breaking out in a sudden peal accompanied by a pawing of the ground by an iron-shod hoof.

The door suddenly closed. All noise ceased.

The frozen townsmen were silent; they remained motionless, stiff with cold.

A thick curtain of glistening white flakes fell ceaselessly to the ground; it obliterated all outlines, enveloped all objects in an icy mantle of foam; nothing was to be heard throughout the length and breadth of the silent, winter-bound city save the vague, nameless rustle of falling snow—a sensation rather than a sound—the gentle mingling of light atoms which seemed to fill all space, to cover the whole world.

The man reappeared with his lantern, leading by a rope a melancholy-looking horse, evidently being led out against his inclination. The hostler placed him beside the pole, fastened the traces, and spent some time in walking round him to make sure that the harness was all right; for he could use only one hand, the other being engaged in holding the lantern. As he was about to fetch the second horse he noticed the motionless group of travellers, already white with snow, and said to them: "Why don't you get inside the coach? You'd be under shelter, at least."

25

This did not seem to have occurred to them, and they at once took his advice. The three men seated their wives at the far end of the coach, then got in themselves; lastly the other vague, snow-shrouded forms clambered to the remaining places without a word.

The floor was covered with straw, into which the feet sank. The ladies at the far end, having brought with them little copper foot-warmers heated by means of a kind of chemical fuel, proceeded to light these, and spent some time in expatiating in low tones on their advantages, saying over and over again things which they had all known for a long time.

At last, six horses instead of four having been harnessed to the diligence, on account of the heavy roads, a voice outside asked: "Is every one there?" To which a voice from the interior replied: "Yes," and they set out.

The vehicle moved slowly, slowly, at a snail's pace; the wheels sank into the snow; the entire body of the coach creaked and groaned; the horses slipped, puffed, steamed, and the coachman's long whip cracked incessantly, flying hither and thither, coiling up, then flinging out its length like a slender serpent, as it lashed

some rounded flank, which instantly grew tense as it strained in further effort.

But the day grew apace. Those light flakes which one traveller, a native of Rouen, had compared to a rain of cotton fell no longer. A murky light filtered through dark, heavy clouds, which made the country more dazzlingly white by contrast, a whiteness broken sometimes by a row of tall trees spangled with hoarfrost, or by a cottage roof hooded in snow.

Within the coach the passengers eyed one another curiously in the dim light of dawn.

Right at the back, in the best seats of all, Monsieur and Madame Loiseau, wholesale wine merchants of the Rue Grand-Pont, slumbered opposite each other. Formerly clerk to a merchant who had failed in business, Loiseau had bought his master's interest, and made a fortune for himself. He sold very bad wine at a very low price to the retail-dealers in the country, and had the reputation, among his friends and acquaintances, of being a shrewd rascal, a true Norman, full of quips and wiles. So well established was his character as a cheat that, in the mouths of the citizens of Rouen, the very name of Loiseau became a byword for sharp practice.

Above and beyond this, Loiseau was noted for his practical jokes of every description—his tricks, good or ill-natured; and no one could mention his name without adding at once: "He's an extraordinary man—Loiseau." He was undersized and potbellied, had a florid face with grayish whiskers.

His wife—tall, strong, determined, with a loud voice and decided manner—represented the spirit of order and arithmetic in the business house which Loiseau enlivened by his jovial activity.

Beside them, dignified in bearing, belonging to a superior caste, sat Monsieur Carre-Lamadon, a man of considerable importance, a king in the cotton trade, proprietor of three spinning-mills, officer of the Legion of Honor, and member of the General Council. During the whole time the Empire was in the ascendancy he remained the chief of the well-disposed Opposition, merely in order to command a higher value for his

devotion when he should rally to the cause which he meanwhile opposed with "courteous weapons," to use his own expression.

Madame Carre-Lamadon, much younger than her husband, was the consolation of all the officers of good family quartered at Rouen. Pretty, slender, graceful, she sat opposite her husband, curled up in her furs, and gazing mournfully at the sorry interior of the coach.

Her neighbors, the Comte and Comtesse Hubert de Breville, bore one of the noblest and most ancient names in Normandy. The count, a nobleman advanced in years and of aristocratic bearing, strove to enhance by every artifice of the toilet, his natural resemblance to King Henry IV, who, according to a legend of which the family were inordinately proud, had been the favored lover of a De Breville lady, and father of her child—the frail one's husband having, in recognition of this fact, been made a count and governor of a province.

A colleague of Monsieur Carre-Lamadon in the General Council, Count Hubert represented the Orleanist party in his department. The story of his marriage with the daughter of a small shipowner at Nantes had always remained more or less of a mystery. But as the countess had an air of unmistakable breeding, entertained faultlessly, and was even supposed to have been loved by a son of Louis-Philippe, the nobility vied with one another in doing her honor, and her drawing-room remained the most select in the whole countryside—the only one which retained the old spirit of gallantry, and to which access was not easy.

The fortune of the Brevilles, all in real estate, amounted, it was said, to five hundred thousand francs a year.

These six people occupied the farther end of the coach, and represented Society—with an income—the strong, established society of good people with religion and principle.

It happened by chance that all the women were seated on the same side; and the countess had, moreover, as neighbors two nuns, who spent the time in fingering their long rosaries and murmuring paternosters and aves. One of them was old, and so deeply pitted with smallpox that she looked for all the world as if she had received a charge of shot full in the face. The other, of

sickly appearance, had a pretty but wasted countenance, and a narrow, consumptive chest, sapped by that devouring faith which is the making of martyrs and visionaries.

A man and woman, sitting opposite the two nuns, attracted all eyes.

The man—a well-known character—was Cornudet, the democrat, the terror of all respectable people. For the past twenty years his big red beard had been on terms of intimate acquaintance with the tankards of all the republican cafes. With the help of his comrades and brethren he had dissipated a respectable fortune left him by his father, an old-established confectioner, and he now impatiently awaited the Republic, that he might at last be rewarded with the post he had earned by his revolutionary orgies. On the fourth of September—possibly as the result of a practical joke—he was led to believe that he had been appointed prefect; but when he attempted to take up the duties of the position the clerks in charge of the office refused to recognize his authority, and he was compelled in consequence to retire. A good sort of fellow in other respects, inoffensive and obliging, he had thrown himself zealously into the work of making an organized defence of the town. He had had pits dug in the level country, young forest trees felled, and traps set on all the roads; then at the approach of the enemy, thoroughly satisfied with his preparations, he had hastily returned to the town. He thought he might now do more good at Havre, where new intrenchments would soon be necessary.

The woman, who belonged to the courtesan class, was celebrated for an embonpoint unusual for her age, which had earned for her the sobriquet of "Boule de Suif" (Tallow Ball). Short and round, fat as a pig, with puffy fingers constricted at the joints, looking like rows of short sausages; with a shiny, tightly-stretched skin and an enormous bust filling out the bodice of her dress, she was yet attractive and much sought after, owing to her fresh and pleasing appearance. Her face was like a crimson apple, a peony-bud just bursting into bloom; she had two magnificent dark eyes, fringed with thick, heavy lashes, which cast a shadow

into their depths; her mouth was small, ripe, kissable, and was furnished with the tiniest of white teeth.

As soon as she was recognized the respectable matrons of the party began to whisper among themselves, and the words "hussy" and "public scandal" were uttered so loudly that Boule de Suif raised her head. She forthwith cast such a challenging, bold look at her neighbors that a sudden silence fell on the company, and all lowered their eyes, with the exception of Loiseau, who watched her with evident interest.

But conversation was soon resumed among the three ladies, whom the presence of this girl had suddenly drawn together in the bonds of friendship—one might almost say in those of intimacy. They decided that they ought to combine, as it were, in their dignity as wives in face of this shameless hussy; for legitimized love always despises its easygoing brother.

The three men, also, brought together by a certain conservative instinct awakened by the presence of Cornudet, spoke of money matters in a tone expressive of contempt for the poor. Count Hubert related the losses he had sustained at the hands of the Prussians, spoke of the cattle which had been stolen from him, the crops which had been ruined, with the easy manner of a nobleman who was also a tenfold millionaire, and whom such reverses would scarcely inconvenience for a single year. Monsieur Carre-Lamadon, a man of wide experience in the cotton industry, had taken care to send six hundred thousand francs to England as provision against the rainy day he was always anticipating. As for Loiseau, he had managed to sell to the French commissariat department all the wines he had in stock, so that the state now owed him a considerable sum, which he hoped to receive at Havre.

And all three eyed one another in friendly, well-disposed fashion. Although of varying social status, they were united in the brotherhood of money—in that vast freemasonry made up of those who possess, who can jingle gold wherever they choose to put their hands into their breeches' pockets.

The coach went along so slowly that at ten o'clock in the morning it had not covered twelve miles. Three times the men of

the party got out and climbed the hills on foot. The passengers were becoming uneasy, for they had counted on lunching at Totes, and it seemed now as if they would hardly arrive there before nightfall. Every one was eagerly looking out for an inn by the roadside, when, suddenly, the coach foundered in a snowdrift, and it took two hours to extricate it.

As appetites increased, their spirits fell; no inn, no wine shop could be discovered, the approach of the Prussians and the transit of the starving French troops having frightened away all business.

50

The men sought food in the farmhouses beside the road, but could not find so much as a crust of bread; for the suspicious peasant invariably hid his stores for fear of being pillaged by the soldiers, who, being entirely without food, would take violent possession of everything they found.

About one o'clock Loiseau announced that he positively had a big hollow in his stomach. They had all been suffering in the same way for some time, and the increasing gnawings of hunger had put an end to all conversation.

Now and then some one yawned, another followed his example, and each in turn, according to his character, breeding and social position, yawned either quietly or noisily, placing his hand before the gaping void whence issued breath condensed into vapor.

Several times Boule de Suif stooped, as if searching for something under her petticoats. She would hesitate a moment, look at her neighbors, and then quietly sit upright again. All faces were pale and drawn. Loiseau declared he would give a thousand francs for a knuckle of ham. His wife made an involuntary and quickly checked gesture of protest. It always hurt her to hear of money being squandered, and she could not even understand jokes on such a subject.

"As a matter of fact, I don't feel well," said the count. "Why did I not think of bringing provisions?" Each one reproached himself in similar fashion.

55

Cornudet, however, had a bottle of rum, which he offered to his neighbors. They all coldly refused except Loiseau, who took a sip, and returned the bottle with thanks, saying: "That's good

stuff; it warms one up, and cheats the appetite." The alcohol put him in good humor, and he proposed they should do as the sailors did in the song: eat the fattest of the passengers. This indirect allusion to Boule de Suif shocked the respectable members of the party. No one replied; only Cornudet smiled. The two good sisters had ceased to mumble their rosary, and, with hands enfolded in their wide sleeves, sat motionless, their eyes steadfastly cast down, doubtless offering up as a sacrifice to Heaven the suffering it had sent them.

At last, at three o'clock, as they were in the midst of an apparently limitless plain, with not a single village in sight, Boule de Suif stooped quickly, and drew from underneath the seat a large basket covered with a white napkin.

From this she extracted first of all a small earthenware plate and a silver drinking cup, then an enormous dish containing two whole chickens cut into joints and imbedded in jelly. The basket was seen to contain other good things: pies, fruit, dainties of all sorts-provisions, in fine, for a three days' journey, rendering their owner independent of wayside inns. The necks of four bottles protruded from among the food. She took a chicken wing, and began to eat it daintily, together with one of those rolls called in Normandy "Regence."

All looks were directed toward her. An odor of food filled the air, causing nostrils to dilate, mouths to water, and jaws to contract painfully. The scorn of the ladies for this disreputable female grew positively ferocious; they would have liked to kill her, or throw, her and her drinking cup, her basket, and her provisions, out of the coach into the snow of the road below.

But Loiseau's gaze was fixed greedily on the dish of chicken. He said:

60

"Well, well, this lady had more forethought than the rest of us. Some people think of everything."

She looked up at him.

"Would you like some, sir? It is hard to go on fasting all day."

He bowed.

"Upon my soul, I can't refuse; I cannot hold out another minute. All is fair in war time, is it not, madame?" And, casting a

65

glance on those around, he added:

"At times like this it is very pleasant to meet with obliging people."

He spread a newspaper over his knees to avoid soiling his trousers, and, with a pocketknife he always carried, helped himself to a chicken leg coated with jelly, which he thereupon proceeded to devour.

Then Boule le Suif, in low, humble tones, invited the nuns to partake of her repast. They both accepted the offer unhesitatingly, and after a few stammered words of thanks began to eat quickly, without raising their eyes. Neither did Cornudet refuse his neighbor's offer, and, in combination with the nuns, a sort of table was formed by opening out the newspaper over the four pairs of knees.

Mouths kept opening and shutting, ferociously masticating and devouring the food. Loiseau, in his corner, was hard at work, and in low tones urged his wife to follow his example. She held out for a long time, but overstrained Nature gave way at last. Her husband, assuming his politest manner, asked their "charming companion" if he might be allowed to offer Madame Loiseau a small helping.

"Why, certainly, sir," she replied, with an amiable smile, holding out the dish.

70

When the first bottle of claret was opened some embarrassment was caused by the fact that there was only one drinking cup, but this was passed from one to another, after being wiped. Cornudet alone, doubtless in a spirit of gallantry, raised to his own lips that part of the rim which was still moist from those of his fair neighbor.

Then, surrounded by people who were eating, and well-nigh suffocated by the odor of food, the Comte and Comtesse de Breville and Monsieur and Madame Carre-Lamadon endured that hateful form of torture which has perpetuated the name of Tantalus. All at once the manufacturer's young wife heaved a sigh which made every one turn and look at her; she was white as the snow without; her eyes closed, her head fell forward; she had fainted. Her husband, beside himself, implored the help of his

neighbors. No one seemed to know what to do until the elder of the two nuns, raising the patient's head, placed Boule de Suif's drinking cup to her lips, and made her swallow a few drops of wine. The pretty invalid moved, opened her eyes, smiled, and declared in a feeble voice that she was all right again. But, to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophe, the nun made her drink a cupful of claret, adding: "It's just hunger—that's what is wrong with you."

Then Boule de Suif, blushing and embarrassed, stammered, looking at the four passengers who were still fasting:

"'Mon Dieu', if I might offer these ladies and gentlemen—"

She stopped short, fearing a snub. But Loiseau continued:

75

"Hang it all, in such a case as this we are all brothers and sisters and ought to assist each other. Come, come, ladies, don't stand on ceremony, for goodness' sake! Do we even know whether we shall find a house in which to pass the night? At our present rate of going we sha'n't be at Totes till midday tomorrow."

They hesitated, no one daring to be the first to accept. But the count settled the question. He turned toward the abashed girl, and in his most distinguished manner said:

"We accept gratefully, madame."

As usual, it was only the first step that cost. This Rubicon once crossed, they set to work with a will. The basket was emptied. It still contained a pate de foie gras, a lark pie, a piece of smoked tongue, Crassane pears, Pont-Leveque gingerbread, fancy cakes, and a cup full of pickled gherkins and onions—Boule de Suif, like all women, being very fond of indigestible things.

They could not eat this girl's provisions without speaking to her. So they began to talk, stiffly at first; then, as she seemed by no means forward, with greater freedom. Mesdames de Breville and Carre-Lamadon, who were accomplished women of the world, were gracious and tactful. The countess especially displayed that amiable condescension characteristic of great ladies whom no contact with baser mortals can sully, and was absolutely charming. But the sturdy Madame Loiseau, who had

80

the soul of a gendarme, continued morose, speaking little and eating much.

Conversation naturally turned on the war. Terrible stories were told about the Prussians, deeds of bravery were recounted of the French; and all these people who were fleeing themselves were ready to pay homage to the courage of their compatriots. Personal experiences soon followed, and Boule de Suif related with genuine emotion, and with that warmth of language not uncommon in women of her class and temperament, how it came about that she had left Rouen.

"I thought at first that I should be able to stay," she said. "My house was well stocked with provisions, and it seemed better to put up with feeding a few soldiers than to banish myself goodness knows where. But when I saw these Prussians it was too much for me! My blood boiled with rage; I wept the whole day for very shame. Oh, if only I had been a man! I looked at them from my window—the fat swine, with their pointed helmets!—and my maid held my hands to keep me from throwing my furniture down on them. Then some of them were quartered on me; I flew at the throat of the first one who entered. They are just as easy to strangle as other men! And I'd have been the death of that one if I hadn't been dragged away from him by my hair. I had to hide after that. And as soon as I could get an opportunity I left the place, and here I am."

She was warmly congratulated. She rose in the estimation of her companions, who had not been so brave; and Cornudet listened to her with the approving and benevolent smile of an apostle, the smile a priest might wear in listening to a devotee praising God; for long-bearded democrats of his type have a monopoly of patriotism, just as priests have a monopoly of religion. He held forth in turn, with dogmatic self-assurance, in the style of the proclamations daily pasted on the walls of the town, winding up with a specimen of stump oratory in which he reviled "that besotted fool of a Louis-Napoleon."

But Boule de Suif was indignant, for she was an ardent Bonapartist. She turned as red as a cherry, and stammered in her wrath: "I'd just like to have seen you in his place—you and your

sort! There would have been a nice mix-up. Oh, yes! It was you who betrayed that man. It would be impossible to live in France if we were governed by such rascals as you!"

Cornudet, unmoved by this tirade, still smiled a superior, contemptuous smile; and one felt that high words were impending, when the count interposed, and, not without difficulty, succeeded in calming the exasperated woman, saying that all sincere opinions ought to be respected. But the countess and the manufacturer's wife, imbued with the unreasoning hatred of the upper classes for the Republic, and instinct, moreover, with the affection felt by all women for the pomp and circumstance of despotic government, were drawn, in spite of themselves, toward this dignified young woman, whose opinions coincided so closely with their own.

85

The basket was empty. The ten people had finished its contents without difficulty amid general regret that it did not hold more. Conversation went on a little longer, though it flagged somewhat after the passengers had finished eating.

Night fell, the darkness grew deeper and deeper, and the cold made Boule de Suif shiver, in spite of her plumpness. So Madame de Breville offered her her foot-warmer, the fuel of which had been several times renewed since the morning, and she accepted the offer at once, for her feet were icy cold. Mesdames Carre-Lamadon and Loiseau gave theirs to the nuns.

The driver lighted his lanterns. They cast a bright gleam on a cloud of vapor which hovered over the sweating flanks of the horses, and on the roadside snow, which seemed to unroll as they went along in the changing light of the lamps.

All was now indistinguishable in the coach; but suddenly a movement occurred in the corner occupied by Boule de Suif and Cornudet; and Loiseau, peering into the gloom, fancied he saw the big, bearded democrat move hastily to one side, as if he had received a well-directed, though noiseless, blow in the dark.

Tiny lights glimmered ahead. It was Totes. The coach had been on the road eleven hours, which, with the three hours allotted the horses in four periods for feeding and breathing, made fourteen. It entered the town, and stopped before the Hotel du Commerce.

90

The coach door opened; a well-known noise made all the travellers start; it was the clanging of a scabbard, on the pavement; then a voice called out something in German.

Although the coach had come to a standstill, no one got out; it looked as if they were afraid of being murdered the moment they left their seats. Thereupon the driver appeared, holding in his hand one of his lanterns, which cast a sudden glow on the interior of the coach, lighting up the double row of startled faces, mouths agape, and eyes wide open in surprise and terror.

Beside the driver stood in the full light a German officer, a tall young man, fair and slender, tightly encased in his uniform like a woman in her corset, his flat shiny cap, tilted to one side of his head, making him look like an English hotel runner. His exaggerated mustache, long and straight and tapering to a point at either end in a single blond hair that could hardly be seen, seemed to weigh down the corners of his mouth and give a droop to his lips.

In Alsatian French he requested the travellers to alight, saying stiffly:

"Kindly get down, ladies and gentlemen."

95

The two nuns were the first to obey, manifesting the docility of holy women accustomed to submission on every occasion. Next appeared the count and countess, followed by the manufacturer and his wife, after whom came Loiseau, pushing his larger and better half before him.

"Good-day, sir," he said to the officer as he put his foot to the ground, acting on an impulse born of prudence rather than of politeness. The other, insolent like all in authority, merely stared without replying.

Boule de Suif and Cornudet, though near the door, were the last to alight, grave and dignified before the enemy. The stout girl tried to control herself and appear calm; the democrat stroked his long russet beard with a somewhat trembling hand. Both strove to maintain their dignity, knowing well that at such a time each individual is always looked upon as more or less typical of his nation; and, also, resenting the complaisant attitude of their companions, Boule de Suif tried to wear a bolder front than her

neighbors, the virtuous women, while he, feeling that it was incumbent on him to set a good example, kept up the attitude of resistance which he had first assumed when he undertook to mine the high roads round Rouen.

They entered the spacious kitchen of the inn, and the German, having demanded the passports signed by the general in command, in which were mentioned the name, description and profession of each traveller, inspected them all minutely, comparing their appearance with the written particulars.

Then he said brusquely: "All right," and turned on his heel.

100

They breathed freely, All were still hungry; so supper was ordered. Half an hour was required for its preparation, and while two servants were apparently engaged in getting it ready the travellers went to look at their rooms. These all opened off a long corridor, at the end of which was a glazed door with a number on it.

They were just about to take their seats at table when the innkeeper appeared in person. He was a former horse dealer—a large, asthmatic individual, always wheezing, coughing, and clearing his throat. Follenvie was his patronymic.

He called:

"Mademoiselle Elisabeth Rousset?"

Boule de Suif started, and turned round.

105

"That is my name."

"Mademoiselle, the Prussian officer wishes to speak to you immediately."

"To me?"

"Yes; if you are Mademoiselle Elisabeth Rousset."

She hesitated, reflected a moment, and then declared roundly:

110

"That may be; but I'm not going."

They moved restlessly around her; every one wondered and speculated as to the cause of this order. The count approached:

"You are wrong, madame, for your refusal may bring trouble not only on yourself but also on all your companions. It never pays to resist those in authority. Your compliance with this request cannot possibly be fraught with any danger; it has

probably been made because some formality or other was forgotten."

All added their voices to that of the count; Boule de Suif was begged, urged, lectured, and at last convinced; every one was afraid of the complications which might result from headstrong action on her part. She said finally:

"I am doing it for your sakes, remember that!"

115

The countess took her hand.

"And we are grateful to you."

She left the room. All waited for her return before commencing the meal. Each was distressed that he or she had not been sent for rather than this impulsive, quick-tempered girl, and each mentally rehearsed platitudes in case of being summoned also.

But at the end of ten minutes she reappeared breathing hard, crimson with indignation.

"Oh! the scoundrel! the scoundrel!" she stammered.

120

All were anxious to know what had happened; but she declined to enlighten them, and when the count pressed the point, she silenced him with much dignity, saying:

"No; the matter has nothing to do with you, and I cannot speak of it."

Then they took their places round a high soup tureen, from which issued an odor of cabbage. In spite of this coincidence, the supper was cheerful. The cider was good; the Loiseaus and the nuns drank it from motives of economy. The others ordered wine; Cornudet demanded beer. He had his own fashion of uncorking the bottle and making the beer foam, gazing at it as he inclined his glass and then raised it to a position between the lamp and his eye that he might judge of its color. When he drank, his great beard, which matched the color of his favorite beverage, seemed to tremble with affection; his eyes positively squinted in the endeavor not to lose sight of the beloved glass, and he looked for all the world as if he were fulfilling the only function for which he was born. He seemed to have established in his mind an affinity between the two great passions of his life—pale ale and

revolution—and assuredly he could not taste the one without dreaming of the other.

Monsieur and Madame Follenvie dined at the end of the table. The man, wheezing like a broken-down locomotive, was too short-winded to talk when he was eating. But the wife was not silent a moment; she told how the Prussians had impressed her on their arrival, what they did, what they said; execrating them in the first place because they cost her money, and in the second because she had two sons in the army. She addressed herself principally to the countess, flattered at the opportunity of talking to a lady of quality.

Then she lowered her voice, and began to broach delicate subjects. Her husband interrupted her from time to time, saying:

125

"You would do well to hold your tongue, Madame Follenvie."

But she took no notice of him, and went on:

"Yes, madame, these Germans do nothing but eat potatoes and pork, and then pork and potatoes. And don't imagine for a moment that they are clean! No, indeed! And if only you saw them drilling for hours, indeed for days, together; they all collect in a field, then they do nothing but march backward and forward, and wheel this way and that. If only they would cultivate the land, or remain at home and work on their high roads! Really, madame, these soldiers are of no earthly use! Poor people have to feed and keep them, only in order that they may learn how to kill! True, I am only an old woman with no education, but when I see them wearing themselves out marching about from morning till night, I say to myself: When there are people who make discoveries that are of use to people, why should others take so much trouble to do harm? Really, now, isn't it a terrible thing to kill people, whether they are Prussians, or English, or Poles, or French? If we revenge ourselves on any one who injures us we do wrong, and are punished for it; but when our sons are shot down like partridges, that is all right, and decorations are given to the man who kills the most. No, indeed, I shall never be able to understand it."

Cornudet raised his voice:

"War is a barbarous proceeding when we attack a peaceful neighbor, but it is a sacred duty when undertaken in defence of one's country." 130

The old woman looked down:

"Yes; it's another matter when one acts in self-defence; but would it not be better to kill all the kings, seeing that they make war just to amuse themselves?"

Cornudet's eyes kindled.

"Bravo, citizens!" he said.

Monsieur Carre-Lamadon was reflecting profoundly. Although an ardent admirer of great generals, the peasant woman's sturdy common sense made him reflect on the wealth which might accrue to a country by the employment of so many idle hands now maintained at a great expense, of so much unproductive force, if they were employed in those great industrial enterprises which it will take centuries to complete. 135

But Loiseau, leaving his seat, went over to the innkeeper and began chatting in a low voice. The big man chuckled, coughed, sputtered; his enormous carcass shook with merriment at the pleasantries of the other; and he ended by buying six casks of claret from Loiseau to be delivered in spring, after the departure of the Prussians.

The moment supper was over every one went to bed, worn out with fatigue.

But Loiseau, who had been making his observations on the sly, sent his wife to bed, and amused himself by placing first his ear, and then his eye, to the bedroom keyhole, in order to discover what he called "the mysteries of the corridor."

At the end of about an hour he heard a rustling, peeped out quickly, and caught sight of Boule de Suif, looking more rotund than ever in a dressing-gown of blue cashmere trimmed with white lace. She held a candle in her hand, and directed her steps to the numbered door at the end of the corridor. But one of the side doors was partly opened, and when, at the end of a few minutes, she returned, Cornudet, in his shirt-sleeves, followed her. They spoke in low tones, then stopped short. Boule de Suif seemed to be stoutly denying him admission to her room.

Unfortunately, Loiseau could not at first hear what they said; but toward the end of the conversation they raised their voices, and he caught a few words. Cornudet was loudly insistent.

"How silly you are! What does it matter to you?" he said.

140

She seemed indignant, and replied:

"No, my good man, there are times when one does not do that sort of thing; besides, in this place it would be shameful."

Apparently he did not understand, and asked the reason. Then she lost her temper and her caution, and, raising her voice still higher, said:

"Why? Can't you understand why? When there are Prussians in the house! Perhaps even in the very next room!"

He was silent. The patriotic shame of this wanton, who would not suffer herself to be caressed in the neighborhood of the enemy, must have roused his dormant dignity, for after bestowing on her a simple kiss he crept softly back to his room. Loiseau, much edified, capered round the bedroom before taking his place beside his slumbering spouse.

145

Then silence reigned throughout the house. But soon there arose from some remote part—it might easily have been either cellar or attic—a stertorous, monotonous, regular snoring, a dull, prolonged rumbling, varied by tremors like those of a boiler under pressure of steam. Monsieur Follenvie had gone to sleep.

As they had decided on starting at eight o'clock the next morning, every one was in the kitchen at that hour; but the coach, its roof covered with snow, stood by itself in the middle of the yard, without either horses or driver. They sought the latter in the stables, coach-houses and barns—but in vain. So the men of the party resolved to scour the country for him, and sallied forth. They found them selves in the square, with the church at the farther side, and to right and left low-roofed houses where there were some Prussian soldiers. The first soldier they saw was peeling potatoes. The second, farther on, was washing out a barber's shop. An other, bearded to the eyes, was fondling a crying infant, and dandling it on his knees to quiet it; and the stout peasant women, whose men-folk were for the most part at the war, were, by means of signs, telling their obedient

conquerors what work they were to do: chop wood, prepare soup, grind coffee; one of them even was doing the washing for his hostess, an infirm old grandmother.

The count, astonished at what he saw, questioned the beadle who was coming out of the presbytery. The old man answered:

"Oh, those men are not at all a bad sort; they are not Prussians, I am told; they come from somewhere farther off, I don't exactly know where. And they have all left wives and children behind them; they are not fond of war either, you may be sure! I am sure they are mourning for the men where they come from, just as we do here; and the war causes them just as much unhappiness as it does us. As a matter of fact, things are not so very bad here just now, because the soldiers do no harm, and work just as if they were in their own homes. You see, sir, poor folk always help one another; it is the great ones of this world who make war."

Cornudet indignant at the friendly understanding established between conquerors and conquered, withdrew, preferring to shut himself up in the inn.

150

"They are repeopling the country," jested Loiseau.

"They are undoing the harm they have done," said Monsieur Carre-Lamadon gravely.

But they could not find the coach driver. At last he was discovered in the village cafe, fraternizing cordially with the officer's orderly.

"Were you not told to harness the horses at eight o'clock?" demanded the count.

"Oh, yes; but I've had different orders since."

155

"What orders?"

"Not to harness at all."

"Who gave you such orders?"

"Why, the Prussian officer."

"But why?"

160

"I don't know. Go and ask him. I am forbidden to harness the horses, so I don't harness them—that's all."

"Did he tell you so himself?"

"No, sir; the innkeeper gave me the order from him."

"When?"

"Last evening, just as I was going to bed."

165

The three men returned in a very uneasy frame of mind.

They asked for Monsieur Follenvie, but the servant replied that on account of his asthma he never got up before ten o'clock. They were strictly forbidden to rouse him earlier, except in case of fire.

They wished to see the officer, but that also was impossible, although he lodged in the inn. Monsieur Follenvie alone was authorized to interview him on civil matters. So they waited. The women returned to their rooms, and occupied themselves with trivial matters.

Cornudet settled down beside the tall kitchen fireplace, before a blazing fire. He had a small table and a jug of beer placed beside him, and he smoked his pipe—a pipe which enjoyed among democrats a consideration almost equal to his own, as though it had served its country in serving Cornudet. It was a fine meerschaum, admirably colored to a black the shade of its owner's teeth, but sweet-smelling, gracefully curved, at home in its master's hand, and completing his physiognomy. And Cornudet sat motionless, his eyes fixed now on the dancing flames, now on the froth which crowned his beer; and after each draught he passed his long, thin fingers with an air of satisfaction through his long, greasy hair, as he sucked the foam from his mustache.

Loiseau, under pretence of stretching his legs, went out to see if he could sell wine to the country dealers. The count and the manufacturer began to talk politics. They forecast the future of France. One believed in the Orleans dynasty, the other in an unknown savior—a hero who should rise up in the last extremity: a Du Guesclin, perhaps a Joan of Arc? or another Napoleon the First? Ah! if only the Prince Imperial were not so young! Cornudet, listening to them, smiled like a man who holds the keys of destiny in his hands. His pipe perfumed the whole kitchen.

170

As the clock struck ten, Monsieur Follenvie appeared. He was immediately surrounded and questioned, but could only repeat, three or four times in succession, and without variation, the words:

"The officer said to me, just like this: 'Monsieur Follenvie, you will forbid them to harness up the coach for those travellers tomorrow. They are not to start without an order from me. You hear? That is sufficient.'"

Then they asked to see the officer. The count sent him his card, on which Monsieur Carre-Lamadon also inscribed his name and titles. The Prussian sent word that the two men would be admitted to see him after his luncheon—that is to say, about one o'clock.

The ladies reappeared, and they all ate a little, in spite of their anxiety. Boule de Suif appeared ill and very much worried.

They were finishing their coffee when the orderly came to fetch the gentlemen.

175

Loiseau joined the other two; but when they tried to get Cornudet to accompany them, by way of adding greater solemnity to the occasion, he declared proudly that he would never have anything to do with the Germans, and, resuming his seat in the chimney corner, he called for another jug of beer.

The three men went upstairs, and were ushered into the best room in the inn, where the officer received them lolling at his ease in an armchair, his feet on the mantelpiece, smoking a long porcelain pipe, and enveloped in a gorgeous dressing-gown, doubtless stolen from the deserted dwelling of some citizen destitute of taste in dress. He neither rose, greeted them, nor even glanced in their direction. He afforded a fine example of that insolence of bearing which seems natural to the victorious soldier.

After the lapse of a few moments he said in his halting French:

"What do you want?"

"We wish to start on our journey," said the count.

180

"No."

"May I ask the reason of your refusal?"

"Because I don't choose."

"I would respectfully call your attention, monsieur, to the fact that your general in command gave us a permit to proceed to Dieppe; and I do not think we have done anything to deserve this harshness at your hands."

"I don't choose—that's all. You may go."

185

They bowed, and retired.

The afternoon was wretched. They could not understand the caprice of this German, and the strangest ideas came into their heads. They all congregated in the kitchen, and talked the subject to death, imagining all kinds of unlikely things. Perhaps they were to be kept as hostages—but for what reason? or to be extradited as prisoners of war? or possibly they were to be held for ransom? They were panic-stricken at this last supposition. The richest among them were the most alarmed, seeing themselves forced to empty bags of gold into the insolent soldier's hands in order to buy back their lives. They racked their brains for plausible lies whereby they might conceal the fact that they were rich, and pass themselves off as poor—very poor. Loiseau took off his watch chain, and put it in his pocket. The approach of night increased their apprehension. The lamp was lighted, and as it wanted yet two hours to dinner Madame Loiseau proposed a game of trente et un. It would distract their thoughts. The rest agreed, and Cornudet himself joined the party, first putting out his pipe for politeness' sake.

The count shuffled the cards—dealt—and Boule de Suif had thirty-one to start with; soon the interest of the game assuaged the anxiety of the players. But Cornudet noticed that Loiseau and his wife were in league to cheat.

They were about to sit down to dinner when Monsieur Follenvie appeared, and in his grating voice announced:

"The Prussian officer sends to ask Mademoiselle Elisabeth Rousset if she has changed her mind yet."

190

Boule de Suif stood still, pale as death. Then, suddenly turning crimson with anger, she gasped out:

"Kindly tell that scoundrel, that cur, that carrion of a Prussian, that I will never consent—you understand?—never, never, never!"

The fat innkeeper left the room. Then Boule de Suif was surrounded, questioned, entreated on all sides to reveal the mystery of her visit to the officer. She refused at first; but her wrath soon got the better of her.

"What does he want? He wants to make me his mistress!" she cried.

No one was shocked at the word, so great was the general indignation. Cornudet broke his jug as he banged it down on the table. A loud outcry arose against this base soldier. All were furious. They drew together in common resistance against the foe, as if some part of the sacrifice exacted of Boule de Suif had been demanded of each. The count declared, with supreme disgust, that those people behaved like ancient barbarians. The women, above all, manifested a lively and tender sympathy for Boule de Suif. The nuns, who appeared only at meals, cast down their eyes, and said nothing.

They dined, however, as soon as the first indignant outburst had subsided; but they spoke little and thought much.

The ladies went to bed early; and the men, having lighted their pipes, proposed a game of *ecarte*, in which Monsieur Follenvie was invited to join, the travellers hoping to question him skillfully as to the best means of vanquishing the officer's obduracy. But he thought of nothing but his cards, would listen to nothing, reply to nothing, and repeated, time after time: "Attend to the game, gentlemen! attend to the game!" So absorbed was his attention that he even forgot to expectorate. The consequence was that his chest gave forth rumbling sounds like those of an organ. His wheezing lungs struck every note of the asthmatic scale, from deep, hollow tones to a shrill, hoarse piping resembling that of a young cock trying to crow.

He refused to go to bed when his wife, overcome with sleep, came to fetch him. So she went off alone, for she was an early bird, always up with the sun; while he was addicted to late hours, ever ready to spend the night with friends. He merely said: "Put my egg-nogg by the fire," and went on with the game. When the other men saw that nothing was to be got out of him they declared it was time to retire, and each sought his bed.

They rose fairly early the next morning, with a vague hope of being allowed to start, a greater desire than ever to do so, and a terror at having to spend another day in this wretched little inn.

Alas! the horses remained in the stable, the driver was invisible. They spent their time, for want of something better to do, in wandering round the coach.

Luncheon was a gloomy affair; and there was a general coolness toward Boule de Suif, for night, which brings counsel, had somewhat modified the judgment of her companions. In the cold light of the morning they almost bore a grudge against the girl for not having secretly sought out the Prussian, that the rest of the party might receive a joyful surprise when they awoke. What more simple?

Besides, who would have been the wiser? She might have saved appearances by telling the officer that she had taken pity on their distress. Such a step would be of so little consequence to her.

But no one as yet confessed to such thoughts.

In the afternoon, seeing that they were all bored to death, the count proposed a walk in the neighborhood of the village. Each one wrapped himself up well, and the little party set out, leaving behind only Cornudet, who preferred to sit over the fire, and the two nuns, who were in the habit of spending their day in the church or at the presbytery.

The cold, which grew more intense each day, almost froze the noses and ears of the pedestrians, their feet began to pain them so that each step was a penance, and when they reached the open country it looked so mournful and depressing in its limitless mantle of white that they all hastily retraced their steps, with bodies benumbed and hearts heavy.

The four women walked in front, and the three men followed a little in their rear.

Loiseau, who saw perfectly well how matters stood, asked suddenly "if that trollop were going to keep them waiting much longer in this Godforsaken spot." The count, always courteous, replied that they could not exact so painful a sacrifice from any woman, and that the first move must come from herself. Monsieur Carre-Lamadon remarked that if the French, as they talked of doing, made a counter attack by way of Dieppe, their encounter with the enemy must inevitably take place at Totes. This reflection made the other two anxious.

"Supposing we escape on foot?" said Loiseau.

The count shrugged his shoulders.

"How can you think of such a thing, in this snow? And with our wives? Besides, we should be pursued at once, overtaken in ten minutes, and brought back as prisoners at the mercy of the soldiery."

210

This was true enough; they were silent.

The ladies talked of dress, but a certain constraint seemed to prevail among them.

Suddenly, at the end of the street, the officer appeared. His tall, wasp-like, uniformed figure was outlined against the snow which bounded the horizon, and he walked, knees apart, with that motion peculiar to soldiers, who are always anxious not to soil their carefully polished boots.

He bowed as he passed the ladies, then glanced scornfully at the men, who had sufficient dignity not to raise their hats, though Loiseau made a movement to do so.

Boule de Suif flushed crimson to the ears, and the three married women felt unutterably humiliated at being met thus by the soldier in company with the girl whom he had treated with such scant ceremony.

215

Then they began to talk about him, his figure, and his face. Madame Carre-Lamadon, who had known many officers and judged them as a connoisseur, thought him not at all bad-looking; she even regretted that he was not a Frenchman, because in that case he would have made a very handsome hussar, with whom all the women would assuredly have fallen in love.

When they were once more within doors they did not know what to do with themselves. Sharp words even were exchanged apropos of the merest trifles. The silent dinner was quickly over, and each one went to bed early in the hope of sleeping, and thus killing time.

They came down next morning with tired faces and irritable tempers; the women scarcely spoke to Boule de Suif.

A church bell summoned the faithful to a baptism. Boule de Suif had a child being brought up by peasants at Yvetot. She did not see him once a year, and never thought of him; but the idea of the child who was about to be baptized induced a sudden wave of

tenderness for her own, and she insisted on being present at the ceremony.

As soon as she had gone out, the rest of the company looked at one another and then drew their chairs together; for they realized that they must decide on some course of action. Loiseau had an inspiration: he proposed that they should ask the officer to detain Boule de Suif only, and to let the rest depart on their way.

220

Monsieur Follenvie was intrusted with this commission, but he returned to them almost immediately. The German, who knew human nature, had shown him the door. He intended to keep all the travellers until his condition had been complied with.

Whereupon Madame Loiseau's vulgar temperament broke bounds.

"We're not going to die of old age here!" she cried. "Since it's that vixen's trade to behave so with men I don't see that she has any right to refuse one more than another. I may as well tell you she took any lovers she could get at Rouen—even coachmen! Yes, indeed, madame—the coachman at the prefecture! I know it for a fact, for he buys his wine of us. And now that it is a question of getting us out of a difficulty she puts on virtuous airs, the drab! For my part, I think this officer has behaved very well. Why, there were three others of us, any one of whom he would undoubtedly have preferred. But no, he contents himself with the girl who is common property. He respects married women. Just think. He is master here. He had only to say: 'I wish it!' and he might have taken us by force, with the help of his soldiers."

The two other women shuddered; the eyes of pretty Madame Carre-Lamadon glistened, and she grew pale, as if the officer were indeed in the act of laying violent hands on her.

The men, who had been discussing the subject among themselves, drew near. Loiseau, in a state of furious resentment, was for delivering up "that miserable woman," bound hand and foot, into the enemy's power. But the count, descended from three generations of ambassadors, and endowed, moreover, with the lineaments of a diplomat, was in favor of more tactful measures.

225

"We must persuade her," he said.

Then they laid their plans.

The women drew together; they lowered their voices, and the discussion became general, each giving his or her opinion. But the conversation was not in the least coarse. The ladies, in particular, were adepts at delicate phrases and charming subtleties of expression to describe the most improper things. A stranger would have understood none of their allusions, so guarded was the language they employed. But, seeing that the thin veneer of modesty with which every woman of the world is furnished goes but a very little way below the surface, they began rather to enjoy this unedifying episode, and at bottom were hugely delighted—feeling themselves in their element, furthering the schemes of lawless love with the gusto of a gourmand cook who prepares supper for another.

Their gaiety returned of itself, so amusing at last did the whole business seem to them. The count uttered several rather risky witticisms, but so tactfully were they said that his audience could not help smiling. Loiseau in turn made some considerably broader jokes, but no one took offence; and the thought expressed with such brutal directness by his wife was uppermost in the minds of all: "Since it's the girl's trade, why should she refuse this man more than another?" Dainty Madame Carre-Lamadon seemed to think even that in Boule de Suif's place she would be less inclined to refuse him than another.

The blockade was as carefully arranged as if they were investing a fortress. Each agreed on the role which he or she was to play, the arguments to be used, the maneuvers to be executed. They decided on the plan of campaign, the stratagems they were to employ, and the surprise attacks which were to reduce this human citadel and force it to receive the enemy within its walls.

But Cornudet remained apart from the rest, taking no share in the plot.

So absorbed was the attention of all that Boule de Suif's entrance was almost unnoticed. But the count whispered a gentle "Hush!" which made the others look up. She was there. They suddenly stopped talking, and a vague embarrassment prevented them for a few moments from addressing her. But the countess,

more practiced than the others in the wiles of the drawing-room, asked her:

"Was the baptism interesting?"

The girl, still under the stress of emotion, told what she had seen and heard, described the faces, the attitudes of those present, and even the appearance of the church. She concluded with the words:

"It does one good to pray sometimes."

235

Until lunch time the ladies contented themselves with being pleasant to her, so as to increase her confidence and make her amenable to their advice.

As soon as they took their seats at table the attack began. First they opened a vague conversation on the subject of self-sacrifice. Ancient examples were quoted: Judith and Holofernes; then, irrationally enough, Lucrece and Sextus; Cleopatra and the hostile generals whom she reduced to abject slavery by a surrender of her charms. Next was recounted an extraordinary story, born of the imagination of these ignorant millionaires, which told how the matrons of Rome seduced Hannibal, his lieutenants, and all his mercenaries at Capua. They held up to admiration all those women who from time to time have arrested the victorious progress of conquerors, made of their bodies a field of battle, a means of ruling, a weapon; who have vanquished by their heroic caresses hideous or detested beings, and sacrificed their chastity to vengeance and devotion.

All was said with due restraint and regard for propriety, the effect heightened now and then by an outburst of forced enthusiasm calculated to excite emulation.

A listener would have thought at last that the one role of woman on earth was a perpetual sacrifice of her person, a continual abandonment of herself to the caprices of a hostile soldiery.

The two nuns seemed to hear nothing, and to be lost in thought. Boule de Suif also was silent.

240

During the whole afternoon she was left to her reflections. But instead of calling her "madame" as they had done hitherto, her companions addressed her simply as "mademoiselle," without

exactly knowing why, but as if desirous of making her descend a step in the esteem she had won, and forcing her to realize her degraded position.

Just as soup was served, Monsieur Follenvie reappeared, repeating his phrase of the evening before:

"The Prussian officer sends to ask if Mademoiselle Elisabeth Rousset has changed her mind."

Boule de Suif answered briefly:

"No, monsieur."

245

But at dinner the coalition weakened. Loiseau made three unfortunate remarks. Each was cudgeling his brains for further examples of self-sacrifice, and could find none, when the countess, possibly without ulterior motive, and moved simply by a vague desire to do homage to religion, began to question the elder of the two nuns on the most striking facts in the lives of the saints. Now, it fell out that many of these had committed acts which would be crimes in our eyes, but the Church readily pardons such deeds when they are accomplished for the glory of God or the good of mankind. This was a powerful argument, and the countess made the most of it. Then, whether by reason of a tacit understanding, a thinly veiled act of complaisance such as those who wear the ecclesiastical habit excel in, or whether merely as the result of sheer stupidity—a stupidity admirably adapted to further their designs—the old nun rendered formidable aid to the conspirator. They had thought her timid; she proved herself bold, talkative, bigoted. She was not troubled by the ins and outs of casuistry; her doctrines were as iron bars; her faith knew no doubt; her conscience no scruples. She looked on Abraham's sacrifice as natural enough, for she herself would not have hesitated to kill both father and mother if she had received a divine order to that effect; and nothing, in her opinion, could displease our Lord, provided the motive were praiseworthy. The countess, putting to good use the consecrated authority of her unexpected ally, led her on to make a lengthy and edifying paraphrase of that axiom enunciated by a certain school of moralists: "The end justifies the means."

"Then, sister," she asked, "you think God accepts all methods, and pardons the act when the motive is pure?"

"Undoubtedly, madame. An action reprehensible in itself often derives merit from the thought which inspires it."

And in this wise they talked on, fathoming the wishes of God, predicting His judgments, describing Him as interested in matters which assuredly concern Him but little.

All was said with the utmost care and discretion, but every word uttered by the holy woman in her nun's garb weakened the indignant resistance of the courtesan. Then the conversation drifted somewhat, and the nun began to talk of the convents of her order, of her Superior, of herself, and of her fragile little neighbor, Sister St. Nicephore. They had been sent for from Havre to nurse the hundreds of soldiers who were in hospitals, stricken with smallpox. She described these wretched invalids and their malady. And, while they themselves were detained on their way by the caprices of the Prussian officer, scores of Frenchmen might be dying, whom they would otherwise have saved! For the nursing of soldiers was the old nun's specialty; she had been in the Crimea, in Italy, in Austria; and as she told the story of her campaigns she revealed herself as one of those holy sisters of the fife and drum who seem designed by nature to follow camps, to snatch the wounded from amid the strife of battle, and to quell with a word, more effectually than any general, the rough and insubordinate troopers—a masterful woman, her seamed and pitted face itself an image of the devastations of war.

No one spoke when she had finished for fear of spoiling the excellent effect of her words.

As soon as the meal was over the travellers retired to their rooms, whence they emerged the following day at a late hour of the morning.

Luncheon passed off quietly. The seed sown the preceding evening was being given time to germinate and bring forth fruit.

In the afternoon the countess proposed a walk; then the count, as had been arranged beforehand, took Boule de Suif's arm, and walked with her at some distance behind the rest.

He began talking to her in that familiar, paternal, slightly contemptuous tone which men of his class adopt in speaking to women like her, calling her "my dear child," and talking down to her from the height of his exalted social position and stainless reputation. He came straight to the point.

255

"So you prefer to leave us here, exposed like yourself to all the violence which would follow on a repulse of the Prussian troops, rather than consent to surrender yourself, as you have done so many times in your life?"

The girl did not reply.

He tried kindness, argument, sentiment. He still bore himself as count, even while adopting, when desirable, an attitude of gallantry, and making pretty—nay, even tender—speeches. He exalted the service she would render them, spoke of their gratitude; then, suddenly, using the familiar "thou":

"And you know, my dear, he could boast then of having made a conquest of a pretty girl such as he won't often find in his own country."

Boule de Suif did not answer, and joined the rest of the party.

260

As soon as they returned she went to her room, and was seen no more. The general anxiety was at its height. What would she do? If she still resisted, how awkward for them all!

The dinner hour struck; they waited for her in vain. At last Monsieur Follenvie entered, announcing that Mademoiselle Rousset was not well, and that they might sit down to table. They all pricked up their ears. The count drew near the innkeeper, and whispered:

"Is it all right?"

"Yes."

Out of regard for propriety he said nothing to his companions, but merely nodded slightly toward them. A great sigh of relief went up from all breasts; every face was lighted up with joy.

265

"By Gad!" shouted Loiseau, "I'll stand champagne all round if there's any to be found in this place." And great was Madame Loiseau's dismay when the proprietor came back with four bottles in his hands. They had all suddenly become talkative and merry; a lively joy filled all hearts. The count seemed to perceive for the

first time that Madame Carre-Lamadon was charming; the manufacturer paid compliments to the countess. The conversation was animated, sprightly, witty, and, although many of the jokes were in the worst possible taste, all the company were amused by them, and none offended—indignation being dependent, like other emotions, on surroundings. And the mental atmosphere had gradually become filled with gross imaginings and unclean thoughts.

At dessert even the women indulged in discreetly worded allusions. Their glances were full of meaning; they had drunk much. The count, who even in his moments of relaxation preserved a dignified demeanor, hit on a much-appreciated comparison of the condition of things with the termination of a winter spent in the icy solitude of the North Pole and the joy of shipwrecked mariners who at last perceive a southward track opening out before their eyes.

Loiseau, fairly in his element, rose to his feet, holding aloft a glass of champagne.

"I drink to our deliverance!" he shouted.

All stood up, and greeted the toast with acclamation. Even the two good sisters yielded to the solicitations of the ladies, and consented to moisten their lips with the foaming wine, which they had never before tasted. They declared it was like effervescent lemonade, but with a pleasanter flavor.

"It is a pity," said Loiseau, "that we have no piano; we might have had a quadrille."

Cornudet had not spoken a word or made a movement; he seemed plunged in serious thought, and now and then tugged furiously at his great beard, as if trying to add still further to its length. At last, toward midnight, when they were about to separate, Loiseau, whose gait was far from steady, suddenly slapped him on the back, saying thickly:

"You're not jolly to-night; why are you so silent, old man?"

Cornudet threw back his head, cast one swift and scornful glance over the assemblage, and answered:

"I tell you all, you have done an infamous thing!"

270

275

He rose, reached the door, and repeating: "Infamous!" disappeared.

A chill fell on all. Loiseau himself looked foolish and disconcerted for a moment, but soon recovered his aplomb, and, writhing with laughter, exclaimed:

"Really, you are all too green for anything!"

Pressed for an explanation, he related the "mysteries of the corridor," whereat his listeners were hugely amused. The ladies could hardly contain their delight. The count and Monsieur Carre-Lamadon laughed till they cried. They could scarcely believe their ears.

"What! you are sure? He wanted—" 280

"I tell you I saw it with my own eyes."

"And she refused?"

"Because the Prussian was in the next room!"

"Surely you are mistaken?"

"I swear I'm telling you the truth." 285

The count was choking with laughter. The manufacturer held his sides. Loiseau continued:

"So you may well imagine he doesn't think this evening's business at all amusing."

And all three began to laugh again, choking, coughing, almost ill with merriment.

Then they separated. But Madame Loiseau, who was nothing if not spiteful, remarked to her husband as they were on the way to bed that "that stuck-up little minx of a Carre-Lamadon had laughed on the wrong side of her mouth all the evening."

"You know," she said, "when women run after uniforms it's all the same to them whether the men who wear them are French or Prussian. It's perfectly sickening!" 290

The next morning the snow showed dazzling white tinder a clear winter sun. The coach, ready at last, waited before the door; while a flock of white pigeons, with pink eyes spotted in the centres with black, puffed out their white feathers and walked sedately between the legs of the six horses, picking at the steaming manure.

The driver, wrapped in his sheepskin coat, was smoking a pipe on the box, and all the passengers, radiant with delight at their approaching departure, were putting up provisions for the remainder of the journey.

They were waiting only for Boule de Suif. At last she appeared.

She seemed rather shamefaced and embarrassed, and advanced with timid step toward her companions, who with one accord turned aside as if they had not seen her. The count, with much dignity, took his wife by the arm, and removed her from the unclean contact.

The girl stood still, stupefied with astonishment; then, plucking up courage, accosted the manufacturer's wife with a humble "Good-morning, madame," to which the other replied merely with a slight and insolent nod, accompanied by a look of outraged virtue. Every one suddenly appeared extremely busy, and kept as far from Boule de Suif as if tier skirts had been infected with some deadly disease. Then they hurried to the coach, followed by the despised courtesan, who, arriving last of all, silently took the place she had occupied during the first part of the journey.

295

The rest seemed neither to see nor to know her—all save Madame Loiseau, who, glancing contemptuously in her direction, remarked, half aloud, to her husband:

"What a mercy I am not sitting beside that creature!"

The lumbering vehicle started on its way, and the journey began afresh.

At first no one spoke. Boule de Suif dared not even raise her eyes. She felt at once indignant with her neighbors, and humiliated at having yielded to the Prussian into whose arms they had so hypocritically cast her.

But the countess, turning toward Madame Carre-Lamadon, soon broke the painful silence:

300

"I think you know Madame d'Etrelles?"

"Yes; she is a friend of mine."

"Such a charming woman!"

"Delightful! Exceptionally talented, and an artist to the finger tips. She sings marvellously and draws to perfection."

The manufacturer was chatting with the count, and amid the clatter of the window-panes a word of their conversation was now and then distinguishable: "Shares—maturity—premium—time-limit."

Loiseau, who had abstracted from the inn the timeworn pack of cards, thick with the grease of five years' contact with half-wiped-off tables, started a game of bezique with his wife.

The good sisters, taking up simultaneously the long rosaries hanging from their waists, made the sign of the cross, and began to mutter in unison interminable prayers, their lips moving ever more and more swiftly, as if they sought which should outdistance the other in the race of orisons; from time to time they kissed a medal, and crossed themselves anew, then resumed their rapid and unintelligible murmur.

Cornudet sat still, lost in thought.

Ah the end of three hours Loiseau gathered up the cards, and remarked that he was hungry.

His wife thereupon produced a parcel tied with string, from which she extracted a piece of cold veal. This she cut into neat, thin slices, and both began to eat.

"We may as well do the same," said the countess. The rest agreed, and she unpacked the provisions which had been prepared for herself, the count, and the Carre-Lamadons. In one of those oval dishes, the lids of which are decorated with an earthenware hare, by way of showing that a game pie lies within, was a succulent delicacy consisting of the brown flesh of the game larded with streaks of bacon and flavored with other meats chopped fine. A solid wedge of Gruyere cheese, which had been wrapped in a newspaper, bore the imprint: "Items of News," on its rich, oily surface.

The two good sisters brought to light a hunk of sausage smelling strongly of garlic; and Cornudet, plunging both hands at once into the capacious pockets of his loose overcoat, produced from one four hard-boiled eggs and from the other a crust of bread. He removed the shells, threw them into the straw beneath his feet, and began to devour the eggs, letting morsels of the

bright yellow yolk fall in his mighty beard, where they looked like stars.

Boule de Suif, in the haste and confusion of her departure, had not thought of anything, and, stifling with rage, she watched all these people placidly eating. At first, ill-suppressed wrath shook her whole person, and she opened her lips to shriek the truth at them, to overwhelm them with a volley of insults; but she could not utter a word, so choked was she with indignation.

No one looked at her, no one thought of her. She felt herself swallowed up in the scorn of these virtuous creatures, who had first sacrificed, then rejected her as a thing useless and unclean. Then she remembered her big basket full of the good things they had so greedily devoured: the two chickens coated in jelly, the pies, the pears, the four bottles of claret; and her fury broke forth like a cord that is overstrained, and she was on the verge of tears. She made terrible efforts at self-control, drew herself up, swallowed the sobs which choked her; but the tears rose nevertheless, shone at the brink of her eyelids, and soon two heavy drops coursed slowly down her cheeks. Others followed more quickly, like water filtering from a rock, and fell, one after another, on her rounded bosom. She sat upright, with a fixed expression, her face pale and rigid, hoping desperately that no one saw her give way.

But the countess noticed that she was weeping, and with a sign drew her husband's attention to the fact. He shrugged his shoulders, as if to say: "Well, what of it? It's not my fault." Madame Loiseau chuckled triumphantly, and murmured:

"She's weeping for shame."

The two nuns had betaken themselves once more to their prayers, first wrapping the remainder of their sausage in paper:

Then Cornudet, who was digesting his eggs, stretched his long legs under the opposite seat, threw himself back, folded his arms, smiled like a man who had just thought of a good joke, and began to whistle the Marseillaise.

The faces of his neighbors clouded; the popular air evidently did not find favor with them; they grew nervous and irritable, and seemed ready to howl as a dog does at the sound of a barrel-

organ. Cornudet saw the discomfort he was creating, and whistled the louder; sometimes he even hummed the words:

Amour sacre de la patrie,
Conduis, soutiens, nos bras vengeurs,
Liberte, liberte cherie,
Combats avec tes defenseurs!

The coach progressed more swiftly, the snow being harder now; and all the way to Dieppe, during the long, dreary hours of the journey, first in the gathering dusk, then in the thick darkness, raising his voice above the rumbling of the vehicle, Cornudet continued with fierce obstinacy his vengeful and monotonous whistling, forcing his weary and exasperated-hearers to follow the song from end to end, to recall every word of every line, as each was repeated over and over again with untiring persistency.

And Boule de Suif still wept, and sometimes a sob she could not restrain was heard in the darkness between two verses of the song.

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

License: Public Domain

Guy de Maupassant

The girl was one of those pretty and charming young creatures who sometimes are born, as if by a slip of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a little clerk of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

Mathilde suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born to enjoy all delicacies and all luxuries. She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the bareness of the walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugliness of the curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tortured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework aroused in her despairing regrets and bewildering dreams. She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove. She thought of long reception halls hung with ancient silk, of the dainty cabinets containing priceless curiosities and of the little coquettish perfumed reception rooms made for chatting at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after, whom all women envy and whose attention they all desire.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a tablecloth in use three days, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup tureen and declared with a delighted air, "Ah, the good soup! I don't know anything better than that," she

thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry that peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvellous plates and of the whispered gallantries to which you listen with a sphinxlike smile while you are eating the pink meat of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no gowns, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but that. She felt made for that. She would have liked so much to please, to be envied, to be charming, to be sought after.

5

She had a friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, and whom she did not like to go to see any more because she felt so sad when she came home.

But one evening her husband reached home with a triumphant air and holding a large envelope in his hand.

"There," said he, "there is something for you."

She tore the paper quickly and drew out a printed card which bore these words:

The Minister of Public Instruction and Madame Georges Ramponneau request the honor of M. and Madame Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th.

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table crossly, muttering:

10

"What do you wish me to do with that?"

"Why, my dear, I thought you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had great trouble to get it. Every one wants to go; it is very select, and they are not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with an irritated glance and said impatiently:

"And what do you wish me to put on my back?"

He had not thought of that. He stammered:

15

"Why, the gown you go to the theatre in. It looks very well to me."

He stopped, distracted, seeing that his wife was weeping. Two great tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes toward the

corners of her mouth.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" he answered.

By a violent effort she conquered her grief and replied in a calm voice, while she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no gown, and, therefore, I can't go to this ball. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I am." 20

He was in despair. He resumed:

"Come, let us see, Mathilde. How much would it cost, a suitable gown, which you could use on other occasions—something very simple?"

She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could ask without drawing on herself an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

Finally she replied hesitating:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs." 25

He grew a little pale, because he was laying aside just that amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends who went to shoot larks there of a Sunday.

But he said:

"Very well. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty gown."

The day of the ball drew near and Madame Loisel seemed sad, uneasy, anxious. Her frock was ready, however. Her husband said to her one evening:

"What is the matter? Come, you have seemed very queer these last three days." 30

And she answered:

"It annoys me not to have a single piece of jewelry, not a single ornament, nothing to put on. I shall look poverty-stricken. I would almost rather not go at all."

"You might wear natural flowers," said her husband. "They're very stylish at this time of year. For ten francs you can get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there's nothing more humiliating than to look poor among other women who are rich." 35

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go look up your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You're intimate enough with her to do that."

She uttered a cry of joy:

"True! I never thought of it."

The next day she went to her friend and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to a wardrobe with a mirror, took out a large jewel box, brought it back, opened it and said to Madame Loisel: 40

"Choose, my dear."

She saw first some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian gold cross set with precious stones, of admirable workmanship. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitated and could not make up her mind to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"Haven't you any more?"

"Why, yes. Look further; I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart throbbed with an immoderate desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it round her throat, outside her high-necked waist, and was lost in ecstasy at her reflection in the mirror. 45

Then she asked, hesitating, filled with anxious doubt:

"Will you lend me this, only this?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

She threw her arms round her friend's neck, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The night of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel was a great success. She was prettier than any other woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling and wild with joy. All the men looked at her, asked her name, sought to be introduced. All the attaches of the Cabinet wished to waltz with her. She was remarked by the minister himself. 50

She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness comprised of all this homage, admiration, these awakened desires and of that sense of triumph which is so sweet to woman's heart.

She left the ball about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were enjoying the ball.

He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, the modest wraps of common life, the poverty of which contrasted with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wished to escape so as not to be remarked by the other women, who were enveloping themselves in costly furs.

Loisel held her back, saying: "Wait a bit. You will catch cold outside. I will call a cab."

But she did not listen to him and rapidly descended the stairs. When they reached the street they could not find a carriage and began to look for one, shouting after the cabmen passing at a distance.

They went toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those ancient night cabs which, as though they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day, are never seen round Paris until after dark.

It took them to their dwelling in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly they mounted the stairs to their flat. All was ended for her. As to him, he reflected that he must be at the ministry at ten o'clock that morning.

She removed her wraps before the glass so as to see herself once more in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace around her neck!

"What is the matter with you?" demanded her husband, already half undressed.

She turned distractedly toward him.

"I have—I have—I've lost Madame Forestier's necklace," she cried.

He stood up, bewildered.

"What!—how? Impossible!"

They looked among the folds of her skirt, of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere, but did not find it.

"You're sure you had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

65

"Yes, I felt it in the vestibule of the minister's house."

"But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes, probably. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you—didn't you notice it?"

"No."

70

They looked, thunderstruck, at each other. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

"I shall go back on foot," said he, "over the whole route, to see whether I can find it."

He went out. She sat waiting on a chair in her ball dress, without strength to go to bed, overwhelmed, without any fire, without a thought.

Her husband returned about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to police headquarters, to the newspaper offices to offer a reward; he went to the cab companies—everywhere, in fact, whither he was urged by the least spark of hope.

75

She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity.

Loisel returned at night with a hollow, pale face. He had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," said he, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to turn round."

She wrote at his dictation.

At the end of a week they had lost all hope. Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

80

"We must consider how to replace that ornament."

The next day they took the box that had contained it and went to the jeweler whose name was found within. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold that necklace; I must simply have furnished the case."

Then they went from jeweler to jeweler, searching for a necklace like the other, trying to recall it, both sick with chagrin and grief.

They found, in a shop at the Palais Royal, a string of diamonds that seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six.

85

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days yet. And they made a bargain that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs, in case they should find the lost necklace before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers and all the race of lenders. He compromised all the rest of his life, risked signing a note without even knowing whether he could meet it; and, frightened by the trouble yet to come, by the black misery that was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, laying upon the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took back the necklace Madame Forestier said to her with a chilly manner:

"You should have returned it sooner; I might have needed it."

90

She did not open the case, as her friend had so much feared. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken Madame Loisel for a thief?

Thereafter Madame Loisel knew the horrible existence of the needy. She bore her part, however, with sudden heroism. That dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know what heavy housework meant and the odious cares of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her dainty fingers and rosy nails on greasy pots and pans. She washed the soiled linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning and carried up the water, stopping for breath at every landing. And dressed like a woman of the people, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher, a basket on her arm, bargaining, meeting with impertinence, defending her miserable money, sou by sou.

Every month they had to meet some notes, renew others, obtain more time.

Her husband worked evenings, making up a tradesman's accounts, and late at night he often copied manuscript for five sous a page.

95

This life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid everything, everything, with the rates of usury and the accumulations of the compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households—strong and hard and rough. With frowsy hair, skirts askew and red hands, she talked loud while washing the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and she thought of that gay evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? who knows? How strange and changeable is life! How small a thing is needed to make or ruin us!

But one Sunday, having gone to take a walk in the Champs Elysees to refresh herself after the labors of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman who was leading a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

100

Madame Loisel felt moved. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all about it. Why not?

She went up.

"Good-day, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be familiarly addressed by this plain good-wife, did not recognize her at all and stammered:

"But—madame!—I do not know—You must have mistaken." 105

"No. I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! How you are changed!"

"Yes, I have had a pretty hard life, since I last saw you, and great poverty—and that because of you!"

"Of me! How so?" 110

"Do you remember that diamond necklace you lent me to wear at the ministerial ball?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it was not easy for us, for us who had nothing. At last it is ended, and I am very glad." 115

Madame Forestier had stopped.

"You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?"

"Yes. You never noticed it, then! They were very similar."

And she smiled with a joy that was at once proud and ingenuous.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took her hands. 120

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, my necklace was paste! It was worth at most only five hundred francs!"

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920)

The Story of an African Farm

South African

Realism

Olive Schreiner, a South African writer and activist, is best known for her work to advance women's rights and political independence for South Africa. As a writer, she is best known for her 1883 novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, and for a later work, *Woman and Labour* (1911), which became a seminal work of the Woman's Movement, asserting the need for women to be engaged in meaningful work. Schreiner was the daughter of English missionary parents in South Africa. Her father, an unsuccessful missionary, was also an ineffectual businessman, so the family lived in abject poverty for most of Schreiner's life. Always an intellectually curious child and a religious skeptic, the turning point in Schreiner's life was her reading of Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*, which reinforced her rejection of organized religion. After working as a governess for a number of employers, Schreiner travelled to England in 1881 to study medicine. However, her ill health—she suffered all of her life from acute asthma—prevented her working as a nurse, so she reconciled herself to working as a full-time writer, a profession she pursued for the rest of her life.

Upon its publication in 1883, *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) became an immediate sensation with readers in both England and America. Readers were fascinated by its experimental form, which included allegorical and dream sequences, a sexually active feminist protagonist, and an account of life in an exotic colonial setting. The novel's themes range from bold feminist statements about the oppression of women, gender ambivalence on the part of a male character who finds fulfillment in dressing as a woman, frank discussions of sex, and an examination of religious agnosticism.

Consider while reading:

1. What is the effect of the opening descriptions? Which features of the environment seem to be emphasized?

2. Contrast Waldo, Lyndall, and Em. How would you characterize each of the children?
3. How are the aboriginal peoples (the Bushmen) and colonized peoples ("Kaffirs" and "Hottentots") represented? Are these representations consistent with Schreiner's later advocacy for the equality and independence of African peoples?

Written by Anita Turlington

THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM

License: Public Domain

Olive Schreiner (aka Ralph Iron)

Preface

I have to thank cordially the public and my critics for the reception they have given this little book.

Dealing with a subject that is far removed from the round of English daily life, it of necessity lacks the charm that hangs about the ideal representation of familiar things, and its reception has therefore been the more kindly.

A word of explanation is necessary. Two strangers appear on the scene, and some have fancied that in the second they have again the first, who returns in a new guise. Why this should be we cannot tell; unless there is a feeling that a man should not appear upon the scene, and then disappear, leaving behind him no more substantial trace than a mere book; that he should return later on as husband or lover, to fill some more important part than that of the mere stimulator of thought.

Human life may be painted according to two methods. There is the stage method. According to that each character is duly marshalled at first, and ticketed; we know with an immutable certainty that at the right crises each one will reappear and act his part, and, when the curtain falls, all will stand before it bowing. There is a sense of satisfaction in this, and of completeness. But there is another method—the method of the life we all lead. Here nothing can be prophesied. There is a strange coming and going of feet. Men appear, act and re-act upon each other, and pass away. When the crisis comes the man who would fit it does not return. When the curtain falls no one is ready. When the footlights are brightest they are blown out; and what the name of the play is no one knows. If there sits a spectator who knows, he sits so high that the players in the gaslight cannot hear his breathing. Life may be painted according to either method; but the methods are different. The canons of criticism that bear upon the one cut cruelly upon the other.

It has been suggested by a kind critic that he would better have liked the little book if it had been a history of wild adventure; of cattle driven into inaccessible kranzes by Bushmen; "of encounters with ravening lions, and hair-breadth escapes." This could not be. Such works are best written in Piccadilly or in the Strand: there the gifts of the creative imagination, untrammelled by contact with any fact, may spread their wings.

But, should one sit down to paint the scenes among which he has grown, he will find that the facts creep in upon him. Those brilliant phases and shapes which the imagination sees in far-off lands are not for him to portray. Sadly he must squeeze the colour from his brush, and dip it into the gray pigments around him. He must paint what lies before him. —R. Iron.

We must see the first images which the external world casts upon the dark mirror of his mind; or must hear the first words which awaken the sleeping powers of thought, and stand by his earliest efforts, if we would understand the prejudices, the habits, and the passions that will rule his life. The entire man is, so to speak, to be found in the cradle of the child.

—ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

Glossary

Several Dutch and Colonial words occurring in this work, the subjoined Glossary is given, explaining the principal.

Alle wereld!: Gosh!

Aasvogels: Vultures.

Benauwdheid: Indigestion.

Brakje: A little cur of low degree.

Bultong: Dried meat.

Coop: Hide and Seek.

Inspan: To harness.

Kapje: A sun-bonnet.

Karoo: The wide sandy plains in some parts of South Africa.

Karoo-bushes: The bushes that take the place of grass on these plains.

Kartel: The wooden-bed fastened in an ox-wagon.

Kloof: A ravine.

Kopje: A small hillock, or "little head."

Kraal: The space surrounded by a stone wall or hedged with thorn branches, into which sheep or cattle are driven at night.
Mealies: Indian corn.
Meerkat: A small weazel-like animal.
Meiboss: Preserved and dried apricots.
Nachtmaal: The Lord's Supper.
Oom: Uncle.
Outspan: To unharness, or a place in the field where one unharnesses.
Pap: Porridge.
Predikant: Parson.
Riem: Leather rope.
Sarsarties: Food.
Sleg: Bad.
Sloot: A dry watercourse.
Spook: To haunt, a ghost.
Stamp-block: A wooden block, hollowed out, in which mealies are placed to be pounded before being cooked.
Stoep: Porch.
Tant or Tante: Aunt.
Upsitting: In Boer courtship the man and girl are supposed to sit up together the whole night.
Veld: Open country.
Velschoen: Shoes of undressed leather.
Vrijer: Available man.

Part I

Chapter I. Shadows From Child-Life

The Watch

The full African moon poured down its light from the blue sky into the wide, lonely plain. The dry, sandy earth, with its coating of stunted karoo bushes a few inches high, the low hills that skirted the plain, the milk-bushes with their long finger-like leaves, all were touched by a weird and an almost oppressive beauty as they lay in the white light.

In one spot only was the solemn monotony of the plain broken. Near the centre a small solitary kopje rose. Alone it lay there, a heap of round ironstones piled one upon another, as over some giant's grave. Here and there a few tufts of grass or small succulent plants had sprung up among its stones, and on the very summit a clump of prickly-pears lifted their thorny arms, and reflected, as from mirrors, the moonlight on their broad fleshy leaves. At the foot of the kopje lay the homestead. First, the stone-walled sheep kraals and Kaffer huts; beyond them the dwelling-house—a square, red-brick building with thatched roof. Even on its bare red walls, and the wooden ladder that led up to the loft, the moonlight cast a kind of dreamy beauty, and quite etherealized the low brick wall that ran before the house, and which inclosed a bare patch of sand and two straggling sunflowers. On the zinc roof of the great open wagon-house, on the roofs of the outbuildings that jutted from its side, the moonlight glinted with a quite peculiar brightness, till it seemed that every rib in the metal was of burnished silver.

Sleep ruled everywhere, and the homestead was not less quiet than the solitary plain.

In the farmhouse, on her great wooden bedstead, Tant Sannie, the Boer-woman, rolled heavily in her sleep.

10

She had gone to bed, as she always did, in her clothes, and the night was warm and the room close, and she dreamed bad dreams. Not of the ghosts and devils that so haunted her waking thoughts; not of her second husband the consumptive Englishman, whose grave lay away beyond the ostrich-camps, nor of her first, the young Boer; but only of the sheep's trotters she had eaten for supper that night. She dreamed that one stuck fast in her throat, and she rolled her huge form from side to side, and snorted horribly.

In the next room, where the maid had forgotten to close the shutter, the white moonlight fell in in a flood, and made it light as day. There were two small beds against the wall. In one lay a yellow-haired child, with a low forehead and a face of freckles; but the loving moonlight hid defects here as elsewhere, and showed only the innocent face of a child in its first sweet sleep.

The figure in the companion bed belonged of right to the moonlight, for it was of quite elfin-like beauty. The child had dropped her cover on the floor, and the moonlight looked in at the naked little limbs. Presently she opened her eyes and looked at the moonlight that was bathing her.

"Em!" she called to the sleeper in the other bed; but received no answer. Then she drew the cover from the floor, turned her pillow, and pulling the sheet over her head, went to sleep again.

Only in one of the outbuildings that jutted from the wagon-house there was some one who was not asleep.

15

The room was dark; door and shutter were closed; not a ray of light entered anywhere. The German overseer, to whom the room belonged, lay sleeping soundly on his bed in the corner, his great arms folded, and his bushy grey and black beard rising and falling on his breast. But one in the room was not asleep. Two large eyes looked about in the darkness, and two small hands were smoothing the patchwork quilt. The boy, who slept on a box under the window, had just awakened from his first sleep. He drew the quilt up to his chin, so that little peered above it but a great head of silky black curls and the two black eyes. He stared about in the darkness. Nothing was visible, not even the outline of one worm-eaten rafter, nor of the deal table, on which lay the Bible from which his father had read before they went to bed. No one could tell where the toolbox was, and where the fireplace. There was something very impressive to the child in the complete darkness.

At the head of his father's bed hung a great silver hunting watch. It ticked loudly. The boy listened to it, and began mechanically to count. Tick—tick—one, two, three, four! He lost count presently, and only listened. Tick—tick—tick—tick!

It never waited; it went on inexorably; and every time it ticked a man died! He raised himself a little on his elbow and listened. He wished it would leave off.

How many times had it ticked since he came to lie down? A thousand times, a million times, perhaps.

He tried to count again, and sat up to listen better.

20

"Dying, dying, dying!" said the watch; "dying, dying, dying!"

He heard it distinctly. Where were they going to, all those people?

He lay down quickly, and pulled the cover up over his head: but presently the silky curls reappeared.

"Dying, dying, dying!" said the watch; "dying, dying, dying!"

He thought of the words his father had read that evening—"For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat."

25

"Many, many, many!" said the watch.

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

"Few, few, few!" said the watch.

The boy lay with his eyes wide open. He saw before him a long stream of people, a great dark multitude, that moved in one direction; then they came to the dark edge of the world and went over. He saw them passing on before him, and there was nothing that could stop them. He thought of how that stream had rolled on through all the long ages of the past—how the old Greeks and Romans had gone over; the countless millions of China and India, they were going over now. Since he had come to bed, how many had gone!

And the watch said, "Eternity, eternity, eternity!"

30

"Stop them! stop them!" cried the child.

And all the while the watch kept ticking on; just like God's will, that never changes or alters, you may do what you please.

Great beads of perspiration stood on the boy's forehead. He climbed out of bed and lay with his face turned to the mud floor.

"Oh, God, God! save them!" he cried in agony. "Only some, only a few! Only for each moment I am praying here one!" He folded his little hands upon his head. "God! God! save them!"

He grovelled on the floor.

35

Oh, the long, long ages of the past, in which they had gone over! Oh, the long, long future, in which they would pass away! Oh, God! the long, long, long eternity, which has no end!

The child wept, and crept closer to the ground.

The farm by daylight was not as the farm by moonlight. The plain was a weary flat of loose red sand, sparsely covered by dry karoo bushes, that cracked beneath the tread like tinder, and showed the red earth everywhere. Here and there a milk-bush lifted its pale-coloured rods, and in every direction the ants and beetles ran about in the blazing sand. The red walls of the farmhouse, the zinc roofs of the outbuildings, the stone walls of the kraals, all reflected the fierce sunlight, till the eye ached and blenched. No tree or shrub was to be seen far or near. The two sunflowers that stood before the door, out-stared by the sun, drooped their brazen faces to the sand; and the little cicada-like insects cried aloud among the stones of the kopje.

The Boer-woman, seen by daylight, was even less lovely than when, in bed, she rolled and dreamed. She sat on a chair in the great front room, with her feet on a wooden stove, and wiped her flat face with the corner of her apron, and drank coffee, and in Cape Dutch swore that the beloved weather was damned. Less lovely, too, by daylight was the dead Englishman's child, her little stepdaughter, upon whose freckles and low, wrinkled forehead the sunlight had no mercy.

"Lyndall," the child said to her little orphan cousin, who sat with her on the floor threading beads, "how is it your beads never fall off your needle?"

40

"I try," said the little one gravely, moistening her tiny finger. "That is why."

The overseer, seen by daylight, was a huge German, wearing a shabby suit, and with a childish habit of rubbing his hands and nodding his head prodigiously when pleased at anything. He stood out at the kraals in the blazing sun, explaining to two Kaffer boys the approaching end of the world. The boys, as they cut the cakes of dung, winked at each other, and worked as slowly as they possibly could; but the German never saw it.

Away, beyond the kopje, Waldo his son herded the ewes and lambs—a small and dusty herd—powdered all over from head to foot with red sand, wearing a ragged coat and shoes of undressed leather, through whose holes the toes looked out. His hat was too large, and had sunk down to his eyes, concealing completely the

silky black curls. It was a curious small figure. His flock gave him little trouble. It was too hot for them to move far; they gathered round every little milk-bush, as though they hoped to find shade, and stood there motionless in clumps. He himself crept under a shelving rock that lay at the foot of the kopje, stretched himself on his stomach, and waved his dilapidated little shoes in the air.

Soon, from the blue bag where he kept his dinner, he produced a fragment of slate, an arithmetic, and a pencil. Proceeding to put down a sum with solemn and earnest demeanour, he began to add it up aloud: "Six and two is eight—and four is twelve—and two is fourteen—and four is eighteen." Here he paused. "And four is eighteen—and—four—is, eighteen." The last was very much drawled. Slowly the pencil slipped from his fingers, and the slate followed it into the sand. For a while he lay motionless, then began muttering to himself, folded his little arms, laid his head down upon them, and might have been asleep, but for the muttering sound that from time to time proceeded from him. A curious old ewe came to sniff at him; but it was long before he raised his head. When he did, he looked at the far-off hills with his heavy eyes.

"Ye shall receive—ye shall receive—shall, shall, shall," he muttered.

45

He sat up then. Slowly the dulness and heaviness melted from his face; it became radiant. Midday had come now, and the sun's rays were poured down vertically; the earth throbbed before the eye.

The boy stood up quickly, and cleared a small space from the bushes which covered it. Looking carefully, he found twelve small stones of somewhat the same size; kneeling down, he arranged them carefully on the cleared space in a square pile, in shape like an altar. Then he walked to the bag where his dinner was kept; in it was a mutton chop and a large slice of brown bread. The boy took them out and turned the bread over in his hand, deeply considering it. Finally he threw it away and walked to the altar with the meat, and laid it down on the stones. Close by in the red sand he knelt down. Sure, never since the beginning of

the world was there so ragged and so small a priest. He took off his great hat and placed it solemnly on the ground, then closed his eyes and folded his hands. He prayed aloud:

"Oh, God, my Father, I have made Thee a sacrifice. I have only twopence, so I cannot buy a lamb. If the lambs were mine, I would give Thee one; but now I have only this meat; it is my dinner meat. Please, my Father, send fire down from heaven to burn it. Thou hast said, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast into the sea, nothing doubting, it shall be done. I ask for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen."

He knelt down with his face upon the ground, and he folded his hands upon his curls. The fierce sun poured down its heat upon his head and upon his altar. When he looked up he knew what he should see—the glory of God! For fear his very heart stood still, his breath came heavily; he was half suffocated. He dared not look up. Then at last he raised himself. Above him was the quiet blue sky, about him the red earth; there were the clumps of silent ewes and his altar—that was all.

He looked up—nothing broke the intense stillness of the blue overhead. He looked round in astonishment, then he bowed again, and this time longer than before.

When he raised himself the second time all was unaltered. Only the sun had melted the fat of the little mutton chop, and it ran down upon the stones.

Then, the third time he bowed himself. When at last he looked up, some ants had come to the meat on the altar. He stood up and drove them away. Then he put his hat on his hot curls, and sat in the shade. He clasped his hands about his knees. He sat to watch what would come to pass. The glory of the Lord God Almighty! He knew he should see it.

"My dear God is trying me," he said; and he sat there through the fierce heat of the afternoon. Still he watched and waited when the sun began to slope, and when it neared the horizon and the sheep began to cast long shadows across the karoo, he still sat there. He hoped when the first rays touched the hills till the sun dipped behind them and was gone. Then he called his ewes

together, and broke down the altar, and threw the meat far, far away into the field.

He walked home behind his flock. His heart was heavy. He reasoned so: "God cannot lie. I had faith. No fire came. I am like Cain—I am not His. He will not hear my prayer. God hates me."

The boy's heart was heavy. When he reached the kraal gate the two girls met him. 55

"Come," said the yellow-haired Em, "let us play coop. There is still time before it gets quite dark. You, Waldo, go and hide on the kopje; Lyndall and I will shut eyes here, and we will not look."

The girls hid their faces in the stone wall of the sheep-kraal, and the boy clambered half way up the kopje. He crouched down between two stones and gave the call. Just then the milk-herd came walking out of the cow-kraal with two pails. He was an ill-looking Kaffer.

"Ah!" thought the boy, "perhaps he will die tonight, and go to hell! I must pray for him, I must pray!"

Then he thought—"Where am I going to?" and he prayed desperately.

"Ah! this is not right at all," little Em said, peeping between the stones, and finding him in a very curious posture. "What are you doing Waldo? It is not the play, you know. You should run out when we come to the white stone. Ah, you do not play nicely." 60

"I—I will play nicely now," said the boy, coming out and standing sheepishly before them; "I—I only forgot; I will play now."

"He has been to sleep," said freckled Em.

"No," said beautiful little Lyndall, looking curiously at him: "he has been crying."

She never made a mistake.

The Confession

One night, two years after, the boy sat alone on the kopje. He had crept softly from his father's room and come there. He often did, because, when he prayed or cried aloud, his father might 65

awake and hear him; and none knew his great sorrow, and none knew his grief, but he himself, and he buried them deep in his heart.

He turned up the brim of his great hat and looked at the moon, but most at the leaves of the prickly pear that grew just before him. They glinted, and glinted, and glinted, just like his own heart—cold, so hard, and very wicked. His physical heart had pain also; it seemed full of little bits of glass, that hurt. He had sat there for half an hour, and he dared not go back to the close house.

He felt horribly lonely. There was not one thing so wicked as he in all the world, and he knew it. He folded his arms and began to cry—not aloud; he sobbed without making any sound, and his tears left scorched marks where they fell. He could not pray; he had prayed night and day for so many months; and tonight he could not pray. When he left off crying, he held his aching head with his brown hands. If one might have gone up to him and touched him kindly; poor, ugly little thing! Perhaps his heart was almost broken.

With his swollen eyes he sat there on a flat stone at the very top of the kopje; and the tree, with every one of its wicked leaves, blinked, and blinked, and blinked at him. Presently he began to cry again, and then stopped his crying to look at it. He was quiet for a long while, then he knelt up slowly and bent forward. There was a secret he had carried in his heart for a year. He had not dared to look at it; he had not whispered it to himself, but for a year he had carried it. "I hate God!" he said. The wind took the words and ran away with them, among the stones, and through the leaves of the prickly pear. He thought it died away half down the kopje. He had told it now!

"I love Jesus Christ, but I hate God."

The wind carried away that sound as it had done the first. Then he got up and buttoned his old coat about him. He knew he was certainly lost now; he did not care. If half the world were to be lost, why not he too? He would not pray for mercy any more. Better so—better to know certainly. It was ended now. Better so.

He began scrambling down the sides of the kopje to go home.

Better so! But oh, the loneliness, the agonized pain! for that night, and for nights on nights to come! The anguish that sleeps all day on the heart like a heavy worm, and wakes up at night to feed!

There are some of us who in after years say to Fate, "Now deal us your hardest blow, give us what you will; but let us never again suffer as we suffered when we were children."

The barb in the arrow of childhood's suffering is this: its intense loneliness, its intense agony.

Chapter II. Plans and Bushman Paintings

At last came the year of the great drought, the year of eighteen-sixty-two. From end to end of the land the earth cried for water. Man and beast turned their eyes to the pitiless sky, that like the roof of some brazen oven arched overhead. On the farm, day after day, month after month, the water in the dams fell lower and lower; the sheep died in the fields; the cattle, scarcely able to crawl, tottered as they moved from spot to spot in search of food. Week after week, month after month, the sun looked down from the cloudless sky, till the karoo-bushes were leafless sticks, broken into the earth, and the earth itself was naked and bare; and only the milk-bushes, like old hags, pointed their shrivelled fingers heavenward, praying for the rain that never came.

75

It was on an afternoon of a long day in that thirsty summer, that on the side of the kopje furthest from the homestead the two girls sat. They were somewhat grown since the days when they played hide-and-seek there, but they were mere children still.

Their dress was of dark, coarse stuff; their common blue pinafores reached to their ankles, and on their feet they wore home-made velschoen.

They sat under a shelving rock, on the surface of which were still visible some old Bushman paintings, their red and black pigments having been preserved through long years from wind and rain by the overhanging ledge; grotesque oxen, elephants,

rhinoceroses, and a one-horned beast, such as no man ever has seen or ever shall.

The girls sat with their backs to the paintings. In their laps were a few fern and ice-plant leaves, which by dint of much searching they had gathered under the rocks.

Em took off her big brown kapje and began vigorously to fan her red face with it; but her companion bent low over the leaves in her lap, and at last took up an ice-plant leaf and fastened it on to the front of her blue pinafore with a pin.

"Diamonds must look as these drops do," she said, carefully bending over the leaf, and crushing one crystal drop with her delicate little nail. "When I," she said, "am grown up, I shall wear real diamonds, exactly like these in my hair."

Her companion opened her eyes and wrinkled her low forehead.

"Where will you find them, Lyndall? The stones are only crystals that we picked up yesterday. Old Otto says so."

"And you think that I am going to stay here always?"

The lip trembled scornfully.

"Ah, no," said her companion. "I suppose some day we shall go somewhere; but now we are only twelve, and we cannot marry till we are seventeen. Four years, five—that is a long time to wait. And we might not have diamonds if we did marry."

"And you think that I am going to stay here till then?"

"Well, where are you going?" asked her companion.

The girl crushed an ice-plant leaf between her fingers.

"Tant Sannie is a miserable old woman," she said. "Your father married her when he was dying, because he thought she would take better care of the farm, and of us, than an English woman. He said we should be taught and sent to school. Now she saves every farthing for herself, buys us not even one old book. She does not ill-use us—why? Because she is afraid of your father's ghost. Only this morning she told her Hottentot that she would have beaten you for breaking the plate, but that three nights ago she heard a rustling and a grunting behind the pantry door, and knew it was your father coming to spook her. She is a miserable

80

85

90

old woman," said the girl, throwing the leaf from her; "but I intend to go to school."

"And if she won't let you?"

"I shall make her."

"How?"

The child took not the slightest notice of the last question, and folded her small arms across her knees.

"But why do you want to go, Lyndall?"

95

"There is nothing helps in this world," said the child slowly, "but to be very wise, and to know everything—to be clever."

"But I should not like to go to school!" persisted the small freckled face.

"And you do not need to. When you are seventeen this Boer-woman will go; you will have this farm and everything that is upon it for your own; but I," said Lyndall, "will have nothing. I must learn."

"Oh, Lyndall! I will give you some of my sheep," said Em, with a sudden burst of pitying generosity.

"I do not want your sheep," said the girl slowly; "I want things of my own. When I am grown up," she added, the flush on her delicate features deepening at every word, "there will be nothing that I do not know. I shall be rich, very rich; and I shall wear not only for best, but every day, a pure white silk, and little rose-buds, like the lady in Tant Sannie's bedroom, and my petticoats will be embroidered, not only at the bottom, but all through."

100

The lady in Tant Sannie's bedroom was a gorgeous creature from a fashion-sheet, which the Boer-woman, somewhere obtaining, had pasted up at the foot of her bed, to be profoundly admired by the children.

"It would be very nice," said Em; but it seemed a dream of quite too transcendent a glory ever to be realized.

At this instant there appeared at the foot of the kopje two figures—the one, a dog, white and sleek, one yellow ear hanging down over his left eye; the other, his master, a lad of fourteen, and no other than the boy Waldo, grown into a heavy, slouching youth of fourteen. The dog mounted the kopje quickly, his master followed slowly. He wore an aged jacket much too large for him,

and rolled up at the wrists, and, as of old, a pair of dilapidated velschoens and a felt hat. He stood before the two girls at last.

"What have you been doing today?" asked Lyndall, lifting her eyes to his face.

"Looking after ewes and lambs below the dam. Here!" he said, 105
holding out his hand awkwardly, "I brought them for you."

There were a few green blades of tender grass.

"Where did you find them?"

"On the dam wall."

She fastened them beside the leaf on her blue pinafore.

"They look nice there," said the boy, awkwardly rubbing his 110
great hands and watching her.

"Yes; but the pinafore spoils it all; it is not pretty."

He looked at it closely.

"Yes, the squares are ugly; but it looks nice upon you—
beautiful."

He now stood silent before them, his great hands hanging
loosely at either side.

"Some one has come today," he mumbled out suddenly, when 115
the idea struck him.

"Who?" asked both girls.

"An Englishman on foot."

"What does he look like?" asked Em.

"I did not notice; but he has a very large nose," said the boy
slowly. "He asked the way to the house."

"Didn't he tell you his name?" 120

"Yes—Bonaparte Blenkins."

"Bonaparte!" said Em, "why that is like the reel Hottentot
Hans plays on the violin—

'Bonaparte, Bonaparte, my wife is sick;
In the middle of the week, but Sundays not,
I give her rice and beans for soup'—

It is a funny name."

"There was a living man called Bonaparte once," said she of
the great eyes.

"Ah yes, I know," said Em—"the poor prophet whom the lions ate. I am always so sorry for him."

125

Her companion cast a quiet glance upon her.

"He was the greatest man who ever lived," she said, "the man I like best."

"And what did he do?" asked Em, conscious that she had made a mistake, and that her prophet was not the man.

"He was one man, only one," said her little companion slowly, "yet all the people in the world feared him. He was not born great, he was common as we are; yet he was master of the world at last. Once he was only a little child, then he was a lieutenant, then he was a general, then he was an emperor. When he said a thing to himself he never forgot it. He waited, and waited and waited, and it came at last."

"He must have been very happy," said Em.

130

"I do not know," said Lyndall; "but he had what he said he would have, and that is better than being happy. He was their master, and all the people were white with fear of him. They joined together to fight him. He was one and they were many, and they got him down at last. They were like the wild cats when their teeth are fast in a great dog, like cowardly wild cats," said the child, "they would not let him go. There were many; he was only one. They sent him to an island on the sea, a lonely island, and kept him there fast. He was one man, and they were many, and they were terrified at him. It was glorious!" said the child.

"And what then?" said Em.

"Then he was alone there in that island with men to watch him always," said her companion, slowly and quietly. "And in the long lonely nights he used to lie awake and think of the things he had done in the old days, and the things he would do if they let him go again. In the day when he walked near the shore it seemed to him that the sea all around him was a cold chain about his body pressing him to death."

"And then?" said Em, much interested.

"He died there in that island; he never got away."

135

"It is rather a nice story," said Em; "but the end is sad."

"It is a terrible, hateful ending," said the little teller of the story, leaning forward on her folded arms; "and the worst is, it is true. I have noticed," added the child very deliberately, "that it is only the made-up stories that end nicely; the true ones all end so."

As she spoke the boy's dark, heavy eyes rested on her face.

"You have read it, have you not?"

He nodded. "Yes; but the Brown history tells only what he did, not what he thought."

"It was in the Brown history that I read of him," said the girl; "but I know what he thought. Books do not tell everything."

"No," said the boy, slowly drawing nearer to her and sitting down at her feet. "What you want to know they never tell."

Then the children fell into silence, till Doss, the dog, growing uneasy at its long continuance, sniffed at one and the other, and his master broke forth suddenly:

"If they could talk, if they could tell us now!" he said, moving his hand out over the surrounding objects—"then we would know something. This kopje, if it could tell us how it came here! The 'Physical Geography' says," he went on most rapidly and confusedly, "that what were dry lands now were once lakes; and what I think is this—these low hills were once the shores of a lake; this kopje is some of the stones that were at the bottom, rolled together by the water. But there is this—How did the water come to make one heap here alone, in the centre of the plain?" It was a ponderous question; no one volunteered an answer. "When I was little," said the boy, "I always looked at it and wondered, and I thought a great giant was buried under it. Now I know the water must have done it; but how? It is very wonderful. Did one little stone come first, and stop the others as they rolled?" said the boy with earnestness, in a low voice, more as speaking to himself than to them.

"Oh, Waldo, God put the little kopje here," said Em with solemnity.

"But how did he put it here?"

"By wanting."

"But how did the wanting bring it here?"

"Because it did."

The last words were uttered with the air of one who produces a clinching argument. What effect it had on the questioner was not evident, for he made no reply, and turned away from her.

Drawing closer to Lyndall's feet, he said after a while in a low voice:

"Lyndall, has it never seemed to you that the stones were talking with you? Sometimes," he added in a yet lower tone, "I lie under there with my sheep, and it seems that the stones are really speaking—speaking of the old things, of the time when the strange fishes and animals lived that are turned into stone now, and the lakes were here; and then of the time when the little Bushmen lived here, so small and so ugly, and used to sleep in the wild dog holes, and in the sloots, and eat snakes, and shot the bucks with their poisoned arrows. It was one of them, one of these old wild Bushmen, that painted those," said the boy, nodding toward the pictures—"one who was different from the rest. He did not know why, but he wanted to make something beautiful—he wanted to make something, so he made these. He worked hard, very hard, to find the juice to make the paint; and then he found this place where the rocks hang over, and he painted them. To us they are only strange things, that make us laugh; but to him they were very beautiful."

The children had turned round and looked at the pictures.

"He used to kneel here naked, painting, painting, painting; and he wondered at the things he made himself," said the boy, rising and moving his hand in deep excitement. "Now the Boers have shot them all, so that we never see a little yellow face peeping out among the stones." He paused, a dreamy look coming over his face. "And the wild bucks have gone, and those days, and we are here. But we will be gone soon, and only the stones will lie on here, looking at everything like they look now. I know that it is I who am thinking," the fellow added slowly, "but it seems as though it were they who are talking. Has it never seemed so to you, Lyndall?"

"No, it never seems so to me," she answered.

The sun had dipped now below the hills, and the boy, suddenly remembering the ewes and lambs, started to his feet.

"Let us also go to the house and see who has come," said Em, as the boy shuffled away to rejoin his flock, while Doss ran at his heels, snapping at the ends of the torn trousers as they fluttered in the wind.

Chapter III. I Was A Stranger, and Ye Took Me In

As the two girls rounded the side of the kopje, an unusual scene presented itself. A large group was gathered at the back door of the homestead.

On the doorstep stood the Boer-woman, a hand on each hip, her face red and fiery, her head nodding fiercely. At her feet sat the yellow Hottentot maid, her satellite, and around stood the black Kaffer maids, with blankets twisted round their half-naked figures. Two, who stamped mealies in a wooden block, held the great stampers in their hands, and stared stupidly at the object of attraction. It certainly was not to look at the old German overseer, who stood in the centre of the group, that they had all gathered together. His salt-and-pepper suit, grizzly black beard, and grey eyes were as familiar to every one on the farm as the red gables of the homestead itself; but beside him stood the stranger, and on him all eyes were fixed. Ever and anon the newcomer cast a glance over his pendulous red nose to the spot where the Boer-woman stood, and smiled faintly.

"I'm not a child," cried the Boer-woman, in low Cape Dutch, "and I wasn't born yesterday. No, by the Lord, no! You can't take me in! My mother didn't wean me on Monday. One wink of my eye and I see the whole thing. I'll have no tramps sleeping on my farm," cried Tant Sannie blowing. "No, by the devil, no! not though he had sixty-times-six red noses."

160

There the German overseer mildly interposed that the man was not a tramp, but a highly respectable individual, whose horse had died by an accident three days before.

"Don't tell me," cried the Boer-woman; "the man isn't born that can take me in. If he'd had money, wouldn't he have bought a horse? Men who walk are thieves, liars, murderers, Rome's priests, seducers! I see the devil in his nose!" cried Tant Sannie

shaking her fist at him; "and to come walking into the house of this Boer's child and shaking hands as though he came on horseback! Oh, no, no!"

The stranger took off his hat, a tall, battered chimneypot, and disclosed a bald head, at the back of which was a little fringe of curled white hair, and he bowed to Tant Sannie.

"What does she remark, my friend?" he inquired, turning his crosswise-looking eyes on the old German.

The German rubbed his old hands and hesitated.

165

"Ah—well—ah—the—Dutch—you know—do not like people who walk—in this country—ah!"

"My dear friend," said the stranger, laying his hand on the German's arm, "I should have bought myself another horse, but crossing, five days ago, a full river, I lost my purse—a purse with five hundred pounds in it. I spent five days on the bank of the river trying to find it—couldn't. Paid a Kaffer nine pounds to go in and look for it at the risk of his life—couldn't find it."

The German would have translated this information, but the Boer-woman gave no ear.

"No, no; he goes tonight. See how he looks at me—a poor unprotected female! If he wrongs me, who is to do me right?" cried Tant Sannie.

"I think," said the German in an undertone, "if you didn't look at her quite so much it might be advisable. She—ah—she—might—imagine that you liked her too well,—in fact—ah—"

170

"Certainly, my dear friend, certainly," said the stranger. "I shall not look at her."

Saying this, he turned his nose full upon a small Kaffer of two years old. That small naked son of Ham became instantly so terrified that he fled to his mother's blanket for protection, howling horribly.

Upon this the newcomer fixed his eyes pensively on the stamp-block, folding his hands on the head of his cane. His boots were broken, but he still had the cane of a gentleman.

"You vagabonds se Engelschman!" said Tant Sannie, looking straight at him.

This was a near approach to plain English; but the man contemplated the block abstractedly, wholly unconscious that any antagonism was being displayed toward him.

175

"You might not be a Scotchman or anything of that kind, might you?" suggested the German. "It is the English that she hates."

"My dear friend," said the stranger, "I am Irish every inch of me—father Irish, mother Irish. I've not a drop of English blood in my veins."

"And you might not be married, might you?" persisted the German. "If you had a wife and children, now? Dutch people do not like those who are not married."

"Ah," said the stranger, looking tenderly at the block, "I have a dear wife and three sweet little children—two lovely girls and a noble boy."

This information having been conveyed to the Boer-woman, she, after some further conversation, appeared slightly mollified; but remained firm to her conviction that the man's designs were evil.

180

"For, dear Lord!" she cried; "all Englishmen are ugly; but was there ever such a red-rag-nosed thing with broken boots and crooked eyes before? Take him to your room," she cried to the German; "but all the sin he does I lay at your door."

The German having told him how matters were arranged, the stranger made a profound bow to Tant Sannie and followed his host, who led the way to his own little room.

"I thought she would come to her better self soon," the German said joyously. "Tant Sannie is not wholly bad, far from it, far." Then seeing his companion cast a furtive glance at him, which he mistook for one of surprise, he added quickly, "Ah, yes, yes; we are all a primitive people here—not very lofty. We deal not in titles. Every one is Tante and Oom—aunt and uncle. This may be my room," he said, opening the door. "It is rough, the room is rough; not a palace—not quite. But it may be better than the fields, a little better!" he said, glancing round at his companion. "Come in, come in. There is something to eat—a mouthful: not the fare of emperors or kings; but we do not starve, not yet," he

said, rubbing his hands together and looking round with a pleased, half-nervous smile on his old face.

"My friend, my dear friend," said the stranger, seizing him by the hand, "may the Lord bless you, the Lord bless and reward you—the God of the fatherless and the stranger. But for you I would this night have slept in the fields, with the dews of heaven upon my head."

Late that evening Lyndall came down to the cabin with the German's rations. Through the tiny square window the light streamed forth, and without knocking she raised the latch and entered. There was a fire burning on the hearth, and it cast its ruddy glow over the little dingy room, with its worm-eaten rafters and mud floor, and broken whitewashed walls. A curious little place, filled with all manner of articles. Next to the fire was a great toolbox; beyond that the little bookshelf with its well-worn books; beyond that, in the corner, a heap of filled and empty grain-bags. From the rafters hung down straps, riems, old boots, bits of harness, and a string of onions. The bed was in another corner, covered by a patchwork quilt of faded red lions, and divided from the rest of the room by a blue curtain, now drawn back. On the mantelshelf was an endless assortment of little bags and stones; and on the wall hung a map of South Germany, with a red line drawn through it to show where the German had wandered. This place was the one home the girls had known for many a year. The house where Tant Sannie lived and ruled was a place to sleep in, to eat in, not to be happy in. It was in vain she told them they were grown too old to go there; every morning and evening found them there. Were there not too many golden memories hanging about the old place for them to leave it?

Long winter nights, when they had sat round the fire and roasted potatoes, and asked riddles, and the old man had told of the little German village, where, fifty years before, a little German boy had played at snowballs, and had carried home the knitted stockings of a little girl who afterward became Waldo's mother; did they not seem to see the German peasant girls walking about with their wooden shoes and yellow, braided hair, and the little children eating their suppers out of little wooden

bowls when the good mothers called them in to have their milk and potatoes?

And were there not yet better times than these? Moonlight nights, when they romped about the door, with the old man, yet more a child than any of them, and laughed, till the old roof of the wagon-house rang?

Or, best of all, were there not warm, dark, starlight nights, when they sat together on the doorstep, holding each other's hands, singing German hymns, their voices rising clear in the still night air—till the German would draw away his hand suddenly to wipe quickly a tear the children must not see? Would they not sit looking up at the stars and talking of them—of the dear Southern Cross, red, fiery Mars, Orion, with his belt, and the Seven Mysterious Sisters—and fall to speculating over them? How old are they? Who dwelt in them? And the old German would say that perhaps the souls we loved lived in them; there, in that little twinkling point was perhaps the little girl whose stockings he had carried home; and the children would look up at it lovingly, and call it "Uncle Otto's star." Then they would fall to deeper speculations—of the times and seasons wherein the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the stars shall fall as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, and there shall be time no longer: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him." In lower and lower tones they would talk, till at last they fell into whispers; then they would wish good night softly, and walk home hushed and quiet.

Tonight, when Lyndall looked in, Waldo sat before the fire watching a pot which simmered there, with his slate and pencil in his hand; his father sat at the table buried in the columns of a three-weeks-old newspaper; and the stranger lay stretched on the bed in the corner, fast asleep, his mouth open, his great limbs stretched out loosely, betokening much weariness. The girl put the rations down upon the table, snuffed the candle, and stood looking at the figure on the bed.

"Uncle Otto," she said presently, laying her hand down on the newspaper, and causing the old German to look up over his glasses, "how long did that man say he had been walking?"

"Since this morning, poor fellow! A gentleman—not accustomed to walking—horse died—poor fellow!" said the German, pushing out his lip and glancing commiseratingly over his spectacles in the direction of the bed where the stranger lay, with his flabby double chin, and broken boots through which the flesh shone.

"And do you believe him, Uncle Otto?"

"Believe him? why of course I do. He himself told me the story three times distinctly."

"If," said the girl slowly, "he had walked for only one day his boots would not have looked so; and if—"

"If!" said the German starting up in his chair, irritated that any one should doubt such irrefragable evidence—"if! Why, he told me himself! Look how he lies there," added the German pathetically, "worn out—poor fellow! We have something for him though," pointing with his forefinger over his shoulder to the saucepan that stood on the fire. "We are not cooks—not French cooks, not quite; but it's drinkable, drinkable, I think; better than nothing, I think," he added, nodding his head in a jocund manner that evinced his high estimation of the contents of the saucepan and his profound satisfaction therein. "Bish! bish! my chicken," he said, as Lyndall tapped her little foot up and down upon the floor. "Bish! bish! my chicken, you will wake him."

195

He moved the candle so that his own head might intervene between it and the sleeper's face; and, smoothing his newspaper, he adjusted his spectacles to read.

The child's grey-black eyes rested on the figure on the bed, then turned to the German, then rested on the figure again.

"I think he is a liar. Good night, Uncle Otto," she said slowly, turning to the door.

Long after she had gone the German folded his paper up methodically, and put it in his pocket.

The stranger had not awakened to partake of the soup, and his son had fallen asleep on the ground. Taking two white sheepskins from the heap of sacks in the corner, the old man doubled them up, and lifting the boy's head gently from the slate on which it rested, placed the skins beneath it.

200

"Poor lambie, poor lambie!" he said, tenderly patting the great rough bear-like head; "tired is he!"

He threw an overcoat across the boy's feet, and lifted the saucepan from the fire. There was no place where the old man could comfortably lie down himself, so he resumed his seat. Opening a much-worn Bible, he began to read, and as he read pleasant thoughts and visions thronged on him.

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in," he read.

He turned again to the bed where the sleeper lay.

"I was a stranger."

205

Very tenderly the old man looked at him. He saw not the bloated body nor the evil face of the man; but, as it were, under deep disguise and fleshly concealment, the form that long years of dreaming had made very real to him. "Jesus, lover, and is it given to us, weak and sinful, frail and erring, to serve Thee, to take Thee in!" he said softly, as he rose from his seat. Full of joy, he began to pace the little room. Now and again as he walked he sang the lines of a German hymn, or muttered broken words of prayer. The little room was full of light. It appeared to the German that Christ was very near him, and that at almost any moment the thin mist of earthly darkness that clouded his human eyes might be withdrawn, and that made manifest of which the friends at Emmaus, beholding it, said, "It is the Lord!"

Again, and yet again, through the long hours of that night, as the old man walked he looked up to the roof of his little room, with its blackened rafters, and yet saw them not. His rough bearded face was illuminated with a radiant gladness; and the night was not shorter to the dreaming sleepers than to him whose waking dreams brought heaven near.

So quickly the night fled, that he looked up with surprise when at four o'clock the first grey streaks of summer dawn showed themselves through the little window. Then the old man turned to rake together the few coals that lay under the ashes, and his son, turning on the sheepskins, muttered sleepily to know if it were time to rise.

"Lie still, lie still! I would only make a fire," said the old man.

"Have you been up all night?" asked the boy.

210

"Yes; but it has been short, very short. Sleep again, my chicken; it is yet early."

And he went out to fetch more fuel.

Chapter IV. Blessed is He That Believeth

Bonaparte Blenkins sat on the side of the bed. He had wonderfully revived since the day before, held his head high, talked in a full sonorous voice, and ate greedily of all the viands offered him. At his side was a basin of soup, from which he took a deep draught now and again as he watched the fingers of the German, who sat on the mud floor mending the bottom of a chair.

Presently he looked out, where, in the afternoon sunshine, a few half-grown ostriches might be seen wandering listlessly about, and then he looked in again at the little whitewashed room, and at Lyndall, who sat in the doorway looking at a book. Then he raised his chin and tried to adjust an imaginary shirt-collar. Finding none, he smoothed the little grey fringe at the back of his head, and began:

"You are a student of history, I perceive, my friend, from the study of these volumes that lie scattered about this apartment; this fact has been made evident to me."

215

"Well—a little—perhaps—it may be," said the German meekly.

"Being a student of history then," said Bonaparte, raising himself loftily, "you will doubtless have heard of my great, of my celebrated kinsman, Napoleon Bonaparte?"

"Yes, yes," said the German, looking up.

"I, sir," said Bonaparte, "was born at this hour, on an April afternoon, three-and-fifty years ago. The nurse, sir—she was the same who attended when the Duke of Sutherland was born—brought me to my mother. 'There is only one name for this child,' she said: 'he has the nose of his great kinsman;' and so Bonaparte Blenkins became my name—Bonaparte Blenkins. Yes, sir," said Bonaparte, "there is a stream on my maternal side that connects me with a stream on his maternal side."

The German made a sound of astonishment.

220

"The connection," said Bonaparte, "is one which could not be easily comprehended by one unaccustomed to the study of aristocratic pedigrees; but the connection is close."

"Is it possible!" said the German, pausing in his work with much interest and astonishment. "Napoleon an Irishman!"

"Yes," said Bonaparte, "on the mother's side, and that is how we are related. There wasn't a man to beat him," said Bonaparte, stretching himself—"not a man except the Duke of Wellington. And it's a strange coincidence," added Bonaparte, bending forward, "but he was a connection of mine. His nephew, the Duke of Wellington's nephew, married a cousin of mine. She was a woman! See her at one of the court balls—amber satin—daisies in her hair. Worth going a hundred miles to look at her! Often seen her there myself, sir!"

The German moved the leather thongs in and out, and thought of the strange vicissitudes of human life, which might bring the kinsman of dukes and emperors to his humble room.

Bonaparte appeared lost among old memories.

225

"Ah, that Duke of Wellington's nephew!" he broke forth suddenly; "many's the joke I've had with him. Often came to visit me at Bonaparte Hall. Grand place I had then—park, conservatory, servants. He had only one fault, that Duke of Wellington's nephew," said Bonaparte, observing that the German was deeply interested in every word, "He was a coward—what you might call a coward. You've never been in Russia, I suppose?" said Bonaparte, fixing his crosswise looking eyes on the German's face.

"No, no," said the old man humbly. "France, England, Germany, a little in this country; it is all I have travelled."

"I, my friend," said Bonaparte, "I have been in every country in the world, and speak every civilised language, excepting only Dutch and German. I wrote a book of my travels—noteworthy incidents. Publisher got it—cheated me out of it. Great rascals those publishers! Upon one occasion the Duke of Wellington's nephew and I were travelling in Russia. All of a sudden one of the horses dropped down dead as a doornail. There we were—cold

night—snow four feet thick—great forest—one horse not being able to move the sledge—night coming on—wolves.

"'Spree!' says the Duke of Wellington's nephew.

"'Spree, do you call it?' says I. 'Look out.'

230

"There, sticking out under a bush, was nothing less than the nose of a bear. The Duke of Wellington's nephew was up a tree like a shot; I stood quietly on the ground, as cool as I am at this moment, loaded my gun, and climbed up the tree. There was only one bough.

"'Bon,' said the Duke of Wellington's nephew, 'you'd better sit in front.'

"'All right,' said I; 'but keep your gun ready. There are more coming.' He'd got his face buried in my back.

"'How many are there?' said he.

"'Four,' said I.

235

"'How many are there now?' said he.

"'Eight,' said I.

"'How many are there now?' said he.

"'Ten,' said I.

"'Ten! ten!' said he; and down goes his gun.

240

"'Wallie,' I said, 'what have you done? We're dead men now.'

"'Bon, my old fellow,' said he, 'I couldn't help it; my hands trembled so!'

"'Wall,' I said, turning round and seizing his hand, 'Wallie, my dear lad, good-bye. I'm not afraid to die. My legs are long—they hang down—the first bear that comes and I don't hit him, off goes my foot. When he takes it I shall give you my gun and go. You may yet be saved; but tell, oh, tell Mary Ann that I thought of her, that I prayed for her.'

"'Good-bye, old fellow,' said he.

"'God bless you,' said I.

245

"By this time the bears were sitting in a circle all around the tree. Yes," said Bonaparte impressively, fixing his eyes on the German, "a regular, exact, circle. The marks of their tails were left in the snow, and I measured it afterward; a drawing-master couldn't have done it better. It was that saved me. If they'd rushed on me at once, poor old Bon would never have been here to tell

this story. But they came on, sir, systematically, one by one. All the rest sat on their tails and waited. The first fellow came up, and I shot him; the second fellow—I shot him; the third—I shot him. At last the tenth came; he was the biggest of all—the leader, you may say.

"'Wall,' I said, 'give me your hand. My fingers are stiff with the cold; there is only one bullet left. I shall miss him. While he is eating me you get down and take your gun; and live, dear friend, live to remember the man who gave his life for you!' By that time the bear was at me. I felt his paw on my trousers.

"'Oh, Bonnie! Bonnie!' said the Duke of Wellington's nephew. But I just took my gun and put the muzzle to the bear's ear—over he fell—dead!"

Bonaparte Blenkins waited to observe what effect his story had made. Then he took out a dirty white handkerchief and stroked his forehead, and more especially his eyes.

"It always affects me to relate that adventure," he remarked, returning the handkerchief to his pocket. "Ingratitude—base, vile ingratitude—is recalled by it! That man, that man, who but for me would have perished in the pathless wilds of Russia, that man in the hour of my adversity forsook me." The German looked up. "Yes," said Bonaparte, "I had money, I had lands; I said to my wife: 'There is Africa, a struggling country; they want capital; they want men of talent; they want men of ability to open up that land. Let us go.'

"I bought eight thousand pounds' worth of machinery—winnowing, plowing, reaping machines; I loaded a ship with them. Next steamer I came out—wife, children, all. Got to the Cape. Where is the ship with the things? Lost—gone to the bottom! And the box with the money? Lost—nothing saved!

"My wife wrote to the Duke of Wellington's nephew; I didn't wish her to; she did it without my knowledge.

"What did the man whose life I saved do? Did he send me thirty thousand pounds? say, 'Bonaparte, my brother, here is a crumb?' No; he sent me nothing.

"My wife said, 'Write.' I said, 'Mary Ann, NO. While these hands have power to work, NO. While this frame has power to

endure, NO. Never shall it be said that Bonaparte Blenkins asked of any man."

The man's noble independence touched the German.

255

"Your case is hard; yes, that is hard," said the German, shaking his head.

Bonaparte took another draught of the soup, leaned back against the pillows, and sighed deeply.

"I think," he said after a while, rousing himself, "I shall now wander in the benign air, and taste the gentle cool of evening. The stiffness hovers over me yet; exercise is beneficial."

So saying, he adjusted his hat carefully on the bald crown of his head, and moved to the door. After he had gone the German sighed again over his work:

"Ah, Lord! So it is! Ah!"

260

He thought of the ingratitude of the world.

"Uncle Otto," said the child in the doorway, "did you ever hear of ten bears sitting on their tails in a circle?"

"Well, not of ten exactly: but bears do attack travellers every day. It is nothing unheard of," said the German. "A man of such courage, too! Terrible experience that!"

"And how do we know that the story is true, Uncle Otto?"

The German's ire was roused.

265

"That is what I do hate!" he cried. "Know that is true! How do you know that anything is true? Because you are told so. If we begin to question everything—proof, proof, proof, what will we have to believe left? How do you know the angel opened the prison door for Peter, except that Peter said so? How do you know that God talked to Moses, except that Moses wrote it? That is what I hate!"

The girl knit her brows. Perhaps her thoughts made a longer journey than the German dreamed of; for, mark you, the old dream little how their words and lives are texts and studies to the generation that shall succeed them. Not what we are taught, but what we see, makes us, and the child gathers the food on which the adult feeds to the end.

When the German looked up next there was a look of supreme satisfaction in the little mouth and the beautiful eyes.

"What dost see, chicken?" he asked.

The child said nothing, and an agonizing shriek was borne on the afternoon breeze. 270

"Oh, God! my God! I am killed!" cried the voice of Bonaparte, as he, with wide open mouth and shaking flesh, fell into the room, followed by a half-grown ostrich, who put its head in at the door, opened its beak at him, and went away.

"Shut the door! shut the door! As you value my life, shut the door!" cried Bonaparte, sinking into a chair, his face blue and white, with a greenishness about the mouth. "Ah, my friend," he said tremulously, "eternity has looked me in the face! My life's thread hung upon a cord! The valley of the shadow of death!" said Bonaparte, seizing the German's arm.

"Dear, dear, dear!" said the German, who had closed the lower half of the door, and stood much concerned beside the stranger, "you have had a fright. I never knew so young a bird to chase before; but they will take dislikes to certain people. I sent a boy away once because a bird would chase him. Ah, dear, dear!"

"When I looked round," said Bonaparte, "the red and yawning cavity was above me, and the reprehensible paw raised to strike me. My nerves," said Bonaparte, suddenly growing faint, "always delicate—highly strung—are broken—broken! You could not give a little wine, a little brandy my friend?"

The old German hurried away to the bookshelf, and took from behind the books a small bottle, half of whose contents he poured into a cup. Bonaparte drained it eagerly. 275

"How do you feel now?" asked the German, looking at him with much sympathy.

"A little, slightly, better."

The German went out to pick up the battered chimneypot which had fallen before the door.

"I am sorry you got the fright. The birds are bad things till you know them," he said sympathetically, as he put the hat down.

"My friend," said Bonaparte, holding out his hand, "I forgive you; do not be disturbed. Whatever the consequences, I forgive you. I know, I believe, it was with no ill-intent that you allowed me to go out. Give me your hand. I have no ill-feeling; none!" 280

"You are very kind," said the German, taking the extended hand, and feeling suddenly convinced that he was receiving magnanimous forgiveness for some great injury, "you are very kind."

"Don't mention it," said Bonaparte.

He knocked out the crown of his caved-in old hat, placed it on the table before him, leaned his elbows on the table and his face in his hands, and contemplated it.

"Ah, my old friend," he thus apostrophized the hat, "you have served me long, you have served me faithfully, but the last day has come. Never more shall you be borne upon the head of your master. Never more shall you protect his brow from the burning rays of summer or the cutting winds of winter. Henceforth bare-headed must your master go. Good-bye, good-bye, old hat!"

At the end of this affecting appeal the German rose. He went to the box at the foot of his bed; out of it he took a black hat, which had evidently been seldom worn and carefully preserved.

285

"It's not exactly what you may have been accustomed to," he said nervously, putting it down beside the battered chimneypot, "but it might be of some use—a protection to the head, you know."

"My friend," said Bonaparte, "you are not following my advice; you are allowing yourself to be reproached on my account. Do not make yourself unhappy. No; I shall go bare-headed."

"No, no, no!" cried the German energetically. "I have no use for the hat, none at all. It is shut up in the box."

"Then I will take it, my friend. It is a comfort to one's own mind when you have unintentionally injured any one to make reparation. I know the feeling. The hat may not be of that refined cut of which the old one was, but it will serve, yes, it will serve. Thank you," said Bonaparte, adjusting it on his head, and then replacing it on the table. "I shall lie down now and take a little repose," he added; "I much fear my appetite for supper will be lost."

"I hope not, I hope not," said the German, reseating himself at his work, and looking much concerned as Bonaparte stretched

290

himself on the bed and turned the end of the patchwork quilt over his feet.

"You must not think to make your departure, not for many days," said the German presently. "Tant Sannie gives her consent, and—"

"My friend," said Bonaparte, closing his eyes sadly, "you are kind; but were it not that tomorrow is the Sabbath, weak and trembling as I lie here, I would proceed on my way. I must seek work; idleness but for a day is painful. Work, labour—that is the secret of all true happiness!"

He doubled the pillar under his head, and watched how the German drew the leather thongs in and out.

After a while Lyndall silently put her book on the shelf and went home, and the German stood up and began to mix some water and meal for roaster-cakes. As he stirred them with his hands he said:

"I make always a double supply on Saturday night; the hands are then free as the thoughts for Sunday."

295

"The blessed Sabbath!" said Bonaparte.

There was a pause. Bonaparte twisted his eyes without moving his head, to see if supper were already on the fire.

"You must sorely miss the administration of the Lord's word in this desolate spot," added Bonaparte. "Oh, how love I Thine house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth!"

"Well, we do; yes," said the German; "but we do our best. We meet together, and I—well, I say a few words, and perhaps they are not wholly lost, not quite."

"Strange coincidence," said Bonaparte; "my plan always was the same. Was in the Free State once—solitary farm—one neighbour. Every Sunday I called together friend and neighbour, child and servant, and said, 'Rejoice with me, that we may serve the Lord,' and then I addressed them. Ah, those were blessed times," said Bonaparte; "would they might return."

300

The German stirred at the cakes, and stirred, and stirred, and stirred. He could give the stranger his bed, and he could give the stranger his hat, and he could give the stranger his brandy; but his Sunday service!

After a good while he said:

"I might speak to Tant Sannie; I might arrange; you might take the service in my place, if it—"

"My friend," said Bonaparte, "it would give me the profoundest felicity, the most unbounded satisfaction; but in these worn-out habiliments, in these deteriorated garments, it would not be possible, it would not be fitting that I should officiate in service of One whom, for respect, we shall not name. No, my friend, I will remain here; and, while you are assembling yourselves together in the presence of the Lord, I, in my solitude, will think of and pray for you. No; I will remain here!"

It was a touching picture—the solitary man there praying for them. The German cleared his hands from the meal, and went to the chest from which he had taken the black hat. After a little careful feeling about, he produced a black cloth coat, trousers, and waistcoat, which he laid on the table, smiling knowingly. They were of new shining cloth, worn twice a year, when he went to the town to nachtmaal. He looked with great pride at the coat as he unfolded it and held it up.

305

"It's not the latest fashion, perhaps, not a West End cut, not exactly; but it might do; it might serve at a push. Try it on, try it on!" he said, his old grey eyes twinkling with pride.

Bonaparte stood up and tried on the coat. It fitted admirably; the waistcoat could be made to button by ripping up the back, and the trousers were perfect; but below were the ragged boots. The German was not disconcerted. Going to the beam where a pair of top-boots hung, he took them off, dusted them carefully, and put them down before Bonaparte. The old eyes now fairly brimmed over with sparkling enjoyment.

"I have only worn them once. They might serve; they might be endured."

Bonaparte drew them on and stood upright, his head almost touching the beams. The German looked at him with profound admiration. It was wonderful what a difference feathers made in the bird.

The boy Waldo kissed the pages of his book and looked up. Far over the flat lay the kopje, a mere speck; the sheep wandered quietly from bush to bush; the stillness of the early Sunday rested everywhere, and the air was fresh.

310

He looked down at his book. On its page a black insect crept. He lifted it off with his finger. Then he leaned on his elbow, watching its quivering antennae and strange movements, smiling.

"Even you," he whispered, "shall not die. Even you He loves. Even you He will fold in His arms when He takes everything and makes it perfect and happy."

When the thing had gone he smoothed the leaves of his Bible somewhat caressingly. The leaves of that book had dropped blood for him once; they had taken the brightness out of his childhood; from between them had sprung the visions that had clung about him and made night horrible. Adder-like thoughts had lifted their heads, had shot out forked tongues at him, asking mockingly strange, trivial questions that he could not answer, miserable child:

Why did the women in Mark see only one angel and the women in Luke two? Could a story be told in opposite ways and both ways be true? Could it? could it? Then again: Is there nothing always right, and nothing always wrong? Could Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite "put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer?" and could the Spirit of the Lord chant paeans over her, loud paeans, high paeans, set in the book of the Lord, and no voice cry out it was a mean and dastardly sin to lie, and kill the trusting in their sleep? Could the friend of God marry his own sister, and be beloved, and the man who does it today goes to hell, to hell? Was there nothing always right or always wrong?

Those leaves had dropped blood for him once: they had made his heart heavy and cold; they had robbed his childhood of its gladness; now his fingers moved over them caressingly.

315

"My father God knows, my father knows," he said; "we cannot understand; He knows." After a while he whispered, smiling—"I

heard your voice this morning when my eyes were not yet open, I felt you near me, my Father. Why do you love me so? His face was illuminated. In the last four months the old question has gone from me. I know you are good; I know you love everything; I know, I know, I know! I could not have borne it any more, not any more." He laughed softly. "And all the while I was so miserable you were looking at me and loving me, and I never knew it. But I know it now. I feel it," said the boy, and he laughed low; "I feel it!" he laughed.

After a while he began partly to sing, partly to chant the disconnected verses of hymns, those which spoke his gladness, many times over. The sheep with their senseless eyes turned to look at him as he sang.

At last he lapsed into quiet. Then as the boy lay there staring at bush and sand, he saw a vision.

He had crossed the river of Death, and walked on the other bank in the Lord's land of Beulah. His feet sank into the dark grass, and he walked alone. Then, far over the fields, he saw a figure coming across the dark green grass. At first he thought it must be one of the angels; but as it came nearer he began to feel what it was. And it came closer, closer to him, and then the voice said, "Come," and he knew surely Who it was. He ran to the dear feet and touched them with his hands; yes, he held them fast! He lay down beside them. When he looked up the face was over him, and the glorious eyes were loving him; and they two were there alone together.

He laughed a deep laugh; then started up like one suddenly awakened from sleep.

320

"Oh, God!" He cried, "I cannot wait; I cannot wait! I want to die; I want to see Him; I want to touch him. Let me die!" He folded his hands, trembling. "How can I wait so long—for long, long years perhaps? I want to die—to see Him. I will die any death. Oh, let me come!"

Weeping he bowed himself, and quivered from head to foot. After a long while he lifted his head.

"Yes; I will wait; I will wait. But not long; do not let it be very long, Jesus King. I want you; oh, I want you—soon, soon!" He sat

still, staring across the plain with his tearful eyes.

Service No. II

In the front room of the farmhouse sat Tant Sannie in her elbow-chair. In her hand was her great brass-clasped hymn-book, round her neck was a clean white handkerchief, under her feet was a wooden stove. There too sat Em and Lyndall, in clean pinafores and new shoes. There too was the spruce Hottentot in a starched white kapje, and her husband on the other side of the door, with his wool oiled and very much combed out, and staring at his new leather boots. The Kaffer servants were not there because Tant Sannie held they were descended from apes, and needed no salvation. But the rest were gathered for the Sunday service, and waited the officiator.

Meanwhile Bonaparte and the German approached arm in arm—Bonaparte resplendent in the black cloth clothes, a spotless shirt, and a spotless collar; the German in the old salt-and-pepper, casting shy glances of admiration at his companion.

325

At the front door Bonaparte removed his hat with much dignity, raised his shirt collar, and entered. To the centre table he walked, put his hat solemnly down by the big Bible, and bowed his head over it in silent prayer.

The Boer-woman looked at the Hottentot, and the Hottentot looked at the Boer-woman.

There was one thing on earth for which Tant Sannie had a profound reverence, which exercised a subduing influence over her, which made her for the time a better woman—that thing was new, shining black cloth. It made her think of the predikant; it made her think of the elders who sat in the top pew of the church on Sundays, with the hair so nicely oiled, so holy and respectable, with their little swallow-tailed coats; it made her think of heaven, where everything was so holy and respectable, and nobody wore tancord, and the littlest angel had a black-tailed coat. She wished she hadn't called him a thief and a Roman Catholic. She hoped the German hadn't told him. She wondered where those clothes were

when he came in rags to her door. There was no doubt, he was a very respectable man, a gentleman.

The German began to read a hymn. At the end of each line Bonaparte groaned, and twice at the end of every verse.

The Boer-woman had often heard of persons groaning during prayers, to add a certain poignancy and finish to them; old Jan Vanderlinde, her mother's brother, always did it after he was converted; and she would have looked upon it as no especial sign of grace in any one; but to groan at hymn-time! She was startled. She wondered if he remembered that she shook her fist in his face. This was a man of God. They knelt down to pray. The Boer-woman weighed two hundred and fifty pounds, and could not kneel. She sat in her chair, and peeped between her crossed fingers at the stranger's back. She could not understand what he said; but he was in earnest. He shook the chair by the back rail till it made quite a little dust on the mud floor.

330

When they rose from their knees Bonaparte solemnly seated himself in the chair and opened the Bible. He blew his nose, pulled up his shirt collar, smoothed the leaves, stroked down his capacious waistcoat, blew his nose again, looked solemnly round the room, then began.

"All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Having read this portion of Scripture, Bonaparte paused impressively, and looked all round the room.

"I shall not, my dear friends," he said, "long detain you. Much of our precious time has already fled blissfully from us in the voice of thanksgiving and the tongue of praise. A few, a very few words are all I shall address to you, and may they be as a rod of iron dividing the bones from the marrow, and the marrow from the bones.

"In the first place: What is a liar?"

335

The question was put so pointedly, and followed by a pause so profound, that even the Hottentot man left off looking at his boots and opened his eyes, though he understood not a word.

"I repeat," said Bonaparte, "what is a liar?"

The sensation was intense; the attention of the audience was riveted.

"Have you any of you ever seen a liar, my dear friends?" There was a still longer pause. "I hope not; I truly hope not. But I will tell you what a liar is. I knew a liar once—a little boy who lived in Cape Town, in Short Market Street. His mother and I sat together one day, discoursing about our souls.

"'Here, Sampson,' said his mother, 'go and buy sixpence of meiboss from the Malay round the corner.' 340

"When he came back she said: 'How much have you got?'

"'Five,' he said.

"He was afraid if he said six and a half she'd ask for some. And, my friends, that was a lie. The half of a meiboss stuck in his throat and he died and was buried. And where did the soul of that little liar go to, my friends? It went to the lake of fire and brimstone. This brings me to the second point of my discourse.

"What is a lake of fire and brimstone? I will tell you, my friends," said Bonaparte condescendingly. "The imagination unaided cannot conceive it: but by the help of the Lord I will put it before your mind's eye.

"I was travelling in Italy once on a time; I came to a city called Rome, a vast city, and near it is a mountain which spits forth fire. Its name is Etna. Now, there was a man in that city of Rome who had not the fear of God before his eyes, and he loved a woman. The woman died, and he walked up that mountain spitting fire, and when he got to the top he threw himself in at the hole that is there. The next day I went up. I was not afraid; the Lord preserves His servants. And in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou fall into a volcano. It was dark night when I got there, but in the fear of the Lord I walked to the edge of the yawning abyss, and looked in. That sight—that sight, my friends, is impressed upon my most indelible memory. I looked down into the lurid depths upon an incandescent lake, a melted fire, a seething sea; the billows rolled from side to side, and on their fiery crests tossed the white skeleton of the suicide. The heat had burnt the flesh from off the bones; they lay as a light cork upon the melted, fiery waves. One skeleton hand was raised upward, 345

the finger pointing to heaven; the other, with outstretched finger, pointing downward, as though it would say, 'I go below, but you, Bonaparte, may soar above.' I gazed; I stood entranced. At that instant there was a crack in the lurid lake; it swelled, expanded, and the skeleton of the suicide disappeared, to be seen no more by mortal eye."

Here again Bonaparte rested, and then continued:

"The lake of melted stone rose in the crater, it swelled higher and higher at the side, it streamed forth at the top. I had presence of mind; near me was a rock; I stood upon it. The fiery torrent was vomited out and streamed on either side of me. And through that long and terrible night I stood there alone upon that rock, the glowing, fiery lava on every hand—a monument of the long-suffering and tender providence of the Lord, who spared me that I might this day testify in your ears of Him.

"Now, my dear friends, let us deduce the lessons that are to be learnt from this narrative.

"Firstly: let us never commit suicide. The man is a fool, my friends, that man is insane, my friends, who would leave this earth, my friends. Here are joys innumerable, such as it hath not entered into the heart of man to understand, my friends. Here are clothes, my friends; here are beds, my friends; here is delicious food, my friends. Our precious bodies were given us to love, to cherish. Oh, let us do so! Oh, let us never hurt them; but care for and love them, my friends!"

Every one was impressed, and Bonaparte proceeded:

350

"Thirdly; let us not love too much. If that young man had not loved that young woman, he would not have jumped into Mount Etna. The good men of old never did so. Was Jeremiah ever in love, or Ezekiel, or Hosea, or even any of the minor prophets? No. Then why should we be? Thousands are rolling in that lake at this moment who would say, 'It was love that brought us here.' Oh, let us think always of our own souls first.

'A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.'

"Oh, beloved friends, remember the little boy and the meiboss; remember the young girl and the young man; remember the lake, the fire, and the brimstone; remember the suicide's skeleton on the pitchy billows of Mount Etna; remember the voice of warning that has this day sounded in your ears; and what I say to you I say to all—watch! May the Lord add his blessings!"

Here the Bible closed with a tremendous thud. Tant Sannie loosened the white handkerchief about her neck and wiped her eyes, and the coloured girl, seeing her do so, sniffled. The did not understand the discourse, which made it the more affecting.

There hung over it that inscrutable charm which hovers forever for the human intellect over the incomprehensible and shadowy. When the last hymn was sung the German conducted the officiator to Tant Sannie, who graciously extended her hand, and offered coffee and a seat on the sofa. Leaving him there, the German hurried away to see how the little plum-pudding he had left at home was advancing; and Tant Sannie remarked that it was a hot day. Bonaparte gathered her meaning as she fanned herself with the end of her apron. He bowed low in acquiescence. A long silence followed. Tant Sannie spoke again. Bonaparte gave her no ear; his eye was fixed on a small miniature on the opposite wall, which represented Tant Sannie as she had appeared on the day before her confirmation, fifteen years before, attired in green muslin. Suddenly he started to his feet, walked up to the picture, and took his stand before it. Long and wistfully he gazed into its features; it was easy to see that he was deeply moved. With a sudden movement, as though no longer able to restrain himself, he seized the picture, loosened it from its nail, and held it close to his eyes. At length, turning to the Boer-woman, he said, in a voice of deep emotion:

"You will, I trust, dear madam, excuse this exhibition of my feelings; but this—this little picture recalls to me my first and best

beloved, my dear departed wife, who is now a saint in heaven."

Tant Sannie could not understand; but the Hottentot maid, who had taken her seat on the floor beside her mistress, translated the English into Dutch as far as she was able.

"Ah, my first, my beloved!" he added, looking tenderly down at the picture. "Oh, the beloved, the beautiful lineaments! My angel wife! This is surely a sister of yours, madame?" he added, fixing his eyes on Tant Sannie.

The Dutchwoman blushed, shook her head, and pointed to herself.

Carefully, intently, Bonaparte looked from the picture in his hand to Tant Sannie's features, and from the features back to the picture. Then slowly a light broke over his countenance, he looked up, it became a smile; he looked back at the miniature, his whole countenance was effulgent.

"Ah, yes; I see it now," he cried, turning his delighted gaze on the Boer-woman; "eyes, mouth, nose, chin, the very expression!" he cried. "How is it possible I did not notice it before?"

360

"Take another cup of coffee," said Tant Sannie. "Put some sugar in."

Bonaparte hung the picture tenderly up, and was turning to take the cup from her hand, when the German appeared, to say that the pudding was ready and the meat on the table.

"He's a God-fearing man, and one who knows how to behave himself," said the Boer-woman as he went out at the door. "If he's ugly, did not the Lord make him? And are we to laugh at the Lord's handiwork? It is better to be ugly and good than pretty and bad; though of course it's nice when one is both," said Tant Sannie, looking complacently at the picture on the wall.

In the afternoon the German and Bonaparte sat before the door of the cabin. Both smoked in complete silence—Bonaparte with a book in his hands and his eyes half closed; the German puffing vigorously, and glancing up now and again at the serene blue sky overhead.

"Supposing—you—you, in fact, made the remark to me," burst forth the German suddenly, "that you were looking for a situation."

365

Bonaparte opened his mouth wide, and sent a stream of smoke through his lips.

"Now supposing," said the German—"merely supposing, of course—that some one, some one, in fact, should make an offer to you, say, to become schoolmaster on their farm and teach two children, two little girls, perhaps, and would give you forty pounds a year, would you accept it? Just supposing, of course."

"Well, my dear friend," said Bonaparte, "that would depend on circumstances. Money is no consideration with me. For my wife I have made provision for the next year. My health is broken. Could I meet a place where a gentleman would be treated as a gentleman I would accept it, however small the remuneration. With me," said Bonaparte, "money is no consideration."

"Well," said the German, when he had taken a whiff or two more from his pipe, "I think I shall go up and see Tant Sannie a little. I go up often on Sunday afternoon to have a general conversation, to see her, you know. Nothing—nothing particular, you know."

The old man put his book into his pocket, and walked up to the farmhouse with a peculiarly knowing and delighted expression of countenance.

370

"He doesn't suspect what I'm going to do," soliloquized the German; "hasn't the least idea. A nice surprise for him."

The man whom he had left at his doorway winked at the retreating figure with a wink that was not to be described.

Chapter VI. Bonaparte Blenkins Makes His Nest

"Ah, what is the matter?" asked Waldo, stopping at the foot of the ladder with a load of skins on his back that he was carrying up to the loft. Through the open door in the gable little Em was visible, her feet dangling from the high bench on which she sat. The room, once a storeroom, had been divided by a row of mealie bags into two parts—the back being Bonaparte's bedroom, the front his schoolroom.

"Lyndall made him angry," said the girl tearfully; "and he has given me the fourteenth of John to learn. He says he will teach me

to behave myself when Lyndall troubles him."

"What did she do?" asked the boy.

375

"You see," said Em, hopelessly turning the leaves, "whenever he talks she looks out at the door, as though she did not hear him. Today she asked him what the signs of the Zodiac were, and he said he was surprised that she should ask him; it was not a fit and proper thing for little girls to talk about. Then she asked him who Copernicus was; and he said he was one of the Emperors of Rome, who burned the Christians in a golden pig, and the worms ate him up while he was still alive. I don't know why," said Em plaintively, "but she just put her books under her arm and walked out; and she will never come to his school again, she says, and she always does what she says. And now I must sit here every day alone," said Em, the great tears dropping softly.

"Perhaps Tant Sannie will send him away," said the boy, in his mumbling way, trying to comfort her.

"No," said Em, shaking her head; "no. Last night when the little Hottentot maid was washing her feet, he told her he liked such feet, and that fat women were so nice to him; and she said I must always put pure cream in his coffee now. No; he'll never go away," said Em dolorously.

The boy put down his skins and fumbled in his pocket, and produced a small piece of paper containing something. He stuck it out toward her.

"There, take it for you," he said. This was by way of comfort.

380

Em opened it and found a small bit of gum, a commodity prized by the children; but the great tears dropped down slowly on to it.

Waldo was distressed. He had cried so much in his morsel of life that tears in another seemed to burn him.

"If," he said, stepping in awkwardly and standing by the table, "if you will not cry I will tell you something—a secret."

"What is that?" asked Em, instantly becoming decidedly better.

"You will tell it to no human being?"

385

"No."

He bent nearer to her, and with deep solemnity said:

"I have made a machine!"

Em opened her eyes.

"Yes; a machine for shearing sheep. It is almost done," said the boy. "There is only one thing that is not right yet; but it will be soon. When you think, and think, and think, all night and all day, it comes at last," he added mysteriously.

390

"Where is it?"

"Here! I always carry it here," said the boy, putting his hand to his breast, where a bulging-out was visible. "This is a model. When it is done they will have to make a large one."

"Show it me."

The boy shook his head.

"No, not till it is done. I cannot let any human being see it till then."

395

"It is a beautiful secret," said Em; and the boy shuffled out to pick up his skins.

That evening father and son sat in the cabin eating their supper. The father sighed deeply sometimes. Perhaps he thought how long a time it was since Bonaparte had visited the cabin; but his son was in that land in which sighs have no part. It is a question whether it were not better to be the shabbiest of fools, and know the way up the little stair of imagination to the land of dreams, than the wisest of men, who see nothing that the eyes do not show, and feel nothing that the hands do not touch. The boy chewed his brown bread and drank his coffee; but in truth he saw only his machine finished—that last something found out and added. He saw it as it worked with beautiful smoothness; and over and above, as he chewed his bread and drank his coffee, there was that delightful consciousness of something bending over him and loving him. It would not have been better in one of the courts of heaven, where the walls are set with rows of the King of Glory's amethysts and milk-white pearls, than there, eating his supper in that little room.

As they sat in silence there was a knock at the door. When it was opened the small woolly head of a little nigger showed itself. She was a messenger from Tant Sannie: the German was wanted at once at the homestead. Putting on his hat with both hands, he

hurried off. The kitchen was in darkness, but in the pantry beyond Tant Sannie and her maids were assembled.

A Kaffer girl, who had been grinding pepper between two stones, knelt on the floor, the lean Hottentot stood with a brass candlestick in her hand, and Tant Sannie, near the shelf, with a hand on each hip, was evidently listening intently, as were her companions.

"What may be it?" cried the old German in astonishment. The room beyond the pantry was the storeroom. Through the thin wooden partition there arose at that instant, evidently from some creature ensconced there, a prolonged and prodigious howl, followed by a succession of violent blows against the partition wall.

The German seized the churn-stick, and was about to rush round the house, when the Boer-woman impressively laid her hand upon his arm.

"That is his head," said Tant Sannie, "that is his head."

"But what might it be?" asked the German, looking from one to the other, churn-stick in hand.

A low hollow bellow prevented reply, and the voice of Bonaparte lifted itself on high.

"Mary-Ann! my angel! my wife!"

"Isn't it dreadful?" said Tant Sannie, as the blows were repeated fiercely. "He has got a letter; his wife is dead. You must go and comfort him," said Tant Sannie at last, "and I will go with you. It would not be the thing for me to go alone—me, who am only thirty-three, and he an unmarried man now," said Tant Sannie, blushing and smoothing out her apron.

Upon this they all trudged round the house in company—the Hottentot maid carrying the light, Tant Sannie and the German following, and the Kaffer girl bringing up the rear.

"Oh," said Tant Sannie, "I see now it wasn't wickedness made him do without his wife so long—only necessity."

At the door she motioned to the German to enter, and followed him closely. On the stretcher behind the sacks Bonaparte lay on his face, his head pressed into a pillow, his legs kicking gently.

The Boer-woman sat down on a box at the foot of the bed. The German stood with folded hands looking on.

"We must all die," said Tant Sannie at last; "it is the dear Lord's will." 410

Hearing her voice, Bonaparte turned himself on to his back.

"It's very hard," said Tant Sannie, "I know, for I've lost two husbands."

Bonaparte looked up into the German's face.

"Oh, what does she say? Speak to me words of comfort!"

The German repeated Tant Sannie's remark. 415

"Ah, I—I also! Two dear, dear wives, whom I shall never see any more!" cried Bonaparte, flinging himself back upon the bed.

He howled, till the tarantulas, who lived between the rafters and the zinc roof, felt the unusual vibration, and looked out with their wicked bright eyes, to see what was going on.

Tant Sannie sighed, the Hottentot maid sighed, the Kaffer girl who looked in at the door put her hand over her mouth and said "Mow-wah!"

"You must trust in the Lord," said Tant Sannie. "He can give you more than you have lost."

"I do, I do!" he cried; "but oh, I have no wife! I have no wife!" 420

Tant Sannie was much affected, and came and stood near the bed.

"Ask him if he won't have a little pap—nice, fine, flour pap. There is some boiling on the kitchen fire."

The German made the proposal, but the widower waved his hand.

"No, nothing shall pass my lips. I should be suffocated. No, no! Speak not of food to me!"

"Pap, and a little brandy in," said Tant Sannie coaxingly. 425

Bonaparte caught the word.

"Perhaps, perhaps—if I struggled with myself—for the sake of my duties I might imbibe a few drops," he said, looking with quivering lip up into the German's face. "I must do my duty, must I not?"

Tant Sannie gave the order, and the girl went for the pap.

"I know how it was when my first husband died. They could do nothing with me," the Boer-woman said, "till I had eaten a sheep's trotter, and honey, and a little roaster-cake. I know."

Bonaparte sat up on the bed with his legs stretched out in front of him, and a hand on each knee, blubbering softly.

430

"Oh, she was a woman! You are very kind to try and comfort me, but she was my wife. For a woman that is my wife I could live; for the woman that is my wife I could die! For a woman that is my wife I could—Ah! that sweet word 'wife'; when will it rest upon my lips again?"

When his feelings had subsided a little he raised the corners of his turned-down mouth, and spoke to the German with flabby lips.

"Do you think she understands me? Oh, tell her every word, that she may know I thank her."

At that instant the girl reappeared with a basin of steaming gruel and a black bottle.

Tant Sannie poured some of its contents into the basin, stirred it well, and came to the bed.

435

"Oh, I can't, I can't! I shall die! I shall die!" said Bonaparte, putting his hands to his side.

"Come, just a little," said Tant Sannie coaxingly; "just a drop."

"It's too thick, it's too thick. I should choke."

Tant Sannie added from the contents of the bottle and held out a spoonful; Bonaparte opened his mouth like a little bird waiting for a worm, and held it open, as she dipped again and again into the pap.

"Ah, this will do your heart good," said Tant Sannie, in whose mind the relative functions of heart and stomach were exceedingly ill-defined.

440

When the basin was emptied the violence of his grief was much assuaged; he looked at Tant Sannie with gentle tears.

"Tell him," said the Boer-woman, "that I hope he will sleep well, and that the Lord will comfort him, as the Lord only can."

"Bless you, dear friend, God bless you," said Bonaparte.

When the door was safely shut on the German, the Hottentot, and the Dutchwoman, he got off the bed and washed away the

soap he had rubbed on his eyelids.

"Bon," he said, slapping his leg, "you're the cutest lad I ever came across. If you don't turn out the old Hymns-and-prayers, and pummel the Ragged coat, and get your arms round the fat one's waist and a wedding-ring on her finger, then you are not Bonaparte. But you are Bonaparte. Bon, you're a fine boy!"

445

Making which pleasing reflection, he pulled off his trousers and got into bed cheerfully.

Chapter VII. He Sets His Trap

"May I come in? I hope I do not disturb you, my dear friend," said Bonaparte, late one evening, putting his nose in at the cabin door, where the German and his son sat finishing their supper.

It was now two months since he had been installed as schoolmaster in Tant Sannie's household, and he had grown mighty and more mighty day by day. He visited the cabin no more, sat close to Tant Sannie drinking coffee all the evening, and walked about loftily with his hands under the coat-tails of the German's black cloth and failed to see even a nigger who wished him a deferential good morning. It was therefore with no small surprise that the German perceived Bonaparte's red nose at the door.

"Walk in, walk in," he said joyfully. "Boy, boy, see if there is any coffee left. Well, none. Make a fire. We have done supper, but —"

"My dear friend," said Bonaparte, taking off his hat, "I came not to sup, not for mere creature comforts, but for an hour of brotherly intercourse with a kindred spirit. The press of business and the weight of thought, but they alone, may sometimes prevent me from sharing the secrets of my bosom with him for whom I have so great a sympathy. You perhaps wonder when I shall return the two pounds—"

450

"Oh, no, no! Make a fire, make a fire, boy. We will have a pot of hot coffee presently," said the German, rubbing his hands and looking about, not knowing how best to show his pleasure at the unexpected visit.

For three weeks the German's diffident "Good evening" had met with a stately bow; the chin of Bonaparte lifting itself higher daily; and his shadow had not darkened the cabin doorway since he came to borrow the two pounds. The German walked to the head of the bed and took down a blue bag that hung there. Blue bags were a speciality of the German's. He kept above fifty stowed away in different corners of his room—some filled with curious stones, some with seeds that had been in his possession fifteen years, some with rusty nails, buckles, and bits of old harness—in all, a wonderful assortment, but highly prized.

"We have something here not so bad," said the German, smiling knowingly, as he dived his hand into the bag and took out a handful of almonds and raisins; "I buy these for my chickens. They increase in size, but they still think the old man must have something nice for them. And the old man—well, a big boy may have a sweet tooth sometimes, may he not? Ha, ha!" said the German, chuckling at his own joke, as he heaped the plate with almonds. "Here is a stone—two stones to crack them—no late patent improvement—well, Adam's nut-cracker; ha, ha! But I think we shall do. We will not leave them uncracked. We will consume a few without fashionable improvements."

Here the German sat down on one side of the table, Bonaparte on the other; each one with a couple of flat stones before him, and the plate between them.

"Do not be afraid," said the German, "do not be afraid. I do not forget the boy at the fire; I crack for him. The bag is full. Why, this is strange," he said suddenly, cracking upon a large nut; "three kernels! I have not observed that before. This must be retained. This is valuable." He wrapped the nut gravely in paper, and put it carefully in his waistcoat pocket. "Valuable, very valuable!" he said, shaking his head.

"Ah, my friend," said Bonaparte, "what joy it is to be once more in your society."

The German's eyes glistened, and Bonaparte seized his hand and squeezed it warmly. They then proceeded to crack and eat. After a while Bonaparte said, stuffing a handful of raisins into his mouth:

"I was so deeply grieved, my dear friend, that you and Tant Sannie had some slight unpleasantness this evening."

"Oh, no, no," said the German; "it is all right now. A few sheep missing; but I make it good myself. I give my twelve sheep, and work in the other eight."

"It is rather hard that you should have to make good the lost sheep," said Bonaparte; "it is no fault of yours."

460

"Well," said the German, "this is the case. Last evening I count the sheep at the kraal—twenty are missing. I ask the herd; he tells me they are with the other flock; he tells me so distinctly; how can I think he lies? This afternoon I count the other flock. The sheep are not there. I come back here: the herd is gone; the sheep are gone. But I cannot—no, I will not—believe he stole them," said the German, growing suddenly excited. "Some one else, but not he. I know that boy. I knew him three years. He is a good boy. I have seen him deeply affected on account of his soul. And she would send the police after him! I say I would rather make the loss good myself. I will not have it; he has fled in fear. I know his heart. It was," said the German, with a little gentle hesitation, "under my words that he first felt his need of a Saviour."

Bonaparte cracked some more almonds, then said, yawning, and more as though he asked for the sake of having something to converse about than from any interest he felt in the subject:

"And what has become of the herd's wife?"

The German was alight again in a moment.

"Yes; his wife. She has a child six days old, and Tant Sannie would turn her out into the fields this night. That," said the German rising, "that is what I call cruelty—diabolical cruelty. My soul abhors that deed. The man that could do such a thing I could run him through with a knife!" said the German, his grey eyes flashing, and his bushy black beard adding to the murderous fury of his aspect. Then suddenly subsiding, he said, "But all is now well; Tant Sannie gives her word that the maid shall remain for some days. I go to Oom Muller's tomorrow to learn if the sheep may not be there. If they are not, then I return. They are gone, that is all. I make it good."

465

"Tant Sannie is a singular woman," said Bonaparte, taking the tobacco bag the German passed to him.

"Singular! Yes," said the German; "but her heart is on her right side. I have lived long years with her, and I may say, I have for her an affection, which she returns. I may say," added the German with warmth, "I may say, that there is not one soul on this farm for whom I have not an affection."

"Ah, my friend," said Bonaparte, "when the grace of God is in our hearts, is it not with us all? Do we not love the very worm we tread upon, and as we tread upon it? Do we know distinctions of race, or of sex, or of colour? No!

'Love so amazing, so divine,
It fills my soul, my life, my all.'

After a time he sank into a less fervent mood, and remarked:

"The coloured female who waits upon Tant Sannie appears to be of a virtuous disposition, an individual who—" 470

"Virtuous!" said the German; "I have confidence in her. There is that in her which is pure, that which is noble. The rich and high that walk this earth with lofty eyelids might exchange with her."

The German here got up to bring a coal for Bonaparte's pipe, and they sat together talking for a while. At length Bonaparte knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

"It is time that I took my departure, dear friend," he said; "but, before I do so, shall we not close this evening of sweet communion and brotherly intercourse by a few words of prayer? Oh, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the dew upon the mountains of Hermon; for there the Lord bestowed a blessing, even life for evermore."

"Stay and drink some coffee," said the German.

"No, thank you, my friend; I have business that must be done tonight," said Bonaparte. "Your dear son appears to have gone to sleep. He is going to take the wagon to the mill tomorrow! What a little man he is." 475

"A fine boy."

But though the boy nodded before the fire he was not asleep; and they all knelt down to pray.

When they rose from their knees Bonaparte extended his hand to Waldo, and patted him on the head.

"Good night, my lad," said he. "As you go to the mill tomorrow, we shall not see you for some days. Good night! Good-bye! The Lord bless and guide you; and may He bring you back to us in safety and find us all as you have left us!" He laid some emphasis on the last words. "And you, my dear friend," he added, turning with redoubled warmth to the German, "long, long shall I look back to this evening as a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, as an hour of blessed intercourse with a brother in Jesus. May such often return. The Lord bless you!" he added, with yet deeper fervour, "richly, richly."

Then he opened the door and vanished out into the darkness.

480

"He, he, he!" laughed Bonaparte, as he stumbled over the stones. "If there isn't the rarest lot of fools on this farm that ever God Almighty stuck legs to. He, he, he! When the worms come out then the blackbirds feed. Ha, ha, ha!" Then he drew himself up; even when alone he liked to pose with a certain dignity; it was second nature to him.

He looked in at the kitchen door. The Hottentot maid who acted as interpreter between Tant Sannie and himself was gone, and Tant Sannie herself was in bed.

"Never mind, Bon, my boy," he said, as he walked round to his own room, "tomorrow will do. He, he, he!"

Chapter VIII. He Catches the Old Bird

At four o'clock the next afternoon the German rode across the plain, returning from his search for the lost sheep. He rode slowly, for he had been in the saddle since sunrise and was somewhat weary, and the heat of the afternoon made his horse sleepy as it picked its way slowly along the sandy road. Every now and then a great red spider would start out of the karoo on one side of the path and run across to the other, but nothing else broke the still monotony. Presently, behind one of the highest of the milk-bushes

that dotted the roadside, the German caught sight of a Kaffer woman, seated there evidently for such shadow as the milk-bush might afford from the sloping rays of the sun.

The German turned the horse's head out of the road. It was not his way to pass a living creature without a word of greeting. Coming nearer, he found it was no other than the wife of the absconding Kaffer herd. She had a baby tied on her back by a dirty strip of red blanket; another strip hardly larger was twisted round her waist, for the rest her black body was naked. She was a sullen, ill-looking woman with lips hideously protruding.

The German questioned her as to how she came there. She muttered in broken Dutch that she had been turned away. Had she done evil? She shook her head sullenly. Had she had food given her? She grunted a negative, and fanned the flies from her baby. Telling the woman to remain where she was, he turned his horse's head to the road and rode off at a furious pace.

"Hard-hearted! cruel! Oh, my God! Is this the way? Is this charity?"

"Yes, yes, yes," ejaculated the old man as he rode on; but, presently, his anger began to evaporate, his horse's pace slackened, and by the time he had reached his own door he was nodding and smiling.

Dismounting quickly, he went to the great chest where his provisions were kept. Here he got out a little meal, a little mealies, a few roaster-cakes. These he tied up in three blue handkerchiefs, and putting them into a sailcloth bag, he strung them over his shoulders. Then he looked circumspectly out at the door. It was very bad to be discovered in the act of giving; it made him red up to the roots of his old grizzled hair. No one was about, however, so he rode off again. Beside the milk-bush sat the Kaffer woman still—like Hagar, he thought, thrust out by her mistress in the wilderness to die. Telling her to loosen the handkerchief from her head, he poured into it the contents of his bag. The woman tied it up in sullen silence.

"You must try and get to the next farm," said the German.

The woman shook her head; she would sleep in the field.

The German reflected. Kaffer women were accustomed to sleep in the open air; but then, the child was small, and after so hot a day the night might be chilly. That she would creep back to the huts at the homestead when the darkness favoured her, the German's sagacity did not make evident to him. He took off the old brown salt-and-pepper coat, and held it out to her. The woman received it in silence, and laid it across her knee. "With that they will sleep warmly; not so bad. Ha, ha!" said the German. And he rode home, nodding his head in a manner that would have made any other man dizzy.

"I wish he would not come back tonight," said Em, her face wet with tears.

"It will be just the same if he comes back tomorrow," said Lyndall.

The two girls sat on the step of the cabin weeping for the German's return. Lyndall shaded her eyes with her hand from the sunset light.

495

"There he comes," she said, "whistling 'Ach Jerusalem du schone' so loud I can hear him from here."

"Perhaps he has found the sheep."

"Found them!" said Lyndall. "He would whistle just so if he knew he had to die tonight."

"You look at the sunset, eh, chickens?" the German said, as he came up at a smart canter. "Ah, yes, that is beautiful!" he added, as he dismounted, pausing for a moment with his hand on the saddle to look at the evening sky, where the sun shot up long flaming streaks, between which and the eye thin yellow clouds floated. "Ei! you weep?" said the German, as the girls ran up to him.

Before they had time to reply the voice of Tant Sannie was heard.

500

"You child, of the child, of the child of a Kaffer's dog, come here!"

The German looked up. He thought the Dutchwoman, come out to cool herself in the yard, called to some misbehaving servant. The old man looked round to see who it might be.

"You old vagabond of a praying German, are you deaf?"

Tant Sannie stood before the steps of the kitchen; upon them sat the lean Hottentot, upon the highest stood Bonaparte Blenkins, both hands folded under the tails of his coat, and his eyes fixed on the sunset sky.

The German dropped the saddle on the ground.

505

"Bish, bish, bish! what may this be?" he said, and walked toward the house. "Very strange!"

The girls followed him: Em still weeping; Lyndall with her face rather white and her eyes wide open.

"And I have the heart of a devil, did you say? You could run me through with a knife, could you?" cried the Dutchwoman. "I could not drive the Kaffer maid away because I was afraid of you, was I? Oh, you miserable rag! I loved you, did I? I would have liked to marry you, would I? would I? WOULD I?" cried the Boer-woman; "you cat's tail, you dog's paw! Be near my house tomorrow morning when the sun rises," she gasped, "my Kaffers will drag you through the sand. They would do it gladly, any of them, for a bit of tobacco, for all your prayings with them."

"I am bewildered, I am bewildered," said the German, standing before her and raising his hand to his forehead; "I—I do not understand."

"Ask him, ask him?" cried Tant Sannie, pointing to Bonaparte; "he knows. You thought he could not make me understand, but he did, he did, you old fool! I know enough English for that. You be here," shouted the Dutchwoman, "when the morning star rises, and I will let my Kaffers take you out and drag you, till there is not one bone left in your old body that is not broken as fine as bobootie-meat, you old beggar! All your rags are not worth that—they should be thrown out onto the ash-heap," cried the Boer-woman; "but I will have them for my sheep. Not one rotten hoof of your old mare do you take with you; I will have her—all, all for my sheep that you have lost, you godless thing!"

510

The Boer-woman wiped the moisture from her mouth with the palm of her hand.

The German turned to Bonaparte, who still stood on the step absorbed in the beauty of the sunset.

"Do not address me; do not approach me, lost man," said Bonaparte, not moving his eye nor lowering his chin. "There is a crime from which all nature revolts; there is a crime whose name is loathsome to the human ear—that crime is yours; that crime is ingratitude. This woman has been your benefactress; on her farm you have lived; after her sheep you have looked; into her house you have been allowed to enter and hold Divine service—an honour of which you were never worthy; and how have you rewarded her?—basely, basely, basely!"

"But it is all false, lies and falsehoods. I must, I will speak," said the German, suddenly looking round bewildered. "Do I dream? Are you mad? What may it be?"

"Go, dog," cried the Dutchwoman; "I would have been a rich woman this day if it had not been for your laziness. Praying with the Kaffers behind the kraal walls. Go, you Kaffer's dog!"

515

"But what then is the matter? What may have happened since I left?" said the German, turning to the Hottentot woman, who sat upon the step.

She was his friend; she would tell him kindly the truth. The woman answered by a loud, ringing laugh.

"Give it him, old missis! Give it him!"

It was so nice to see the white man who had been master hunted down. The coloured woman laughed, and threw a dozen mealie grains into her mouth to chew.

All anger and excitement faded from the old man's face. He turned slowly away and walked down the little path to his cabin, with his shoulders bent; it was all dark before him. He stumbled over the threshold of his own well-known door.

520

Em, sobbing bitterly, would have followed him; but the Boer-woman prevented her by a flood of speech which convulsed the Hottentot, so low were its images.

"Come, Em," said Lyndall, lifting her small proud head, "let us go in. We will not stay to hear such language."

She looked into the Boer-woman's eyes. Tant Sannie understood the meaning of the look if not the words. She waddled after them, and caught Em by the arm. She had struck Lyndall once years before, and had never done it again, so she took Em.

"So you will defy me, too, will you, you Englishman's ugliness!" she cried, and with one hand she forced the child down, and held her head tightly against her knee; with the other she beat her first upon one cheek, and then upon the other.

For one instant Lyndall looked on, then she laid her small fingers on the Boer-woman's arm. With the exertion of half its strength Tant Sannie might have flung the girl back upon the stones. It was not the power of the slight fingers, tightly though they clinched her broad wrist—so tightly that at bedtime the marks were still there; but the Boer-woman looked into the clear eyes and at the quivering white lips, and with a half-surprised curse relaxed her hold. The girl drew Em's arm through her own.

525

"Move!" she said to Bonaparte, who stood in the door, and he, Bonaparte the invincible, in the hour of his triumph, moved to give her place.

The Hottentot ceased to laugh, and an uncomfortable silence fell on all the three in the doorway.

Once in their room, Em sat down on the floor and wailed bitterly. Lyndall lay on the bed with her arm drawn across her eyes, very white and still.

"Hoo, hoo!" cried Em; "and they won't let him take the grey mare; and Waldo has gone to the mill. Hoo, hoo, and perhaps they won't let us go and say good-bye to him. Hoo, hoo, hoo!"

"I wish you would be quiet," said Lyndall without moving. "Does it give you such felicity to let Bonaparte know he is hurting you? We will ask no one. It will be suppertime soon. Listen—and when you hear the clink of the knives and forks we will go out and see him."

530

Em suppressed her sobs and listened intently, kneeling at the door. Suddenly some one came to the window and put the shutter up.

"Who was that?" said Lyndall, starting.

"The girl, I suppose," said Em. "How early she is this evening!"

But Lyndall sprang from the bed and seized the handle of the door, shaking it fiercely. The door was locked on the outside. She ground her teeth.

"What is the matter?" asked Em.

535

The room was in perfect darkness now.

"Nothing," said Lyndall quietly; "only they have locked us in."

She turned, and went back to bed again. But ere long Em heard a sound of movement. Lyndall had climbed up into the window, and with her fingers felt the woodwork that surrounded the panes. Slipping down, the girl loosened the iron knob from the foot of the bedstead, and climbing up again she broke with it every pane of glass in the window, beginning at the top and ending at the bottom.

"What are you doing?" asked Em, who heard the falling fragments.

Her companion made her no reply; but leaned on every little cross-bar, which cracked and gave way beneath her. Then she pressed with all her strength against the shutter. She had thought the wooden buttons would give way, but by the clinking sound she knew that the iron bar had been put across. She was quite quiet for a time. Clambering down, she took from the table a small one-bladed penknife, with which she began to peck at the hard wood of the shutter.

540

"What are you doing now?" asked Em, who had ceased crying in her wonder, and had drawn near.

"Trying to make a hole," was the short reply.

"Do you think you will be able to?"

"No; but I am trying."

In an agony of suspense Em waited. For ten minutes Lyndall pecked. The hole was three-eighths of an inch deep—then the blade sprung into ten pieces.

545

"What has happened now?" Em asked, blubbering afresh.

"Nothing," said Lyndall. "Bring me my nightgown, a piece of paper, and the matches."

Wondering, Em fumbled about till she found them.

"What are you going to do with them?" she whispered.

"Burn down the window."

550

"But won't the whole house take fire and burn down too?"

"Yes."

"But will it not be very wicked?"

"Yes, very. And I do not care."

She arranged the nightgown carefully in the corner of the window, with the chips of the frame about it. There was only one match in the box. She drew it carefully along the wall. For a moment it burnt up blue, and showed the tiny face with its glistening eyes. She held it carefully to the paper. For an instant it burnt up brightly, then flickered and went out. She blew the spark, but it died also. Then she threw the paper on to the ground, trod on it, and went to her bed, and began to undress.

555

Em rushed to the door, knocking against it wildly.

"Oh, Tant Sannie! Tant Sannie! Oh, let us out!" she cried. "Oh, Lyndall, what are we to do?"

Lyndall wiped a drop of blood off the lip she had bitten.

"I am going to sleep," she said. "If you like to sit there and howl till the morning, do. Perhaps you will find that it helps; I never heard that howling helped any one."

Long after, when Em herself had gone to bed and was almost asleep, Lyndall came and stood at her bedside.

560

"Here," she said, slipping a little pot of powder into her hand; "rub some on to your face. Does it not burn where she struck you?"

Then she crept back to her own bed. Long, long after, when Em was really asleep, she lay still awake, and folded her hands on her little breast, and muttered—

"When that day comes, and I am strong, I will hate everything that has power, and help everything that is weak." And she bit her lip again.

The German looked out at the cabin door for the last time that night. Then he paced the room slowly and sighed. Then he drew out pen and paper, and sat down to write, rubbing his old grey eyes with his knuckles before he began.

"My Chickens: You did not come to say good-bye to the old man. Might you? Ah, well, there is a land where they part no more, where saints immortal reign.

565

"I sit here alone, and I think of you. Will you forget the old man? When you wake tomorrow he will be far away. The old horse is lazy, but he has his stick to help him; that is three legs.

He comes back one day with gold and diamonds. Will you welcome him? Well, we shall see. I go to meet Waldo. He comes back with the wagon; then he follows me. Poor boy? God knows. There is a land where all things are made right, but that land is not here.

"My little children, serve the Saviour; give your hearts to Him while you are yet young. Life is short.

"Nothing is mine, otherwise I would say, Lyndall, take my books, Em my stones. Now I say nothing. The things are mine: it is not righteous, God knows? But I am silent. Let it be. But I feel it, I must say I feel it.

"Do not cry too much for the old man. He goes out to seek his fortune, and comes back with it in a bag, it may be.

"I love my children. Do they think of me? I am Old Otto, who goes out to seek his fortune.

570

"O.F."

Having concluded this quaint production, he put it where the children would find it the next morning, and proceeded to prepare his bundle. He never thought of entering a protest against the loss of his goods; like a child, he submitted, and wept. He had been there eleven years, and it was hard to go away. He spread open on the bed a blue handkerchief, and on it put one by one the things he thought most necessary and important—a little bag of curious seeds, which he meant to plant some day, an old German hymn-book, three misshapen stones that he greatly valued, a Bible, a shirt and two handkerchiefs; then there was room for nothing more. He tied up the bundle tightly and put it on a chair by his bedside.

"That is not much; they cannot say I take much," he said, looking at it.

He put his knotted stick beside it, his blue tobacco bag and his short pipe, and then inspected his coats. He had two left—a moth-eaten overcoat and a black alpaca, out at the elbows. He decided for the overcoat; it was warm, certainly, but then he could carry it over his arm and only put it on when he met some one along the road. It was more respectable than the black alpaca.

He hung the greatcoat over the back of the chair, and stuffed a hard bit of roaster-cake under the knot of the bundle, and then his preparations were completed. The German stood contemplating them with much satisfaction. He had almost forgotten his sorrow at leaving in his pleasure at preparing. Suddenly he started; an expression of intense pain passed over his face. He drew back his left arm quickly, and then pressed his right hand upon his breast.

"Ah, the sudden pang again," he said.

His face was white, but it quickly regained its colour. Then the old man busied himself in putting everything right.

"I will leave it neat. They shall not say I did not leave it neat," he said. Even the little bags of seeds on the mantelpiece he put in rows and dusted. Then he undressed and got into bed. Under his pillow was a little storybook. He drew it forth. To the old German a story was no story. Its events were as real and as important to himself as the matters of his own life.

He could not go away without knowing whether that wicked earl relented and whether the baron married Emilina. So he adjusted his spectacles and began to read. Occasionally, as his feelings became too strongly moved, he ejaculated: "Ah, I thought so! That was a rogue! I saw it before! I knew it from the beginning!" More than half an hour had passed when he looked up to the silver watch at the top of his bed.

"The march is long tomorrow; this will not do," he said, taking off his spectacles and putting them carefully into the book to mark the place. "This will be good reading as I walk along tomorrow," he added, as he stuffed the book into the pocket of the greatcoat; "very good reading." He nodded his head and lay down. He thought a little of his own troubles, a good deal of the two little girls he was leaving, of the earl, of Emilina, of the baron; but he was soon asleep—sleeping as peacefully as a little child, upon whose innocent soul sorrow and care cannot rest.

It was very quiet in the room. The coals in the fireplace threw a dull red light across the floor upon the red lions on the quilt. Eleven o'clock came, and the room was very still.

One o'clock came. The glimmer had died out, though the ashes were still warm, and the room was very dark. The grey mouse,

who had his hole under the toolbox, came out and sat on the sacks in the corner; then, growing bolder, the room was so dark, it climbed the chair at the bedside, nibbled at the roaster-cake, took one bite quickly at the candle, and then sat on his haunches listening. It heard the even breathing of the old man, and the steps of the hungry Kaffer dog going his last round in search of a bone or a skin that had been forgotten; and it heard the white hen call out as the wild cat ran away with one of her brood, and it heard the chicken cry. Then the grey mouse went back to its hole under the toolbox, and the room was quiet. And two o'clock came. By that time the night was grown dull and cloudy. The wild cat had gone to its home on the kopje; the Kaffer dog had found a bone, and lay gnawing it.

An intense quiet reigned everywhere. Only in her room the Boer-woman tossed her great arms in her sleep; for she dreamed that a dark shadow with outstretched wings fled slowly over her house, and she moaned and shivered. And the night was very still.

But, quiet as all places were, there was a quite peculiar quiet in the German's room. Though you strained your ear most carefully you caught no sound of breathing.

He was not gone, for the old coat still hung on the chair—the coat that was to be put on when he met any one; and the bundle and stick were ready for tomorrow's long march. The old German himself lay there, his wavy black hair just touched with grey thrown back upon the pillow. The old face was lying there alone in the dark, smiling like a little child's—oh, so peacefully. There is a stranger whose coming, they say, is worse than all the ills of life, from whose presence we flee away trembling; but he comes very tenderly sometimes. And it seemed almost as though Death had known and loved the old man, so gently it touched him. And how could it deal hardly with him—the loving, simple, childlike old man?

So it smoothed out the wrinkles that were in the old forehead, and fixed the passing smile, and sealed the eyes that they might not weep again; and then the short sleep of time was melted into the long, long sleep of eternity.

"How has he grown so young in this one night?" they said when they found him in the morning.

Yes, dear old man; to such as you time brings no age. You die with the purity and innocence of your childhood upon you, though you die in your grey hairs.

Chapter IX. He Sees A Ghost

Bonaparte stood on the ash-heap. He espied across the plain a moving speck and he chucked his coat-tails up and down in expectancy of a scene.

The wagon came on slowly. Waldo laid curled among the sacks at the back of the wagon, the hand in his breast resting on the sheep-shearing machine. It was finished now. The right thought had struck him the day before as he sat, half asleep, watching the water go over the mill-wheel. He muttered to himself with half-closed eyes:

"Tomorrow smooth the cogs—tighten the screws a little—show it to them." Then after a pause—"Over the whole world—the whole world—mine, that I have made!" He pressed the little wheels and pulleys in his pocket till they cracked. Presently his muttering became louder—"And fifty pounds—a black hat for my dadda—for Lyndall a blue silk, very light; and one purple like the earth-bells, and white shoes." He muttered on—"A box full, full of books. They shall tell me all, all, all," he added, moving his fingers desiringly: "why the crystals grow in such beautiful shapes; why lightning runs to the iron; why black people are black; why the sunlight makes things warm. I shall read, read, read," he muttered slowly. Then came over him suddenly what he called "The presence of God"; a sense of a good, strong something folding him round. He smiled through his half-shut eyes. "Ah, Father, my own Father, it is so sweet to feel you, like the warm sunshine. The Bibles and books cannot tell of you and all I feel you. They are mixed with men's words; but you—"

His muttering sank into inaudible confusion, till, opening his eyes wide, it struck him that the brown plain he looked at was the old home farm. For half an hour they had been riding in it, and he

had not known it. He roused the leader, who sat nodding on the front of the wagon in the early morning sunlight. They were within half a mile of the homestead. It seemed to him that he had been gone from them all a year. He fancied he could see Lyndall standing on the brick wall to watch for him; his father, passing from one house to the other, stopping to look.

He called aloud to the oxen. For each one at home he had brought something. For his father a piece of tobacco, bought at the shop by the mill; for Em a thimble; for Lyndall a beautiful flower dug out by the roots, at a place where they had outspanned; for Tant Sannie a handkerchief. When they drew near the house he threw the whip to the Kaffer leader, and sprung from the side of the wagon to run on. Bonaparte stopped him as he ran past the ash-heap.

"Good morning, my dear boy. Where are you running to so fast with your rosy cheeks?"

The boy looked up at him, glad even to see Bonaparte.

595

"I am going to the cabin," he said, out of breath.

"You won't find them in just now—not your good old father," said Bonaparte.

"Where is he?" asked the lad.

"There, beyond the camps," said Bonaparte, waving his hand oratorically toward the stone-walled ostrich-camps.

"What is he doing there?" asked the boy.

600

Bonaparte patted him on the cheek kindly.

"We could not keep him any more, it was too hot. We've buried him, my boy," said Bonaparte, touching with his finger the boy's cheek. "We couldn't keep him any more. He, he, he!" laughed Bonaparte, as the boy fled away along the low stone wall, almost furtively, as one in fear.

At five o'clock Bonaparte knelt before a box in the German's room. He was busily unpacking it.

It had been agreed upon between Tant Sannie and himself, that now the German was gone he, Bonaparte, was to be no longer

schoolmaster, but overseer of the farm. In return for his past scholastic labours he had expressed himself willing to take possession of the dead man's goods and room. Tant Sannie hardly liked the arrangement. She had a great deal more respect for the German dead than the German living, and would rather his goods had been allowed to descend peacefully to his son. For she was a firm believer in the chinks in the world above, where not only ears, but eyes might be applied to see how things went on in this world below. She never felt sure how far the spirit-world might overlap this world of sense, and, as a rule, prudently abstained from doing anything which might offend unseen auditors. For this reason she abstained from ill-using the dead Englishman's daughter and niece, and for this reason she would rather the boy had had his father's goods. But it was hard to refuse Bonaparte anything when she and he sat so happily together in the evening drinking coffee, Bonaparte telling her in the broken Dutch he was fast learning how he adored fat women, and what a splendid farmer he was.

So at five o'clock on this afternoon Bonaparte knelt in the German's room.

605

"Somewhere, here it is," he said, as he packed the old clothes carefully out of the box, and, finding nothing, packed them in again. "Somewhere in this room it is; and if it's here Bonaparte finds it," he repeated. "You didn't stay here all these years without making a little pile somewhere, my lamb. You weren't such a fool as you looked. Oh, no!" said Bonaparte.

He now walked about the room, diving his fingers in everywhere: sticking them into the great crevices in the wall and frightening out the spiders; rapping them against the old plaster till it cracked and fell in pieces; peering up the chimney, till the soot dropped on his bald head and blackened it. He felt in little blue bags; he tried to raise the hearth-stone; he shook each book, till the old leaves fell down in showers on the floor.

It was getting dark, and Bonaparte stood with his finger on his nose reflecting. Finally he walked to the door, behind which hung the trousers and waistcoat the dead man had last worn. He had felt in them, but hurriedly, just after the funeral the day before; he

would examine them again. Sticking his fingers into the waistcoat pockets, he found in one corner a hole. Pressing his hand through it, between the lining and the cloth, he presently came into contact with something. Bonaparte drew it forth—a small, square parcel, sewed up in sail-cloth. He gazed at it, squeezed it; it cracked, as though full of bank-notes. He put it quickly into his own waistcoat pocket, and peeped over the half-door to see if there was any one coming. There was nothing to be seen but the last rays of yellow sunset light, painting the karoo bushes in the plain, and shining on the ash-heap, where the fowls were pecking. He turned and sat down on the nearest chair, and, taking out his pen-knife, ripped the parcel open. The first thing that fell was a shower of yellow faded papers. Bonaparte opened them carefully one by one, and smoothed them out on his knee. There was something very valuable to be hidden so carefully, though the German characters he could not decipher. When he came to the last one, he felt there was something hard in it.

"You've got it, Bon, my boy! you've got it!" he cried, slapping his leg hard. Edging nearer to the door, for the light was fading, he opened the paper carefully. There was nothing inside but a plain gold wedding-ring.

"Better than nothing!" said Bonaparte, trying to put it on his little finger, which, however, proved too fat.

610

He took it off and set it down on the table before him, and looked at it with his crosswise eyes.

"When that auspicious hour, Sannie," he said, "shall have arrived, when, panting, I shall lead thee, lighted by Hymen's torch, to the connubial altar, then upon thy fair amaranthine finger, my joyous bride, shall this ring repose.

Thy fair body, oh, my girl,
Shall Bonaparte possess;
His fingers in thy money-bags,
He therein, too, shall mess.

Having given utterance to this flood of poesy, he sat lost in joyous reflection.

"He therein, too, shall mess," he repeated meditatively.

At this instant, as Bonaparte swore, and swore truly to the end of his life, a slow and distinct rap was given on the crown of his bald head.

615

Bonaparte started and looked up. No riem or strap, hung down from the rafters above, and not a human creature was near the door. It was growing dark; he did not like it. He began to fold up the papers expeditiously. He stretched out his hand for the ring. The ring was gone! Gone, although no human creature had entered the room; gone, although no form had crossed the doorway. Gone!

He would not sleep there, that was certain.

He stuffed the papers into his pocket. As he did so, three slow and distinct taps were given on the crown of his head. Bonaparte's jaw fell: each separate joint lost its power: he could not move; he dared not rise; his tongue lay loose in his mouth.

"Take all, take all!" he gurgled in his throat. "I—I do not want them. Take"—

Here a resolute tug at the grey curls at the back of his head caused him to leap up, yelling wildly. Was he to sit still paralyzed, to be dragged away bodily to the devil? With terrific shrieks he fled, casting no glance behind.

620

When the dew was falling, and the evening was dark, a small figure moved toward the gate of the furthest ostrich-camp, driving a bird before it. When the gate was opened and the bird driven in and the gate fastened, it turned away, but then suddenly paused near the stone wall.

"Is that you, Waldo?" said Lyndall, hearing a sound.

The boy was sitting on the damp ground with his back to the wall. He gave her no answer.

"Come," she said, bending over him, "I have been looking for you all day."

He mumbled something.

625

"You have had nothing to eat. I have put some supper in your room. You must come home with me, Waldo."

She took his hand, and the boy rose slowly.

She made him take her arm, and twisted her small fingers among his.

"You must forget," she whispered. "Since it happened I walk, I talk, I never sit still. If we remember, we cannot bring back the dead." She knit her little fingers closer among his. "Forgetting is the best thing. He did watch it coming," she whispered presently. "That is the dreadful thing, to see it coming!" She shuddered. "I want it to come so to me too. Why do you think I was driving that bird?" she added quickly. "That was Hans, the bird that hates Bonaparte. I let him out this afternoon; I thought he would chase him and perhaps kill him."

The boy showed no sign of interest.

630

"He did not catch him; but he put his head over the half-door of your cabin and frightened him horribly. He was there, busy stealing your things. Perhaps he will leave them alone now; but I wish the bird had trodden on him."

They said no more till they reached the door of the cabin.

"There is a candle and supper on the table. You must eat," she said authoritatively. "I cannot stay with you now, lest they find out about the bird."

He grasped her arm and brought his mouth close to her ear.

"There is no God!" he almost hissed; "no God; not anywhere!"

635

She started.

"Not anywhere!"

He ground it out between his teeth, and she felt his hot breath on her cheek.

"Waldo, you are mad," she said, drawing herself from him, instinctively.

He loosened his grasp and turned away from her also.

640

In truth, is it not life's way? We fight our little battles alone; you yours, I mine. We must not help or find help.

When your life is most real, to me you are mad; when your agony is blackest, I look at you and wonder. Friendship is good, a strong stick; but when the hour comes to lean hard, it gives. In the day of their bitterest need all souls are alone.

Lyndall stood by him in the dark, pityingly, wonderingly. As he walked to the door, she came after him.

"Eat your supper; it will do you good," she said.

She rubbed her cheek against his shoulder and then ran away.

645

In the front room the little woolly Kaffer girl was washing Tant Sannie's feet in a small tub, and Bonaparte, who sat on the wooden sofa, was pulling off his shoes and stockings that his own feet might be washed also. There were three candles burning in the room, and he and Tant Sannie sat close together, with the lean Hottentot not far off; for when ghosts are about much light is needed, there is great strength in numbers. Bonaparte had completely recovered from the effects of his fright in the afternoon, and the numerous doses of brandy that it had been necessary to administer to him to effect his restoration had put him into a singularly pleasant and amiable mood.

"That boy Waldo," said Bonaparte, rubbing his toes, "took himself off coolly this morning as soon as the wagon came, and has not done a stiver of work all day. I'll not have that kind of thing now I'm master of this farm."

The Hottentot maid translated.

"Ah, I expect he's sorry that his father's dead," said Tant Sannie. "It's nature, you know. I cried the whole morning when my father died. One can always get another husband, but one can't get another father," said Tant Sannie, casting a sidelong glance at Bonaparte.

Bonaparte expressed a wish to give Waldo his orders for the next day's work, and accordingly the little woolly-headed Kaffer was sent to call him. After a considerable time the boy appeared, and stood in the doorway.

650

If they had dressed him in one of the swallow-tailed coats, and oiled his hair till the drops fell from it, and it lay as smooth as an elder's on sacrament Sunday, there would still have been something unanointed in the aspect of the fellow. As it was, standing there in his strange old costume, his head presenting much the appearance of having been deeply rolled in sand, his eyelids swollen, the hair hanging over his forehead, and a dogged

sullenness on his features, he presented most the appearance of an ill-conditioned young buffalo.

"Beloved Lord," cried Tant Sannie, "how he looks! Come in, boy. Couldn't you come and say good-day to me? Don't you want some supper?"

He said he wanted nothing, and turned his heavy eyes away from her.

"There's a ghost been seen in your father's room," said Tant Sannie. "If you're afraid you can sleep in the kitchen."

"I will sleep in our room," said the boy slowly.

655

"Well, you can go now," she said; "but be up early to take the sheep. The herd—"

"Yes, be up early, my boy," interrupted Bonaparte, smiling. "I am to be master of this farm now; and we shall be good friends, I trust, very good friends, if you try to do your duty, my dear boy."

Waldo turned to go, and Bonaparte, looking benignly at the candle, stretched out one unstockinged foot, over which Waldo, looking at nothing in particular, fell with a heavy thud upon the floor.

"Dear me! I hope you are not hurt, my boy," said Bonaparte. "You'll have many a harder thing than that though, before you've gone through life," he added consolingly, as Waldo picked himself up.

The lean Hottentot laughed till the room rang again; and Tant Sannie tittered till her sides ached.

660

When he had gone the little maid began to wash Bonaparte's feet.

"Oh, Lord, beloved Lord, how he did fall! I can't think of it," cried Tant Sannie, and she laughed again. "I always did know he was not right; but this evening any one could see it," she added, wiping the tears of mirth from her face. "His eyes are as wild as if the devil was in them. He never was like other children. The dear Lord knows, if he doesn't walk alone for hours talking to himself. If you sit in the room with him you can see his lips moving the whole time; and if you talk to him twenty times he doesn't hear you. Daft-eyes; he's as mad as mad can be."

This repetition of the word mad conveyed meaning to Bonaparte's mind. He left off paddling his toes in the water.

"Mad, mad? I know that kind of mad," said Bonaparte, "and I know the thing to give for it. The front end of a little horsewhip, the tip! Nice thing; takes it out," said Bonaparte.

The Hottentot laughed, and translated.

665

"No more walking about and talking to themselves on this farm now," said Bonaparte; "no more minding of sheep and reading of books at the same time. The point of a horsewhip is a little thing, but I think he'll have a taste of it before long." Bonaparte rubbed his hands and looked pleasantly across his nose; and then the three laughed together grimly.

And Waldo in his cabin crouched in the dark in a corner, with his knees drawn up to his chin.

Chapter X. He Shows His Teeth

Doss sat among the karoo bushes, one yellow ear drawn over his wicked little eye, ready to flap away any adventurous fly that might settle on his nose. Around him in the morning sunlight fed the sheep; behind him lay his master polishing his machine. He found much comfort in handling it that morning. A dozen philosophical essays, or angelically atuned songs for the consolation of the bereaved, could never have been to him what that little sheep-shearing machine was that day.

After struggling to see the unseeable, growing drunk with the endeavour to span the infinite, and writhing before the inscrutable mystery, it is a renovating relief to turn to some simple, feelable, weighable substance; to something which has a smell and a colour, which may be handled and turned over this way and that. Whether there be or be not a hereafter, whether there be any use in calling aloud to the Unseen power, whether there be an Unseen power to call to, whatever be the true nature of the "I" who call and of the objects around me, whatever be our meaning, our internal essence, our cause (and in a certain order of minds death and the agony of loss inevitably awaken the wild desire, at other times smothered, to look into these things), whatever be the

nature of that which lies beyond the unbroken wall which the limits of the human intellect build up on every hand, this thing is certain—a knife will cut wood, and one cogged wheel will turn another. This is sure.

Waldo found an immeasurable satisfaction in the handling of his machine; but Doss winked and blinked, and thought it all frightfully monotonous out there on the flat, and presently dropped asleep, sitting bolt upright. Suddenly his eyes opened wide; something was coming from the direction of the homestead. Winking his eyes and looking intently, he perceived it was the grey mare. Now Doss had wondered much of late what had become of her master. Seeing she carried some one on her back, he now came to his own conclusion, and began to move his tail violently up and down. Presently he pricked up one ear and let the other hang; his tail became motionless, and the expression of his mouth was one of decided disapproval bordering on scorn. He wrinkled his lips up on each side into little lines.

670

The sand was soft, and the grey mare came on so noiselessly that the boy heard nothing till Bonaparte dismounted. Then Doss got up and moved back a step. He did not approve of Bonaparte's appearance. His costume, in truth, was of a unique kind. It was a combination of the town and country. The tails of his black cloth coat were pinned up behind to keep them from rubbing; he had on a pair of moleskin trousers and leather gaiters, and in his hand he carried a little whip of rhinoceros hide.

Waldo started and looked up. Had there been a moment's time he would have dug a hole in the sand with his hands and buried his treasure. It was only a toy of wood, but he loved it, as one of necessity loves what has been born of him, whether of the flesh or spirit. When cold eyes have looked at it, the feathers are rubbed off our butterfly's wing forever.

"What have you here, my lad?" said Bonaparte, standing by him, and pointing with the end of his whip to the medley of wheels and hinges.

The boy muttered something inaudible, and half spread over the thing.

"But this seems to be a very ingenious little machine," said Bonaparte, seating himself on the antheap, and bending down over it with deep interest. "What is it for, my lad?"

675

"Shearing sheep."

"It is a very nice little machine," said Bonaparte. "How does it work, now? I have never seen anything so ingenious!"

There was never a parent who heard deception in the voice that praised his child—his first-born. Here was one who liked the thing that had been created in him. He forgot everything. He showed how the shears would work with a little guidance, how the sheep would be held, and the wool fall into the trough. A flush burst over his face as he spoke.

"I tell you what, my lad," said Bonaparte emphatically, when the explanation was finished, "we must get you a patent. Your fortune is made. In three years' time there'll not be a farm in this colony where it isn't working. You're a genius, that's what you are!" said Bonaparte, rising.

"If it were made larger," said the boy, raising his eyes, "it would work more smoothly. Do you think there would be any one in this colony would be able to make it?"

680

"I'm sure they could," said Bonaparte; "and if not, why I'll do my best for you. I'll send it to England. It must be done somehow. How long have you worked at it?"

"Nine months," said the boy.

"Oh, it is such a nice little machine," said Bonaparte, "one can't help feeling an interest in it. There is only one little improvement, one very little improvement, I should like to make."

Bonaparte put his foot on the machine and crushed it into the sand. The boy looked up into his face.

"Looks better now," said Bonaparte, "doesn't it? If we can't have it made in England we'll send it to America. Good-bye; ta-ta," he added. "You're a great genius, a born genius, my dear boy, there's no doubt about it."

685

He mounted the grey mare and rode off. The dog watched his retreat with cynical satisfaction; but his master lay on the ground with his head on his arms in the sand, and the little wheels and

chips of wood lay on the ground around him. The dog jumped on to his back and snapped at the black curls, till, finding that no notice was taken, he walked off to play with a black beetle. The beetle was hard at work trying to roll home a great ball of dung it had been collecting all the morning: but Doss broke the ball, and ate the beetle's hind legs, and then bit off its head. And it was all play, and no one could tell what it had lived and worked for. A striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing.

Chapter XI. He Snaps

"I have found something in the loft," said Em to Waldo, who was listlessly piling cakes of fuel on the kraal wall, a week after. "It is a box of books that belonged to my father. We thought Tant Sannie had burnt them."

The boy put down the cake he was raising and looked at her.

"I don't think they are very nice, not stories," she added, "but you can go and take any you like."

So saying, she took up the plate in which she had brought his breakfast, and walked off to the house.

690

After that the boy worked quickly. The pile of fuel Bonaparte had ordered him to pack was on the wall in half an hour. He then went to throw salt on the skins laid out to dry. Finding the pot empty, he went to the loft to refill it.

Bonaparte Blenkins, whose door opened at the foot of the ladder, saw the boy go up, and stood in the doorway waiting for his return. He wanted his boots blacked. Doss, finding he could not follow his master up the round bars, sat patiently at the foot of the ladder. Presently he looked up longingly, but no one appeared. Then Bonaparte looked up also, and began to call; but there was no answer. What could the boy be doing? The loft was an unknown land to Bonaparte. He had often wondered what was up there; he liked to know what was in all locked-up places and out-of-the-way corners, but he was afraid to climb the ladder. So Bonaparte looked up, and in the name of all that was tantalizing, questioned what the boy did up there. The loft was used only as a

lumber-room. What could the fellow find up there to keep him so long?

Could the Boer-woman have beheld Waldo at that instant, any lingering doubt which might have remained in her mind as to the boy's insanity would instantly have vanished. For, having filled the salt-pot, he proceeded to look for the box of books among the rubbish that filled the loft. Under a pile of sacks he found it—a rough packing-case, nailed up, but with one loose plank. He lifted that, and saw the even backs of a row of books. He knelt down before the box, and ran his hand along its rough edges, as if to assure himself of its existence. He stuck his hand in among the books, and pulled out two. He felt them, thrust his fingers in among the leaves, and crumpled them a little, as a lover feels the hair of his mistress. The fellow gloated over his treasure. He had had a dozen books in the course of his life; now here was a mine of them opened at his feet. After a while he began to read the titles, and now and again opened a book and read a sentence; but he was too excited to catch the meanings distinctly. At last he came to a dull, brown volume. He read the name, opened it in the centre, and where he opened began to read. It was a chapter on property that he fell upon—Communism, Fourierism, St. Simonism, in a work on Political Economy. He read down one page and turned over to the next; he read down that without changing his posture by an inch; he read the next, and the next, kneeling up all the while with the book in his hand, and his lips parted.

All he read he did not fully understand; the thoughts were new to him; but this was the fellow's startled joy in the book—the thoughts were his, they belonged to him. He had never thought them before, but they were his.

He laughed silently and internally, with the still intensity of triumphant joy.

So, then, all thinking creatures did not send up the one cry—"As thou, dear Lord, has created things in the beginning, so are they now, so ought they to be, so will they be, world without end; and it doesn't concern us what they are. Amen." There were men to whom not only kopjes and stones were calling out

imperatively, "What are we, and how came we here? Understand us, and know us;" but to whom even the old, old relations between man and man, and the customs of the ages called, and could not be made still and forgotten.

The boy's heavy body quivered with excitement. So he was not alone, not alone. He could not quite have told any one why he was so glad, and this warmth had come to him. His cheeks were burning. No wonder that Bonaparte called in vain, and Doss put his paws on the ladder, and whined till three-quarters of an hour had passed. At last the boy put the book in his breast and buttoned it tightly to him. He took up the salt pot, and went to the top of the ladder. Bonaparte, with his hands folded under his coat-tails, looked up when he appeared, and accosted him.

"You've been rather a long time up there, my lad," he said, as the boy descended with a tremulous haste, most unlike his ordinary slow movements. "You didn't hear me calling, I suppose?"

Bonaparte whisked the tails of his coat up and down as he looked at him. He, Bonaparte Blenkins, had eyes which were very far-seeing. He looked at the pot. It was rather a small pot to have taken three-quarters of an hour in the filling. He looked at the face. It was flushed. And yet, Tant Sannie kept no wine—he had not been drinking; his eyes were wide open and bright—he had not been sleeping; there was no girl up there—he had not been making love. Bonaparte looked at him sagaciously. What would account for the marvellous change in the boy coming down the ladder from the boy going up the ladder? One thing there was. Did not Tant Sannie keep in the loft bultongs, and nice smoked sausages? There must be something nice to eat up there! Aha! that was it!

Bonaparte was so interested in carrying out this chain of inductive reasoning that he quite forgot to have his boots blacked.

He watched the boy shuffle off with the salt-pot under his arm; then he stood in his doorway and raised his eyes to the quiet blue sky, and audibly propounded this riddle to himself:

"What is the connection between the naked back of a certain boy with a greatcoat on and a salt-pot under his arm, and the tip

of a horsewhip? Answer: No connection at present, but there will be soon."

Bonaparte was so pleased with this sally of his wit that he chuckled a little and went to lie down on his bed.

There was bread-baking that afternoon, and there was a fire lighted in the brick oven behind the house, and Tant Sannie had left the great wooden-elbowed chair in which she passed her life, and waddled out to look at it. Not far off was Waldo, who, having thrown a pail of food into the pigsty, now leaned over the sod wall looking at the pigs. Half of the sty was dry, but the lower half was a pool of mud, on the edge of which the mother sow lay with closed eyes, her ten little ones sucking; the father pig, knee-deep in the mud, stood running his snout into a rotten pumpkin and wriggling his curled tail.

Waldo wondered dreamily as he stared why they were pleasant to look at. Taken singly they were not beautiful; taken together they were. Was it not because there was a certain harmony about them? The old sow was suited to the little pigs, and the little pigs to their mother, the old boar to the rotten pumpkin, and all to the mud. They suggested the thought of nothing that should be added, of nothing that should be taken away. And, he wondered on vaguely, was not that the secret of all beauty, that you who look on— So he stood dreaming, and leaned further and further over the sod wall, and looked at the pigs.

All this time Bonaparte Blenkins was sloping down from the house in an aimless sort of way; but he kept one eye fixed on the pigsty, and each gyration brought him nearer to it. Waldo stood like a thing asleep when Bonaparte came close up to him.

In old days, when a small boy, playing in an Irish street-gutter, he, Bonaparte, had been familiarly known among his comrades under the title of Tripping Ben; this, from the rare ease and dexterity with which, by merely projecting his foot, he could precipitate any unfortunate companion on to the crown of his head. Years had elapsed, and Tripping Ben had become Bonaparte; but the old gift was in him still. He came close to the pigsty. All the defunct memories of his boyhood returned on him

in a flood, as, with an adroit movement, he inserted his leg between Waldo and the wall and sent him over into the pigsty.

The little pigs were startled at the strange intruder, and ran behind their mother, who sniffed at him. Tant Sannie smote her hands together and laughed; but Bonaparte was far from joining her. Lost in reverie, he gazed at the distant horizon.

The sudden reversal of head and feet had thrown out the volume that Waldo carried in his breast. Bonaparte picked it up and began to inspect it, as the boy climbed slowly over the wall. He would have walked off sullenly, but he wanted his book, and he waited until it should be given him.

"Ha!" said Bonaparte, raising his eyes from the leaves of the book which he was examining, "I hope your coat has not been injured; it is of an elegant cut. An heirloom, I presume, from your paternal grandfather? It looks nice now."

710

"Oh, Lord! oh! Lord!" cried Tant Sannie, laughing and holding her sides; "how the child looks—as though he thought the mud would never wash off. Oh, Lord, I shall die! You, Bonaparte, are the funniest man I ever saw."

Bonaparte Blenkins was now carefully inspecting the volume he had picked up. Among the subjects on which the darkness of his understanding had been enlightened during his youth, Political Economy had not been one. He was not, therefore, very clear as to what the nature of the book might be; and as the name of the writer, J.S. Mill, might, for anything he knew to the contrary, have belonged to a venerable member of the British and Foreign Bible Society, it by no means threw light upon the question. He was not in any way sure that Political Economy had nothing to do with the cheapest way of procuring clothing for the army and navy, which would be certainly both a political and economical subject.

But Bonaparte soon came to a conclusion as to the nature of the book and its contents, by the application of a simple rule now largely acted upon, but which, becoming universal, would save much thought and valuable time. It is of marvellous simplicity, of infinite utility, of universal applicability. It may easily be committed to memory and runs thus:

Whenever you come into contact with any book, person, or opinion of which you absolutely comprehend nothing, declare that book, person or opinion to be immoral. Bespatter it, vituperate against it, strongly insist that any man or woman harbouring it is a fool or a knave, or both. Carefully abstain from studying it. Do all that in you lies to annihilate that book, person, or opinion.

Acting on this rule, so wide in its comprehensiveness, so beautifully simple in its working, Bonaparte approached Tant Sannie with the book in his hand. Waldo came a step nearer, eyeing it like a dog whose young has fallen into evil hands.

715

"This book," said Bonaparte, "is not a fit and proper study for a young and immature mind."

Tant Sannie did not understand a word, and said:

"What?"

"This book," said Bonaparte, bringing down his finger with energy on the cover, "this book is sleg, sleg, Davel, Davel!"

Tant Sannie perceived from the gravity of his countenance that it was no laughing matter. From the words "sleg" and "Davel" she understood that the book was evil, and had some connection with the prince who pulls the wires of evil over the whole earth.

720

"Where did you get this book?" she asked, turning her twinkling little eyes on Waldo. "I wish that my legs may be as thin as an Englishman's if it isn't one of your father's. He had more sins than all the Kaffers in Kafferland, for all that he pretended to be so good all those years, and to live without a wife because he was thinking of the one that was dead! As though ten dead wives could make up for one fat one with arms and legs!" cried Tant Sannie, snorting.

"It was not my father's book," said the boy savagely. "I got it from your loft."

"My loft! my book! How dare you?" cried Tant Sannie.

"It was Em's father's. She gave it me," he muttered more sullenly.

"Give it here. What is the name of it? What is it about?" she asked, putting her finger upon the title.

725

Bonaparte understood.

"Political Economy," he said slowly.

"Dear Lord!" said Tant Sannie, "cannot one hear from the very sound what an ungodly book it is! One can hardly say the name. Haven't we got curses enough on this farm?" cried Tant Sannie, eloquently; "my best imported Merino ram dying of nobody knows what, and the short-horn cow casting her two calves, and the sheep eaten up with the scab and the drought? And is this a time to bring ungodly things about the place, to call down the vengeance of Almighty God to punish us more? Didn't the minister tell me when I was confirmed not to read any book except my Bible and hymn-book, that the devil was in all the rest? And I never have read any other book," said Tant Sannie with virtuous energy, "and I never will!"

Waldo saw that the fate of his book was sealed, and turned sullenly on his heel.

"So you will not stay to hear what I say!" cried Tant Sannie. "There, take your Polity-gollity-gominy, your devil's book!" she cried, flinging the book at his head with much energy.

730

It merely touched his forehead on one side and fell to the ground.

"Go on," she cried; "I know you are going to talk to yourself. People who talk to themselves always talk to the devil. Go and tell him all about it. Go, go! run!" cried Tant Sannie.

But the boy neither quickened nor slackened his pace, and passed sullenly round the back of the wagon-house.

Books have been thrown at other heads before and since that summer afternoon, by hands more white and delicate than those of the Boer-woman; but whether the result of the process has been in any case wholly satisfactory, may be questioned. We love that with a peculiar tenderness, we treasure it with a peculiar care, it has for us quite a fictitious value, for which we have suffered. If we may not carry it anywhere else we will carry it in our hearts, and always to the end.

Bonaparte Blenkins went to pick up the volume, now loosened from its cover, while Tant Sannie pushed the stumps of wood further into the oven. Bonaparte came close to her, tapped the book knowingly, nodded, and looked at the fire. Tant Sannie

735

comprehended, and, taking the volume from his hand, threw it into the back of the oven. It lay upon the heap of coals, smoked, flared, and blazed, and the "Political Economy" was no more—gone out of existence, like many another poor heretic of flesh and blood.

Bonaparte grinned, and to watch the process brought his face so near the oven door that the white hair on his eyebrows got singed. He then inquired if there were any more in the loft.

Learning that there were, he made signs indicative of taking up armfuls and flinging them into the fire. But Tant Sannie was dubious. The deceased Englishman had left all his personal effects specially to his child. It was all very well for Bonaparte to talk of burning the books. He had had his hair spiritually pulled, and she had no wish to repeat his experience.

She shook her head. Bonaparte was displeased. But then a happy thought occurred to him. He suggested that the key of the loft should henceforth be put into his own safe care and keeping—no one gaining possession of it without his permission. To this Tant Sannie readily assented, and the two walked lovingly to the house to look for it.

Chapter XII. He Bites

Bonaparte Blenkins was riding home on the grey mare. He had ridden out that afternoon, partly for the benefit of his health, partly to maintain his character as overseer of the farm. As he rode on slowly, he thoughtfully touched the ears of the grey mare with his whip.

"No, Bon, my boy," he addressed himself, "don't propose! You can't marry for four years, on account of the will; then why propose? Wheedle her, tweedle her, teedle her, but don't let her make sure of you. When a woman," said Bonaparte, sagely resting his finger against the side of his nose, "When a woman is sure of you she does what she likes with you; but when she isn't, you do what you like with her. And I—" said Bonaparte.

Here he drew the horse up suddenly and looked. He was now close to the house, and leaning over the pigsty wall, in company

with Em, who was showing her the pigs, was a strange female figure. It was the first visitor that had appeared on the farm since his arrival, and he looked at her with interest. She was a tall, pudgy girl of fifteen, weighing a hundred and fifty pounds, with baggy pendulous cheeks and up-turned nose. She strikingly resembled Tant Sannie, in form and feature, but her sleepy good eyes lacked that twinkle that dwelt in the Boer-woman's small orbs. She was attired in a bright green print, wore brass rings in her ears and glass beads round her neck, and was sucking the tip of her large finger as she looked at the pigs.

"Who is it that has come?" asked Bonaparte, when he stood drinking his coffee in the front room.

"Why, my niece, to be sure," said Tant Sannie, the Hottentot maid translating. "She's the only daughter of my only brother Paul, and she's come to visit me. She'll be a nice mouthful to the man that can get her," added Tant Sannie. "Her father's got two thousand pounds in the green wagon box under his bed, and a farm, and five thousand sheep, and God Almighty knows how many goats and horses. They milk ten cows in mid-winter, and the young men are after her like flies about a bowl of milk. She says she means to get married in four months, but she doesn't yet know to whom. It was so with me when I was young," said Tant Sannie. "I've sat up with the young men four and five nights a week. And they will come riding again, as soon as ever they know that the time's up that the Englishman made me agree not to marry in."

The Boer-woman smirked complacently.

"Where are you going to?" asked Tant Sannie presently, seeing that Bonaparte rose.

"Ha! I'm just going to the kraals; I'll be in to supper," said Bonaparte.

Nevertheless, when he reached his own door he stopped and turned in there. Soon after he stood before the little glass, arrayed in his best white shirt with the little tucks, and shaving himself. He had on his very best trousers, and had heavily oiled the little fringe at the back of his head, which, however, refused to become darker. But what distressed him most was his nose—it was very

red. He rubbed his finger and thumb on the wall, and put a little whitewash on it; but, finding it rather made matters worse, he rubbed it off again. Then he looked carefully into his own eyes. They certainly were a little pulled down at the outer corners, which gave them the appearance of looking crosswise; but then they were a nice blue. So he put on his best coat, took up his stick, and went out to supper, feeling on the whole well satisfied.

"Aunt," said Trana to Tant Sannie when that night they lay together in the great wooden bed, "why does the Englishman sigh so when he looks at me?"

"Ha!" said Tant Sannie, who was half asleep, but suddenly started, wide awake. "It's because he thinks you look like me. I tell you, Trana," said Tant Sannie, "the man is mad with love of me. I told him the other night I couldn't marry till Em was sixteen, or I'd lose all the sheep her father left me. And he talked about Jacob working seven years and seven years again for his wife. And of course he meant me," said Tant Sannie pompously. "But he won't get me so easily as he thinks; he'll have to ask more than once."

"Oh!" said Trana, who was a lumpish girl and not much given to talking; but presently she added, "Aunt, why does the Englishman always knock against a person when he passes them?"

750

"That's because you are always in the way," said Tant Sannie.

"But, aunt," said Trana, presently, "I think he is very ugly."

"Phugh!" said Tant Sannie. "It's only because we're not accustomed to such noses in this country. In his country he says all the people have such noses, and the redder your nose is the higher you are. He's of the family of the Queen Victoria, you know," said Tant Sannie, wakening up with her subject; "and he doesn't think anything of governors and church elders and such people; they are nothing to him. When his aunt with the dropsy dies he'll have money enough to buy all the farms in this district."

"Oh!" said Trana. That certainly made a difference.

"Yes," said Tant Sannie; "and he's only forty-one, though you'd take him to be sixty. And he told me last night the real reason of his baldness."

755

Tant Sannie then proceeded to relate how, at eighteen years of age, Bonaparte had courted a fair young lady. How a deadly rival, jealous of his verdant locks, his golden flowing hair, had, with a damnable and insinuating deception, made him a present of a pot of pomatum. How, applying it in the evening, on rising in the morning he found his pillow strewn with the golden locks, and, looking into the glass, beheld the shining and smooth expanse which henceforth he must bear. The few remaining hairs were turned to a silvery whiteness, and the young lady married his rival.

"And," said Tant Sannie solemnly, "if it had not been for the grace of God, and reading of the psalms, he says he would have killed himself. He says he could kill himself quite easily if he wants to marry a woman and she won't."

"Alle wereld!" said Trana: and then they went to sleep.

Every one was lost in sleep soon; but from the window of the cabin the light streamed forth. It came from a dung fire, over which Waldo sat brooding. Hour after hour he sat there, now and again throwing a fresh lump of fuel on to the fire, which burnt up bravely, and then sank into a great bed of red coals, which reflected themselves in the boy's eyes as he sat there brooding, brooding, brooding. At last, when the fire was blazing at its brightest, he rose suddenly and walked slowly to a beam from which an ox riem hung. Loosening it, he ran a noose in one end and then doubled it round his arm.

"Mine, mine! I have a right," he muttered; and then something louder, "if I fall and am killed, so much the better!"

He opened the door and went out into the starlight.

He walked with his eyes bent upon the ground, but overhead it was one of those brilliant southern nights when every space so small that your hand might cover it shows fifty cold white points, and the Milky-Way is a belt of sharp frosted silver. He passed the door where Bonaparte lay dreaming of Trana and her wealth, and he mounted the ladder steps. From those he clambered with some difficulty on to the roof of the house. It was of old rotten thatch with a ridge of white plaster, and it crumbled away under his feet

at every step. He trod as heavily as he could. So much the better if he fell.

He knelt down when he got to the far gable, and began to fasten his riem to the crumbling bricks. Below was the little window of the loft. With one end of the riem tied round the gable, the other end round his waist, how easy to slide down to it, and to open it, through one of the broken panes, and to go in, and to fill his arms with books, and to clamber up again! They had burnt one book—he would have twenty. Every man's hand was against his—his should be against every man's. No one would help him—he would help himself.

He lifted the black damp hair from his knit forehead, and looked round to cool his hot face. Then he saw what a regal night it was. He knelt silently and looked up. A thousand eyes were looking down at him, bright and so cold. There was a laughing irony in them.

"So hot, so bitter, so angry? Poor little mortal?"

765

He was ashamed. He folded his arms, and sat on the ridge of the roof looking up at them.

"So hot, so bitter, so angry?"

It was as though a cold hand had been laid upon his throbbing forehead, and slowly they began to fade and grow dim. Tant Sannie and the burnt book, Bonaparte and the broken machine, the box in the loft, he himself sitting there—how small they all became! Even the grave over yonder. Those stars that shone on up above so quietly, they had seen a thousand such little existences fight just so fiercely, flare up just so brightly and go out; and they, the old, old stars, shone on forever.

"So hot, so angry, poor little soul?" they said.

The riem slipped from his fingers; he sat with his arms folded, looking up.

770

"We," said the stars, "have seen the earth when it was young. We have seen small things creep out upon its surface—small things that prayed and loved and cried very loudly, and then crept under it again. But we," said the stars, "are as old as the Unknown."

He leaned his chin against the palm of his hand and looked up at them. So long he sat there that bright stars set and new ones rose, and yet he sat on.

Then at last he stood up, and began to loosen the riem from the gable.

What did it matter about the books? The lust and the desire for them had died out. If they pleased to keep them from him they might. What matter? it was a very little thing. Why hate, and struggle, and fight? Let it be as it would.

He twisted the riem round his arm and walked back along the ridge of the house.

775

By this time Bonaparte Blenkins had finished his dream of Trana, and as he turned himself round for a fresh doze he heard the steps descending the ladder. His first impulse was to draw the blanket over his head and his legs under him, and to shout; but recollecting that the door was locked and the window carefully bolted, he allowed his head slowly to crop out among the blankets, and listened intently. Whosoever it might be, there was no danger of their getting at him; so he clambered out of bed, and going on tiptoe to the door, applied his eye to the keyhole. There was nothing to be seen; so walking to the window, he brought his face as close to the glass as his nose would allow. There was a figure just discernible. The lad was not trying to walk softly, and the heavy shuffling of the well-known velschoens could be clearly heard through the closed window as they crossed the stones in the yard. Bonaparte listened till they had died away round the corner of the wagon-house; and, feeling that his bare legs were getting cold, he jumped back into bed again.

"What do you keep up in your loft?" inquired Bonaparte of the Boer-woman the next evening, pointing upwards and elucidating his meaning by the addition of such Dutch words as he knew, for the lean Hottentot was gone home.

"Dried skins," said the Boer-woman, "and empty bottles, and boxes, and sacks, and soap."

"You don't keep any of your provisions there—sugar, now?" said Bonaparte, pointing to the sugar-basin and then up at the loft.

Tant Sannie shook her head.

"Only salt, and dried peaches."

"Dried peaches! Eh?" said Bonaparte. "Shut the door, my dear child, shut it tight," he called out to Em, who stood in the dining room. Then he leaned over the elbow of the sofa and brought his face as close as possible to the Boer-woman's, and made signs of eating. Then he said something she did not comprehend; then said, "Waldo, Waldo, Waldo," pointed up to the loft, and made signs of eating again.

Now an inkling of his meaning dawned on the Boer-woman's mind. To make it clearer, he moved his legs after the manner of one going up a ladder, appeared to be opening a door, masticated vigorously, said, "Peaches, peaches, peaches," and appeared to be coming down the ladder.

It was now evident to Tant Sannie that Waldo had been in her loft and eaten her peaches.

To exemplify his own share in the proceedings, Bonaparte lay down on the sofa, and shutting his eyes tightly, said, "Night, night, night!" Then he sat up wildly, appearing to be intently listening, mimicked with his feet the coming down a ladder, and looked at Tant Sannie. This clearly showed how, roused in the night, he had discovered the theft.

"He must have been a great fool to eat my peaches," said Tant Sannie. "They are full of mites as a sheepskin, and as hard as stones."

Bonaparte, fumbling in his pocket, did not even hear her remark, and took out from his coat-tail a little horsewhip, nicely rolled up. Bonaparte winked at the little rhinoceros horsewhip, at the Boer-woman, and then at the door.

"Shall we call him—Waldo, Waldo?" he said.

Tant Sannie nodded, and giggled. There was something so exceedingly humorous in the idea that he was going to beat the boy, though for her own part she did not see that the peaches were worth it. When the Kaffer maid came with the wash-tub she was sent to summon Waldo; and Bonaparte doubled up the little whip

and put it in his pocket. Then he drew himself up, and prepared to act his important part with becoming gravity. Soon Waldo stood in the door, and took off his hat.

"Come in, come in, my lad," said Bonaparte, "and shut the door behind."

790

The boy came in and stood before them.

"You need not be so afraid, child," said Tant Sannie. "I was a child myself once. It's no great harm if you have taken a few."

Bonaparte perceived that her remark was not in keeping with the nature of the proceedings, and of the little drama he intended to act. Pursing out his lips, and waving his hand, he solemnly addressed the boy.

"Waldo, it grieves me beyond expression to have to summon you for so painful a purpose; but it is at the imperative call of duty, which I dare not evade. I do not state that frank and unreserved confession will obviate the necessity of chastisement, which if requisite shall be fully administered; but the nature of that chastisement may be mitigated by free and humble confession. Waldo, answer me as you would your own father, in whose place I now stand to you; have you, or have you not, did you, or did you not, eat of the peaches in the loft?"

"Say you took them, boy, say you took them, then he won't beat you much," said the Dutchwoman, good-naturedly, getting a little sorry for him.

795

The boy raised his eyes slowly and fixed them vacantly upon her, then suddenly his face grew dark with blood.

"So, you haven't got anything to say to us, my lad?" said Bonaparte, momentarily forgetting his dignity, and bending forward with a little snarl. "But what I mean is just this, my lad—when it takes a boy three-quarters of an hour to fill a salt-pot, and when at three o'clock in the morning he goes knocking about the doors of a loft, it's natural to suppose there's mischief in it. It's certain there is mischief in it; and where there's mischief in, it must be taken out," said Bonaparte, grinning into the boy's face. Then, feeling that he had fallen from that high gravity which was as spice to the pudding, and the flavour of the whole little tragedy,

he drew himself up. "Waldo," he said, "confess to me instantly, and without reserve, that you ate the peaches."

The boy's face was white now. His eyes were on the ground, his hands doggedly clasped before him.

"What, do you not intend to answer?"

The boy looked up at them once from under his bent eyebrows, and then looked down again.

"The creature looks as if all the devils in hell were in it," cried Tant Sannie. "Say you took them, boy. Young things will be young things; I was older than you when I used to eat bultong in my mother's loft, and get the little niggers whipped for it. Say you took them."

But the boy said nothing.

"I think a little solitary confinement might perhaps be beneficial," said Bonaparte. "It will enable you, Waldo, to reflect on the enormity of the sin you have committed against our Father in heaven. And you may also think of the submission you owe to those who are older and wiser than you are, and whose duty it is to check and correct you."

Saying this, Bonaparte stood up and took down the key of the fuel-house, which hung on a nail against the wall.

"Walk on, my boy," said Bonaparte, pointing to the door; and as he followed him out he drew his mouth expressively on one side, and made the lash of the little horsewhip stick out of his pocket and shake up and down.

Tant Sannie felt half sorry for the lad; but she could not help laughing, it was always so funny when one was going to have a whipping, and it would do him good. Anyhow, he would forget all about it when the places were healed. Had not she been beaten many times and been all the better for it?

Bonaparte took up a lighted candle that had been left burning on the kitchen table, and told the boy to walk before him. They went to the fuel-house. It was a little stone erection that jutted out from the side of the wagon-house. It was low and without a window, and the dried dung was piled in one corner, and the coffee-mill stood in another, fastened on the top of a short post

800

805

about three feet high. Bonaparte took the padlock off the rough door.

"Walk in, my lad," he said.

Waldo obeyed sullenly; one place to him was much the same as another. He had no objection to being locked up.

Bonaparte followed him in, and closed the door carefully. He put the light down on the heap of dung in the corner, and quietly introduced his hand under his coat-tails, and drew slowly from his pocket the end of a rope, which he concealed behind him.

810

"I'm very sorry, exceedingly sorry, Waldo, my lad, that you should have acted in this manner. It grieves me," said Bonaparte.

He moved round toward the boy's back. He hardly liked the look in the fellow's eyes, though he stood there motionless. If he should spring on him!

So he drew the rope out very carefully, and shifted round to the wooden post. There was a slipknot in one end of the rope, and a sudden movement drew the boy's hands to his back and passed it round them. It was an instant's work to drag it twice round the wooden post: then Bonaparte was safe.

For a moment the boy struggled to free himself; then he knew that he was powerless, and stood still.

"Horses that kick must have their legs tied," said Bonaparte, as he passed the other end of the rope round the boy's knees. "And now, my dear Waldo," taking the whip out of his pocket, "I am going to beat you."

815

He paused for a moment. It was perfectly quiet; they could hear each other's breath.

"'Chasten thy son while there is hope,'" said Bonaparte, "'and let not thy soul spare for his crying.' Those are God's words. I shall act as a father to you, Waldo. I think we had better have your naked back."

He took out his penknife, and slit the shirt down from the shoulder to the waist.

"Now," said Bonaparte, "I hope the Lord will bless and sanctify to you what I am going to do to you."

The first cut ran from the shoulder across the middle of the back; the second fell exactly in the same place. A shudder passed

820

through the boy's frame.

"Nice, eh?" said Bonaparte, peeping round into his face, speaking with a lisp, as though to a very little child. "Nith, eh?"

But the eyes were black and lustreless, and seemed not to see him. When he had given sixteen Bonaparte paused in his work to wipe a little drop of blood from his whip.

"Cold, eh? What makes you shiver so? Perhaps you would like to pull up your shirt? But I've not quite done yet."

When he had finished he wiped the whip again, and put it back in his pocket. He cut the rope through with his penknife, and then took up the light.

"You don't seem to have found your tongue yet. Forgotten how to cry?" said Bonaparte, patting him on the cheek.

The boy looked up at him—not sullenly, not angrily. There was a wild, fitful terror in the eyes. Bonaparte made haste to go out and shut the door, and leave him alone in the darkness. He himself was afraid of that look.

825

It was almost morning. Waldo lay with his face upon the ground at the foot of the fuel-heap. There was a round hole near the top of the door, where a knot of wood had fallen out, and a stream of grey light came in through it.

Ah, it was going to end at last. Nothing lasts forever, not even the night. How was it he had never thought of that before? For in all that long dark night he had been very strong, had never been tired, never felt pain, had run on and on, up and down, up and down; he had not dared to stand still, and he had not known it would end. He had been so strong, that when he struck his head with all his force upon the stone wall it did not stun him nor pain him—only made him laugh. That was a dreadful night.

When he clasped his hands frantically and prayed—"O God, my beautiful God, my sweet God, once, only once, let me feel you near me tonight!" he could not feel him. He prayed aloud, very loud, and he got no answer; when he listened it was all quite quiet—like when the priests of Baal cried aloud to their god

—"Oh, Baal, hear us! Oh, Baal, hear us! But Baal was gone a-hunting."

That was a long wild night, and wild thoughts came and went in it; but they left their marks behind them forever: for, as years cannot pass without leaving their traces behind them, neither can nights into which are forced the thoughts and sufferings of years. And now the dawn was coming, and at last he was very tired. He shivered and tried to draw the shirt up over his shoulders. They were getting stiff. He had never known they were cut in the night. He looked up at the white light that came in through the hole at the top of the door and shuddered. Then he turned his face back to the ground and slept again.

Some hours later Bonaparte came toward the fuel-house with a lump of bread in his hand. He opened the door and peered in; then entered, and touched the fellow with his boot. Seeing that he breathed heavily, though he did not rouse, Bonaparte threw the bread down on the ground. He was alive, that was one thing. He bent over him, and carefully scratched open one of the cuts with the nail of his forefinger, examining with much interest his last night's work. He would have to count his sheep himself that day; the boy was literally cut up. He locked the door and went away again.

"Oh, Lyndall," said Em, entering the dining room, and bathed in tears, that afternoon, "I have been begging Bonaparte to let him out, and he won't."

"The more you beg the more he will not," said Lyndall.

She was cutting out aprons on the table.

"Oh, but it's late, and I think they want to kill him," said Em, weeping bitterly; and finding that no more consolation was to be gained from her cousin, she went off blubbing—"I wonder you can cut out aprons when Waldo is shut up like that."

For ten minutes after she was gone Lyndall worked on quietly; then she folded up her stuff, rolled it tightly together, and stood before the closed door of the sitting room with her hands closely clasped. A flush rose to her face: she opened the door quickly, and walked in, went to the nail on which the key of the fuel-room hung. Bonaparte and Tant Sannie sat there and saw her.

"What do you want?" they asked together.

"This key," she said, holding it up, and looking at them.

"Do you mean her to have it?" said Tant Sannie in Dutch.

"Why don't you stop her?" asked Bonaparte in English.

840

"Why don't you take it from her?" said Tant Sannie.

So they looked at each other, talking, while Lyndall walked to the fuel-house with the key, her underlip bitten in.

"Waldo," she said, as she helped him to stand up, and twisted his arm about her waist to support him, "we will not be children always; we shall have the power, too, some day." She kissed his naked shoulder with her soft little mouth. It was all the comfort her young soul could give him.

Chapter XIII. He Makes Love

"Here," said Tant Sannie to her Hottentot maid, "I have been in this house four years, and never been up in the loft. Fatter women than I go up ladders; I will go up today and see what it is like, and put it to rights up there. You bring the little ladder and stand at the bottom."

"There's one would be sorry if you were to fall," said the Hottentot maid, leering at Bonaparte's pipe, that lay on the table.

845

"Hold your tongue, jade," said her mistress, trying to conceal a pleased smile, "and go and fetch the ladder."

There was a never-used trap-door at one end of the sitting room: this the Hottentot maid pushed open, and setting the ladder against it, the Boer-woman with some danger and difficulty climbed into the loft. Then the Hottentot maid took the ladder away, as her husband was mending the wagon-house, and needed it; but the trap-door was left open.

For a little while Tant Sannie poked about among the empty bottles and skins, and looked at the bag of peaches that Waldo was supposed to have liked so; then she sat down near the trap-door beside a barrel of salt mutton. She found that the pieces of meat were much too large, and took out her clasp-knife to divide them.

That was always the way when one left things to servants, she grumbled to herself: but when once she was married to her husband Bonaparte it would not matter whether a sheep spoiled or no—when once his rich aunt with the dropsy was dead. She smiled as she dived her hand into the pickle-water.

At that instant her niece entered the room below, closely followed by Bonaparte, with his head on one side, smiling mawkishly. Had Tant Sannie spoken at that moment the life of Bonaparte Blenkins would have run a wholly different course; as it was, she remained silent, and neither noticed the open trap-door above their heads.

850

"Sit there, my love," said Bonaparte, motioning Trana into her aunt's elbow-chair, and drawing another close up in front of it, in which he seated himself. "There, put your feet upon the stove too. Your aunt has gone out somewhere. Long have I waited for this auspicious event!"

Trana, who understood not one word of English, sat down in the chair and wondered if this was one of the strange customs of other lands, that an old gentleman may bring his chair up to yours, and sit with his knees touching you. She had been five days in Bonaparte's company, and feared the old man, and disliked his nose.

"How long have I desired this moment!" said Bonaparte. "But that aged relative of thine is always casting her unhallowed shadow upon us. Look into my eyes, Trana."

Bonaparte knew that she comprehended not a syllable; but he understood that it is the eye, the tone, the action, and not at all the rational word, that touches the love-chords. He saw she changed colour.

"All night," said Bonaparte, "I lie awake; I see naught but thy angelic countenance. I open my arms to receive thee—where art thou, where? Thou art not there!" said Bonaparte, suiting the action to the words, and spreading out his arms and drawing them to his breast.

855

"Oh, please, I don't understand," said Trana, "I want to go away."

"Yes, yes," said Bonaparte, leaning back in his chair, to her great relief, and pressing his hands on his heart, "since first thy amethystine countenance was impressed here—what have I not suffered, what have I not felt? Oh, the pangs unspoken, burning as an ardent coal in a fiery and uncontaminated bosom!" said Bonaparte, bending forward again.

"Dear Lord!" said Trana to herself, "how foolish I have been! The old man has a pain in his stomach, and now, as my aunt is out, he has come to me to help him."

She smiled kindly at Bonaparte, and pushing past him, went to the bedroom, quickly returning with a bottle of red drops in her hand.

"They are very good for benauwdheid; my mother always drinks them," she said, holding the bottle out.

860

The face in the trap-door was a fiery red. Like a tiger-cat ready to spring. Tant Sannie crouched, with the shoulder of mutton in her hand. Exactly beneath her stood Bonaparte. She rose and clasped with both arms the barrel of salt meat.

"What, rose of the desert, nightingale of the colony, that with thine amorous lay whilest the lonesome night!" cried Bonaparte, seizing the hand that held the vonlicsense. "Nay, struggle not! Fly as a stricken fawn into the arms that would embrace thee, thou—"

Here a stream of cold pickle-water, heavy with ribs and shoulders, descending on his head abruptly terminated his speech. Half-blinded, Bonaparte looked up through the drops that hung from his eyelids, and saw the red face that looked down at him. With one wild cry he fled. As he passed out at the front door a shoulder of mutton, well-directed, struck the black coat in the small of the back.

"Bring the ladder! bring the ladder! I will go after him!" cried the Boer-woman, as Bonaparte Blenkins wildly fled into the fields.

Late in the evening of the same day Waldo knelt on the floor of his cabin. He bathed the foot of his dog which had been pierced

865

by a thorn. The bruises on his own back had had five days to heal in, and, except a little stiffness in his movements, there was nothing remarkable about the boy.

The troubles of the young are soon over; they leave no external mark. If you wound the tree in its youth the bark will quickly cover the gash; but when the tree is very old, peeling the bark off, and looking carefully, you will see the scar there still. All that is buried is not dead.

Waldo poured the warm milk over the little swollen foot; Doss lay very quiet, with tears in his eyes. Then there was a tap at the door. In an instant Doss looked wide awake, and winked the tears out from between his little lids.

"Come in," said Waldo, intent on his work; and slowly and cautiously the door opened.

"Good evening, Waldo, my boy," said Bonaparte Blenkins in a mild voice, not venturing more than his nose within the door. "How are you this evening?"

Doss growled and showed his little teeth, and tried to rise, but his paw hurt him so he whined.

870

"I'm very tired, Waldo, my boy," said Bonaparte plaintively.

Doss showed his little white teeth again. His master went on with his work without looking round. There are some people at whose hands it is best not to look. At last he said:

"Come in."

Bonaparte stepped cautiously a little way into the room, and left the door open behind him. He looked at the boy's supper on the table.

"Waldo, I've had nothing to eat all day—I'm very hungry," he said.

875

"Eat!" said Waldo after a moment, bending lower over his dog.

"You won't go and tell her that I am here, will you, Waldo?" said Bonaparte most uneasily. "You've heard how she used me, Waldo? I've been badly treated; you'll know yourself what it is some day when you can't carry on a little conversation with a lady without having salt meat and pickle-water thrown at you. Waldo, look at me; do I look as a gentleman should?"

But the boy neither looked up nor answered, and Bonaparte grew more uneasy.

"You wouldn't go and tell her that I am here, would you?" said Bonaparte, whiningly. "There's no knowing what she would do to me. I've such trust in you, Waldo; I've always thought you such a promising lad, though you mayn't have known it, Waldo."

"Eat," said the boy, "I shall say nothing."

880

Bonaparte, who knew the truth when another spoke it, closed the door, carefully putting on the button. Then he looked to see that the curtain of the window was closely pulled down, and seated himself at the table. He was soon munching the cold meat and bread. Waldo knelt on the floor, bathing the foot with hands which the dog licked lovingly. Once only he glanced at the table, and turned away quickly.

"Ah, yes! I don't wonder that you can't look at me, Waldo," said Bonaparte; "my condition would touch any heart. You see, the water was fatty, and that has made all the sand stick to me; and my hair," said Bonaparte, tenderly touching the little fringe at the back of his head, "is all caked over like a little plank; you wouldn't think it was hair at all," said Bonaparte, plaintively. "I had to creep all along the stone walls for fear she'd see me, and with nothing on my head but a red handkerchief, tied under my chin, Waldo; and to hide in a sloop the whole day, with not a mouthful of food, Waldo. And she gave me such a blow, just here," said Bonaparte.

He had cleared the plate of the last morsel, when Waldo rose and walked to the door.

"Oh, Waldo, my dear boy, you are not going to call her," said Bonaparte, rising anxiously.

"I am going to sleep in the wagon," said the boy, opening the door.

885

"Oh, we can both sleep in this bed; there's plenty of room. Do stay, my boy, please."

But Waldo stepped out.

"It was such a little whip, Waldo," said Bonaparte, following him deprecatingly. "I didn't think it would hurt you so much. It

was such a little whip. I am sure you didn't take the peaches. You aren't going to call her, Waldo, are you?"

But the boy walked off.

Bonaparte waited till his figure had passed round the front of the wagon-house, and then slipped out. He hid himself round the corner, but kept peeping out to see who was coming. He felt sure the boy was gone to call Tant Sannie. His teeth chattered with inward cold as he looked round into the darkness and thought of the snakes that might bite him, and the dreadful things that might attack him, and the dead that might arise out of their graves if he slept out in the field all night. But more than an hour passed and no footstep approached.

890

Then Bonaparte made his way back to the cabin. He buttoned the door and put the table against it and, giving the dog a kick to silence his whining when the foot throbbed, he climbed into bed. He did not put out the light, for fear of the ghost, but, worn out with the sorrows of the day, was soon asleep himself.

About four o'clock Waldo, lying between the seats of the horse-wagon, was awakened by a gentle touch on his head.

Sitting up, he espied Bonaparte looking through one of the windows with a lighted candle in his hand.

"I'm about to depart, my dear boy, before my enemies arise, and I could not leave without coming to bid you farewell," said Bonaparte.

Waldo looked at him.

895

"I shall always think of you with affection" said Bonaparte. "And there's that old hat of yours, if you could let me have it for a keepsake—"

"Take it," said Waldo.

"I thought you would say so, so I brought it with me," said Bonaparte, putting it on. "The Lord bless you, my dear boy. You haven't a few shillings—just a trifle you don't need—have you?"

"Take the two shillings that are in the broken vase."

"May the blessing of my God rest upon you, my dear child," said Bonaparte; "may He guide and bless you. Give me your hand."

900

Waldo folded his arms closely, and lay down.

"Farewell, adieu!" said Bonaparte. "May the blessing of my God and my father's God rest on you, now and evermore."

With these words the head and nose withdrew themselves, and the light vanished from the window.

After a few moments the boy, lying in the wagon, heard stealthy footsteps as they passed the wagon-house and made their way down the road. He listened as they grew fainter and fainter, and at last died away altogether, and from that night the footstep of Bonaparte Blenkins was heard no more at the old farm.

Part II

And it was all play, and no one could tell what it had lived and worked for. A striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing.

Chapter I. Times and Seasons

Waldo lay on his stomach on the sand. Since he prayed and howled to his God in the fuel-house three years had passed.

905

They say that in the world to come time is not measured out by months and years. Neither is it here. The soul's life has seasons of its own; periods not found in any calendar, times that years and months will not scan, but which are as deftly and sharply cut off from one another as the smoothly-arranged years which the earth's motion yields us.

To stranger eyes these divisions are not evident; but each, looking back at the little track his consciousness illuminates, sees it cut into distinct portions, whose boundaries are the termination of mental states.

As man differs from man, so differ these souls' years. The most material life is not devoid of them; the story of the most spiritual is told in them. And it may chance that some, looking back, see the past cut out after this fashion:

The year of infancy, where from the shadowy background of forgetfulness start out pictures of startling clearness, disconnected, but brightly coloured, and indelibly printed in the mind. Much that follows fades, but the colours of those baby-pictures are permanent.

There rises, perhaps, a warm summer's evening; we are seated on the doorstep; we have yet the taste of the bread and milk in our mouth, and the red sunset is reflected in our basin.

910

Then there is a dark night, where, waking with a fear that there is some great being in the room, we run from our own bed to another, creep close to some large figure, and are comforted.

Then there is remembrance of the pride when, on some one's shoulder, with our arms around their head, we ride to see the little pigs, the new little pigs with their curled tails and tiny snouts—where do they come from?

Remembrance of delight in the feel and smell of the first orange we ever see; of sorrow which makes us put up our lip, and cry hard, when one morning we run out to try and catch the dewdrops, and they melt and wet our little fingers; of almighty and despairing sorrow when we are lost behind the kraals, and cannot see the house anywhere.

And then one picture starts out more vividly than any.

There has been a thunderstorm; the ground, as far as the eye can reach, is covered with white hail; the clouds are gone, and overhead a deep blue sky is showing; far off a great rainbow rests on the white earth. We, standing in a window to look, feel the cool, unspeakably sweet wind blowing in on us, and a feeling of longing comes over us—unutterable longing, we cannot tell for what. We are so small, our head only reaches as high as the first three panes. We look at the white earth, and the rainbow, and the blue sky; and oh, we want it, we want—we do not know what. We cry as though our heart was broken. When one lifts our little body from the window we cannot tell what ails us. We run away to play.

915

So looks the first year.

Now the pictures become continuous and connected. Material things still rule, but the spiritual and intellectual take their places.

In the dark night when we are afraid we pray and shut our eyes. We press our fingers very hard upon the lids, and see dark spots moving round and round, and we know they are heads and wings of angels sent to take care of us, seen dimly in the dark as they move round our bed. It is very consoling.

In the day we learn our letters, and are troubled because we cannot see why k-n-o-w should be know, and p-s-a-l-m psalm. They tell us it is so because it is so. We are not satisfied; we hate to learn; we like better to build little stone houses. We can build them as we please, and know the reason for them.

Other joys too we have incomparably greater than even the building of stone houses.

920

We are run through with a shudder of delight when in the red sand we come on one of those white wax flowers that lie between their two green leaves flat on the sand. We hardly dare pick them, but we feel compelled to do so; and we smell and smell till the delight becomes almost pain. Afterward we pull the green leaves softly into pieces to see the silk threads run across.

Beyond the kopje grow some pale-green, hairy-leaved bushes. We are so small, they meet over our head, and we sit among them, and kiss them, and they love us back; it seems as though they were alive.

One day we sit there and look up at the blue sky, and down at our fat little knees; and suddenly it strikes us, Who are we? This I, what is it? We try to look in upon ourselves, and ourself beats back upon ourself. Then we get up in great fear and run home as hard as we can. We can't tell any one what frightened us. We never quite lose that feeling of self again.

III

And then a new time rises. We are seven years old. We can read now—read the Bible. Best of all we like the story of Elijah in his cave at Horeb, and the still small voice.

One day, a notable one, we read on the kopje, and discover the fifth chapter of Matthew, and read it all through. It is a new gold-mine. Then we tuck the Bible under our arm and rushed home. They didn't know it was wicked to take your things again if some one took them, wicked to go to law, wicked to—! We are quite breathless when we get to the house; we tell them we have discovered a chapter they never heard of; we tell them what it says. The old wise people tell us they knew all about it. Our discovery is a mare's-nest to them; but to us it is very real. The ten commandments and the old "Thou shalt" we have heard about long enough and don't care about it; but this new law sets us on fire.

We will deny ourself. Our little wagon that we have made, we give to the little Kaffers. We keep quiet when they throw sand at us (feeling, oh, so happy). We conscientiously put the cracked teacup for ourselves at breakfast, and take the burnt roaster-cake. We save our money, and buy threepence of tobacco for the Hottentot maid who calls us names. We are exotically virtuous. At night we are profoundly religious; even the ticking watch says, "Eternity, eternity! hell, hell, hell!" and the silence talks of God, and the things that shall be.

Occasionally, also, unpleasantly shrewd questions begin to be asked by some one, we know not who, who sits somewhere behind our shoulder. We get to know him better afterward.

Now we carry the questions to the grown-up people, and they give us answers. We are more or less satisfied for the time. The grown-up people are very wise, and they say it was kind of God to make hell, and very loving of Him to send men there; and besides, he couldn't help Himself, and they are very wise, we think, so we believe them—more or less.

IV

Then a new time comes, of which the leading feature is, that the shrewd questions are asked louder. We carry them to the grown-up people; they answer us, and we are not satisfied.

And now between us and the dear old world of the senses the spirit-world begins to peep in, and wholly clouds it over. What are the flowers to us? They are fuel waiting for the great burning. We look at the walls of the farmhouse and the matter-of-fact sheep-kraals, with the merry sunshine playing over all; and do not see it. But we see a great white throne, and him that sits on it. Around Him stand a great multitude that no man can number, harpers harping with their harps, a thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. How white are their robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb! And the music rises higher, and rends the vault of heaven with its unutterable sweetness. And we, as we listen, ever and anon, as it sinks on the sweetest, lowest note, hear a groan of the damned from below. We shudder in the sunlight.

"The torment," says Jeremy Taylor, whose sermons our father reads aloud in the evening, "comprises as many torments as the body of man has joints, sinews, arteries, etc., being caused by that penetrating and real fire of which this temporal fire is but a painted fire. What comparison will there be between burning for a hundred years' space and to be burning without intermission as long as God is God!"

We remember the sermon there in the sunlight. One comes and asks why we sit there nodding so moodily. Ah, they do not see what we see.

A moment's time, a narrow space,
Divides me from that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell."

So says Wesley's hymn, which we sing evening by evening. What matter sunshine and walls, men and sheep?

"The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." They are real.

The Bible we bear always in our breast; its pages are our food; we learn to repeat it; we weep much, for in sunshine and in shade, in the early morning or the late evening, in the field or in the house, the devil walks with us. He comes to a real person, copper-coloured face, head a little on one side, forehead knit, asking

questions. Believe me, it were better to be followed by three deadly diseases than by him. He is never silenced—without mercy. Though the drops of blood stand out on your heart he will put his question. Softly he comes up (we are only a wee bit child); "Is it good of God to make hell? Was it kind of Him to let no one be forgiven unless Jesus Christ died?"

Then he goes off, and leaves us writhing. Presently he comes back.

"Do you love Him?"—waits a little. "Do you love Him? You will be lost if you don't."

We say we try to.

"But do you?" Then he goes off.

It is nothing to him if we go quite mad with fear at our own wickedness. He asks on, the questioning devil; he cares nothing what he says. We long to tell some one, that they may share our pain. We do not yet know that the cup of affliction is made with such a narrow mouth that only one lip can drink at a time, and that each man's cup is made to match his lip.

940

One day we try to tell some one. Then a grave head is shaken solemnly at us. We are wicked, very wicked, they say we ought not to have such thoughts. God is good, very good. We are wicked, very wicked. That is the comfort we get. Wicked! Oh, Lord! do we not know it? Is it not the sense of our own exceeding wickedness that is drying up our young heart, filling it with sand, making all life a dust-bin for us?

Wicked? We know it! Too vile to live, too vile to die, too vile to creep over this, God's earth, and move among His believing men. Hell is the one place for him who hates his master, and there we do not want to go. This is the comfort we get from the old.

And once again we try to seek for comfort. This time great eyes look at us wondering, and lovely little lips say:

"If it makes you so unhappy to think of these things, why do you not think of something else, and forget?"

Forget! We turn away and shrink into ourself. Forget, and think of other things! Oh, God! do they not understand that the material world is but a film, through every pore of which God's awful

945

spirit world is shining through on us? We keep as far from others as we can.

One night, a rare clear moonlight night, we kneel in the window; every one else is asleep, but we kneel reading by the moonlight. It is a chapter in the prophets, telling how the chosen people of God shall be carried on the Gentiles' shoulders. Surely the devil might leave us alone; there is not much to handle for him there. But presently he comes.

"Is it right there should be a chosen people? To Him, who is father to all, should not all be dear?"

How can we answer him? We were feeling so good till he came. We put our head down on the Bible and blister it with tears. Then we fold our hands over our head and pray, till our teeth grind together. Oh, that from that spirit-world, so real and yet so silent, that surrounds us, one word would come to guide us! We are left alone with this devil; and God does not whisper to us. Suddenly we seize the Bible, turning it round and round, and say hurriedly:

"It will be God's voice speaking to us; His voice as though we heard it."

We yearn for a token from the inexorably Silent One.

950

We turn the book, put our finger down on a page, and bend to read by the moonlight. It is God's answer. We tremble.

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also."

For an instant our imagination seizes it; we are twisting, twirling, trying to make an allegory. The fourteen years are fourteen months; we are Paul and the devil is Barnabas, Titus is—Then a sudden loathing comes to us: we are liars and hypocrites, we are trying to deceive ourselves. What is Paul to us—and Jerusalem? We are Barnabas and Titus? We know not the men. Before we know we seize the book, swing it round our head, and fling it with all our might to the further end of the room. We put down our head again and weep.

Youth and ignorance; is there anything else that can weep so? It is as though the tears were drops of blood congealed beneath the eyelids; nothing else is like those tears. After a long time we

are weak with crying, and lie silent, and by chance we knock against the wood that stops the broken pane. It falls. Upon our hot stiff face a sweet breath of wind blows. We raise our head, and with our swollen eyes look out at the beautiful still world, and the sweet night-wind blows in upon us, holy and gentle, like a loving breath from the lips of God. Over us a deep peace comes, a calm, still joy; the tears now flow readily and softly. Oh, the unutterable gladness! At last, at last we have found it! "The peace with God." "The sense of sins forgiven." All doubt vanished, God's voice in the soul, the Holy Spirit filling us! We feel Him! We feel Him! Oh, Jesus Christ, through you, through you this joy! We press our hands upon our breast and look upward with adoring gladness. Soft waves of bliss break through us. "The peace with God." "The sense of sins forgiven." Methodists and revivalists say the words, and the mocking world shoots out its lip, and walks by smiling—"Hypocrite."

There are more fools and fewer hypocrites than the wise world dreams of. The hypocrite is rare as icebergs in the tropics; the fool common as buttercups beside a water-furrow: whether you go this way or that you tread on him; you dare not look at your own reflection in the water but you see one. There is no cant phrase, rotten with age, but it was the dress of a living body; none but at heart it signifies a real bodily or mental condition which some have passed through.

After hours and nights of frenzied fear of the supernatural desire to appease the power above, a fierce quivering excitement in every inch of nerve and blood vessel, there comes a time when nature cannot endure longer, and the spring long bent recoils. We sink down emasculated. Up creeps the deadly delicious calm.

"I have blotted out as a cloud thy sins, and as a thick cloud thy trespasses, and will remember them no more for ever." We weep with soft transporting joy.

A few experience this; many imagine they experience it, one here and there lies about it. In the main, "The peace with God; a sense of sins forgiven," stands for a certain mental and physical reaction. Its reality those know who have felt it.

And we, on that moonlight night, put down our head on the window, "Oh, God! we are happy, happy; thy child forever. Oh, thank you, God!" and we drop asleep.

Next morning the Bible we kiss. We are God's forever. We go out to work, and it goes happily all day, happily all night; but hardly so happily, not happily at all, the next day; and the next night the devil asks us, "where is your Holy Spirit?"

960

We cannot tell.

So month by month, summer and winter, the old life goes on—reading, praying, weeping, praying. They tell us we become utterly stupid. We know it. Even the multiplication table we learnt with so much care we forgot. The physical world recedes further and further from us. Truly we love not the world, neither the things that are in it. Across the bounds of sleep our grief follows us. When we wake in the night we are sitting up in bed weeping bitterly, or find ourself outside in the moonlight, dressed, and walking up and down, and wringing our hands, and we cannot tell how we came there. So pass two years, as men reckon them.

V

Then a new time.

Before us there were three courses possible—to go mad, to die, to sleep.

We take the latter course; or nature takes it for us.

965

All things take rest in sleep; the beasts, birds, the very flowers close their eyes, and the streams are still in winter; all things take rest; then why not the human reason also? So the questioning devil in us drops asleep, and in that sleep a beautiful dream rises for us. Though you hear all the dreams of men, you will hardly find a prettier one than ours. It ran so:

In the centre of all things is a mighty Heart, which, having begotten all things, loves them; and, having born them into life, beats with great throbs of love towards them. No death for His dear insects, no hell for His dear men, no burning up for His dear world—His own, own world that he has made. In the end all will be beautiful. Do not ask us how we make our dream tally with

facts; the glory of a dream is this—that it despises facts, and makes its own. Our dream saves us from going mad; that is enough.

Its peculiar point of sweetness lay here. When the Mighty Heart's yearning of love became too great for other expression, it shaped itself into the sweet Rose of heaven, the beloved Man-god.

Jesus! you Jesus of our dream! how we loved you; no Bible tells of you as we knew you. Your sweet hands held ours fast; your sweet voice said always, "I am here, my loved one, not far off; put your arms about me, and hold fast."

We find Him in everything in those days. When the little weary lamb we drive home drags its feet, we seize on it, and carry it with its head against our face. His little lamb! We feel we have got Him.

970

When the drunken Kaffer lies by the road in the sun we draw his blanket over his head, and put green branches of milk-bush on it. His Kaffer; why should the sun hurt him?

In the evening, when the clouds lift themselves like gates, and the red lights shine through them, we cry; for in such glory He will come, and the hands that ache to touch Him will hold him, and we shall see the beautiful hair and eyes of our God. "Lift up your heads, O, ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and our King of glory shall come in!"

The purple flowers, the little purple flowers, are His eyes, looking at us. We kiss them, and kneel alone on the flat, rejoicing over them. And the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for Him, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose.

If ever, in our tearful, joyful ecstasy, the poor, sleepy, half-dead devil should raise his head, we laugh at him. It is not his hour now.

"If there should be a hell, after all!" he mutters. "If your God should be cruel! If there should be no God! If you should find out it is all imagination! If—"

975

We laugh at him. When a man sits in the warm sunshine, do you ask him for proof of it? He feels—that is all. And we feel—that is all. We want no proof of our God. We feel, we feel!

We do not believe in our God because the Bible tells us of Him. We believe in the Bible because He tells us of it. We feel Him, we feel Him, we feel—that is all! And the poor, half-swamped devil mutters:

"But if the day should come when you do not feel?"

And we laugh and cry him down.

"It will never come—never," and the poor devil slinks to sleep again, with his tail between his legs. Fierce assertion many times repeated is hard to stand against; only time separates the truth from the lie. So we dream on.

980

One day we go with our father to town, to church. The townspeople rustle in their silks, and the men in their sleek cloth, and settle themselves in their pews, and the light shines in through the windows on the artificial flowers in the women's bonnets. We have the same miserable feeling that we have in a shop where all the clerks are very smart. We wish our father hadn't brought us to town, and we were out on the karoo. Then the man in the pulpit begins to preach. His text is "He that believeth not shall be damned."

The day before the magistrate's clerk, who was an atheist, has died in the street struck by lightning.

The man in the pulpit mentions no name; but he talks of "The hand of God made visible amongst us." He tells us how, when the white stroke fell, quivering and naked, the soul fled, robbed of his earthly filament, and lay at the footstool of God; how over its head has been poured out the wrath of the Mighty One, whose existence it has denied; and, quivering and terrified, it has fled to the everlasting shade.

We, as we listen, half start up; every drop of blood in our body has rushed to our head. He lies! he lies! he lies! That man in the pulpit lies! Will no one stop him? Have none of them heard—do none of them know, that when the poor, dark soul shut its eyes on earth it opened them in the still light of heaven? that there is no wrath where God's face is? that if one could once creep to the footstool of God, there is everlasting peace there, like the fresh stillness of the early morning? While the atheist lay wondering and afraid, God bent down and said: "My child, here I am—I,

whom you have not known; I, whom you have not believed in; I am here. I sent My messenger, the white sheet-lightning, to call you home. I am here."

Then the poor soul turned to the light—its weakness and pain were gone forever.

Have they not known, have they not heard, who it is rules?

"For a little moment have I hidden my face from thee; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

We mutter on to ourselves, till some one pulls us violently by the arm to remind us we are in church. We see nothing but our own ideas.

Presently every one turns to pray. There are six hundred souls lifting themselves to the Everlasting light.

Behind us sit two pretty ladies; one hands her scent-bottle softly to the other, and a mother pulls down her little girl's frock. One lady drops her handkerchief; a gentleman picks it up; she blushes. The women in the choir turn softly the leaves of their tune-books, to be ready when the praying is done. It is as though they thought more of the singing than the Everlasting Father. Oh, would it not be more worship of Him to sit alone in the karoo and kiss one little purple flower that he had made? Is it not mockery? Then the thought comes, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" We who judge, what are we better than they?—rather worse. Is it any excuse to say, "I am but a child and must come?" Does God allow any soul to step in between the spirit he made and himself? What do we there in that place, where all the words are lies against the All Father? Filled with horror, we turn and flee out of the place. On the pavement we smite our foot, and swear in our child's soul never again to enter those places where men come to sing and pray. We are questioned afterward. Why was it we went out of the church.

How can we explain?—we stand silent. Then we are pressed further, and we try to tell. Then a head is shaken solemnly at us. No one can think it wrong to go to the house of the Lord; it is the idle excuse of a wicked boy. When will we think seriously of our souls, and love going to church? We are wicked, very wicked.

And we—we slink away and go alone to cry. Will it be always so? Whether we hate and doubt, or whether we believe and love, to our dearest, are we to seem always wicked?

We do not yet know that in the soul's search for truth the bitterness lies here, the striving cannot always hide itself among the thoughts; sooner or later it will clothe itself in outward action; then it steps in and divides between the soul and what it loves. All things on earth have their price; and for truth we pay the dearest. We barter it for love and sympathy. The road to honour is paved with thorns; but on the path to truth, at every step you set your foot down on your own heart.

VI

Then at last a new time—the time of waking; short, sharp, and not pleasant, as wakings often are.

Sleep and dreams exist on this condition—that no one wake the dreamer.

And now life takes us up between her finger and thumb, shakes us furiously, till our poor nodding head is well-nigh rolled from our shoulders, and she sets us down a little hard on the bare earth, bruised and sore, but preternaturally wide awake.

We have said in our days of dreaming, "Injustice and wrong are a seeming; pain is a shadow. Our God, He is real, He who made all things, and He only is Love."

Now life takes us by the neck and shows us a few other things,—new-made graves with the red sand flying about them; eyes that we love with the worms eating them; evil men walking sleek and fat, the whole terrible hurly-burly of the thing called life,—and she says, "What do you think of these?" We dare not say "Nothing." We feel them; they are very real. But we try to lay our hands about and feel that other thing we felt before. In the dark night in the fuel-room we cry to our Beautiful dream-god: "Oh, let us come near you, and lay our head against your feet. Now in our hour of need be near us." But He is not there; He is gone away. The old questioning devil is there.

We must have been awakened sooner or later. The imagination cannot always triumph over reality, the desire over truth. We must have been awakened. If it was done a little sharply, what matter? It was done thoroughly, and it had to be done.

VII

And a new life begins for us—a new time, a life as cold as that of a man who sits on the pinnacle of an iceberg and sees the glittering crystals all about him. The old looks indeed like a long hot delirium, peopled with phantasies. The new is cold enough.

Now we have no God. We have had two: the old God that our fathers handed down to us, that we hated, and never liked: the new one that we made for ourselves, that we loved; but now he has flitted away from us, and we see what he was made of—the shadow of our highest ideal, crowned and throned. Now we have no God.

1000

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." It may be so. Most things said or written have been the work of fools.

This thing is certain—he is a fool who says, "No man hath said in his heart, There is no God."

It has been said many thousand times in hearts with profound bitterness of earnest faith.

We do not cry and weep: we sit down with cold eyes and look at the world. We are not miserable. Why should we be? We eat and drink, and sleep all night; but the dead are not colder.

And we say it slowly, but without sighing, "Yes, we see it now; there is no God."

1005

And, we add, growing a little colder yet. "There is no justice. The ox dies in the yoke, beneath its master's whip; it turns its anguish-filled eyes on the sunlight, but there is no sign of recompense to be made it. The black man is shot like a dog, and it goes well with the shooter. The innocent are accused and the accuser triumphs. If you will take the trouble to scratch the surface anywhere, you will see under the skin a sentient being writhing in impotent anguish."

And, we say further, and our heart is as the heart of the dead for coldness, "There is no order: all things are driven about by a blind chance."

What a soul drinks in with its mother's milk will not leave it in a day. From our earliest hour we have been taught that the thought of the heart, the shaping of the rain-cloud, the amount of wool that grows on a sheep's back, the length of a drought, and the growing of the corn, depend on nothing that moves immutable, at the heart of all things; but on the changeable will of a changeable being, whom our prayers can alter. To us, from the beginning, nature has been but a poor plastic thing, to be toyed with this way or that, as man happens to please his deity or not; to go to church or not; to say his prayers right or not; to travel on a Sunday or not. Was it possible for us in an instant to see Nature as she is—the flowing vestment of an unchanging reality? When the soul breaks free from the arms of a superstition, bits of the claws and talons break themselves off in him. It is not the work of a day to squeeze them out.

And so, for us, the human-like driver and guide being gone, all existence, as we look out at it with our chilled, wondering eyes, is an aimless rise and swell of shifting waters. In all that weltering chaos we can see no spot so large as a man's hand on which we may plant our foot.

Whether a man believes in a human-like God or no is a small thing. Whether he looks into the mental and physical world and sees no relation between cause and effect, no order, but a blind chance sporting, this is the mightiest fact that can be recorded in any spiritual existence. It were almost a mercy to cut his throat, if indeed he does not do it for himself.

1010

We, however, do not cut our throats. To do so would imply some desire and feeling, and we have no desire and no feeling; we are only cold. We do not wish to live, and we do not wish to die. One day a snake curls itself round the waist of a Kaffer woman. We take it in our hand, swing it round and round, and fling it on the ground—dead. Every one looks at us with eyes of admiration. We almost laugh. Is it wonderful to risk that for which we care nothing?

In truth, nothing matters. This dirty little world full of confusion, and the blue rag, stretched overhead for a sky, is so low we could touch it with our hand.

Existence is a great pot, and the old Fate who stirs it round cares nothing what rises to the top and what goes down, and laughs when the bubbles burst. And we do not care. Let it boil about. Why should we trouble ourselves? Nevertheless the physical sensations are real. Hunger hurts, and thirst, therefore we eat and drink: inaction pains us, therefore we work like galley-slaves. No one demands it, but we set ourselves to build a great dam in red sand beyond the graves. In the grey dawn before the sheep are let out we work at it. All day, while the young ostriches we tend feed about us, we work on through the fiercest heat. The people wonder what new spirit has seized us now. They do not know we are working for life. We bear the greatest stones, and feel a satisfaction when we stagger under them, and are hurt by a pang that shoots through our chest. While we eat our dinner we carry on baskets full of earth, as though the devil drove us. The Kaffer servants have a story that at night a witch and two white oxen come to help us. No wall, they say, could grow so quickly under one man's hands.

At night, alone in our cabin, we sit no more brooding over the fire. What should we think of now? All is emptiness. So we take the old arithmetic; and the multiplication table, which with so much pains we learnt long ago and forgot directly, we learn now in a few hours, and never forget again. We take a strange satisfaction in working arithmetical problems. We pause in our building to cover the stones with figures and calculations. We save money for a Latin Grammar and Algebra, and carry them about in our pockets, poring over them as over our Bible of old. We have thought we were utterly stupid, incapable of remembering anything, of learning anything. Now we find that all is easy. Has a new soul crept into this old body, that even our intellectual faculties are changed? We marvel; not perceiving that what a man expends in prayer and ecstasy he cannot have over for acquiring knowledge. You never shed a tear, or create a beautiful image, or quiver with emotion, but you pay for it at the practical,

calculating end of your nature. You have just so much force: when the one channel runs over the other runs dry.

And now we turn to Nature. All these years we have lived beside her, and we have never seen her; and now we open our eyes and look at her.

1015

The rocks have been to us a blur of brown: we bend over them, and the disorganised masses dissolve into a many-coloured, many-shaped, carefully-arranged form of existence. Here masses of rainbow-tinted crystals, half-fused together; there bands of smooth grey and red methodically overlying each other. This rock here is covered with a delicate silver tracery, in some mineral, resembling leaves and branches; there on the flat stone, on which we so often have sat to weep and pray, we look down, and see it covered with the fossil footprints of great birds, and the beautiful skeleton of a fish. We have often tried to picture in our mind what the fossiled remains of creatures must be like, and all the while we sat on them, we have been so blinded by thinking and feeling that we have never seen the world.

The flat plain has been to us a reach of monotonous red. We look at it, and every handful of sand starts into life. That wonderful people, the ants, we learn to know; see them make war and peace, play and work, and build their huge palaces. And that smaller people we make acquaintance with, who live in the flowers. The bitto flower has been for us a mere blur of yellow; we find its heart composed of a hundred perfect flowers, the homes of the tiny black people with red stripes, who move in and out in that little yellow city. Every bluebell has its inhabitant. Every day the karoo shows us a new wonder sleeping in its teeming bosom.

On our way back to work we pause and stand to see the ground-spider make its trap, bury itself in the sand, and then wait for the falling in of its enemy.

Further on walks a horned beetle, and near him starts open the door of a spider, who peeps out carefully, and quickly pulls it down again. On a karoo-bush a green fly is laying her silver eggs. We carry them home, and see the shells pierced, the spotted grub come out, turn to a green fly, and flit away. We are not satisfied

with what Nature shows us, and we see something for ourselves. Under the white hen we put a dozen eggs, and break one daily, to see the white spot wax into the chicken. We are not excited or enthusiastic about it; but a man is not to lay his throat open, he must think of something. So we plant seeds in rows on our dam-wall, and pull one up daily to see how it goes with them. Alladeen buried her wonderful stone, and a golden palace sprung up at her feet. We do far more. We put a brown seed in the earth, and a living thing starts out—starts upward—why, no more than Alladeen can we say—starts upward, and does not desist till it is higher than our heads, sparkling with dew in the early morning, glittering with yellow blossoms, shaking brown seeds with little embryo souls on to the ground. We look at it solemnly, from the time it consists of two leaves peeping above the ground and a soft white root, till we have to raise our faces to look at it; but we find no reason for that upward starting.

We look into dead ducks and lambs. In the evening we carry them home, spread newspapers on the floor, and lie working with them till midnight. With a started feeling near akin to ecstasy we open the lump of flesh called a heart, and find little doors and strings inside. We feel them, and put the heart away; but every now and then return to look, and to feel them again. Why we like them so we can hardly tell.

A gander drowns itself in our dam. We take it out, and open it on the bank, and kneel looking at it. Above are the organs divided by delicate tissues; below are the intestines artistically curved in a spiral form, and each tier covered by a delicate network of blood-vessels standing out red against the faint blue background. Each branch of the blood-vessels is comprised of a trunk, bifurcating and rebifurcating into the most delicate, hair-like threads, symmetrically arranged. We are struck with its singular beauty. And, moreover—and here we drop from our kneeling into a sitting posture—this also we remark: of that same exact shape and outline is our thorn-tree seen against the sky in mid-winter: of that shape also is delicate metallic tracery between our rocks; in that exact path does our water flow when without a furrow we lead it from the dam; so shaped are the antlers of the horned beetle. How

are these things related that such deep union should exist between them all? Is it chance? Or, are they not all the fine branches of one trunk, whose sap flows through us all? That would explain it. We nod over the gander's inside.

This thing we call existence; is it not a something which has its roots far down below in the dark, and its branches stretching out into the immensity above, which we among the branches cannot see? Not a chance jungle; a living thing, a One. The thought gives us intense satisfaction, we cannot tell why.

We nod over the gander; then start up suddenly, look into the blue sky, throw the dead gander and the refuse into the dam, and go to work again.

And so, it comes to pass in time, that the earth ceases for us to be a weltering chaos. We walk in the great hall of life, looking up and round reverentially. Nothing is despicable—all is meaningful; nothing is small—all is part of a whole, whose beginning and end we know not. The life that throbs in us is a beginning and end we know not. The life that throbs in us is a pulsation from it; too mighty for our comprehension, not too small.

And so, it comes to pass at last, that whereas the sky was at first a small blue rag stretched out over us, and so low that our hands might touch it, pressing down on us, it raises itself into an immeasurable blue arch over our heads, and we begin to live again.

1025

Chapter II. Waldo's Stranger

Waldo lay on his stomach on the red sand. The small ostriches he herded wandered about him, pecking at the food he had cut, or at pebbles and dry sticks. On his right lay the graves; to his left the dam; in his hand was a large wooden post covered with carvings, at which he worked. Doss lay before him basking in the winter sunshine, and now and again casting an expectant glance at the corner of the nearest ostrich camp. The scrubby thorn-trees under which they lay yielded no shade, but none was needed in that glorious June weather, when in the hottest part of the afternoon the sun was but pleasantly warm; and the boy carved

on, not looking up, yet conscious of the brown serene earth about him and the intensely blue sky above.

Presently, at the corner of the camp, Em appeared, bearing a covered saucer in one hand and in the other a jug, with a cup in the top. She was grown into a premature little old woman of sixteen, ridiculously fat. The jug and saucer she put down on the ground before the dog and his master and dropped down beside them herself, panting and out of breath.

"Waldo, as I came up the camps I met some one on horseback, and I do believe it must be the new man that is coming."

The new man was an Englishman to whom the Boer-woman had hired half the farm.

"Hum!" said Waldo.

1030

"He is quite young," said Em, holding her side, "and he has brown hair, and beard curling close to his face, and such dark blue eyes. And, Waldo, I was so ashamed! I was just looking back to see, you know, and he happened just to be looking back too, and we looked right into each other's faces; and he got red, and I got so red. I believe he is the new man."

"Yes," said Waldo.

"I must go now. Perhaps he has brought us letters from the post from Lyndall. You know she can't stay at school much longer, she must come back soon. And the new man will have to stay with us till his house is built. I must get his room ready. Good-bye!"

She tripped off again, and Waldo carved on at his post. Doss lay with his nose close to the covered saucer, and smelt that some one had made nice little fat cakes that afternoon. Both were so intent on their occupation that not till a horse's hoofs beat beside them in the sand did they look up to see a rider drawing in his steed.

He was certainly not the stranger whom Em had described. A dark, somewhat French-looking little man of eight-and-twenty, rather stout, with heavy, cloudy eyes and pointed moustaches. His horse was a fiery creature, well caparisoned; a highly-finished saddlebag hung from the saddle; the man's hands were gloved, and he presented the appearance-an appearance rare on that farm—of a well-dressed gentleman.

1035

In an uncommonly melodious voice he inquired whether he might be allowed to remain there for an hour. Waldo directed him to the farmhouse, but the stranger declined. He would merely rest under the trees and give his horse water. He removed the saddle and Waldo led the animal away to the dam. When he returned, the stranger had settled himself under the trees, with his back against the saddle. The boy offered him of the cakes. He declined, but took a draught from the jug; and Waldo lay down not far off and fell to work again. It mattered nothing if cold eyes saw it. It was not his sheep-shearing machine. With material loves, as with human, we go mad once, love out, and have done. We never get up the true enthusiasm a second time. This was but a thing he had made, laboured over, loved and liked—nothing more—not his machine.

The stranger forced himself lower down in the saddle and yawned. It was a drowsy afternoon, and he objected to travel in these out-of-the-world parts. He liked better civilised life, where at every hour of the day a man may look for his glass of wine, and his easy-chair, and paper; where at night he may lock himself into his room with his books and a bottle of brandy, and taste joys mental and physical. The world said of him—the all-knowing, omnipotent world, whom no locks can bar, who has the cat-like propensity of seeing best in the dark—the world said, that better than the books he loved the brandy, and better than books or brandy that which it had been better had he loved less. But for the world he cared nothing; he smiled blandly in its teeth. All life is a dream; if wine and philosophy and women keep the dream from becoming a nightmare, so much the better. It is all they are fit for, all they can be used for. There was another side to his life and thought; but of that the world knew nothing, and said nothing, as the way of the wise world is.

The stranger looked from beneath his sleepy eyelids at the brown earth that stretched away, beautiful in spite of itself in that June sunshine; looked at the graves, the gables of the farmhouse showing over the stone walls of the camps, at the clownish fellow at his feet, and yawned. But he had drunk of the hind's tea, and must say something.

"Your father's place I presume?" he inquired sleepily.

"No; I am only a servant."

1040

"Dutch people?"

"Yes."

"And you like the life?"

The boy hesitated.

"On days like these."

1045

"And why on these?"

The boy waited.

"They are very beautiful."

The stranger looked at him. It seemed that as the fellow's dark eyes looked across the brown earth they kindled with an intense satisfaction; then they looked back at the carving.

What had that creature, so coarse-clad and clownish, to do with the subtle joys of the weather? Himself, white-handed and delicate, he might hear the music with shimmering sunshine and solitude play on the finely-strung chords of nature; but that fellow! Was not the ear in that great body too gross for such delicate mutterings?

1050

Presently he said:

"May I see what you work at?"

The fellow handed his wooden post. It was by no means lovely. The men and birds were almost grotesque in their laboured resemblance to nature, and bore signs of patient thought. The stranger turned the thing over on his knee.

"Where did you learn this work?"

"I taught myself."

1055

"And these zigzag lines represent—"

"A mountain."

The stranger looked.

"It has some meaning, has it not?"

The boy muttered confusedly.

1060

"Only things."

The questioner looked down at him—the huge, unwieldy figure, in size a man's, in right of his childlike features and curling hair a child's; and it hurt him—it attracted him and it hurt him. It was something between pity and sympathy.

"How long have you worked at this?"

"Nine months."

From his pocket the stranger drew his pocket-book, and took something from it. He could fasten the post to his horse in some way, and throw it away in the sand when at a safe distance. 1065

"Will you take this for your carving?"

The boy glanced at the five-pound note and shook his head.

"No; I cannot."

"You think it is worth more?" asked the stranger with a little sneer.

He pointed with his thumb to a grave. 1070

"No; it is for him."

"And who is there?" asked the stranger.

"My father."

The man silently returned the note to his pocket-book, and gave the carving to the boy; and, drawing his hat over his eyes, composed himself to sleep. Not being able to do so, after a while he glanced over the fellow's shoulder to watch him work. The boy carved letters into the back.

"If," said the stranger, with his melodious voice, rich with a sweetness that never showed itself in the clouded eyes—for sweetness will linger on in the voice long after it has died out in the eyes—"if for such a purpose, why write that upon it?" 1075

The boy glanced round at him, but made no answer. He had almost forgotten his presence.

"You surely believe," said the stranger, "that some day, sooner or later, these graves will open, and those Boer-uncles with their wives walk about here in the red sand, with the very fleshly legs with which they went to sleep? Then why say, 'He sleeps forever?' You believe he will stand up again?"

"Do you?" asked the boy, lifting for an instant his heavy eyes to the stranger's face.

Half taken aback the stranger laughed. It was as though a curious little tadpole which he held under his glass should suddenly lift its tail and begin to question him.

"I?—no." He laughed his short thick laugh. "I am a man who believes nothing, hopes nothing, fears nothing, feels nothing. I am 1080

beyond the pale of humanity; no criterion of what you should be who live here among your ostriches and bushes."

The next moment the stranger was surprised by a sudden movement on the part of the fellow, which brought him close to the stranger's feet. Soon after he raised his carving and laid it across the man's knee.

"Yes, I will tell you," he muttered; "I will tell you all about it."

He put his finger on the grotesque little mannikin at the bottom (ah! that man who believed nothing, hoped nothing, felt nothing; how he loved him!), and with eager finger the fellow moved upward, explaining over fantastic figures and mountains, to the crowning bird from whose wing dropped a feather. At the end he spoke with broken breath—short words, like one who utters things of mighty import.

The stranger watched more the face than the carving; and there was now and then a show of white teeth beneath the moustaches as he listened.

"I think," he said blandly, when the boy had done, "that I partly understand you. It is something after this fashion, is it not?" (He smiled.) "In certain valleys there was a hunter." (He touched the grotesque little figure at the bottom.) "Day by day he went to hunt for wild-fowl in the woods; and it chanced that once he stood on the shores of a large lake. While he stood waiting in the rushes for the coming of the birds, a great shadow fell on him, and in the water he saw a reflection. He looked up to the sky; but the thing was gone. Then a burning desire came over him to see once again that reflection in the water, and all day he watched and waited; but night came and it had not returned. Then he went home with his empty bag, moody and silent. His comrades came questioning about him to know the reason, but he answered them nothing; he sat alone and brooded. Then his friend came to him, and to him he spoke.

"'I have seen today,' he said, 'that which I never saw before—a vast white bird, with silver wings outstretched, sailing in the everlasting blue. And now it is as though a great fire burnt within my breast. It was but a sheen, a shimmer, a reflection in the water; but now I desire nothing more on earth than to hold her.'"

"His friend laughed.

"'It was but a beam playing on the water, or the shadow of your own head. Tomorrow you will forget her,' he said.

"But tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow the hunter walked alone. He sought in the forest and in the woods, by the lakes and among the rushes, but he could not find her. He shot no more wild fowl; what were they to him?

"'What ails him?' said his comrades.

1090

"'He is mad,' said one.

"'No; but he is worse,' said another; 'he would see that which none of us have seen, and make himself a wonder.'

"'Come, let us forswear his company,' said all.

"So the hunter walked alone.

"One night, as he wandered in the shade, very heartsore and weeping, an old man stood before him, grander and taller than the sons of men.

1095

"'Who are you?' asked the hunter.

"'I am Wisdom,' answered the old man; 'but some men call me Knowledge. All my life I have grown in these valleys; but no man sees me till he has sorrowed much. The eyes must be washed with tears that are to behold me; and, according as a man has suffered, I speak.'

"And the hunter cried:

"'Oh, you who have lived here so long, tell me, what is that great wild bird I have seen sailing in the blue? They would have me believe she is a dream; the shadow of my own head.'

"The old man smiled.

1100

"'Her name is Truth. He who has once seen her never rests again. Till death he desires her.'

"And the hunter cried:

"'Oh, tell me where I may find her.'

"But the old man said:

"'You have not suffered enough,' and went.

1105

"Then the hunter took from his breast the shuttle of Imagination, and wound on it the thread of his Wishes; and all night he sat and wove a net.

"In the morning he spread the golden net upon the ground, and into it he threw a few grains of credulity, which his father had left him, and which he kept in his breast-pocket. They were like white puff-balls, and when you trod on them a brown dust flew out. Then he sat by to see what would happen. The first that came into the net was a snow-white bird, with dove's eyes, and he sang a beautiful song—'A human-God! a human-God! a human-God!' it sang. The second that came was black and mystical, with dark, lovely eyes, that looked into the depths of your soul, and he sang only this—'Immortality!'

"And the hunter took them both in his arms for he said—

""They are surely of the beautiful family of Truth.'

"Then came another, green and gold, who sang in a shrill voice, like one crying in the marketplace,—'Reward after Death! Reward after Death!'

"And he said—

""You are not so fair; but you are fair too,' and he took it.

"And others came, brightly coloured, singing pleasant songs, till all the grains were finished. And the hunter gathered all his birds together, and built a strong iron cage called a new creed, and put all his birds in it.

"Then the people came about dancing and singing.

""Oh, happy hunter!' they cried. 'Oh, wonderful man! Oh, delightful birds! Oh, lovely songs!'

"No one asked where the birds had come from, nor how they had been caught; but they danced and sang before them. And the hunter too was glad, for he said:

""Surely Truth is among them. In time she will moult her feathers, and I shall see her snow-white form.'

"But the time passed, and the people sang and danced; but the hunter's heart grew heavy. He crept alone, as of old, to weep; the terrible desire had awakened again in his breast. One day, as he sat alone weeping, it chanced that Wisdom met him. He told the old man what he had done.

"And Wisdom smiled sadly.

""Many men,' he said, 'have spread that net for Truth; but they have never found her. On the grains of credulity she will not feed;

in the net of wishes her feet cannot be held; in the air of these valleys she will not breathe. The birds you have caught are of the brood of Lies. Lovely and beautiful, but still lies; Truth knows them not.'

"And the hunter cried out in bitterness—

""And must I then sit still, to be devoured of this great burning?"

"And the old man said,

""Listen, and in that you have suffered much and wept much, I will tell you what I know. He who sets out to search for Truth must leave these valleys of superstition forever, taking with him not one shred that has belonged to them. Alone he must wander down into the Land of Absolute Negation and Denial; he must abide there; he must resist temptation; when the light breaks he must arise and follow it into the country of dry sunshine. The mountains of stern reality will rise before him; he must climb them; beyond them lies Truth.'

""And he will hold her fast! he will hold her in his hands!' the hunter cried.

1125

"Wisdom shook his head.

""He will never see her, never hold her. The time is not yet.'

""Then there is no hope?' cried the hunter.

""There is this,' said Wisdom: 'Some men have climbed on those mountains; circle above circle of bare rock they have scaled; and, wandering there, in those high regions, some have chanced to pick up on the ground one white silver feather, dropped from the wing of Truth. And it shall come to pass,' said the old man, raising himself prophetically and pointing with his finger to the sky, 'it shall come to pass, that when enough of those silver feathers shall have been gathered by the hands of men, and shall have been woven into a cord, and the cord into a net, that in that net Truth may be captured. Nothing but Truth can hold Truth.'

"The hunter arose. 'I will go,' he said.

1130

"But wisdom detained him.

""Mark you well—who leaves these valleys never returns to them. Though he should weep tears of blood seven days and

nights upon the confines, he can never put his foot across them. Left—they are left forever. Upon the road which you would travel there is no reward offered. Who goes, goes freely—for the great love that is in him. The work is his reward.'

"'I go' said the hunter; 'but upon the mountains, tell me, which path shall I take?'

"'I am the child of The-Accumulated-Knowledge-of-Ages,' said the man; 'I can walk only where many men have trodden. On these mountains few feet have passed; each man strikes out a path for himself. He goes at his own peril: my voice he hears no more. I may follow after him, but cannot go before him.'

"Then Knowledge vanished.

1135

"And the hunter turned. He went to his cage, and with his hands broke down the bars, and the jagged iron tore his flesh. It is sometimes easier to build than to break.

"One by one he took his plumed birds and let them fly. But when he came to his dark-plumed bird he held it, and looked into its beautiful eyes, and the bird uttered its low, deep cry—'Immortality!'

"And he said quickly: 'I cannot part with it. It is not heavy; it eats no food. I will hide it in my breast; I will take it with me.' And he buried it there and covered it over with his cloak.

"But the thing he had hidden grew heavier, heavier, heavier—till it lay on his breast like lead. He could not move with it. He could not leave those valleys with it. Then again he took it out and looked at it.

"'Oh, my beautiful! my heart's own!' he cried, 'may I not keep you?'

1140

"He opened his hands sadly.

"'Go!' he said. 'It may happen that in Truth's song one note is like yours; but I shall never hear it.'

"Sadly he opened his hand, and the bird flew from him forever.

"Then from the shuttle of imagination he took the thread of his wishes, and threw it on the ground; and the empty shuttle he put into his breast, for the thread was made in those valleys, but the shuttle came from an unknown country. He turned to go, but now the people came about him, howling.

"'Fool, hound, demented lunatic!' they cried. 'How dared you break your cage and let the birds fly?'"

1145

"The hunter spoke; but they would not hear him.

"'Truth! who is she? Can you eat her? can you drink her? Who has ever seen her? Your birds were real: all could hear them sing! Oh, fool! vile reptile! atheist!' they cried, 'you pollute the air.'"

"'Come, let us take up stones and stone him,' cried some.

"'What affair is it of ours?' said others. 'Let the idiot go,' and went away. But the rest gathered up stones and mud and threw at him. At last, when he was bruised and cut, the hunter crept away into the woods. And it was evening about him."

At every word the stranger spoke the fellow's eyes flashed back on him—yes, and yes, and yes! The stranger smiled. It was almost worth the trouble of exerting oneself, even on a lazy afternoon, to win those passionate flashes, more thirsty and desiring than the love-glances of a woman.

1150

"He wandered on and on," said the stranger, "and the shade grew deeper. He was on the borders now of the land where it is always night. Then he stepped into it, and there was no light there. With his hands he groped; but each branch as he touched it broke off, and the earth was covered with cinders. At every step his foot sank in, and a fine cloud of impalpable ashes flew up into his face; and it was dark. So he sat down upon a stone and buried his face in his hands, to wait in the Land of Negation and Denial till the light came.

"And it was night in his heart also.

"Then from the marshes to his right and left cold mists arose and closed about him. A fine, imperceptible rain fell in the dark, and great drops gathered on his hair and clothes. His heart beat slowly, and a numbness crept through all his limbs. Then, looking up, two merry wisp lights came dancing. He lifted his head to look at them. Nearer, nearer they came. So warm, so bright, they danced like stars of fire. They stood before him at last. From the centre of the radiating flame in one looked out a woman's face, laughing, dimpled, with streaming yellow hair. In the centre of the other were merry laughing ripples, like the bubbles on a glass of wine. They danced before him.

"'Who are you,' asked the hunter, 'who alone come to me in my solitude and darkness?'

"'We are the twins Sensuality,' they cried. 'Our father's name is Human-Nature, and our mother's name is Excess. We are as old as the hills and rivers, as old as the first man; but we never die,' they laughed. 1155

"'Oh, let me wrap my arms about you!; cried the first; 'they are soft and warm. Your heart is frozen now, but I will make it beat. Oh, come to me!'

"'I will pour my hot life into you,' said the second; 'your brain is numb, and your limbs are dead now; but they shall live with a fierce free life. Oh, let me pour it in!'

"'Oh, follow us,' they cried, 'and live with us. Nobler hearts than yours have sat here in this darkness to wait, and they have come to us and we to them; and they have never left us, never. All else is a delusion, but we are real, we are real, we are real. Truth is a shadow; the valleys of superstition are a farce: the earth is of ashes, the trees all rotten; but we—feel us—we live! You cannot doubt us. Feel us how warm we are! Oh, come to us! Come with us!'

"Nearer and nearer round his head they hovered, and the cold drops melted on his forehead. The bright light shot into his eyes, dazzling him, and the frozen blood began to run. And he said:

"'Yes, why should I die here in this awful darkness? They are warm, they melt my frozen blood!' and he stretched out his hands to take them. 1160

"Then in a moment there arose before him the image of the thing he had loved, and his hand dropped to his side.

"'Oh, come to us!' they cried.

"But he buried his face.

"'You dazzle my eyes,' he cried, 'you make my heart warm; but you cannot give me what I desire. I will wait here—wait till I die. Go!'

"He covered his face with his hands and would not listen; and when he looked up again they were two twinkling stars, that vanished in the distance. 1165

"And the long, long night rolled on.

"All who leave the valley of superstition pass through that dark land; but some go through it in a few days, some linger there for months, some for years, and some die there."

The boy had crept closer; his hot breath almost touched the stranger's hand; a mystic wonder filled his eyes.

"At last for the hunter a faint light played along the horizon, and he rose to follow it; and he reached that light at last, and stepped into the broad sunshine. Then before him rose the almighty mountains of Dry-facts and Realities. The clear sunshine played on them, and the tops were lost in the clouds. At the foot many paths ran up. An exultant cry burst from the hunter. He chose the straightest and began to climb; and the rocks and ridges resounded with his song. They had exaggerated; after all, it was not so high, nor was the road so steep! A few days, a few weeks, a few months at most, and then the top! Not one feather only would he pick up; he would gather all that other men had found—weave the net—capture Truth—hold her fast—touch her with his hands—clasp her!

"He laughed in the merry sunshine, and sang loud. Victory was very near. Nevertheless, after a while the path grew steeper. He needed all his breath for climbing, and the singing died away. On the right and left rose huge rocks, devoid of lichen or moss, and in the lava-like earth chasms yawned. Here and there he saw a sheen of white bones. Now too the path began to grow less and less marked; then it became a mere trace, with a footmark here and there; then it ceased altogether. He sang no more, but struck forth a path for himself, until it reached a mighty wall of rock, smooth and without break, stretching as far as the eye could see. 'I will rear a stair against it; and, once this wall climbed, I shall be almost there,' he said bravely; and worked. With his shuttle of imagination he dug out stones; but half of them would not fit, and half a month's work would roll down because those below were ill chosen. But the hunter worked on, saying always to himself, 'Once this wall climbed, I shall be almost there. This great work ended!'

"At last he came out upon the top, and he looked about him. Far below rolled the white mist over the valleys of superstition,

and above him towered the mountains. They had seemed low before; they were of an immeasurable height now, from crown to foundation surrounded by walls of rock, that rose tier above tier in mighty circles. Upon them played the eternal sunshine. He uttered a wild cry. He bowed himself on to the earth, and when he rose his face was white. In absolute silence he walked on. He was very silent now. In those high regions the rarefied air is hard to breathe by those born in the valleys; every breath he drew hurt him, and the blood oozed out from the tips of his fingers. Before the next wall of rock he began to work. The height of this seemed infinite, and he said nothing. The sound of his tool rang night and day upon the iron rocks into which he cut steps. Years passed over him, yet he worked on; but the wall towered up always above him to heaven. Sometimes he prayed that a little moss or lichen might spring up on those bare walls to be a companion to him; but it never came." The stranger watched the boy's face.

"And the years rolled on; he counted them by the steps he had cut—a few for a year—only a few. He sang no more; he said no more, 'I will do this or that'—he only worked. And at night, when the twilight settled down, there looked out at him from the holes and crevices in the rocks strange wild faces.

"'Stop your work, you lonely man, and speak to us,' they cried.

"'My salvation is in work, if I should stop but for one moment you would creep down upon me,' he replied. And they put out their long necks further.

"'Look down into the crevice at your feet,' they said. 'See what lie there—white bones! As brave and strong a man as you climbed to these rocks.' And he looked up. He saw there was no use in striving; he would never hold Truth, never see her, never find her. So he lay down here, for he was very tired. He went to sleep forever. He put himself to sleep. Sleep is very tranquil. You are not lonely when you are asleep, neither do your hands ache, nor your heart. And the hunter laughed between his teeth.

"'Have I torn from my heart all that was dearest; have I wandered alone in the land of night; have I resisted temptation; have I dwelt where the voice of my kind is never heard, and laboured alone, to lie down and be food for you, ye harpies?'

"He laughed fiercely; and the Echoes of Despair slunk away, for the laugh of a brave, strong heart is as a death blow to them.

"Nevertheless they crept out again and looked at him.

"Do you know that your hair is white?' they said, 'that your hands begin to tremble like a child's? Do you see that the point of your shuttle is gone?—it is cracked already. If you should ever climb this stair,' they said, 'it will be your last. You will never climb another.'

"And he answered, 'I know it!' and worked on.

1180

"The old, thin hands cut the stones ill and jaggedly, for the fingers were stiff and bent. The beauty and the strength of the man was gone.

"At last, an old, wizened, shrunken face looked out above the rocks. It saw the eternal mountains rise with walls to the white clouds; but its work was done.

"The old hunter folded his tired hands and lay down by the precipice where he had worked away his life. It was the sleeping time at last. Below him over the valleys rolled the thick white mist. Once it broke; and through the gap the dying eyes looked down on the trees and fields of their childhood. From afar seemed borne to him the cry of his own wild birds, and he heard the noise of people singing as they danced. And he thought he heard among them the voices of his old comrades; and he saw far off the sunlight shine on his early home. And great tears gathered in the hunter's eyes.

"Ah! They who die there do not die alone,' he cried.

"Then the mists rolled together again; and he turned his eyes away.

1185

"I have sought,' he said, 'for long years I have laboured; but I have not found her. I have not rested, I have not repined, and I have not seen her; now my strength is gone. Where I lie down worn out other men will stand, young and fresh. By the steps that I have cut they will climb; by the stairs that I have built they will mount. They will never know the name of the man who made them. At the clumsy work they will laugh; when the stones roll they will curse me. But they will mount, and on my work; they

will climb, and by my stair! They will find her, and through me!
And no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself.'

"The tears rolled from beneath the shrivelled eyelids. If Truth had appeared above him in the clouds now he could not have seen her, the mist of death was in his eyes.

"'My soul hears their glad step coming,' he said; 'and they shall mount! they shall mount!' He raised his shrivelled hand to his eyes.

"Then slowly from the white sky above, through the still air, came something falling, falling, falling. Softly it fluttered down, and dropped on to the breast of the dying man. He felt it with his hands. It was a feather. He died holding it."

The boy had shaded his eyes with his hand. On the wood of the carving great drops fell. The stranger must have laughed at him, or remained silent. He did so.

"How did you know it?" the boy whispered at last. "It is not written there—not on that wood. How did you know it?"

"Certainly," said the stranger, "the whole of the story is not written here, but it is suggested. And the attribute of all true art, the highest and the lowest, is this—that it rays more than it says, and takes you away from itself. It is a little door that opens into an infinite hall where you may find what you please. Men, thinking to detract, say: 'People read more in this or that work of genius than was ever written in it,' not perceiving that they pay the highest compliment. If we pick up the finger and nail of a real man, we can decipher a whole story—could almost reconstruct the creature again, from head to foot. But half the body of a Mumboo-jumbow idol leaves us utterly in the dark as to what the rest was like. We see what we see, but nothing more. There is nothing so universally intelligible as truth. It has a thousand meanings, and suggests a thousand more."

He turned over the wooden thing.

"Though a man should carve it into matter with the least possible manipulative skill, it will yet find interpreters. It is the soul that looks out with burning eyes through the most gross fleshly filament. Whosoever should portray truly the life and death of a little flower—its birth, sucking in of nourishment,

reproduction of its kind, withering and vanishing—would have shaped a symbol of all existence. All true facts of nature or the mind are related. Your little carving represents some mental facts as they really are, therefore fifty different true stories might be read from it. What your work wants is not truth, but beauty of external form, the other half of art." He leaned almost gently toward the boy. "Skill may come in time, but you will have to work hard. The love of beauty and the desire for it must be born in a man; the skill to reproduce it he must make. He must work hard."

"All my life I have longed to see you," the boy said.

1195

The stranger broke off the end of his cigar, and lit it. The boy lifted the heavy wood from the stranger's knee and drew yet nearer him. In the dog-like manner of his drawing near there was something superbly ridiculous, unless one chanced to view it in another light. Presently the stranger said, whiffing, "Do something for me."

The boy started up.

"No; stay where you are. I don't want you to go anywhere; I want you to talk to me. Tell me what you have been doing all your life."

The boy slunk down again. Would that the man had asked him to root up bushes with his hands for his horse to feed on; or to run to the far end of the plain for the fossils that lay there, or to gather the flowers that grew on the hills at the edge of the plain; he would have run and been back quickly—but now!

"I have never done anything," he said.

1200

"Then tell me of that nothing. I like to know what other folks have been doing whose word I can believe. It is interesting. What was the first thing you ever wanted very much?"

The boy waited to remember, then began hesitatingly, but soon the words flowed. In the smallest past we find an inexhaustible mine when once we begin to dig at it.

A confused, disordered story—the little made large and the large small, and nothing showing its inward meaning. It is not till the past has receded many steps that before the clearest eyes it falls into co-ordinate pictures. It is not till the I we tell of has

ceased to exist that it takes its place among other objective realities, and finds its true niche in the picture. The present and the near past is a confusion, whose meaning flashes on us as it slinks away into the distance.

The stranger lit one cigar from the end of another, and puffed and listened with half-closed eyes.

"I will remember more to tell you if you like," said the boy.

1205

He spoke with that extreme gravity common to all very young things who feel deeply. It is not till twenty that we learn to be in deadly earnest and to laugh. The stranger nodded, while the fellow sought for something more to relate. He would tell all to this man of his—all that he knew, all that he had felt, his inmost sorest thought. Suddenly the stranger turned upon him.

"Boy," he said, "you are happy to be here."

Waldo looked at him. Was his delightful one ridiculing him? Here, with this brown earth and these low hills, while the rare wonderful world lay all beyond. Fortunate to be here?

The stranger read his glance.

"Yes," he said; "here with the karoo-bushes and red sand. Do you wonder what I mean? To all who have been born in the old faith there comes a time of danger, when the old slips from us, and we have not yet planted our feet on the new. We hear the voice from Sinai thundering no more, and the still small voice of reason is not yet heard. We have proved the religion our mothers fed us on to be a delusion; in our bewilderment we see no rule by which to guide our steps day by day; and yet every day we must step somewhere."

1210

The stranger leaned forward and spoke more quickly. "We have never once been taught by word or act to distinguish between religion and the moral laws on which it has artfully fastened itself, and from which it has sucked its vitality. When we have dragged down the weeds and creepers that covered the solid wall and have found them to be rotten wood, we imagine the wall itself to be rotten wood too. We find it is solid and standing only when we fall headlong against it. We have been taught that all right and wrong originate in the will of an irresponsible being. It is some time before we see how the inexorable 'Thou shalt and

shalt not,' are carved into the nature of things. This is the time of danger."

His dark, misty eyes looked into the boy's.

"In the end experience will inevitably teach us that the laws for a wise and noble life have a foundation infinitely deeper than the fiat of any being, God or man, even in the groundwork of human nature.

"She will teach us that whoso sheddeth man's blood, though by man his blood be not shed, though no man avenge and no hell await, yet every drop shall blister on his soul and eat in the name of the dead. She will teach that whoso takes a love not lawfully his own, gathers a flower with a poison on its petals; that whoso revenges, strikes with a sword that has two edges—one for his adversary, one for himself; that who lives to himself is dead, though the ground is not yet on him; that who wrongs another clouds his own sun; and that who sins in secret stands accursed and condemned before the one Judge who deals eternal justice—his own all-knowing self.

"Experience will teach us this, and reason will show us why it must be so; but at first the world swings before our eyes, and no voice cries out, 'This is the way, walk ye in it!' You are happy to be here, boy! When the suspense fills you with pain you build stone walls and dig earth for relief. Others have stood where you stand today, and have felt as you feel; and another relief has been offered them, and they have taken it.

1215

"When the day has come when they have seen the path in which they might walk, they have not the strength to follow it. Habits have fastened on them from which nothing but death can free them; which cling closer than his sacerdotal sanctimony to a priest; which feed on the intellect like a worm, sapping energy, hope, creative power, all that makes a man higher than a beast—leaving only the power to yearn, to regret, and to sink lower in the abyss.

"Boy," he said, and the listener was not more unsmiling now than the speaker, "you are happy to be here! Stay where you are. If you ever pray, let it be only the one old prayer—'Lead us not into temptation.' Live on here quietly. The time may yet come

when you will be that which other men have hoped to be and never will be now."

The stranger rose, shook the dust from his sleeve, and ashamed at his own earnestness, looked across the bushes for his horse.

"We should have been on our way already," he said. "We shall have a long ride in the dark tonight."

Waldo hastened to fetch the animal; but he returned leading it slowly. The sooner it came the sooner would its rider be gone. 1220

The stranger was opening his saddlebag, in which were a bright French novel and an old brown volume. He took the last and held it out to the boy.

"It may be of some help to you," he said, carelessly. "It was a gospel to me when I first fell on it. You must not expect too much; but it may give you a centre round which to hang your ideas, instead of letting them lie about in a confusion that makes the head ache. We of this generation are not destined to eat and be satisfied as our fathers were; we must be content to go hungry."

He smiled his automaton smile, and rebuttoned the bag. Waldo thrust the book into his breast, and while he saddled the horse the stranger made inquiries as to the nature of the road and the distance to the next farm.

When the bags were fixed, Waldo took up his wooden post and began to fasten it on to the saddle, tying it with the little blue cotton handkerchief from his neck. The stranger looked on in silence. When it was done the boy held the stirrup for him to mount.

"What is your name?" he inquired, ungloving his right hand when he was in the saddle. 1225

The boy replied:

"Well, I trust we shall meet again some day, sooner or later."

He shook hands with the ungloved hand; then drew on the glove, and touched his horse, and rode slowly away. The boy stood to watch him.

Once when the stranger had gone half across the plain he looked back.

"Poor devil," he said, smiling and stroking his moustache. Then he looked to see if the little blue handkerchief were still 1230

safely knotted. "Poor devil!"

He smiled, and then he sighed wearily, very wearily.

And Waldo waited till the moving speck had disappeared on the horizon; then he stooped and kissed passionately a hoof-mark in the sand. Then he called his young birds together, and put his book under his arm, and walked home along the stone wall. There was a rare beauty to him in the sunshine that evening.

Chapter III. Gregory Rose Finds His Affinity

The new man, Gregory Rose, sat at the door of his dwelling, his arms folded, his legs crossed, and a profound melancholy seeming to rest over his soul. His house was a little square daub-and-wattle building, far out in the karoo, two miles from the homestead. It was covered outside with a sombre coating of brown mud, two little panes being let into the walls for windows. Behind it were the sheep-kraals, and to the right a large dam, now principally containing baked mud. Far off the little kopje concealed the homestead, and was not itself an object conspicuous enough to relieve the dreary monotony of the landscape.

Before the door sat Gregory Rose in his shirt-sleeves, on a camp-stool, and ever and anon he sighed deeply. There was that in his countenance for which even his depressing circumstances failed to account. Again and again he looked at the little kopje, at the milk-pail at his side, and at the brown pony, who a short way off cropped the dry bushes—and sighed.

Presently he rose and went into his house. It was one tiny room, the whitewashed walls profusely covered with prints cut from the "Illustrated London News", and in which there was a noticeable preponderance of female faces and figures. A stretcher filled one end of the hut, and a rack for a gun and a little hanging looking-glass diversified the gable opposite, while in the centre stood a chair and table. All was scrupulously neat and clean, for Gregory kept a little duster folded in the corner of his table-drawer, just as he had seen his mother do, and every morning before he went out he said his prayers, and made his bed, and

dusted the table and the legs of the chairs, and even the pictures on the wall and the gun-rack.

On this hot afternoon he took from beneath his pillow a watch-bag made by his sister Jemima, and took out the watch. Only half past four! With a suppressed groan he dropped it back and sat down beside the table. Half-past four! Presently he roused himself. He would write to his sister Jemima. He always wrote to her when he was miserable. She was his safety-valve. He forgot her when he was happy; but he used her when he was wretched.

He took out ink and paper. There was a family crest and motto on the latter, for the Roses since coming to the colony had discovered that they were of distinguished lineage. Old Rose himself, an honest English farmer, knew nothing of his noble descent; but his wife and daughter knew—especially his daughter. There were Roses in England who kept a park and dated from the Conquest. So the colonial "Rose Farm" became "Rose Manor" in remembrance of the ancestral domain, and the claim of the Roses to noble blood was established—in their own minds at least.

Gregory took up one of the white, crested sheets; but on deeper reflection he determined to take a pink one, as more suitable to the state of his feelings. He began:

Kopje Alone,
Monday afternoon.
My Dear Jemima—

Then he looked up into the little glass opposite. It was a youthful face reflected there, with curling brown beard and hair; but in the dark blue eyes there was a look of languid longing that touched him. He re-dipped his pen and wrote:

When I look up into the little glass that hangs opposite me, I wonder if that changed and sad face—

Here he sat still and reflected. It sounded almost as if he might be conceited or unmanly to be looking at his own face in the

glass. No, that would not do. So he looked for another pink sheet and began again.

Kopje Alone,

Monday afternoon.

Dear Sister,—It is hardly six months since I left you to come to this spot, yet could you now see me I know what you would say, I know what mother would say—'Can that be our Greg—that thing with the strange look in his eyes?'

Yes, Jemima, it is your Greg, and the change has been coming over me ever since I came here; but it is greatest since yesterday. You know what sorrows I have passed through, Jemima; how unjustly I was always treated at school, the masters keeping me back and calling me a blockhead, though, as they themselves allowed, I had the best memory of any boy in the school, and could repeat whole books from beginning to end. You know how cruelly father always used me, calling me a noodle and a milksop, just because he couldn't understand my fine nature. You know how he has made a farmer of me instead of a minister, as I ought to have been; you know it all, Jemima; and how I have borne it all, not as a woman, who whines for every touch, but as a man should—in silence.

But there are things, there is a thing, which the soul longs to pour forth into a kindred ear.

Dear sister, have you ever known what it is to keep wanting and wanting and wanting to kiss some one's mouth, and you may not; to touch some one's hand, and you cannot? I am in love, Jemima.

The old Dutchwoman from whom I hire this place has a little stepdaughter, and her name begins with 'E'.

She is English. I do not know how her father came to marry a Boer-woman. It makes me feel so strange to put down that letter, that I can hardly go on writing 'E'. I've loved her ever since I came here. For weeks I have not been able to eat or drink; my very tobacco when I smoke has no taste; and I can remain for no more than five minutes in one place, and sometimes feel as though I were really going mad.

Every evening I go there to fetch my milk. Yesterday she gave me some coffee. The spoon fell on the ground. She picked it up; when she gave it me her finger touched mine. Jemima, I do not know if I fancied it—I shivered hot, and she shivered too! I thought, 'It is all right; she will be mine; she loves me!' Just then, Jemima, in came a fellow, a great, coarse fellow, a German—a ridiculous fellow, with curls right down to his shoulders; it makes one sick to look at him. He's only a servant of the Boer-woman's, and a low, vulgar, uneducated thing; that's never been to boarding-school in his life. He had been to the next farm seeking sheep. When he came in she said, 'Good evening, Waldo. Have some coffee!' AND SHE KISSED HIM.

All last night I heard nothing else but 'Have some coffee; have some coffee.' If I

went to sleep for a moment I dreamed that her finger was pressing mine; but when I woke with a start I heard her say, 'Good evening, Waldo. Have some coffee!'

Is this madness?

I have not eaten a mouthful today. This evening I go and propose to her. If she refuses me I shall go and kill myself tomorrow. There is a dam of water close by. The sheep have drunk most of it up, but there is still enough if I tie a stone to my neck.

It is a choice between death and madness. I can endure no more. If this should be the last letter you ever get from me, think of me tenderly, and forgive me. Without her, life would be a howling wilderness, a long tribulation. She is my affinity; the one love of my life, of my youth, of my manhood; my sunshine; my God-given blossom.

'They never loved who dreamed that they loved once,
And who saith, 'I loved once'?—
Not angels, whose deep eyes look down through realms of
light!'

Your disconsolate brother, on what is, in all probability, the last and distracted night of his life.

Gregory Nazianzen Rose.

P.S.—Tell mother to take care of my pearl studs. I left them in the wash-hand-stand drawer. Don't let the children get hold of them.

P.P.S.—I shall take this letter with me to the farm. If I turn down one corner you may know I have been accepted; if not, you may know it is all up with your heartbroken brother,
G.N.R.

Gregory having finished this letter, read it over with much approval, put it in an envelope, addressed it, and sat contemplating the inkpot, somewhat relieved in mind.

The evening turned out chilly and very windy after the day's heat. From afar off, as Gregory neared the homestead on the brown pony, he could distinguish a little figure in a little red cloak at the door of the cow-kraal. Em leaned over the poles that barred the gate, and watched the frothing milk run through the black fingers of the herdsman, while the unwilling cows stood with tethered heads by the milking poles. She had thrown the red cloak over her own head, and held it under her chin with a little hand, to

keep from her ears the wind, that playfully shook it, and tossed the little fringe of yellow hair into her eyes.

"Is it not too cold for you to be standing here?" said Gregory, coming softly close to her.

"Oh, no; it is so nice. I always come to watch the milking. That red cow with the short horns is bringing up the calf of the white cow that died. She loves it so—just as if it were her own. It is so nice to see her lick its little ears. Just look!"

"The clouds are black. I think it is going to rain tonight," said Gregory. 1245

"Yes," answered Em, looking up as well as she could for the little yellow fringe.

"But I'm sure you must be cold," said Gregory, and put his hand under the cloak, and found there a small fist doubled up, soft, and very warm. He held it fast in his hand.

"Oh, Em, I love you better than all the world besides! Tell me, do you love me a little?"

"Yes, I do," said Em, hesitating, and trying softly to free her hand.

"Better than everything; better than all the world, darling?" he asked, bending down so low that the yellow hair was blown into his eyes. 1250

"I don't know," said Em, gravely. "I do love you very much; but I love my cousin who is at school, and Waldo, very much. You see I have known them so long!"

"Oh, Em, do not talk to me so coldly!" Gregory cried, seizing the little arm that rested on the gate, and pressing it till she was half afraid. The herdsman had moved away to the other end of the kraal now, and the cows, busy with their calves, took no notice of the little human farce. "Em, if you talk so to me I will go mad! You must love me, love me better than all! You must give yourself to me. I have loved you since that first moment when I saw you walking by the stone wall with the jug in your hands. You were made for me, created for me! I will love you till I die! Oh, Em, do not be so cold, so cruel to me!"

He held her arm so tightly that her fingers relaxed their hold, and the cloak fluttered down on to the ground, and the wind

played more roughly than ever with the little yellow head.

"I do love you very much," she said; "but I do not know if I want to marry you. I love you better than Waldo, but I can't tell if I love you better than Lyndall. If you would let me wait for a week I think perhaps I could tell you."

Gregory picked up the cloak and wrapped it round her.

1255

"If you could but love me as I love you," he said; "but no woman can love as a man can. I will wait till Saturday. I will not once come near you till then. Good-bye! Oh, Em," he said, turning again, and twining his arm about her, and kissing her surprised little mouth, "if you are not my wife I cannot live. I have never loved another woman, and I never shall!—never, never!"

"You make me afraid," said Em. "Come, let us go, and I will fill your pail."

"I want no milk. Good-bye! You will not see me again till Saturday."

Late that night, when every one else had gone to bed, the yellow-haired little woman stood alone in the kitchen. She had come to fill the kettle for the next morning's coffee, and now stood before the fire. The warm reflection lit the grave old-womanish little face, that was so unusually thoughtful this evening.

"Better than all the world; better than everything; he loves me better than everything!" She said the words aloud, as if they were more easy to believe if she spoke them so. She had given out so much love in her little life, and had got none of it back with interest. Now one said, "I love you better than all the world." One loved her better than she loved him. How suddenly rich she was. She kept clasping and unclasping her hands. So a beggar feels who falls asleep on the pavement wet and hungry, and who wakes in a palace-hall with servants and lights, and a feast before him. Of course the beggar's is only a dream, and he wakes from it; and this was real.

1260

Gregory had said to her, "I will love you as long as I live." She said the words over and over to herself like a song.

"I will send for him tomorrow, and I will tell him how I love him back," she said.

But Em needed not to send for him. Gregory discovered on reaching home that Jemima's letter was still in his pocket. And, therefore, much as he disliked the appearance of vacillation and weakness, he was obliged to be at the farmhouse before sunrise to post it.

"If I see her," Gregory said, "I shall only bow to her. She shall see that I am a man, one who keeps his word."

As to Jemima's letter, he had turned down one corner of the page, and then turned it back, leaving a deep crease. That would show that he was neither accepted nor rejected, but that matters were in an intermediate condition. It was a more poetical way then putting it in plain words.

1265

Gregory was barely in time with his letter, for Waldo was starting when he reached the homestead, and Em was on the doorstep to see him off. When he had given the letter, and Waldo had gone, Gregory bowed stiffly and prepared to remount his own pony, but somewhat slowly. It was still early; none of the servants were about. Em came up close to him and put her little hand softly on his arm as he stood by his horse.

"I do love you best of all," she said. She was not frightened now, however much he kissed her. "I wish I was beautiful and nice," she added, looking up into his eyes as he held her against his breast.

"My darling, to me you are more beautiful than all the women in the world; dearer to me than everything it holds. If you were in hell I would go after you to find you there! If you were dead, though my body moved, my soul would be under the ground with you. All life as I pass with you in my arms will be perfect to me. It will pass, pass like a ray of sunshine."

Em thought how beautiful and grand his face was as she looked up into it. She raised her hand gently and put it on his forehead.

"You are so silent, so cold, my Em," he cried. "Have you nothing to say to me?"

1270

A little shade of wonder filled her eyes.

"I will do everything you tell me," she said.

"What else could she say? Her idea of love was only service.

"Then, my own precious one, promise never to kiss that fellow again. I cannot bear that you should love any one but me. You must not! I will not have it! If every relation I had in the world were to die tomorrow, I would be quite happy if I still only had you! My darling, my love, why are you so cold? Promise me not to love him any more. If you asked me to do anything for you, I would do it, though it cost my life."

Em put her hand very gravely round his neck.

1275

"I will never kiss him," she said, "and I will try not to love any one else. But I do not know if I will be able."

"Oh, my darling, I think of you all night, all day. I think of nothing else, love, nothing else," he said, folding his arms about her.

Em was a little conscience stricken; even that morning she had found time to remember that in six months her cousin would come back from school, and she had thought to remind Waldo of the lozenges for his cough, even when she saw Gregory coming.

"I do not know how it is," she said humbly, nestling to him, "but I cannot love you so much as you love me. Perhaps it is because I am only a woman; but I do love you as much as I can."

Now the Kaffer maids were coming from the huts. He kissed her again, eyes and mouth and hands, and left her.

1280

Tant Sannie was well satisfied when told of the betrothment. She herself contemplated marriage within the year with one or other of her numerous vrijers, and she suggested that the weddings might take place together.

Em set to work busily to prepare her own household linen and wedding garments. Gregory was with her daily, almost hourly, and the six months which elapsed before Lyndall's return passed, as he felicitously phrased it, "like a summer night, when you are dreaming of some one you love."

Late one evening, Gregory sat by his little love, turning the handle of her machine as she drew her work through it, and they talked of the changes they would make when the Boer-woman was gone, and the farm belonged to them alone. There should be

a new room here, and a kraal there. So they chatted on. Suddenly Gregory dropped the handle, and impressed a fervent kiss on the fat hand that guided the linen.

"You are so beautiful, Em," said the lover. "It comes over me in a flood suddenly how I love you."

Em smiled.

1285

"Tant Sannie says when I am her age no one will look at me; and it is true. My hands are as short and broad as a duck's foot, and my forehead is so low, and I haven't any nose. I can't be pretty."

She laughed softly. It was so nice to think he should be so blind.

"When my cousin comes tomorrow you will see a beautiful woman, Gregory," she added presently. "She is like a little queen: her shoulders are so upright, and her head looks as though it ought to have a little crown upon it. You must come to see her tomorrow as soon as she comes. I am sure you will love her."

"Of course I shall come to see her, since she is your cousin; but do you think I could ever think any woman as lovely as I think you?"

He fixed his seething eyes upon her.

1290

"You could not help seeing that she is prettier," said Em, slipping her right hand into his; "but you will never be able to like any one so much as you like me."

Afterward, when she wished her lover good night, she stood upon the doorstep to call a greeting after him; and she waited, as she always did, till the brown pony's hoofs became inaudible behind the kopje.

Then she passed through the room where Tant Sannie lay snoring, and through the little room that was all draped in white, waiting for her cousin's return, on to her own room.

She went to the chest of drawers to put away the work she had finished, and sat down on the floor before the lowest drawer. In it were the things she was preparing for her marriage. Piles of white linen, and some aprons and quilts; and in a little box in the corner a spray of orange-blossom which she had bought from a smouse. There, too, was a ring Gregory had given her, and a veil his sister

had sent, and there was a little roll of fine embroidered work which Trana had given her. It was too fine and good even for Gregory's wife—just right for something very small and soft. She would keep it. And she touched it gently with her forefinger, smiling; and then she blushed and hid it far behind the other things. She knew so well all that was in that drawer, and yet she turned them all over as though she saw them for the first time, packed them all out, and packed them all in, without one fold or crumple; and then sat down and looked at them.

Tomorrow evening when Lyndall came she would bring her here, and show it her all. Lyndall would so like to see it—the little wreath, and the ring, and the white veil! It would be so nice! Then Em fell to seeing pictures. Lyndall should live with them till she herself got married some day.

1295

Every day when Gregory came home, tired from his work, he would look about and say, "Where is my wife? Has no one seen my wife? Wife, some coffee!" and she would give him some.

Em's little face grew very grave at last, and she knelt up and extended her hands over the drawer of linen.

"Oh, God!" she said, "I am so glad! I do not know what I have done that I should be so glad. Thank you!"

Chapter IV. Lyndall

She was more like a princess, yes, far more like a princess, than the lady who still hung on the wall in Tant Sannie's bedroom. So Em thought. She leaned back in the little armchair; she wore a grey dressing-gown, and her long hair was combed out and hung to the ground. Em, sitting before her, looked up with mingled respect and admiration.

Lyndall was tired after her long journey, and had come to her room early. Her eyes ran over the familiar objects. Strange to go away for four years, and come back, and find that the candle standing on the dressing-table still cast the shadow of an old crone's head in the corner beyond the clothes-horse. Strange that even a shadow should last longer than a man! She looked about

1300

among the old familiar objects; all was there, but the old self was gone.

"What are you noticing?" asked Em.

"Nothing and everything. I thought the windows were higher. If I were you, when I get this place I should raise the walls. There is not room to breathe here. One suffocates."

"Gregory is going to make many alterations," said Em; and drawing nearer to the grey dressing-gown respectfully. "Do you like him, Lyndall? Is he not handsome?"

"He must have been a fine baby," said Lyndall, looking at the white dimity curtain that hung above the window.

Em was puzzled.

1305

"There are some men," said Lyndall, "whom you never can believe were babies at all; and others you never see without thinking how very nice they must have looked when they wore socks and pink sashes."

Em remained silent; then she said with a little dignity, "When you know him you will love him as I do. When I compare other people with him, they seem so weak and little. Our hearts are so cold, our loves are mixed up with so many other things. But he—no one is worthy of his love. I am not. It is so great and pure."

"You need not make yourself unhappy on that point—your poor return for his love, my dear," said Lyndall. "A man's love is a fire of olive-wood. It leaps higher every moment; it roars, it blazes, it shoots out red flames; it threatens to wrap you round and devour you—you who stand by like an icicle in the glow of its fierce warmth. You are self-reproached at your own chilliness and want of reciprocity. The next day, when you go to warm your hands a little, you find a few ashes! 'Tis a long love and cool against a short love and hot; men, at all events, have nothing to complain of."

"You speak so because you do not know men," said Em, instantly assuming the dignity of superior knowledge so universally affected by affianced and married women in discussing man's nature with their uncontracted sisters.

"You will know them too some day, and then you will think differently," said Em, with the condescending magnanimity which

1310

superior knowledge can always afford to show to ignorance.

Lyndall's little lip quivered in a manner indicative of intense amusement. She twirled a massive ring upon her forefinger—a ring more suitable for the hand of a man, and noticeable in design—a diamond cross set into gold, with the initials "R.R." below it.

"Ah, Lyndall," Em cried, "perhaps you are engaged yourself—that is why you smile. Yes; I am sure you are. Look at this ring!"

Lyndall drew the hand quickly from her.

"I am not in so great a hurry to put my neck beneath any man's foot; and I do not so greatly admire the crying of babies," she said, as she closed her eyes half wearily and leaned back in the chair. "There are other women glad of such work."

Em felt rebuked and ashamed. How could she take Lyndall and show her the white linen and the wreath, and the embroidery? She was quiet for a little while, and then began to talk about Trana and the old farm-servants, till she saw her companion was weary; then she rose and left her for the night. But after Em was gone Lyndall sat on, watching the old crone's face in the corner, and with a weary look, as though the whole world's weight rested on these frail young shoulders.

1315

The next morning, Waldo, starting off before breakfast with a bag of mealies slung over his shoulder to feed the ostriches, heard a light step behind him.

"Wait for me; I am coming with you," said Lyndall, adding as she came up to him, "if I had not gone to look for you yesterday you would not have come to greet me till now. Do you not like me any longer, Waldo?"

"Yes—but—you are changed."

It was the old clumsy, hesitating mode of speech.

"You like the pinafores better?" she said quickly. She wore a dress of a simple cotton fabric, but very fashionably made, and on her head was a broad white hat. To Waldo she seemed superbly attired. She saw it. "My dress has changed a little," she said, "and I also; but not to you. Hang the bag over your other shoulder, that I may see your face. You say so little that if one does not look at you you are an uncomprehended cipher." Waldo changed the bag, and they walked on side by side. "You have improved," she said.

1320

"Do you know that I have sometimes wished to see you while I was away; not often, but still sometimes."

They were at the gate of the first camp now. Waldo threw over a bag of mealies, and they walked on over the dewy ground.

"Have you learnt much?" he asked her simply, remembering how she had once said, "When I come back again I shall know everything that a human being can."

She laughed.

"Are you thinking of my old boast? Yes; I have learnt something, though hardly what I expected, and not quite so much. In the first place, I have learnt that one of my ancestors must have been a very great fool; for they say nothing comes out in a man but one of his forefathers possessed it before him. In the second place, I have discovered that of all cursed places under the sun, where the hungriest soul can hardly pick up a few grains of knowledge, a girls' boarding-school is the worst. They are called finishing schools, and the name tells accurately what they are. They finish everything but imbecility and weakness, and that they cultivate. They are nicely adapted machines for experimenting on the question, 'Into how little space a human soul can be crushed?' I have seen some souls so compressed that they would have fitted into a small thimble, and found room to move there—wide room. A woman who has been for many years in one of those places carries the mark of the beast on her till she dies, though she may expand a little afterward, when she breathes in the free world."

"Were you miserable?" he asked, looking at her with quick anxiety.

1325

"I?—no. I am never miserable and never happy. I wish I were. But I should have run away from the place on the fourth day, and hired myself to the first Boer-woman whose farm I came to, to make fire under her soap-pot, if I had to live as the rest of the drove did. Can you form an idea, Waldo, of what it must be to be shut up with cackling old women, who are without knowledge of life, without love of the beautiful, without strength, to have your soul cultured by them? It is suffocation only to breathe the air they breathe; but I made them give me room. I told them I should leave, and they knew I came there on my own account; so they

gave me a bedroom without the companionship of one of those things that were having their brains slowly diluted and squeezed out of them. I did not learn music, because I had no talent; and when the drove made cushions, and hideous flowers that the roses laugh at, and a footstool in six weeks that a machine would have made better in five minutes, I went to my room. With the money saved from such work I bought books and newspapers, and at night I sat up. I read, and epitomized what I read; and I found time to write some plays, and find out how hard it is to make your thoughts look anything but imbecile fools when you paint them with ink and paper. In the holidays I learnt a great deal more. I made acquaintances, saw a few places and many people, and some different ways of living, which is more than any books can show one. On the whole, I am not dissatisfied with my four years. I have not learnt what I expected; but I have learnt something else. What have you been doing?"

"Nothing."

"That is not possible. I shall find out by and by."

They still stepped on side by side over the dewy bushes. Then suddenly she turned on him.

"Don't you wish you were a woman, Waldo?"

1330

"No," he answered readily.

She laughed.

"I thought not. Even you are too worldly-wise for that. I never met a man who did. This is a pretty ring," she said, holding out her little hand, that the morning sun might make the diamonds sparkle. "Worth fifty pounds at least. I will give it to the first man who tells me he would like to be a woman. There might be one on Robbin Island (lunatics at the Cape are sent to Robbin Island) who would win it perhaps, but I doubt it even there. It is delightful to be a woman; but every man thanks the Lord devoutly that he isn't one."

She drew her hat to one side to keep the sun out of her eyes as she walked. Waldo looked at her so intently that he stumbled over the bushes. Yes, this was his little Lyndall who had worn the check pinafores; he saw it now, and he walked closer beside her. They reached the next camp.

"Let us wait at this camp and watch the birds," she said, as an ostrich hen came bounding toward them with velvety wings outstretched, while far away over the bushes the head of the cock was visible as he sat brooding on the eggs.

Lyndall folded her arms on the gate bar, and Waldo threw his empty bag on the wall and leaned beside her.

"I like these birds," she said; "they share each other's work, and are companions. Do you take an interest in the position of women, Waldo?"

"No."

"I thought not. No one does, unless they are in need of a subject upon which to show their wit. And as for you, from of old you can see nothing that is not separated from you by a few millions of miles, and strewn over with mystery. If women were the inhabitants of Jupiter, of whom you had happened to hear something, you would pore over us and our condition night and day; but because we are before your eyes you never look at us. You care nothing that this is ragged and ugly," she said, putting her little finger on his sleeve; "but you strive mightily to make an imaginary leaf on an old stick beautiful. I'm sorry you don't care for the position of women; I should have liked us to be friends; and it is the only thing about which I think much or feel much—if, indeed, I have any feeling about anything," she added, flippantly, readjusting her dainty little arms. "When I was a baby, I fancy my parents left me out in the frost one night, and I got nipped internally—it feels so!"

"I have only a few old thoughts," he said, "and I think them over and over again; always beginning where I left off. I never get any further. I am weary of them."

"Like an old hen that sits on its eggs month after month and they never come out?" she said quickly. "I am so pressed in upon by new things that, lest they should trip one another up, I have to keep forcing them back. My head swings sometimes. But this one thought stands, never goes—if I might but be one of these born in the future; then, perhaps, to be born a woman will not be to be born branded."

Waldo looked at her. It was hard to say whether she were in earnest or mocking.

"I know it is foolish. Wisdom never kicks at the iron walls it can't bring down," she said. "But we are cursed. Waldo, born cursed from the time our mothers bring us into the world till the shrouds are put on us. Do not look at me as though I were talking nonsense. Everything has two sides—the outside that is ridiculous, and the inside that is solemn."

"I am not laughing," said the boy, sedately enough; "but what curses you?"

He thought she would not reply to him, she waited so long.

1345

"It is not what is done to us, but what is made of us," she said at last, "that wrongs us. No man can be really injured but by what modifies himself. We all enter the world little plastic beings, with so much natural force, perhaps, but for the rest—blank; and the world tells us what we are to be, and shapes us by the ends it sets before us. To you it says—"Work;" and to us it says—"Seem!" To you it says—As you approximate to man's highest ideal of God, as your arm is strong and your knowledge great, and the power to labour is with you, so you shall gain all that human heart desires. To us it says—Strength shall not help you, nor knowledge, nor labour. You shall gain what men gain, but by other means. And so the world makes men and women.

"Look at this little chin of mine, Waldo, with the dimple in it. It is but a small part of my person; but though I had a knowledge of all things under the sun, and the wisdom to use it, and the deep loving heart of an angel, it would not stead me through life like this little chin. I can win money with it, I can win love; I can win power with it, I can win fame. What would knowledge help me? The less a woman has in her head the lighter she is for climbing. I once heard an old man say, that he never saw intellect help a woman so much as a pretty ankle; and it was the truth. They begin to shape us to our cursed end," she said, with her lips drawn in to look as though they smiled, "when we are tiny things in shoes and socks. We sit with our little feet drawn up under us in the window, and look out at the boys in their happy play. We want to go. Then a loving hand is laid on us: 'Little one, you cannot go,'

they say, 'your little face will burn, and your nice white dress be spoiled.' We feel it must be for our good, it is so lovingly said: but we cannot understand; and we kneel still with one little cheek wistfully pressed against the pane. Afterwards we go and thread blue beads, and make a string for our neck; and we go and stand before the glass. We see the complexion we were not to spoil, and the white frock, and we look into our own great eyes. Then the curse begins to act on us. It finishes its work when we are grown women, who no more look out wistfully at a more healthy life; we are contented. We fit our sphere as a Chinese woman's foot fits her shoe, exactly, as though God had made both—and yet he knows nothing of either. In some of us the shaping of our end has been quite completed. The parts we are not to use have been quite atrophied, and have even dropped off; but in others, and we are not less to be pitied, they have been weakened and left. We wear the bandages, but our limbs have not grown to them; we know that we are compressed, and chafe against them.

"But what does it help? A little bitterness, a little longing when we are young, a little futile searching for work, a little passionate striving for room for the exercise of our powers,—and then we go with the drove. A woman must march with her regiment. In the end she must be trodden down or go with it; and if she is wise she goes.

"I see in your great eyes what you are thinking," she said, glancing at him; "I always know what the person I am talking to is thinking of. How is this woman who makes such a fuss worse off than I? I will show you by a very little example. We stand here at this gate this morning, both poor, both young, both friendless; there is not much to choose between us. Let us turn away just as we are, to make our way in life. This evening you will come to a farmer's house. The farmer, albeit you come alone on foot, will give you a pipe of tobacco and a cup of coffee and a bed. If he has no dam to build and no child to teach, tomorrow you can go on your way, with a friendly greeting of the hand. I, if I come to the same place tonight, will have strange questions asked me, strange glances cast on me. The Boer-wife will shake her head and give me food to eat with the Kaffers, and a right to sleep with the dogs.

That would be the first step in our progress—a very little one, but every step to the end would repeat it. We were equals once when we lay new-born babes on our nurses' knees. We will be equals again when they tie up our jaws for the last sleep!"

Waldo looked in wonder at the little quivering face; it was a glimpse into a world of passion and feeling wholly new to him.

1350

"Mark you," she said, "we have always this advantage over you—we can at any time step into ease and competence, where you must labour patiently for it. A little weeping, a little wheedling, a little self-degradation, a little careful use of our advantages, and then some man will say: "Come, be my wife!" With good looks and youth marriage is easy to attain. There are men enough; but a woman who has sold herself, even for a ring and a new name, need hold her skirt aside for no creature in the street. They both earn their bread in one way. Marriage for love is the beautifullest external symbol of the union of souls; marriage without it is the uncleanliest traffic that defiles the world." She ran her little finger savagely along the topmost bar, shaking off the dozen little dewdrops that still hung there. "And they tell us we have men's chivalrous attention!" she cried. "When we ask to be doctors, lawyers, law-makers, anything but ill-paid drudges, they say—No; but you have men's chivalrous attention; now think of that and be satisfied! What would you do without it?"

The bitter little silvery laugh, so seldom heard, rang out across the bushes. She bit her little teeth together.

"I was coming up in Cobb & Co.'s the other day. At a little wayside hotel we had to change the large coach for a small one. We were ten passengers, eight men and two women. As I sat in the house the gentlemen came and whispered to me, 'There is not room for all in the new coach, take your seat quickly.' We hurried out, and they gave me the best seat, and covered me with rugs, because it was drizzling. Then the last passenger came running up to the coach—an old woman with a wonderful bonnet, and a black shawl pinned with a yellow pin.

"'There is no room,' they said; 'you must wait till next week's coach takes you up;' but she climbed on to the step, and held on at the window with both hands.

"My son-in-law is ill, and I must go and see him,' she said. 1355

"My good woman,' said one, 'I am really exceedingly sorry that your son-in-law is ill; but there is absolutely no room for you here.'

"You had better get down,' said another, 'or the wheel will catch you.'

"I got up to give her my place.

"Oh, no, no!' they cried, 'we will not allow that.'

"I will rather kneel,' said one, and he crouched down at my feet; so the woman came in. 1360

"There were nine of us in that coach, and only one showed chivalrous attention—and that was a woman to a woman.

"I shall be old and ugly, too, one day, and I shall look for men's chivalrous help, but I shall not find it.

"The bees are very attentive to the flowers till their honey is done, and then they fly over them. I don't know if the flowers feel grateful to the bees; they are great fools if they do."

"But some women," said Waldo, speaking as though the words forced themselves from him at that moment, "some women have power."

She lifted her beautiful eyes to his face. 1365

"Power! Did you ever hear of men being asked whether other souls should have power or not? It is born in them. You may dam up the fountain of water, and make it a stagnant marsh, or you may let it run free and do its work; but you cannot say whether it shall be there; it is there. And it will act, if not openly for good, then covertly for evil; but it will act. If Goethe had been stolen away a child, and reared in a robber horde in the depths of a German forest, do you think the world would have had "Faust" and "Iphigenie?" But he would have been Goethe still—stronger, wiser than his fellows. At night, round their watch-fire, he would have chanted wild songs of rapine and murder, till the dark faces about him were moved and trembled. His songs would have echoed on from father to son, and nerved the heart and arm—for evil. Do you think if Napoleon had been born a woman that he would have been contented to give small tea-parties and talk small scandal? He would have risen; but the world would not

have heard of him as it hears of him now—a man great and kingly with all his sins; he would have left one of those names that stain the leaf of every history—the names of women, who, having power, but being denied the right to exercise it openly, rule in the dark, covertly, and by stealth, through the men whose passions they feed on and by whom they climb.

"Power!" she said, suddenly, smiting her little hand upon the rail. "Yes, we have power; and since we are not to expend it in tunnelling mountains, nor healing diseases, nor making laws, nor money, nor on any extraneous object, we expend it on you. You are our goods, our merchandise, our material for operating on; we buy you, we sell you, we make fools of you, we act the wily old Jew with you, we keep six of you crawling to our little feet, and praying only for a touch of our little hand; and they say truly, there was never an ache or pain or broken heart but a woman was at the bottom of it. We are not to study law, nor science, nor art, so we study you. There is never a nerve or fibre in a man's nature but we know it. We keep six of you dancing in the palm of one little hand," she said, balancing her outstretched arm gracefully, as though tiny beings disported themselves in its palm. "There, we throw you away, and you sink to the devil," she said, folding her arms composedly. "There was never a man who said one word for woman but he said two for man, and three for the whole human race."

She watched the bird pecking up the last yellow grains; but Waldo looked only at her.

When she spoke again it was very measuredly.

"They bring weighty arguments against us when we ask for the perfect freedom of women," she said; "but, when you come to the objections, they are like pumpkin devils with candles inside, hollow, and can't bite. They say that women do not wish for the sphere and freedom we ask for them, and would not use it!"

"If the bird does like its cage, and does like its sugar and will not leave it, why keep the door so very carefully shut? Why not open it, only a little? Do they know there is many a bird will not break its wings against the bars, but would fly if the doors were open?" She knit her forehead and leaned further over the bars.

"Then they say, 'If the women have the liberty you ask for, they will be found in positions for which they are not fitted!' If two men climb one ladder, did you ever see the weakest anywhere but at the foot? The surest sign of fitness is success. The weakest never wins but where there is handicapping. Nature, left to herself, will as beautifully apportion a man's work to his capacities as long ages ago she graduated the colours on the bird's breast. If we are not fit, you give us, to no purpose, the right to labour; the work will fall out of our hands into those that are wiser."

She talked more rapidly as she went on, as one talks of that over which they have brooded long, and which lies near their hearts.

Waldo watched her intently.

"They say women have one great and noble work left them, and they do it ill. That is true; they do it execrably. It is the work that demands the broadest culture, and they have not even the narrowest. The lawyer may see no deeper than his law-books, and the chemist see no further than the windows of his laboratory, and they may do their work well. But the woman who does woman's work needs a many-sided, multiform culture; the heights and depths of human life must not be beyond the reach of her vision; she must have knowledge of men and things in many states, a wide catholicity of sympathy, the strength that springs from knowledge, and the magnanimity which springs from strength. We bear the world, and we make it. The souls of little children are marvellously delicate and tender things, and keep forever the shadow that first falls on them, and that is the mother's or at best a woman's. There was never a great man who had not a great mother—it is hardly an exaggeration. The first six years of our life make us; all that is added later is veneer; and yet some say, if a woman can cook a dinner or dress herself well she has culture enough.

"The mightiest and noblest of human work is given to us, and we do it ill. Send a navvie to work into an artist's studio, and see what you will find there! And yet, thank God, we have this work," she added, quickly—"it is the one window through which

we see into the great world of earnest labour. The meanest girl who dances and dresses becomes something higher when her children look up into her face and ask her questions. It is the only education we have and which they cannot take from us."

She smiled slightly. "They say that we complain of woman's being compelled to look upon marriage as a profession; but that she is free to enter upon it or leave it, as she pleases.

"Yes—and a cat set afloat in a pond is free to sit in the tub till it dies there, it is under no obligation to wet its feet; and a drowning man may catch at a straw or not, just as he likes—it is a glorious liberty! Let any man think for five minutes of what old maidenhood means to a woman—and then let him be silent. Is it easy to bear through life a name that in itself signifies defeat? to dwell, as nine out of ten unmarried women must, under the finger of another woman? Is it easy to look forward to an old age without honour, without the reward of useful labour, without love? I wonder how many men there are who would give up everything that is dear in life for the sake of maintaining a high ideal purity."

She laughed a little laugh that was clear without being pleasant.

"And then, when they have no other argument against us, they say, 'Go on; but when you have made woman what you wish, and her children inherit her culture, you will defeat yourself. Man will gradually become extinct from excess of intellect, the passions which replenish the race will die.' Fools!" she said, curling her pretty lip. "A Hottentot sits at the roadside and feeds on a rotten bone he has found there, and takes out his bottle of Cape-smoke and swills at it, and grunts with satisfaction; and the cultured child of the nineteenth century sits in his armchair, and sips choice wines with the lip of a connoisseur, and tastes delicate dishes with a delicate palate, and with a satisfaction of which the Hottentot knows nothing. Heavy jaw and sloping forehead—all have gone with increasing intellect; but the animal appetites are there still—refined, discriminative, but immeasurably intensified. Fools! Before men forgave or worshipped, while they were weak on their hind legs, did they not eat and drink, and fight for wives?

When all the latter additions to humanity have vanished, will not the foundation on which they are built remain?"

She was silent then for a while, and said somewhat dreamily, more as though speaking to herself than to him,

"They ask, What will you gain, even if man does not become extinct?—you will have brought justice and equality on to the earth, and sent love from it. When men and women are equals they will love no more. Your highly-cultured women will not be lovable, will not love.

"Do they see nothing, understand nothing? It is Tant Sannie who buries husbands one after another, and folds her hands resignedly,—'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord,'—and she looks for another. It is the hard-headed, deep thinker who, when the wife who has thought and worked with him goes, can find no rest, and lingers near her till he finds sleep beside her.

"A great soul draws and is drawn with a more fierce intensity than any small one. By every inch we grow in intellectual height our love strikes down its roots deeper, and spreads out its arms wider. It is for love's sake yet more than for any other that we look for that new time."

She had leaned her head against the stones, and watched with her sad, soft eyes the retreating bird. "Then when that time comes," she said lowly, "when love is no more bought or sold, when it is not a means of making bread, when each woman's life is filled with earnest, independent labour, then love will come to her, a strange, sudden sweetness breaking in upon her earnest work; not sought for, but found. Then, but not now—"

1385

Waldo waited for her to finish the sentence, but she seemed to have forgotten him.

"Lyndall," he said, putting his hand upon her—she started—"if you think that that new time will be so great, so good, you who speak so easily—"

She interrupted him.

"Speak! speak!" she said, "the difficulty is not to speak; the difficulty is to keep silence."

"But why do you not try to bring that time?" he said with pitiful simplicity. "When you speak I believe all you say; other people would listen to you also." 1390

"I am not so sure of that," she said with a smile.

Then over the small face came the weary look it had worn last night as it watched the shadow in the corner, Ah, so weary!

"I, Waldo, I?" she said. "I will do nothing good for myself, nothing for the world, till some one wakes me. I am asleep, swathed, shut up in self; till I have been delivered I will deliver no one."

He looked at her wondering, but she was not looking at him.

"To see the good and the beautiful," she said, "and to have no strength to live it, is only to be Moses on the mountain of Nebo, with the land at your feet and no power to enter. It would be better not to see it. Come," she said, looking up into his face, and seeing its uncomprehending expression, "let us go, it is getting late. Doss is anxious for his breakfast also," she added, wheeling round and calling to the dog, who was endeavouring to unearth a mole, an occupation to which he had been zealously addicted from the third month, but in which he had never on any single occasion proved successful. 1395

Waldo shouldered his bag, and Lyndall walked on before in silence, with the dog close to her side. Perhaps she thought of the narrowness of the limits within which a human soul may speak and be understood by its nearest of mental kin, of how soon it reaches that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow footfall is ever heard. Whatever her thoughts may have been, she was soon interrupted. Waldo came close to her, and standing still, produced with awkwardness from his breast-pocket a small carved box.

"I made it for you," he said, holding it out.

"I like it," she said, examining it carefully.

The workmanship was better than that of the grave-post. The flowers that covered it were delicate, and here and there small conical protuberances were let in among them. She turned it round critically. Waldo bent over it lovingly.

"There is one strange thing about it," he said earnestly, putting a finger on one little pyramid. "I made it without these, and I felt something was wrong; I tried many changes, and at last I let these in, and then it was right. But why was it? They are not beautiful in themselves."

1400

"They relieve the monotony of the smooth leaves, I suppose."

He shook his head as over a weighty matter.

"The sky is monotonous," he said, "when it is blue, and yet it is beautiful. I have thought of that often; but it is not monotony, and it is not variety makes beauty. What is it? The sky, and your face, and this box—the same thing is in them all, only more in the sky and in your face. But what is it?"

She smiled.

"So you are at your old work still. Why, why, why? What is the reason? It is enough for me," she said, "if I find out what is beautiful and what is ugly, what is real and what is not. Why it is there, and over the final cause of things in general, I don't trouble myself; there must be one, but what is it to me? If I howl to all eternity I shall never get hold of it; and if I did I might be no better off. But you Germans are born with an aptitude for borrowing; you can't help yourselves. You must sniff after reasons, just as that dog must after a mole. He knows perfectly well he will never catch it, but he's under the imperative necessity of digging for it."

1405

"But he might find it."

"Might!—but he never has and never will. Life is too short to run after might; we must have certainties."

She tucked the box under her arm and was about to walk on, when Gregory Rose, with shining spurs, an ostrich feather in his hat, and a silver-headed whip, careered past. He bowed gallantly as he went by. They waited till the dust of the horse's hoofs had laid itself.

"There," said Lyndall, "goes a true woman—one born for the sphere that some women have to fill without being born for it. How happy he would be sewing frills into his little girl's frocks, and how pretty he would look sitting in a parlour, with a rough man making love to him! Don't you think so?"

"I shall not stay here when he is master," Waldo answered, not
able to connect any kind of beauty with Gregory Rose. 1410

"I should imagine not. The rule of a woman is tyranny; but the
rule of a man-woman grinds fine. Where are you going?"

"Anywhere."

"What to do?"

"See—see everything."

"You will be disappointed." 1415

"And were you?"

"Yes; and you will be more so. I want things that men and the
world give, you do not. If you have a few yards of earth to stand
on, and a bit of blue over you, and something that you cannot see
to dream about, you have all that you need, all that you know how
to use. But I like to see real men. Let them be as disagreeable as
they please, they are more interesting to me than flowers, or trees,
or stars, or any other thing under the sun. Sometimes," she added,
walking on, and shaking the dust daintily from her skirts, "when I
am not too busy trying to find a new way of doing my hair that
will show my little neck to better advantage, or over other work
of that kind, sometimes it amuses me intensely to trace out the
resemblance between one man and another: to see how Tant
Sannie and I, you and Bonaparte, St. Simon on his pillow, and the
emperor dining off larks' tongues, are one and the same
compound, merely mixed in different proportions.

"What is microscopic in one is largely developed in another;
what is a rudimentary in one man is an active organ in another;
but all things are in all men, and one soul is the model of all. We
shall find nothing new in human nature after we have once
carefully dissected and analyzed the one being we ever shall truly
know—ourselves. The Kaffer girl threw some coffee on my arm in
bed this morning; I felt displeased, but said nothing. Tant Sannie
would have thrown the saucer at her and sworn for an hour; but
the feeling would be the same irritated displeasure. If a huge
animated stomach like Bonaparte were put under a glass by a
skilful mental microscopist, even he would be found to have an
embryonic doubling somewhere indicative of a heart, and

rudimentary buddings that might have become conscience and sincerity. Let me take your arm Waldo.

"How full you are of mealie dust. No, never mind. It will brush off. And sometimes what is more amusing still than tracing the likeness between man and man, is to trace the analogy there always is between the progress and development of one individual and of a whole nation; or, again, between a single nation and the entire human race. It is pleasant when it dawns on you that the one is just the other written out in large letters; and very odd to find all the little follies and virtues, and developments and retrogressions, written out in the big world's book that you find in your little internal self. It is the most amusing thing I know of; but of course, being a woman, I have not often time for such amusements. Professional duties always first, you know. It takes a great deal of time and thought always to look perfectly exquisite, even for a pretty woman. Is the old buggy still in existence, Waldo?"

"Yes, but the harness is broken."

1420

"Well, I wish you would mend it. You must teach me to drive. I must learn something while I am here. I got the Hottentot girl to show me how to make sarsarties this morning; and Tant Sannie is going to teach me to make kapjes. I will come and sit with you this afternoon while you mend the harness."

"Thank you."

"No, don't thank me; I come for my own pleasure. I never find any one I can talk to. Women bore me, and men, I talk so to —'Going to the ball this evening? Nice little dog that of yours. Pretty little ears. So fond of pointer pups!' And they think me fascinating, charming! Men are like the earth, and we are the moon; we turn always one side to them, and they think there is no other, because they don't see it—but there is."

They had reached the house now.

"Tell me when you set to work," she said, and walked toward the door.

1425

Waldo stood to look after her, and Doss stood at his side, a look of painful uncertainty depicted on his small countenance, and one little foot poised in the air. Should he stay with his master

or go? He looked at the figure with the wide straw hat moving toward the house, and he looked up at his master; then he put down the little paw and went. Waldo watched them both in at the door and then walked away alone. He was satisfied that at least his dog was with her.

Chapter V. Tant Sannie Holds An Upsitting, and Gregory Writes A

Letter

It was just after sunset, and Lyndall had not yet returned from her first driving-lesson, when the lean coloured woman standing at the corner of the house to enjoy the evening breeze, saw coming along the road a strange horseman. Very narrowly she surveyed him, as slowly he approached. He was attired in the deepest mourning, the black crepe round his tall hat totally concealing the black felt, and nothing but a dazzling shirt-front relieving the funereal tone of his attire. He rode much forward in his saddle, with his chin resting on the uppermost of his shirt-studs, and there was an air of meek subjection to the will of Heaven, and to what might be in store for him, that bespoke itself even in the way in which he gently urged his steed. He was evidently in no hurry to reach his destination, for the nearer he approached to it the slacker did his bridle hang. The coloured woman having duly inspected him, dashed into the dwelling.

"Here is another one!" she cried—"a widower; I see it by his hat."

"Good Lord!" said Tant Sannie; "it's the seventh I've had this month; but the men know where sheep and good looks and money in the bank are to be found," she added, winking knowingly. "How does he look?"

"Nineteen, weak eyes, white hair, little round nose," said the maid.

"Then it's he! then it's he!" said Tant Sannie triumphantly; "little Piet Vander Walt, whose wife died last month—two farms,

twelve thousand sheep. I've not seen him, but my sister-in-law told me about him, and I dreamed about him last night."

Here Piet's black hat appeared in the doorway, and the Boer-woman drew herself up in dignified silence, extended the tips of her fingers, and motioned solemnly to a chair. The young man seated himself, sticking his feet as far under it as they would go, and said mildly:

"I am Little Piet Vander Walt, and my father is Big Piet Vander Walt."

Tant Sannie said solemnly: "Yes."

"Aunt," said the young man, starting up spasmodically; "can I off-saddle?"

"Yes."

He seized his hat, and disappeared with a rush through the door.

"I told you so! I knew it!" said Tant Sannie. "The dear Lord doesn't send dreams for nothing. Didn't I tell you this morning that I dreamed of a great beast like a sheep, with red eyes, and I killed it? Wasn't the white wool his hair, and the red eyes his weak eyes, and my killing him meant marriage? Get supper ready quickly; the sheep's inside and roaster-cakes. We shall sit up tonight."

To young Piet Vander Walt that supper was a period of intense torture. There was something overawing in that assembly of English people, with their incomprehensible speech; and moreover, it was his first courtship; his first wife had courted him, and ten months of severe domestic rule had not raised his spirit nor courage. He ate little, and when he raised a morsel to his lips glanced guiltily round to see if he were not observed. He had put three rings on his little finger, with the intention of sticking it out stiffly when he raised a coffee-cup; now the little finger was curled miserably among its fellows. It was small relief when the meal was over, and Tant Sannie and he repaired to the front room. Once seated there, he set his knees close together, stood his black hat upon them, and wretchedly turned the brim up and down. But supper had cheered Tant Sannie, who found it impossible longer

to maintain that decorous silence, and whose heart yearned over the youth.

"I was related to your aunt Selena who died," said Tant Sannie. "My mother's stepbrother's child was married to her father's brother's stepnephew's niece."

1440

"Yes, aunt," said the young man, "I know we were related."

"It was her cousin," said Tant Sannie, now fairly on the flow, "who had the cancer cut out of her breast by the other doctor, who was not the right doctor they sent for, but who did it quite as well."

"Yes, aunt," said the young man.

"I've heard about it often," said Tant Sannie. "And he was the son of the old doctor that they say died on Christmas-day, but I don't know if that's true. People do tell such awful lies. Why should he die on Christmas-day more than any other day?"

"Yes, aunt, why?" said the young man meekly.

1445

"Did you ever have the toothache?" asked Tant Sannie.

"No, aunt."

"Well, they say that doctor—not the son of the old doctor that died on Christmas-day, the other that didn't come when he was sent for—he gave such good stuff for the toothache that if you opened the bottle in the room where any one was bad they got better directly. You could see it was good stuff," said Tant Sannie; "it tasted horrid. That was a real doctor! He used to give a bottle so high," said the Boer-woman, raising her hand a foot from the table, "you could drink at it for a month and it wouldn't get done, and the same medicine was good for all sorts of sicknesses—croup, measles, jaundice, dropsy. Now you have to buy a new kind for each sickness. The doctors aren't so good as they used to be."

"No, aunt," said the young man, who was trying to gain courage to stick out his legs and clink his spurs together. He did so at last.

Tant Sannie had noticed the spurs before; but she thought it showed a nice manly spirit, and her heart warmed yet more to the youth.

1450

"Did you ever have convulsions when you were a baby?" asked Tant Sannie.

"Yes," said the young man.

"Strange," said Tant Sannie; "I had convulsions too. Wonderful that we should be so much alike!"

"Aunt," said the young man explosively, "can we sit up tonight?"

Tant Sannie hung her head and half closed her eyes; but finding that her little wiles were thrown away, the young man staring fixedly at his hat, she simpered, "Yes," and went away to fetch candles. 1455

In the dining room Em worked at her machine, and Gregory sat close beside her, his great blue eyes turned to the window where Lyndall leaned out talking to Waldo.

Tant Sannie took two candles out of the cupboard and held them up triumphantly, winking all round the room.

"He's asked for them," she said.

"Does he want them for his horse's rubbed back?" asked Gregory, new to up-country life.

"No," said Tant Sannie, indignantly; "we're going to sit up!" and she walked off in triumph with the candles. 1460

Nevertheless, when all the rest of the house had retired, when the long candle was lighted, when the coffee-kettle was filled, when she sat in the elbow-chair, with her lover on a chair close beside her, and when the vigil of the night was fairly begun, she began to find it wearisome. The young man looked chilly, and said nothing.

"Won't you put your feet on my stove?" said Tant Sannie.

"No thank you, aunt," said the young man, and both lapsed into silence.

At last Tant Sannie, afraid of going to sleep, tapped a strong cup of coffee for herself and handed another to her lover. This visibly revived both.

"How long were you married, cousin?" 1465

"Ten months, aunt."

"How old was your baby?"

"Three days when it died."

"It's very hard when we must give our husbands and wives to the Lord," said Tant Sannie.

"Very," said the young man; "but it's the Lord's will."

1470

"Yes," said Tant Sannie, and sighed.

"She was such a good wife, aunt: I've known her break a churn-stick over a maid's head for only letting dust come on a milk cloth."

Tant Sannie felt a twinge of jealousy. She had never broken a churn-stick on a maid's head.

"I hope your wife made a good end," she said.

"Oh, beautiful, aunt: she said up a psalm and two hymns and a half before she died."

1475

"Did she leave any messages?" asked Tant Sannie.

"No," said the young man; "but the night before she died I was lying at the foot of her bed; I felt her foot kick me.

"'Piet,' she said.

"'Annie, my heart,' said I.

"'My little baby that died yesterday has been here, and it stood over the wagon-box,' she said.

1480

"'What did it say?' I asked.

"'It said that if I died you must marry a fat woman.'

"'I will,' I said, and I went to sleep again. Presently she woke me.

"'The little baby has been here again, and it says you must marry a woman over thirty, and who's had two husbands.'

"I didn't go to sleep after that for a long time, aunt; but when I did she woke me.

1485

"'The baby has been here again,' she said, 'and it says you mustn't marry a woman with a mole.' I told her I wouldn't; and the next day she died."

"That was a vision from the Redeemer," said Tant Sannie.

The young man nodded his head mournfully. He thought of a younger sister of his wife's who was not fat, and who had a mole, and of whom his wife had always been jealous, and he wished the little baby had liked better staying in heaven than coming and standing over the wagon-chest.

"I suppose that's why you came to me," said Tant Sannie.

"Yes, aunt. And pa said I ought to get married before shearing-time. It is bad if there's no one to see after things then; and the maids waste such a lot of fat."

1490

"When do you want to get married?"

"Next month, aunt," said the young man in a tone of hopeless resignation. "May I kiss you, aunt?"

"Fie! fie!" said Tant Sannie, and then gave him a resounding kiss. "Come, draw your chair a little closer," she said, and their elbows now touching, they sat on through the night.

The next morning at dawn, as Em passed through Tant Sannie's bedroom, she found the Boer-woman pulling off her boots preparatory to climbing into bed.

"Where is Piet Vander Walt?"

1495

"Just gone," said Tant Sannie; "and I am going to marry him this day four weeks. I am dead sleepy," she added; "the stupid thing doesn't know how to talk love-talk at all," and she climbed into the four-poster, clothes and all, and drew the quilt up to her chin.

On the day preceding Tant Sannie's wedding, Gregory Rose sat in the blazing sun on the stone wall behind his daub-and-wattle house. It was warm, but he was intently watching a small buggy that was being recklessly driven over the bushes in the direction of the farmhouse. Gregory never stirred till it had vanished; then, finding the stones hot, he slipped down and walked into the house. He kicked the little pail that lay in the doorway, and sent it into one corner; that did him good. Then he sat down on the box, and began cutting letters out of a piece of newspaper. Finding that the snippings littered the floor, he picked them up and began scribbling on his blotting-paper. He tried the effect of different initials before the name Rose: G. Rose, E. Rose, L. Rose, Rose, L.L., L.L. Rose. When he had covered the sheet, he looked at it discontentedly a little while, then suddenly began to write a letter:

Beloved Sister,

It is a long while since I last wrote to you, but I have had no time. This is the first

morning I have been at home since I don't know when. Em always expects me to go down to the farmhouse in the morning; but I didn't feel as though I could stand the ride today.

I have much news for you.

Tant Sannie, Em's Boer stepmother, is to be married tomorrow. She is gone to town today, and the wedding feast is to be at her brother's farm. Em and I are going to ride over on horseback, but her cousin is going to ride in the buggy with that German. I don't think I've written to you since she came back from school. I don't think you would like her at all, Jemima; there's something so proud about her. She thinks just because she's handsome there's nobody good enough to talk to her, and just as if there had nobody else but her been to boarding-school before.

They are going to have a grand affair tomorrow; all the Boers about are coming, and they are going to dance all night; but I don't think I shall dance at all; for, as Em's cousin says, these Boer dances are low things. I am sure I only danced at the last to please Em. I don't know why she is fond of dancing. Em talked of our being married on the same day as Tant Sannie; but I said it would be nicer for her if she waited till the shearing was over, and I took her down to see you. I suppose she will have to live with us (Em's cousin, I mean), as she has not anything in the world but a poor fifty pounds. I don't like her at all, Jemima, and I don't think you would. She's got such queer ways; she's always driving about in a gig with that low German; and I don't think it's at all the thing for a woman to be going about with a man she's not engaged to. Do you? If it was me now, of course, who am a kind of connection, it would be different. The way she treats me, considering that I am so soon to be her cousin, is not at all nice. I took down my album the other day with your likenesses in it, and I told her she could look at it, and put it down close to her; but she just said, Thank you, and never even touched it, as much as to say—What are your relations to me?

She gets the wildest horses in that buggy, and a horrid snappish little cur belonging to the German sitting in front, and then she drives out alone. I don't think it's at all proper for a woman to drive out alone; I wouldn't allow it if she was my sister. The other morning, I don't know how it happened, I was going in the way from which she was coming, and that little beast—they call him Doss—began to bark when he saw me—he always does, the little wretch—and the horses began to spring, and kicked the splashboard all to pieces. It was a sight to see Jemima! She has got the littlest hands I ever saw—I could hold them both in one of mine, and not know that I'd got anything except that they were so soft; but she held those horses in as though they were made of iron. When I wanted to help her she said, 'No thank you: I can manage them myself. I've got a pair of bits that would break their jaws if I used them well,' and she laughed and drove away. It's so unwomanly.

Tell father my hire of the ground will not be out for six months, and before that Em and I will be married. My pair of birds is breeding now, but I haven't been down to see them for three days. I don't seem to care about anything any more. I don't know what it is; I'm not well. If I go into town on Saturday I will let the doctor examine me; but perhaps she'll go in herself. It's a very strange thing, Jemima, but she never will send her letters to post by me. If I ask her she has

Jemima, but she never will send her letters to post by me. If I ask her she has none, and the very next day she goes in and posts them herself. You mustn't say anything about it, Jemima, but twice I've brought her letters from the post in a gentleman's hand, and I'm sure they were both from the same person, because I noticed every little mark, even the dotting of the i's.

Of course it's nothing to me; but for Em's sake I can't help feeling an interest in her, however much I may dislike her myself; and I hope she's up to nothing. I pity the man who marries her; I wouldn't be him for anything. If I had a wife with pride I'd make her give it up, sharp. I don't believe in a man who can't make a woman obey him. Now Em—I'm very fond of her, as you know—but if I tell her to put on a certain dress, that dress she puts on; and if I tell her to sit on a certain seat, on that seat she sits; and if I tell her not to speak to a certain individual, she does not speak to them. If a man lets a woman do what he doesn't like he's a muff.

Give my love to mother and the children. The veld here is looking pretty good, and the sheep are better since we washed them. Tell father the dip he recommended is very good.

Em sends her love to you. She is making me some woollen shirts; but they don't fit me so nicely as those mother made me.

Write soon to
Your loving brother, Gregory.

P.S.—She drove past just now; I was sitting on the kraal wall right before her eyes, and she never even bowed. G.N.R.

Chapter VI. A Boer-wedding

"I didn't know before you were so fond of riding hard," said Gregory to his little betrothed.

They were cantering slowly on the road to Oom Muller's on the morning of the wedding.

"Do you call this riding hard?" asked Em in some astonishment. 1500

"Of course I do! It's enough to break the horses' necks, and knock one up for the whole day besides," he added testily; then twisted his head to look at the buggy that came on behind. "I thought Waldo was such a mad driver; they are taking it easily enough today," said Gregory. "One would think the black stallions were lame."

"I suppose they want to keep out of our dust," said Em. "See, they stand still as soon as we do."

Perceiving this to be the case, Gregory rode on.

"It's all that horse of yours: she kicks up such a confounded dust, I can't stand it myself," he said.

Meanwhile the cart came on slowly enough.

1505

"Take the reins," said Lyndall, and "and make them walk. I want to rest and watch their hoofs today—not to be exhilarated; I am so tired."

She leaned back in her corner, and Waldo drove on slowly in the grey dawn light along the level road. They passed the very milk-bush behind which so many years before the old German had found the Kaffer woman. But their thoughts were not with him that morning: they were the thoughts of the young, that run out to meet the future, and labour in the present. At last he touched her arm.

"What is it?"

"I feared you had gone to sleep and might be jolted out," he said; "you sat so quietly."

"No; do not talk to me; I am not asleep;" but after a time she said suddenly: "It must be a terrible thing to bring a human being into the world."

1510

Waldo looked round; she sat drawn into the corner, her blue cloud wound tightly about her, and she still watched the horses' feet. Having no comment to offer on her somewhat unexpected remark, he merely touched up his horses.

"I have no conscience, none," she added; "but I would not like to bring a soul into this world. When it sinned and when it suffered something like a dead hand would fall on me—'You did it, you, for your own pleasure you created this thing! See your work!' If it lived to be eighty it would always hang like a millstone round my neck, have the right to demand good from me, and curse me for its sorrow. A parent is only like to God—if his work turns out bad, so much the worse for him; he dare not wash his hands of it. Time and years can never bring the day when you can say to your child: 'Soul, what have I to do with you?'"

Waldo said dreamingly:

"It is a marvellous thing that one soul should have power to cause another."

She heard the words as she heard the beating of the horses' hoofs; her thoughts ran on in their own line.

1515

"They say, 'God sends the little babies.' Of all the dastardly revolting lies men tell to suit themselves, I hate that most. I suppose my father said so when he knew he was dying of consumption, and my mother when she knew she had nothing to support me on, and they created me to feed like a dog from stranger hands. Men do not say God sends the books, or the newspaper articles, or the machines they make; and then sigh, and shrug their shoulders and say they can't help it. Why do they say so about other things? Liars! 'God sends the little babies!'" She struck her foot fretfully against the splashboard. "The small children say so earnestly. They touch the little stranger reverently who has just come from God's far country, and they peep about the room to see if not one white feather has dropped from the wing of the angel that brought him. On their lips the phrase means much; on all others it is a deliberate lie. Noticeable, too," she said, dropping in an instant from the passionate into a low, mocking tone, "when people are married, though they should have sixty children, they throw the whole onus on God. When they are not, we hear nothing about God's having sent them. When there has been no legal contract between the parents, who sends the little children then? The devil perhaps!" She laughed her little silvery, mocking laugh. "Odd that some men should come from hell and some from heaven, and yet all look so much alike when they get here."

Waldo wondered at her. He had not the key to her thoughts, and did not see the string on which they were strung. She drew her cloud tighter about her.

"It must be very nice to believe in the devil," she said; "I wish I did. If it would be of any use I would pray three hours night and morning on my bare knees, 'God, let me believe in Satan.' He is so useful to those people who do. They may be as selfish and as sensual as they please, and, between God's will and the devil's action, always have some one to throw their sin on. But we,

wretched unbelievers, we bear our own burdens: we must say, 'I myself did it, I. Not God, not Satan; I myself!' That is the sting that strikes deep. Waldo," she said gently, with a sudden and complete change of manner, "I like you so much, I love you." She rested her cheek softly against his shoulder. "When I am with you I never know that I am a woman and you are a man; I only know that we are both things that think. Other men when I am with them, whether I love them or not, they are mere bodies to me; but you are a spirit; I like you. Look," she said quickly, sinking back into her corner, "what a pretty pinkness there is on all the hilltops! The sun will rise in a moment."

Waldo lifted his eyes to look round over the circle of golden hills; and the horses, as the first sunbeams touched them, shook their heads and champed their bright bits, till the brass settings in their harness glittered again.

It was eight o'clock when they neared the farmhouse: a red-brick building, with kraals to the right and a small orchard to the left. Already there were signs of unusual life and bustle: one cart, a wagon, and a couple of saddles against the wall betokened the arrival of a few early guests, whose numbers would soon be largely increased. To a Dutch country wedding guests start up in numbers astonishing to one who has merely ridden through the plains of sparsely-inhabited karoo.

1520

As the morning advances, riders on many shades of steeds appear from all directions, and add their saddles to the long rows against the walls, shake hands, drink coffee, and stand about outside in groups to watch the arriving carts and ox-wagons, as they are unburdened of their heavy freight of massive Tantes and comely daughters, followed by swarms of children of all sizes, dressed in all manner of print and moleskin, who are taken care of by Hottentot, Kaffer, and half-caste nurses, whose many-shaded complexions, ranging from light yellow up to ebony black, add variety to the animated scene.

Everywhere is excitement and bustle, which gradually increases as the time for the return of the wedding-party approaches. Preparations for the feast are actively advancing in the kitchen; coffee is liberally handed round, and amid a profound

sensation, and the firing of guns, the horse-wagon draws up, and the wedding-party alight. Bride and bridegroom, with their attendants, march solemnly to the marriage-chamber, where bed and box are decked out in white, with ends of ribbon and artificial flowers, and where on a row of chairs the party solemnly seat themselves. After a time bridesmaid and best man rise, and conduct in with ceremony each individual guest, to wish success and to kiss bride and bridegroom.

Then the feast is set on the table, and it is almost sunset before the dishes are cleared away, and the pleasure of the day begins. Everything is removed from the great front room, and the mud floor, well rubbed with bullock's blood, glistens like polished mahogany. The female portion of the assembly flock into the side-rooms to attire themselves for the evening; and re-issue clad in white muslin, and gay with bright ribbons and brass jewelry. The dancing begins as the first tallow candles are stuck up about the walls, the music coming from a couple of fiddlers in a corner of the room. Bride and bridegroom open the ball, and the floor is soon covered with whirling couples, and every one's spirits rise. The bridal pair mingle freely in the throng, and here and there a musical man sings vigorously as he drags his partner through the Blue Water or John Speriwig; boys shout and applaud, and the enjoyment and confusion are intense, till eleven o'clock comes. By this time the children who swarm in the side-rooms are not to be kept quiet longer, even by hunches of bread and cake; there is a general howl and wail, that rises yet higher than the scraping of fiddles, and mothers rush from their partners to knock small heads together, and cuff little nursemaids, and force the wailers down into unoccupied corners of beds, under tables and behind boxes. In half an hour every variety of childish snore is heard on all sides, and it has become perilous to raise or set down a foot in any of the side-rooms lest a small head or hand should be crushed.

Now too the busy feet have broken the solid coating of the floor, and a cloud of fine dust arises, that makes a yellow halo round the candles, and sets asthmatic people coughing, and grows denser, till to recognise any one on the opposite side of the room

becomes impossible, and a partner's face is seen through a yellow mist.

At twelve o'clock the bride is led to the marriage-chamber and undressed; the lights are blown out, and the bridegroom is brought to the door by the best man, who gives him the key; then the door is shut and locked, and the revels rise higher than ever. There is no thought of sleep till morning, and no unoccupied spot where sleep may be found.

1525

It was at this stage of the proceedings on the night of Tant Sannie's wedding that Lyndall sat near the doorway in one of the side-rooms, to watch the dancers as they appeared and disappeared in the yellow cloud of dust. Gregory sat moodily in a corner of the large dancing-room. His little betrothed touched his arm.

"I wish you would go and ask Lyndall to dance with you," she said; "she must be so tired; she has sat still the whole evening."

"I have asked her three times," replied her lover shortly. "I'm not going to be her dog, and creep to her feet, just to give her the pleasure of kicking me—not for you, Em, nor for anybody else."

"Oh, I didn't know you had asked her, Greg," said his little betrothed, humbly; and she went away to pour out coffee.

Nevertheless, some time after Gregory found he had shifted so far round the room as to be close to the door where Lyndall sat. After standing for some time he inquired whether he might not bring her a cup of coffee.

1530

She declined; but still he stood on (why should he not stand there as well as anywhere else?), and then he stepped into the bedroom.

"May I not bring you a stove, Miss Lyndall, to put your feet on?"

"Thank you."

He sought for one, and put it under her feet.

"There is a draught from that broken window: shall I stuff something in the pane?"

1535

"No, we want air."

Gregory looked round, but nothing else suggesting itself, he sat down on a box on the opposite side of the door. Lyndall sat

before him, her chin resting in her hand; her eyes, steel-grey by day, but black by night, looked through the doorway into the next room. After a time he thought she had entirely forgotten his proximity, and he dared to inspect the little hands and neck as he never dared when he was in momentary dread of the eyes being turned upon him.

She was dressed in black, which seemed to take her yet further from the white-clad, gewgawed women about her; and the little hands were white, and the diamond ring glittered. Where had she got that ring? He bent forward a little and tried to decipher the letters, but the candle-light was too faint. When he looked up her eyes were fixed on him. She was looking at him—not, Gregory felt, as she had ever looked at him before; not as though he were a stump or a stone that chance had thrown in her way. Tonight, whether it were critically, or kindly, or unkindly, he could not tell, but she looked at him, at the man, Gregory Rose, with attention. A vague elation filled him. He clinched his fist tight to think of some good idea he might express to her; but of all those profound things he had pictured himself as saying to her, when he sat alone in the daub-and-wattle house, not one came. He said, at last:

"These Boer dances are very low things;" and then, as soon as it had gone from him, he thought it was not a clever remark, and wished it back.

Before Lyndall replied Em looked in at the door.

1540

"Oh, come," she said; "they are going to have the cushion-dance. I do not want to kiss any of these fellows. Take me quickly."

She slipped her hand into Gregory's arm.

"It is so dusty, Em; do you care to dance any more?" he asked, without rising.

"Oh, I do not mind the dust, and the dancing rests me."

But he did not move.

1545

"I feel tired; I do not think I shall dance again," he said.

Em withdrew her hand, and a young farmer came to the door and bore her off.

"I have often imagined," remarked Gregory—but Lyndall had risen.

"I am tired," she said. "I wonder where Waldo is; he must take me home. These people will not leave off till morning, I suppose; it is three already."

She made her way past the fiddlers, and a bench full of tired dancers, and passed out at the front door. On the stoep a group of men and boys were smoking, peeping in at the windows, and cracking coarse jokes. Waldo was certainly not among them, and she made her way to the carts and wagons drawn up at some distance from the homestead.

"Waldo," she said, peering into a large cart, "is that you? I am so dazed with the tallow candles, I see nothing."

He had made himself a place between the two seats. She climbed up and sat on the sloping floor in front.

"I thought I should find you here," she said, drawing her skirt up about her shoulders. "You must take me home presently, but not now."

She leaned her head on the seat near to his, and they listened in silence to the fitful twanging of the fiddles as the night-wind bore it from the farmhouse, and to the ceaseless thud of the dancers, and the peals of gross laughter. She stretched out her little hand to feel for his.

"It is so nice to lie here and hear that noise," she said. "I like to feel that strange life beating up against me. I like to realise forms of life utterly unlike mine." She drew a long breath. "When my own life feels small, and I am oppressed with it, I like to crush together, and see it in a picture, in an instant, a multitude of disconnected unlike phases of human life—a mediaeval monk with his string of beads pacing the quiet orchard, and looking up from the grass at his feet to the heavy fruit-trees; little Malay boys playing naked on a shining sea-beach; a Hindoo philosopher alone under his banyan tree, thinking, thinking, thinking, so that in the thought of God he may lose himself; a troop of Bacchanalians dressed in white, with crowns of vine-leaves, dancing along the Roman streets; a martyr on the night of his death looking through the narrow window to the sky, and feeling that already he has the wings that shall bear him up" (she moved her hand dreamily over her face); "an epicurean discoursing at a

1550

1555

Roman bath to a knot of his disciples on the nature of happiness; a Kaffer witchdoctor seeking for herbs by moonlight, while from the huts on the hillside come the sound of dogs barking, and the voices of women and children; a mother giving bread-and-milk to her children in little wooden basins and singing the evening song. I like to see it all; I feel it run through me—that life belongs to me; it makes my little life larger, it breaks down the narrow walls that shut me in."

She sighed, and drew a long breath.

"Have you made any plans?" she asked him presently.

"Yes," he said, the words coming in jets, with pauses between; "I will take the grey mare—I will travel first—I will see the world—then I will find work."

"What work?"

"I do not know."

1560

She made a little impatient movement.

"That is no plan; travel—see the world—find work! If you go into the world aimless, without a definite object, dreaming—dreaming, you will be definitely defeated, bamboozled, knocked this way and that. In the end you will stand with your beautiful life all spent, and nothing to show. They talk of genius—it is nothing but this, that a man knows what he can do best, and does it, and nothing else. Waldo," she said, knitting her little fingers closer among his, "I wish I could help you; I wish I could make you see that you must decide what you will be and do. It does not matter what you choose—be a farmer, businessman, artist, what you will—but know your aim, and live for that one thing. We have only one life. The secret of success is concentration; wherever there has been a great life, or a great work, that has gone before. Taste everything a little, look at everything a little; but live for one thing. Anything is possible to a man who knows his end and moves straight for it, and for it alone. I will show you what I mean," she said, concisely; "words are gas till you condense them into pictures."

"Suppose a woman, young, friendless as I am, the weakest thing on God's earth. But she must make her way through life. What she would be she cannot be because she is a woman; so she

looks carefully at herself and the world about her, to see where her path must be made.

"There is no one to help her; she must help herself. She looks. These things she has—a sweet voice, rich in subtle intonations; a fair, very fair face, with a power of concentrating in itself, and giving expression to, feelings that otherwise must have been dissipated in words; a rare power of entering into other lives unlike her own, and intuitively reading them aright. These qualities she has. How shall she use them? A poet, a writer, needs only the mental; what use has he for a beautiful body that registers clearly mental emotions? And the painter wants an eye for form and colour, and the musician an ear for time and tune, and the mere drudge has no need for mental gifts.

"But there is one art in which all she has would be used, for which they are all necessary—the delicate expressive body, the rich voice, the power of mental transposition. The actor, who absorbs and then reflects from himself other human lives, needs them all, but needs not much more. This is her end; but how to reach it? Before her are endless difficulties: seas must be crossed, poverty must be endured, loneliness, want. She must be content to wait long before she can even get her feet upon the path. If she has made blunders in the past, if she has weighted herself with a burden which she must bear to the end, she must but bear the burden bravely, and labour on. There is no use in wailing and repentance here: the next world is the place for that; this life is too short. By our errors we see deeper into life. They help us." She waited for a while. "If she does all this—if she waits patiently, if she is never cast down, never despairs, never forgets her end, moves straight toward it, bending men and things most unlikely to her purpose—she must succeed at last. Men and things are plastic; they part to the right and left when one comes among them moving in a straight line to one end. I know it by my own little experience," she said. "Long years ago I resolved to be sent to school. It seemed a thing utterly out of my power; but I waited, I watched, I collected clothes, I wrote, took my place at the school; when all was ready I bore with my full force on the Boer-woman, and she sent me at last. It was a small thing; but life is

made up of small things, as a body is built up of cells. What has been done in small things can be done in large. Shall be," she said softly.

Waldo listened. To him the words were no confession, no glimpse into the strong, proud, restless heart of the woman. They were general words with a general application. He looked up into the sparkling sky with dull eyes.

"Yes," he said; "but when we lie and think, and think, we see that there is nothing worth doing. The universe is so large, and man is so small—"

She shook her head quickly.

"But we must not think so far; it is madness, it is a disease. We know that no man's work is great, and stands forever. Moses is dead, and the prophets and the books that our grandmothers fed on the mould is eating. Your poet and painter and actor,—before the shouts that applaud them have died their names grow strange, they are milestones that the world has passed. Men have set their mark on mankind forever, as they thought; but time has washed it out as it has washed out mountains and continents." She raised herself on her elbow. "And what if we could help mankind, and leave the traces of our work upon it to the end? Mankind is only an ephemeral blossom on the tree of time; there were others before it opened; there will be others after it has fallen. Where was man in the time of the dicynodont, and when hoary monsters wallowed in the mud? Will he be found in the aeons that are to come? We are sparks, we are shadows, we are pollen, which the next wind will carry away. We are dying already; it is all a dream.

"I know that thought. When the fever of living is on us, when the desire to become, to know, to do, is driving us mad, we can use it as an anodyne, to still the fever and cool our beating pulses. But it is a poison, not a food. If we live on it it will turn our blood to ice; we might as well be dead. We must not, Waldo; I want your life to be beautiful, to end in something. You are nobler and stronger than I," she said; "and as much better as one of God's great angels is better than a sinning man. Your life must go for something."

"Yes, we will work," he said.

She moved closer to him and lay still, his black curls touching her smooth little head.

Doss, who had lain at his master's side, climbed over the bench, and curled himself up in her lap. She drew her skirt up over him, and the three sat motionless for a long time.

"Waldo," she said, suddenly, "they are laughing at us."

"Who?" he asked, starting up.

1575

"They—the stars!" she said, softly. "Do you not see? There is a little white, mocking finger pointing down at us from each one of them! We are talking of tomorrow and tomorrow, and our hearts are so strong; we are not thinking of something that can touch us softly in the dark and make us still forever. They are laughing at us Waldo."

Both sat looking upward.

"Do you ever pray?" he asked her in a low voice.

"No."

"I never do; but I might when I look up there. I will tell you," he added, in a still lower voice, "where I could pray. If there were a wall of rock on the edge of a world, and one rock stretched out far, far into space, and I stood alone upon it, alone, with stars above me, and stars below me,—I would not say anything; but the feeling would be prayer."

1580

There was an end to their conversation after that, and Doss fell asleep on her knee. At last the night-wind grew very chilly.

"Ah," she said, shivering, and drawing the skirt about her shoulders, "I am cold. Span-in the horses, and call me when you are ready."

She slipped down and walked toward the house, Doss stiffly following her, not pleased at being roused. At the door she met Gregory.

"I have been looking for you everywhere; may I not drive you home?" he said.

"Waldo drives me," she replied, passing on; and it appeared to Gregory that she looked at him in the old way, without seeing him. But before she had reached the door an idea had occurred to her, for she turned.

1585

"If you wish to drive me you may."

Gregory went to look for Em, whom he found pouring out coffee in the back room. He put his hand quickly on her shoulder.

"You must ride with Waldo; I am going to drive your cousin home."

"But I can't come just now, Greg; I promised Tant Annie Muller to look after the things while she went to rest a little."

"Well, you can come presently, can't you? I didn't say you were to come now. I'm sick of this thing," said Gregory, turning sharply on his heel. "Why must I sit up the whole night because your stepmother chooses to get married?" 1590

"Oh, it's all right, Greg, I only meant—"

But he did not hear her, and a man had come up to have his cup filled.

An hour after Waldo came in to look for her, and found her still busy at the table.

"The horses are ready," he said; "but if you would like to have one dance more I will wait."

She shook her head wearily. 1595

"No; I am quite ready. I want to go."

And soon they were on the sandy road the buggy had travelled an hour before. Their horses, with heads close together, nodding sleepily as they walked in the starlight, you might have counted the rise and fall of their feet in the sand; and Waldo in his saddle nodded drowsily also. Only Em was awake, and watched the starlit road with wide-open eyes. At last she spoke.

"I wonder if all people feel so old, so very old, when they get to be seventeen?"

"Not older than before," said Waldo sleepily, pulling at his bridle.

Presently she said again: 1600

"I wish I could have been a little child always. You are good then. You are never selfish; you like every one to have everything; but when you are grown up there are some things you like to have all to yourself, you don't like any one else to have any of them."

"Yes," said Waldo sleepily, and she did not speak again.

When they reached the farmhouse all was dark, for Lyndall had retired as soon as they got home.

Waldo lifted Em from her saddle, and for a moment she leaned her head on his shoulder and clung to him.

"You are very tired," he said, as he walked with her to the door; "let me go in and light a candle for you." 1605

"No, thank you; it is all right," she said. "Good night, Waldo, dear."

But when she went in she sat long alone in the dark.

Chapter VII. Waldo Goes Out to Taste Life, and Em Stays At Home and

Tastes It

At nine o'clock in the evening, packing his bundles for the next morning's start, Waldo looked up, and was surprised to see Em's yellow head peeping in at his door. It was many a month since she had been there. She said she had made him sandwiches for his journey, and she stayed a while to help him put his goods into the saddlebags.

"You can leave the old things lying about," she said; "I will lock the room, and keep it waiting for you to come back some day."

To come back some day! Would the bird ever return to its cage? But he thanked her. When she went away he stood on the doorstep holding the candle till she had almost reached the house. But Em was that evening in no hurry to enter, and, instead of going in at the back door, walked with lagging footsteps round the low brick wall that ran before the house. Opposite the open window of the parlour she stopped. The little room, kept carefully closed in Tant Sannie's time, was well lighted by a paraffin lamp; books and work lay strewn about it, and it wore a bright, habitable aspect. Beside the lamp at the table in the corner sat Lyndall, the open letters and papers of the day's post lying scattered before her, while she perused the columns of a newspaper. At the centre table, with his arms folded on an open 1610

paper, which there was not light enough to read, sat Gregory. He was looking at her. The light from the open window fell on Em's little face under its white kapje as she looked in, but no one glanced that way.

"Go and fetch me a glass of water!" Lyndall said, at last.

Gregory went out to find it; when he put it down at her side she merely moved her head in recognition, and he went back to his seat and his old occupation. Then Em moved slowly away from the window, and through it came in spotted, hard-winged insects, to play round the lamp, till, one by one, they stuck to its glass, and fell to the foot dead.

Ten o'clock struck. Then Lyndall rose, gathered up her papers and letters, and wished Gregory good night. Some time after Em entered; she had been sitting all the while on the loft ladder, and had drawn her kapje down very much over her face.

Gregory was piecing together the bits of an envelope when she came in.

"I thought you were never coming," he said, turning round quickly, and throwing the fragments onto the floor. "You know I have been shearing all day, and it is ten o'clock already." 1615

"I'm sorry. I did not think you would be going so soon," she said in a low voice.

"I can't hear what you say. What makes you mumble so? Well, good night, Em."

He stooped down hastily to kiss her.

"I want to talk to you, Gregory."

"Well, make haste," he said pettishly. "I'm awfully tired. I've been sitting here all the evening. Why couldn't you come and talk before?" 1620

"I will not keep you long," she answered very steadily now. "I think, Gregory, it would be better if you and I were never to be married."

"Good Heaven! Em, what do you mean? I thought you were so fond of me? You always professed to be. What on earth have you taken into your head now?"

"I think it would be better," she said, folding her hands over each other, very much as though she were praying.

"Better, Em! What do you mean? Even a woman can't take a freak all about nothing! You must have some reason for it, and I'm sure I've done nothing to offend you. I wrote only today to my sister to tell her to come up next month to our wedding, and I've been as affectionate and happy as possible. Come—what's the matter?"

He put his arm half round her shoulder, very loosely.

1625

"I think it would be better," she answered, slowly.

"Oh, well," he said, drawing himself up, "if you won't enter into explanations you won't; and I'm not the man to beg and pray—not to any woman, and you know that! If you don't want to marry me I can't oblige you to, of course."

She stood quite still before him.

"You women never do know your own minds for two days together; and of course you know the state of your own feelings best; but it's very strange. Have you really made up your mind, Em?"

"Yes."

1630

"Well, I'm very sorry. I'm sure I've not been in anything to blame. A man can't always be billing and cooing; but, as you say, if your feeling for me has changed, it's much better you shouldn't marry me. There's nothing so foolish as to marry some one you don't love; and I only wish for your happiness, I'm sure. I daresay you'll find some one can make you much happier than I could; the first person we love is seldom the right one. You are very young; it's quite natural you should change."

She said nothing.

"Things often seem hard at the time, but Providence makes them turn out for the best in the end," said Gregory. "You'll let me kiss you, Em, just for old friendship's sake." He stooped down. "You must look upon me as a dear brother, as a cousin at least; as long as I am on the farm I shall always be glad to help you, Em."

Soon after the brown pony was cantering along the footpath to the daub-and-wattle house, and his master as he rode whistled John Speriwig and the Thorn Kloof Schottische.

The sun had not yet touched the outstretched arms of the prickly pear upon the kopje, and the early cocks and hens still

1635

strutted about stiffly after the night's roost, when Waldo stood before the wagon-house saddling the grey mare. Every now and then he glanced up at the old familiar objects: they had a new aspect that morning. Even the cocks, seen in the light of parting, had a peculiar interest, and he listened with conscious attention while one crowed clear and loud as it stood on the pigsty wall. He wished good morning softly to the Kaffer woman who was coming up from the huts to light the fire. He was leaving them all to that old life, and from his height he looked down on them pityingly. So they would keep on crowing, and coming to light fires, when for him that old colourless existence was but a dream.

He went into the house to say good-bye to Em, and then he walked to the door of Lyndall's room to wake her; but she was up, and standing in the doorway.

"So you are ready," she said.

Waldo looked at her with sudden heaviness; the exhilaration died out of his heart. Her grey dressing-gown hung close about her, and below its edge the little bare feet were resting on the threshold.

"I wonder when we shall meet again, Waldo? What you will be, and what I?"

"Will you write to me?" he asked of her.

1640

"Yes; and if I should not, you can still remember, wherever you are, that you are not alone."

"I have left Doss for you," he said.

"Will you not miss him?"

"No; I want you to have him. He loves you better than he loves me."

"Thank you." They stood quiet.

1645

"Good-bye!" she said, putting her little hand in his, and he turned away; but when he reached the door she called to him: "Come back, I want to kiss you." She drew his face down to hers, and held it with both hands, and kissed it on the forehead and mouth. "Good-bye, dear!"

When he looked back the little figure with its beautiful eyes was standing in the doorway still.

Chapter VIII. The Kopje

"Good morning!"

Em, who was in the storeroom measuring the Kaffer's rations, looked up and saw her former lover standing betwixt her and the sunshine. For some days after that evening on which he had ridden home whistling he had shunned her. She might wish to enter into explanations, and he, Gregory Rose, was not the man for that kind of thing. If a woman had once thrown him overboard she must take the consequences, and stand by them. When, however, she showed no inclination to revert to the past, and shunned him more than he shunned her, Gregory softened.

"You must let me call you Em still, and be like a brother to you till I go," he said; and Em thanked him so humbly that he wished she hadn't. It wasn't so easy after that to think himself an injured man.

On that morning he stood some time in the doorway switching his whip, and moving rather restlessly from one leg to the other. 1650

"I think I'll just take a walk up to the camps and see how your birds are getting on. Now Waldo's gone you've no one to see after things. Nice morning, isn't it?" Then he added suddenly, "I'll just go round to the house and get a drink of water first;" and somewhat awkwardly walked off. He might have found water in the kitchen, but he never glanced toward the buckets. In the front room a monkey and two tumblers stood on the centre-table; but he merely looked round, peeped into the parlour, looked round again, and then walked out at the front door, and found himself again at the storeroom without having satisfied his thirst. "Awfully nice morning this," he said, trying to pose himself in a graceful and indifferent attitude against the door. "It isn't hot and it isn't cold. It's awfully nice."

"Yes," said Em.

"Your cousin, now," said Gregory in an aimless sort of way—"I suppose she's shut up in her room writing letters."

"No," said Em.

"Gone for a drive, I expect? Nice morning for a drive."

1655

"No."

"Gone to see the ostriches, I suppose?"

"No." After a little silence Em added, "I saw her go by the kraals to the kopje."

Gregory crossed and uncrossed his legs.

"Well, I think I'll just go and have a look about," he said, "and see how things are getting on before I go to the camps. Good-bye; so long." 1660

Em left for a while the bags she was folding and went to the window, the same through which, years before, Bonaparte had watched the slouching figure cross the yard. Gregory walked to the pigsty first, and contemplated the pigs for a few seconds; then turned round, and stood looking fixedly at the wall of the fuel-house as though he thought it wanted repairing; then he started off suddenly with the evident intention of going to the ostrich-camps; then paused, hesitated, and finally walked off in the direction of the kopje.

Then Em went back to the corner and folded more sacks.

On the other side of the kopje Gregory caught sight of a white tail waving among the stones, and a succession of short, frantic barks told where Doss was engaged in howling imploringly to a lizard who had crept between two stones, and who had not the slightest intention of re-sunning himself at that particular moment.

The dog's mistress sat higher up, under the shelving rock, her face bent over a volume of plays upon her knee. As Gregory mounted the stones she started violently and looked up; then resumed her book.

"I hope I am not troubling you," said Gregory as he reached her side. "If I am I will go away. I just—" 1665

"No; you may stay."

"I fear I startled you."

"Yes; your step was firmer than it generally is. I thought it was that of some one else."

"Who could it be but me?" asked Gregory, seating himself on a stone at her feet.

"Do you suppose you are the only man who would find anything to attract him to this kopje?" 1670

"Oh, no," said Gregory.

He was not going to argue that point with her, nor any other; but no old Boer was likely to take the trouble of climbing the kopje, and who else was there?

She continued the study of her book.

"Miss Lyndall," he said at last, "I don't know why it is you never talk to me."

"We had a long conversation yesterday," she said without looking up. 1675

"Yes; but you ask me questions about sheep and oxen. I don't call that talking. You used to talk to Waldo, now," he said, in an aggrieved tone of voice. "I've heard you when I came in, and then you've just left off. You treated me like that from the first day; and you couldn't tell from just looking at me that I couldn't talk about the things you like. I'm sure I know as much about such things as Waldo does," said Gregory, in exceeding bitterness of spirit.

"I do not know which things you refer to. If you will enlighten me I am quite prepared to speak of them," she said, reading as she spoke.

"Oh, you never used to ask Waldo like that," said Gregory, in a more sorely aggrieved tone than ever. "You used just to begin."

"Well, let me see," she said, closing her book and folding her hands on it. "There at the foot of the kopje goes a Kaffer; he has nothing on but a blanket; he is a splendid fellow—six feet high, with a magnificent pair of legs. In his leather bag he is going to fetch his rations, and I suppose to kick his wife with his beautiful legs when he gets home. He has a right to; he bought her for two oxen. There is a lean dog going after him, to whom I suppose he never gives more than a bone from which he has sucked the marrow; but his dog loves him, as his wife does. There is something of the master about him in spite of his blackness and wool. See how he brandishes his stick and holds up his head!"

"Oh, but aren't you making fun?" said Gregory, looking doubtfully from her to the Kaffer herd, who rounded the kopje. 1680

"No; I am very serious. He is the most interesting and intelligent thing I can see just now, except, perhaps, Doss. He is profoundly suggestive. Will his race melt away in the heat of a collision with a higher? Are the men of the future to see his bones only in museums—a vestige of one link that spanned between the dog and the white man? He wakes thoughts that run far out into the future and back into the past."

Gregory was not quite sure how to take these remarks. Being about a Kaffer, they appeared to be of the nature of a joke; but, being seriously spoken, they appeared earnest; so he half laughed and half not, to be on the safe side.

"I've often thought so myself. It's funny we should both think the same; I knew we should if once we talked. But there are other things—love, now," he added. "I wonder if we would think alike about that. I wrote an essay on love once; the master said it was the best I ever wrote, and I can remember the first sentence still—'Love is something that you feel in your heart.'"

"That was a trenchant remark. Can't you remember any more?"

"No," said Gregory, regretfully; "I've forgotten the rest. But tell me what do you think about love?"

A look, half of abstraction, half amusement, played on her lips.

"I don't know much about love," she said, "and I do not like to talk of things I do not understand; but I have heard two opinions. Some say the devil carried the seed from hell and planted it on the earth to plague men and make them sin; and some say, that when all the plants in the garden of Eden were pulled up by the roots, one bush that the angels planted was left growing, and it spread its seed over the whole earth, and its name is love. I do not know which is right—perhaps both. There are different species that go under the same name. There is a love that begins in the head, and goes down to the heart, and grows slowly; but it lasts till death, and asks less than it gives. There is another love, that blots out wisdom, that is sweet with the sweetness of life and bitter with the bitterness of death, lasting for an hour; but it is worth having lived a whole life for that hour. I cannot tell, perhaps the old monks were right when they tried to root love out; perhaps the poets are right when they try to water it. It is a blood-red flower,

with the colour of sin; but there is always the scent of a god about it."

Gregory would have made a remark; but she said, without noticing:

"There are as many kinds of loves as there are flowers; everlastings that never wither; speedwells that wait for the wind to fan them out of life; blood-red mountain-lilies that pour their voluptuous sweetness out for one day, and lie in the dust at night. There is no flower has the charm of all—the speedwell's purity, the everlasting's strength, the mountain-lily's warmth; but who knows whether there is no love that holds all—friendship, passion, worship?

"Such a love," she said, in her sweetest voice, "will fall on the surface of strong, cold, selfish life as the sunlight falls on a torpid winter world; there, where the trees are bare, and the ground frozen, till it rings to the step like iron, and the water is solid, and the air is sharp as a two-edged knife that cuts the unwary.

1690

"But when its sun shines on it, through its whole dead crust a throbbing yearning wakes: the trees feel him, and every knot and bud swell, aching to open to him. The brown seeds, who have slept deep under the ground, feel him, and he gives them strength, till they break through the frozen earth, and lift two tiny, trembling green hands in love to him. And he touches the water, till down to its depths it feels him and melts, and it flows, and the things, strange sweet things that were locked up in it, it sings as it runs, for love of him. Each plant tries to bear at least one fragrant little flower for him; and the world that was dead lives, and the heart that was dead and self-centred throbs, with an upward, outward yearning, and it has become that which it seemed impossible ever to become. There, does that satisfy you?" she asked, looking down at Gregory. "Is that how you like me to talk?"

"Oh, yes," said Gregory, "that is what I have already thought. We have the same thoughts about everything. How strange!"

"Very," said Lyndall, working with her little toe at a stone in the ground before her.

Gregory felt he must sustain the conversation. The only thing he could think of was to recite a piece of poetry. He knew he had learnt many about love; but the only thing that would come into his mind now was the "Battle of Hohenlinden," and "Not a drum was heard," neither of which seemed to bear directly on the subject on hand.

But unexpected relief came to him from Doss, who, too deeply lost in contemplation of his crevice, was surprised by the sudden descent of the stone Lyndall's foot had loosened, which, rolling against his little front paw, carried away a piece of white-skin. Doss stood on three legs, holding up the paw with an expression of extreme self-commiseration; he then proceeded to hop slowly upward in search of sympathy.

1695

"You have hurt that dog," said Gregory.

"Have I?" she replied indifferently, and re-opened the book, as though to resume her study of the play.

"He's a nasty, snappish little cur!" said Gregory, calculating from her manner that the remark would be endorsed. "He snapped at my horse's tail yesterday, and nearly made it throw me. I wonder his master didn't take him, instead of leaving him here to be a nuisance to all of us!"

Lyndall seemed absorbed in her play; but he ventured another remark.

"Do you think now, Miss Lyndall, that he'll ever have anything in the world—that German. I mean—money enough to support a wife on, and all that sort of thing? I don't. He's what I call soft."

1700

She was spreading her skirt out softly with her left hand for the dog to lie down on it.

"I think I should be rather astonished if he ever became a respectable member of society," she said. "I don't expect to see him the possessor of bank-shares, the chairman of a divisional council, and the father of a large family; wearing a black hat, and going to church twice on a Sunday. He would rather astonish me if he came to such an end."

"Yes; I don't expect anything of him either," said Gregory, zealously.

"Well, I don't know," said Lyndall; "there are some small things I rather look to him for. If he were to invent wings, or carve a statue that one might look at for half an hour without wanting to look at something else, I should not be surprised. He may do some little thing of that kind perhaps, when he has done fermenting and the sediment has all gone to the bottom."

Gregory felt that what she said was not wholly intended as blame. 1705

"Well, I don't know," he said sulkily; "to me he looks like a fool. To walk about always in that dead-and-alive sort of way, muttering to himself like an old Kaffer witchdoctor! He works hard enough, but it's always as though he didn't know what he was doing. You don't know how he looks to a person who sees him for the first time."

Lyndall was softly touching the little sore foot as she read, and Doss, to show he liked it, licked her hand.

"But, Miss Lyndall," persisted Gregory, "what do you really think of him?"

"I think," said Lyndall, "that he is like a thorn-tree, which grows up very quietly, without any one's caring for it, and one day suddenly breaks out into yellow blossoms."

"And what do you think I am like?" asked Gregory, hopefully. 1710

Lyndall looked up from her book.

"Like a little tin duck floating on a dish of water, that comes after a piece of bread stuck on a needle, and the more the needle pricks it the more it comes on."

"Oh, you are making fun of me now, you really are!" said Gregory feeling wretched. "You are making fun, aren't you, now?"

"Partly. It is always diverting to make comparisons."

"Yes; but you don't compare me to anything nice, and you do other people. What is Em like, now?" 1715

"The accompaniment of a song. She fills up the gaps in other people's lives, and is always number two; but I think she is like many accompaniments—a great deal better than the song she is to accompany."

"She is not half so good as you are!" said Gregory, with a burst of uncontrollable ardour.

"She is so much better than I, that her little finger has more goodness in it than my whole body. I hope you may not live to find out the truth of that fact."

"You are like an angel," he said, the blood rushing to his head and face.

"Yes, probably; angels are of many orders."

1720

"You are the one being that I love!" said Gregory quivering. "I thought I loved before, but I know now! Do not be angry with me. I know you could never like me; but, if I might but always be near you to serve you, I would be utterly, utterly happy. I would ask nothing in return! If you could only take everything I have and use it; I want nothing but to be of use to you."

She looked at him for a few moments.

"How do you know," she said slowly, "that you could not do something to serve me? You could serve me by giving me your name."

He started, and turned his burning face to her.

"You are very cruel; you are ridiculing me," he said.

1725

"No, I am not, Gregory. What I am saying is plain, matter-of-fact business. If you are willing to give me your name within three weeks' time, I am willing to marry you, if not, well. I want nothing more than your name. That is a clear proposal, is it not?"

He looked up. Was it contempt, loathing, pity, that moved in the eyes above! He could not tell; but he stooped over the little foot and kissed it.

She smiled.

"Do you really mean it?" he whispered.

"Yes. You wish to serve me, and to have nothing in return!—you shall have what you wish." She held out her fingers for Doss to lick. "Do you see this dog? He licks my hand because I love him; and I allow him to. Where I do not love I do not allow it. I believe you love me; I too could love so, that to lie under the foot of the thing I loved would be more heaven than to lie in the breast of another. Come! let us go. Carry the dog," she added; "he will

1730

not bite you if I put him in your arms. So—do not let his foot hang down."

They descended the kopje. At the bottom, he whispered:

"Would you not take my arm? the path is very rough."

She rested her fingers lightly on it.

"I may yet change my mind about marrying you before the time comes. It is very likely. Mark you!" she said, turning round on him; "I remember your words: You will give everything, and expect nothing. The knowledge that you are serving me is to be your reward; and you will have that. You will serve me, and greatly. The reasons I have for marrying you I need not inform you of now; you will probably discover some of them before long."

"I only want to be of some use to you," he said.

1735

It seemed to Gregory that there were pulses in the soles of his feet, and the ground shimmered as on a summer's day. They walked round the foot of the kopje and past the Kaffer huts. An old Kaffer maid knelt at the door of one grinding mealies. That she should see him walking so made his heart beat so fast, that the hand on his arm felt its pulsation. It seemed that she must envy him.

Just then Em looked out again at the back window and saw them coming. She cried bitterly all the while she sorted the skins.

But that night when Lyndall had blown her candle out, and half turned round to sleep, the door of Em's bedroom opened.

"I want to say good night to you, Lyndall," she said, coming to the bedside and kneeling down.

"I thought you were asleep," Lyndall replied.

1740

"Yes, I have been asleep; but I had such a vivid dream," she said, holding the other's hands, "and that woke me. I never had so vivid a dream before.

"It seemed I was a little girl again, and I came somewhere into a large room. On a bed in the corner there was something lying dressed in white, and its little eyes were shut, and its little face was like wax. I thought it was a doll, and I ran forward to take it; but some one held up her finger and said: 'Hush! it is a little dead

baby.' And I said: 'Oh, I must go and call Lyndall, that she may look at it also.'

"And they put their faces close down to my ear and whispered: 'It is Lyndall's baby.'

"And I said: 'She cannot be grown up yet; she is only a little girl! Where is she?' And I went to look for you, but I could not find you.

"And when I came to some people who were dressed in black, I asked them where you were, and they looked down at their black clothes, and shook their heads, and said nothing; and I could not find you anywhere. And then I awoke. 1745

"Lyndall," she said, putting her face down upon the hands she held, "it made me think about that time when we were little girls and used to play together, when I loved you better than anything else in the world. It isn't any one's fault that they love you; they can't help it. And it isn't your fault; you don't make them love you. I know it."

"Thank you, dear," Lyndall said. "It is nice to be loved, but it would be better to be good."

Then they wished good night, and Em went back to her room. Long after Lyndall lay in the dark thinking, thinking, thinking; and as she turned round wearily to sleep she muttered:

"There are some wiser in their sleeping than in their waking."

Chapter IX. Lyndall's Stranger

A fire is burning in the unused hearth of the cabin. The fuel blazes up, and lights the black rafters, and warms the faded red lions on the quilt, and fills the little room with a glow of warmth and light made brighter by contrast, for outside the night is chill and misty. 1750

Before the open fireplace sits a stranger, his tall, slight figure reposing in the broken armchair, his keen blue eyes studying the fire from beneath delicately pencilled, drooping eyelids. One white hand plays thoughtfully with a heavy flaxen moustache; yet, once he starts, and for an instant the languid lids raise themselves; there is a keen, intent look upon the face as he listens

for something. Then he leans back in his chair, fills his glass from the silver flask in his bag, and resumes his old posture.

Presently the door opens noiselessly. It is Lyndall, followed by Doss. Quietly as she enters, he hears her, and turns.

"I thought you were not coming."

"I waited till all had gone to bed. I could not come before."

She removed the shawl that enveloped her, and the stranger rose to offer her his chair; but she took her seat on a low pile of sacks before the window. 1755

"I hardly see why I should be outlawed after this fashion," he said, reseating himself and drawing his chair a little nearer to her; "these are hardly the quarters one expects to find after travelling a hundred miles in answer to an invitation."

"I said, 'Come if you wish.'"

"And I did wish. You give me a cold reception."

"I could not take you to the house. Questions would be asked which I could not answer without prevarication."

"Your conscience is growing to have a certain virgin tenderness," he said, in a low, melodious voice. 1760

"I have no conscience. I spoke one deliberate lie this evening. I said the man who had come looked rough, we had best not have him in the house; therefore I brought him here. It was a deliberate lie, and I hate lies. I tell them if I must, but they hurt me."

"Well, you do not tell lies to yourself, at all events. You are candid, so far."

She interrupted him.

"You got my short letter?"

"Yes; that is why I come. You sent a very foolish reply; you must take it back. Who is this fellow you talk of marrying?" 1765

"A young farmer."

"Lives here?"

"Yes; he has gone to town to get things for our wedding."

"What kind of a fellow is he?"

"A fool." 1770

"And you would rather marry him than me?"

"Yes; because you are not one."

"That is a novel reason for refusing to marry a man," he said, leaning his elbow on the table and watching her keenly.

"It is a wise one," she said shortly. "If I marry him I shall shake him off my hand when it suits me. If I remained with him for twelve months he would never have dared to kiss my hand. As far as I wish he should come, he comes, and no further. Would you ask me what you might and what you might not do?"

Her companion raised the moustache with a caressing movement from his lip and smiled. It was not a question that stood in need of any answer. 1775

"Why do you wish to enter on this semblance of marriage?"

"Because there is only one point on which I have a conscience. I have told you so."

"Then why not marry me?"

"Because if once you have me you would hold me fast. I shall never be free again." She drew a long, low breath.

"What have you done with the ring I gave you?" he said. 1780

"Sometimes I wear it; then I take it off and wish to throw it into the fire; the next day I put it on again, and sometimes I kiss it."

"So you do love me a little?"

"If you were not something more to me than any other man in the world, do you think—" She paused. "I love you when I see you; but when you are away from me I hate you."

"Then I fear I must be singularly invisible at the present moment," he said. "Possibly if you were to look less fixedly into the fire you might perceive me."

He moved his chair slightly, so as to come between her and the firelight. She raised her eyes to his face. 1785

"If you do love me," he asked her, "why will you not marry me?"

"Because, if I had been married to you for a year I should have come to my senses and seen that your hands and your voice are like the hands and the voice of any other man. I cannot quite see that now. But it is all madness. You call into activity one part of my nature; there is a higher part that you know nothing of, that you never touch. If I married you, afterward it would arise and

assert itself, and I should hate you always, as I do now sometimes."

"I like you when you grow metaphysical and analytical," he said, leaning his face upon his hand. "Go a little further in your analysis; say, 'I love you with the right ventricle of my heart, but not the left, and with the left auricle of my heart, but not the right; and, this being the case, my affection for you is not of a duly elevated, intellectual and spiritual nature.' I like you when you get philosophical."

She looked quietly at him; he was trying to turn her own weapons against her.

"You are acting foolishly, Lyndall," he said, suddenly changing his manner, and speaking earnestly, "most foolishly. You are acting like a little child; I am surprised at you. It is all very well to have ideals and theories; but you know as well as any one can that they must not be carried into the practical world. I love you. I do not pretend that it is in any high, superhuman sense; I do not say that I should like you as well if you were ugly and deformed, or that I should continue to prize you whatever your treatment of me might be, or to love you though you were a spirit without any body at all. That is sentimentality for beardless boys. Every one not a mere child (and you are not a child, except in years) knows what love between a man and a woman means. I love you with that love. I should not have believed it possible that I could have brought myself twice to ask of any woman to be my wife, more especially one without wealth, without position, and who—"

1790

"Yes—go on. Do not grow sorry for me. Say what you were going to—'who has put herself into my power, and who has lost the right of meeting me on equal terms.' Say what you think. At least we two may speak the truth to one another."

Then she added after a pause:

"I believe you do love me, as much as you possibly could love anything; and I believe that when you ask me to marry you you are performing the most generous act you ever have performed in the course of your life, or ever will; but, at the same time, if I had required your generosity, it would not have been shown me. If, when I got your letter a month ago, hinting at your willingness to

marry me, I had at once written, imploring you to come, you would have read the letter. 'Poor little devil!' you would have said, and tore it up. The next week you would have sailed for Europe, and have sent me a check for a hundred and fifty pounds (which I would have thrown in the fire), and I would have heard no more of you."

The stranger smiled.

"But because I declined your proposal, and wrote that in three weeks I should be married to another, then what you call love woke up. Your man's love is a child's love for butterflies. You follow till you have the thing, and break it. If you have broken one wing, and the thing flies still, then you love it more than ever, and follow till you break both; then you are satisfied when it lies still on the ground."

1795

"You are profoundly wise in the ways of the world; you have seen far into life," he said.

He might as well have sneered at the firelight.

"I have seen enough to tell me that you love me because you cannot bear to be resisted, and want to master me. You liked me at first because I treated you and all men with indifference. You resolved to have me because I seemed unattainable. This is all your love means."

He felt a strong inclination to stoop down and kiss the little lips that defied him; but he restrained himself. He said, quietly: "And you loved me—"

"Because you are strong. You are the first man I ever was afraid of. And"—a dreamy look came into her face—"because I like to experience, I like to try. You don't understand that."

1800

He smiled.

"Well, since you will not marry me, may I inquire what your intentions are, the plan you wrote of. You asked me to come and hear it, and I have come."

"I said, 'Come if you wish.' If you agree to it, well; if not, I marry on Monday."

"Well?"

She was still looking beyond him at the fire.

1805

"I cannot marry you," she said slowly, "because I cannot be tied; but if you wish, you may take me away with you, and take care of me; then when we do not love any more we can say good-bye. I will not go down country," she added; "I will not go to Europe. You must take me to the Transvaal. That is out of the world. People we meet there we need not see again in our future lives."

"Oh, my darling," he said, bending tenderly, and holding his hand out to her, "why will you not give yourself entirely to me? One day you will desert me and go to another."

She shook her head without looking at him.

"No, life is too long. But I will go with you."

"When?"

1810

"Tomorrow. I have told them that before daylight I go to the next farm. I will write from the town and tell them the facts. I do not want them to trouble me; I want to shake myself free of these old surroundings; I want them to lose sight of me. You can understand that is necessary for me."

He seemed lost in consideration; then he said:

"It is better to have you on those conditions than not at all. If you will have it, let it be so."

He sat looking at her. On her face was the weary look that rested there so often now when she sat alone. Two months had not passed since they parted; but the time had set its mark on her. He looked at her carefully, from the brown, smooth head to the little crossed feet on the floor. A worn look had grown over the little face, and it made its charm for him stronger. For pain and time, which trace deep lines and write a story on a human face, have a strangely different effect on one face and another. The face that is only fair, even very fair, they mar and flaw; but to the face whose beauty is the harmony between that which speaks from within and the form through which it speaks, power is added by all that causes the outer man to bear more deeply the impress of the inner. The pretty woman fades with the roses on her cheeks, and the girlhood that lasts an hour; the beautiful woman finds her fullness of bloom only when a past has written itself on her, and her power is then most irresistible when it seems going.

From under their half-closed lids the keen eyes looked down at her. Her shoulders were bent; for a moment the little figure had forgotten its queenly bearing, and drooped wearily; the wide, dark eyes watched the fire very softly.

1815

It certainly was not in her power to resist him, nor any strength in her that made his own at that moment grow soft as he looked at her.

He touched one little hand that rested on her knee.

"Poor little thing!" he said; "you are only a child."

She did not draw her hand away from his, and looked up at him.

"You are very tired?"

1820

"Yes."

She looked into his eyes as a little child might whom a long day's play had saddened.

He lifted her gently up, and sat her on his knee.

"Poor little thing!" he said.

She turned her face to his shoulder, and buried it against his neck; he wound his strong arm about her, and held her close to him. When she had sat for a long while, he drew with his hand the face down, and held it against his arm. He kissed it, and then put it back in its old resting-place.

1825

"Don't you want to talk to me?"

"No."

"Have you forgotten the night in the avenue?"

He could feel that she shook her head.

"Do you want to be quiet now?"

1830

"Yes."

They sat quite still, excepting that only sometimes he raised her fingers softly to his mouth.

Doss, who had been asleep in the corner, waking suddenly, planted himself before them, his wiry legs moving nervously, his yellow eyes filled with anxiety. He was not at all sure that she was not being retained in her present position against her will, and was not a little relieved when she sat up and held out her hand for the shawl.

"I must go," she said.

The stranger wrapped the shawl very carefully about her.

1835

"Keep it close around your face, Lyndall; it is very damp outside. Shall I walk with you to the house?"

"No. Lie down and rest; I will come and wake you at three o'clock."

She lifted her face that he might kiss it, and, when he had kissed it once, she still held it that he might kiss it again. Then he let her out. He had seated himself at the fireplace, when she reopened the door.

"Have you forgotten anything?"

"No."

1840

She gave one long, lingering look at the old room. When she was gone, and the door shut, the stranger filled his glass, and sat at the table sipping it thoughtfully.

The night outside was misty and damp; the faint moonlight, trying to force its way through the thick air, made darkly visible the outlines of the buildings. The stones and walls were moist, and now and then a drop, slowly collecting, fell from the eaves to the ground. Doss, not liking the change from the cabin's warmth, ran quickly to the kitchen doorstep; but his mistress walked slowly past him, and took her way up the winding footpath that ran beside the stone wall of the camps. When she came to the end of the last camp, she threaded her way among the stones and bushes till she reached the German's grave. Why she had come there she hardly knew; she stood looking down. Suddenly she bent and put one hand on the face of a wet stone.

"I shall never come to you again," she said.

Then she knelt on the ground, and leaned her face upon the stones.

"Dear old man, good old man, I am so tired!" she said (for we will come to the dead to tell secrets we would never have told to the living). "I am so tired. There is light, there is warmth," she wailed; "why am I alone, so hard, so cold? I am so weary of myself! It is eating my soul to its core—self, self, self! I cannot bear this life! I cannot breathe, I cannot live! Will nothing free me from myself?" She pressed her cheek against the wooden post. "I want to love! I want something great and pure to lift me to itself!"

1845

Dear old man, I cannot bear it any more! I am so cold, so hard, so hard; will no one help me?"

The water gathered slowly on her shawl, and fell on to the wet stones; but she lay there crying bitterly. For so the living soul will cry to the dead, and the creature to its God; and of all this crying there comes nothing. The lifting up of the hands brings no salvation; redemption is from within, and neither from God nor man; it is wrought out by the soul itself, with suffering and through time.

Doss, on the kitchen doorstep, shivered, and wondered where his mistress stayed so long; and once, sitting sadly there in the damp, he had dropped asleep, and dreamed that old Otto gave him a piece of bread, and patted him on the head, and when he woke his teeth chattered, and he moved to another stone to see if it was drier. At last he heard his mistress' step, and they went into the house together. She lit a candle, and walked to the Boer-woman's bedroom. On a nail under the lady in pink hung the key of the wardrobe. She took it down and opened the great press. From a little drawer she took fifty pounds (all she had in the world), relocked the door, and turned to hang up the key. The marks of tears were still on her face, but she smiled. Then she paused, hesitated.

"Fifty pounds for a lover! A noble reward!" she said, and opened the wardrobe and returned the notes to the drawer, where Em might find them.

Once in her own room, she arranged the few articles she intended to take tomorrow, burnt her old letters, and then went back to the front room to look at the time. There were two hours yet before she must call him. She sat down at the dressing-table to wait, and leaned her elbows on it, and buried her face in her hands. The glass reflected the little brown head with its even parting, and the tiny hands on which it rested. "One day I will love something utterly, and then I will be better," she said once. Presently she looked up. The large, dark eyes from the glass looked back at her. She looked deep into them.

"We are all alone, you and I," she whispered; "no one helps us, no one understands us; but we will help ourselves." The eyes

looked back at her. There was a world of assurance in their still depths. So they had looked at her ever since she could remember, when it was but a small child's face above a blue pinafore. "We shall never be quite alone, you and I," she said; "we shall always be together, as we were when we were little."

The beautiful eyes looked into the depths of her soul.

"We are not afraid; we will help ourselves!" she said. She stretched out her hand and pressed it over them on the glass. "Dear eyes! we will never be quite alone till they part us—till then!"

Chapter X. Gregory Rose Has An Idea

Gregory Rose was in the loft putting it neat. Outside the rain poured; a six months' drought had broken, and the thirsty plain was drenched with water. What it could not swallow ran off in mad rivulets to the great sloop, that now foamed like an angry river across the flat. Even the little furrow between the farmhouse and the kraals was now a stream, knee-deep, which almost bore away the Kaffer women who crossed it. It had rained for twenty-four hours, and still the rain poured on. The fowls had collected—a melancholy crowd—in and about the wagon-house, and the solitary gander, who alone had survived the six months' want of water, walked hither and thither, printing his webbed footmarks on the mud, to have them washed out the next instant by the pelting rain, which at eleven o'clock still beat on the walls and roofs with unabated ardour.

Gregory, as he worked in the loft, took no notice of it beyond stuffing a sack into the broken pane to keep it out; and, in spite of the pelt and patter, Em's clear voice might be heard through the open trap-door from the dining room, where she sat at work, singing the "Blue Water:"

And take me away,
And take me away,
And take me away,
To the Blue Water—

that quaint, childish song of the people, that has a world of sweetness, and sad, vague yearning when sung over and over dreamily by a woman's voice as she sits alone at her work.

But Gregory heard neither that nor yet the loud laughter of the Kaffer maids, that every now and again broke through from the kitchen, where they joked and worked. Of late Gregory had grown strangely impervious to the sounds and sights about him. His lease had run out, but Em had said, "Do not renew it; I need one to help me; just stay on." And, she had added, "You must not remain in your own little house; live with me; you can look after my ostriches better so."

And Gregory did not thank her. What difference did it make to him, paying rent or not, living there or not; it was all one. But yet he came. Em wished that he would still sometimes talk of the strength of the master-right of man; but Gregory was as one smitten on the cheek-bone.

She might do what she pleased, he would find no fault, had no word to say. He had forgotten that it is man's right to rule. On that rainy morning he had lighted his pipe at the kitchen fire, and when breakfast was over stood in the front door watching the water rush down the road till the pipe died out in his mouth. Em saw she must do something for him, and found him a large calico duster. He had sometimes talked of putting the loft neat, and today she could find nothing else for him to do. So she had the ladder put to the trap-door that he need not go out in the wet, and Gregory with the broom and duster mounted to the loft. Once at work he worked hard. He dusted down the very rafters, and cleaned the broken candle-moulds and bent forks that had stuck in the thatch for twenty years. He placed the black bottles neatly in rows on an old box in the corner, and piled the skins on one another, and sorted the rubbish in all the boxes; and at eleven o'clock his work was almost done. He seated himself on the packing-case which had once held Waldo's books, and proceeded to examine the contents of another which he had not yet looked at. It was carelessly nailed down. He loosened one plank, and began to lift out various articles of female attire—old-fashioned caps, aprons, dresses with long pointed bodies such as he

remembered to have seen his mother wear when he was a little child.

He shook them out carefully to see there were no moths, and then sat down to fold them up again one by one. They had belonged to Em's mother, and the box, as packed at her death, had stood untouched and forgotten these long years. She must have been a tall woman, that mother of Em's, for when he stood up to shake out a dress the neck was on a level with his, and the skirt touched the ground. Gregory laid a nightcap out on his knee, and began rolling up the strings; but presently his fingers moved slower and slower, then his chin rested on his breast, and finally the imploring blue eyes were fixed on the frill abstractedly. When Em's voice called to him from the foot of the ladder he started, and threw the nightcap behind him.

She was only come to tell him that his cup of soup was ready; and, when he could hear that she was gone, he picked up the nightcap again, and a great brown sun-kapje—just such a kapje and such a dress as one of those he remembered to have seen a sister of mercy wear. Gregory's mind was very full of thought. He took down a fragment of an old looking-glass from behind a beam, and put the kapje on. His beard looked somewhat grotesque under it; he put up his hand to hide it—that was better. The blue eyes looked out with the mild gentleness that became eyes looking out from under a kapje. Next he took the brown dress, and, looking round furtively, slipped it over his head. He had just got his arms in the sleeves, and was trying to hook up the back, when an increase in the patter of the rain at the window made him drag it off hastily. When he perceived there was no one coming he tumbled the things back into the box, and, covering it carefully, went down the ladder.

1860

Em was still at her work, trying to adjust a new needle in the machine. Gregory drank his soup, and then sat before her, an awful and mysterious look in his eyes.

"I am going to town tomorrow," he said.

"I'm almost afraid you won't be able to go," said Em, who was intent on her needle; "I don't think it is going to leave off today."

"I am going," said Gregory.

Em looked up. 1865

"But the sloods are as full as rivers; you cannot go. We can wait for the post," she said.

"I am not going for the post," said Gregory, impressively.

Em looked for explanation; none came.

"When will you be back?"

"I am not coming back." 1870

"Are you going to your friends?"

Gregory waited, then caught her by the wrist.

"Look here, Em," he said between his teeth, "I can't stand it any more. I am going to her."

Since that day, when he had come home and found Lyndall gone, he had never talked of her; but Em knew who it was who needed to be spoken of by no name.

She said, when he had released her hand: 1875

"But you do not know where she is?"

"Yes, I do. She was in Bloemfontein when I heard last. I will go there, and I will find out where she went then, and then, and then! I will have her."

Em turned the wheel quickly, and the ill-adjusted needle sprung into twenty fragments.

"Gregory," she said, "she does not want us; she told us so clearly in the letter she wrote." A flush rose on her face as she spoke. "It will only be pain to you, Gregory: Will she like to have you near her?"

There was an answer he might have made, but it was his secret, and he did not choose to share it. He said only: 1880

"I am going."

"Will you be gone long, Gregory?"

"I do not know; perhaps I shall never come back. Do what you please with my things. I cannot stay here!"

He rose from his seat.

"People say, forget, forget!" he cried, pacing the room. They are mad! they are fools! Do they say so to men who are dying of thirst—forget, forget? Why is it only to us they say so! It is a lie to say that time makes it easy; it is afterward, afterward that it eats in at your heart! 1885

"All these months," he cried bitterly, "I have lived here quietly, day after day, as if I cared for what I ate, and what I drank, and what I did! I care for nothing! I cannot bear it! I will not! Forget! forget!" ejaculated Gregory. "You can forget all the world, but you cannot forget yourself. When one thing is more to you than yourself, how are you to forget it?"

"I read," he said—"yes; and then I come to a word she used, and it is all back with me again! I go to count my sheep, and I see her face before me, and I stand and let the sheep run by. I look at you, and in your smile, a something at the corner of your lips, I see her. How can I forget her when, whenever I turn, she is there, and not there? I cannot, I will not, live where I do not see her.

"I know what you think," he said, turning upon her. "You think I am mad; you think I am going to see whether she will not like me! I am not so foolish. I should have known at first she never could suffer me. Who am I, what am I, that she should look at me? It was right that she left me; right that she should not look at me. If any one says it is not, it is a lie! I am not going to speak to her," he added—"only to see her; only to stand sometimes in a place where she has stood before."

Chapter XI. An Unfinished Letter

Gregory Rose had been gone seven months. Em sat alone on a white sheepskin before the fire.

The August night-wind, weird and shrill, howled round the chimneys and through the crannies, and in walls and doors, and uttered a long low cry as it forced its way among the clefts of the stones on the kopje. It was a wild night. The prickly-pear tree, stiff and upright as it held its arms, felt the wind's might, and knocked its flat leaves heavily together, till great branches broke off. The Kaffers, as they slept in their straw huts, whispered one to another that before morning there would not be an armful of thatch left on the roofs; and the beams of the wagon-house creaked and groaned as if it were heavy work to resist the importunity of the wind.

Em had not gone to bed. Who could sleep on a night like this? So in the dining room she had lighted a fire, and sat on the ground before it, turning the roaster-cakes that lay on the coals to bake. It would save work in the morning; and she blew out the light because the wind through the window-chinks made it flicker and run; and she sat singing to herself as she watched the cakes. They lay at one end of the wide hearth on a bed of coals, and at the other end a fire burnt up steadily, casting its amber glow over Em's light hair and black dress, with the ruffle of crepe about the neck, and over the white curls of the sheepskin on which she sat.

Louder and more fiercely yet howled the storm; but Em sang on, and heard nothing but the words of her song, and heard them only faintly, as something restful. It was an old, childish song she had often heard her mother sing long ago:

Where the reeds dance by the river, Where the willow's song is said,
On the face of the morning water, Is reflected a white flower's head.

She folded her hands and sang the next verse dreamily:

Where the reeds shake by the river,
Where the moonlight's sheen is shed,
On the face of the sleeping water,
Two leaves of a white flower float dead.
Dead, Dead, Dead!

She echoed the refrain softly till it died away, and then repeated it. It was as if, unknown to herself, it harmonized with the pictures and thoughts that sat with her there alone in the firelight. She turned the cakes over, while the wind hurled down a row of bricks from the gable, and made the walls tremble.

Presently she paused and listened; there was a sound as of something knocking at the back-doorway. But the wind had raised its level higher, and she went on with her work. At last the sound was repeated. Then she rose, lit the candle and the fire, and went to see. Only to satisfy herself, she said, that nothing could be out on such a night.

She opened the door a little way, and held the light behind her to defend it from the wind. The figure of a tall man stood there,

and before she could speak he had pushed his way in, and was forcing the door to close behind him.

"Waldo!" she cried in astonishment.

He had been gone more than a year and a half.

"You did not expect to see me," he answered, as he turned toward her; "I should have slept in the outhouse, and not troubled you tonight; but through the shutter I saw glimmerings of a light." 1900

"Come in to the fire," she said; "it is a terrific night for any creature to be out. Shall we not go and fetch your things in first?" she added.

"I have nothing but this," he said, motioning to the little bundle in his hand.

"Your horse?"

"Is dead."

He sat down on the bench before the fire. 1905

"The cakes are almost ready," she said; "I will get you something to eat. Where have you been wandering all this while?"

"Up and down, up and down," he answered wearily; "and now the whim has seized me to come back here. Em," he said, putting his hand on her arm as she passed him, "have you heard from Lyndall lately?"

"Yes," said Em, turning quickly from him.

"Where is she? I had one letter from her, but that is almost a year ago now—just when she left. Where is she?"

"In the Transvaal. I will go and get you some supper; we can talk afterward." 1910

"Can you give me her exact address? I want to write to her."

But Em had gone into the next room.

When food was on the table she knelt down before the fire, turning the cakes, babbling restlessly, eagerly, now of this, now of that. She was glad to see him—Tant Sannie was coming soon to show her her new baby—he must stay on the farm now, and help her. And Waldo himself was well content to eat his meal in silence, asking no more questions.

"Gregory is coming back next week," she said; "he will have been gone just a hundred and three days tomorrow. I had a letter

from him yesterday."

"Where has he been?"

1915

But his companion stooped to lift a cake from the fire.

"How the wind blows! One can hardly hear one's own voice," she said. "Take this warm cake; no one's cakes are like mine. Why, you have eaten nothing!"

"I am a little weary," he said; "the wind was mad tonight."

He folded his arms, and rested his head against the fireplace, whilst she removed the dishes from the table. On the mantelpiece stood an inkpot and some sheets of paper. Presently he took them down and turned up the corner of the tablecloth.

"I will write a few lines," he said; "till you are ready to sit down and talk."

1920

Em, as she shook out the tablecloth, watched him bending intently over his paper. He had changed much. His face had grown thinner; his cheeks were almost hollow, though they were covered by a dark growth of beard.

She sat down on the skin beside him, and felt the little bundle on the bench; it was painfully small and soft. Perhaps it held a shirt and a book, but nothing more. The old black hat had a piece of unhemmed muslin twisted round it, and on his elbow was a large patch so fixed on with yellow thread that her heart ached. Only his hair was not changed, and hung in silky beautiful waves almost to his shoulders.

Tomorrow she would take the ragged edge off his collar, and put a new band round his hat. She did not interrupt him, but she wondered how it was that he sat to write so intently after his long weary walk. He was not tired now; his pen hurried quickly and restlessly over the paper, and his eye was bright. Presently Em raised her hand to her breast, where lay the letter yesterday had brought her. Soon she had forgotten him, as entirely as he had forgotten her; each was in his own world with his own. He was writing to Lyndall. He would tell her all he had seen, all he had done, though it were nothing worth relating. He seemed to have come back to her, and to be talking to her now he sat there in the old house.

"—and then I got to the next town, and my horse was tired, so I could go no further, and looked for work. A shopkeeper agreed to hire me as salesman. He made me sign a promise to remain six months, and he gave me a little empty room at the back of the store to sleep in. I had still three pounds of my own, and when you just come from the country three pounds seems a great deal.

"When I had been in the shop three days I wanted to go away again. A clerk in a shop has the lowest work to do of all the people. It is much better to break stones; you have the blue sky above you, and only the stones to bend to. I asked my master to let me go, and I offered to give him my two pounds, and the bag of mealies I had bought with the other pound; but he would not.

1925

"I found out afterward he was only giving me half as much as he gave to the others—that was why. I had fear when I looked at the other clerks that I would at last become like them. All day they were bowing and smirking to the women who came in; smiling, when all they wanted was to get their money from them. They used to run and fetch the dresses and ribbons to show them, and they seemed to me like worms with oil on. There was one respectable thing in that store—it was the Kaffer storeman. His work was to load and unload, and he never needed to smile except when he liked, and he never told lies.

"The other clerks gave me the name of Old Salvation; but there was one person I liked very much. He was clerk in another store. He often went past the door. He seemed to me not like others—his face was bright and fresh like a little child's. When he came to the shop I felt I liked him. One day I saw a book in his pocket, and that made me feel near him. I asked him if he was fond of reading, and he said, yes, when there was nothing else to do. The next day he came to me, and asked me if I did not feel lonely; he never saw me going out with the other fellows; he would come and see me that evening, he said.

"I was glad, and bought some meat and flour, because the grey mare and I always ate mealies; it is the cheapest thing; when you boil it hard you can't eat much of it. I made some cakes, and I folded my great coat on the box to make it softer for him; and at last he came.

""You've got a rummy place here,' he said.

"You see there was nothing in it but packing-cases for furniture, and it was rather empty. While I was putting the food on the box he looked at my books; he read their names out aloud. 'Elementary Physiology,' 'First Principles.'

1930

""Golly!' he said; 'I've got a lot of dry stuff like that at home I got for Sunday-school prizes; but I only keep them to light my pipe with now; they come in handy for that.' Then he asked me if I had ever read a book called the 'Black-eyed Creole.' 'That is the style for me,' he said; 'there where the fellow takes the nigger-girl by the arm, and the other fellow cuts it off! That's what I like.'

"But what he said after that I don't remember, only it made me feel as if I were having a bad dream, and I wanted to be far away.

"When he had finished eating he did not stay long; he had to go and see some girls home from a prayer-meeting; and he asked how it was he never saw me walking out with any on Sunday afternoons. He said he had lots of sweethearts, and he was going to see one the next Wednesday on a farm, and he asked me to lend my mare. I told him she was very old. But he said it didn't matter; he would come the next day to fetch her.

"After he was gone my little room got back to its old look. I loved it so; I was so glad to get into it at night, and it seemed to be reproaching me for bringing him there. The next day he took the grey mare. On Thursday he did not bring her back, and on Friday I found the saddle and bridle standing at my door.

"In the afternoon he looked into the shop, and called out: 'Hope you got your saddle, Farber? Your bag-of-bones kicked out six miles from here. I'll send you a couple of shillings tomorrow, though the old hide wasn't worth it. Good morning.'

1935

"But I sprung over the counter, and got him by his throat. My father was so gentle with her; he never would ride her up hill, and now this fellow had murdered her! I asked him where he had killed her, and I shook him till he slipped out of my hand. He stood in the door grinning.

""It didn't take much to kill that bag-of-bones, whose master sleeps in a packing-case, and waits till his company's finished to eat on the plate. Shouldn't wonder if you fed her on sugar-bags,'

he said; 'and if you think I've jumped her, you'd better go and look yourself. You'll find her along the road by the aasvogels that are eating her.'

"I caught him by his collar, and I lifted him from the ground, and I threw him out into the street, half-way across it. I heard the bookkeeper say to the clerk that there was always the devil in those mum fellows; but they never called me Salvation after that.

"I am writing to you of very small things, but there is nothing else to tell; it has been all small and you will like it. Whenever anything has happened I have always thought I would tell it to you. The back thought in my mind is always you. After that only one old man came to visit me. I had seen him in the streets often; he always wore very dirty black clothes, and a hat with crepe round it, and he had one eye, so I noticed him. One day he came to my room with a subscription-list for a minister's salary. When I said I had nothing to give he looked at me with his one eye.

"'Young man,' he said, 'how is it I never see you in the house of the Lord?' I thought he was trying to do good, so I felt sorry for him, and I told him I never went to chapel. 'Young man,' he said, 'it grieves me to hear such godless words from the lips of one so young—so far gone in the paths of destruction. Young man, if you forget God, God will forget you. There is a seat on the right-hand side as you go at the bottom door that you may get. If you are given over to the enjoyment and frivolities of this world, what will become of your never dying soul?'

1940

"He would not go till I gave him half a crown for the minister's salary. Afterward I heard he was the man who collected the pew rents and got a percentage. I didn't get to know any one else.

"When my time in that shop was done I hired myself to drive one of a transport-rider's wagons.

"That first morning, when I sat in the front and called to my oxen, and saw nothing about me but the hills, with the blue coming down to them, and the karoo bushes, I was drunk; I laughed; my heart was beating till it hurt me. I shut my eyes tight, that when I opened them I might see there were no shelves about me. There must be a beauty in buying and selling, if there is beauty in everything: but it is very ugly to me. My life as

transport-rider would have been the best life in the world if I had had only one wagon to drive. My master told me he would drive one, I the other, and he would hire another person to drive the third. But the first day I drove two to help him, and after that he let me drive all three. Whenever we came to an hotel he stopped behind to get a drink, and when he rode up to the wagons he could never stand; the Hottentot and I used to lift him up. We always travelled all night, and used to outspan for five or six hours in the heat of the day to rest. I planned that I would lie under a wagon and read for an hour or two every day before I went to sleep, and I did for the first two or three; but after that I only wanted to sleep, like the rest, and I packed my books away.

"When you have three wagons to look after all night, you are sometimes so tired you can hardly stand. At first when I walked along driving my wagons in the night it was glorious; the stars had never looked so beautiful to me; and on the dark nights when we rode through the bush there were will-o'-the-wisps dancing on each side of the road. I found out that even the damp and dark are beautiful. But I soon changed, and saw nothing but the road and my oxen. I only wished for a smooth piece of road, so that I might sit at the front and doze. At the places where we outspanned there were sometimes rare plants and flowers, the festoons hanging from the bush-trees, and nuts and insects, such as we never see here; but after a little while I never looked at them—I was too tired.

"I ate as much as I could, and then lay down on my face under the wagon till the boy came to wake me to inspan, and then we drove on again all night; so it went, so it went. I think sometimes when I walked by my oxen I called to them in my sleep, for I know I thought of nothing; I was like an animal. My body was strong and well to work, but my brain was dead. If you have not felt it, Lyndall, you cannot understand it. You may work, and work, and work, till you are only a body, not a soul. Now, when I see one of those evil-looking men that come from Europe—navvies, with the beast-like, sunken face, different from any Kaffer's—I know what brought that look into their eyes; and if I have only one inch of tobacco I give them half. It is work,

grinding, mechanical work, that they or their ancestors have done, that has made them into beasts. You may work a man's body so that his soul dies. Work is good. I have worked at the old farm from the sun's rising till its setting, but I have had time to think, and time to feel. You may work a man so that all but the animal in him is gone; and that grows stronger with physical labour.

"You may work a man till he is a devil. I know it, because I have felt it. You will never understand the change that came over me. No one but I will ever know how great it was. But I was never miserable; when I could keep my oxen from sticking fast, and when I could find a place to lie down in, I had all I wanted. After I had driven eight months a rainy season came. For eighteen hours out of the twenty-four we worked in the wet. The mud went up to the axles sometimes, and we had to dig the wheels out, and we never went far in a day. My master swore at me more than ever, but when he had done he always offered me his brandy-flask. When I first came he had offered it me, and I had always refused; but now I drank as my oxen did when I gave them water—without thinking. At last I bought brandy for myself whenever we passed an hotel.

"One Sunday we outspanned on the banks of a swollen river to wait for its going down. It was drizzling still, so I lay under the wagon on the mud. There was no dry place anywhere; and all the dung was wet, so there was no fire to cook food. My little flask was filled with brandy, and I drank some and went to sleep. When I woke it was drizzling still, so I drank some more. I was stiff and cold; and my master, who lay by me, offered me his flask, because mine was empty. I drank some, and then I thought I would go and see if the river was going down. I remember that I walked to the road, and it seemed to be going away from me. When I woke up I was lying by a little bush on the bank of the river. It was afternoon; all the clouds had gone, and the sky was deep blue. The Bushman boy was grilling ribs at the fire. He looked at me and grinned from ear to ear. 'Master was a little nice,' he said, 'and lay down in the road. Something might ride over master, so I carried him there.' He grinned at me again. It

was as though he said, 'You and I are comrades. I have lain in a road, too. I know all about it.'

"When I turned my head from him I saw the earth, so pure after the rain, so green, so fresh, so blue; and I was a drunken carrier, whom his leader had picked up in the mud, and laid at the roadside to sleep out his drink. I remember my old life, and I remember you. I saw how, one day, you would read in the papers: 'A German carrier, named Waldo Farber, was killed through falling from his wagon, being instantly crushed under the wheel. Deceased was supposed to have been drunk at the time of the accident.' There are those notices in the paper every month. I sat up, and I took the brandy-flask out of my pocket, and I flung it as far as I could into the dark water. The Hottentot boy ran down to see if he could catch it; it had sunk to the bottom. I never drank again. But, Lyndall, sin looks much more terrible to those who look at it than to those who do it. A convict, or a man who drinks, seems something so far off and horrible when we see him; but to himself he seems quite near to us, and like us. We wonder what kind of a creature he is; but he is just we, ourselves. We are only the wood, the knife that carves on us is the circumstance.

"I do not know why I kept on working so hard for that master. I think it was as the oxen come every day and stand by the yokes; they do not know why. Perhaps I would have been with him still; but one day we started with loads for the Diamond Fields. The oxen were very thin now, and they had been standing about in the yoke all day without food, while the wagons were being loaded. Not far from the town was a hill. When we came to the foot the first wagon stuck fast. I tried for a little while to urge the oxen, but I soon saw the one span could never pull it up. I went to the other wagon to loosen that span to join them on in front, but the transport-rider, who was lying at the back of the wagon, jumped out.

"'They shall bring it up the hill; and if half of them die for it they shall do it alone,' he said.

1950

"He was not drunk, but in bad temper, for he had been drunk the night before. He swore at me, and told me to take the whip and help him. We tried for a little time, then I told him it was no

use, they could never do it. He swore louder and called to the leaders to come on with their whips, and together they lashed. There was one ox, a black ox, so thin that the ridge of his backbone almost cut through his flesh.

"It is you, devil, is it, that will not pull?' the transport-rider said. 'I will show you something.' He looked like a devil.

"He told the boys to leave off flogging, and he held the ox by the horn, and took up a round stone and knocked its nose with it till the blood came. When he had done they called to the oxen and took up their whips again, and the oxen strained with their backs bent, but the wagon did not move an inch.

"So you won't, won't you?' he said. I'll help you.'

"He took out his clasp-knife, and ran it into the leg of the trembling ox three times, up to the hilt. Then he put the knife in his pocket, and they took their whips. The oxen's flanks quivered, and they foamed at the mouth. Straining, they moved the wagon a few feet forward, then stood with bent backs to keep it from sliding back. From the black ox's nostrils foam and blood were streaming on to the ground. It turned its head in its anguish and looked at me with its great starting eyes. It was praying for help in its agony and weakness, and they took their whips again. The creature bellowed aloud. If there is a God, it was calling to its Maker for help. Then a stream of clear blood burst from both nostrils; it fell on to the ground, and the wagon slipped back. The man walked up to it.

1955

"You are going to lie down, devil, are you? We'll see you don't take it too easy.'

"The thing was just dying. He opened his clasp-knife and stooped down over it. I do not know what I did then. But afterward I know I had him on the stones, and I was kneeling on him. The boys dragged me off. I wish they had not. I left him standing in the sand in the road, shaking himself, and I walked back to the town. I took nothing from that accursed wagon, so I had only two shillings. But it did not matter. The next day I got work at a wholesale store. My work was to pack and unpack goods, and to carry boxes, and I had to work from six in the morning to six in the evening; so I had plenty of time.

"I hired a little room, and subscribed to a library, so I had everything I needed; and in the week of Christmas holidays I went to see the sea. I walked all night, Lyndall, to escape the heat, and a little after sunrise I got to the top of a high hill. Before me was a long, low, blue, monotonous mountain. I walked looking at it, but I was thinking of the sea I wanted to see. At last I wondered what that curious blue thing might be; then it struck me it was the sea! I would have turned back again, only I was too tired. I wonder if all the things we long to see—the churches, the pictures, the men in Europe—will disappoint us so! You see I had dreamed of it so long. When I was a little boy, minding sheep behind the kopje, I used to see the waves stretching out as far as the eye could reach in the sunlight. My sea! Is the idea always more beautiful than the real?

"I got to the beach that afternoon, and I saw the water run up and down on the sand, and I saw the white foam breakers; they were pretty, but I thought I would go back the next day. It was not my sea.

"But I began to like it when I sat by it that night in the moonlight; and the next day I liked it better; and before I left I loved it. It was not like the sky and stars, that talk of what has no beginning and no end; but it is so human. Of all the things I have ever seen, only the sea is like a human being; the sky is not, nor the earth. But the sea is always moving, always something deep in itself is stirring it. It never rests. It is always wanting, wanting, wanting. It hurries on; and then it creeps back slowly without having reached, moaning. It is always asking a question, and it never gets the answer. I can hear it in the day and in the night; the white foam breakers are saying that which I think. I walk alone with them when there is no one to see me, and I sing with them. I lie down on the sand and watch them with my eyes half shut. The sky is better, but it is so high above our heads. I love the sea. Sometimes we must look down too. After five days I went back to Grahamstown.

"I had glorious books, and in the night I could sit in my little room and read them; but I was lonely. Books are not the same things when you are living among people. I cannot tell why, but

they are dead. On the farm they would have been living beings to me; but here, where there were so many people about me, I wanted some one to belong to me. I was lonely. I wanted something that was flesh and blood. Once on this farm there came a stranger; I did not ask his name, but he sat among the karoo and talked with me. Now, wherever I have travelled I have looked for him—in hotels, in streets, in passenger wagons as they rushed in, through the open windows of houses I have looked for him, but I have not found him—never heard a voice like his. One day I went to the Botanic Gardens. It was a half-holiday, and the band was to play. I stood in the long raised avenue and looked down. There were many flowers, and ladies and children were walking about beautifully dressed. At last the music began. I had not heard such music before.

"At first it was slow and even, like the everyday life, when we walk through it without thought or feeling; then it grew faster, then it paused, hesitated, then it was quite still for an instant, and then it burst out. Lyndall, they made heaven right when they made it all music. It takes you up and carries you away, away, till you have the things you longed for, you are up close to them. You have got out into a large, free, open place. I could not see anything while it was playing; I stood with my head against my tree; but, when it was done, I saw that there were ladies sitting close to me on a wooden bench, and the stranger who had talked to me that day in the karoo was sitting between them. The ladies were very pretty, and their dresses beautiful. I do not think they had been listening to the music, for they were talking and laughing very softly. I heard all they said, and could even smell the rose on the breast of one. I was afraid he would see me; so I went to the other side of the tree, and soon they got up and began to pace up and down in the avenue.

"All the time the music played they chatted, and he carried on his arm the scarf of the prettiest lady. I did not hear the music; I tried to catch the sound of his voice each time he went by. When I was listening to the music I did not know I was badly dressed; now I felt so ashamed of myself. I never knew before what a low, horrible thing I was, dressed in tancord. That day on the farm,

when we sat on the ground under the thorn-trees, I thought he quite belonged to me; now, I saw he was not mine. But he was still as beautiful. His brown eyes are more beautiful than any one's eyes, except yours.

"At last they turned to go, and I walked after them. When they got out of the gate he helped the ladies into a phaeton, and stood for a moment with his foot on the step talking to them. He had a little cane in his hand, and an Italian greyhound ran after him. Just when they drove away one of the ladies dropped her whip.

"'Pick it up, fellow,' she said; and when I brought it her she threw sixpence on the ground. I might have gone back to the garden then; but I did not want music; I wanted clothes, and to be fashionable and fine. I felt that my hands were coarse, and that I was vulgar. I never tried to see him again.

1965

"I stayed in my situation four months after that, but I was not happy. I had no rest. The people about me pressed on me, and made me dissatisfied. I could not forget them. Even when I did not see them they pressed on me, and made me miserable. I did not love books; I wanted people. When I walked home under the shady trees in the street I could not be happy, for when I passed the houses I heard music, and saw faces between the curtains. I did not want any of them, but I wanted some one for mine, for me. I could not help it. I wanted a finer life.

"Only one day something made me happy. A nurse came to the store with a little girl belonging to one of our clerks. While the maid went into the office to give a message to its father, the little child stood looking at me. Presently she came close to me and peeped up into my face.

"'Nice curls, pretty curls,' she said; 'I like curls.'

"She felt my hair all over, with her little hands. When I put out my arm she let me take her and sit her on my knee. She kissed me with her soft mouth. We were happy till the nurse-girl came and shook her, and asked her if she was not ashamed to sit on the knee of that strange man. But I do not think my little one minded. She laughed at me as she went out.

"If the world was all children I could like it; but men and women draw me so strangely, and then press me away, till I am in

1970

agony. I was not meant to live among people. Perhaps some day, when I am grown older, I will be able to go and live among them and look at them as I look at the rocks, and bushes, without letting them disturb me, and take myself from me; but not now. So I grew miserable; a kind of fever seemed to eat me; I could not rest, or read, or think; so I came back here. I knew you were not here but it seemed as though I should be nearer you; and it is you I want—you that the other people suggest to me, but cannot give."

He had filled all the sheets he had taken, and now lifted down the last from the mantelpiece. Em had dropped asleep, and lay slumbering peacefully on the skin before the fire. Out of doors the storm still raged; but in a fitful manner, as though growing half weary of itself. He bent over his paper again, with eager flushed cheek, and wrote on.

"It has been a delightful journey, this journey home. I have walked on foot. The evening before last, when it was just sunset, I was a little footsore and thirsty, and went out of the road to look for water. I went down into a deep little kloof. Some trees ran along the bottom, and I thought I should find water there. The sun had quite set when I got to the bottom of it. It was very still—not a leaf was stirring anywhere. In the bed of the mountain torrent I thought I might find water. I came to the bank, and leaped down into the dry bed. The floor on which I stood was of fine white sand, and the banks rose on every side like the walls of a room.

"Above there was a precipice of rocks, and a tiny stream of water oozed from them and fell slowly on to the flat stone below. Each drop you could hear fall like a little silver bell. There was one among the trees on the bank that stood cut out against the white sky. All the other trees were silent; but this one shook and trembled against the sky. Everything else was still; but those leaves were quivering, quivering. I stood on the sand; I could not go away. When it was quite dark, and the stars had come, I crept out. Does it seem strange to you that it should have made me so happy? It is because I cannot tell you how near I felt to things that we cannot see but we always feel. Tonight has been a wild, stormy night. I have been walking across the plain for hours in the dark. I have liked the wind, because I have seemed forcing my

way through to you. I knew you were not here, but I would hear of you. When I used to sit on the transport wagon half-sleeping, I used to start awake because your hands were on me. In my lodgings, many nights I have blown the light out, and sat in the dark, that I might see your face start out more distinctly. Sometimes it was the little girl's face who used to come to me behind the kopje when I minded sheep, and sit by me in her blue pinafore; sometimes it was older. I love both. I am very helpless; I shall never do anything; but you will work, and I will take your work for mine. Sometimes such a sudden gladness seizes me when I remember that somewhere in the world you are living and working. You are my very own; nothing else is my own so. When I have finished I am going to look at your room door—"

He wrote; and the wind, which had spent its fury, moaned round and round the house, most like a tired child weary with crying.

Em woke up, and sat before the fire, rubbing her eyes, and listening, as it sobbed about the gables, and wandered away over the long stone walls.

1975

"How quiet it has grown now," she said, and sighed herself, partly from weariness and partly from sympathy with the tired wind. He did not answer her; he was lost in his letter.

She rose slowly after a time, and rested her hand on his shoulder.

"You have many letters to write," she said.

"No," he answered; "it is only one to Lyndall."

She turned away, and stood long before the fire looking into it. If you have a deadly fruit to give, it will not grow sweeter by keeping.

1980

"Waldo, dear," she said, putting her hand on his, "leave off writing."

He threw back the dark hair from his forehead and looked at her.

"It is no use writing any more," she said.

"Why not?" he asked.

She put her hand over the papers he had written.

1985

"Waldo," she said, "Lyndall is dead."

Chapter XII. Gregory's Womanhood

Slowly over the flat came a cart. On the back seat sat Gregory, his arms folded, his hat drawn over his eyes. A Kaffer boy sat on the front seat driving, and at his feet sat Doss, who, now and again, lifted his nose and eyes above the level of the splashboard, to look at the surrounding country; and then, with an exceedingly knowing wink of his left eye, turned to his companions, thereby intimating that he clearly perceived his whereabouts. No one noticed the cart coming. Waldo, who was at work at his carpenter's table in the wagon-house, saw nothing, till chancing to look down he perceived Doss standing before him, the legs trembling, the little nose wrinkled, and a series of short suffocating barks giving utterance to his joy at reunion.

Em, whose eyes had ached with looking out across the plain, was now at work in a back room, and knew nothing till, looking up, she saw Gregory, with his straw hat and blue eyes, standing in the doorway. He greeted her quietly, hung his hat up in its old place behind the door, and for any change in his manner or appearance he might have been gone only the day before to fetch letters from the town. Only his beard was gone, and his face was grown thinner. He took off his leather gaiters, said the afternoon was hot and the roads dusty, and asked for some tea. They talked of wool, and the cattle, and the sheep, and Em gave him the pile of letters that had come for him during the months of absence, but of the thing that lay at their hearts neither said anything. Then he went out to look at the kraals, and at supper Em gave him hot cakes and coffee. They talked about the servants, and then ate their meal in quiet. She asked no questions. When it was ended Gregory went into the front room, and lay in the dark on the sofa.

"Do you not want a light?" Em asked, venturing to look in.

"No," he answered; then presently called to her, "Come and sit here; I want to talk to you."

She came and sat on a footstool near him.

"Do you wish to hear anything?" he asked.

She whispered:

"Yes, if it does not hurt you."

"What difference does it make to me?" he said. "If I talk or am silent, is there any change?"

1995

Yet he lay quiet for a long time. The light through the open door showed him to her, where he lay, with his arm thrown across his eyes. At last he spoke. Perhaps it was a relief to him to speak.

To Bloemfontein in the Free State, to which through an agent he had traced them, Gregory had gone. At the hotel where Lyndall and her stranger had stayed he put up; he was shown the very room in which they had slept. The coloured boy who had driven them to the next town told him in which house they had boarded, and Gregory went on. In that town he found they had left the cart, and bought a spider and four greys, and Gregory's heart rejoiced. Now indeed it would be easy to trace their course. And he turned his steps northward.

At the farmhouses where he stopped the ooms and tantes remembered clearly the spider with its four grey horses. At one place the Boer-wife told how the tall, blue-eyed Englishman had bought milk, and asked the way to the next farm. At the next farm the Englishman had bought a bunch of flowers, and given half a crown for them to the little girl. It was quite true; the Boer-mother made her get it out of the box and show it. At the next place they had slept. Here they told him that the great bulldog, who hated all strangers, had walked in in the evening and laid its head in the lady's lap. So at every place he heard something, and traced them step by step.

At one desolate farm the Boer had a good deal to tell. The lady had said she liked a wagon that stood before the door. Without asking the price the Englishman had offered a hundred and fifty pounds for the old thing, and bought oxen worth ten pounds for sixteen. The Dutchman chuckled, for he had the Salt-riem's money in the box under his bed. Gregory laughed too, in silence; he could not lose sight of them now, so slowly they would have to move with that cumbrous ox-wagon. Yet, when that evening came, and he reached a little wayside inn, no one could tell him anything of the travellers.

The master, a surly creature, half stupid with Boer-brand, sat on the bench before the door smoking. Gregory sat beside him,

2000

questioning, but he smoked on. He remembered nothing of such strangers. How should he know who had been there months and months before? He smoked on. Gregory, very weary, tried to wake his memory, said that the lady he was seeking for was very beautiful, had a little mouth, and tiny, very tiny, feet. The man only smoked on as sullenly as at first. What were little, very little, mouths and feet to him. But his daughter leaned out in the window above. She was dirty and lazy, and liked to loll there when travellers came, to hear the men talk, but she had a soft heart. Presently a hand came out of the window, and a pair of velvet slippers touched his shoulder, tiny slippers with black flowers. He pulled them out of her hand. Only one woman's feet had worn them, he knew that.

"Left here last summer by a lady," said the girl; "might be the one you are looking for. Never saw any feet so small."

Gregory rose and questioned her.

They might have come in a wagon and spider, she could not tell. But the gentleman was very handsome, tall, lovely figure, blue eyes, wore gloves always when he went out. An English officer, perhaps; no Africander, certainly.

Gregory stopped her.

The lady? Well, she was pretty, rather, the girl said; very cold, dull air, silent. They stayed for, it might be, five days; slept in the wing over against the stoep; quarrelled sometimes, she thought—the lady. She had seen everything when she went in to wait. One day the gentleman touched her hair; she drew back from him as though his fingers poisoned her. Went to the other end of the room if he came to sit near her. Walked out alone. Cold wife for such a handsome husband, the girl thought; she evidently pitied him, he was such a beautiful man. They went away early one morning, how, or in which way, the girl could not tell.

Gregory inquired of the servants, but nothing more was to be learnt; so the next morning he saddled his horse and went on. At the farms he came to the good old ooms and tantes asked him to have coffee, and the little shoeless children peeped out at the stranger from behind ovens and gables; but no one had seen what he asked for. This way and that he rode to pick up the thread he

had dropped, but the spider and the wagon, the little lady and the handsome gentleman, no one had seen. In the towns he fared yet worse.

Once indeed hope came to him. On the stoep of an hotel at which he stayed the night in a certain little village, there walked a gentleman, grave and kindly-looking. It was not hard to open conversation with him about the weather, and then—Had he ever seen such and such people, a gentleman and a lady, a spider and wagon, arrive at that place? The kindly gentleman shook his head. What was the lady like, he inquired.

Gregory painted. Hair like silken floss, small mouth, underlip very full and pink, upper lip pink but very thin and curled; there were four white spots on the nail of her right hand forefinger, and her eyebrows were very delicately curved.

"Yes; and a rose-bud tinge in the cheeks; hands like lilies, and perfectly seraphic smile."

"That is she! that is she!" cried Gregory.

2010

Who else could it be? He asked where she had gone to. The gentleman most thoughtfully stroked his beard.

He would try to remember. Were not her ears—. Here such a violent fit of coughing seized him that he ran away into the house. An ill-fed clerk and a dirty barman standing in the doorway laughed aloud. Gregory wondered if they could be laughing at the gentleman's cough, and then he heard some one laughing in the room into which the gentleman had gone. He must follow him and try to learn more; but he soon found that there was nothing more to be learnt there. Poor Gregory!

Backward and forward, backward and forward, from the dirty little hotel where he had dropped the thread, to this farm and to that, rode Gregory, till his heart was sick and tired. That from that spot the wagon might have gone its own way and the spider another was an idea that did not occur to him. At last he saw it was no use lingering in that neighbourhood, and pressed on.

One day coming to a little town, his horses knocked up, and he resolved to rest them there. The little hotel of the town was a bright and sunny place, like the jovial face of the clean little woman who kept it, and who trotted about talking always—

talking to the customers in the taproom, and to the maids in the kitchen, and to the passers-by when she could hail them from the windows; talking, as good-natured women with large mouths and small noses always do, in season and out.

There was a little front parlour in the hotel, kept for strangers who wanted to be alone. Gregory sat there to eat his breakfast, and the landlady dusted the room and talked of the great finds at the Diamond Fields, and the badness of maid-servants, and the shameful conduct of the Dutch parson in that town to the English inhabitants. Gregory ate his breakfast and listened to nothing. He had asked his one question, and had had his answer; now she might talk on.

2015

Presently a door in the corner opened and a woman came out—a Mozambiquer, with a red handkerchief twisted round her head. She carried in her hand a tray, with a slice of toast crumbled fine, and a half-filled cup of coffee, and an egg broken open, but not eaten. Her ebony face grinned complacently as she shut the door softly and said, "Good morning."

The landlady began to talk to her.

"You are not going to leave her really, Ayah, are you?" she said. "The maids say so; but I'm sure you wouldn't do such a thing."

The Mozambiquer grinned.

"Husband says I must go home."

2020

"But she hasn't got any one else, and won't have any one else. Come, now," said the landlady, "I've no time to be sitting always in a sickroom, not if I was paid anything for it."

The Mozambiquer only showed her white teeth good-naturedly for answer, and went out, and the landlady followed her.

Gregory, glad to be alone, watched the sunshine as it came over the fuchsias in the window, and ran up and down on the panelled door in the corner. The Mozambiquer had closed it loosely behind her, and presently something touched it inside. It moved a little, then it was still, then moved again; then through the gap a small nose appeared, and a yellow ear overlapping one eye; then the whole head obtruded, placed itself critically on one side, wrinkled its nose disapprovingly at Gregory, and withdrew.

Through the half-open door came a faint scent of vinegar, and the room was dark and still.

Presently the landlady came back.

"Left the door open," she said, bustling to shut it; "but a darky will be a darky, and never carries a head on its shoulders like other folks. Not ill, I hope sir?" she said, looking at Gregory when she had shut the bedroom door.

"No," said Gregory, "no."

The landlady began putting the things together.

"Who," asked Gregory, "is in that room?"

Glad to have a little innocent piece of gossip to relate, and some one willing to hear it, the landlady made the most of a little story as she cleared the table. Six months before a lady had come alone to the hotel in a wagon, with only a coloured leader and driver. Eight days after a little baby had been born.

If Gregory stood up and looked out at the window he would see a bluegum-tree in the graveyard; close by it was a little grave. The baby was buried there. A tiny thing—only lived two hours, and the mother herself almost went with it. After a while she was better; but one day she got up out of bed, dressed herself without saying a word to any one, and went out. It was a drizzly day; a little time after some one saw her sitting on the wet ground under the bluegum-tree, with the rain dripping from her hat and shawl. They went to fetch her, but she would not come until she chose. When she did, she had gone to bed and had not risen again from it; never would, the doctor said.

She was very patient, poor thing. When you went in to ask her how she was she said always "Better," or "Nearly well!" and lay still in the darkened room, and never troubled any one. The Mozambiquer took care of her, and she would not allow any one else to touch her; would not so much as allow any one else to see her foot uncovered. She was strange in many ways, but she paid well, poor thing; and now the Mozambiquer was going, and she would have to take up with some one else.

The landlady prattled on pleasantly, and now carried away the tray with the breakfast things. When she was gone Gregory leaned his head on his hands, but he did not think long.

2025

2030

Before dinner he had ridden out of the town to where on a rise a number of transport-wagons were outspanned. The Dutchman driver of one wondered at the stranger's eagerness to free himself of his horses. Stolen perhaps; but it was worth his while to buy them at so low a price. So the horses changed masters, and Gregory walked off with his saddlebags slung across his arm. Once out of sight of the wagons he struck out of the road and walked across the veld, the dry, flowering grasses waving everywhere about him; half-way across the plain he came to a deep gully which the rain torrents had washed out, but which was now dry. Gregory sprung down into its red bed. It was a safe place, and quiet. When he had looked about him he sat down under the shade of an overhanging bank and fanned himself with his hat, for the afternoon was hot, and he had walked fast. At his feet the dusty ants ran about, and the high red bank before him was covered by a network of roots and fibres washed bare by the rains. Above his head rose the clear blue African sky; at his side were the saddlebags full of women's clothing. Gregory looked up half plaintively into the blue sky.

"Am I, am I Gregory Nazianzen Rose?" he said.

It was also strange, he sitting there in that slood in that up-country plain!—strange as the fantastic, changing shapes in a summer cloud. At last, tired out, he fell asleep, with his head against the bank. When he woke the shadow had stretched across the slood, and the sun was on the edge of the plain. Now he must be up and doing. He drew from his breast pocket a little sixpenny looking-glass, and hung it on one of the roots that stuck out from the bank. Then he dressed himself in one of the old-fashioned gowns and a great pinked-out collar. Then he took out a razor. Tuft by tuft the soft brown beard fell down into the sand, and the little ants took it to line their nests with. Then the glass showed a face surrounded by a frilled cap, white as a woman's, with a little mouth, a very short upper lip, and a receding chin.

Presently a rather tall woman's figure was making its way across the veld. As it passed a hollowed-out anthill it knelt down, and stuffed in the saddlebags with the man's clothing, closing up the anthill with bits of ground to look as natural as

possible. Like a sinner hiding his deed of sin, the hider started once and looked round, but yet there was no one near save a meerkat, who had lifted herself out of her hole and sat on her hind legs watching. He did not like that even she should see, and when he rose she dived away into her hole. Then he walked on leisurely, that the dusk might have reached the village streets before he walked there. The first house was the smith's, and before the open door two idle urchins lolled. As he hurried up the street in the gathering gloom he heard them laugh long and loudly behind him. He glanced round fearingly, and would almost have fled, but that the strange skirts clung about his legs. And after all it was only a spark that had alighted on the head of one, and not the strange figure they laughed at.

The door of the hotel stood wide open, and the light fell out into the street. He knocked, and the landlady came. She peered out to look for the cart that had brought the traveller; but Gregory's heart was brave now he was so near the quiet room. He told her he had come with the transport wagons that stood outside the town.

He had walked in, and wanted lodgings for the night.

It was a deliberate lie, glibly told; he would have told fifty, though the recording angel had stood in the next room with his pen dipped in the ink. What was it to him? He remembered that she lay there saying always: "I am better."

The landlady put his supper in the little parlour where he had sat in the morning. When it was on the table she sat down in the rocking-chair, as her fashion was to knit and talk, that she might gather news for her customers in the taproom. In the white face under the queer, deep-fringed cap she saw nothing of the morning's traveller. The newcomer was communicative. She was a nurse by profession, she said; had come to the Transvaal, hearing that good nurses were needed there. She had not yet found work. The landlady did not perhaps know whether there would be any for her in that town?

The landlady put down her knitting and smote her fat hands together.

If it wasn't the very finger of God's providence, as though you saw it hanging out of the sky, she said. Here was a lady ill and needing a new nurse that very day, and not able to get one to her mind, and now—well, if it wasn't enough to convert all the Atheists and Freethinkers in the Transvaal, she didn't know!

Then the landlady proceeded to detail facts.

"I'm sure you will suit her," she added; "you're just the kind. She has heaps of money to pay you with; has everything that money can buy. And I got a letter with a check in it for fifty pounds the other day from some one, who says I'm to spend it for her, and not to let her know. She is asleep now, but I'll take you in to look at her."

The landlady opened the door of the next room, and Gregory followed her. A table stood near the bed, and a lamp burning low stood on it; the bed was a great four-poster with white curtains, and the quilt was of rich crimson satin. But Gregory stood just inside the door with his head bent low, and saw no further.

2045

"Come nearer! I'll turn the lamp up a bit, that you can have a look at her. A pretty thing, isn't it?" said the landlady.

Near the foot of the bed was a dent in the crimson quilt, and out of it Doss' small head and bright eyes looked knowingly.

Then Gregory looked up at what lay on the cushion. A little white, white face, transparent as an angel's with a cloth bound round the forehead, and with soft hair tossed about on the pillow.

"We had to cut it off," said the woman, touching it with her forefinger. "Soft as silk, like a wax doll's."

But Gregory's heart was bleeding.

2050

"Never get up again, the doctor says," said the landlady.

Gregory uttered one word. In an instant the beautiful eyes opened widely, looked round the room and into the dark corners.

"Who is here? Whom did I hear speak?"

Gregory had sunk back behind the curtain; the landlady drew it aside, and pulled him forward.

"Only this lady, ma'am—a nurse by profession. She is willing to stay and take care of you, if you can come to terms with her."

2055

Lyndall raised herself on her elbow, and cast one keen scrutinizing glance over him.

"Have I never seen you before?" she asked.

"No."

She fell back wearily.

"Perhaps you would like to arrange the terms between yourselves," said the landlady. "Here is a chair. I will be back presently." 2060

Gregory sat down, with bent head and quick breath. She did not speak, and lay with half-closed eyes, seeming to have forgotten him.

"Will you turn the lamp down a little?" she said at last; "I cannot bear the light."

Then his heart grew braver in the shadow, and he spoke. Nursing was to him, he said, his chosen life's work. He wanted no money if— She stopped him.

"I take no service for which I do not pay," she said. "What I gave to my last nurse I will give to you; if you do not like it you may go."

And Gregory muttered humbly, he would take it. 2065

Afterward she tried to turn herself. He lifted her! Ah! a shrunken little body, he could feel its weakness as he touched it. His hands were to him glorified for what they had done.

"Thank you! that is so nice. Other people hurt me when they touch me," she said. "Thank you!" Then after a little while she repeated humbly, "Thank you; they hurt me so."

Gregory sat down trembling. His little ewe-lamb, could they hurt her?

The doctor said of Gregory four days after, "She is the most experienced nurse I ever came in contact with."

Gregory, standing in the passage, heard it and laughed in his heart. What need had he of experience? Experience teaches us in a millennium what passion teaches us in an hour. A Kaffer studies all his life the discerning of distant sounds; but he will never hear my step, when my love hears it, coming to her window in the dark over the short grass. 2070

At first Gregory's heart was sore when day by day the body grew lighter, and the mouth he fed took less; but afterward he

grew accustomed to it, and was happy. For passion has one cry, one only—"Oh, to touch thee, Beloved!"

In that quiet room Lyndall lay on the bed with the dog at her feet, and Gregory sat in his dark corner watching.

She seldom slept, and through those long, long days she would lie watching the round streak of sunlight that came through the knot in the shutter, or the massive lion's paw on which the wardrobe rested. What thoughts were in those eyes? Gregory wondered; he dared not ask.

Sometimes Doss where he lay on her feet would dream that they two were in the cart, tearing over the veld, with the black horses snorting, and the wind in their faces; and he would start up in his sleep and bark aloud. Then awaking, he would lick his mistress' hand almost remorsefully, and slink quietly down into his place.

Gregory thought she had no pain, she never groaned; only sometimes, when the light was near her, he thought he could see contractions about her lips and eyebrows.

2075

He slept on the sofa outside her door.

One night he thought he heard a sound, and, opening it softly, he looked in. She was crying out aloud, as if she and her pain were alone in the world. The light fell on the red quilt, and the little hands that were clasped over the head. The wide-open eyes were looking up, and the heavy drops fell slowly from them.

"I cannot bear any more, not any more," she said in a deep voice. "Oh, God, God! have I not borne in silence? Have I not endured these long, long months? But now, now, oh, God, I cannot!"

Gregory knelt in the doorway listening.

"I do not ask for wisdom, not human love, not work, not knowledge, not for all things I have longed for," she cried; "only a little freedom from pain! Only one little hour without pain! Then I will suffer again."

2080

She sat up, and bit the little hand Gregory loved.

He crept away to the front door, and stood looking out at the quiet starlight. When he came back she was lying in her usual

posture, the quiet eyes looking at the lion's claw. He came close to the bed.

"You have much pain tonight?" he asked her.

"No, not much."

"Can I do anything for you?"

2085

"No, nothing."

She still drew her lips together, and motioned with her fingers toward the dog who lay sleeping at her feet. Gregory lifted him and laid him at her side. She made Gregory turn open the bosom of her nightdress, that the dog might put his black muzzle between her breasts. She crossed her arms over him. Gregory left them lying there together.

Next day, when they asked her how she was, she answered "Better."

"Some one ought to tell her," said the landlady; "we can't let her soul go out into eternity not knowing, especially when I don't think it was all right about the child. You ought to go and tell her, doctor."

So, the little doctor, edged on and on, went in at last. When he came out of the room he shook his fist in the landlady's face.

2090

"The next time you have any devil's work to do, do it yourself," he said, and he shook his fist in her face again, and went away swearing.

When Gregory went into the bedroom he only found her moved, her body curled up, and drawn close to the wall. He dared not disturb her. At last, after a long time, she turned.

"Bring me food," she said, "I want to eat. Two eggs, and toast, and meat—two large slices of toast, please."

Wondering, Gregory brought a tray with all that she had asked for.

"Sit me up, and put it close to me," she said; "I am going to eat it all." She tried to draw the things near her with her fingers, and re-arranged the plates. She cut the toast into long strips, broke open both eggs, put a tiny morsel of bread into her own mouth, and fed the dog with pieces of meat put into his jaws with her fingers.

2095

"Is it twelve o'clock yet?" she said; "I think I do not generally eat so early. Put it away, please, carefully—no, do not take it away—only on the table. When the clock strikes twelve I will eat it."

She lay down trembling. After a little while she said:

"Give me my clothes."

He looked at her.

"Yes; I am going to dress tomorrow. I should get up now, but it is rather late. Put them on that chair. My collars are in the little box, my boots behind the door." 2100

Her eyes followed him intently as he collected the articles one by one, and placed them on the chair as she directed.

"Put it nearer," she said, "I cannot see it;" and she lay watching the clothes, with her hand under her cheek.

"Now open the shutter wide," she said; "I am going to read."

The old, old tone was again in the sweet voice. He obeyed her; and opened the shutter, and raised her up among the pillows.

"Now bring my books to me," she said, motioning eagerly with her fingers; "the large book, and the reviews and the plays—I want them all." 2105

He piled them round her on the bed; she drew them greedily closer, her eyes very bright, but her face as white as a mountain lily.

"Now the big one off the drawers. No, you need not help me to hold my book," she said; "I can hold it for myself."

Gregory went back to his corner, and for a little time the restless turning over of leaves was to be heard.

"Will you open the window," she said, almost querulously, "and throw this book out? It is so utterly foolish. I thought it was a valuable book; but the words are merely strung together, they make no sense. Yes—so!" she said with approval, seeing him fling it out into the street. "I must have been very foolish when I thought that book good."

Then she turned to read, and leaned her little elbows resolutely on the great volume, and knit her brows. This was Shakespeare—it must mean something. 2110

"I wish you would take a handkerchief and tie it tight round my head, it aches so."

He had not been long in his seat when he saw drops fall from beneath the hands that shaded the eyes, on to the page.

"I am not accustomed to so much light, it makes my head swim a little," she said. "Go out and close the shutter."

When he came back, she lay shrivelled up among the pillows.

He heard no sound of weeping, but the shoulders shook. He darkened the room completely. 2115

When Gregory went to his sofa that night, she told him to wake her early; she would be dressed before breakfast. Nevertheless, when morning came, she said it was a little cold, and lay all day watching her clothes upon the chair. Still she sent for her oxen in the country; they would start on Monday and go down to the Colony.

In the afternoon she told him to open the window wide, and draw the bed near it.

It was a leaden afternoon, the dull rain-clouds rested close to the roofs of the houses, and the little street was silent and deserted. Now and then a gust of wind eddying round caught up the dried leaves, whirled them hither and thither under the trees, and dropped them again into the gutter; then all was quiet. She lay looking out.

Presently the bell of the church began to toll, and up the village street came a long procession. They were carrying an old man to his last resting-place. She followed them with her eyes till they turned in among the trees at the gate.

"Who was that?" she asked. 2120

"An old man," he answered, "a very old man; they say he was ninety-four; but his name I do not know."

She mused a while, looking out with fixed eyes.

"That is why the bell rang so cheerfully," she said. "When the old die it is well; they have had their time. It is when the young die that the bells weep drops of blood."

"But the old love life?" he said; for it was sweet to hear her speak.

She raised herself on her elbow. 2125

"They love life, they do not want to die," she answered, "but what of that? They have had their time. They knew that a man's life is three-score years and ten; they should have made their plans accordingly!

"But the young," she said, "the young, cut down, cruelly, when they have not seen, when they have not known—when they have not found—it is for them that the bells weep blood. I heard in the ringing it was an old man. When the old die— Listen to the bell! it is laughing—'It is right, it is right; he has had his time.' They cannot ring so for the young."

She fell back exhausted; the hot light died from her eyes, and she lay looking out into the street. By and by stragglers from the funeral began to come back and disappear here and there among the houses; then all was quiet, and the night began to settle down upon the village street. Afterward, when the room was almost dark, so that they could not see each other's faces, she said, "It will rain tonight;" and moved restlessly on the pillows. "How terrible when the rain falls down on you."

He wondered what she meant, and they sat on in the still darkening room. She moved again.

"Will you presently take my cloak—and new grey cloak from behind the door—and go out with it. You will find a little grave at the foot of the tall gum-tree; the water drips off the long, pointed leaves; you must cover it up with that."

2130

She moved restlessly as though in pain.

Gregory assented, and there was silence again. It was the first time she had ever spoken of her child.

"It was so small," she said; "it lived such a little while—only three hours. They laid it close by me, but I never saw it; I could feel it by me." She waited; "its feet were so cold; I took them in my hand to make them warm, and my hand closed right over them they were so little." There was an uneven trembling in the voice. "It crept close to me; it wanted to drink, it wanted to be warm." She hardened herself—"I did not love it; its father was not my prince; I did not care for it; but it was so little." She moved her hand. "They might have kissed it, one of them, before they

put it in. It never did any one any harm in all its little life. They might have kissed it, one of them."

Gregory felt that some one was sobbing in the room.

Late on in the evening, when the shutter was closed and the lamp lighted, and the rain-drops beat on the roof, he took the cloak from behind the door and went away with it. On his way back he called at the village post-office and brought back a letter. In the hall he stood reading the address. How could he fail to know whose hand had written it? Had he not long ago studied those characters on the torn fragments of paper in the old parlour? A burning pain was at Gregory's heart. If now, now at the last, one should come, should step in between! He carried the letter into the bedroom and gave it to her. "Bring me the lamp nearer," she said. When she had read it she asked for her desk.

2135

Then Gregory sat down in the lamp-light on the other side of the curtain, and heard the pencil move on the paper. When he looked round the curtain she was lying on the pillow musing. The open letter lay at her side; she glanced at it with soft eyes. The man with the languid eyelids must have been strangely moved before his hand set down those words:

"Let me come back to you! My darling, let me put my hand round you, and guard you from all the world. As my wife they shall never touch you. I have learnt to love you more wisely, more tenderly, than of old; you shall have perfect freedom. Lyndall, grand little woman, for your own sake be my wife!

"Why did you send that money back to me? You are cruel to me; it is not rightly done."

She rolled the little red pencil softly between her fingers, and her face grew very soft. Yet:

"It cannot be," she wrote; "I thank you much for the love you have shown me; but I cannot listen. You will call me mad, foolish—the world would do so; but I know what I need and the kind of path I must walk in. I cannot marry you. I will always love you for the sake of what lay by me those three hours; but there it ends. I must know and see, I cannot be bound to one whom I love as I love you. I am not afraid of the world—I will fight the world. One day—perhaps it may be far off—I shall find what I have wanted

2140

all my life; something nobler, stronger than I, before which I can kneel down. You lose nothing by not having me now; I am a weak, selfish, erring woman. One day I shall find something to worship, and then I shall be—"

"Nurse," she said; "take my desk away; I am suddenly so sleepy; I will write more tomorrow." She turned her face to the pillow; it was the sudden drowsiness of great weakness. She had dropped asleep in a moment, and Gregory moved the desk softly, and then sat in the chair watching. Hour after hour passed, but he had no wish for rest, and sat on, hearing the rain cease, and the still night settle down everywhere. At a quarter-past twelve he rose, and took a last look at the bed where she lay sleeping so peacefully; then he turned to go to his couch. Before he had reached the door she had started up and was calling him back.

"You are sure you have put it up?" she said, with a look of blank terror at the window. "It will not fall open in the night, the shutter—you are sure?"

He comforted her. Yes, it was tightly fastened.

"Even if it is shut," she said, in a whisper, "you cannot keep it out! You feel it coming in at four o'clock, creeping, creeping, up, up; deadly cold!" She shuddered.

He thought she was wandering, and laid her little trembling body down among the blankets. 2145

"I dreamed just now that it was not put up," she said, looking into his eyes; "and it crept right in and I was alone with it."

"What do you fear?" he asked, tenderly.

"The Grey Dawn," she said, glancing round at the window. "I was never afraid of anything, never, when I was a little child, but I have always been afraid of that. You will not let it come in to me?"

"No, no; I will stay with you," he continued.

But she was growing calmer. "No, you must go to bed. I only awoke with a start; you must be tired. I am childish, that is all;" but she shivered again. 2150

He sat down beside her, after some time she said: "Will you not rub my feet?"

He knelt down at the foot of the bed and took the tiny foot in his hand; it was swollen and unsightly now, but as he touched it he bent down and covered it with kisses.

"It makes it better when you kiss it; thank you. What makes you all love me so?" Then dreamily she muttered to herself: "Not utterly bad, not quite bad—what makes them all love me so?"

Kneeling there, rubbing softly, with his cheek pressed against the little foot, Gregory dropped to sleep at last. How long he knelt there he could not tell; but when he started up awake she was not looking at him. The eyes were fixed on the far corner, gazing wide and intent, with an unearthly light.

He looked round fearfully. What did she see there? God's angels come to call her? Something fearful? He saw only the purple curtain with the shadows that fell from it. Softly he whispered, asking what she saw there.

2155

And she said, in a voice strangely unlike her own: "I see the vision of a poor, weak soul striving after good. It was not cut short, and in the end it learnt, through tears and much pain, that holiness is an infinite compassion for others; that greatness is to take the common things of life and walk truly among them; that"—She moved her white hand and laid it on her forehead—"happiness is a great love and much serving. It was not cut short; and it loved what it had learnt—it loved—and—"

Was that all she saw in the corner?

Gregory told the landlady the next morning that she had been wandering all night. Yet, when he came in to give her her breakfast, she was sitting up against the pillows, looking as he had not seen her look before.

"Put it close to me," she said, "and when I have had breakfast I am going to dress."

She finished all he had brought her eagerly.

2160

"I am sitting up quite by myself," she said. "Give me his meat;" and she fed the dog herself, cutting his food small for him. She moved to the side of the bed.

"Now bring the chair near and dress me. It is being in this room so long, and looking at that miserable little bit of sunshine that comes in through the shutter, that is making me so ill. Always

that lion's paw!" she said, with a look of disgust at it. "Come and dress me." Gregory knelt on the floor before her, and tried to draw on one stocking, but the little swollen foot refused to be covered.

"It is very funny that I should have grown so fat since I have been so ill," she said, peering down curiously. "Perhaps it is want of exercise." She looked troubled and said again, "Perhaps it is want of exercise." She wanted Gregory to say so too. But he only found a larger pair; and then tried to force the shoes, oh, so tenderly, on to her little feet.

"There," she said, looking down at them when they were on, with the delight of a small child over its first shoes, "I could walk far now. How nice it looks!"

"No," she said, seeing the soft gown he had prepared for her, "I will not put that on. Get one of my white dresses—the one with the pink bows. I do not even want to think I have been ill. It is thinking and thinking of things that makes them real," she said. "When you draw your mind together, and resolve that a thing shall not be, it gives way before you; it is not. Everything is possible if one is resolved," she said. She drew in her little lips together, and Gregory obeyed her; she was so small and slight now it was like dressing a small doll. He would have lifted her down from the bed when he had finished, but she pushed him from her, laughing very softly. It was the first time she had laughed in those long, dreary months.

"No, no; I can get down myself," she said, slipping cautiously on to the floor. "You see!" She cast a defiant glance of triumph when she stood there. "Hold the curtain up high, I want to look at myself."

He raised it, and stood holding it. She looked into the glass on the opposite wall.

Such a queenly little figure in its pink and white. Such a transparent little face, refined by suffering into an almost angel-like beauty. The face looked at her; she looked back, laughing softly. Doss, quivering with excitement, ran round her, barking. She took one step toward the door, balancing herself with outstretched hands.

"I am nearly there," she said.

Then she groped blindly.

2170

"Oh, I cannot see! I cannot see! Where am I?" she cried.

When Gregory reached her she had fallen with her face against the sharp foot of the wardrobe and cut her forehead. Very tenderly he raised the little crushed heap of muslin and ribbons, and laid it on the bed. Doss climbed up, and sat looking down at it. Very softly Gregory's hands disrobed her.

"You will be stronger tomorrow, and then we shall try again," he said, but she neither looked at him nor stirred.

When he had undressed her, and laid her in bed, Doss stretched himself across her feet and lay whining softly.

So she lay all that morning, and all that afternoon.

2175

Again and again Gregory crept close to the bedside and looked at her; but she did not speak to him. Was it stupor or was it sleep that shone under those half-closed eyelids. Gregory could not tell.

At last in the evening he bent over her.

"The oxen have come," he said; "we can start tomorrow if you like. Shall I get the wagon ready tonight?"

Twice he repeated his question. Then she looked up at him, and Gregory saw that all hope had died out of the beautiful eyes. It was not stupor that shone there, it was despair.

"Yes, let us go," she said.

2180

"It makes no difference," said the doctor; "staying or going; it is close now."

So the next day Gregory carried her out in his arms to the wagon which stood inspanned before the door. As he laid her down on the kartel she looked far out across the plain. For the first time she spoke that day.

"That blue mountain, far away; let us stop when we get to it, not before." She closed her eyes again. He drew the sails down before and behind, and the wagon rolled away slowly. The landlady and the niggers stood to watch it from the stoep.

Very silently the great wagon rolled along the grass-covered plain. The driver on the front box did not clap his whip or call to his oxen, and Gregory sat beside him with folded arms. Behind them, in the closed wagon, she lay with the dog at her feet, very quiet, with folded hands. He, Gregory, dared not be in there. Like

Hagar, when she laid her treasure down in the wilderness, he sat afar off:—"For Hagar said, Let me not see the death of the child."

Evening came, and yet the blue mountain was not reached, and all the next day they rode on slowly, but still it was far off. Only at evening they reached it; not blue now, but low and brown, covered with long waving grasses and rough stones. They drew the wagon up close to its foot for the night. It was a sheltered, warm spot.

When the dark night had come, when the tired oxen were tied to the wheels, and the driver and leader had rolled themselves in their blankets before the fire, and gone to sleep, then Gregory fastened down the sails of the wagon securely. He fixed a long candle near the head of the bed, and lay down himself on the floor of the wagon near the back. He leaned his head against the kartel, and listened to the chewing of the tired oxen, and to the crackling of the fire, till, overpowered by weariness, he fell into a heavy sleep. Then all was very still in the wagon. The dog slept on his mistress' feet, and only two mosquitoes, creeping in through a gap in the front sail, buzzed drearily round.

The night was grown very old when from a long, peaceful sleep Lyndall awoke. The candle burnt at her head, the dog lay on her feet; but he shivered; it seemed as though a coldness struck up to him from his resting-place. She lay with folded hands, looking upward; and she heard the oxen chewing, and she saw the two mosquitoes buzzing drearily round and round, and her thoughts—her thoughts ran far back into the past.

Through these months of anguish a mist had rested on her mind; it was rolled together now, and the old clear intellect awoke from its long torpor. It looked back into the past, it saw the present; there was no future now. The old strong soul gathered itself together for the last time; it knew where it stood.

Slowly raising herself on her elbow, she took from the sail a glass that hung pinned there. Her fingers were stiff and cold. She put the pillow on her breast, and stood the glass against it. Then the white face on the pillow looked into the white face in the glass. They had looked at each other often so before. It had been a child's face once, looking out above its blue pinafore; it had been

a woman's face, with a dim shadow in the eyes, and a something which had said, "We are not afraid, you and I; we are together; we will fight, you and I." Now tonight it had come to this.

The dying eyes on the pillow looked into the dying eyes in the glass; they knew that their hour had come. She raised one hand and pressed the stiff fingers against the glass. They were growing very stiff. She tried to speak to it, but she would never speak again. Only the wonderful yearning light was in the eyes still. The body was dead now, but the soul, clear and unclouded, looked forth.

2190

Then slowly, without a sound, the beautiful eyes closed. The dead face that the glass reflected was a thing of marvelous beauty and tranquillity. The Grey Dawn crept in over it and saw it lying there.

Had she found what she sought for—something to worship? Had she ceased from being? Who shall tell us? There is a veil of terrible mist over the face of the Hereafter.

Chapter XIII. Dreams

"Tell me what a soul desires, and I will tell you what it is." So runs the phrase.

"Tell me what a man dreams, and I will tell you what he loves." That also has its truth.

For, ever from the earliest childhood to the latest age, day by day, and step by step, the busy waking life is followed and reflected by the life of dreams—waking dreams, sleeping dreams. Weird, misty, and distorted as the inverted image of a mirage, or a figure seen through the mountain mist, they are still the reflections of a reality.

2195

On the night when Gregory told his story Waldo sat alone before the fire, his untasted supper before him. He was weary after his day's work—too weary to eat. He put the plate down on the floor for Doss, who licked it clean, and then went back to his corner. After a time the master threw himself across the foot of the bed without undressing, and fell asleep there. He slept so long

that the candle burnt itself out, and the room was in darkness. But he dreamed a lovely dream as he lay there.

In his dream, to his right rose high mountains, their tops crowned with snow, their sides clothed with bush and bathed in the sunshine. At their feet was the sea, blue and breezy, bluer than any earthly sea, like the sea he had dreamed of in his boyhood. In the narrow forest that ran between the mountains and the sea the air was rich with the scent of the honey-creeper that hung from dark green bushes, and through the velvety grass little streams ran purling down into the sea.

He sat on a high square rock among the bushes, and Lyndall sat by him and sang to him. She was only a small child, with a blue pinafore, and a grave, grave, little face. He was looking up at the mountains, then suddenly when he looked round she was gone. He slipped down from his rock, and went to look for her, but he found only her little footmarks; he found them on the bright green grass, and in the moist sand, and there where the little streams ran purling down into the sea. In and out, in and out, and among the bushes where the honey-creeper hung, he went looking for her. At last, far off, in the sunshine, he saw her gathering shells upon the sand. She was not a child now, but a woman, and the sun shone on her soft brown hair, and in her white dress she put the shells she gathered. She was stooping, but when she heard his step she stood up, holding her skirt close about her, and waited for his coming. One hand she put in his, and together they walked on over the glittering sand and pink sea-shells; and they heard the leaves talking, and they heard the waters babbling on their way to the sea, and they heard the sea singing to itself, singing, singing.

At last they came to a place where was a long reach of pure white sand; there she stood still, and dropped on to the sand one by one the shells that she had gathered. Then she looked up into his face with her beautiful eyes. She said nothing; but she lifted one hand and laid it softly on his forehead; the other she laid on his heart.

With a cry of suppressed agony Waldo sprung from the bed, flung open the upper half of the door, and leaned out, breathing

heavily.

Great God! it might be only a dream, but the pain was very real, as though a knife ran through his heart, as though some treacherous murderer crept on him in the dark! The strong man drew his breath like a frightened woman.

"Only a dream, but the pain was very real," he muttered, as he pressed his right hand upon his breast. Then he folded his arms on the door, and stood looking out into the starlight.

The dream was with him still; the woman who was his friend was not separated from him by years—only that very night he had seen her. He looked up into the night sky that all his life long had mingled itself with his existence. There were a thousand faces that he loved looking down at him, a thousand stars in their glory, in crowns, and circles, and solitary grandeur. To the man they were not less dear than to the boy they had been not less mysterious; yet he looked up at them and shuddered; at last turned away from them with horror. Such countless multitudes stretching out far into space, and yet not in one of them all was she! Though he searched through them all, to the furthest, faintest point of light, nowhere should he ever say, "She is here!" Tomorrow's sun would rise and gild the world's mountains, and shine into its thousand valleys; it would set and the stars creep out again. Year after year, century after century, the old changes of nature would go on, day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest; but in none of them all would she have part!

He shut the door to keep out their hideous shining, and because the dark was intolerable lit a candle, and paced the little room, faster and faster yet. He saw before him the long ages of eternity that would roll on, on, on, and never bring her. She would exist no more. A dark mist filled the little room.

"Oh, little hand! oh, little voice! oh, little form!" he cried; "oh, little soul that walked with mine! oh, little soul, that looked so fearlessly down into the depths, do you exist no more for ever—for all time?" He cried more bitterly: "It is for this hour—this—that men blind reason, and crush out thought! For this hour—this, this—they barter truth and knowledge, take any lie, any creed, so

it does not whisper to them of the dead that they are dead! Oh, God! for a Hereafter!"

Pain made his soul weak; it cried for the old faith. They are the tears that fall into the new-made grave that cement the power of the priest. For the cry of the soul that loves and loses is this, only this: "Bridge over Death; blend the Here with the Hereafter; cause the mortal to robe himself in immortality; let me not say of my Dead that it is dead! I will believe all else, bear all else, endure all else!"

Muttering to himself, Waldo walked with bent head, the mist in his eyes.

To the soul's wild cry for its own there are many answers. He began to think of them. Was not there one of them all from which he might suck one drop of comfort?

"You shall see her again," says the Christian, the true Bible Christian. "Yes, you shall see her again. 'And I saw the dead, great and small, stand before God. And the books were opened, and the dead were judged from those things which were written in the books. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.' Yes; you shall see her again. She died so—with her knee unbent, with her hand unraised, with a prayer unuttered, in the pride of her intellect and the strength of her youth. She loved and she was loved; but she said no prayer to God; she cried for no mercy; she repented of no sin! Yes; you shall see her again."

In his bitterness Waldo laughed low:

Ah, he had long ceased to hearken to the hellish voice.

But yet another speaks.

"You shall see her again," said the nineteenth-century Christian, deep into whose soul modern unbelief and thought have crept, though he knows it not. He it is who uses his Bible as the pearl-fishers use their shells, sorting out gems from refuse; he sets his pearls after his own fashion, and he sets them well. "Do not fear," he says; "hell and judgment are not. God is love. I know that beyond this blue sky above us is a love as wide-spreading over all. The All-Father will show her to you again; not spirit only—the little hands, the little feet you loved, you shall lie down and

kiss them if you will. Christ arose, and did eat and drink, so shall she arise. The dead, all the dead, raised incorruptible! God is love. You shall see her again."

It is a heavenly song, this of the nineteenth-century Christian. A man might dry his tears to listen to it, but for this one thing—Waldo muttered to himself confusedly:

"The thing I loved was a woman proud and young; it had a mother once, who, dying, kissed her little baby, and prayed God that she might see it again. If it had lived the loved thing would itself have had a son, who, when he closed the weary eyes and smoothed the wrinkled forehead of his mother, would have prayed God to see that old face smile again in the Hereafter. To the son heaven will be no heaven if the sweet worn face is not in one of the choirs; he will look for it through the phalanx of God's glorified angels; and the youth will look for the maid, and the mother for the baby. 'And whose then shall she be at the resurrection of the dead?'"

2215

"Ah, God! ah, God! a beautiful dream," he cried; "but can any one dream it not sleeping?"

Waldo paced on, moaning in agony and longing.

He heard the Transcendentalist's high answer.

"What have you to do with flesh, the gross and miserable garment in which spirit hides itself? You shall see her again. But the hand, the foot, the forehead you loved, you shall see no more. The loves, the fears, the frailties that are born with the flesh, with the flesh they shall die. Let them die! There is that in man that cannot die—a seed, a germ an embryo, a spiritual essence. Higher than she was on earth, as the tree is higher than the seed, the man than the embryo, so shall you behold her; changed, glorified!"

High words, ringing well; they are the offering of jewels to the hungry, of gold to the man who dies for bread. Bread is corruptible, gold is incorruptible; bread is light, gold is heavy; bread is common, gold is rare; but the hungry man will barter all your mines for one morsel of bread. Around God's throne there may be choirs and companies of angels, cherubim and seraphim, rising tier above tier, but not for one of them all does the soul cry

2220

aloud. Only perhaps for a little human woman full of sin, that it once loved.

"Change is death, change is death!" he cried. "I want no angel, only she; no holier and no better, with all her sins upon her, so give her me or give me nothing!"

And, truly, does not the heart love its own with the strongest passion for their very frailties? Heaven might keep its angels if men were but left to men.

"Change is death," he cried, "change is death! Who dares to say the body never dies, because it turns again to grass and flowers? And yet they dare to say the spirit never dies, because in space some strange unearthly being may have sprung up upon its ruins. Leave me! Leave me!" he cried in frantic bitterness. "Give me back what I have lost, or give me nothing."

For the soul's fierce cry for immortality is this—only this: Return to me after death the thing as it was before. Leave me in the Hereafter the being that I am today. Rob me of the thoughts, the feelings, the desires that are my life, and you have left nothing to take. Your immortality is annihilation, your Hereafter is a lie.

Waldo flung open the door, and walked out into the starlight, his pain-stricken thoughts ever driving him on as he paced there.

2225

"There must be a Hereafter because man longs for it!" he whispered. "Is not all life from the cradle to the grave one long yearning for that which we never touch? There must be a Hereafter because we cannot think of any end to life. Can we think of a beginning? Is it easier to say 'I was not' than to say 'I shall not be'? And yet, where were we ninety years ago? Dreams, dreams! Ah, all dreams and lies! No ground anywhere."

He went back into the cabin and walked there. Hour after hour passed, and he was dreaming.

For, mark you, men will dream; the most that can be asked of them is but that the dream be not in too glaring discord with the thing they know. He walked with bent head.

All dies, all dies! the roses are red with the matter that once reddened the cheek of the child; the flowers bloom the fairest on the last year's battleground; the work of death's finger cunningly wreathed over is at the heart of all things, even of the living.

Death's finger is everywhere. The rocks are built up of a life that was. Bodies, thoughts, and loves die: from where springs that whisper to the tiny soul of man, "You shall not die." Ah, is there no truth of which this dream is shadow?

2230

He fell into perfect silence. And, at last, as he walked there with his bent head, his soul passed down the steps of contemplation into that vast land where there is always peace; that land where the soul, gazing long, loses all consciousness of its little self, and almost feels its hand on the old mystery of Universal unity that surrounds it.

"No death, no death," he muttered; "there is that which never dies—which abides. It is but the individual that perishes, the whole remains. It is the organism that vanishes, the atoms are there. It is but the man that dies, the Universal Whole of which he is part reworks him into its inmost self. Ah, what matter that man's day be short!—that the sunrise sees him, and the sunset sees his grave; that of which he is but the breath has breathed him forth and drawn him back again. That abides—we abide."

For the little soul that cries aloud for continued personal existence for itself and its beloved, there is no help. For the soul which knows itself no more as a unit, but as a part of the Universal Unity of which the Beloved also is a part; which feels within itself the throb of the Universal Life; for that soul there is no death.

"Let us die, beloved, you and I, that we may pass on forever through the Universal Life! In that deep world of contemplation all fierce desires die out, and peace comes down." He, Waldo, as he walked there, saw no more the world that was about him; cried out no more for the thing that he had lost. His soul rested. Was it only John, think you, who saw the heavens open? The dreamers see it every day.

Long years before the father had walked in the little cabin, and seen choirs of angels, and a prince like unto men, but clothed in immortality.

2235

The son's knowledge was not as the father's, therefore the dream was new-tinted, but the sweetness was all there, the infinite peace that men find not in the little cankered kingdom of the

tangible. The bars of the real are set close about us; we cannot open our wings but they are struck against them, and drop bleeding. But, when we glide between the bars into the great unknown beyond, we may sail forever in the glorious blue, seeing nothing but our own shadows.

So age succeeds age, and dream succeeds dream, and of the joy of the dreamer no man knoweth but he who dreameth.

Our fathers had their dream; we have ours; the generation that follows will have its own. Without dreams and phantoms man cannot exist.

Chapter XIV. Waldo Goes Out to Sit in the Sunshine

It had been a princely day. The long morning had melted slowly into a rich afternoon. Rains had covered the karoo with a heavy coat of green that hid the red earth everywhere. In the very chinks of the stone walls dark green leaves hung out, and beauty and growth had crept even into the beds of the sandy furrows and lined them with weeds. On the broken sod walls of the old pigsty chick-weeds flourished, and ice-plants lifted heir transparent leaves. Waldo was at work in the wagon-house again. He was making a kitchen table for Em. As the long curls gathered in heaps before his plane, he paused for an instant now and again to throw one down to a small naked nigger, who had crept from its mother, who stood churning in the sunshine, and had crawled into the wagon-house.

From time to time the little animal lifted its fat hand as it expected a fresh shower of curls; till Doss, jealous of his master's noticing any other small creature but himself, would catch the curl in his mouth and roll the little Kaffer over in the sawdust, much to that small animal's contentment. It was too lazy an afternoon to be really ill-natured, so Doss satisfied himself with snapping at the little nigger's fingers, and sitting on him till he laughed. Waldo, as he worked, glanced down at them now and then, and smiled; but he never looked out across the plain. He was conscious without looking of that broad green earth; it made his work pleasant to him. Near the shadow at the gable the mother of

the little nigger stood churning. Slowly she raised and let fall the stick in her hands, murmuring to herself a sleepy chant such as her people love; it sounded like the humming of far-off bees.

A different life showed itself in the front of the house, where Tant Sannie's cart stood ready inspanned and the Boer-woman herself sat in the front room drinking coffee.

She had come to visit her stepdaughter, probably for the last time, as she now weighed two hundred and sixty pounds, and was not easily able to move. On a chair sat her mild young husband nursing the baby—a pudding-faced, weak-eyed child.

"You take it and get into the cart with it," said Tant Sannie. "What do you want here, listening to our woman's talk?"

The young man arose, and meekly went out with the baby.

"I'm very glad you are going to be married, my child," said Tant Sannie, as she drained the last drop from her coffee cup. "I wouldn't say so while that boy was here, it would make him too conceited; but marriage is the finest thing in the world. I've been at it three times, and if it pleased God to take this husband from me I should have another. There's nothing like it, my child; nothing."

2245

"Perhaps it might not suit all people, at all times, as well as it suits you, Tant Sannie," said Em. There was a little shade of weariness in the voice.

"Not suit every one!" said Tant Sannie. "If the beloved Redeemer didn't mean men to have wives what did He make women for? That's what I say. If a woman's old enough to marry, and doesn't, she's sinning against the Lord—it's a wanting to know better than Him. What, does she think the Lord took all that trouble in making her for nothing? It's evident He wants babies, otherwise why does He send them? Not that I've done much in that way myself," said Tant Sannie, sorrowfully; "but I've done my best."

She rose with some difficulty from her chair, and began moving slowly toward the door.

"It's a strange thing," she said, "but you can't love a man till you've had a baby by him. Now there's that boy there, when we were first married if he only sneezed in the night I boxed his ears;

now if he lets his pipe-ash come on my milk-cloths I don't think of laying a finger on him. There's nothing like being married," said Tant Sannie, as she puffed toward the door. "If a woman's got a baby and a husband she's got the best things the Lord can give her; if only the baby doesn't have convulsions. As for a husband, it's very much the same who one has. Some men are fat, and some men are thin; some men drink brandy, and some men drink gin; but it all comes to the same thing in the end; it's all one. A man's a man, you know."

Here they came upon Gregory, who was sitting in the shade before the house. Tant Sannie shook hands with him.

2250

"I'm glad you're going to get married," she said. "I hope you'll have as many children in five years as a cow has calves, and more too. I think I'll just go and have a look at your soap-pot before I start," she said, turning to Em. "Not that I believe in this new plan of putting soda in the pot. If the dear Father had meant soda to be put into soap what would He have made milk-bushes for, and stuck them all over the veld as thick as lambs in the lambing season?"

She waddled off after Em in the direction of the built-in soap-pot, leaving Gregory as they found him, with his dead pipe lying on the bench beside him, and his blue eyes gazing out far across the flat, like one who sits on the seashore watching that which is fading, fading from him.

Against his breast was a letter found in the desk addressed to himself, but never posted. It held only four words: "You must marry Em." He wore it in a black bag round his neck. It was the only letter she had ever written to him.

"You see if the sheep don't have the scab this year!" said Tant Sannie as she waddled after Em. "It's with all these new inventions that the wrath of God must fall on us. What were the children of Israel punished for, if it wasn't for making a golden calf? I may have my sins, but I do remember the tenth commandment: 'Honour thy father and mother that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee!' It's all very well to say we honour them, and then to be finding out things that they never knew, and

doing things in a way that they never did them! My mother boiled soap with bushes, and I will boil soap with bushes. If the wrath of God is to fall upon this land," said Tant Sannie, with the serenity of conscious virtue, "it shall not be through me."

"Let them make their steam-wagons and their fire-carriages; let them go on as though the dear Lord didn't know what he was about when He gave horses and oxen legs—the destruction of the Lord will follow them. I don't know how such people read their Bibles. When do we hear of Moses or Noah riding in a railway? The Lord sent fire-carriages out of heaven in those days: there's no chance of His sending them for us if we go on in this way," said Tant Sannie sorrowfully, thinking of the splendid chance which this generation had lost.

Arrived at the soap-pot she looked over into it thoughtfully.

"Depend upon it you'll get the itch, or some other disease; the blessing of the Lord'll never rest upon it," said the Boer-woman. Then suddenly she broke forth. "And she eighty-two, and goats, and rams, and eight thousand morgen, and the rams real angora, and two thousand sheep, and a short-horn bull," said Tant Sannie, standing upright and planting a hand on each hip.

Em looked at her in silent wonder. Had connubial bliss and the joys of motherhood really turned the old Boer-woman's head?

"Yes," said Tant Sannie; "I had almost forgotten to tell you. By the Lord if I had him here! We were walking to church last Sacrament Sunday, Piet and I. Close in front of us with old Tant Trana, with dropsy and cancer, and can't live eight months. Walking by her was something with its hands under its coat-tails, flap, flap, flap; and its chin in the air, and a stick-up collar, and the black hat on the very back of the head. I knew him! 'Who's that?' I asked. 'The rich Englishman that Tant Trana married last week.' 'Rich Englishman! I'll rich Englishman him,' I said; 'I'll tell Tant Trana a thing or two. My fingers were just in his little white curls. If it hadn't been the blessed Sacrament, he wouldn't have walked so sourka, sourka, sourka, any more. But I thought. Wait till I've had it, and then—. But he, sly fox, son of Satan, seed of the Amalekite, he saw me looking at him in the church.

"The blessed Sacrament wasn't half over when he takes Tant Trana by the arm, and out they go. I clap my baby down to its father, and I go after them. But," said Tant Sannie, regretfully, "I couldn't get up to them; I am too fat. When I got to the corner he was pulling Tant Trana up into the cart. 'Tant Trana,' I said, 'you've married a Kaffer's dog, a Hottentot's brakje.' I hadn't any more breath. He winked at me; he winked at ME," said Tant Sannie, her sides shaking with indignation, "first with one eye, and then with the other, and then drove away. Child of the Amalekite!" said Tant Sannie, "if it hadn't been the blessed Sacrament. Lord, Lord, Lord!"

Here the little Bush-girl came running to say that the horses would stand no longer, and still breathing out vengeance against her old adversary she laboured toward the cart. Shaking hands and affectionately kissing Em, she was with some difficulty drawn up. Then slowly the cart rolled away, the good Boer-woman putting her head out between the sails to smile and nod.

Em stood watching it for a time, then as the sun dazzled her eyes she turned away. There was no use in going to sit with Gregory! he liked best sitting there alone, staring across the the green karoo; and till the maid had done churning there was nothing to do; so Em walked away to the wagon-house, and climbed on to the end of Waldo's table, and sat there, swinging one little foot slowly to and fro, while the wooden curls from the plane heaped themselves up against her black print dress.

"Waldo," she said at last, "Gregory has given me the money he got for the wagon and oxen, and I have fifty pounds besides that once belonged to some one. I know what they would have liked to have done with it. You must take it and go to some place and study for a year or two."

"No, little one, I will not take it," he said, as he planed slowly away; "the time was when I would have been very grateful to any one who would have given me a little money, a little help, a little power of gaining knowledge. But now, I have gone so far alone I may go on to the end. I don't want it, little one."

She did not seem pained at his refusal, but swung her foot to and fro, the little old wrinkled forehead more wrinkled up than

ever.

"Why is it always so, Waldo, always so?" she said; "we long for things, and long for them, and pray for them; we would give all we have to come near to them, but we never reach them. Then at last, too late, just when we don't want them any more, when all the sweetness is taken out of them, then they come. We don't want them then," she said, folding their hands resignedly on her little apron. After a while she added: "I remember once, very long ago, when I was a very little girl, my mother had a workbox full of coloured reels. I always wanted to play with them, but she would never let me. At last one day she said I might take the box. I was so glad I hardly knew what to do. I ran round the house, and sat down with it on the back steps. But when I opened the box all the cottons were taken out."

She sat for a while longer, till the Kaffer maid had finished churning, and was carrying the butter toward the house. Then Em prepared to slip off the table, but first she laid her little hand on Waldo's. He stopped his planing and looked up.

"Gregory is going to the town tomorrow. He is going to give in our bans to the minister; we are going to be married in three weeks."

Waldo lifted her very gently from the table. He did not congratulate her; perhaps he thought of the empty box, but he kissed her forehead gravely.

She walked away toward the house, but stopped when she got half-way. "I will bring you a glass of buttermilk when it is cool," she called out; and soon her clear voice came ringing out through the back windows as she sang the "Blue Water" to herself, and washed the butter.

2270

Waldo did not wait till she returned. Perhaps he had at last really grown weary of work; perhaps he felt the wagon-house chilly (for he had shuddered two or three times), though this was hardly likely in that warm summer weather; or, perhaps, and most probably, one of his old dreaming fits had come upon him suddenly.

He put his tools together, ready for tomorrow, and walked slowly out. At the side of the wagon-house there was a world of

bright sunshine, and a hen with her chickens was scratching among the gravel. Waldo seated himself near them with his back against the red-brick wall. The long afternoon was half spent, and the kopje was just beginning to cast its shadow over the round-headed yellow flowers that grew between it and the farmhouse. Among the flowers the white butterflies hovered and on the old kraal mounds three white kids gambolled, and at the door of one of the huts an old grey-headed Kaffer-woman sat on the ground mending her mats. A balmy, restful peacefulness seemed to reign everywhere. Even the old hen seemed well satisfied. She scratched among the stones and called to her chickens when she found a treasure; and all the while tucked to herself with intense inward satisfaction.

Waldo, as he sat with his knees drawn up to his chin and his arms folded on them, looked at it all and smiled. An evil world, a deceitful, treacherous, mirage-like world it might be; but a lovely world for all that, and to sit there gloating in the sunlight was perfect. It was worth having been a little child, and having cried and prayed so one might sit there. He moved his hands as though he were washing them in the sunshine. There will always be something worth living for while there are shimmery afternoons. Waldo chuckled with intense inward satisfaction as the old hen had done—she, over the insects and the warmth; he, over the old brick walls, and the haze, and the little bushes. Beauty is God's wine, with which He recompenses the souls that love Him; He makes them drunk.

The fellow looked, and at last stretched out one hand to a little ice-plant that grew on the sod wall of the sty; not as though he would have picked it, but as it were in a friendly greeting. He loved it. One little leaf of the ice-plant stood upright, and the sun shone through it. He could see every little crystal cell like a drop of ice in the transparent green, and it thrilled him.

There are only rare times when a man's soul can see Nature.

2275

So long as any passion holds its revel there, the eyes are holden that they should not see her.

Go out if you will and walk alone on the hillside in the evening, but if your favourite child lies ill at home, or your lover

comes tomorrow, or at your heart there lies a scheme for the holding of wealth, then you will return as you went out; you will have seen nothing. For Nature, ever, like the Old Hebrew God, cries out, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Only then, when there comes a pause, a blank in your life, when the old idol is broken, when the old hope is dead, when the old desire is crushed, then the Divine compensation of Nature is made manifest. She shows herself to you. So near she draws you, that the blood seems to flow from her to you, through a still uncut cord: you feel the throb of her life.

When that day comes, that you sit down broken, without one human creature to whom you cling, with your loves the dead and the living-dead; when the very thirst for knowledge through long-continued thwarting has grown dull; when in the present there is no craving, and in the future no hope, then, oh, with a beneficent tenderness, Nature infolds you.

Then the large white snow-flakes as they flutter down, softly, one by one, whisper soothingly, "Rest, poor heart, rest!" It is as though our mother smoothed our hair, and we are comforted.

And yellow-legged bees as they hum make a dreamy lyric; and the light on the brown stone wall is a great work of art; and the glitter through the leaves makes the pulses beat.

2280

Well to die then; for, if you live, so surely as the years come, so surely as the spring succeeds the winter, so surely will passions arise. They will creep back, one by one, into the bosom that has cast them forth, and fasten there again, and peace will go. Desire, ambition, and the fierce agonizing flood of love for the living they will spring again. Then Nature will draw down her veil; with all your longing you shall not be able to raise one corner; you cannot bring back those peaceful days. Well to die then!

Sitting there with his arms folded on his knees, and his hat slouched down over his face, Waldo looked out into the yellow sunshine that tinted even the very air with the colour of ripe corn, and was happy.

He was an uncouth creature with small learning, and no prospect in the future but that of making endless tables and stone walls, yet it seemed to him as he sat there that life was a rare and

very rich thing. He rubbed his hands in the sunshine. Ah, to live on so, year after year, how well! Always in the present; letting each day glide, bringing its own labour, and its own beauty; the gradual lighting up of the hills, night and the stars, firelight and the coals! To live on so, calmly, far from the paths of men; and to look at the lives of clouds and insects; to look deep into the heart of flowers, and see how lovingly the pistil and the stamens nestle there together; and to see in the thorn-pods how the little seeds suck their life through the delicate curled-up string, and how the little embryo sleeps inside! Well, how well, to sit so on one side taking no part in the world's life; but when great men blossom into books looking into those flowers also, to see how the world of men too opens beautifully, leaf after leaf. Ah! life is delicious; well to live long, and see the darkness breaking, and the day coming! The day when soul shall not thrust back soul that would come to it; when men shall not be driven to seek solitude because of the crying-out of their hearts for love and sympathy. Well to live long and see the new time breaking. Well to live long; life is sweet, sweet, sweet! In his breast pocket, where of old the broken slate used to be, there was now a little dancing shoe of his friend who was sleeping. He could feel it when he folded his arm tight against his breast; and that was well also. He drew his hat lower over his eyes and sat so motionless that the chickens thought he was asleep, and gathered closer around him. One even ventured to peck at his boot, but he ran away quickly. Tiny, yellow fellow that he was, he knew that men were dangerous; even sleeping they might awake. But Waldo did not sleep, and coming back from his sunshiny dream, stretched out his hand for the tiny thing to mount. But the chicken eyed the hand, and then ran off to hide under its mother's wing, and from beneath it it sometimes put out its round head to peep at the great figure sitting there. Presently its brothers ran off after a little white moth and it ran out to join them; and when the moth fluttered away over their heads they stood looking up disappointed, and then ran back to their mother.

Waldo through his half-closed eyes looked at them. Thinking, fearing, craving, those tiny sparks of brother life, what were they, so real there in that old yard on that sunshiny afternoon? A few

years—where would they be? Strange little brother spirits! He stretched his hand toward them, for his heart went out to them; but not one of the little creatures came nearer him, and he watched them gravely for a time; then he smiled, and began muttering to himself after his old fashion. Afterward he folded his arms upon his knees, and rested his forehead on them. And so he sat there in the yellow sunshine, muttering, muttering, muttering, to himself.

It was not very long after when Em came out at the back door with a towel thrown across her head, and in her hand a cup of milk.

2285

"Ah," she said, coming close to him, "he is sleeping now. He will find it when he wakes, and be glad of it."

She put it down upon the ground beside him. The mother-hen was at work still among the stones, but the chickens had climbed about him and were perching on him. One stood upon his shoulder, and rubbed its little head softly against his black curls: another tried to balance itself on the very edge of the old felt hat. One tiny fellow stood upon his hand, and tried to crow; another had nestled itself down comfortably on the old coat-sleeve and gone to sleep there.

Em did not drive them away; but she covered the glass softly at his side. "He will wake soon," she said, "and be glad of it."

But the chickens were wiser.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

The Yellow Wallpaper

American

Realism

Charlotte Perkins Gilman made a name for herself as a feminist writer, a suffragist, and a lecturer on social issues. Although her father, Frederick Beecher Perkins, walked out on his family when she was a baby, Gilman spent time with her father's aunts: Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), Isabella Beecher Hooker (a suffragist), and Catherine Beecher (an educator and advocate for female education). Gilman argued that fundamental changes in society were necessary for women to achieve equality. In *Women and Economics* (1898), Gilman noted that women would be more independent when tasks such as cooking and cleaning could be (to use a modern term) outsourced, allowing women to work outside of the home. Gilman lectured extensively on a variety of social issues, worked as a magazine editor, and published novels, short stories, collections of poetry, works on sociology, and numerous articles. She was married twice; the second marriage was a happy one, while an incident from the first (unhappy) marriage inspired her most famous work, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892). After the birth of her only child, Gilman suffered from postpartum depression; with her husband's support, a doctor called it hysteria and prescribed what was called the rest cure treatment, which involved being kept in seclusion with nothing to do (since she was forbidden to write or paint). The treatment only worsened her depression, which only improved when she became active again, and the experience ultimately resulted in a divorce. The story is partly autobiographical (although Gilman did not deteriorate to the extent that her character does) and examines how society damages a woman's mental and physical health by denying her the freedom she needs.

Consider while reading:

1. How does the narrator's description of the wallpaper change? What might the wallpaper represent figuratively: mental illness? Society's

repression of women? Other metaphors? Does the metaphor change as the description changes?

2. In what ways is this story (its setting, its characters, its situation) a product of its time period? In what ways does it transcend its time period?
3. Look at Gilman's *Women and Economics*. In what ways does the treatise predict changes in present day society, and is there anything that is inaccurate? Are there changes that she suggests that still have not been made?

Written by Laura Getty

THE YELLOW WALL-PAPER

License: Public Domain

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

5

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps*—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see, he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

10

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to "work" until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

15

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it *does* exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them. 20

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and co-heirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid; but I don't care—there is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition. 25

But John says if I feel so I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself,—before him, at least,—and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more. 30

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear," said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time." So we took the nursery, at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playground and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off—the paper—in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate, and provoke study, and when you follow the lame, uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard-of contradictions.

35

The color is repellant, almost revolting; a smouldering, unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

40

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please,

save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him. 45

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able—to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I *cannot* be with him, it makes me so nervous. 50

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wallpaper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

"You know the place is doing you good," he said, "and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental."

"Then do let us go downstairs," I said, "there are such pretty rooms there." 55

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down cellar if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is as airy and comfortable a room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I'm really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deep-shaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

60

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fire-works in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

65

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it *knew* what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside-down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy-store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

70

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wallpaper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother—they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed, which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit—only the paper.

75

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect, and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely, shaded, winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wallpaper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

80

But in the places where it isn't faded, and where the sun is just so, I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to sulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

85

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

90

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wallpaper. Perhaps *because* of the wallpaper.

It dwells in my mind so!

95

I lie here on this great immovable bed—it is nailed down, I believe—and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of "debased Romanesque" with *delirium tremens*—go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

100

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the cross-lights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,—the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap, I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

105

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I *must* say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

110

John says I musn't lose my strength, and has me take cod-liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness, I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head. 115

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wallpaper.

If we had not used it that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all. I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see. 120

Of course I never mention it to them any more,—I am too wise,—but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here! 125

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around, just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wallpaper till I felt creepy.

130

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper *did* move, and when I came back John was awake.

"What is it, little girl?" he said. "Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold."

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

"Why darling!" said he, "our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before."

135

"The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better. I feel really much easier about you."

"I don't weigh a bit more," said I, "nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening, when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away."

"Bless her little heart!" said he with a big hug; "she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let's improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!"

"And you won't go away?" I asked gloomily.

"Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really, dear, you are better!"

140

"Better in body perhaps"—I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

"My darling," said he, "I beg of you, for my sake and for our child's sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one

instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?"

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn't,—I lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

145

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well under way in following, it turns a back somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions,—why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

150

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight—the moon shines in all night when there is a moon—I wouldn't know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candlelight, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind,—that dim sub-pattern,—but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

155

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed, he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit, I am convinced, for, you see, I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake,—oh, no!

The fact is, I am getting a little afraid of John.

160

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis, that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times *looking at the paper!* And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry—asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

165

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wallpaper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was *because* of the wallpaper—he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough. 170

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper—the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here. 175

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it—there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like. 180

It is not bad—at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful. I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house—to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

185

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern *does* move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

190

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside-down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

195

And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines. 200

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time. 205

And though I always see her she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes. 210

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him! 215

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me—the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight, and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her. 220

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing. 225

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not *alive!*

She tried to get me out of the room—it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner—I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it. 230

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

235

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

240

This bed will *not* move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

245

I don't like to *look* out of the windows even—there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get *me* out in the road there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

250

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why, there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

255

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments.

260

Then he said—very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it, of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

265

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904)

A Doctor's Visit

The Lady with the Dog

Russian

Realism

Anton Chekhov was the grandson of a serf who purchased his freedom, whereas Chekhov would end up making enough money to purchase his own estate. Chekhov worked as a physician for most of his adult life, while making a name for himself as a playwright and as a short story writer. Several of his stories, in fact, draw on his experiences as a practicing physician, including "A Doctor's Visit" (1898). Four of Chekhov's plays are classics of the theater: *The Seagull* (1895), *Uncle Vanya* (1897), *The Three Sisters* (1900), and *The Cherry Orchard* (1903). Chekhov was influenced by Henrik Ibsen's use of Realism on stage, as well as his own experiences with all levels of Russian society. While Ibsen's plays focused on the middle class, Chekhov also looked at the decline of Russian aristocracy alongside the rise of the middle class, usually with neither group shown to advantage. His influence on modern theater is considerable. He proposed the dramatic convention that there should be no extraneous elements in a plot, which is called "Chekhov's gun"—if a gun is hanging on the wall onstage in the first act, it must be fired later in the play, with the same requirement if it is mentioned in a short story. This convention is often found in film, television, and modern short stories. Among Chekhov's short stories, many critics regard "The Lady with the Dog" (1899) as perhaps his best work, as well as a classic in the genre. In the story, Chekhov offers insight into the complexities of romantic relationships, balancing sympathy with realism. What could have been a cliché in another writer's hands becomes a sensitive portrayal of two people who find themselves in an impossible situation of their own making.

Consider while reading:

- 1.

2.

Written by Laura Getty

THE LADY WITH THE DOG

License: Public Domain

Anton Chekhov

Translated by Constance Garnett

I

It was said that a new person had appeared on the sea-front: a lady with a little dog. Dmitri Dmitritch Gurov, who had by then been a fortnight at Yalta, and so was fairly at home there, had begun to take an interest in new arrivals. Sitting in Verney's pavilion, he saw, walking on the sea-front, a fair-haired young lady of medium height, wearing a béret; a white Pomeranian dog was running behind her.

And afterwards he met her in the public gardens and in the square several times a day. She was walking alone, always wearing the same béret, and always with the same white dog; no one knew who she was, and every one called her simply "the lady with the dog."

"If she is here alone without a husband or friends, it wouldn't be amiss to make her acquaintance," Gurov reflected.

He was under forty, but he had a daughter already twelve years old, and two sons at school. He had been married young, when he was a student in his second year, and by now his wife seemed half as old again as he. She was a tall, erect woman with dark eyebrows, staid and dignified, and, as she said of herself, intellectual. She read a great deal, used phonetic spelling, called her husband, not Dmitri, but Dimitri, and he secretly considered her unintelligent, narrow, inelegant, was afraid of her, and did not like to be at home. He had begun being unfaithful to her long ago—had been unfaithful to her often, and, probably on that account, almost always spoke ill of women, and when they were talked about in his presence, used to call them "the lower race."

It seemed to him that he had been so schooled by bitter experience that he might call them what he liked, and yet he could not get on for two days together without "the lower race." In the society of men he was bored and not himself, with them he was

cold and uncommunicative; but when he was in the company of women he felt free, and knew what to say to them and how to behave; and he was at ease with them even when he was silent. In his appearance, in his character, in his whole nature, there was something attractive and elusive which allured women and disposed them in his favour; he knew that, and some force seemed to draw him, too, to them.

Experience often repeated, truly bitter experience, had taught him long ago that with decent people, especially Moscow people—always slow to move and irresolute—every intimacy, which at first so agreeably diversifies life and appears a light and charming adventure, inevitably grows into a regular problem of extreme intricacy, and in the long run the situation becomes unbearable. But at every fresh meeting with an interesting woman this experience seemed to slip out of his memory, and he was eager for life, and everything seemed simple and amusing.

One evening he was dining in the gardens, and the lady in the *béret* came up slowly to take the next table. Her expression, her gait, her dress, and the way she did her hair told him that she was a lady, that she was married, that she was in Yalta for the first time and alone, and that she was dull there. . . . The stories told of the immorality in such places as Yalta are to a great extent untrue; he despised them, and knew that such stories were for the most part made up by persons who would themselves have been glad to sin if they had been able; but when the lady sat down at the next table three paces from him, he remembered these tales of easy conquests, of trips to the mountains, and the tempting thought of a swift, fleeting love affair, a romance with an unknown woman, whose name he did not know, suddenly took possession of him.

He beckoned coaxingly to the Pomeranian, and when the dog came up to him he shook his finger at it. The Pomeranian growled: Gurov shook his finger at it again.

The lady looked at him and at once dropped her eyes.

"He doesn't bite," she said, and blushed.

"May I give him a bone?" he asked; and when she nodded he asked courteously, "Have you been long in Yalta?"

"Five days."

"And I have already dragged out a fortnight here."

There was a brief silence.

"Time goes fast, and yet it is so dull here!" she said, not looking at him.

15

"That's only the fashion to say it is dull here. A provincial will live in Belyov or Zhidra and not be dull, and when he comes here it's 'Oh, the dullness! Oh, the dust!' One would think he came from Grenada."

She laughed. Then both continued eating in silence, like strangers, but after dinner they walked side by side; and there sprang up between them the light jesting conversation of people who are free and satisfied, to whom it does not matter where they go or what they talk about. They walked and talked of the strange light on the sea: the water was of a soft warm lilac hue, and there was a golden streak from the moon upon it. They talked of how sultry it was after a hot day. Gurov told her that he came from Moscow, that he had taken his degree in Arts, but had a post in a bank; that he had trained as an opera-singer, but had given it up, that he owned two houses in Moscow. . . . And from her he learnt that she had grown up in Petersburg, but had lived in S---- since her marriage two years before, that she was staying another month in Yalta, and that her husband, who needed a holiday too, might perhaps come and fetch her. She was not sure whether her husband had a post in a Crown Department or under the Provincial Council—and was amused by her own ignorance. And Gurov learnt, too, that she was called Anna Sergeyevna.

Afterwards he thought about her in his room at the hotel—thought she would certainly meet him next day; it would be sure to happen. As he got into bed he thought how lately she had been a girl at school, doing lessons like his own daughter; he recalled the diffidence, the angularity, that was still manifest in her laugh and her manner of talking with a stranger. This must have been the first time in her life she had been alone in surroundings in which she was followed, looked at, and spoken to merely from a secret motive which she could hardly fail to guess. He recalled her slender, delicate neck, her lovely grey eyes.

"There's something pathetic about her, anyway," he thought, and fell asleep.

II

A week had passed since they had made acquaintance. It was a holiday. It was sultry indoors, while in the street the wind whirled the dust round and round, and blew people's hats off. It was a thirsty day, and Gurov often went into the pavilion, and pressed Anna Sergeyevna to have syrup and water or an ice. One did not know what to do with oneself.

20

In the evening when the wind had dropped a little, they went out on the groyne to see the steamer come in. There were a great many people walking about the harbour; they had gathered to welcome someone, bringing bouquets. And two peculiarities of a well-dressed Yalta crowd were very conspicuous: the elderly ladies were dressed like young ones, and there were great numbers of generals.

Owing to the roughness of the sea, the steamer arrived late, after the sun had set, and it was a long time turning about before it reached the groyne. Anna Sergeyevna looked through her lorgnette at the steamer and the passengers as though looking for acquaintances, and when she turned to Gurov her eyes were shining. She talked a great deal and asked disconnected questions, forgetting next moment what she had asked; then she dropped her lorgnette in the crush.

The festive crowd began to disperse; it was too dark to see people's faces. The wind had completely dropped, but Gurov and Anna Sergeyevna still stood as though waiting to see someone else come from the steamer. Anna Sergeyevna was silent now, and sniffed the flowers without looking at Gurov.

"The weather is better this evening," he said. "Where shall we go now? Shall we drive somewhere?"

She made no answer.

25

Then he looked at her intently, and all at once put his arm round her and kissed her on the lips, and breathed in the moisture

and the fragrance of the flowers; and he immediately looked round him, anxiously wondering whether anyone had seen them.

"Let us go to your hotel," he said softly. And both walked quickly.

The room was close and smelt of the scent she had bought at the Japanese shop. Gurov looked at her and thought: "What different people one meets in the world!" From the past he preserved memories of careless, good-natured women, who loved cheerfully and were grateful to him for the happiness he gave them, however brief it might be; and of women like his wife who loved without any genuine feeling, with superfluous phrases, affectedly, hysterically, with an expression that suggested that it was not love nor passion, but something more significant; and of two or three others, very beautiful, cold women, on whose faces he had caught a glimpse of a rapacious expression—an obstinate desire to snatch from life more than it could give, and these were capricious, unreflecting, domineering, unintelligent women not in their first youth, and when Gurov grew cold to them their beauty excited his hatred, and the lace on their linen seemed to him like scales.

But in this case there was still the diffidence, the angularity of inexperienced youth, an awkward feeling; and there was a sense of consternation as though someone had suddenly knocked at the door. The attitude of Anna Sergeyevna—"the lady with the dog"—to what had happened was somehow peculiar, very grave, as though it were her fall—so it seemed, and it was strange and inappropriate. Her face dropped and faded, and on both sides of it her long hair hung down mournfully; she mused in a dejected attitude like "the woman who was a sinner" in an old-fashioned picture.

"It's wrong," she said. "You will be the first to despise me now."

30

There was a water-melon on the table. Gurov cut himself a slice and began eating it without haste. There followed at least half an hour of silence.

Anna Sergeyevna was touching; there was about her the purity of a good, simple woman who had seen little of life. The solitary

candle burning on the table threw a faint light on her face, yet it was clear that she was very unhappy.

"How could I despise you?" asked Gurov. "You don't know what you are saying."

"God forgive me," she said, and her eyes filled with tears. "It's awful."

"You seem to feel you need to be forgiven."

35

"Forgiven? No. I am a bad, low woman; I despise myself and don't attempt to justify myself. It's not my husband but myself I have deceived. And not only just now; I have been deceiving myself for a long time. My husband may be a good, honest man, but he is a flunkey! I don't know what he does there, what his work is, but I know he is a flunkey! I was twenty when I was married to him. I have been tormented by curiosity; I wanted something better. 'There must be a different sort of life,' I said to myself. I wanted to live! To live, to live! . . . I was fired by curiosity . . . you don't understand it, but, I swear to God, I could not control myself; something happened to me: I could not be restrained. I told my husband I was ill, and came here. . . . And here I have been walking about as though I were dazed, like a mad creature; . . . and now I have become a vulgar, contemptible woman whom any one may despise."

Gurov felt bored already, listening to her. He was irritated by the naïve tone, by this remorse, so unexpected and inopportune; but for the tears in her eyes, he might have thought she was jesting or playing a part.

"I don't understand," he said softly. "What is it you want?"

She hid her face on his breast and pressed close to him.

"Believe me, believe me, I beseech you . . ." she said. "I love a pure, honest life, and sin is loathsome to me. I don't know what I am doing. Simple people say: 'The Evil One has beguiled me.' And I may say of myself now that the Evil One has beguiled me."

40

"Hush, hush! . . ." he muttered.

He looked at her fixed, scared eyes, kissed her, talked softly and affectionately, and by degrees she was comforted, and her gaiety returned; they both began laughing.

Afterwards when they went out there was not a soul on the sea-front. The town with its cypresses had quite a deathlike air, but the sea still broke noisily on the shore; a single barge was rocking on the waves, and a lantern was blinking sleepily on it.

They found a cab and drove to Oreanda.

"I found out your surname in the hall just now: it was written on the board—Von Diderits," said Gurov. "Is your husband a German?"

45

"No; I believe his grandfather was a German, but he is an Orthodox Russian himself."

At Oreanda they sat on a seat not far from the church, looked down at the sea, and were silent. Yalta was hardly visible through the morning mist; white clouds stood motionless on the mountain-tops. The leaves did not stir on the trees, grasshoppers chirruped, and the monotonous hollow sound of the sea rising up from below, spoke of the peace, of the eternal sleep awaiting us. So it must have sounded when there was no Yalta, no Oreanda here; so it sounds now, and it will sound as indifferently and monotonously when we are all no more. And in this constancy, in this complete indifference to the life and death of each of us, there lies hid, perhaps, a pledge of our eternal salvation, of the unceasing movement of life upon earth, of unceasing progress towards perfection. Sitting beside a young woman who in the dawn seemed so lovely, soothed and spellbound in these magical surroundings—the sea, mountains, clouds, the open sky—Gurov thought how in reality everything is beautiful in this world when one reflects: everything except what we think or do ourselves when we forget our human dignity and the higher aims of our existence.

A man walked up to them—probably a keeper—looked at them and walked away. And this detail seemed mysterious and beautiful, too. They saw a steamer come from Theodosia, with its lights out in the glow of dawn.

"There is dew on the grass," said Anna Sergeyevna, after a silence.

"Yes. It's time to go home."

50

They went back to the town.

Then they met every day at twelve o'clock on the sea-front, lunched and dined together, went for walks, admired the sea. She complained that she slept badly, that her heart throbbed violently; asked the same questions, troubled now by jealousy and now by the fear that he did not respect her sufficiently. And often in the square or gardens, when there was no one near them, he suddenly drew her to him and kissed her passionately. Complete idleness, these kisses in broad daylight while he looked round in dread of someone's seeing them, the heat, the smell of the sea, and the continual passing to and fro before him of idle, well-dressed, well-fed people, made a new man of him; he told Anna Sergeyevna how beautiful she was, how fascinating. He was impatiently passionate, he would not move a step away from her, while she was often pensive and continually urged him to confess that he did not respect her, did not love her in the least, and thought of her as nothing but a common woman. Rather late almost every evening they drove somewhere out of town, to Oreanda or to the waterfall; and the expedition was always a success, the scenery invariably impressed them as grand and beautiful.

They were expecting her husband to come, but a letter came from him, saying that there was something wrong with his eyes, and he entreated his wife to come home as quickly as possible. Anna Sergeyevna made haste to go.

"It's a good thing I am going away," she said to Gurov. "It's the finger of destiny!"

She went by coach and he went with her. They were driving the whole day. When she had got into a compartment of the express, and when the second bell had rung, she said:

"Let me look at you once more . . . look at you once again. That's right."

She did not shed tears, but was so sad that she seemed ill, and her face was quivering.

"I shall remember you . . . think of you," she said. "God be with you; be happy. Don't remember evil against me. We are parting forever—it must be so, for we ought never to have met. Well, God be with you."

The train moved off rapidly, its lights soon vanished from sight, and a minute later there was no sound of it, as though everything had conspired together to end as quickly as possible that sweet delirium, that madness. Left alone on the platform, and gazing into the dark distance, Gurov listened to the chirrup of the grasshoppers and the hum of the telegraph wires, feeling as though he had only just waked up. And he thought, musing, that there had been another episode or adventure in his life, and it, too, was at an end, and nothing was left of it but a memory. . . . He was moved, sad, and conscious of a slight remorse. This young woman whom he would never meet again had not been happy with him; he was genuinely warm and affectionate with her, but yet in his manner, his tone, and his caresses there had been a shade of light irony, the coarse condescension of a happy man who was, besides, almost twice her age. All the time she had called him kind, exceptional, lofty; obviously he had seemed to her different from what he really was, so he had unintentionally deceived her. . . .

Here at the station was already a scent of autumn; it was a cold evening.

60

"It's time for me to go north," thought Gurov as he left the platform. "High time!"

III

At home in Moscow everything was in its winter routine; the stoves were heated, and in the morning it was still dark when the children were having breakfast and getting ready for school, and the nurse would light the lamp for a short time. The frosts had begun already. When the first snow has fallen, on the first day of sledge-driving it is pleasant to see the white earth, the white roofs, to draw soft, delicious breath, and the season brings back the days of one's youth. The old limes and birches, white with hoar-frost, have a good-natured expression; they are nearer to one's heart than cypresses and palms, and near them one doesn't want to be thinking of the sea and the mountains.

Gurov was Moscow born; he arrived in Moscow on a fine frosty day, and when he put on his fur coat and warm gloves, and walked along Petrovka, and when on Saturday evening he heard the ringing of the bells, his recent trip and the places he had seen lost all charm for him. Little by little he became absorbed in Moscow life, greedily read three newspapers a day, and declared he did not read the Moscow papers on principle! He already felt a longing to go to restaurants, clubs, dinner-parties, anniversary celebrations, and he felt flattered at entertaining distinguished lawyers and artists, and at playing cards with a professor at the doctors' club. He could already eat a whole plateful of salt fish and cabbage.

In another month, he fancied, the image of Anna Sergeyevna would be shrouded in a mist in his memory, and only from time to time would visit him in his dreams with a touching smile as others did. But more than a month passed, real winter had come, and everything was still clear in his memory as though he had parted with Anna Sergeyevna only the day before. And his memories glowed more and more vividly. When in the evening stillness he heard from his study the voices of his children, preparing their lessons, or when he listened to a song or the organ at the restaurant, or the storm howled in the chimney, suddenly everything would rise up in his memory: what had happened on the groyne, and the early morning with the mist on the mountains, and the steamer coming from Theodosia, and the kisses. He would pace a long time about his room, remembering it all and smiling; then his memories passed into dreams, and in his fancy the past was mingled with what was to come. Anna Sergeyevna did not visit him in dreams, but followed him about everywhere like a shadow and haunted him. When he shut his eyes he saw her as though she were living before him, and she seemed to him lovelier, younger, tenderer than she was; and he imagined himself finer than he had been in Yalta. In the evenings she peeped out at him from the bookcase, from the fireplace, from the corner—he heard her breathing, the caressing rustle of her dress. In the street he watched the women, looking for someone like her.

He was tormented by an intense desire to confide his memories to someone. But in his home it was impossible to talk of his love, and he had no one outside; he could not talk to his tenants nor to any one at the bank. And what had he to talk of? Had he been in love, then? Had there been anything beautiful, poetical, or edifying or simply interesting in his relations with Anna Sergeyevna? And there was nothing for him but to talk vaguely of love, of woman, and no one guessed what it meant; only his wife twitched her black eyebrows, and said:

65

"The part of a lady-killer does not suit you at all, Dimitri."

One evening, coming out of the doctors' club with an official with whom he had been playing cards, he could not resist saying:

"If only you knew what a fascinating woman I made the acquaintance of in Yalta!"

The official got into his sledge and was driving away, but turned suddenly and shouted:

"Dmitri Dmitritch!"

70

"What?"

"You were right this evening: the sturgeon was a bit too strong!"

These words, so ordinary, for some reason moved Gurov to indignation, and struck him as degrading and unclean. What savage manners, what people! What senseless nights, what uninteresting, uneventful days! The rage for card-playing, the gluttony, the drunkenness, the continual talk always about the same thing. Useless pursuits and conversations always about the same things absorb the better part of one's time, the better part of one's strength, and in the end there is left a life grovelling and curtailed, worthless and trivial, and there is no escaping or getting away from it—just as though one were in a madhouse or a prison.

Gurov did not sleep all night, and was filled with indignation. And he had a headache all next day. And the next night he slept badly; he sat up in bed, thinking, or paced up and down his room. He was sick of his children, sick of the bank; he had no desire to go anywhere or to talk of anything.

In the holidays in December he prepared for a journey, and told his wife he was going to Petersburg to do something in the

75

interests of a young friend—and he set off for S----. What for? He did not very well know himself. He wanted to see Anna Sergeyevna and to talk with her—to arrange a meeting, if possible.

He reached S---- in the morning, and took the best room at the hotel, in which the floor was covered with grey army cloth, and on the table was an inkstand, grey with dust and adorned with a figure on horseback, with its hat in its hand and its head broken off. The hotel porter gave him the necessary information; Von Diderits lived in a house of his own in Old Gontcharny Street—it was not far from the hotel: he was rich and lived in good style, and had his own horses; everyone in the town knew him. The porter pronounced the name "Dridirits."

Gurov went without haste to Old Gontcharny Street and found the house. Just opposite the house stretched a long grey fence adorned with nails.

"One would run away from a fence like that," thought Gurov, looking from the fence to the windows of the house and back again.

He considered: to-day was a holiday, and the husband would probably be at home. And in any case it would be tactless to go into the house and upset her. If he were to send her a note it might fall into her husband's hands, and then it might ruin everything. The best thing was to trust to chance. And he kept walking up and down the street by the fence, waiting for the chance. He saw a beggar go in at the gate and dogs fly at him; then an hour later he heard a piano, and the sounds were faint and indistinct. Probably it was Anna Sergeyevna playing. The front door suddenly opened, and an old woman came out, followed by the familiar white Pomeranian. Gurov was on the point of calling to the dog, but his heart began beating violently, and in his excitement he could not remember the dog's name.

He walked up and down, and loathed the grey fence more and more, and by now he thought irritably that Anna Sergeyevna had forgotten him, and was perhaps already amusing herself with someone else, and that that was very natural in a young woman who had nothing to look at from morning till night but that

confounded fence. He went back to his hotel room and sat for a long while on the sofa, not knowing what to do, then he had dinner and a long nap.

"How stupid and worrying it is!" he thought when he woke and looked at the dark windows: it was already evening. "Here I've had a good sleep for some reason. What shall I do in the night?"

He sat on the bed, which was covered by a cheap grey blanket, such as one sees in hospitals, and he taunted himself in his vexation:

"So much for the lady with the dog . . . so much for the adventure You're in a nice fix. . . ."

That morning at the station a poster in large letters had caught his eye. "The Geisha" was to be performed for the first time. He thought of this and went to the theatre.

"It's quite possible she may go to the first performance," he thought.

85

The theatre was full. As in all provincial theatres, there was a fog above the chandelier, the gallery was noisy and restless; in the front row the local dandies were standing up before the beginning of the performance, with their hands behind them; in the Governor's box the Governor's daughter, wearing a boa, was sitting in the front seat, while the Governor himself lurked modestly behind the curtain with only his hands visible; the orchestra was a long time tuning up; the stage curtain swayed. All the time the audience were coming in and taking their seats Gurov looked at them eagerly.

Anna Sergeyevna, too, came in. She sat down in the third row, and when Gurov looked at her his heart contracted, and he understood clearly that for him there was in the whole world no creature so near, so precious, and so important to him; she, this little woman, in no way remarkable, lost in a provincial crowd, with a vulgar lorgnette in her hand, filled his whole life now, was his sorrow and his joy, the one happiness that he now desired for himself, and to the sounds of the inferior orchestra, of the wretched provincial violins, he thought how lovely she was. He thought and dreamed.

A young man with small side-whiskers, tall and stooping, came in with Anna Sergeyevna and sat down beside her; he bent his head at every step and seemed to be continually bowing. Most likely this was the husband whom at Yalta, in a rush of bitter feeling, she had called a flunkey. And there really was in his long figure, his side-whiskers, and the small bald patch on his head, something of the flunkey's obsequiousness; his smile was sugary, and in his buttonhole there was some badge of distinction like the number on a waiter.

During the first interval the husband went away to smoke; she remained alone in her stall. Gurov, who was sitting in the stalls, too, went up to her and said in a trembling voice, with a forced smile:

"Good-evening."

90

She glanced at him and turned pale, then glanced again with horror, unable to believe her eyes, and tightly gripped the fan and the lorgnette in her hands, evidently struggling with herself not to faint. Both were silent. She was sitting, he was standing, frightened by her confusion and not venturing to sit down beside her. The violins and the flute began tuning up. He felt suddenly frightened; it seemed as though all the people in the boxes were looking at them. She got up and went quickly to the door; he followed her, and both walked senselessly along passages, and up and down stairs, and figures in legal, scholastic, and civil service uniforms, all wearing badges, flitted before their eyes. They caught glimpses of ladies, of fur coats hanging on pegs; the draughts blew on them, bringing a smell of stale tobacco. And Gurov, whose heart was beating violently, thought:

"Oh, heavens! Why are these people here and this orchestra! . . ."

And at that instant he recalled how when he had seen Anna Sergeyevna off at the station he had thought that everything was over and they would never meet again. But how far they were still from the end!

On the narrow, gloomy staircase over which was written "To the Amphitheatre," she stopped.

"How you have frightened me!" she said, breathing hard, still pale and overwhelmed. "Oh, how you have frightened me! I am half dead. Why have you come? Why?"

"But do understand, Anna, do understand . . ." he said hastily in a low voice. "I entreat you to understand. . . ."

She looked at him with dread, with entreaty, with love; she looked at him intently, to keep his features more distinctly in her memory.

"I am so unhappy," she went on, not heeding him. "I have thought of nothing but you all the time; I live only in the thought of you. And I wanted to forget, to forget you; but why, oh, why, have you come?"

On the landing above them two schoolboys were smoking and looking down, but that was nothing to Gurov; he drew Anna Sergeyevna to him, and began kissing her face, her cheeks, and her hands.

"What are you doing, what are you doing!" she cried in horror, pushing him away. "We are mad. Go away to-day; go away at once. . . . I beseech you by all that is sacred, I implore you. . . . There are people coming this way!"

Someone was coming up the stairs.

"You must go away," Anna Sergeyevna went on in a whisper. "Do you hear, Dmitri Dmitritch? I will come and see you in Moscow. I have never been happy; I am miserable now, and I never, never shall be happy, never! Don't make me suffer still more! I swear I'll come to Moscow. But now let us part. My precious, good, dear one, we must part!"

She pressed his hand and began rapidly going downstairs, looking round at him, and from her eyes he could see that she really was unhappy. Gurov stood for a little while, listened, then, when all sound had died away, he found his coat and left the theatre.

IV

And Anna Sergeyevna began coming to see him in Moscow. Once in two or three months she left S----, telling her husband

that she was going to consult a doctor about an internal complaint—and her husband believed her, and did not believe her. In Moscow she stayed at the Slaviansky Bazaar hotel, and at once sent a man in a red cap to Gurov. Gurov went to see her, and no one in Moscow knew of it.

Once he was going to see her in this way on a winter morning (the messenger had come the evening before when he was out). With him walked his daughter, whom he wanted to take to school: it was on the way. Snow was falling in big wet flakes.

"It's three degrees above freezing-point, and yet it is snowing," said Gurov to his daughter. "The thaw is only on the surface of the earth; there is quite a different temperature at a greater height in the atmosphere."

"And why are there no thunderstorms in the winter, father?"

He explained that, too. He talked, thinking all the while that he was going to see her, and no living soul knew of it, and probably never would know. He had two lives: one, open, seen and known by all who cared to know, full of relative truth and of relative falsehood, exactly like the lives of his friends and acquaintances; and another life running its course in secret. And through some strange, perhaps accidental, conjunction of circumstances, everything that was essential, of interest and of value to him, everything in which he was sincere and did not deceive himself, everything that made the kernel of his life, was hidden from other people; and all that was false in him, the sheath in which he hid himself to conceal the truth—such, for instance, as his work in the bank, his discussions at the club, his "lower race," his presence with his wife at anniversary festivities—all that was open. And he judged of others by himself, not believing in what he saw, and always believing that every man had his real, most interesting life under the cover of secrecy and under the cover of night. All personal life rested on secrecy, and possibly it was partly on that account that civilised man was so nervously anxious that personal privacy should be respected.

After leaving his daughter at school, Gurov went on to the Slaviansky Bazaar. He took off his fur coat below, went upstairs, and softly knocked at the door. Anna Sergeyevna, wearing his

favourite grey dress, exhausted by the journey and the suspense, had been expecting him since the evening before. She was pale; she looked at him, and did not smile, and he had hardly come in when she fell on his breast. Their kiss was slow and prolonged, as though they had not met for two years.

"Well, how are you getting on there?" he asked. "What news?"

110

"Wait; I'll tell you directly. . . . I can't talk."

She could not speak; she was crying. She turned away from him, and pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Let her have her cry out. I'll sit down and wait," he thought, and he sat down in an arm-chair.

Then he rang and asked for tea to be brought him, and while he drank his tea she remained standing at the window with her back to him. She was crying from emotion, from the miserable consciousness that their life was so hard for them; they could only meet in secret, hiding themselves from people, like thieves! Was not their life shattered?

"Come, do stop!" he said.

115

It was evident to him that this love of theirs would not soon be over, that he could not see the end of it. Anna Sergeyevna grew more and more attached to him. She adored him, and it was unthinkable to say to her that it was bound to have an end some day; besides, she would not have believed it!

He went up to her and took her by the shoulders to say something affectionate and cheering, and at that moment he saw himself in the looking-glass.

His hair was already beginning to turn grey. And it seemed strange to him that he had grown so much older, so much plainer during the last few years. The shoulders on which his hands rested were warm and quivering. He felt compassion for this life, still so warm and lovely, but probably already not far from beginning to fade and wither like his own. Why did she love him so much? He always seemed to women different from what he was, and they loved in him not himself, but the man created by their imagination, whom they had been eagerly seeking all their lives; and afterwards, when they noticed their mistake, they loved him all the same. And not one of them had been happy with him.

Time passed, he had made their acquaintance, got on with them, parted, but he had never once loved; it was anything you like, but not love.

And only now when his head was grey he had fallen properly, really in love—for the first time in his life.

Anna Sergeyevna and he loved each other like people very close and akin, like husband and wife, like tender friends; it seemed to them that fate itself had meant them for one another, and they could not understand why he had a wife and she a husband; and it was as though they were a pair of birds of passage, caught and forced to live in different cages. They forgave each other for what they were ashamed of in their past, they forgave everything in the present, and felt that this love of theirs had changed them both.

120

In moments of depression in the past he had comforted himself with any arguments that came into his mind, but now he no longer cared for arguments; he felt profound compassion, he wanted to be sincere and tender. . . .

"Don't cry, my darling," he said. "You've had your cry; that's enough. . . . Let us talk now, let us think of some plan."

Then they spent a long while taking counsel together, talked of how to avoid the necessity for secrecy, for deception, for living in different towns and not seeing each other for long at a time. How could they be free from this intolerable bondage?

"How? How?" he asked, clutching his head. "How?"

And it seemed as though in a little while the solution would be found, and then a new and splendid life would begin; and it was clear to both of them that they had still a long, long road before them, and that the most complicated and difficult part of it was only just beginning.

125

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

License: Public Domain

Anton Chekhov

Translated by Julius West

Characters

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA RANEVSKY (MME. RANEVSKY), A LANDOWNER

ANYA, HER DAUGHTER, AGED SEVENTEEN

VARYA (BARBARA), HER ADOPTED DAUGHTER, AGED TWENTY-SEVEN

LEONID ANDREYEVITCH GAEV, MME. RANEVSKY'S BROTHER

[ERMOLAI](#) ALEXEYEVITCH LOPAKHIN, A MERCHANT

[PETER](#) SERGEYEVITCH TROFIMOV, A STUDENT

BORIS BORISOVITCH SIMEONOV-PISCHIN, A LANDOWNER

CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, A GOVERNESS

SIMEON PANTELEYEVITCH [EPIKHODOV](#), A CLERK

DUNYASHA (AVDOTYA FEDOROVNA), A MAIDSERVANT

[FIERS](#), AN OLD FOOTMAN, AGED EIGHTY-SEVEN

YASHA, A YOUNG [FOOTMAN](#)

A TRAMP

A STATION-MASTER

POST-OFFICE CLERK

GUESTS

A SERVANT

[THE ACTION TAKES PLACE ON MME. RANEVSKY'S ESTATE]

Act One

[A ROOM WHICH IS STILL CALLED THE NURSERY. ONE OF THE DOORS
LEADS INTO ANYA'S ROOM. IT IS CLOSE ON SUNRISE. IT IS MAY.
THE CHERRY-TREES ARE IN FLOWER BUT IT IS CHILLY IN THE
GARDEN. THERE IS AN EARLY FROST. THE WINDOWS OF THE ROOM
ARE SHUT. DUNYASHA COMES IN WITH A CANDLE, AND
LOPAKHIN WITH A BOOK IN HIS HAND.]

LOPAKHIN

The train's arrived, thank God. What's the time?

DUNYASHA

It will soon be two. [BLOWS OUT CANDLE.] It is light already.

LOPAKHIN

How much was the train late? Two hours at least. [YAWNS AND STRETCHES HIMSELF.] I have made a rotten mess of it! I came here on purpose to meet them at the station, and

then overslept myself . . . in my chair. It's a pity. I wish you'd wakened me.

DUNYASHA

I thought you'd gone away. *[LISTENING.]* I think I hear them coming.

LOPAKHIN

[LISTENS.] No. . . . They've got to collect their luggage and so on. . . . *[PAUSE.]* Lubov Andreyevna has been living abroad for five years; I don't know what she'll be like now. . . . She's a good sort--an easy, simple person. I remember when I was a boy of fifteen, my father, who is dead--he used to keep a shop in the village here--hit me on the face with his fist, and my nose bled. . . . We had gone into the yard together for something or other, and he was a little drunk. Lubov Andreyevna, as I remember her now, was still young, and very thin, and she took me to the washstand here in this very room, the nursery. She said, "Don't cry, [little man](#), it'll be all right in time for your wedding." *[PAUSE.]* "Little man". . . . My father was a peasant, it's true, but here I am in a white waistcoat and yellow shoes . . . a pearl out of an oyster. I'm rich now, with lots of money, but just think about it and examine me, and you'll find I'm still a peasant down to the marrow of my bones. *[TURNS OVER THE PAGES OF HIS BOOK.]* Here I've been reading this book, but I understood nothing. I read and fell asleep. *[PAUSE.]*

DUNYASHA

The dogs didn't sleep all night; they know that they're coming.

LOPAKHIN

What's up with you, Dunyasha . . . ?

DUNYASHA

My hands are shaking. I shall faint.

LOPAKHIN

You're too sensitive, Dunyasha. You dress just like a lady, and you do your hair like one too. You oughtn't. You should know your place.

EPIKHODOV

[ENTERS WITH A BOUQUET. HE WEARS A SHORT JACKET AND BRILLIANTLY POLISHED BOOTS WHICH SQUEAK AUDIBLY. HE DROPS THE BOUQUET AS HE ENTERS, THEN PICKS IT UP.] The gardener sent these; says they're to go into the dining-room. *[GIVES THE BOUQUET TO DUNYASHA.]*

LOPAKHIN

And you'll bring me some [kvass](#).

DUNYASHA

Very well. *[EXIT.]*

EPIKHODOV

There's a frost this morning--three degrees, and the cherry-trees are all in flower. I can't approve of our climate. [*SIGHS.*] I can't. Our climate is indisposed to favour us even this once. And, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, allow me to say to you, in addition, that I bought myself some boots two days ago, and I beg to assure you that they squeak in a perfectly unbearable manner. What shall I put on them?

LOPAKHIN

Go away. You bore me.

EPIKHODOV

Some misfortune happens to me every day. But I don't complain; I'm used to it, and I can smile. [*DUNYASHA COMES IN AND BRINGS LOPAKHIN SOME KVASS.*] I shall go. [*KNOCKS OVER A CHAIR.*] There. . . . [*TRIUMPHANTLY.*] There, you see, if I may use the word, what circumstances I am in, so to speak. It is even simply marvellous. [*EXIT.*]

DUNYASHA

I may confess to you, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that Epikhodov has proposed to me.

LOPAKHIN

Ah!

DUNYASHA

I don't know what to do about it. He's a nice young man, but every now and again, when he begins talking, you can't understand a word he's saying. I think I like him. He's madly in love with me. He's an unlucky man; every day something happens. We tease him about it. They call him "Two-and-twenty troubles."

LOPAKHIN

[*LISTENS.*] There they come, I think.

DUNYASHA

They're coming! What's the matter with me? I'm cold all over.

LOPAKHIN

There they are, right enough. Let's go and meet them. Will she know me? We haven't seen each other for five years.

DUNYASHA

[*EXCITED.*] I shall faint in a minute. . . . Oh, I'm fainting!

[*TWO CARRIAGES ARE HEARD DRIVING UP TO THE HOUSE.*]

LOPAKHIN AND DUNYASHA QUICKLY GO OUT. THE STAGE IS EMPTY. A NOISE BEGINS IN THE NEXT ROOM. FIER, LEANING ON A STICK, WALKS QUICKLY ACROSS THE STAGE; HE HAS JUST BEEN TO MEET LUBOV ANDREYEVNA. HE WEARS AN OLD-FASHIONED LIVERY AND A TALL HAT. HE IS SAYING SOMETHING TO HIMSELF, BUT NOT A WORD OF IT CAN BE MADE OUT. THE NOISE BEHIND THE STAGE GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER. A VOICE IS HEARD: "LET'S GO IN THERE." ENTER LUBOV ANDREYEVNA,

ANYA, AND CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA WITH A LITTLE DOG ON A CHAIN, AND ALL DRESSED IN TRAVELLING CLOTHES, VARYA IN A LONG COAT AND WITH A KERCHIEF ON HER HEAD. GAEV, SIMEONOV-PISCHIN, LOPAKHIN, DUNYASHA WITH A PARCEL AND AN UMBRELLA, AND A SERVANT WITH LUGGAGE --ALL CROSS THE ROOM.]

ANYA

Let's come through here. Do you remember what this room is, mother?

LUBOV

[JOYFULLY, THROUGH HER TEARS.] The nursery!

VARYA

How cold it is! My hands are quite numb. *[To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.]* Your rooms, the white one and the violet one, are just as they used to be, mother.

LUBOV

My dear nursery, oh, you beautiful room. . . . I used to sleep here when I was a baby. *[WEEPS.]* And here I am like a little girl again. *[KISSES HER BROTHER, VARYA, THEN HER BROTHER AGAIN.]* And Varya is just as she used to be, just like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha. *[KISSES HER.]*

GAEV

The train was two hours late. There now; how's that for punctuality?

CHARLOTTA

[To PISCHIN.] My dog eats nuts too.

PISCHIN

[ASTONISHED.] To think of that, now!

[ALL GO OUT EXCEPT ANYA AND DUNYASHA.]

DUNYASHA

We did have to wait for you!

[TAKES OFF ANYA'S CLOAK AND HAT.]

ANYA

I didn't get any sleep for four nights on the journey. . . . I'm awfully cold.

DUNYASHA

You went away during Lent, when it was snowing and frosty, but now? Darling!

[LAUGHS AND KISSES HER.] We did have to wait for you, my joy, my pet. . . . I must tell you at once, I can't bear to wait a minute.

ANYA

[TIRED.] Something else now . . . ?

DUNYASHA

The clerk, Epikhodov, proposed to me after Easter.

ANYA

Always the same. . . . [*PUTS HER HAIR STRAIGHT.*] I've lost all my hairpins. . . .

[*SHE IS VERY TIRED, AND EVEN STAGGERS AS SHE WALKS.*]

DUNYASHA

I don't know what to think about it. He loves me, he loves me so much!

ANYA

[*LOOKS INTO HER ROOM; IN A GENTLE VOICE.*] My room, my windows, as if I'd never gone away. I'm at home! To-morrow morning I'll get up and have a run in the [garden](#). . . .Oh, if I could only get to sleep! I didn't sleep the whole journey, I was so bothered.

DUNYASHA

Peter Sergeyevitch came two days ago.

ANYA

[*JOYFULLY.*] Peter!

DUNYASHA

He sleeps in the bath-house, he lives there. He said he was afraid he'd be in the way. [*LOOKS AT HER POCKET-WATCH.*] I ought to wake him, but Barbara Mihailovna told me not to. "Don't wake him," she said.

[*ENTER VARYA, A BUNCH OF KEYS ON HER BELT.*]

VARYA

Dunyasha, some coffee, quick. Mother wants some.

DUNYASHA

This minute. [*EXIT.*]

VARYA

Well, you've come, glory be to God. Home again. [*CARESSING HER.*] My darling is back again! My pretty one is back again!

ANYA

I did have an awful time, I tell you.

VARYA

I can just imagine it!

ANYA

I went away in Holy Week; it was very cold then. Charlotta talked the whole way and would go on performing her tricks. Why did you tie Charlotta on to me?

VARYA

You couldn't go alone, darling, at seventeen!

ANYA

We went to Paris; it's cold there and snowing. I talk French perfectly horribly. My mother lives on the fifth floor. I go to her, and find her there with various Frenchmen, women, an old abbé with a book, and everything in tobacco smoke and with no comfort at all. I suddenly became very sorry for mother--so sorry that I took her head in my arms and hugged her and wouldn't let her go. Then mother started hugging me and crying. . . .

VARYA

[*WEeping.*] Don't say any more, don't say any more. . . .

ANYA

She's already sold her [villa](#) near [Mentone](#); she's nothing left, nothing. And I haven't a copeck left either; we only just managed to get here. And mother won't understand! We had dinner at a station; she asked for all the expensive things, and tipped the waiters one rouble each. And Charlotta too. Yasha wants his share too--it's too bad. Mother's got a footman now, Yasha; we've brought him here.

VARYA

I saw the [wretch](#).

ANYA

How's business? Has the interest been paid?

VARYA

Not much chance of that.

ANYA

Oh God, oh God . . .

VARYA

The place will be sold in August.

ANYA

O God. . . .

LOPAKHIN

[*LOOKS IN AT THE DOOR AND MOOS.*] Moo! . . . [*EXIT.*]

VARYA

[*THROUGH HER TEARS.*] I'd like to. . . . [*SHAKES HER FIST.*]

ANYA

[*EMBRACES VARYA, SOFTLY.*] Varya, has he proposed to you? [*VARYA SHAKES HEAD.*] But he loves you. . . . Why don't you make up your minds? Why do you keep on waiting?

VARYA

I think that it will all come to nothing. He's a busy man. I'm not his affair . . . he pays no attention to me. Bless the man, I don't want to see him., . . But everybody talks about our marriage, everybody congratulates me, and there's nothing in it at all, it's all like a dream. *[IN ANOTHER TONE.]* You've got a brooch like a bee.

ANYA

[SADLY.] Mother bought it. *[GOES INTO HER ROOM, AND TALKS LIGHTLY, LIKE A CHILD.]* In Paris I went up in a balloon!

VARYA

My darling's come back, my pretty one's come back! *[DUNYASHA HAS ALREADY RETURNED WITH THE COFFEE-POT AND IS MAKING THE COFFEE, VARYA STANDS NEAR THE DOOR.]* I go about all day, looking after the house, and I think all the time, if only you could marry a rich man, then I'd be happy and would go away somewhere by myself, then to Kiev . . . to Moscow, and so on, from one holy place to another. I'd tramp and tramp. That would be splendid!

ANYA

The birds are singing in the garden. What time is it now?

VARYA

It must be getting on for three. Time you went to sleep, darling. *[GOES INTO ANYA'S ROOM.]* Splendid!

[ENTER YASHA WITH A PLAID SHAWL AND A TRAVELLING BAG.]

YASHA

[CROSSING THE STAGE: POLITELY.] May I go this way?

DUNYASHA

I hardly knew you, Yasha. You have changed abroad.

YASHA

Hm . . . and who are you?

DUNYASHA

When you went away I was only so high. *[SHOWING WITH HER HAND.]* I'm Dunyasha, the daughter of Theodore Kozoyedov. You don't remember!

YASHA

Oh, you little cucumber!

[LOOKS ROUND AND EMBRACES HER. SHE SCREAMS AND DROPS A SAUCER. YASHA GOES OUT QUICKLY.]

VARYA

[IN THE DOORWAY: IN AN ANGRY VOICE.] What's that?

DUNYASHA

[*THROUGH HER TEARS.*] I've broken a saucer.

VARYA

It may bring luck.

ANYA

[*COMING OUT OF HER ROOM.*] We must tell mother that Peter's here.

VARYA

I told them not to wake him.

ANYA

[*THOUGHTFULLY.*] Father died six years ago, and a month later my brother Grisha was drowned in the river-- such a dear little boy of seven! Mother couldn't bear it; she went away, away, without looking round. . . . [*SHUDDERS.*] How I understand her; if only she knew! [*PAUSE.*] And Peter Trofimov was Grisha's tutor, he might tell her. . .

[*ENTER FIERS IN A SHORT JACKET AND WHITE WAISTCOAT.*]

FIERS

[*GOES TO THE COFFEE-POT, NERVOUSLY.*] The mistress is going to have some food here. . . . [*PUTS ON WHITE GLOVES.*] Is the coffee ready? [*TO DUNYASHA, SEVERELY.*] You! Where's the cream?

DUNYASHA

Oh, dear me . . . ! [*RAPID EXIT.*]

FIERS

[*FUSSING ROUND THE COFFEE-POT.*] Oh, you bungler. . . . [*MURMURS TO HIMSELF.*] Back from Paris . . . the master went to Paris once . . . in a carriage. . . . [*LAUGHS.*]

VARYA

What are you talking about, Fiers?

FIERS

I beg your pardon? [*JOYFULLY.*] The mistress is home again. I've lived to see her! Don't care if I die now. . . . [*WEEPS WITH JOY.*]

[*ENTER LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, LOPAKHIN, AND SIMEONOV-PISCHIN, THE LATTER IN A LONG JACKET OF THIN CLOTH AND LOOSE TROUSERS. GAEV, COMING IN, MOVES HIS ARMS AND BODY ABOUT AS IF HE IS PLAYING BILLIARDS.*]

LUBOV

Let me remember now. Red into the corner! Twice into the centre!

GAEV

Right into the pocket! Once upon a time you and I used both to sleep in this room, and now I'm fifty-one; it does seem strange.

LOPAKHIN

Yes, time does go.

GAEV

Who does?

LOPAKHIN

I said that time does go.

GAEV

It smells of [patchouli](#) here.

ANYA

I'm going to bed. Good-night, [mother](#). *[KISSES HER.]*

LUBOV

My lovely little one. *[KISSES HER HAND.]* Glad to be at home? I can't get over it.

ANYA

Good-night, uncle.

GAEV

[KISSES HER FACE AND HANDS.] God be with you. How you do resemble your mother! *[TO HIS SISTER.]* You were just like her at her age, Luba.

[ANYA GIVES HER HAND TO LOPAKHIN AND PISCHIN AND GOES OUT, SHUTTING THE DOOR BEHIND HER.]

LUBOV

She's awfully tired.

PISCHIN

It's a very long journey.

VARYA

[TO LOPAKHIN AND PISCHIN.] Well, sirs, it's getting on for three, quite time you went.

LUBOV

[LAUGHS.] You're just the same as ever, Varya. *[DRAWS HER CLOSE AND KISSES HER.]* I'll have some coffee now, then we'll all go. *[FIERS LAYS A CUSHION UNDER HER FEET.]* Thank you, dear. I'm used to coffee. I drink it day and night. Thank you, dear old man. *[KISSES FIERS.]*

VARYA

I'll go and see if they've brought in all the luggage. *[EXIT.]*

LUBOV

Is it really I who am sitting here? *[LAUGHS.]* I want to jump about and wave my arms. *[COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS.]* But suppose I'm dreaming! God knows I love my own country, I love it deeply; I couldn't look out of the railway carriage, I cried so

much. [*THROUGH HER TEARS.*] Still, I must have my coffee. Thank you, Fiers. Thank you, dear old man. I'm so glad you're still with us.

FIERS

The day before yesterday.

GAEV

He doesn't hear well.

LOPAKHIN

I've got to go off to Kharkov by the five o'clock train. I'm awfully sorry! I should like to have a look at you, to gossip a little. You're as fine-looking as ever.

PISCHIN

[*BREATHES HEAVILY.*] Even finer-looking . . . dressed in Paris fashions . . . confound it all.

LOPAKHIN

Your brother, Leonid Andreyevitch, says I'm a snob, a usurer, but that is absolutely nothing to me. Let him talk. Only I do wish you would believe in me as you once did, that your wonderful, touching eyes would look at me as they did before. Merciful God! My father was the serf of your grandfather and your own father, but you--you more than anybody else--did so much for me once upon a time that I've forgotten everything and love you as if you belonged to my family . . . and even more.

LUBOV

I can't sit still, I'm not in a state to do it. [*JUMPS UP AND WALKS ABOUT IN GREAT EXCITEMENT.*] I'll never survive this happiness. . . . You can laugh at me; I'm a silly woman. . . . [My dear little cupboard](#). [*KISSES CUPBOARD.*] My little table.

GAEV

[Nurse](#) has died in your absence.

LUBOV

[*SITS AND DRINKS COFFEE.*] Yes, bless her soul. I heard by letter.

GAEV

And Anastasius has died too. Peter Kosoy has left me and now lives in town with the Commissioner of Police. [*TAKES A BOX OF SUGAR-CANDY OUT OF HIS POCKET AND SUCKS A PIECE.*]

PISCHIN

My daughter, Dashenka, sends her love.

LOPAKHIN

I want to say something very pleasant, very delightful, to you. [*LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.*] I'm going away at once, I haven't much time . . . but I'll tell you all about it in two or

three words. As you already know, your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts, and the sale is fixed for August 22; but you needn't be alarmed, dear madam, you may sleep in peace; there's a way out. Here's my plan. Please attend carefully! Your estate is only thirteen miles from the town, the railway runs by, and if the cherry orchard and the land by the river are broken up into building lots and are then leased off for villas you'll get at least twenty-five thousand roubles a year profit out of it.

GAEV

How utterly absurd!

LUBOV

I don't understand you at all, Ermolai Alexeyevitch.

LOPAKHIN

You will get twenty-five roubles a year for each [dessiatin](#) from the leaseholders at the very least, and if you advertise now I'm willing to bet that you won't have a vacant plot left by the autumn; they'll all go. In a word, you're saved. I congratulate you. Only, of course, you'll have to put things straight, and clean up. . . . For instance, you'll have to pull down all the old buildings, this house, which isn't any use to anybody now, and cut down the old cherry orchard. . .

LUBOV

Cut it down? My dear man, you must excuse me, but you don't understand anything at all. If there's anything interesting or remarkable in the whole province, it's this cherry orchard of ours.

LOPAKHIN

The only remarkable thing about the orchard is that it's very large. It only bears fruit every other year, and even then you don't know what to do with them; nobody buys any.

GAEV

This orchard is mentioned in the ["Encyclopaedic Dictionary."](#)

LOPAKHIN

[LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.] If we can't think of anything and don't make up our minds to anything, then on August 22, both the cherry orchard and the whole estate will be up for auction. Make up your mind! I swear there's no other way out, I'll swear it again.

FIERS

In the old days, forty or fifty years back, they dried the cherries, soaked them and pickled them, and made jam of them, and it used to happen that . . .

GAEV

Be quiet, Fiers.

FIERS

And then we'd send the dried cherries off in carts to Moscow and Kharkov. And money! And the dried cherries were soft, juicy, sweet, and nicely scented. . . They knew the way. . . .

LUBOV

What was the way?

FIERS

They've forgotten. Nobody remembers.

PISCHIN

[*To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.*] What about Paris? Eh? Did you eat frogs?

LUBOV

I ate crocodiles.

PISCHIN

To think of that, now.

LOPAKHIN

Up to now in the villages there were only the gentry and the labourers, and now the people who live in villas have arrived. All towns now, even small ones, are surrounded by villas. And it's safe to say that in twenty years' time the villa resident will be all over the place. At present he sits on his balcony and drinks tea, but it may well come to pass that he'll begin to cultivate his patch of land, and then your cherry orchard will be happy, rich, splendid. . . .

GAEV

[*ANGRY.*] What rot!

[*ENTER VARYA AND YASHA.*]

VARYA

There are two telegrams for you, little mother. [*PICKS OUT A KEY AND NOISILY UNLOCKS AN ANTIQUE CUPBOARD.*] Here they are.

LUBOV

They're from Paris. . . . [*TEARS THEM UP WITHOUT READING THEM.*] I've done with Paris.

GAEV

And do you know, Luba, how old this case is? A week ago I took out the bottom drawer; I looked and saw figures burnt out in it. That case was made exactly a hundred years ago. What do you think of that? What? We could celebrate its [jubilee](#). It hasn't a soul of its own, but still, say what you will, it's a fine bookcase.

PISCHIN

[*ASTONISHED.*] A hundred years. . . Think of that!

GAEV

Yes . . . it's a real thing. [*HANDLING IT.*] My dear and honoured case! I congratulate you on your existence, which has already for more than a hundred years been directed towards the bright ideals of good and justice; your silent call to productive labour has not grown less in the hundred years [*WEEPING.*] during which you have upheld virtue and faith in a better future to the generations of our race, educating us up to ideals of goodness and to the knowledge of a common consciousness. [*PAUSE.*]

LOPAKHIN

Yes. . . .

LUBOV

You're just the same as ever, Leon.

GAEV

[*A LITTLE CONFUSED.*] Off the white on the right, into the corner pocket. Red ball goes into the middle pocket!

LOPAKHIN

[*LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.*] It's time I went.

YASHA

[*GIVING LUBOV ANDREYEVNA HER MEDICINE.*] Will you take your pills now?

PISCHIN

You oughtn't to take medicines, dear madam; they do you neither harm nor good. . . . Give them here, dear madam. [*TAKES THE PILLS, TURNS THEM OUT INTO THE PALM OF HIS HAND, BLOWS ON THEM, PUTS THEM INTO HIS MOUTH, AND DRINKS SOME KVASS.*] There!

LUBOV

[*FRIGHTENED.*] You're off your head!

PISCHIN

I've taken all the pills.

LOPAKHIN

Gormandizer! [*ALL LAUGH.*]

FIERS

They were here in Easter week and ate half a pailful of cucumbers. . . . [*MUMBLES.*]

LUBOV

What's he driving at?

VARYA

He's been mumbling away for three years. We're used to that.

YASHA

Senile decay.

[CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA CROSSES THE STAGE, DRESSED IN
WHITE: SHE IS VERY THIN AND TIGHTLY LACED; HAS A LORGNETTE
AT HER WAIST.]

LOPAKHIN

Excuse me, Charlotta Ivanovna, I haven't said "How do you do" to you yet. [TRIES TO
KISS HER HAND.]

CHARLOTTA

[TAKES HER HAND AWAY.] If you let people kiss your hand, then they'll want your elbow,
then your shoulder, and then . . .

LOPAKHIN

My luck's out to-day! [ALL LAUGH.] Show us a trick, Charlotta Ivanovna!

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA

Charlotta, do us a trick.

CHARLOTTA

It's not necessary. I want to go to bed. [EXIT.]

LOPAKHIN

We shall see each other in three weeks. [KISSES LUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S HAND.] Now, good-
bye. It's time to go. [TO GAEV.] See you again. [KISSES PISCHIN.] Au revoir. [GIVES HIS HAND
TO VARYA, THEN TO FIERS AND TO YASHA.] I don't want to go away. [TO LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.]. If
you think about the villas and make up your mind, then just let me know, and I'll
raise a loan of 50,000 roubles at once. Think about it seriously.

VARYA

[ANGRILY.] Do go, now!

LOPAKHIN

I'm going, I'm going. . . . [EXIT.]

GAEV

Snob. Still, I beg pardon. . . . Varya's going to marry him, he's Varya's young man.

VARYA

Don't talk too much, uncle.

LUBOV

Why not, Varya? I should be very glad. He's a good man.

PISCHIN

To speak the honest truth . . . he's a worthy man. . . . And my Dashenka . . . also says that . . . she says lots of things. [*SNORES, BUT WAKES UP AGAIN AT ONCE.*] But still, dear madam, if you could lend me . . . 240 roubles . . . to pay the interest on my mortgage to-morrow . . .

VARYA

[*FRIGHTENED.*] We haven't got it, we haven't got it!

LUBOV

It's quite true. I've nothing at all.

PISCHIN

I'll find it all right [*LAUGHS.*] I never lose hope. I used to think, "Everything's lost now. I'm a dead man," when, lo and behold, a railway was built over my land . . . and they paid me for it. And something else will happen to-day or to-morrow. Dashenka may win 20,000 roubles . . . she's got a lottery ticket.

LUBOV

The coffee's all gone, we can go to bed.

FIERS

[*BRUSHING GAEV'S TROUSERS; IN AN INSISTENT TONE.*] You've put on the wrong trousers again. What am I to do with you?

VARYA

[*QUIETLY.*] Anya's asleep. [*OPENS WINDOW QUIETLY.*] The sun has risen already; it isn't cold. Look, little mother: what lovely trees! And the air! The starlings are singing!

GAEV

[*OPENS THE OTHER WINDOW.*] The whole garden's white. You haven't forgotten, Luba ? There's that long avenue going straight, straight, like a stretched strap; it shines on moonlight nights. Do you remember? You haven't forgotten?

LUBOV

[*LOOKS OUT INTO THE GARDEN.*] Oh, my childhood, days of my innocence! In this nursery I used to sleep; I used to look out from here into the orchard. Happiness used to wake with me every morning, and then it was just as it is now; nothing has changed. [*LAUGHS FROM JOY.*] It's all, all white! Oh, my orchard! After the dark autumns and the cold winters, you're young again, full of happiness, the angels of heaven haven't left you. . . . If only I could take my heavy burden off my breast and shoulders, if I could forget my past!

GAEV

Yes, and they'll sell this orchard to pay off debts. How strange it seems!

LUBOV

Look, there's my dead mother going in the orchard . . . dressed in white! [*LAUGHS FROM JOY.*] That's she.

GAEV
Where?

VARYA
God bless you, little mother.

LUBOV
There's nobody there; I thought I saw somebody. On the right, at the turning by the summer-house, a white little tree bent down, looking just like a woman. [*ENTER TROFIMOV IN A WORN STUDENT UNIFORM AND SPECTACLES.*] What a marvellous garden! White masses of flowers, the blue sky. . . .

TROFIMOV
Lubov Andreyevna! [*SHE LOOKS ROUND AT HIM.*] I only want to show myself, and I'll go away. [*KISSES HER HAND WARMLY.*] I was told to wait till the morning, but I didn't have the patience.
[*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA LOOKS SURPRISED.*]

VARYA
[*CRYING.*] It's Peter Trofimov.

TROFIMOV
Peter Trofimov, once the tutor of your Grisha. . . . Have I changed so much?
[*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA EMBRACES HIM AND CRIES SOFTLY.*]

GAEV
[*CONFUSED.*] That's enough, that's enough, Luba.

VARYA
[*WEEPS.*] But I told you, Peter, to wait till to-morrow.

LUBOV
My Grisha . . . my boy . . . Grisha . . . my son.

VARYA
What are we to do, little mother? It's the will of God.

TROFIMOV
[*SOFTLY, THROUGH HIS TEARS.*] It's all right, it's all right.

LUBOV
[*STILL WEEPING.*] My boy's dead; he was drowned. Why? Why, my friend? [*SOFTLY.*] Anya's asleep in there. I am speaking so loudly, making such a noise. . . . Well, Peter? What's made you look so bad? Why have you grown so old?

TROFIMOV

In the train an old woman called me a decayed gentleman.

LUBOV

You were quite a boy then, a nice little student, and now your hair is not at all thick and you wear spectacles. Are you really still a student? *[GOES TO THE DOOR.]*

TROFIMOV

I suppose I shall always be a student.

LUBOV

[KISSES HER BROTHER, THEN VARYA.] Well, let's go to bed. . . . And you've grown older, Leonid.

PISCHIN

[FOLLOWS HER.] Yes, we've got to go to bed. . . . Oh, my gout! I'll stay the night here. If only, Lubov Andreyevna, my dear, you could get me 240 roubles to-morrow morning--

GAEV

Still the same story.

PISCHIN

Two hundred and forty roubles . . . to pay the interest on the mortgage.

LUBOV

I haven't any money, dear man.

PISCHIN

I'll give it back . . . it's a small sum. . .

LUBOV

Well, then, Leonid will give it to you. . . Let him have it, Leonid.

GAEV

By all means; hold out your hand.

LUBOV

Why not? He wants it; he'll give it back.

*[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, TROFIMOV, PISCHIN, AND FIERS
GO OUT. GAEV, VARYA, AND YASHA REMAIN.]*

GAEV

My sister hasn't lost the habit of throwing money about. *[To YASHA.]* Stand off, do; you smell of poultry.

YASHA

[GRINS.] You are just the same as ever, Leonid Andreyevitch.

GAEV

Really? *[To VARYA.]* What's he saying?

VARYA

[To YASHA.] Your mother's come from the village; she's been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, and wants to see you. . . .

YASHA

Bless the woman!

VARYA

Shameless man.

YASHA

A lot of use there is in her coming. She might have come tomorrow just as well.

[EXIT.]

VARYA

Mother hasn't altered a scrap, she's just as she always was. She'd give away everything, if the idea only entered her head.

GAEV

Yes. . . . *[PAUSE.]* If there's any illness for which people offer many remedies, you may be sure that particular illness is incurable, I think. I work my brains to their hardest. I've several remedies, very many, and that really means I've none at all. It would be nice to inherit a fortune from somebody, it would be nice to marry our Anya to a rich man, it would be nice to go to Yaroslav and try my luck with my aunt the Countess. My aunt is very, very rich.

VARYA

[WEEPS.] If only God helped us.

GAEV

Don't cry. My aunt's very rich, but she doesn't like us. My sister, in the first place, married an [advocate](#), not a noble. . . . *[ANYA APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY.]* She not only married a man who was not a noble, but she behaved herself in a way which cannot be described as proper. She's nice and kind and charming, and I'm very fond of her, but say what you will in her favour and you still have to admit that she's wicked; you can feel it in her slightest movements.

VARYA

[WHISPERS.] Anya's in the doorway.

GAEV

Really? *[PAUSE.]* It's curious, something's got into my right eye . . . I can't see properly out of it. And on Thursday, when I was at the District Court . . .

[ENTER ANYA.]

VARYA

Why aren't you in bed, Anya?

ANYA

Can't sleep. It's no good.

GAEV

My darling! [KISSES ANYA'S FACE AND HANDS.] My child. . . . [CRYING.] You're not my niece, you're my angel, you're my all. . . Believe in me, believe. . .

ANYA

I do believe in you, uncle. Everybody loves you and respects you . . . but, uncle dear, you ought to say nothing, no more than that. What were you saying just now about my mother, your own sister? Why did you say those things?

GAEV

Yes, yes. [COVERS HIS FACE WITH HER HAND.] Yes, really, it was awful. Save me, my God! And only just now I made a speech before a bookcase . . . it's so silly! And only when I'd finished I knew how silly it was.

VARYA

Yes, uncle dear, you really ought to say less. Keep quiet, that's all.

ANYA

You'd be so much happier in yourself if you only kept quiet.

GAEV

All right, I'll be quiet. [KISSES THEIR HANDS.] I'll be quiet. But let's talk business. On Thursday I was in the District Court, and a lot of us met there together, and we began to talk of this, that, and the other, and now I think I can arrange a loan to pay the interest into the bank.

VARYA

If only God would help us!

GAEV

I'll go on Tuesday. I'll talk with them about it again. [To VARYA.] Don't howl. [To ANYA.] Your mother will have a talk to Lopakhin; he, of course, won't refuse . . . And when you've rested you'll go to Yaroslav to the Countess, your grandmother. So you see, we'll have three irons in the fire, and we'll be safe. We'll pay up the interest. I'm certain. [PUTS SOME SUGAR-CANDY INTO HIS MOUTH.] I swear on my honour, on anything you will, that the estate will not be sold! [EXCITEDLY.] I swear on my happiness! Here's my hand. You may call me a dishonourable wretch if I let it go to auction! I swear by all I am!

ANYA

[*SHE IS CALM AGAIN AND HAPPY.*] How good and clever you are, uncle. [*EMBRACES HIM.*] I'm happy now! I'm happy! All's well!

[*ENTER FIERS.*]

FIERS

[*REPROACHFULLY.*] Leonid Andreyevitch, don't you fear God? When are you going to bed?

GAEV

Soon, soon. You go away, Fiers. I'll undress myself. Well, children, bye-bye . . . ! I'll give you the details to-morrow, but let's go to bed now. [*KISSES ANYA AND VARYA.*] [I'm a man of the eighties.](#) . . . People don't praise those years much, but I can still say that I've suffered for my beliefs. The peasants don't love me for nothing, I assure you. We've got to learn to know the peasants! We ought to learn how. . . .

ANYA

You're doing it again, uncle!

VARYA

Be quiet, uncle!

FIERS

[*ANGRILY.*] Leonid Andreyevitch!

GAEV

I'm coming, I'm coming. . . . Go to bed now. Off two cushions into the middle! I turn over a new leaf. . .

[*EXIT. FIERS GOES OUT AFTER HIM.*]

ANYA

I'm quieter now. I don't want to go to Yaroslav, I don't like grandmother; but I'm calm now; thanks to uncle. [*SITS DOWN.*]

VARYA

It's time to go to sleep. I'll go. There's been an unpleasantness here while you were away. In the old servants' part of the house, as you know, only the old people live--little old Efim and Polya and Evstigney, and Karp as well. They started letting some tramps or other spend the night there--I said nothing. Then I heard that they were saying that I had ordered them to be fed on peas and nothing else; from meanness, you see. . . . And it was all Evstigney's doing. . . . Very well, I thought, if that's what the matter is, just you wait. So I call Evstigney. . . . [*YAWNS.*] He comes. "What's this," I say, "Evstigney, you old fool. . . . [*LOOKS AT ANYA.*] [Any dear!](#) [*PAUSE.*] She's dropped off. . . . [*TAKES ANYA'S ARM.*] Let's go to bye-bye. . . . Come along! . . .

[*LEADS HER.*] My darling's gone to sleep! Come on. . . . [*THEY GO. IN THE DISTANCE, THE OTHER SIDE*

OF THE ORCHARD, A SHEPHERD PLAYS HIS PIPE. TROFIMOV CROSSES THE STAGE AND STOPS ON SEEING VARYA AND ANYA.] Sh! She's asleep, asleep. Come on, dear.

ANYA

[QUIETLY, HALF-ASLEEP.] I'm so tired . . . all the bells . . . uncle, dear! Mother and uncle!

VARYA

Come on, dear, come on! [THEY GO INTO ANYA'S ROOM.]

TROFIMOV

[MOVED.] My sun! My spring!

[CURTAIN.]

Act Two

[IN A FIELD. AN OLD, CROOKED [SHRINE](#), WHICH HAS BEEN LONG ABANDONED; NEAR IT A WELL AND LARGE STONES, WHICH APPARENTLY ARE OLD TOMBSTONES, AND AN OLD GARDEN SEAT. THE ROAD IS SEEN TO GAEV'S ESTATE. ON ONE SIDE RISE DARK POPLARS, BEHIND THEM BEGINS THE CHERRY ORCHARD. IN THE DISTANCE IS A ROW OF TELEGRAPH POLES, AND FAR, FAR AWAY ON THE HORIZON ARE THE INDISTINCT SIGNS OF A LARGE TOWN, WHICH CAN ONLY BE SEEN ON THE FINEST AND CLEAREST DAYS. IT IS CLOSE ON SUNSET. CHARLOTTA, YASHA, AND DUNYASHA ARE SITTING ON THE SEAT; EPIKHODOV STANDS BY AND PLAYS ON A GUITAR; ALL SEEM THOUGHTFUL. CHARLOTTA WEARS A MAN'S OLD PEAKED CAP; SHE HAS UNSLUNG A RIFLE FROM HER SHOULDERS AND IS PUTTING TO RIGHTS THE BUCKLE ON THE STRAP.]

CHARLOTTA

[THOUGHTFULLY.] I haven't a real [passport](#). I don't know how old I am, and I think I'm young. When I was a little girl my father and mother used to go round fairs and give very good performances and I used to do the [salto mortale](#) and various little things. And when papa and mamma died a German lady took me to her and began to teach me. I liked it. I grew up and became a governess. And where I came from and who I am, I don't know. . . . Who my parents were--perhaps they weren't married--I don't know. [TAKES A CUCUMBER OUT OF HER POCKET AND EATS.] I don't know anything. [PAUSE.] I do want to talk, but I haven't anybody to talk to . . . I haven't anybody at all.

EPIKHODOV

[PLAYS ON THE GUITAR AND SINGS.]

["What is this noisy earth to me,](#)
What matter friends and foes?"

I do like playing on the mandoline!

DUNYASHA

That's a guitar, not a mandoline. [*LOOKS AT HERSELF IN A LITTLE MIRROR AND POWDERS HERSELF.*]

EPIKHODOV

For the enamoured madman, this is a mandoline. [*SINGS.*]

"Oh that the heart was warmed,
By all the flames of love returned!"

[*YASHA SINGS TOO.*]

CHARLOTTA

These people sing terribly. . . . Foo! Like jackals.

DUNYASHA

[*TO YASHA.*] Still, it must be nice to live abroad.

YASHA

Yes, certainly. I cannot differ from you there. [*YAWNS AND LIGHTS A CIGAR.*]

EPIKHODOV

That is perfectly natural. Abroad everything is in full complexity.

YASHA

That goes without saying.

EPIKHODOV

I'm an educated man, I read various remarkable books, but I cannot understand the direction I myself want to go--whether to live or to shoot myself, as it were. So, in case, I always carry a revolver about with me. Here it is. [*SHOWS A REVOLVER.*]

CHARLOTTA

I've done. Now I'll go. [*SLINGS THE RIFLE.*] You, Epikhodov, are a very clever man and very terrible; women must be madly in love with you. Brrr!! [*GOING.*] These wise ones are all so stupid. I've nobody to talk to. I'm always alone, alone; I've nobody at all . . . and I don't know who I am or why I live. [*EXIT SLOWLY.*]

EPIKHODOV

As a matter of fact, independently of everything else, I must express my feeling, among other things, that fate has been as pitiless in her dealings with me as a storm is to a small ship. Suppose, let us grant, I am wrong; then why did I wake up this morning, to give an example, and behold an enormous spider on my chest, like that. [*SHOWS WITH BOTH HANDS.*] And if I do drink some kvass, why is it that there is bound to be something of the most indelicate nature in it, such as a beetle? [*PAUSE.*]

Have you read [Buckle](#)? [PAUSE.] I should like to trouble you, Avdotya Fedorovna, for two words.

DUNYASHA

Say on.

EPIKHODOV

I should prefer to be alone with you. [SIGHS.]

DUNYASHA

[SHY.] Very well, only first bring me my little cloak. . . . It's by the cupboard. It's a little damp here.

EPIKHODOV

Very well ... I'll bring it. . . . Now I know what to do with my revolver. [TAKES GUITAR AND EXITS, STRUMMING.]

YASHA

Two-and-twenty troubles! A silly man, between you and me and the gatepost.

[YAWNS.]

DUNYASHA

I hope to goodness he won't shoot himself. [PAUSE.] I'm so nervous, I'm worried. I went into service when I was quite a little girl, and now I'm not used to common life, and my hands are white, white as a lady's. I'm so tender and so delicate now; respectable and afraid of everything. . . . I'm so frightened. And I don't know what will happen to my nerves if you deceive me, Yasha.

YASHA

[KISSES HER.] Little cucumber! Of course, every girl must respect herself; there's nothing I dislike more than a badly behaved girl.

DUNYASHA

I'm awfully in love with you; you're educated, you can talk about everything.

[PAUSE.]

YASHA

[YAWNS.] Yes. I think this: if a girl loves anybody, then that means she's immoral.

[PAUSE.] It's nice to smoke a cigar out in the open air. . . . [LISTENS.] Somebody's coming. It's the mistress, and people with her. [DUNYASHA EMBRACES HIM SUDDENLY.] Go to the house, as if you'd been bathing in the river; go by this path, or they'll meet you and will think I've been meeting you. I can't stand that sort of thing.

DUNYASHA

[COUGHS QUIETLY.] My head's aching because of your cigar.

[EXIT. YASHA REMAINS, SITTING BY THE SHRINE. ENTER LUBOV
ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, AND LOPAKHIN.]

LOPAKHIN

You must make up your mind definitely--there's no time to waste. The question is perfectly plain. Are you willing to let the land for villas or no? Just one word, yes or no? Just one word!

LUBOV

Who's smoking horrible cigars here? [SITS.]

GAEV

They built that railway; that's made this place very handy. [SITS.] Went to town and had lunch . . . red in the middle! I'd like to go in now and have just one game.

LUBOV

You'll have time.

LOPAKHIN

Just one word! [IMPLORINGLY.] Give me an answer!

GAEV

[YAWNS.] Really!

LUBOV

[LOOKS IN HER PURSE.] I had a lot of money yesterday, but there's very little to-day. My poor Varya feeds everybody on milk soup to save money, in the kitchen the old people only get peas, and I spend recklessly. [DROPS THE PURSE, SCATTERING GOLD COINS.] There, they are all over the place.

YASHA

Permit me to pick them up. [COLLECTS THE COINS.]

LUBOV

Please do, Yasha. And why did I go and have lunch there? . . . A horrid restaurant with band and tablecloths smelling of soap. . . . Why do you drink so much, Leon? Why do you eat so much? Why do you talk so much? You talked again too much to-day in the restaurant, and it wasn't at all to the point--about [the seventies and about decadents](#). And to whom? Talking to the waiters about decadents!

LOPAKHIN

Yes.

GAEV

[WAVES HIS HAND.] I can't be cured, that's obvious. . . . [IRRITABLY TO YASHA.] What's the matter? Why do you keep twisting about in front of me?

YASHA

[*LAUGHS.*] I can't listen to your voice without laughing.

GAEV

[*TO HIS SISTER.*] Either he or I . . .

LUBOV

Go away, Yasha; get out of this. . . .

YASHA

[*GIVES PURSE TO LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.*] I'll go at once. [*HARDLY ABLE TO KEEP FROM LAUGHING.*] This minute. . . . [*EXIT.*]

LOPAKHIN

That rich man Deriganov is preparing to buy your estate. They say he'll come to the sale himself.

LUBOV

Where did you hear that?

LOPAKHIN

They say so in town.

GAEV

Our Yaroslav aunt has promised to send something, but I don't know when or how much.

LOPAKHIN

How much will she send? A hundred thousand roubles? Or two, perhaps?

LUBOV

I'd be glad of ten or fifteen thousand.

LOPAKHIN

You must excuse my saying so, but I've never met such frivolous people as you before, or anybody so unbusinesslike and peculiar. Here I am telling you in plain language that your estate will be sold, and you don't seem to understand.

LUBOV

What are we to do? Tell us, what?

LOPAKHIN

I tell you every day. I say the same thing every day. Both the cherry orchard and the land must be leased off for villas and at once, immediately--the auction is staring you in the face: Understand! Once you do definitely make up your minds to the villas, then you'll have as much money as you want and you'll be saved.

LUBOV

Villas and villa residents--it's so vulgar, excuse me.

GAEV

I entirely agree with you.

LOPAKHIN

I must cry or yell or faint. I can't stand it! You're too much for me! [*To GAEV.*] You old woman!

GAEV

Really!

LOPAKHIN

Old woman! [*GOING OUT.*]

LUBOV

[*FRIGHTENED.*] No, don't go away, [do stop](#); be a dear. Please. Perhaps we'll find some way out!

LOPAKHIN

What's the good of trying to think!

LUBOV

Please don't go away. It's nicer when you're here. . . . [*PAUSE.*] I keep on waiting for something to happen, as if the house is going to collapse over our heads.

GAEV

[*THINKING DEEPLY.*] Double in the corner . . . across the middle. . . .

LUBOV

We have been too sinful. . . .

LOPAKHIN

What sins have you committed?

GAEV

[*PUTS CANDY INTO HIS MOUTH.*] They say that I've eaten [all my substance](#) in sugar-candies.

[*LAUGHS.*]

LUBOV

Oh, my sins. . . . I've always scattered money about without holding myself in, like a madwoman, and I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband died of champagne--he drank terribly--and to my misfortune, I fell in love with another man and went off with him, and just at that time--it was my first punishment, a blow that hit me right on the head--here, in the river . . . my boy was drowned, and I went away, quite away, never to return, never to see this river again. . . . I shut my eyes and ran without thinking, but he ran after me . . . without pity, without respect. I bought a villa near Mentone because he fell ill there, and for three years

I knew no rest either by day or night; the sick man wore me out, and my soul dried up. And last year, when they had sold the villa to pay my debts, I went away to Paris, and there he robbed me of all I had and threw me over and went off with another woman. I tried to poison myself. . . . It was so silly, so shameful. . . . And suddenly I longed to be back in Russia, my own land, with my little girl. . . . [WIPES HER TEARS.] Lord, Lord be merciful to me, forgive me my sins! Punish me no more! [TAKES A TELEGRAM OUT OF HER POCKET.] I had this to-day from Paris. . . . He begs my forgiveness, he implores me to return. . . . [TEARS IT UP.] Don't I hear music? [LISTENS.]

GAEV

That is our celebrated Jewish band. You remember--four violins, a flute, and a double-bass.

LUBOV

So it still exists? It would be nice if they came along some evening.

LOPAKHIN

[LISTENS.] I can't hear. . . . [SINGS QUIETLY.] "For money will the Germans make a Frenchman of a Russian." [LAUGHS.] I saw such an awfully funny thing at the theatre last night.

LUBOV

I'm quite sure there wasn't anything at all funny. You oughtn't to go and see plays, you ought to go and look at yourself. What a grey life you lead, what a lot you talk unnecessarily.

LOPAKHIN

It's true. To speak the straight truth, we live a silly life. [PAUSE.] My father was a peasant, an idiot, he understood nothing, he didn't teach me, he was always drunk, and always used a stick on me. In point of fact, I'm a fool and an idiot too. I've never learned anything, my handwriting is bad, I write so that I'm quite ashamed before people, like a pig!

LUBOV

You ought to get married, my friend.

LOPAKHIN

Yes . . . that's true.

LUBOV

Why not to our Varya? She's a nice girl.

LOPAKHIN

Yes.

LUBOV

She's quite homely in her ways, works all day, and, what matters most, she's in love with you. And you've liked her for a long time.

LOPAKHIN

Well? I don't mind . . . she's a nice girl. [*PAUSE.*]

GAEV

I'm offered a place in a bank. Six thousand roubles a year. . . Did you hear?

LUBOV

What's the matter with you! Stay where you are. . . .

[*ENTER FIERS WITH AN OVERCOAT.*]

FIERS

[*TO GAEV.*] Please, sir, put this on, it's damp.

GAEV

[*PUTTING IT ON.*] You're a nuisance, old man.

FIERS

It's all very well. . . . You went away this morning without telling me. [*EXAMINING GAEV.*]

LUBOV

How old you've grown, Fiers!

FIERS

I beg your pardon?

LOPAKHIN

She says you've grown very old!

FIERS

I've been alive a long time. They were already getting ready to marry me before your father was born. . . . [*LAUGHS.*] And when the [Emancipation](#) came I was already first valet. Only I didn't agree with the Emancipation and remained with my people. . . . [*PAUSE.*] I remember everybody was happy, but they didn't know why.

LOPAKHIN

[It was very good for them in the old days.](#) At any rate, they used to beat them.

FIERS

[*NOT HEARING.*] Rather. The peasants kept their distance from the masters and the masters kept their distance from the peasants, but now everything's all anyhow and you can't understand anything.

GAEV

Be quiet, Fiers. I've got to go to town tomorrow. I've been promised an introduction to a General who may lend me money on a bill.

LOPAKHIN

Nothing will come of it. And you won't pay your interest, don't you worry.

LUBOV

He's talking rubbish. There's no General at all.

[ENTER TROFIMOV, ANYA, AND VARYA.]

GAEV

Here they are.

ANYA

Mother's sitting down here.

LUBOV

[TENDERLY.] Come, come, my dears. . . . [EMBRACING ANYA AND VARYA.] If you two only knew how much I love you. Sit down next to me, like that. [ALL SIT DOWN.]

LOPAKHIN

Our eternal student is always with the ladies.

TROFIMOV

That's not your business.

LOPAKHIN

He'll soon be fifty, and he's still a student.

TROFIMOV

Leave off your silly jokes!

LOPAKHIN

Getting angry, eh, silly?

TROFIMOV

Shut up, can't you.

LOPAKHIN

[LAUGHS.] I wonder what you think of me?

TROFIMOV

I think, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that you're a rich man, and you'll soon be a millionaire. Just as the wild beast which eats everything it finds is needed for changes to take place in matter, so you are needed too.

[ALL LAUGH.]

VARYA

Better tell us something about the planets, Peter.

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA

No, let's go on with yesterday's talk!

TROFIMOV

About what?

GAEV

About the proud man.

TROFIMOV

Yesterday we talked for a long time but we didn't come to anything in the end. There's something mystical about the proud man, in your sense. Perhaps you are right from your point of view, but if you take the matter simply, without complicating it, then what pride can there be, what sense can there be in it, if a man is imperfectly made, physiologically speaking, if in the vast majority of cases he is coarse and stupid and deeply unhappy? We must stop admiring one another. We must work, nothing more.

GAEV

You'll die, all the same.

TROFIMOV

Who knows? And what does it mean--you'll die? Perhaps a man has a hundred senses, and when he dies only the five known to us are destroyed and the remaining ninety-five are left alive.

LUBOV

How clever of you, Peter!

LOPAKHIN

[*IRONICALLY.*] Oh, awfully!

TROFIMOV

The human race progresses, perfecting its powers. Everything that is unattainable now will some day be near at hand and comprehensible, but we must work, we must help with all our strength those who seek to know what fate will bring. Meanwhile in Russia only a very few of us work. The vast majority of those intellectuals whom I know seek for nothing, do nothing, and are at present incapable of hard work. They call themselves intellectuals, but they use "thou" and "thee" to their servants, they treat the peasants like animals, they learn badly, they read nothing seriously, they do absolutely nothing, about science they only talk, about art they understand little. They are all serious, they all have severe faces, they all talk about important things. They philosophize, and at the same time, the vast majority of us, ninety-nine out of a hundred, live like savages, fighting and cursing at the slightest opportunity, eating filthily, sleeping in the dirt, in

stuffiness, with fleas, stinks, smells, moral filth, and so on. . . And it's obvious that all our nice talk is only carried on to distract ourselves and others. Tell me, where are those [crèches](#) we hear so much of? and where are those reading-rooms? People only write novels about them; they don't really exist. Only dirt, vulgarity, and Asiatic plagues really exist. . . . I'm afraid, and I don't at all like serious faces; I don't like serious conversations. Let's be quiet sooner.

LOPAKHIN

You know, I get up at five every morning, I work from morning till evening, I am always dealing with money--my own and other people's--and I see what people are like. You've only got to begin to do anything to find out how few honest, honourable people there are. Sometimes, when I can't sleep, I think: "Oh Lord, you've given us huge forests, infinite fields, and endless horizons, and we, living here, ought really to be giants."

LUBOV

You want giants, do you ? . . . They're only good in stories, and even there they frighten one.

[EPIKHODOV ENTERS AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE PLAYING HIS GUITAR. THOUGHTFULLY: EPIKHODOV'S THERE.]

ANYA

[THOUGHTFULLY.] Epikhodov's there.

GAEV

The sun's set, ladies and gentlemen.

TROFIMOV

Yes.

GAEV

[NOT LOUDLY, AS IF DECLAIMING.] O Nature, thou art wonderful, thou shinest with eternal radiance! Oh, beautiful and indifferent one, thou whom we call mother, thou containest in thyself existence and death, thou livest and destroyest. . . .

VARYA

[ENTREATINGLY.] Uncle, dear!

ANYA

Uncle, you're doing it again!

TROFIMOV

You'd better double the red into the middle.

GAEV

I'll be quiet, I'll be quiet.

[THEY ALL SIT THOUGHTFULLY. IT IS QUIET. ONLY THE MUMBLING OF
FIERS IS HEARD. SUDDENLY A DISTANT SOUND IS HEARD AS IF
FROM THE SKY, THE SOUND OF A BREAKING STRING, WHICH DIES
AWAY SADLY.]

LUBOV

What's that?

LOPAKHIN

I don't know. It may be a bucket fallen down a well somewhere. But it's some way off.

GAEV

Or perhaps it's some bird . . . like a heron.

TROFIMOV

Or an owl.

LUBOV

[SHUDDERS.] It's unpleasant, somehow. [A PAUSE.]

FIERS

Before the misfortune the same thing happened. An owl screamed and the samovar hummed without stopping.

GAEV

Before what misfortune?

FIERS

Before the Emancipation. [A PAUSE.]

LUBOV

You know, my friends, let's go in; it's evening now. [To ANYA.] You've tears in your eyes. . . . What is it, little girl? [EMBRACES HER.]

ANYA

It's nothing, mother.

TROFIMOV

Some one's coming.

[ENTER A TRAMP IN AN OLD WHITE PEAKED CAP AND OVERCOAT.
HE IS A LITTLE DRUNK.]

TRAMP

Excuse me, may I go this way straight through to the station?

GAEV

You may. Go along this path.

TRAMP

I thank you from the bottom of my heart. [*HICCUPS.*] Lovely weather. . . . [*DECLAIMS.*]
My brother, my suffering brother. . . . Come out on the Volga, you whose groans . .
.
[*TO VARYA.*] Mademoiselle, please give a hungry Russian thirty copecks. . . .
[*VARYA SCREAMS, FRIGHTENED.*]

LOPAKHIN

[*ANGRILY.*] There's manners everybody's got to keep!

LUBOV

[*WITH A START.*] Take this ... here you are. . . . [*FEELS IN HER PURSE.*] There's no silver. . . . It
doesn't matter, here's gold.

TRAMP

I am deeply grateful to you! [*EXIT. LAUGHTER.*]

VARYA

[*FRIGHTENED.*] I'm going, I'm going. . . . Oh, little mother, at home there's nothing for
the servants to eat, and you gave him gold.

LUBOV

What is to be done with such a fool as I am! At home I'll give you everything I've
got. Ermolai Alexeyevitch, lend me some more! . . .

LOPAKHIN

Very well.

LUBOV

Let's go, it's time. And Varya, we've settled your affair; I congratulate you.

VARYA

[*CRYING.*] You shouldn't joke about this, mother.

LOPAKHIN

Oh, feel me, get thee to a nunnery.

GAEV

My hands are all trembling; I haven't played billiards for a long time.

LOPAKHIN

Oh, feel me, nymph, remember me in thine orisons.

LUBOV

Come along; it'll soon be supper-time.

VARYA

He did frighten me. My heart is beating hard.

LOPAKHIN

Let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen, on August 22 the cherry orchard will be sold. Think of that! . . . Think of that! . . .

[ALL GO OUT EXCEPT TROFIMOV AND ANYA.]

ANYA

[LAUGHS.] Thanks to the tramp who frightened Barbara, we're alone now.

TROFIMOV

Varya's afraid we may fall in love with each other and won't get away from us for days on end. Her narrow mind won't allow her to understand that we are above love. To escape all the petty and deceptive things which prevent our being happy and free, that is the aim and meaning of our lives. Forward! We go irresistibly on to that bright star which burns there, in the distance! Don't lag behind, friends!

ANYA

[CLAPPING HER HANDS.] How beautifully you talk! [PAUSE.] It is glorious here to-day!

TROFIMOV

Yes, the weather is wonderful.

ANYA

What have you done to me, Peter? I don't love the cherry orchard as I used to. I loved it so tenderly, I thought there was no better place in the world than our orchard.

TROFIMOV

All Russia is our orchard. The land is great and beautiful, there are many marvellous places in it. [PAUSE.] Think, Anya, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, and all your ancestors were serf-owners, they owned living souls; and now, doesn't something human look at you from every cherry in the orchard, every leaf and every stalk? Don't you hear voices . . . ? Oh, it's awful, your orchard is terrible; and when in the evening or at night you walk through the orchard, then the old bark on the trees sheds a dim light and the old cherry-trees seem to be dreaming of all that was a hundred, two hundred years ago, and are oppressed by their heavy visions. Still, at any rate, we've left those two hundred years behind us. So far we've gained nothing at all--we don't yet know what the past is to be to us--we only philosophize, we complain that we are dull, or we drink vodka. For it's so clear that in order to begin to live in the present we must first redeem the past, and that can only be done by suffering, by strenuous, uninterrupted labour. Understand that, Anya.

ANYA

The house in which we live has long ceased to be our house; I shall go away. I give you my word.

TROFIMOV

If you have the housekeeping keys, throw them down the well and go away. Be as free as the wind.

ANYA

[ENTHUSIASTICALLY.] How nicely you said that!

TROFIMOV

Believe me, Anya, believe me! I'm not thirty yet, I'm young, I'm still a student, but I have undergone a great deal! I'm as hungry as the winter, I'm ill, I'm shaken. I'm as poor as a beggar, and where haven't I been--fate has tossed me everywhere! But my soul is always my own; every minute of the day and the night it is filled with unspeakable presentiments. I know that happiness is coming, Anya, I see it already. . .

ANYA

[THOUGHTFUL.] The moon is rising.

[EPIKHODOV IS HEARD PLAYING THE SAME SAD SONG ON HIS GUITAR. THE MOON RISES. SOMEWHERE BY THE POPLARS VARYA IS LOOKING FOR ANYA AND CALLING, "ANYA, WHERE ARE YOU?"]

TROFIMOV

Yes, the moon has risen. [PAUSE.] There is happiness, there it comes; it comes nearer and nearer; I hear its steps already. And if we do not see it we shall not know it, but what does that matter? Others will see it!

THE VOICE OF VARYA

Anya! Where are you?

TROFIMOV

That's Varya again! [ANGRY.] Disgraceful!

ANYA

Never mind. Let's go to the river. It's nice there.

TROFIMOV

Let's go. [THEY GO OUT.]

THE VOICE OF VARYA

Anya! Anya!

[CURTAIN.]

Act Three

[A RECEPTION-ROOM CUT OFF FROM A DRAWING-ROOM BY AN ARCH. CHANDELIER LIGHTED. A JEWISH BAND, THE ONE MENTIONED IN ACT II, IS HEARD PLAYING IN ANOTHER ROOM. EVENING. IN THE

DRAWING-ROOM THE GRAND ROND IS BEING DANCED. VOICE OF SIMEONOV PISCHIN "PROMENADE A UNE PAIRE!" DANCERS COME INTO THE RECEPTION-ROOM; THE FIRST PAIR ARE PISCHIN AND CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA; THE SECOND, TROFIMOV AND LUBOV ANDREYEVNA; THE THIRD, ANYA AND THE POST OFFICE CLERK; THE FOURTH, VARYA AND THE STATION-MASTER, AND SO ON. VARYA IS CRYING GENTLY AND WIPES AWAY HER TEARS AS SHE DANCES. DUNYASHA IS IN THE LAST PAIR. THEY GO OFF INTO THE DRAWING-ROOM, PISCHIN SHOUTING, "GRAND ROND, BALANCEZ:" AND "LES CAVALIERS À GENOU ET REMERCEZ VOS DAMES!" FIER, IN A DRESS-COAT, CARRIES A TRAY WITH SELTZER-WATER ACROSS. ENTER PISCHIN AND TROFIMOV FROM THE DRAWING-ROOM.]

PISCHIN

I'm full-blooded and have already had two strokes; it's hard for me to dance, but, as they say, if you're in Rome, you must do as Rome does. I've got the strength of a horse. My dead father, who liked a joke, peace to his bones, used to say, talking of our ancestors, that the ancient stock of the Simeonov-Pischins was descended from that identical horse that Caligula made a senator. . . . [SITS.] But the trouble is, I've no money! A hungry dog only believes in meat. [SNORES AND WAKES UP AGAIN IMMEDIATELY.] So I . . . only believe in money. . . .

TROFIMOV

Yes. There is something equine about your figure.

PISCHIN

Well . . . a horse is a fine animal . . . you can sell a horse.

[BILLIARD PLAYING CAN BE HEARD IN THE NEXT ROOM. VARYA APPEARS UNDER THE ARCH.]

TROFIMOV

[TEASING.] Madame Lopakhin! Madame Lopakhin!

VARYA

[ANGRY.] Decayed gentleman!

TROFIMOV

Yes, I am a decayed gentleman, and I'm proud of it!

VARYA

[BITTERLY.] We've hired the musicians, but how are they to be paid? [EXIT.]

TROFIMOV

[TO PISCHIN.] If the energy which you, in the course of your life, have spent in looking for money to pay interest had been used for something else, then, I believe, after all, you'd be able to turn everything upside down.

PISCHIN

[Nietzsche](#) . . . a philosopher . . . a very great, a most celebrated man . . . a man of enormous brain, says in his books that you can forge bank-notes.

TROFIMOV

And have you read Nietzsche?

PISCHIN

Well . . . Dashenka told me. Now I'm in such a position, I wouldn't mind forging them . . . I've got to pay 310 roubles the day after to-morrow . . . I've got 130 already. . . . [*FEELS HIS POCKETS, NERVOUSLY.*] I've lost the money! The money's gone! [*CRYING.*] Where's the money? [*JOYFULLY.*] Here it is behind the lining . . . I even began to perspire.

[*ENTER LUBOV ANDREYEVNA AND CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.*]

LUBOV

[*HUMMING A [CAUCASIAN DANCE](#).*] Why is Leonid away so long? What's he doing in town? [*TO DUNYASHA.*] Dunyasha, give the musicians some tea.

TROFIMOV

Business is off, I suppose.

LUBOV

And the musicians needn't have come, and we needn't have got up this ball. . . . Well, never mind. . . . [*SITS AND SINGS SOFTLY.*]

CHARLOTTA

[*GIVES A PACK OF CARDS TO PISCHIN.*] Here's a pack of cards, think of any one card you like.

PISCHIN

I've thought of one.

CHARLOTTA

Now shuffle. All right, now. Give them here, oh my dear Mr. Pischin. [Ein, zwei, drei!](#) Now look and you'll find it in your coat-tail pocket.

PISCHIN

[*TAKES A CARD OUT OF HIS COAT-TAIL POCKET.*] Eight of spades, quite right! [*SURPRISED.*] Think of that now!

CHARLOTTA

[*HOLDS THE PACK OF CARDS ON THE PALM OF HER HAND. TO TROFIMOV.*] Now tell me quickly. What's the top card?

TROFIMOV

Well, the queen of spades.

CHARLOTTA

Right! [*To PISCHIN.*] Well now? What card's on top?

PISCHIN

Ace of hearts.

CHARLOTTA

Right! [*CLAPS HER HANDS, THE PACK OF CARDS VANISHES.*] How lovely the weather is to-day. [*A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN'S VOICE ANSWERS HER, AS IF FROM UNDER THE FLOOR, "OH YES, IT'S LOVELY WEATHER, MADAM."*] You are so beautiful, you are my ideal. [*VOICE, "YOU, MADAM, PLEASE ME VERY MUCH TOO."*]

STATION-MASTER

[*APPLAUDS.*] Madame ventriloquist, bravo!

PISCHIN

[*SURPRISED.*] Think of that, now! Delightful, Charlotte Ivanovna . . . I'm simply in love. . . .

CHARLOTTA

In love? [*SHRUGGING HER SHOULDERS.*] Can you love? [Guter Mensch aber schlechter Musikant.](#)

TROFIMOV

[*SLAPS PISCHIN ON THE SHOULDER.*] Oh, you horse!

CHARLOTTA

Attention please, here's another trick. [*TAKES A SHAWL FROM A CHAIR.*] Here's a very nice plaid shawl, I'm going to sell it. . . . [*SHAKES IT.*] Won't anybody buy it?

PISCHIN

[*ASTONISHED.*] Think of that now!

CHARLOTTA

Ein, zwei, drei.

[*SHE QUICKLY LIFTS UP THE SHAWL, WHICH IS HANGING DOWN.
ANYA IS STANDING BEHIND IT; SHE BOWS AND RUNS TO HER
MOTHER, HUGS HER AND RUNS BACK TO THE DRAWING-ROOM AMID
GENERAL APPLAUSE.*]

LUBOV

[*APPLAUDS.*] Bravo, bravo!

CHARLOTTA

Once again! *Ein, zwei, drei!*

[*LIFTS THE SHAWL.*]

. VARYA stands behind it and bows.

PISCHIN

[*ASTONISHED.*] Think of that, now.

CHARLOTTA

The end!

[*THROWS THE SHAWL AT PISCHIN, CURTSEYS AND RUNS INTO THE DRAWING-ROOM.*]

PISCHIN

[*RUNS AFTER HER.*] Little wretch. . . . What? Would you? [*EXIT.*]

LUBOV

Leonid hasn't come yet. I don't understand what he's doing so long in town! Everything must be over by now. The estate must be sold; or, if the sale never came off, then why does he stay so long?

VARYA

[*TRIES TO SOOTHE HER.*] Uncle has bought it. I'm certain of it.

TROFIMOV

[*SARCASTICALLY.*] Oh, yes!

VARYA

Grandmother sent him her authority for him to buy it in her name and transfer the debt to her. She's doing it for Anya. And I'm certain that God will help us and uncle will buy it.

LUBOV

Grandmother sent fifteen thousand roubles from Yaroslav to buy the property in her name--she won't trust us--and that wasn't even enough to pay the interest.

[*COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS.*] My fate will be settled to-day, my fate. . . .

TROFIMOV

[*TEASING VARYA.*] Madame Lopakhin!

VARYA

[*ANGRY.*] Eternal student! He's already been expelled twice from the university.

LUBOV

Why are you getting angry, Varya? He's teasing you about Lopakhin, well what of it? You can marry Lopakhin if you want to, he's a good, interesting man. . . . You needn't if you don't want to; nobody wants to force you against your will, my darling.

VARYA

I do look at the matter seriously, little mother, to be quite frank. He's a good man, and I like him.

LUBOV

Then marry him. I don't understand what you're waiting for.

VARYA

I can't propose to him myself, little mother. People have been talking about him to me for two years now, but he either says nothing, or jokes about it. I understand. He's getting rich, he's busy, he can't bother about me. If I had some money, even a little, even only a hundred roubles, I'd throw up everything and go away. I'd go into a convent.

TROFIMOV

How nice!

VARYA

[*To TROFIMOV.*] A student ought to have sense! [*GENTLY, IN TEARS.*] How ugly you are now, Peter, how old you've grown! [*To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, NO LONGER CRYING.*] But I can't go on without working, little mother. I want to be doing something every minute.

[*ENTER YASHA.*]

YASHA

[*NEARLY LAUGHING.*] Epikhodov's broken a billiard cue! [*EXIT.*]

VARYA

Why is Epikhodov here? Who said he could play billiards? I don't understand these people. [*EXIT.*]

LUBOV

Don't tease her, Peter, you see that she's quite unhappy without that.

TROFIMOV

She takes too much on herself, she keeps on interfering in other people's business. The whole summer she's given no peace to me or to Anya, she's afraid we'll have a romance all to ourselves. What has it to do with her? As if I'd ever given her grounds to believe I'd stoop to such vulgarity! We are above love.

LUBOV

Then I suppose I must be beneath love. [*IN AGITATION.*] Why isn't Leonid here? If I only knew whether the estate is sold or not! The disaster seems to me so improbable that I don't know what to think, I'm all at sea . . . I may scream . . . or do something silly. Save me, Peter. Say something, say something.

TROFIMOV

Isn't it all the same whether the estate is sold to-day or isn't? It's been all up with it for a long time; there's no turning back, the path's grown over. Be calm, dear, you shouldn't deceive yourself, for once in your life at any rate you must look the truth straight in the face.

LUBOV

What truth? You see where truth is, and where untruth is, but I seem to have lost my sight and see nothing. You boldly settle all important questions, but tell me, dear, isn't it because you're young, because you haven't had time to suffer till you settled a single one of your questions? You boldly look forward, isn't it because you cannot foresee or expect anything terrible, because so far life has been hidden from your young eyes? You are bolder, more honest, deeper than we are, but think only, be just a little magnanimous, and have mercy on me. I was born here, my father and mother lived here, my grandfather too, I love this house. I couldn't understand my life without that cherry orchard, and if it really must be sold, sell me with it! [*EMBRACES TROFIMOV, KISSES HIS FOREHEAD.*]. My son was drowned here. . . . [*WEEPS.*] Have pity on me, good, kind man.

TROFIMOV

You know I sympathize with all my soul.

LUBOV

Yes, but it ought to be said differently, differently. . . . [*TAKES ANOTHER HANDKERCHIEF, A TELEGRAM FALLS ON THE FLOOR.*] I'm so sick at heart to-day, you can't imagine. Here it's so noisy, my soul shakes at every sound. I shake all over, and I can't go away by myself, I'm afraid of the silence. Don't judge me harshly, Peter . . . I loved you, as if you belonged to my family. I'd gladly let Anya marry you, I swear it, only dear, you ought to work, finish your studies. You don't do anything, only fate throws you about from place to place, it's so odd. . . . Isn't it true? Yes? And you ought to do something to your beard to make it grow better [*LAUGHS.*] You are funny!

TROFIMOV

[*PICKING UP TELEGRAM.*] I don't want to be a [Beau Brummel](#).

LUBOV

This telegram's from Paris. I get one every day. Yesterday and to-day. That wild man is ill again, he's bad again. . . . He begs for forgiveness, and implores me to come, and I really ought to go to Paris to be near him. You look severe, Peter, but what can I do, my dear, what can I do; he's ill, he's alone, unhappy, and who's to look after him, who's to keep him away from his errors, to give him his medicine punctually? And why should I conceal it and say nothing about it; I love him, that's plain, I love him, I love him. . . . That love is a stone round my neck; I'm going with it to the bottom, but I love that stone and can't live without it. [*SQUEEZES TROFIMOV'S HAND.*] Don't think badly of me, Peter, don't say anything to me, don't say . . .

TROFIMOV

[*WEEPING.*] For God's sake forgive my speaking candidly, but that man has robbed you!

LUBOV

No, no, no, you oughtn't to say that! *[STOPS HER EARS.]*

TROFIMOV

But he's a wretch, you alone don't know it! He's a petty thief, a nobody. . .

LUBOV

[ANGRY, BUT RESTRAINED.] You're twenty-six or twenty-seven, and still a schoolboy of the second class!

TROFIMOV

Why not!

LUBOV

You ought to be a man, at your age you ought to be able to understand those who love. And you ought to be in love yourself, you must fall in love! *[ANGRY.]* Yes, yes! You aren't pure, you're just a freak, a queer fellow, a funny growth. . . .

TROFIMOV

[IN HORROR.] What is she saying!

LUBOV

"I'm above love!" You're not above love, you're just what our Fiers calls a bungler. Not to have a mistress at your age!

TROFIMOV

[IN HORROR.] This is awful! What is she saying? *[GOES QUICKLY UP INTO THE DRAWING-ROOM, CLUTCHING HIS HEAD.]* It's awful . . . I can't stand it, I'll go away. *[EXIT, BUT RETURNS AT ONCE.]* All is over between us! *[EXIT.]*

LUBOV

[SHOUTS AFTER HIM.] Peter, wait! Silly man, I was joking! Peter! *[SOMEBODY IS HEARD GOING OUT AND FALLING DOWNSTAIRS NOISILY. ANYA AND VARYA SCREAM; LAUGHTER IS HEARD IMMEDIATELY.]* What's that?
[ANYA COMES RUNNING IN, LAUGHING.]

ANYA

Peter's fallen downstairs! *[RUNS OUT AGAIN.]*

LUBOV

This Peter's a marvel.

[THE STATION-MASTER STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DRAWING-ROOM AND RECITES "THE MAGDALEN" BY TOLSTOY. HE IS LISTENED TO, BUT HE HAS ONLY DELIVERED A FEW LINES WHEN A WALTZ IS HEARD FROM THE FRONT ROOM, AND THE RECITATION IS STOPPED. EVERYBODY DANCES. TROFIMOV, ANYA, VARYA, AND LUBOV ANDREYEVNA COME IN FROM THE FRONT ROOM.]

LUBOV

Well, Peter . . . you pure soul . . . I beg your pardon . . . let's dance.

*[SHE DANCES WITH PETER. ANYA AND VARYA DANCE. FIER'S
ENTERS AND STANDS HIS STICK BY A SIDE DOOR. YASHA HAS ALSO
COME IN AND LOOKS ON AT THE DANCE.]*

YASHA

Well, grandfather?

FIER'S

I'm not well. At our balls some time back, generals and barons and admirals used to dance, and now we send for post-office clerks and the Station-master, and even they come as a favour. I'm very weak. The dead master, the grandfather, used to give everybody sealing-wax when anything was wrong. I've taken sealing-wax every day for twenty years, and more; perhaps that's why I still live.

YASHA

I'm tired of you, grandfather. *[YAWNS.]* If you'd only hurry up and kick the bucket.

FIER'S

Oh you . . . bungler! *[MUTTERS.]*

*[TROFIMOV AND LUBOV ANDREYEVNA DANCE IN THE
RECEPTION-ROOM, THEN INTO THE SITTING-ROOM.]*

LUBOV

Merci. I'll sit down. *[SITS.]* I'm tired.

[ENTER ANYA.]

ANYA

[EXCITED.] Somebody in the kitchen was saying just now that the cherry orchard was sold to-day.

LUBOV

Sold to whom?

ANYA

He didn't say to whom. He's gone now. *[DANCES OUT INTO THE RECEPTION-ROOM WITH TROFIMOV.]*

YASHA

Some old man was chattering about it a long time ago. A stranger!

FIER'S

And Leonid Andreyevitch isn't here yet, he hasn't come. He's wearing a light, [demi-saison](#) overcoat. He'll catch cold. Oh these young fellows.

LUBOV

I'll die of this. Go and find out, Yasha, to whom it's sold.

YASHA

Oh, but he's been gone a long time, the old man. *[LAUGHS.]*

LUBOV

[*SLIGHTLY VEXED.*] Why do you laugh? What are you glad about?

YASHA

Epikhodov's too funny. He's a silly man. Two-and-twenty troubles.

LUBOV

Fiers, if the estate is sold, where will you go?

FIERS

I'll go wherever you order me to go.

LUBOV

Why do you look like that? Are you ill? I think you ought to go to bed. . . .

FIERS

Yes . . . [*WITH A SMILE.*] I'll go to bed, and who'll hand things round and give orders without me? I've the whole house on my shoulders.

YASHA

[*TO LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.*] Lubov Andreyevna! I want to ask a favour of you, if you'll be so kind! If you go to Paris again, then please take me with you. It's absolutely impossible for me to stop here. [*LOOKING ROUND; IN AN UNDERTONE.*] What's the good of talking about it, you see for yourself that this is an uneducated country, with an immoral population, and it's so dull. The food in the kitchen is beastly, and here's this Fiers walking about mumbling various inappropriate things. Take me with you, be so kind!

[*ENTER PISCHIN.*]

PISCHIN

I come to ask for the pleasure of a little waltz, dear lady. . . . [*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA GOES TO HIM.*] But all the same, you wonderful woman, I must have 180 little roubles from you ... I must. . . . [*THEY DANCE.*] 180 little roubles. . . . [*THEY GO THROUGH INTO THE DRAWING-ROOM.*]

YASHA

[*SINGS SOFTLY.*]

"Oh, will you understand
My soul's deep restlessness?"

[*IN THE DRAWING-ROOM A FIGURE IN A GREY TOP-HAT AND IN BAGGY CHECK TROUSERS IS WAVING ITS HANDS AND JUMPING ABOUT; THERE ARE CRIES OF "BRAVO, CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA!"*]

DUNYASHA

[*STOPS TO POWDER HER FACE.*] The young mistress tells me to dance--there are a lot of gentlemen, but few ladies--and my head goes round when I dance, and my heart beats, Fiers Nicolaevitch; the Post-office clerk told me something just now which made me catch my breath. [*THE MUSIC GROWS FAINT.*]

FIERS

What did he say to you?

DUNYASHA

He says, "You're like a little flower."

YASHA

[*YAWNS.*] Impolite. . . . [*EXIT.*]

DUNYASHA

Like a little flower. I'm such a delicate girl; I simply love words of tenderness.

FIERS

You'll lose your head.

[*ENTER EPIKHODOV.*]

EPIKHODOV

You, Avdotya Fedorovna, want to see me no more than if I was some insect. [*SIGHS.*]
Oh, life!

DUNYASHA

What do you want?

EPIKHODOV

Undoubtedly, perhaps, you may be right. [*SIGHS.*] But, certainly, if you regard the matter from the aspect, then you, if I may say so, and you must excuse my candidness, have absolutely reduced me to a state of mind. I know my fate, every day something unfortunate happens to me, and I've grown used to it a long time ago, I even look at my fate with a smile. You gave me your word, and though I . . .

DUNYASHA

Please, we'll talk later on, but leave me alone now. I'm meditating now. [*PLAYS WITH HER FAN.*]

EPIKHODOV

Every day something unfortunate happens to me, and I, if I may so express myself, only smile, and even laugh.

[*VARYA ENTERS FROM THE DRAWING-ROOM.*]

VARYA

Haven't you gone yet, Simeon? You really have no respect for anybody. [*To DUNYASHA.*] You go away, Dunyasha. [*To EPIKHODOV.*] You play billiards and break a

cue, and walk about the drawing-room as if you were a visitor!

EPIKHODOV

You cannot, if I may say so, call me to order.

VARYA

I'm not calling you to order, I'm only telling you. You just walk about from place to place and never do your work. Goodness only knows why we keep a clerk.

EPIKHODOV

[*OFFENDED.*] Whether I work, or walk about, or eat, or play billiards, is only a matter to be settled by people of understanding and my elders.

VARYA

You dare to talk to me like that! [*FURIOUS.*] You dare? You mean that I know nothing? Get out of here! This minute!

EPIKHODOV

[*NERVOUS.*] I must ask you to express yourself more delicately.

VARYA

[*BESIDE HERSELF.*] Get out this minute. Get out! [*HE GOES TO THE DOOR, SHE FOLLOWS.*] Two-and-twenty troubles! I don't want any sign of you here! I don't want to see anything of you! [*EPIKHODOV HAS GONE OUT; HIS VOICE CAN BE HEARD OUTSIDE: "I'LL MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST YOU."*] What, coming back? [*SNATCHES UP THE STICK LEFT BY FIERS BY THE DOOR.*] Go . . . go . . . go, I'll show you. . . . Are you going? Are you going? Well, then take that. [*SHE HITS OUT AS LOPAKHIN ENTERS.*]

LOPAKHIN

Much obliged.

VARYA

[*ANGRY BUT AMUSED.*] I'm sorry.

LOPAKHIN

Never mind. I thank you for my pleasant reception.

VARYA

It isn't worth any thanks. [*WALKS AWAY, THEN LOOKS BACK AND ASKS GENTLY.*] I didn't hurt you, did I?

LOPAKHIN

No, not at all. There'll be an enormous bump, that's all.

VOICES FROM THE DRAWING-ROOM

Lopakhin's returned! Ermolai Alexeyevitch!

PISCHIN

Now we'll see what there is to see and hear what there is to hear. . . . [*KISSES LOPAKHIN.*] You smell of cognac, my dear, my soul. And we're all having a good time.

[*ENTER LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.*]

LUBOV

Is that you, Ermolai Alexeyevitch ? Why were you so long? Where's Leonid?

LOPAKHIN

Leonid Andreyevitch came back with me, he's coming. . . .

LUBOV

[*EXCITED.*] Well, what? Is it sold? Tell me?

LOPAKHIN

[*CONFUSED, AFRAID TO SHOW HIS PLEASURE.*] The sale ended up at four o'clock. . . . We missed the train, and had to wait till half-past nine. [*SIGHS HEAVILY.*] Ooh! My head's going round a little.

[*ENTER GAEV; IN HIS RIGHT HAND HE CARRIES THINGS HE HAS BOUGHT, WITH HIS LEFT HE WIPES AWAY HIS TEARS.*]

LUBOV

Leon, what's happened? Leon, well? [*IMPATIENTLY, IN TEARS.*] Quick, for the love of God. . . .

GAEV

[*SAYS NOTHING TO HER, ONLY WAVES HIS HAND; TO FIERS, WEeping.*] Here, take this. . . . Here are anchovies, herrings from Kertch. . . . I've had no food to-day. . . . I have had a time! [*THE DOOR FROM THE BILLIARD-ROOM IS OPEN; THE CLICKING OF THE BALLS IS HEARD, AND YASHA'S VOICE, "SEVEN, EIGHTEEN!" GAEV'S EXPRESSION CHANGES, HE CRIES NO MORE.*] I'm awfully tired. Help me change my clothes, Fiers.

[*GOES OUT THROUGH THE DRAWING-ROOM; FIERS AFTER HIM.*]

PISCHIN

What happened? Come on, tell us!

LUBOV

Is the cherry orchard sold?

LOPAKHIN

It is sold.

LUBOV

Who bought it?

LOPAKHIN

I bought it.

[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA IS OVERWHELMED; SHE WOULD FALL IF SHE WERE NOT STANDING BY AN ARMCHAIR AND A TABLE. VARYA TAKES HER KEYS OFF HER BELT, THROWS THEM ON THE FLOOR, INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM AND GOES OUT.]

LOPAKHIN

I bought it! Wait, ladies and gentlemen, please, my head's going round, I can't talk. . . . [LAUGHS.] When we got to the sale, Deriganov was there already. Leonid Andreyevitch had only fifteen thousand roubles, and Deriganov offered thirty thousand on top of the mortgage to begin with. I saw how matters were, so I grabbed hold of him and bid forty. He went up to forty-five, I offered fifty-five. That means he went up by fives and I went up by tens. . . . Well, it came to an end. I bid ninety more than the mortgage; and it stayed with me. The cherry orchard is mine now, mine! [ROARS WITH LAUGHTER.] My God, my God, the cherry orchard's mine! Tell me I'm drunk, or mad, or dreaming. . . . [STAMPS HIS FEET.] Don't laugh at me! If my father and grandfather rose from their graves and looked at the whole affair, and saw how their Ermolai, their beaten and uneducated Ermolai, who used to run barefoot in the winter, how that very Ermolai has bought an estate, which is the most beautiful thing in the world! I've bought the estate where my grandfather and my father were slaves, where they weren't even allowed into the kitchen. I'm asleep, it's only a dream, an illusion. . . . It's the fruit of imagination, wrapped in the fog of the unknown. . . . [PICKS UP THE KEYS, NICELY SMILING.] She threw down the keys, she wanted to show she was no longer mistress here. . . . [JINGLES KEYS.] Well, it's all one! [HEARS THE BAND TUNING UP.] Eh, musicians, play, I want to hear you! Come and look at Ermolai Lopakhin laying his axe to the cherry orchard, come and look at the trees falling! We'll build villas here, and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life here. . . . Play on, music! [THE BAND PLAYS. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA SINKS INTO A CHAIR AND WEEPS BITTERLY. LOPAKHIN CONTINUES REPROACHFULLY.] Why then, why didn't you take my advice? My poor, dear woman, you can't go back now. [WEEPS.] Oh, if only the whole thing was done with, if only our uneven, unhappy life were changed!

PISCHIN

[TAKES HIS ARM; IN AN UNDERTONE.] She's crying. Let's go into the drawing-room and leave her by herself . . . come on. . . . [TAKES HIS ARM AND LEADS HIM OUT.]

LOPAKHIN

What's that? Bandsmen, play nicely! Go on, do just as I want you to! [IRONICALLY.] The new owner, the owner of the cherry orchard is coming! [HE ACCIDENTALLY KNOCKS UP AGAINST A LITTLE TABLE AND NEARLY UPSETS THE CANDELABRA.] I can pay for everything! [EXIT WITH PISCHIN.]

[IN THE RECEPTION-ROOM AND THE DRAWING-ROOM NOBODY REMAINS EXCEPT LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, WHO SITS HUDDLED UP AND WEEPING BITTERLY. THE BAND PLAYS SOFTLY. ANYA AND TROFIMOV COME IN QUICKLY. ANYA GOES UP TO HER MOTHER

AND GOES ON HER KNEES IN FRONT OF HER. TROFIMOV STANDS
AT THE DRAWING-ROOM ENTRANCE.]

ANYA

Mother! mother, are you crying? My dear, kind, good mother, my beautiful mother, I love you! Bless you! The cherry orchard is sold, we've got it no longer, it's true, true, but don't cry mother, you've still got your life before you, you've still your beautiful pure soul . . . Come with me, come, dear, away from here, come! We'll plant a new garden, finer than this, and you'll see it, and you'll understand, and deep joy, gentle joy will sink into your soul, like the evening sun, and you'll smile, mother! Come, dear, let's go!

[CURTAIN.]

Act Four

[THE STAGE IS SET AS FOR ACT I. THERE ARE NO CURTAINS ON THE WINDOWS, NO PICTURES; ONLY A FEW PIECES OF FURNITURE ARE LEFT; THEY ARE PILED UP IN A CORNER AS IF FOR SALE. THE EMPTINESS IS FELT. BY THE DOOR THAT LEADS OUT OF THE HOUSE AND AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE, PORTMANTEAUX AND TRAVELLING PARAPHERNALIA ARE PILED UP. THE DOOR ON THE LEFT IS OPEN; THE VOICES OF VARYA AND ANYA CAN BE HEARD THROUGH IT. LOPAKHIN STANDS AND WAITS. YASHA HOLDS A TRAY WITH LITTLE TUMBLERS OF CHAMPAGNE. OUTSIDE, EPIKHODOV IS TYING UP A BOX. VOICES ARE HEARD BEHIND THE STAGE. THE PEASANTS HAVE COME TO SAY GOOD-BYE. THE VOICE OF GAEV IS HEARD: "THANK YOU, BROTHERS, THANK YOU."]

YASHA

The common people have come to say good-bye. I am of the opinion, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that they're good people, but they don't understand very much.

[THE VOICES DIE AWAY. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA AND GAEV ENTER. SHE IS NOT CRYING BUT IS PALE, AND HER FACE TREMBLES; SHE CAN HARDLY SPEAK.]

GAEV

You gave them your purse, Luba. You can't go on like that, you can't!

LUBOV

I couldn't help myself, I couldn't! [THEY GO OUT.]

LOPAKHIN

[IN THE DOORWAY, CALLING AFTER THEM.] Please, I ask you most humbly! Just a little glass to say good-bye. I didn't remember to bring any from town and I only found one bottle at the station. Please, do! [PAUSE.] Won't you really have any? [GOES AWAY FROM THE DOOR.] If I only knew--I wouldn't have bought any. Well, I shan't drink any either. [YASHA CAREFULLY PUTS THE TRAY ON A CHAIR.] You have a drink, Yasha, at any rate.

YASHA

To those departing! And good luck to those who stay behind! *[DRINKS.]* I can assure you that this isn't real champagne.

LOPAKHIN

Eight roubles a bottle. *[PAUSE.]* It's devilish cold here.

YASHA

There are no fires to-day, we're going away. *[LAUGHS.]*

LOPAKHIN

What's the matter with you?

YASHA

I'm just pleased.

LOPAKHIN

It's October outside, but it's as sunny and as quiet as if it were summer. Good for building. *[LOOKING AT HIS WATCH AND SPEAKING THROUGH THE DOOR.]* Ladies and gentlemen, please remember that it's only forty-seven minutes till the train goes! You must go off to the station in twenty minutes. Hurry up.

[TROFIMOV IN AN OVERCOAT, COMES IN FROM THE GROUNDS.]

TROFIMOV

I think it's time we went. The carriages are waiting. Where the devil are my goloshes? They're lost. *[THROUGH THE DOOR.]* Anya, I can't find my goloshes! I can't!

LOPAKHIN

I've got to go to Kharkov. I'm going in the same train as you. I'm going to spend the whole winter in Kharkov. I've been hanging about with you people, going rusty without work. I can't live without working. I must have something to do with my hands; they hang about as if they weren't mine at all.

TROFIMOV

We'll go away now and then you'll start again on your useful labours.

LOPAKHIN

Have a glass.

TROFIMOV

I won't.

LOPAKHIN

So you're off to Moscow now?

TROFIMOV

Yes. I'll see them into town and to-morrow I'm off to Moscow.

LOPAKHIN

Yes. . . . I expect the professors don't lecture nowadays; they're waiting till you turn up!

TROFIMOV

That's not your business.

LOPAKHIN

How many years have you been going to the university?

TROFIMOV

Think of something fresh. This is old and flat. [*LOOKING FOR HIS GOLOSHES.*] You know, we may not meet each other again, so just let me give you a word of advice on parting: "Don't wave your hands about! Get rid of that habit of waving them about. And then, building villas and reckoning on their residents becoming [freeholders](#) in time--that's the same thing; it's all a matter of waving your hands about. . . . Whether I want to or not, you know, I like you. You've thin, delicate fingers, like those of an artist, and you've a thin, delicate soul. . . ."

LOPAKHIN

[*EMBRACES HIM.*] Good-bye, dear fellow. Thanks for all you've said. If you want any, take some money from me for the journey.

TROFIMOV

Why should I? I don't want it.

LOPAKHIN

But you've nothing!

TROFIMOV

Yes, I have, thank you; I've got some for a translation. Here it is in my pocket. [*NERVOUSLY.*] But I can't find my goloshes!

VARYA

[*FROM THE OTHER ROOM.*] Take your rubbish away! [*THROWS A PAIR OF RUBBER GOLOSHES ON TO THE STAGE.*]

TROFIMOV

Why are you angry, Varya? Hm! These aren't my goloshes!

LOPAKHIN

In the spring I sowed three thousand acres of poppies, and now I've made forty thousand roubles net profit. And when my poppies were in flower, what a picture it was! So I, as I was saying, made forty thousand roubles, and I mean I'd like to lend you some, because I can afford it. Why turn up your nose at it? I'm just a simple peasant. . . .

TROFIMOV

Your father was a peasant, mine was a [chemist](#), and that means absolutely nothing. [LOPAKHIN TAKES OUT HIS POCKET-BOOK.] No, no. . . . Even if you gave me twenty thousand I should refuse. I'm a free man. And everything that all you people, rich and poor, value so highly and so dearly hasn't the least influence over me; it's like a flock of down in the wind. I can do without you, I can pass you by. I'm strong and proud. Mankind goes on to the highest truths and to the highest happiness such as is only possible on earth, and I go in the front ranks!

LOPAKHIN

Will you get there?

TROFIMOV

I will. [PAUSE.] I'll get there and show others the way [AXES CUTTING THE TREES ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.]

LOPAKHIN

Well, good-bye, old man. It's time to go. Here we stand pulling one another's noses, but life goes its own way all the time. When I work for a long time, and I don't get tired, then I think more easily, and I think I get to understand why I exist. And there are so many people in Russia, brother, who live for nothing at all. Still, work goes on without that. Leonid Andreyevitch, they say, has accepted a post in a bank; he will get sixty thousand roubles a year. . . . But he won't stand it; he's very lazy.

ANYA

[AT THE DOOR.] Mother asks if you will stop them cutting down the orchard until she has gone away.

TROFIMOV

Yes, really, you ought to have enough tact not to do that. [EXIT.]

LOPAKHIN

All right, all right . . . yes, he's right. [EXIT.]

ANYA

Has Fiers been sent to the hospital?

YASHA

I gave the order this morning. I suppose they've sent him.

ANYA

[TO EPIKHODOV, WHO CROSSES THE ROOM.] Simeon Panteleyevitch, please make inquiries if Fiers has been sent to the hospital.

YASHA

[OFFENDED.] I told Egor this morning. What's the use of asking ten times!

EPIKHODOV

The aged Fiers, in my conclusive opinion, isn't worth mending; his forefathers had better have him. I only envy him. [PUTS A TRUNK ON A HAT-BOX AND SQUASHES IT.] Well, of course. I thought so! [EXIT.]

YASHA

[GRINNING.] Two-and-twenty troubles.

VARYA

[BEHIND THE DOOR.] Has Fiers been taken away to the hospital?

ANYA

Yes.

VARYA

Why didn't they take the letter to the doctor?

ANYA

It'll have to be sent after him. [EXIT.]

VARYA

[IN THE NEXT ROOM.] Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother's come and wants to say good-bye to him.

YASHA

[WAVING HIS HAND.] She'll make me lose all patience!

[DUNYASHA HAS MEANWHILE BEEN BUSTLING ROUND THE LUGGAGE; NOW THAT YASHA IS LEFT ALONE, SHE GOES UP TO HIM.]

DUNYASHA

If you only looked at me once, Yasha. You're going away, leaving me behind.

[WEEPS AND HUGS HIM ROUND THE NECK.]

YASHA

What's the use of crying ? [DRINKS CHAMPAGNE.] In six days I'll be again in Paris. Tomorrow we get into the express and off we go. I can hardly believe it. Vive la France! It doesn't suit me here, I can't live here . . . it's no good. Well, I've seen the uncivilized world; I have had enough of it. [DRINKS CHAMPAGNE.] What do you want to cry for? You behave yourself properly, and then you won't cry.

DUNYASHA

[LOOKS IN A SMALL MIRROR AND POWDERS HER FACE.] Send me a letter from Paris. You know I loved you, Yasha, so much! I'm a sensitive creature, Yasha.

YASHA

Somebody's coming.

[HE BUSTLES AROUND THE LUGGAGE, SINGING SOFTLY. ENTER
LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, ANYA, AND CHARLOTTA
IVANOVNA.]

GAEV

We'd better be off. There's no time left. [LOOKS AT YASHA.] Somebody smells of herring!

LUBOV

We needn't get into our carriages for ten minutes. . . . [LOOKS ROUND THE ROOM.] Good-bye, dear house, old grandfather. The winter will go, the spring will come, and then you'll exist no more, you'll be pulled down. How much these walls have seen! [PASSIONATELY KISSES HER DAUGHTER.] My treasure, you're radiant, your eyes flash like two jewels! Are you happy? Very?

ANYA

Very! A new life is beginning, mother!

GAEV

[GAILY.] Yes, really, everything's all right now. Before the cherry orchard was sold we all were excited and we suffered, and then, when the question was solved once and for all, we all calmed down, and even became cheerful. I'm a bank official now, and a financier . . . red in the middle; and you, Luba, for some reason or other, look better, there's no doubt about it.

LUBOV

Yes. My nerves are better, it's true. [SHE PUTS ON HER COAT AND HAT.] I sleep well. Take my luggage out, Yasha. It's time. [TO ANYA.] My little girl, we'll soon see each other again. . . . I'm off to Paris. I'll live there on the money your grandmother from Yaroslav sent along to buy the estate--bless her!--though it won't last long.

ANYA

You'll come back soon, soon, mother, won't you? I'll get ready, and pass the exam at the Higher School, and then I'll work and help you. We'll read all sorts of books to one another, won't we? [KISSES HER MOTHER'S HANDS.] We'll read in the autumn evenings; we'll read many books, and a beautiful new world will open up before us. . . . [THOUGHTFULLY.] You'll come, mother. . . .

LUBOV

I'll come, my darling. [EMBRACES HER.]
[ENTER LOPAKHIN. CHARLOTTA IS SINGING TO HERSELF.]

GAEV

Charlotta is happy; she sings!

CHARLOTTA

[TAKES A BUNDLE, LOOKING LIKE A WRAPPED-UP BABY.] My little baby, bye-bye. [THE BABY SEEMS TO ANSWER, "OUA! OUAI!".] Hush, my nice little boy. ["OUA! OUAI!".] I'm so sorry for you! [THROWS THE BUNDLE BACK.] So please find me a new place. I can't go on like this.

LOPAKHIN

We'll find one, Charlotta Ivanovna, don't you be afraid.

GAEV

Everybody's leaving us. Varya's going away. . . we've suddenly become unnecessary.

CHARLOTTA

I've nowhere to live in town. I must go away. [HUMS.] Never mind.
[ENTER PISCHIN.]

LOPAKHIN

Nature's marvel!

PISCHIN

[PUFFING.] Oh, let me get my breath back. . . . [I'm fagged out](#) . . . My most honoured, give me some water. . . .

GAEV

Come for money, what? I'm your humble servant, and I'm going out of the way of temptation. [EXIT.]

PISCHIN

I haven't been here for ever so long . . . dear madam. [To LOPAKHIN.] You here? Glad to see you . . . man of immense brain . . . take this . . . take it. . . [GIVES LOPAKHIN MONEY.] Four hundred roubles. . . . That leaves 840. . . .

LOPAKHIN

[SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS IN SURPRISE.] As if I were dreaming. Where did you get this from?

PISCHIN

Stop . . . it's hot. . . . A most unexpected thing happened. Some Englishmen came along and found some white clay on my land. . . . [To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.] And here's four hundred for you . . . beautiful lady. . . . [GIVES HER MONEY.] Give you the rest later. . . . [DRINKS WATER.] Just now a young man in the train was saying that some great philosopher advises us all to jump off roofs. "Jump!" he says, and that's all. [ASTONISHED.] To think of that, now! More water!

LOPAKHIN

Who were these Englishmen?

PISCHIN

I've leased off the land with the clay to them for twenty-four years. . . . Now, excuse me, I've no time. ... I must run off. . . . I must go to Znoikov and to Kardamonov ... I owe them all money. . . . *[DRINKS.]* Good-bye. I'll come in on Thursday.

LUBOV

We're just off to town, and to-morrow I go abroad.

PISCHIN

[AGITATED.] What? Why to town? I see furniture ... trunks. . . . Well, never mind. *[CRYING.]* Never mind. These Englishmen are men of immense intellect. . . . Never mind. . . . Be happy. . . . God will help you. . . . Never mind. . . . Everything in this world comes to an end. . . . *[KISSES LUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S HAND.]* And if you should happen to hear that my end has come, just remember this old . . . horse and say: "There was one such and such a Simeonov-Pischin, God bless his soul. . . ." Wonderful weather ... yes. . . . *[EXIT DEEPLY MOVED, BUT RETURNS AT ONCE AND SAYS IN THE DOOR.]* Dashenka sent her love! *[EXIT.]*

LUBOV

Now we can go. I've two anxieties, though. The first is poor Fiers *[LOOKS AT HER WATCH.]* We've still five minutes. . . .

ANYA

Mother, Fiers has already been sent to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning.

LUBOV

The second is Varya. She's used to getting up early and to work, and now she's no work to do she's like a fish out of water. She's grown thin and pale, and she cries, poor thing. . . . *[PAUSE.]* You know very well, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that I used to hope to marry her to you, and I suppose you are going to marry somebody? *[WHISPERS TO ANYA, WHO NODS TO CHARLOTTA, AND THEY BOTH GO OUT.]* She loves you, she's your sort, and I don't understand, I really don't, why you seem to be keeping away from each other. I don't understand!

LOPAKHIN

To tell the truth, I don't understand it myself. It's all so strange. . . . If there's still time, I'll be ready at once . . . Let's get it over, once and for all; I don't feel as if I could ever propose to her without you.

LUBOV

Excellent. It'll only take a minute. I'll call her.

LOPAKHIN

The champagne's very appropriate. [*LOOKING AT THE TUMBLERS.*] They're empty, somebody's already drunk them. [*YASHA COUGHS.*] I call that licking it up. . . .

LUBOV

[*ANIMATED.*] Excellent. We'll go out. Yasha, [allez](#). I'll call her in. . . . [*AT THE DOOR.*] Varya, leave that and come here. Come! [*EXIT WITH YASHA.*]

LOPAKHIN

[*LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.*] Yes. . . . [*PAUSE.*]

[*THERE IS A RESTRAINED LAUGH BEHIND THE DOOR, A WHISPER, THEN VARYA COMES IN.*]

VARYA

[*LOOKING AT THE LUGGAGE IN SILENCE.*] I can't seem to find it. . . .

LOPAKHIN

What are you looking for?

VARYA

I packed it myself and I don't remember. [*PAUSE.*]

LOPAKHIN

Where are you going to now, Barbara Mihailovna?

VARYA

I? To the Ragulins. . . . I've got an agreement to go and look after their house . . . as housekeeper or something.

LOPAKHIN

Is that at Yashnevo? It's about fifty miles. [*PAUSE.*] So life in this house is finished now. . . .

VARYA

[*LOOKING AT THE LUGGAGE.*] Where is it? . . . perhaps I've put it away in the trunk. . . . Yes, there'll be no more life in this house. . . .

LOPAKHIN

And I'm off to Kharkov at once . . . by this train. I've a lot of business on hand. I'm leaving Epikhodov here . . . I've taken him on.

VARYA

Well, well!

LOPAKHIN

Last year at this time the snow was already falling, if you remember, and now it's nice and sunny. Only it's rather cold. . . . There's three degrees of frost.

VARYA

I didn't look. *[PAUSE.]* And our thermometer's broken. . . . *[PAUSE.]*

VOICE AT THE DOOR
Ermolai Alexeyevitch!

LOPAKHIN

[AS IF HE HAS LONG BEEN WAITING TO BE CALLED.] This minute. *[EXIT QUICKLY.]*

[VARYA, SITTING ON THE FLOOR, PUTS HER FACE ON A BUNDLE OF CLOTHES AND WEEPS GENTLY. THE DOOR OPENS. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA ENTERS CAREFULLY.]

LUBOV
Well? *[PAUSE.]* We must go.

VARYA
[NOT CRYING NOW, WIPES HER EYES.] Yes, it's quite time, little mother. I'll get to the Ragulins to-day, if I don't miss the train. . . .

LUBOV
[AT THE DOOR.] Anya, put on your things. *[ENTER ANYA, THEN GAEV, CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA. GAEV WEARS A WARM OVERCOAT WITH A CAPE. A SERVANT AND DRIVERS COME IN. EPIKHODOV BUSTLES AROUND THE LUGGAGE.]* Now we can go away.

ANYA
[JOYFULLY.] Away!

GAEV
My friends, my dear friends! Can I be silent, in leaving this house for evermore?-- can I restrain myself, in saying farewell, from expressing those feelings which now fill my whole being . . . ?

ANYA
[IMPLORINGLY.] Uncle!

VARYA
Uncle, you shouldn't!

GAEV
[STUPIDLY.] Double the red into the middle. . . . I'll be quiet.
[ENTER TROFIMOV, THEN LOPAKHIN.]

TROFIMOV
Well, it's time to be off.

LOPAKHIN
Epikhodov, my coat!

LUBOV

I'll sit here one more minute. It's as if I'd never really noticed what the walls and ceilings of this house were like, and now I look at them greedily, with such tender love. . . .

GAEV

I remember, when I was six years old, on Trinity Sunday, I sat at this window and looked and saw my father going to church. . . .

LUBOV

Have all the things been taken away?

LOPAKHIN

Yes, all, I think. *[To EPIKHODOV, PUTTING ON HIS COAT.]* You see that everything's quite straight, Epikhodov.

EPIKHODOV

[HOARSELY.] You may depend upon me, Ermolai Alexeyevitch!

LOPAKHIN

What's the matter with your voice?

EPIKHODOV

I swallowed something just now; I was having a drink of water.

YASHA

[SUSPICIOUSLY.] What manners. . . .

LUBOV

We go away, and not a soul remains behind.

LOPAKHIN

Till the spring.

VARYA

[DRAGS AN UMBRELLA OUT OF A BUNDLE, AND SEEMS TO BE WAVING IT ABOUT. LOPAKHIN PRETENDS TO BE FRIGHTENED.] What are you doing? . . . I never thought . . .

TROFIMOV

Come along, let's take our seats . . . it's time! The train will be in directly.

VARYA

Peter, here they are, your goloshes, by that trunk. *[IN TEARS.]* And how old and dirty they are. . . .

TROFIMOV

[PUTTING THEM ON.] Come on!

GAEV

[*DEEPLY MOVED, NEARLY CRYING.*] The train . . . the station. . . . Cross in the middle, a white double in the corner. . . .

LUBOV

Let's go!

LOPAKHIN

Are you all here? There's nobody else? [*LOCKS THE SIDE-DOOR ON THE LEFT.*] There's a lot of things in there. I must lock them up. Come!

ANYA

Good-bye, home! Good-bye, old life!

TROFIMOV

Welcome, new life. [*EXIT WITH ANYA.*]

[*VARYA LOOKS ROUND THE ROOM AND GOES OUT SLOWLY. YASHA AND CHARLOTTA, WITH HER LITTLE DOG, GO OUT.*]

LOPAKHIN

Till the spring, then! Come on . . . till we meet again! [*EXIT.*]

[*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA AND GAEV ARE LEFT ALONE. THEY MIGHT ALMOST HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THAT. THEY FALL INTO EACH OTHER'S ARMS AND SOB RESTRAINEDLY AND QUIETLY, FEARING THAT SOMEBODY MIGHT HEAR THEM.*]

GAEV

[*IN DESPAIR.*] My sister, my sister. . . .

LUBOV

My dead, my gentle, beautiful orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, good-bye! Good-bye!

ANYA'S VOICE

[*GAILY.*] Mother!

TROFIMOV'S VOICE

[*GAILY, EXCITED.*] Coo-ee!

LUBOV

To look at the walls and the windows for the last time. . . . My dead mother used to like to walk about this room. . . .

GAEV

My sister, my sister!

ANYA'S VOICE

Mother!

TROFIMOV'S VOICE

Coo-ee!

LUBOV

We're coming! *[THEY GO OUT.]*

[THE STAGE IS EMPTY. THE SOUND OF KEYS BEING TURNED IN THE LOCKS IS HEARD, AND THEN THE NOISE OF THE CARRIAGES GOING AWAY. IT IS QUIET. THEN THE SOUND OF AN AXE AGAINST THE TREES IS HEARD IN THE SILENCE, SADLY AND BY ITSELF. STEPS ARE HEARD. FIERS COMES IN FROM THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT. HE IS DRESSED AS USUAL, IN A SHORT JACKET AND WHITE WAISTCOAT; SLIPPERS ON HIS FEET. HE IS ILL. HE GOES TO THE DOOR AND TRIES THE HANDLE.]

FIERS

It's locked. They've gone away. *[SITS ON A SOFA.]* They've forgotten about me. . . .
Never mind, I'll sit here. . . . And Leonid Andreyevitch will have gone in a light
overcoat instead of putting on his fur coat. . . . *[SIGHS ANXIOUSLY.]* I didn't see. . . . Oh,
these young people! *[MUMBLES SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD.]* Life's gone on as if I'd
never lived. *[LYING DOWN.]* I'll lie down. . . . You've no strength left in you, nothing left
at all. . . Oh, you . . . bungler!

[HE LIES WITHOUT MOVING. THE DISTANT SOUND IS HEARD, AS IF FROM THE SKY, OF A BREAKING STRING, DYING AWAY SADLY. SILENCE FOLLOWS IT, AND ONLY THE SOUND IS HEARD, SOME WAY AWAY IN THE ORCHARD, OF THE AXE FALLING ON THE TREES.]
[CURTAIN.]

FOOTNOTES BY JAMES RUSK

ERMOLAI

now written in English as "Yermolay" [\[back\]](#)

PETER

"Petya" in the original [\[back\]](#)

EPIKHODOV

now written in English as "Yepikhodov" [\[back\]](#)

FIERS

pronounced "fierce" [\[back\]](#)

footman

valet [\[back\]](#)

little man

lit., little peasant [\[back\]](#)

kvass

a homemade beer [\[back\]](#)

mother/little mother

the translator's choices for "Mamochka," an intimate nickname for mother [\[back\]](#)

garden

orchard [\[back\]](#)

villa

"dacha," a summer vacation home [\[back\]](#)

Mentone

located on the French Mediterranean [\[back\]](#)

wretch

scoundrel [\[back\]](#)

from one holy place to another

religious pilgrims were common in 19th century Russia [\[back\]](#)

long jacket of thin cloth

"poddëuka," typical peasant clothing [\[back\]](#)

as if he is playing billiards

Gaev's billiard terms don't match any particular kind of billiard playing, and Chekhov admitted he knew nothing about the game [\[back\]](#)

patchouli

a perfume [\[back\]](#)

my dear little cupboard

most translators use "bookcase" [\[back\]](#)

Nurse has died

"nyanya," a nanny [\[back\]](#)

dessiatin

2.7 acres [\[back\]](#)

Encyclopaedic Dictionary

probably the 86-volume Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary [\[back\]](#)

jubilee

anniversary [\[back\]](#)

in a worn student uniform

all students at this time wore uniforms [\[back\]](#)

advocate

lawyer [\[back\]](#)

I'm a man of the eighties

a period of extreme reaction under Czar Alexandr III [\[back\]](#)

Any dear!

Anichka! [\[back\]](#)

shrine

chapel [\[back\]](#)

passport

an internal passport for movement within Russia [\[back\]](#)

salto mortale

a complete somersault [\[back\]](#)

What is this noisy earth to me...

words to a popular ballad [\[back\]](#)

Buckle

historian Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1861) was considered a materialist and free-thinker [\[back\]](#)

about the seventies and about decadents

probably refers to the group of French poets who called themselves decadents [\[back\]](#)

do stop

do stay [\[back\]](#)

all my substance

all my fortune [\[back\]](#)

Emancipation

the serfs were freed in 1861 [\[back\]](#)

It was very good for them in the old days

this is said ironically [\[back\]](#)

crèches

public nurseries; day care centers [\[back\]](#)

My brother, my suffering brother

from a poem by Nadson [\[back\]](#)

Come out on the Volga

from a poem by Nekrasov [\[back\]](#)

Oh, feel me, get thee to a nunnery

in Hamlet, Hamlet says this to Ophelia (III, 1, 121) [\[back\]](#)

Oh, feel me, nymph, remember me in thine orisons

see Hamlet, III, 1, 89-90 [\[back\]](#)

Oh, it's awful...their heavy visions

this passage was substituted by Chekhov for one the censor objected to. The original passage was restored after the 1917 revolution: "To own human beings has affected every one of you--those who lived before and those who live now. Your mother, your uncle, and you don't notice that you are living off the labours of others--in fact, the very people you won't even let in the front door." [\[back\]](#)

drawing-room

ballroom [\[back\]](#)

Promenade a une paire

promenade with your partner [\[back\]](#)

Grand rond, balancez

the great ring dance, get set [\[back\]](#)

Les cavaliers à genou et remerciez vos dames!

Gentlemen, on your knees and thank your ladies [\[back\]](#)

Nietzsche

German philosopher, 1844-1900 [\[back\]](#)

Caucasian dance

lezginka, a courtship dance [\[back\]](#)

Ein, zwei, drei

one, two, three (German) [\[back\]](#)

Guter Mensch aber schlechter Musikant

A good man, but a bad musician (German) [\[back\]](#)

I don't want to be a Beau Brummel

I don't want to be fashionable (Beau Brummel was George Brummel, 1778-1840) [\[back\]](#)

"The Magdalen" by Tolstoy

the poem is "The Sinful Woman" by Aleksey Tolstoy (1817-1875), not Leo Tolstoy the novelist [\[back\]](#)

demi-saison

between-season [\[back\]](#)

freeholders

small farmers [\[back\]](#)

chemist

druggist [\[back\]](#)

fagged out

worn out [\[back\]](#)

allez

let's go! (French) [\[back\]](#)

A DOCTOR'S VISIT

License: Public Domain

Anton Chekhov

Translated by Constance Garnett

The Professor received a telegram from the Lyalikovs' factory; he was asked to come as quickly as possible. The daughter of some Madame Lyalikov, apparently the owner of the factory, was ill, and that was all that one could make out of the long, incoherent telegram. And the Professor did not go himself, but sent instead his assistant, Korolyov.

It was two stations from Moscow, and there was a drive of three miles from the station. A carriage with three horses had been sent to the station to meet Korolyov; the coachman wore a hat with a peacock's feather on it, and answered every question in a loud voice like a soldier: "No, sir!" "Certainly, sir!"

It was Saturday evening; the sun was setting, the workpeople were coming in crowds from the factory to the station, and they bowed to the carriage in which Korolyov was driving. And he was charmed with the evening, the farmhouses and villas on the road, and the birch-trees, and the quiet atmosphere all around, when the fields and woods and the sun seemed preparing, like the workpeople now on the eve of the holiday, to rest, and perhaps to pray. . . .

He was born and had grown up in Moscow; he did not know the country, and he had never taken any interest in factories, or been inside one, but he had happened to read about factories, and had been in the houses of manufacturers and had talked to them; and whenever he saw a factory far or near, he always thought how quiet and peaceable it was outside, but within there was always sure to be impenetrable ignorance and dull egoism on the side of the owners, wearisome, unhealthy toil on the side of the workpeople, squabbling, vermin, vodka. And now when the workpeople timidly and respectfully made way for the carriage, in their faces, their caps, their walk, he read physical impurity, drunkenness, nervous exhaustion, bewilderment.

They drove in at the factory gates. On each side he caught glimpses of the little houses of workpeople, of the faces of

women, of quilts and linen on the railings. "Look out!" shouted the coachman, not pulling up the horses. It was a wide courtyard without grass, with five immense blocks of buildings with tall chimneys a little distance one from another, warehouses and barracks, and over everything a sort of grey powder as though from dust. Here and there, like oases in the desert, there were pitiful gardens, and the green and red roofs of the houses in which the managers and clerks lived. The coachman suddenly pulled up the horses, and the carriage stopped at the house, which had been newly painted grey; here was a flower garden, with a lilac bush covered with dust, and on the yellow steps at the front door there was a strong smell of paint.

"Please come in, doctor," said women's voices in the passage and the entry, and at the same time he heard sighs and whisperings. "Pray walk in. . . . We've been expecting you so long . . . we're in real trouble. Here, this way."

Madame Lyalikov—a stout elderly lady wearing a black silk dress with fashionable sleeves, but, judging from her face, a simple uneducated woman—looked at the doctor in a flutter, and could not bring herself to hold out her hand to him; she did not dare. Beside her stood a personage with short hair and a pince-nez; she was wearing a blouse of many colours, and was very thin and no longer young. The servants called her Christina Dmitryevna, and Korolyov guessed that this was the governess. Probably, as the person of most education in the house, she had been charged to meet and receive the doctor, for she began immediately, in great haste, stating the causes of the illness, giving trivial and tiresome details, but without saying who was ill or what was the matter.

The doctor and the governess were sitting talking while the lady of the house stood motionless at the door, waiting. From the conversation Korolyov learned that the patient was Madame Lyalikov's only daughter and heiress, a girl of twenty, called Liza; she had been ill for a long time, and had consulted various doctors, and the previous night she had suffered till morning from such violent palpitations of the heart, that no one in the house had slept, and they had been afraid she might die.

"She has been, one may say, ailing from a child," said Christina Dmitryevna in a sing-song voice, continually wiping her lips with her hand. "The doctors say it is nerves; when she was a little girl she was scrofulous, and the doctors drove it inwards, so I think it may be due to that."

They went to see the invalid. Fully grown up, big and tall, but ugly like her mother, with the same little eyes and disproportionate breadth of the lower part of the face, lying with her hair in disorder, muffled up to the chin, she made upon Korolyov at the first minute the impression of a poor, destitute creature, sheltered and cared for here out of charity, and he could hardly believe that this was the heiress of the five huge buildings.

10

"I am the doctor come to see you," said Korolyov. "Good evening."

He mentioned his name and pressed her hand, a large, cold, ugly hand; she sat up, and, evidently accustomed to doctors, let herself be sounded, without showing the least concern that her shoulders and chest were uncovered.

"I have palpitations of the heart," she said, "It was so awful all night. . . . I almost died of fright! Do give me something."

"I will, I will; don't worry yourself."

Korolyov examined her and shrugged his shoulders.

15

"The heart is all right," he said; "it's all going on satisfactorily; everything is in good order. Your nerves must have been playing pranks a little, but that's so common. The attack is over by now, one must suppose; lie down and go to sleep."

At that moment a lamp was brought into the bed-room. The patient screwed up her eyes at the light, then suddenly put her hands to her head and broke into sobs. And the impression of a destitute, ugly creature vanished, and Korolyov no longer noticed the little eyes or the heavy development of the lower part of the face. He saw a soft, suffering expression which was intelligent and touching: she seemed to him altogether graceful, feminine, and simple; and he longed to soothe her, not with drugs, not with advice, but with simple, kindly words. Her mother put her arms round her head and hugged her. What despair, what grief was in the old woman's face! She, her mother, had reared her and

brought her up, spared nothing, and devoted her whole life to having her daughter taught French, dancing, music: had engaged a dozen teachers for her; had consulted the best doctors, kept a governess. And now she could not make out the reason of these tears, why there was all this misery, she could not understand, and was bewildered; and she had a guilty, agitated, despairing expression, as though she had omitted something very important, had left something undone, had neglected to call in somebody—and whom, she did not know.

"Lizanka, you are crying again . . . again," she said, hugging her daughter to her. "My own, my darling, my child, tell me what it is! Have pity on me! Tell me."

Both wept bitterly. Korolyov sat down on the side of the bed and took Liza's hand.

"Come, give over; it's no use crying," he said kindly. "Why, there is nothing in the world that is worth those tears. Come, we won't cry; that's no good. . . ."

And inwardly he thought:

"It's high time she was married. . . ."

"Our doctor at the factory gave her kalibromati," said the governess, "but I notice it only makes her worse. I should have thought that if she is given anything for the heart it ought to be drops. . . . I forget the name. . . . Convallaria, isn't it?"

And there followed all sorts of details. She interrupted the doctor, preventing his speaking, and there was a look of effort on her face, as though she supposed that, as the woman of most education in the house, she was duty bound to keep up a conversation with the doctor, and on no other subject but medicine.

Korolyov felt bored.

"I find nothing special the matter," he said, addressing the mother as he went out of the bedroom. "If your daughter is being attended by the factory doctor, let him go on attending her. The treatment so far has been perfectly correct, and I see no reason for changing your doctor. Why change? It's such an ordinary trouble; there's nothing seriously wrong."

He spoke deliberately as he put on his gloves, while Madame Lyalikov stood without moving, and looked at him with her tearful eyes.

"I have half an hour to catch the ten o'clock train," he said. "I hope I am not too late."

"And can't you stay?" she asked, and tears trickled down her cheeks again. "I am ashamed to trouble you, but if you would be so good For God's sake," she went on in an undertone, glancing towards the door, "do stay to-night with us! She is all I have . . . my only daughter. . . . She frightened me last night; I can't get over it. . . . Don't go away, for goodness' sake! . . ."

He wanted to tell her that he had a great deal of work in Moscow, that his family were expecting him home; it was disagreeable to him to spend the evening and the whole night in a strange house quite needlessly; but he looked at her face, heaved a sigh, and began taking off his gloves without a word.

30

All the lamps and candles were lighted in his honour in the drawing-room and the dining-room. He sat down at the piano and began turning over the music. Then he looked at the pictures on the walls, at the portraits. The pictures, oil-paintings in gold frames, were views of the Crimea—a stormy sea with a ship, a Catholic monk with a wineglass; they were all dull, smooth daubs, with no trace of talent in them. There was not a single good-looking face among the portraits, nothing but broad cheekbones and astonished-looking eyes. Lyalikov, Liza's father, had a low forehead and a self-satisfied expression; his uniform sat like a sack on his bulky plebeian figure; on his breast was a medal and a Red Cross Badge. There was little sign of culture, and the luxury was senseless and haphazard, and was as ill fitting as that uniform. The floors irritated him with their brilliant polish, the lustres on the chandelier irritated him, and he was reminded for some reason of the story of the merchant who used to go to the baths with a medal on his neck. . . .

He heard a whispering in the entry; someone was softly snoring. And suddenly from outside came harsh, abrupt, metallic sounds, such as Korolyov had never heard before, and which he

did not understand now; they roused strange, unpleasant echoes in his soul.

"I believe nothing would induce me to remain here to live . . ." he thought, and went back to the music-books again.

"Doctor, please come to supper!" the governess called him in a low voice.

He went into supper. The table was large and laid with a vast number of dishes and wines, but there were only two to supper: himself and Christina Dmitryevna. She drank Madeira, ate rapidly, and talked, looking at him through her pince-nez:

35

"Our workpeople are very contented. We have performances at the factory every winter; the workpeople act themselves. They have lectures with a magic lantern, a splendid tea-room, and everything they want. They are very much attached to us, and when they heard that Lizanka was worse they had a service sung for her. Though they have no education, they have their feelings, too."

"It looks as though you have no man in the house at all," said Korolyov.

"Not one. Pyotr Nikanoritch died a year and a half ago, and left us alone. And so there are the three of us. In the summer we live here, and in winter we live in Moscow, in Polianka. I have been living with them for eleven years—as one of the family."

At supper they served sterlet, chicken rissoles, and stewed fruit; the wines were expensive French wines.

"Please don't stand on ceremony, doctor," said Christina Dmitryevna, eating and wiping her mouth with her fist, and it was evident she found her life here exceedingly pleasant. "Please have some more."

40

After supper the doctor was shown to his room, where a bed had been made up for him, but he did not feel sleepy. The room was stuffy and it smelt of paint; he put on his coat and went out.

It was cool in the open air; there was already a glimmer of dawn, and all the five blocks of buildings, with their tall chimneys, barracks, and warehouses, were distinctly outlined against the damp air. As it was a holiday, they were not working, and the windows were dark, and in only one of the buildings was

there a furnace burning; two windows were crimson, and fire mixed with smoke came from time to time from the chimney. Far away beyond the yard the frogs were croaking and the nightingales singing.

Looking at the factory buildings and the barracks, where the workpeople were asleep, he thought again what he always thought when he saw a factory. They may have performances for the workpeople, magic lanterns, factory doctors, and improvements of all sorts, but, all the same, the workpeople he had met that day on his way from the station did not look in any way different from those he had known long ago in his childhood, before there were factory performances and improvements. As a doctor accustomed to judging correctly of chronic complaints, the radical cause of which was incomprehensible and incurable, he looked upon factories as something baffling, the cause of which also was obscure and not removable, and all the improvements in the life of the factory hands he looked upon not as superfluous, but as comparable with the treatment of incurable illnesses.

"There is something baffling in it, of course . . ." he thought, looking at the crimson windows. "Fifteen hundred or two thousand workpeople are working without rest in unhealthy surroundings, making bad cotton goods, living on the verge of starvation, and only waking from this nightmare at rare intervals in the tavern; a hundred people act as overseers, and the whole life of that hundred is spent in imposing fines, in abuse, in injustice, and only two or three so-called owners enjoy the profits, though they don't work at all, and despise the wretched cotton. But what are the profits, and how do they enjoy them? Madame Lyalikov and her daughter are unhappy—it makes one wretched to look at them; the only one who enjoys her life is Christina Dmitryevna, a stupid, middle-aged maiden lady in pince-nez. And so it appears that all these five blocks of buildings are at work, and inferior cotton is sold in the Eastern markets, simply that Christina Dmitryevna may eat sterlet and drink Madeira."

Suddenly there came a strange noise, the same sound Korolyov had heard before supper. Someone was striking on a sheet of metal near one of the buildings; he struck a note, and then at once

checked the vibrations, so that short, abrupt, discordant sounds were produced, rather like "Dair . . . dair . . . dair. . . ." Then there was half a minute of stillness, and from another building there came sounds equally abrupt and unpleasant, lower bass notes: "Drin . . . drin . . . drin. . ." Eleven times. Evidently it was the watchman striking the hour. Near the third building he heard: "Zhuk . . . zhuk . . . zhuk. . ." And so near all the buildings, and then behind the barracks and beyond the gates. And in the stillness of the night it seemed as though these sounds were uttered by a monster with crimson eyes—the devil himself, who controlled the owners and the work-people alike, and was deceiving both.

Korolyov went out of the yard into the open country.

"Who goes there?" someone called to him at the gates in an abrupt voice.

"It's just like being in prison," he thought, and made no answer.

Here the nightingales and the frogs could be heard more distinctly, and one could feel it was a night in May. From the station came the noise of a train; somewhere in the distance drowsy cocks were crowing; but, all the same, the night was still, the world was sleeping tranquilly. In a field not far from the factory there could be seen the framework of a house and heaps of building material:

Korolyov sat down on the planks and went on thinking.

50

"The only person who feels happy here is the governess, and the factory hands are working for her gratification. But that's only apparent: she is only the figurehead. The real person, for whom everything is being done, is the devil."

And he thought about the devil, in whom he did not believe, and he looked round at the two windows where the fires were gleaming. It seemed to him that out of those crimson eyes the devil himself was looking at him—that unknown force that had created the mutual relation of the strong and the weak, that coarse blunder which one could never correct. The strong must hinder the weak from living—such was the law of Nature; but only in a newspaper article or in a school book was that intelligible and easily accepted. In the hotchpotch which was everyday life, in the

tangle of trivialities out of which human relations were woven, it was no longer a law, but a logical absurdity, when the strong and the weak were both equally victims of their mutual relations, unwillingly submitting to some directing force, unknown, standing outside life, apart from man.

So thought Korolyov, sitting on the planks, and little by little he was possessed by a feeling that this unknown and mysterious force was really close by and looking at him. Meanwhile the east was growing paler, time passed rapidly; when there was not a soul anywhere near, as though everything were dead, the five buildings and their chimneys against the grey background of the dawn had a peculiar look—not the same as by day; one forgot altogether that inside there were steam motors, electricity, telephones, and kept thinking of lake-dwellings, of the Stone Age, feeling the presence of a crude, unconscious force. . . .

And again there came the sound: "Dair . . . dair . . . dair . . . dair . . ." twelve times. Then there was stillness, stillness for half a minute, and at the other end of the yard there rang out.

"Drin . . . drin . . . drin. . . ."

55

"Horribly disagreeable," thought Korolyov.

"Zhuk . . . zhuk . . ." there resounded from a third place, abruptly, sharply, as though with annoyance—"Zhuk . . . zhuk. . . ."

And it took four minutes to strike twelve. Then there was a hush; and again it seemed as though everything were dead.

Korolyov sat a little longer, then went to the house, but sat up for a good while longer. In the adjoining rooms there was whispering, there was a sound of shuffling slippers and bare feet.

"Is she having another attack?" thought Korolyov.

60

He went out to have a look at the patient. By now it was quite light in the rooms, and a faint glimmer of sunlight, piercing through the morning mist, quivered on the floor and on the wall of the drawing-room. The door of Liza's room was open, and she was sitting in a low chair beside her bed, with her hair down, wearing a dressing-gown and wrapped in a shawl. The blinds were down on the windows.

"How do you feel?" asked Korolyov.

"Well, thank you."

He touched her pulse, then straightened her hair, that had fallen over her forehead.

"You are not asleep," he said. "It's beautiful weather outside. It's spring. The nightingales are singing, and you sit in the dark and think of something."

65

She listened and looked into his face; her eyes were sorrowful and intelligent, and it was evident she wanted to say something to him.

"Does this happen to you often?" he said.

She moved her lips, and answered:

"Often, I feel wretched almost every night."

At that moment the watchman in the yard began striking two o'clock. They heard: "Dair . . . dair . . ." and she shuddered.

70

"Do those knockings worry you?" he asked.

"I don't know. Everything here worries me," she answered, and pondered. "Everything worries me. I hear sympathy in your voice; it seemed to me as soon as I saw you that I could tell you all about it."

"Tell me, I beg you."

"I want to tell you of my opinion. It seems to me that I have no illness, but that I am weary and frightened, because it is bound to be so and cannot be otherwise. Even the healthiest person can't help being uneasy if, for instance, a robber is moving about under his window. I am constantly being doctored," she went on, looking at her knees, and she gave a shy smile. "I am very grateful, of course, and I do not deny that the treatment is a benefit; but I should like to talk, not with a doctor, but with some intimate friend who would understand me and would convince me that I was right or wrong."

"Have you no friends?" asked Korolyov.

75

"I am lonely. I have a mother; I love her, but, all the same, I am lonely. That's how it happens to be. . . . Lonely people read a great deal, but say little and hear little. Life for them is mysterious; they are mystics and often see the devil where he is not. Lermontov's Tamara was lonely and she saw the devil."

"Do you read a great deal?"

"Yes. You see, my whole time is free from morning till night. I read by day, and by night my head is empty; instead of thoughts there are shadows in it."

"Do you see anything at night?" asked Korolyov.

"No, but I feel. . . ."

80

She smiled again, raised her eyes to the doctor, and looked at him so sorrowfully, so intelligently; and it seemed to him that she trusted him, and that she wanted to speak frankly to him, and that she thought the same as he did. But she was silent, perhaps waiting for him to speak.

And he knew what to say to her. It was clear to him that she needed as quickly as possible to give up the five buildings and the million if she had it—to leave that devil that looked out at night; it was clear to him, too, that she thought so herself, and was only waiting for someone she trusted to confirm her.

But he did not know how to say it. How? One is shy of asking men under sentence what they have been sentenced for; and in the same way it is awkward to ask very rich people what they want so much money for, why they make such a poor use of their wealth, why they don't give it up, even when they see in it their unhappiness; and if they begin a conversation about it themselves, it is usually embarrassing, awkward, and long.

"How is one to say it?" Korolyov wondered. "And is it necessary to speak?"

And he said what he meant in a roundabout way:

85

"You in the position of a factory owner and a wealthy heiress are dissatisfied; you don't believe in your right to it; and here now you can't sleep. That, of course, is better than if you were satisfied, slept soundly, and thought everything was satisfactory. Your sleeplessness does you credit; in any case, it is a good sign. In reality, such a conversation as this between us now would have been unthinkable for our parents. At night they did not talk, but slept sound; we, our generation, sleep badly, are restless, but talk a great deal, and are always trying to settle whether we are right or not. For our children or grandchildren that question—whether they are right or not—will have been settled. Things will be clearer for them than for us. Life will be good in fifty years' time;

it's only a pity we shall not last out till then. It would be interesting to have a peep at it."

"What will our children and grandchildren do?" asked Liza.

"I don't know. . . . I suppose they will throw it all up and go away."

"Go where?"

"Where? . . . Why, where they like," said Korolyov; and he laughed. "There are lots of places a good, intelligent person can go to."

90

He glanced at his watch.

"The sun has risen, though," he said. "It is time you were asleep. Undress and sleep soundly. Very glad to have made your acquaintance," he went on, pressing her hand. "You are a good, interesting woman. Good-night!"

He went to his room and went to bed.

In the morning when the carriage was brought round they all came out onto the steps to see him off. Liza, pale and exhausted, was in a white dress as though for a holiday, with a flower in her hair; she looked at him, as yesterday, sorrowfully and intelligently, smiled and talked, and all with an expression as though she wanted to tell him something special, important—him alone. They could hear the larks trilling and the church bells pealing. The windows in the factory buildings were sparkling gaily, and, driving across the yard and afterwards along the road to the station, Korolyov thought neither of the workpeople nor of lake dwellings, nor of the devil, but thought of the time, perhaps close at hand, when life would be as bright and joyous as that still Sunday morning; and he thought how pleasant it was on such a morning in the spring to drive with three horses in a good carriage, and to bask in the sunshine.

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Selected Poems

Irish

Victorianism/Realism/Modernism

The poetry of William Butler Yeats does not fit easily into any literary movement. He admired the Victorian Pre-Raphaelites, who embraced a combination of realistic techniques and symbolic meanings. Yeats' poetry is full of myths and symbols, and his belief in a type of mysticism or spiritualism underlies much of his work (for Yeats, mysticism and the occult were real, not metaphorical). His earlier poems, such as "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (1890), could be straight out of Victorianism, but over time, Yeats began to incorporate more realistic elements into his poetry. In "Easter, 1916"—written right after the failed Easter Uprising for Irish independence—Yeats offers a critical (and mostly unflattering) view of the individuals who were executed, but recognizes how their deaths for the cause have transformed them into something greater than themselves (a new mythology). Despite that transformation, the narrator worries about whether it was a worthwhile sacrifice (in fact, by 1922, Yeats would be elected a senator in the new Republic of Ireland). Even though his poetry in later years would contain elements of Modernism, such as in the poem "The Second Coming" (1921), Yeats never abandoned the mystical and symbolic in his poetry, becoming a modern poet who disliked Modernism and refused to give up traditional elements (Albrecht; Longley). In his life, Yeats had the same tendency to be caught between (or among) movements. Although he was an Anglo-Irish Protestant born in Dublin, who was expected to support the English presence in Ireland, Yeats became an Irish Nationalist: partly out of patriotism, and partly because he fell in love with the actress Maud Gonne, a beautiful Nationalist. Yeats proposed to Gonne at least four times, and his (bitter) reaction to her rejection of him can be found in many poems, including some of those written after he married Georgiana Hyde-Lees, with whom he had two children. The poem "When You Are Old" (1895) is an early example of his obsession with Gonne. Besides writing poetry, Yeats was one of the founders of the Irish (now Abbey) Theater, for

which he wrote many plays. When he received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, it was mostly for his plays, which the Nobel organization noted in 1969 is doubly ironic: not only are his poems more famous now, but also "Yeats is one of the few writers whose greatest works were written after the award of the Nobel Prize" (Frenz).

Consider while reading:

1. In "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," which elements of the poem are Romantic in nature?
2. The poem "When You Are Old" is often quoted out of context, focusing on how the narrator "loved the pilgrim soul" of the woman. Considering the bitterness that Yeats felt towards Maud Gonne (the inspiration for the woman), how is the poem less than flattering to her? In what ways does the poem scold her for rejecting him?
3. In "The Second Coming," who or what is about to be born (there is one obvious answer, but there are at least a few other options)?

Written by Laura Getty

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

License: Public Domain

W.B. Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree, And a small cabin build there,
of clay and wattles made: Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the
honey bee, And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings; There
midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow, And evening full of
the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day I hear lake water lapping
with low sounds by the shore; While I stand on the roadway, or on the
pavements gray, I hear it in the deep heart's core.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

License: Public Domain

W.B. Yeats

When you are old and gray and full of sleep, And nodding by the fire, take
down this book, And slowly read, and dream of the soft look Your eyes
had once, and of their shadows deep; How many loved your moments of
glad grace, And loved your beauty will love false or true; But one man
loved the pilgrim soul in you, And loved the sorrows of your changing
face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars Murmur, a little sadly, how love
fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

EASTER 1916

License: Public Domain

W.B. Yeats

I have met them at close of day Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head Or polite meaningless words, Or have
 lingered awhile and said Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done Of a mocking tale or a gibe To please a companion
Around the fire at the club, Being certain that they and I But lived where motley is
 worn: All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horse;
This other his helper and friend Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end, So sensitive his nature seemed, So daring and
 sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed A drunken, vainglorious lout.
He had done most bitter wrong To some who are near my heart, Yet I number him
 in the song; He, too, has resigned his part In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn, Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone Through summer and winter seem Enchanted to a
 stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road, The rider, the birds that range From cloud to
 tumbling cloud, Minute by minute they change; A shadow of cloud on the
 stream Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim, And a horse plashed within it; The long-legged
 moor-hens dive, And hens to moor-cocks call; Minute by minute they live: The
 stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part To murmur name upon name,

As a mother names her child When sleep at last has come On limbs that had run wild.

What is it but nightfall?

No, no, not night but death; Was it needless death after all?

For England may keep faith

For all that is done and said.

We know their dream; enough To know they dreamed and are dead; And what if excess of love

Bewildered them till they died?

I write it out in a verse -

MacDonagh and MacBride

And Connolly and Pearse

Now and in time to be,

Wherever green is worn,

Are changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born.

THE SECOND COMING

License: Public Domain

W.B. Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere The ceremony of innocence is
drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand; Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out When a vast image out of
Spiritus Mundi Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert A shape
with lion body and the head of a man, A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it Reel shadows of the indignant desert
birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle, And what rough beast, its hour
come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

H.G. Wells (1866-1946)

The Island of Dr. Moreau

British

Realism

Herbert George Wells, generally referred to as H.G. Wells, was a prolific 19th-century British writer best known for his science fiction novels. He is often referred to, in fact, as the father of science fiction. Born into a lower middle class family, after his father's shop failed and the family went bankrupt, Wells held a variety of jobs as an adolescent, including working as a teaching assistant, apprentice draper, and pharmacy clerk. He would later use these experiences in his novels as the basis for social satire. After eventually winning a scholarship to Imperial College, Wells trained as a scientist; he was particularly interested in Darwinian theory. Wells was also an avid Socialist and an active member of the Fabian Society, an organization that advocated a long-term approach to the eventual Socialist revolution. Throughout his life, Wells suffered from various physical ailments, including diabetes, and his life was further complicated by a series of romantic affairs and two failed marriages. Wells, who published 51 novels as well as dozens of stories, story collections, works of non-fiction, and essays, is also best known for his novels *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Invisible Man*, and *When the Sleeper Awakes*.

An early science fiction novel, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) dramatizes the practice of vivisection, the practice of performing operations on live animals for the purpose of scientific research. Vivisection was a controversial topic in fin de siècle England, with a number of organizations formed to fight the practice as cruel and unethical. As the novel examines the ethics of vivisection, it also illustrates the possibility that civilization was spiraling downward into an increasingly degenerate state. Although Wells was an educated man and a scientist, he appears to be warning of the dangers that unregulated science can pose to the larger community.

Consider while reading:

1. Although this novel is considered an early science fiction text, it can also be described as a work of Gothic horror. What elements of the Gothic genre do you see here?
2. What does this novel have in common with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*?
3. What do you think of the ending of the novel? What does the ending suggest about the nature of humankind?

Written by Anita Turlington

THE INVISIBLE MAN

License: Public Domain

H.G. Wells

A Grotesque Romance

I. The Strange Man's Arrival

The stranger came early in February, one wintry day, through a biting wind and a driving snow, the last snowfall of the year, over the down, walking from Bramblehurst railway station, and carrying a little black portmanteau in his thickly gloved hand. He was wrapped up from head to foot, and the brim of his soft felt hat hid every inch of his face but the shiny tip of his nose; the snow had piled itself against his shoulders and chest, and added a white crest to the burden he carried. He staggered into the "Coach and Horses" more dead than alive, and flung his portmanteau down. "A fire," he cried, "in the name of human charity! A room and a fire!" He stamped and shook the snow from off himself in the bar, and followed Mrs. Hall into her guest parlour to strike his bargain. And with that much introduction, that and a couple of sovereigns flung upon the table, he took up his quarters in the inn.

Mrs. Hall lit the fire and left him there while she went to prepare him a meal with her own hands. A guest to stop at Iping in the wintertime was an unheard-of piece of luck, let alone a guest who was no "haggler," and she was resolved to show herself worthy of her good fortune. As soon as the bacon was well under way, and Millie, her lymphatic maid, had been brisked up a bit by a few deftly chosen expressions of contempt, she carried the cloth, plates, and glasses into the parlour and began to lay them with the utmost *éclat*. Although the fire was burning up briskly, she was surprised to see that her visitor still wore his hat and coat, standing with his back to her and staring out of the window at the falling snow in the yard. His gloved hands were clasped behind him, and he seemed to be lost in thought. She noticed that the melting snow that still sprinkled his shoulders dripped upon her carpet. "Can I take your hat and coat, sir?" she said, "and give them a good dry in the kitchen?"

"No," he said without turning.

She was not sure she had heard him, and was about to repeat her question.

He turned his head and looked at her over his shoulder. "I prefer to keep them on," he said with emphasis, and she noticed that he wore big blue spectacles with sidelights, and had a bush side-whisker over his coat-collar that completely hid his cheeks and face.

"Very well, sir," she said. "As you like. In a bit the room will be warmer."

He made no answer, and had turned his face away from her again, and Mrs. Hall, feeling that her conversational advances were ill-timed, laid the rest of the table things in a quick staccato and whisked out of the room. When she returned he was still standing there, like a man of stone, his back hunched, his collar turned up, his dripping hat-brim turned down, hiding his face and ears completely. She put down the eggs and bacon with considerable emphasis, and called rather than said to him, "Your lunch is served, sir."

"Thank you," he said at the same time, and did not stir until she was closing the door. Then he swung round and approached the table with a certain eager quickness.

As she went behind the bar to the kitchen she heard a sound repeated at regular intervals. Chirk, chirk, chirk, it went, the sound of a spoon being rapidly whisked round a basin. "That girl!" she said. "There! I clean forgot it. It's her being so long!" And while she herself finished mixing the mustard, she gave Millie a few verbal stabs for her excessive slowness. She had cooked the ham and eggs, laid the table, and done everything, while Millie (help indeed!) had only succeeded in delaying the mustard. And him a new guest and wanting to stay! Then she filled the mustard pot, and, putting it with a certain stateliness upon a gold and black tea-tray, carried it into the parlour.

She rapped and entered promptly. As she did so her visitor moved quickly, so that she got but a glimpse of a white object disappearing behind the table. It would seem he was picking something from the floor. She rapped down the mustard pot on

the table, and then she noticed the overcoat and hat had been taken off and put over a chair in front of the fire, and a pair of wet boots threatened rust to her steel fender. She went to these things resolutely. "I suppose I may have them to dry now," she said in a voice that brooked no denial.

"Leave the hat," said her visitor, in a muffled voice, and turning she saw he had raised his head and was sitting and looking at her.

For a moment she stood gaping at him, too surprised to speak.

He held a white cloth—it was a serviette he had brought with him—over the lower part of his face, so that his mouth and jaws were completely hidden, and that was the reason of his muffled voice. But it was not that which startled Mrs. Hall. It was the fact that all his forehead above his blue glasses was covered by a white bandage, and that another covered his ears, leaving not a scrap of his face exposed excepting only his pink, peaked nose. It was bright, pink, and shiny just as it had been at first. He wore a dark-brown velvet jacket with a high, black, linen-lined collar turned up about his neck. The thick black hair, escaping as it could below and between the cross bandages, projected in curious tails and horns, giving him the strangest appearance conceivable. This muffled and bandaged head was so unlike what she had anticipated, that for a moment she was rigid.

He did not remove the serviette, but remained holding it, as she saw now, with a brown gloved hand, and regarding her with his inscrutable blue glasses. "Leave the hat," he said, speaking very distinctly through the white cloth.

Her nerves began to recover from the shock they had received. She placed the hat on the chair again by the fire. "I didn't know, sir," she began, "that—" and she stopped embarrassed.

"Thank you," he said drily, glancing from her to the door and then at her again.

"I'll have them nicely dried, sir, at once," she said, and carried his clothes out of the room. She glanced at his white-swathed head and blue goggles again as she was going out of the door; but his napkin was still in front of his face. She shivered a little as she closed the door behind her, and her face was eloquent of her

surprise and perplexity. "I *never*," she whispered. "There!" She went quite softly to the kitchen, and was too preoccupied to ask Millie what she was messing about with *now*, when she got there.

The visitor sat and listened to her retreating feet. He glanced inquiringly at the window before he removed his serviette, and resumed his meal. He took a mouthful, glanced suspiciously at the window, took another mouthful, then rose and, taking the serviette in his hand, walked across the room and pulled the blind down to the top of the white muslin that obscured the lower panes. This left the room in a twilight. This done, he returned with an easier air to the table and his meal.

"The poor soul's had an accident or an op'ration or somethin'," said Mrs. Hall. "What a turn them bandages did give me, to be sure!"

She put on some more coal, unfolded the clothes-horse, and extended the traveller's coat upon this. "And they goggles! Why, he looked more like a divin' helmet than a human man!" She hung his muffler on a corner of the horse. "And holding that handkerchief over his mouth all the time. Talkin' through it! ... Perhaps his mouth was hurt too—maybe."

20

She turned round, as one who suddenly remembers. "Bless my soul alive!" she said, going off at a tangent; "ain't you done them taters *yet*, Millie?"

When Mrs. Hall went to clear away the stranger's lunch, her idea that his mouth must also have been cut or disfigured in the accident she supposed him to have suffered, was confirmed, for he was smoking a pipe, and all the time that she was in the room he never loosened the silk muffler he had wrapped round the lower part of his face to put the mouthpiece to his lips. Yet it was not forgetfulness, for she saw he glanced at it as it smouldered out. He sat in the corner with his back to the window-blind and spoke now, having eaten and drunk and being comfortably warmed through, with less aggressive brevity than before. The reflection of the fire lent a kind of red animation to his big spectacles they had lacked hitherto.

"I have some luggage," he said, "at Bramblehurst station," and he asked her how he could have it sent. He bowed his bandaged

head quite politely in acknowledgment of her explanation. "Tomorrow?" he said. "There is no speedier delivery?" and seemed quite disappointed when she answered, "No." Was she quite sure? No man with a trap who would go over?

Mrs. Hall, nothing loath, answered his questions and developed a conversation. "It's a steep road by the down, sir," she said in answer to the question about a trap; and then, snatching at an opening, said, "It was there a carriage was upsettled, a year ago and more. A gentleman killed, besides his coachman. Accidents, sir, happen in a moment, don't they?"

But the visitor was not to be drawn so easily. "They do," he said through his muffler, eyeing her quietly through his impenetrable glasses.

25

"But they take long enough to get well, don't they? ... There was my sister's son, Tom, jest cut his arm with a scythe, tumbled on it in the 'ayfield, and, bless me! he was three months tied up sir. You'd hardly believe it. It's regular given me a dread of a scythe, sir."

"I can quite understand that," said the visitor.

"He was afraid, one time, that he'd have to have an op'ration—he was that bad, sir."

The visitor laughed abruptly, a bark of a laugh that he seemed to bite and kill in his mouth. "Was he?" he said.

"He was, sir. And no laughing matter to them as had the doing for him, as I had—my sister being took up with her little ones so much. There was bandages to do, sir, and bandages to undo. So that if I may make so bold as to say it, sir—"

30

"Will you get me some matches?" said the visitor, quite abruptly. "My pipe is out."

Mrs. Hall was pulled up suddenly. It was certainly rude of him, after telling him all she had done. She gasped at him for a moment, and remembered the two sovereigns. She went for the matches.

"Thanks," he said concisely, as she put them down, and turned his shoulder upon her and stared out of the window again. It was altogether too discouraging. Evidently he was sensitive on the topic of operations and bandages. She did not "make so bold as to

say," however, after all. But his snubbing way had irritated her, and Millie had a hot time of it that afternoon.

The visitor remained in the parlour until four o'clock, without giving the ghost of an excuse for an intrusion. For the most part he was quite still during that time; it would seem he sat in the growing darkness smoking in the firelight—perhaps dozing.

Once or twice a curious listener might have heard him at the coals, and for the space of five minutes he was audible pacing the room. He seemed to be talking to himself. Then the armchair creaked as he sat down again.

35

II. Mr. Teddy Henfrey's First Impressions

At four o'clock, when it was fairly dark and Mrs. Hall was screwing up her courage to go in and ask her visitor if he would take some tea, Teddy Henfrey, the clock-jobber, came into the bar. "My sakes! Mrs. Hall," said he, "but this is terrible weather for thin boots!" The snow outside was falling faster.

Mrs. Hall agreed, and then noticed he had his bag with him. "Now you're here, Mr. Teddy," said she, "I'd be glad if you'd give th' old clock in the parlour a bit of a look. 'Tis going, and it strikes well and hearty; but the hour-hand won't do nuthin' but point at six."

And leading the way, she went across to the parlour door and rapped and entered.

Her visitor, she saw as she opened the door, was seated in the armchair before the fire, dozing it would seem, with his bandaged head drooping on one side. The only light in the room was the red glow from the fire—which lit his eyes like adverse railway signals, but left his downcast face in darkness—and the scanty vestiges of the day that came in through the open door. Everything was ruddy, shadowy, and indistinct to her, the more so since she had just been lighting the bar lamp, and her eyes were dazzled. But for a second it seemed to her that the man she looked at had an enormous mouth wide open—a vast and incredible mouth that swallowed the whole of the lower portion of his face. It was the sensation of a moment: the white-bound head, the

monstrous goggle eyes, and this huge yawn below it. Then he stirred, started up in his chair, put up his hand. She opened the door wide, so that the room was lighter, and she saw him more clearly, with the muffler held up to his face just as she had seen him hold the serviette before. The shadows, she fancied, had tricked her.

"Would you mind, sir, this man a-coming to look at the clock, sir?" she said, recovering from the momentary shock. 40

"Look at the clock?" he said, staring round in a drowsy manner, and speaking over his hand, and then, getting more fully awake, "certainly."

Mrs. Hall went away to get a lamp, and he rose and stretched himself. Then came the light, and Mr. Teddy Henfrey, entering, was confronted by this bandaged person. He was, he says, "taken aback."

"Good afternoon," said the stranger, regarding him—as Mr. Henfrey says, with a vivid sense of the dark spectacles—"like a lobster."

"I hope," said Mr. Henfrey, "that it's no intrusion."

"None whatever," said the stranger. "Though, I understand," he said turning to Mrs. Hall, "that this room is really to be mine for my own private use." 45

"I thought, sir," said Mrs. Hall, "you'd prefer the clock—"

"Certainly," said the stranger, "certainly—but, as a rule, I like to be alone and undisturbed."

"But I'm really glad to have the clock seen to," he said, seeing a certain hesitation in Mr. Henfrey's manner. "Very glad." Mr. Henfrey had intended to apologise and withdraw, but this anticipation reassured him. The stranger turned round with his back to the fireplace and put his hands behind his back. "And presently," he said, "when the clock-mending is over, I think I should like to have some tea. But not till the clock-mending is over."

Mrs. Hall was about to leave the room—she made no conversational advances this time, because she did not want to be snubbed in front of Mr. Henfrey—when her visitor asked her if she had made any arrangements about his boxes at Bramblehurst.

She told him she had mentioned the matter to the postman, and that the carrier could bring them over on the morrow. "You are certain that is the earliest?" he said.

She was certain, with a marked coldness.

50

"I should explain," he added, "what I was really too cold and fatigued to do before, that I am an experimental investigator."

"Indeed, sir," said Mrs. Hall, much impressed.

"And my baggage contains apparatus and appliances."

"Very useful things indeed they are, sir," said Mrs. Hall.

"And I'm very naturally anxious to get on with my inquiries."

55

"Of course, sir."

"My reason for coming to Iping," he proceeded, with a certain deliberation of manner, "was ... a desire for solitude. I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. In addition to my work, an accident —"

"I thought as much," said Mrs. Hall to herself.

"—necessitates a certain retirement. My eyes—are sometimes so weak and painful that I have to shut myself up in the dark for hours together. Lock myself up. Sometimes—now and then. Not at present, certainly. At such times the slightest disturbance, the entry of a stranger into the room, is a source of excruciating annoyance to me—it is well these things should be understood."

"Certainly, sir," said Mrs. Hall. "And if I might make so bold as to ask—"

60

"That I think, is all," said the stranger, with that quietly irresistible air of finality he could assume at will. Mrs. Hall reserved her question and sympathy for a better occasion.

After Mrs. Hall had left the room, he remained standing in front of the fire, glaring, so Mr. Henfrey puts it, at the clock-mending. Mr. Henfrey not only took off the hands of the clock, and the face, but extracted the works; and he tried to work in as slow and quiet and unassuming a manner as possible. He worked with the lamp close to him, and the green shade threw a brilliant light upon his hands, and upon the frame and wheels, and left the rest of the room shadowy. When he looked up, coloured patches swam in his eyes. Being constitutionally of a curious nature, he had removed the works—a quite unnecessary proceeding—with

the idea of delaying his departure and perhaps falling into conversation with the stranger. But the stranger stood there, perfectly silent and still. So still, it got on Henfrey's nerves. He felt alone in the room and looked up, and there, grey and dim, was the bandaged head and huge blue lenses staring fixedly, with a mist of green spots drifting in front of them. It was so uncanny to Henfrey that for a minute they remained staring blankly at one another. Then Henfrey looked down again. Very uncomfortable position! One would like to say something. Should he remark that the weather was very cold for the time of year?

He looked up as if to take aim with that introductory shot. "The weather—" he began.

"Why don't you finish and go?" said the rigid figure, evidently in a state of painfully suppressed rage. "All you've got to do is to fix the hour-hand on its axle. You're simply humbugging—"

"Certainly, sir—one minute more. I overlooked—" and Mr. Henfrey finished and went.

65

But he went feeling excessively annoyed. "Damn it!" said Mr. Henfrey to himself, trudging down the village through the thawing snow; "a man must do a clock at times, surely."

And again, "Can't a man look at you?—Ugly!"

And yet again, "Seemingly not. If the police was wanting you you couldn't be more wropped and bandaged."

At Gleeson's corner he saw Hall, who had recently married the stranger's hostess at the "Coach and Horses," and who now drove the Iping conveyance, when occasional people required it, to Sidderbridge Junction, coming towards him on his return from that place. Hall had evidently been "stopping a bit" at Sidderbridge, to judge by his driving. "'Ow do, Teddy?" he said, passing.

"You got a rum un up home!" said Teddy.

70

Hall very sociably pulled up. "What's that?" he asked.

"Rum-looking customer stopping at the 'Coach and Horses,'" said Teddy. "My sakes!"

And he proceeded to give Hall a vivid description of his grotesque guest. "Looks a bit like a disguise, don't it? I'd like to see a man's face if I had him stopping in *my* place," said Henfrey.

"But women are that trustful—where strangers are concerned. He's took your rooms and he ain't even given a name, Hall."

"You don't say so!" said Hall, who was a man of sluggish apprehension.

"Yes," said Teddy. "By the week. Whatever he is, you can't get rid of him under the week. And he's got a lot of luggage coming to-morrow, so he says. Let's hope it won't be stones in boxes, Hall."

75

He told Hall how his aunt at Hastings had been swindled by a stranger with empty portmanteaux. Altogether he left Hall vaguely suspicious. "Get up, old girl," said Hall. "I s'pose I must see 'bout this."

Teddy trudged on his way with his mind considerably relieved.

Instead of "seeing 'bout it," however, Hall on his return was severely rated by his wife on the length of time he had spent in Sidderbridge, and his mild inquiries were answered snappishly and in a manner not to the point. But the seed of suspicion Teddy had sown germinated in the mind of Mr. Hall in spite of these discouragements. "You wim' don't know everything," said Mr. Hall, resolved to ascertain more about the personality of his guest at the earliest possible opportunity. And after the stranger had gone to bed, which he did about half-past nine, Mr. Hall went very aggressively into the parlour and looked very hard at his wife's furniture, just to show that the stranger wasn't master there, and scrutinised closely and a little contemptuously a sheet of mathematical computations the stranger had left. When retiring for the night he instructed Mrs. Hall to look very closely at the stranger's luggage when it came next day.

"You mind your own business, Hall," said Mrs. Hall, "and I'll mind mine."

She was all the more inclined to snap at Hall because the stranger was undoubtedly an unusually strange sort of stranger, and she was by no means assured about him in her own mind. In the middle of the night she woke up dreaming of huge white heads like turnips, that came trailing after her, at the end of interminable necks, and with vast black eyes. But being a sensible

80

woman, she subdued her terrors and turned over and went to sleep again.

III. The Thousand and One Bottles

So it was that on the twenty-ninth day of February, at the beginning of the thaw, this singular person fell out of infinity into Iping village. Next day his luggage arrived through the slush—and very remarkable luggage it was. There were a couple of trunks indeed, such as a rational man might need, but in addition there were a box of books—big, fat books, of which some were just in an incomprehensible handwriting—and a dozen or more crates, boxes, and cases, containing objects packed in straw, as it seemed to Hall, tugging with a casual curiosity at the straw—glass bottles. The stranger, muffled in hat, coat, gloves, and wrapper, came out impatiently to meet Fearenside's cart, while Hall was having a word or so of gossip preparatory to helping bring them in. Out he came, not noticing Fearenside's dog, who was sniffing in a *dilettante* spirit at Hall's legs. "Come along with those boxes," he said. "I've been waiting long enough."

And he came down the steps towards the tail of the cart as if to lay hands on the smaller crate.

No sooner had Fearenside's dog caught sight of him, however, than it began to bristle and growl savagely, and when he rushed down the steps it gave an undecided hop, and then sprang straight at his hand. "Whup!" cried Hall, jumping back, for he was no hero with dogs, and Fearenside howled, "Lie down!" and snatched his whip.

They saw the dog's teeth had slipped the hand, heard a kick, saw the dog execute a flanking jump and get home on the stranger's leg, and heard the rip of his trousering. Then the finer end of Fearenside's whip reached his property, and the dog, yelping with dismay, retreated under the wheels of the waggon. It was all the business of a swift half-minute. No one spoke, everyone shouted. The stranger glanced swiftly at his torn glove and at his leg, made as if he would stoop to the latter, then turned and rushed swiftly up the steps into the inn. They heard him go

headlong across the passage and up the uncarpeted stairs to his bedroom.

"You brute, you!" said Fearenside, climbing off the waggon with his whip in his hand, while the dog watched him through the wheel. "Come here," said Fearenside—"You'd better."

85

Hall had stood gaping. "He wuz bit," said Hall. "I'd better go and see to en," and he trotted after the stranger. He met Mrs. Hall in the passage. "Carrier's darg," he said "bit en."

He went straight upstairs, and the stranger's door being ajar, he pushed it open and was entering without any ceremony, being of a naturally sympathetic turn of mind.

The blind was down and the room dim. He caught a glimpse of a most singular thing, what seemed a handless arm waving towards him, and a face of three huge indeterminate spots on white, very like the face of a pale pansy. Then he was struck violently in the chest, hurled back, and the door slammed in his face and locked. It was so rapid that it gave him no time to observe. A waving of indecipherable shapes, a blow, and a concussion. There he stood on the dark little landing, wondering what it might be that he had seen.

A couple of minutes after, he rejoined the little group that had formed outside the "Coach and Horses." There was Fearenside telling about it all over again for the second time; there was Mrs. Hall saying his dog didn't have no business to bite her guests; there was Huxter, the general dealer from over the road, interrogative; and Sandy Wadgers from the forge, judicial; besides women and children, all of them saying fatuities: "Wouldn't let en bite *me*, I knows"; "'Tasn't right *have* such dargs"; "Whad '*e* bite 'n for, then?" and so forth.

Mr. Hall, staring at them from the steps and listening, found it incredible that he had seen anything so very remarkable happen upstairs. Besides, his vocabulary was altogether too limited to express his impressions.

90

"He don't want no help, he says," he said in answer to his wife's inquiry. "We'd better be a-takin' of his luggage in."

"He ought to have it cauterised at once," said Mr. Huxter; "especially if it's at all inflamed."

"I'd shoot en, that's what I'd do," said a lady in the group.

Suddenly the dog began growling again.

"Come along," cried an angry voice in the doorway, and there stood the muffled stranger with his collar turned up, and his hat-brim bent down. "The sooner you get those things in the better I'll be pleased." It is stated by an anonymous bystander that his trousers and gloves had been changed.

"Was you hurt, sir?" said Fearenside. "I'm rare sorry the darg —"

"Not a bit," said the stranger. "Never broke the skin. Hurry up with those things."

He then swore to himself, so Mr. Hall asserts.

Directly the first crate was, in accordance with his directions, carried into the parlour, the stranger flung himself upon it with extraordinary eagerness, and began to unpack it, scattering the straw with an utter disregard of Mrs. Hall's carpet. And from it he began to produce bottles—little fat bottles containing powders, small and slender bottles containing coloured and white fluids, fluted blue bottles labeled Poison, bottles with round bodies and slender necks, large green-glass bottles, large white-glass bottles, bottles with glass stoppers and frosted labels, bottles with fine corks, bottles with bungs, bottles with wooden caps, wine bottles, salad-oil bottles—putting them in rows on the chiffonnier, on the mantel, on the table under the window, round the floor, on the bookshelf—everywhere. The chemist's shop in Bramblehurst could not boast half so many. Quite a sight it was. Crate after crate yielded bottles, until all six were empty and the table high with straw; the only things that came out of these crates besides the bottles were a number of test-tubes and a carefully packed balance.

And directly the crates were unpacked, the stranger went to the window and set to work, not troubling in the least about the litter of straw, the fire which had gone out, the box of books outside, nor for the trunks and other luggage that had gone upstairs.

When Mrs. Hall took his dinner in to him, he was already so absorbed in his work, pouring little drops out of the bottles into test-tubes, that he did not hear her until she had swept away the

bulk of the straw and put the tray on the table, with some little emphasis perhaps, seeing the state that the floor was in. Then he half turned his head and immediately turned it away again. But she saw he had removed his glasses; they were beside him on the table, and it seemed to her that his eye sockets were extraordinarily hollow. He put on his spectacles again, and then turned and faced her. She was about to complain of the straw on the floor when he anticipated her.

"I wish you wouldn't come in without knocking," he said in the tone of abnormal exasperation that seemed so characteristic of him.

"I knocked, but seemingly—"

"Perhaps you did. But in my investigations—my really very urgent and necessary investigations—the slightest disturbance, the jar of a door—I must ask you—"

"Certainly, sir. You can turn the lock if you're like that, you know. Any time."

105

"A very good idea," said the stranger.

"This stor, sir, if I might make so bold as to remark—"

"Don't. If the straw makes trouble put it down in the bill." And he mumbled at her—words suspiciously like curses.

He was so odd, standing there, so aggressive and explosive, bottle in one hand and test-tube in the other, that Mrs. Hall was quite alarmed. But she was a resolute woman. "In which case, I should like to know, sir, what you consider—"

"A shilling—put down a shilling. Surely a shilling's enough?"

110

"So be it," said Mrs. Hall, taking up the table-cloth and beginning to spread it over the table. "If you're satisfied, of course —"

He turned and sat down, with his coat-collar toward her.

All the afternoon he worked with the door locked and, as Mrs. Hall testifies, for the most part in silence. But once there was a concussion and a sound of bottles ringing together as though the table had been hit, and the smash of a bottle flung violently down, and then a rapid pacing athwart the room. Fearing "something was the matter," she went to the door and listened, not caring to knock.

"I can't go on," he was raving. "I *can't* go on. Three hundred thousand, four hundred thousand! The huge multitude! Cheated! All my life it may take me! ... Patience! Patience indeed! ... Fool! fool!"

There was a noise of hobnails on the bricks in the bar, and Mrs. Hall had very reluctantly to leave the rest of his soliloquy. When she returned the room was silent again, save for the faint crepitation of his chair and the occasional clink of a bottle. It was all over; the stranger had resumed work.

115

When she took in his tea she saw broken glass in the corner of the room under the concave mirror, and a golden stain that had been carelessly wiped. She called attention to it.

"Put it down in the bill," snapped her visitor. "For God's sake don't worry me. If there's damage done, put it down in the bill," and he went on ticking a list in the exercise book before him.

"I'll tell you something," said Fearenside, mysteriously. It was late in the afternoon, and they were in the little beer-shop of Iping Hanger.

"Well?" said Teddy Henfrey.

"This chap you're speaking of, what my dog bit. Well—he's black. Leastways, his legs are. I seed through the tear of his trousers and the tear of his glove. You'd have expected a sort of pinky to show, wouldn't you? Well—there wasn't none. Just blackness. I tell you, he's as black as my hat."

120

"My sakes!" said Henfrey. "It's a rummy case altogether. Why, his nose is as pink as paint!"

"That's true," said Fearenside. "I knows that. And I tell 'ee what I'm thinking. That marn's a piebald, Teddy. Black here and white there—in patches. And he's ashamed of it. He's a kind of half-breed, and the colour's come off patchy instead of mixing. I've heard of such things before. And it's the common way with horses, as any one can see."

IV. Mr. Cuss Interviews the Stranger

I have told the circumstances of the stranger's arrival in Iping with a certain fulness of detail, in order that the curious

impression he created may be understood by the reader. But excepting two odd incidents, the circumstances of his stay until the extraordinary day of the club festival may be passed over very cursorily. There were a number of skirmishes with Mrs. Hall on matters of domestic discipline, but in every case until late April, when the first signs of penury began, he over-rode her by the easy expedient of an extra payment. Hall did not like him, and whenever he dared he talked of the advisability of getting rid of him; but he showed his dislike chiefly by concealing it ostentatiously, and avoiding his visitor as much as possible. "Wait till the summer," said Mrs. Hall sagely, "when the artisks are beginning to come. Then we'll see. He may be a bit overbearing, but bills settled punctual is bills settled punctual, whatever you'd like to say."

The stranger did not go to church, and indeed made no difference between Sunday and the irreligious days, even in costume. He worked, as Mrs. Hall thought, very fitfully. Some days he would come down early and be continuously busy. On others he would rise late, pace his room, fretting audibly for hours together, smoke, sleep in the armchair by the fire. Communication with the world beyond the village he had none. His temper continued very uncertain; for the most part his manner was that of a man suffering under almost unendurable provocation, and once or twice things were snapped, torn, crushed, or broken in spasmodic gusts of violence. He seemed under a chronic irritation of the greatest intensity. His habit of talking to himself in a low voice grew steadily upon him, but though Mrs. Hall listened conscientiously she could make neither head nor tail of what she heard.

He rarely went abroad by daylight, but at twilight he would go out muffled up invisibly, whether the weather were cold or not, and he chose the loneliest paths and those most overshadowed by trees and banks. His goggling spectacles and ghastly bandaged face under the penthouse of his hat, came with a disagreeable suddenness out of the darkness upon one or two home-going labourers, and Teddy Henfrey, tumbling out of the "Scarlet Coat" one night, at half-past nine, was scared shamefully by the

stranger's skull-like head (he was walking hat in hand) lit by the sudden light of the opened inn door. Such children as saw him at nightfall dreamt of bogies, and it seemed doubtful whether he disliked boys more than they disliked him, or the reverse; but there was certainly a vivid enough dislike on either side.

It was inevitable that a person of so remarkable an appearance and bearing should form a frequent topic in such a village as Iping. Opinion was greatly divided about his occupation. Mrs. Hall was sensitive on the point. When questioned, she explained very carefully that he was an "experimental investigator," going gingerly over the syllables as one who dreads pitfalls. When asked what an experimental investigator was, she would say with a touch of superiority that most educated people knew such things as that, and would thus explain that he "discovered things." Her visitor had had an accident, she said, which temporarily discoloured his face and hands, and being of a sensitive disposition, he was averse to any public notice of the fact.

Out of her hearing there was a view largely entertained that he was a criminal trying to escape from justice by wrapping himself up so as to conceal himself altogether from the eye of the police. This idea sprang from the brain of Mr. Teddy Henfrey. No crime of any magnitude dating from the middle or end of February was known to have occurred. Elaborated in the imagination of Mr. Gould, the probationary assistant in the National School, this theory took the form that the stranger was an Anarchist in disguise, preparing explosives, and he resolved to undertake such detective operations as his time permitted. These consisted for the most part in looking very hard at the stranger whenever they met, or in asking people who had never seen the stranger, leading questions about him. But he detected nothing.

Another school of opinion followed Mr. Fearenside, and either accepted the piebald view or some modification of it; as, for instance, Silas Durgan, who was heard to assert that "if he chooses to show ensel at fairs he'd make his fortune in no time," and being a bit of a theologian, compared the stranger to the man with the one talent. Yet another view explained the entire matter

by regarding the stranger as a harmless lunatic. That had the advantage of accounting for everything straight away.

Between these main groups there were waverers and compromisers. Sussex folk have few superstitions, and it was only after the events of early April that the thought of the supernatural was first whispered in the village. Even then it was only credited among the women folk.

But whatever they thought of him, people in Iping, on the whole, agreed in disliking him. His irritability, though it might have been comprehensible to an urban brain-worker, was an amazing thing to these quiet Sussex villagers. The frantic gesticulations they surprised now and then, the headlong pace after nightfall that swept him upon them round quiet corners, the inhuman bludgeoning of all tentative advances of curiosity, the taste for twilight that led to the closing of doors, the pulling down of blinds, the extinction of candles and lamps—who could agree with such goings on? They drew aside as he passed down the village, and when he had gone by, young humourists would up with coat-collars and down with hat-brims, and go pacing nervously after him in imitation of his occult bearing. There was a song popular at that time called "The Bogey Man". Miss Statchell sang it at the schoolroom concert (in aid of the church lamps), and thereafter whenever one or two of the villagers were gathered together and the stranger appeared, a bar or so of this tune, more or less sharp or flat, was whistled in the midst of them. Also belated little children would call "Bogey Man!" after him, and make off tremulously elated.

Cuss, the general practitioner, was devoured by curiosity. The bandages excited his professional interest, the report of the thousand and one bottles aroused his jealous regard. All through April and May he coveted an opportunity of talking to the stranger, and at last, towards Whitsuntide, he could stand it no longer, but hit upon the subscription-list for a village nurse as an excuse. He was surprised to find that Mr. Hall did not know his guest's name. "He give a name," said Mrs. Hall—an assertion which was quite unfounded—"but I didn't rightly hear it." She thought it seemed so silly not to know the man's name.

Cuss rapped at the parlour door and entered. There was a fairly audible imprecation from within. "Pardon my intrusion," said Cuss, and then the door closed and cut Mrs. Hall off from the rest of the conversation.

She could hear the murmur of voices for the next ten minutes, then a cry of surprise, a stirring of feet, a chair flung aside, a bark of laughter, quick steps to the door, and Cuss appeared, his face white, his eyes staring over his shoulder. He left the door open behind him, and without looking at her strode across the hall and went down the steps, and she heard his feet hurrying along the road. He carried his hat in his hand. She stood behind the door, looking at the open door of the parlour. Then she heard the stranger laughing quietly, and then his footsteps came across the room. She could not see his face where she stood. The parlour door slammed, and the place was silent again.

Cuss went straight up the village to Bunting the vicar. "Am I mad?" Cuss began abruptly, as he entered the shabby little study. "Do I look like an insane person?"

"What's happened?" said the vicar, putting the ammonite on the loose sheets of his forth-coming sermon.

"That chap at the inn—"

"Well?"

"Give me something to drink," said Cuss, and he sat down.

When his nerves had been steadied by a glass of cheap sherry—the only drink the good vicar had available—he told him of the interview he had just had. "Went in," he gasped, "and began to demand a subscription for that Nurse Fund. He'd stuck his hands in his pockets as I came in, and he sat down lumpily in his chair. Sniffed. I told him I'd heard he took an interest in scientific things. He said yes. Sniffed again. Kept on sniffing all the time; evidently recently caught an infernal cold. No wonder, wrapped up like that! I developed the nurse idea, and all the while kept my eyes open. Bottles—chemicals—everywhere. Balance, test-tubes in stands, and a smell of—evening primrose. Would he subscribe? Said he'd consider it. Asked him, point-blank, was he researching. Said he was. A long research? Got quite cross. 'A damnable long research,' said he, blowing the cork out, so to speak. 'Oh,' said I.

And out came the grievance. The man was just on the boil, and my question boiled him over. He had been given a prescription, most valuable prescription—what for he wouldn't say. Was it medical? 'Damn you! What are you fishing after?' I apologised. Dignified sniff and cough. He resumed. He'd read it. Five ingredients. Put it down; turned his head. Draught of air from window lifted the paper. Swish, rustle. He was working in a room with an open fireplace, he said. Saw a flicker, and there was the prescription burning and lifting chimneyward. Rushed towards it just as it whisked up the chimney. So! Just at that point, to illustrate his story, out came his arm."

"Well?"

140

"No hand—just an empty sleeve. Lord! I thought, *that's* a deformity! Got a cork arm, I suppose, and has taken it off. Then, I thought, there's something odd in that. What the devil keeps that sleeve up and open, if there's nothing in it? There was nothing in it, I tell you. Nothing down it, right down to the joint. I could see right down it to the elbow, and there was a glimmer of light shining through a tear of the cloth. 'Good God!' I said. Then he stopped. Stared at me with those black goggles of his, and then at his sleeve."

"Well?"

"That's all. He never said a word; just glared, and put his sleeve back in his pocket quickly. 'I was saying,' said he, 'that there was the prescription burning, wasn't I?' Interrogative cough. 'How the devil,' said I, 'can you move an empty sleeve like that?' 'Empty sleeve?' 'Yes,' said I, 'an empty sleeve.'

"'It's an empty sleeve, is it? You saw it was an empty sleeve?' He stood up right away. I stood up too. He came towards me in three very slow steps, and stood quite close. Sniffed venomously. I didn't flinch, though I'm hanged if that bandaged knob of his, and those blinkers, aren't enough to unnerve any one, coming quietly up to you.

"'You said it was an empty sleeve?' he said. 'Certainly,' I said. At staring and saying nothing a barefaced man, unspectacled, starts scratch. Then very quietly he pulled his sleeve out of his pocket again, and raised his arm towards me as though he would

145

show it to me again. He did it very, very slowly. I looked at it. Seemed an age. 'Well?' said I, clearing my throat, 'there's nothing in it.'

"Had to say something. I was beginning to feel frightened. I could see right down it. He extended it straight towards me, slowly, slowly—just like that—until the cuff was six inches from my face. Queer thing to see an empty sleeve come at you like that! And then—"

"Well?"

"Something—exactly like a finger and thumb it felt—nipped my nose."

Bunting began to laugh.

"There wasn't anything there!" said Cuss, his voice running up into a shriek at the "there." "It's all very well for you to laugh, but I tell you I was so startled, I hit his cuff hard, and turned around, and cut out of the room—I left him—"

Cuss stopped. There was no mistaking the sincerity of his panic. He turned round in a helpless way and took a second glass of the excellent vicar's very inferior sherry. "When I hit his cuff," said Cuss, "I tell you, it felt exactly like hitting an arm. And there wasn't an arm! There wasn't the ghost of an arm!"

Mr. Bunting thought it over. He looked suspiciously at Cuss. "It's a most remarkable story," he said. He looked very wise and grave indeed. "It's really," said Mr. Bunting with judicial emphasis, "a most remarkable story."

V. The Burglary at the Vicarage

The facts of the burglary at the vicarage came to us chiefly through the medium of the vicar and his wife. It occurred in the small hours of Whit Monday, the day devoted in Iping to the Club festivities. Mrs. Bunting, it seems, woke up suddenly in the stillness that comes before the dawn, with the strong impression that the door of their bedroom had opened and closed. She did not arouse her husband at first, but sat up in bed listening. She then distinctly heard the pad, pad, pad of bare feet coming out of the adjoining dressing-room and walking along the passage towards

the staircase. As soon as she felt assured of this, she aroused the Rev. Mr. Bunting as quietly as possible. He did not strike a light, but putting on his spectacles, her dressing-gown and his bath slippers, he went out on the landing to listen. He heard quite distinctly a fumbling going on at his study desk down-stairs, and then a violent sneeze.

At that he returned to his bedroom, armed himself with the most obvious weapon, the poker, and descended the staircase as noiselessly as possible. Mrs. Bunting came out on the landing.

The hour was about four, and the ultimate darkness of the night was past. There was a faint shimmer of light in the hall, but the study doorway yawned impenetrably black. Everything was still except the faint creaking of the stairs under Mr. Bunting's tread, and the slight movements in the study. Then something snapped, the drawer was opened, and there was a rustle of papers. Then came an imprecation, and a match was struck and the study was flooded with yellow light. Mr. Bunting was now in the hall, and through the crack of the door he could see the desk and the open drawer and a candle burning on the desk. But the robber he could not see. He stood there in the hall undecided what to do, and Mrs. Bunting, her face white and intent, crept slowly downstairs after him. One thing kept Mr. Bunting's courage; the persuasion that this burglar was a resident in the village.

They heard the chink of money, and realised that the robber had found the housekeeping reserve of gold—two pounds ten in half sovereigns altogether. At that sound Mr. Bunting was nerved to abrupt action. Gripping the poker firmly, he rushed into the room, closely followed by Mrs. Bunting. "Surrender!" cried Mr. Bunting, fiercely, and then stooped amazed. Apparently the room was perfectly empty.

Yet their conviction that they had, that very moment, heard somebody moving in the room had amounted to a certainty. For half a minute, perhaps, they stood gaping, then Mrs. Bunting went across the room and looked behind the screen, while Mr. Bunting, by a kindred impulse, peered under the desk. Then Mrs. Bunting turned back the window-curtains, and Mr. Bunting looked up the chimney and probed it with the poker. Then Mrs. Bunting

scrutinised the waste-paper basket and Mr. Bunting opened the lid of the coal-scuttle. Then they came to a stop and stood with eyes interrogating each other.

"I could have sworn—" said Mr. Bunting.

"The candle!" said Mr. Bunting. "Who lit the candle?"

"The drawer!" said Mrs. Bunting. "And the money's gone!"

160

She went hastily to the doorway.

"Of all the strange occurrences—"

There was a violent sneeze in the passage. They rushed out, and as they did so the kitchen door slammed. "Bring the candle," said Mr. Bunting, and led the way. They both heard a sound of bolts being hastily shot back.

As he opened the kitchen door he saw through the scullery that the back door was just opening, and the faint light of early dawn displayed the dark masses of the garden beyond. He is certain that nothing went out of the door. It opened, stood open for a moment, and then closed with a slam. As it did so, the candle Mrs. Bunting was carrying from the study flickered and flared. It was a minute or more before they entered the kitchen.

The place was empty. They refastened the back door, examined the kitchen, pantry, and scullery thoroughly, and at last went down into the cellar. There was not a soul to be found in the house, search as they would.

165

Daylight found the vicar and his wife, a quaintly-costumed little couple, still marvelling about on their own ground floor by the unnecessary light of a guttering candle.

VI. The Furniture That Went Mad

Now it happened that in the early hours of Whit Monday, before Millie was hunted out for the day, Mr. Hall and Mrs. Hall both rose and went noiselessly down into the cellar. Their business there was of a private nature, and had something to do with the specific gravity of their beer. They had hardly entered the cellar when Mrs. Hall found she had forgotten to bring down a bottle of sarsaparilla from their joint-room. As she was the expert

and principal operator in this affair, Hall very properly went upstairs for it.

On the landing he was surprised to see that the stranger's door was ajar. He went on into his own room and found the bottle as he had been directed.

But returning with the bottle, he noticed that the bolts of the front door had been shot back, that the door was in fact simply on the latch. And with a flash of inspiration he connected this with the stranger's room upstairs and the suggestions of Mr. Teddy Henfrey. He distinctly remembered holding the candle while Mrs. Hall shot these bolts overnight. At the sight he stopped, gaping, then with the bottle still in his hand went upstairs again. He rapped at the stranger's door. There was no answer. He rapped again; then pushed the door wide open and entered.

It was as he expected. The bed, the room also, was empty. And what was stranger, even to his heavy intelligence, on the bedroom chair and along the rail of the bed were scattered the garments, the only garments so far as he knew, and the bandages of their guest. His big slouch hat even was cocked jauntily over the bed-post.

170

As Hall stood there he heard his wife's voice coming out of the depth of the cellar, with that rapid telescoping of the syllables and interrogative cocking up of the final words to a high note, by which the West Sussex villager is wont to indicate a brisk impatience. "George! You gart whad a wand?"

At that he turned and hurried down to her. "Janny," he said, over the rail of the cellar steps, "'tas the truth what Henfrey sez. 'E's not in uz room, 'e en't. And the front door's onbolted."

At first Mrs. Hall did not understand, and as soon as she did she resolved to see the empty room for herself. Hall, still holding the bottle, went first. "If 'e en't there," he said, "'is close are. And what's 'e doin' 'ithout 'is close, then? 'Tas a most curious business."

As they came up the cellar steps they both, it was afterwards ascertained, fancied they heard the front door open and shut, but seeing it closed and nothing there, neither said a word to the other about it at the time. Mrs. Hall passed her husband in the passage

and ran on first upstairs. Someone sneezed on the staircase. Hall, following six steps behind, thought that he heard her sneeze. She, going on first, was under the impression that Hall was sneezing. She flung open the door and stood regarding the room. "Of all the curious!" she said.

She heard a sniff close behind her head as it seemed, and turning, was surprised to see Hall a dozen feet off on the topmost stair. But in another moment he was beside her. She bent forward and put her hand on the pillow and then under the clothes.

"Cold," she said. "He's been up this hour or more."

As she did so, a most extraordinary thing happened. The bed-clothes gathered themselves together, leapt up suddenly into a sort of peak, and then jumped headlong over the bottom rail. It was exactly as if a hand had clutched them in the centre and flung them aside. Immediately after, the stranger's hat hopped off the bed-post, described a whirling flight in the air through the better part of a circle, and then dashed straight at Mrs. Hall's face. Then as swiftly came the sponge from the washstand; and then the chair, flinging the stranger's coat and trousers carelessly aside, and laughing drily in a voice singularly like the stranger's, turned itself up with its four legs at Mrs. Hall, seemed to take aim at her for a moment, and charged at her. She screamed and turned, and then the chair legs came gently but firmly against her back and impelled her and Hall out of the room. The door slammed violently and was locked. The chair and bed seemed to be executing a dance of triumph for a moment, and then abruptly everything was still.

Mrs. Hall was left almost in a fainting condition in Mr. Hall's arms on the landing. It was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Hall and Millie, who had been roused by her scream of alarm, succeeded in getting her downstairs, and applying the restoratives customary in such cases.

"'Tas sperits," said Mrs. Hall. "I know 'tas sperits. I've read in papers of en. Tables and chairs leaping and dancing..."

"Take a drop more, Janny," said Hall. "'Twill steady ye."

"Lock him out," said Mrs. Hall. "Don't let him come in again. I half guessed—I might ha' known. With them goggling eyes and

bandaged head, and never going to church of a Sunday. And all they bottles—more'n it's right for any one to have. He's put the sperits into the furniture.... My good old furniture! 'Twas in that very chair my poor dear mother used to sit when I was a little girl. To think it should rise up against me now!"

"Just a drop more, Janny," said Hall. "Your nerves is all upset."

They sent Millie across the street through the golden five o'clock sunshine to rouse up Mr. Sandy Wadgers, the blacksmith. Mr. Hall's compliments and the furniture upstairs was behaving most extraordinary. Would Mr. Wadgers come round? He was a knowing man, was Mr. Wadgers, and very resourceful. He took quite a grave view of the case. "Arm darmed if thet ent witchcraft," was the view of Mr. Sandy Wadgers. "You warnt horseshoes for such gentry as he."

He came round greatly concerned. They wanted him to lead the way upstairs to the room, but he didn't seem to be in any hurry. He preferred to talk in the passage. Over the way Huxter's apprentice came out and began taking down the shutters of the tobacco window. He was called over to join the discussion. Mr. Huxter naturally followed over in the course of a few minutes. The Anglo-Saxon genius for parliamentary government asserted itself; there was a great deal of talk and no decisive action. "Let's have the facts first," insisted Mr. Sandy Wadgers. "Let's be sure we'd be acting perfectly right in bustin' that there door open. A door onbust is always open to bustin', but ye can't onbust a door once you've busted en."

And suddenly and most wonderfully the door of the room upstairs opened of its own accord, and as they looked up in amazement, they saw descending the stairs the muffled figure of the stranger staring more blackly and blankly than ever with those unreasonably large blue glass eyes of his. He came down stiffly and slowly, staring all the time; he walked across the passage staring, then stopped.

"Look there!" he said, and their eyes followed the direction of his gloved finger and saw a bottle of sarsaparilla hard by the cellar door. Then he entered the parlour, and suddenly, swiftly, viciously, slammed the door in their faces.

Not a word was spoken until the last echoes of the slam had died away. They stared at one another. "Well, if that don't lick everything!" said Mr. Wadgers, and left the alternative unsaid.

"I'd go in and ask'n 'bout it," said Wadgers, to Mr. Hall. "I'd d'mand an explanation."

It took some time to bring the landlady's husband up to that pitch. At last he rapped, opened the door, and got as far as, "Excuse me—"

"Go to the devil!" said the stranger in a tremendous voice, and "Shut that door after you." So that brief interview terminated.

190

VII. The Unveiling of the Stranger

The stranger went into the little parlour of the "Coach and Horses" about half-past five in the morning, and there he remained until near midday, the blinds down, the door shut, and none, after Hall's repulse, venturing near him.

All that time he must have fasted. Thrice he rang his bell, the third time furiously and continuously, but no one answered him. "Him and his 'go to the devil' indeed!" said Mrs. Hall. Presently came an imperfect rumour of the burglary at the vicarage, and two and two were put together. Hall, assisted by Wadgers, went off to find Mr. Shuckleforth, the magistrate, and take his advice. No one ventured upstairs. How the stranger occupied himself is unknown. Now and then he would stride violently up and down, and twice came an outburst of curses, a tearing of paper, and a violent smashing of bottles.

The little group of scared but curious people increased. Mrs. Huxter came over; some gay young fellows resplendent in black ready-made jackets and *piqué* paper ties—for it was Whit Monday—joined the group with confused interrogations. Young Archie Harker distinguished himself by going up the yard and trying to peep under the window-blinds. He could see nothing, but gave reason for supposing that he did, and others of the Iping youth presently joined him.

It was the finest of all possible Whit Mondays, and down the village street stood a row of nearly a dozen booths, a shooting

gallery, and on the grass by the forge were three yellow and chocolate waggons and some picturesque strangers of both sexes putting up a cocoanut shy. The gentlemen wore blue jerseys, the ladies white aprons and quite fashionable hats with heavy plumes. Wodger, of the "Purple Fawn," and Mr. Jagers, the cobbler, who also sold old second-hand ordinary bicycles, were stretching a string of union-jacks and royal ensigns (which had originally celebrated the first Victorian Jubilee) across the road.

And inside, in the artificial darkness of the parlour, into which only one thin jet of sunlight penetrated, the stranger, hungry we must suppose, and fearful, hidden in his uncomfortable hot wrappings, pored through his dark glasses upon his paper or chinked his dirty little bottles, and occasionally swore savagely at the boys, audible if invisible, outside the windows. In the corner by the fireplace lay the fragments of half a dozen smashed bottles, and a pungent twang of chlorine tainted the air. So much we know from what was heard at the time and from what was subsequently seen in the room.

195

About noon he suddenly opened his parlour door and stood glaring fixedly at the three or four people in the bar. "Mrs. Hall," he said. Somebody went sheepishly and called for Mrs. Hall.

Mrs. Hall appeared after an interval, a little short of breath, but all the fiercer for that. Hall was still out. She had deliberated over this scene, and she came holding a little tray with an unsettled bill upon it. "Is it your bill you're wanting, sir?" she said.

"Why wasn't my breakfast laid? Why haven't you prepared my meals and answered my bell? Do you think I live without eating?"

"Why isn't my bill paid?" said Mrs. Hall. "That's what I want to know."

"I told you three days ago I was awaiting a remittance—"

200

"I told you two days ago I wasn't going to await no remittances. You can't grumble if your breakfast waits a bit, if my bill's been waiting these five days, can you?"

The stranger swore briefly but vividly.

"Nar, nar!" from the bar.

"And I'd thank you kindly, sir, if you'd keep your swearing to yourself, sir," said Mrs. Hall.

The stranger stood looking more like an angry diving-helmet than ever. It was universally felt in the bar that Mrs. Hall had the better of him. His next words showed as much.

205

"Look here, my good woman—" he began.

"Don't 'good woman' *me*," said Mrs. Hall.

"I've told you my remittance hasn't come."

"Remittance indeed!" said Mrs. Hall.

"Still, I daresay in my pocket—"

210

"You told me three days ago that you hadn't anything but a sovereign's worth of silver upon you."

"Well, I've found some more—"

"Ul-lo!" from the bar.

"I wonder where you found it," said Mrs. Hall.

That seemed to annoy the stranger very much. He stamped his foot. "What do you mean?" he said.

215

"That I wonder where you found it," said Mrs. Hall. "And before I take any bills or get any breakfasts, or do any such things whatsoever, you got to tell me one or two things I don't understand, and what nobody don't understand, and what everybody is very anxious to understand. I want to know what you been doing t'my chair upstairs, and I want to know how 'tis your room was empty, and how you got in again. Them as stops in this house comes in by the doors—that's the rule of the house, and that you *didn't* do, and what I want to know is how you *did* come in. And I want to know—"

Suddenly the stranger raised his gloved hands clenched, stamped his foot, and said, "Stop!" with such extraordinary violence that he silenced her instantly.

"You don't understand," he said, "who I am or what I am. I'll show you. By Heaven! I'll show you." Then he put his open palm over his face and withdrew it. The centre of his face became a black cavity. "Here," he said. He stepped forward and handed Mrs. Hall something which she, staring at his metamorphosed face, accepted automatically. Then, when she saw what it was, she screamed loudly, dropped it, and staggered back. The nose—it was the stranger's nose! pink and shining—rolled on the floor.

Then he removed his spectacles, and everyone in the bar gasped. He took off his hat, and with a violent gesture tore at his whiskers and bandages. For a moment they resisted him. A flash of horrible anticipation passed through the bar. "Oh, my Gard!" said some one. Then off they came.

It was worse than anything. Mrs. Hall, standing open-mouthed and horror-struck, shrieked at what she saw, and made for the door of the house. Everyone began to move. They were prepared for scars, disfigurements, tangible horrors, but nothing! The bandages and false hair flew across the passage into the bar, making a hobbledehoy jump to avoid them. Everyone tumbled on everyone else down the steps. For the man who stood there shouting some incoherent explanation, was a solid gesticulating figure up to the coat-collar of him, and then—nothingness, no visible thing at all!

People down the village heard shouts and shrieks, and looking up the street saw the "Coach and Horses" violently firing out its humanity. They saw Mrs. Hall fall down and Mr. Teddy Henfrey jump to avoid tumbling over her, and then they heard the frightful screams of Millie, who, emerging suddenly from the kitchen at the noise of the tumult, had come upon the headless stranger from behind. These increased suddenly.

Forthwith everyone all down the street, the sweetstuff seller, cocoanut shy proprietor and his assistant, the swing man, little boys and girls, rustic dandies, smart wenches, smocked elders and aproned gipsies—began running towards the inn, and in a miraculously short space of time a crowd of perhaps forty people, and rapidly increasing, swayed and hooted and inquired and exclaimed and suggested, in front of Mrs. Hall's establishment. Everyone seemed eager to talk at once, and the result was Babel. A small group supported Mrs. Hall, who was picked up in a state of collapse. There was a conference, and the incredible evidence of a vociferous eye-witness. "O Bogey!" "What's he been doin', then?" "Ain't hurt the girl, 'as 'e?" "Run at en with a knife, I believe." "No 'ed, I tell ye. I don't mean no manner of speaking. I mean *marn 'ithout a 'ed!*" "Narnsense! 'tis some conjuring trick." "Fetched off 'is wrapping, 'e did—"

In its struggles to see in through the open door, the crowd formed itself into a straggling wedge, with the more adventurous apex nearest the inn. "He stood for a moment, I heerd the gal scream, and he turned. I saw her skirts whisk, and he went after her. Didn't take ten seconds. Back he comes with a knife in uz hand and a loaf; stood just as if he was staring. Not a moment ago. Went in that there door. I tell 'e, 'e ain't gart no 'ed at all. You just missed en—"

There was a disturbance behind, and the speaker stopped to step aside for a little procession that was marching very resolutely towards the house; first Mr. Hall, very red and determined, then Mr. Bobby Jaffers, the village constable, and then the wary Mr. Wadgers. They had come now armed with a warrant.

People shouted conflicting information of the recent circumstances. "'Ed or no 'ed," said Jaffers, "I got to 'rest en, and 'rest en I *will*."

225

Mr. Hall marched up the steps, marched straight to the door of the parlour and flung it open. "Constable," he said, "do your duty."

Jaffers marched in. Hall next, Wadgers last. They saw in the dim light the headless figure facing them, with a gnawed crust of bread in one gloved hand and a chunk of cheese in the other.

"That's him!" said Hall.

"What the devil's this?" came in a tone of angry expostulation from above the collar of the figure.

"You're a damned rum customer, mister," said Mr. Jaffers. "But 'ed or no 'ed, the warrant says 'body,' and duty's duty—"

230

"Keep off!" said the figure, starting back.

Abruptly he whipped down the bread and cheese, and Mr. Hall just grasped the knife on the table in time to save it. Off came the stranger's left glove and was slapped in Jaffers' face. In another moment Jaffers, cutting short some statement concerning a warrant, had gripped him by the handleless wrist and caught his invisible throat. He got a sounding kick on the shin that made him shout, but he kept his grip. Hall sent the knife sliding along the table to Wadgers, who acted as goal-keeper for the offensive, so to speak, and then stepped forward as Jaffers and the stranger

swayed and staggered towards him, clutching and hitting in. A chair stood in the way, and went aside with a crash as they came down together.

"Get the feet," said Jaffers between his teeth.

Mr. Hall, endeavouring to act on instructions, received a sounding kick in the ribs that disposed of him for a moment, and Mr. Wadgers, seeing the decapitated stranger had rolled over and got the upper side of Jaffers, retreated towards the door, knife in hand, and so collided with Mr. Huxter and the Sidderbridge carter coming to the rescue of law and order. At the same moment down came three or four bottles from the chiffonnier and shot a web of pungency into the air of the room.

"I'll surrender," cried the stranger, though he had Jaffers down, and in another moment he stood up panting, a strange figure, headless and handless—for he had pulled off his right glove now as well as his left. "It's no good," he said, as if sobbing for breath.

It was the strangest thing in the world to hear that voice coming as if out of empty space, but the Sussex peasants are perhaps the most matter-of-fact people under the sun. Jaffers got up also and produced a pair of handcuffs. Then he stared.

"I say!" said Jaffers, brought up short by a dim realization of the incongruity of the whole business, "Darn it! Can't use 'em as I can see."

The stranger ran his arm down his waistcoat, and as if by a miracle the buttons to which his empty sleeve pointed became undone. Then he said something about his shin, and stooped down. He seemed to be fumbling with his shoes and socks.

"Why!" said Huxter, suddenly, "that's not a man at all. It's just empty clothes. Look! You can see down his collar and the linings of his clothes. I could put my arm—"

He extended his hand; it seemed to meet something in mid-air, and he drew it back with a sharp exclamation. "I wish you'd keep your fingers out of my eye," said the aerial voice, in a tone of savage expostulation. "The fact is, I'm all here—head, hands, legs, and all the rest of it, but it happens I'm invisible. It's a confounded nuisance, but I am. That's no reason why I should be poked to pieces by every stupid bumpkin in Iping, is it?"

The suit of clothes, now all unbuttoned and hanging loosely upon its unseen supports, stood up, arms akimbo.

Several other of the men folks had now entered the room, so that it was closely crowded. "Invisible, eh?" said Huxter, ignoring the stranger's abuse. "Who ever heard the likes of that?"

"It's strange, perhaps, but it's not a crime. Why am I assaulted by a policeman in this fashion?"

"Ah! that's a different matter," said Jaffers. "No doubt you are a bit difficult to see in this light, but I got a warrant and it's all correct. What I'm after ain't no invisibility,—it's burglary. There's a house been broke into and money took."

"Well?"

245

"And circumstances certainly point—"

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the Invisible Man.

"I hope so, sir; but I've got my instructions."

"Well," said the stranger, "I'll come. I'll *come*. But no handcuffs."

"It's the regular thing," said Jaffers.

250

"No handcuffs," stipulated the stranger.

"Pardon me," said Jaffers.

Abruptly the figure sat down, and before any one could realise was was being done, the slippers, socks, and trousers had been kicked off under the table. Then he sprang up again and flung off his coat.

"Here, stop that," said Jaffers, suddenly realising what was happening. He gripped at the waistcoat; it struggled, and the shirt slipped out of it and left it limp and empty in his hand. "Hold him!" said Jaffers, loudly. "Once he gets the things off—"

"Hold him!" cried everyone, and there was a rush at the fluttering white shirt which was now all that was visible of the stranger.

255

The shirt-sleeve planted a shrewd blow in Hall's face that stopped his open-armed advance, and sent him backward into old Toothsome the sexton, and in another moment the garment was lifted up and became convulsed and vacantly flapping about the arms, even as a shirt that is being thrust over a man's head. Jaffers clutched at it, and only helped to pull it off; he was struck in the

mouth out of the air, and incontinently threw his truncheon and smote Teddy Henfrey savagely upon the crown of his head.

"Look out!" said everybody, fencing at random and hitting at nothing. "Hold him! Shut the door! Don't let him loose! I got something! Here he is!" A perfect Babel of noises they made. Everybody, it seemed, was being hit all at once, and Sandy Wadgers, knowing as ever and his wits sharpened by a frightful blow in the nose, reopened the door and led the rout. The others, following incontinently, were jammed for a moment in the corner by the doorway. The hitting continued. Phipps, the Unitarian, had a front tooth broken, and Henfrey was injured in the cartilage of his ear. Jaffers was struck under the jaw, and, turning, caught at something that intervened between him and Huxter in the mêlée, and prevented their coming together. He felt a muscular chest, and in another moment the whole mass of struggling, excited men shot out into the crowded hall.

"I got him!" shouted Jaffers, choking and reeling through them all, and wrestling with purple face and swelling veins against his unseen enemy.

Men staggered right and left as the extraordinary conflict swayed swiftly towards the house door, and went spinning down the half-dozen steps of the inn. Jaffers cried in a strangled voice—holding tight, nevertheless, and making play with his knee—spun around, and fell heavily undermost with his head on the gravel. Only then did his fingers relax.

There were excited cries of "Hold him!" "Invisible!" and so forth, and a young fellow, a stranger in the place whose name did not come to light, rushed in at once, caught something, missed his hold, and fell over the constable's prostrate body. Half-way across the road a woman screamed as something pushed by her; a dog, kicked apparently, yelped and ran howling into Huxter's yard, and with that the transit of the Invisible Man was accomplished. For a space people stood amazed and gesticulating, and then came panic, and scattered them abroad through the village as a gust scatters dead leaves.

But Jaffers lay quite still, face upward and knees bent, at the foot of the steps of the inn.

VIII. In Transit

The eighth chapter is exceedingly brief, and relates that Gibbons, the amateur naturalist of the district, while lying out on the spacious open downs without a soul within a couple of miles of him, as he thought, and almost dozing, heard close to him the sound as of a man coughing, sneezing, and then swearing savagely to himself; and looking, beheld nothing. Yet the voice was indisputable. It continued to swear with that breadth and variety that distinguishes the swearing of a cultivated man. It grew to a climax, diminished again, and died away in the distance, going as it seemed to him in the direction of Adderdean. It lifted to a spasmodic sneeze and ended. Gibbons had heard nothing of the morning's occurrences, but the phenomenon was so striking and disturbing that his philosophical tranquillity vanished; he got up hastily, and hurried down the steepness of the hill towards the village, as fast as he could go.

IX. Mr. Thomas Marvel

You must picture Mr. Thomas Marvel as a person of copious, flexible visage, a nose of cylindrical protrusion, a liquorish, ample, fluctuating mouth, and a beard of bristling eccentricity. His figure inclined to embonpoint; his short limbs accentuated this inclination. He wore a furry silk hat, and the frequent substitution of twine and shoe-laces for buttons, apparent at critical points of his costume, marked a man essentially bachelor.

Mr. Thomas Marvel was sitting with his feet in a ditch by the roadside over the down towards Adderdean, about a mile and a half out of Iping. His feet, save for socks of irregular open-work, were bare, his big toes were broad, and pricked like the ears of a watchful dog. In a leisurely manner—he did everything in a leisurely manner—he was contemplating trying on a pair of boots. They were the soundest boots he had come across for a long time, but too large for him; whereas the ones he had were, in dry weather, a very comfortable fit, but too thin-soled for damp. Mr. Thomas Marvel hated roomy shoes, but then he hated damp.

He had never properly thought out which he hated most, and it was a pleasant day, and there was nothing better to do. So he put the four shoes in a graceful group on the turf and looked at them. And seeing them there among the grass and springing agrimony, it suddenly occurred to him that both pairs were exceedingly ugly to see. He was not at all startled by a voice behind him.

"They're boots, anyhow," said the Voice.

265

"They are—charity boots," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, with his head on one side regarding them distastefully; "and which is the ugliest pair in the whole blessed universe, I'm darned if I know!"

"H'm," said the Voice.

"I've worn worse—in fact, I've worn none. But none so owdacious ugly—if you'll allow the expression. I've been cadging boots—in particular—for days. Because I was sick of *them*. They're sound enough, of course. But a gentleman on tramp sees such a thundering lot of his boots. And if you'll believe me, I've raised nothing in the whole blessed country, try as I would, but *them*. Look at 'em! And a good country for boots, too, in a general way. But it's just my promiscuous luck. I've got my boots in this country ten years or more. And then they treat you like this."

"It's a beast of a country," said the Voice. "And pigs for people."

"Ain't it?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "Lord! But them boots! It beats it."

270

He turned his head over his shoulder to the right, to look at the boots of his interlocutor with a view to comparisons, and lo! where the boots of his interlocutor should have been were neither legs nor boots. He was irradiated by the dawn of a great amazement. "Where *are* yer?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel over his shoulder and coming on all fours. He saw a stretch of empty downs with the wind swaying the remote green-pointed furze bushes.

"Am I drunk?" said Mr. Marvel. "Have I had visions? Was I talking to myself? What the—"

"Don't be alarmed," said a Voice.

"None of your ventriloquising *me*," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, rising sharply to his feet. "Where *are* yer? Alarmed, indeed!"

"Don't be alarmed," repeated the Voice.

275

"*You'll* be alarmed in a minute, you silly fool," said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "Where *are* yer? Lemme get my mark on yer...

"Are yer *buried*?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel, after an interval.

There was no answer. Mr. Thomas Marvel stood bootless and amazed, his jacket nearly thrown off.

"Peewit," said a peewit, very remote.

"Peewit, indeed!" said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "This ain't no time for foolery." The down was desolate, east and west, north and south; the road with its shallow ditches and white bordering stakes, ran smooth and empty north and south, and, save for that peewit, the blue sky was empty too. "So help me," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, shuffling his coat on to his shoulders again. "It's the drink! I might ha' known."

280

"It's not the drink," said the Voice. "You keep your nerves steady."

"Ow!" said Mr. Marvel, and his face grew white amidst its patches. "It's the drink!" his lips repeated noiselessly. He remained staring about him, rotating slowly backwards. "I could have sworn I heard a voice," he whispered.

"Of course you did."

"It's there again," said Mr. Marvel, closing his eyes and clasping his hand on his brow with a tragic gesture. He was suddenly taken by the collar and shaken violently, and left more dazed than ever. "Don't be a fool," said the Voice.

"I'm—off—my—blooming—chump," said Mr. Marvel. "It's no good. It's fretting about them blarsted boots. I'm off my blessed blooming chump. Or it's spirits."

285

"Neither one thing nor the other," said the Voice. "Listen!"

"Chump," said Mr. Marvel.

"One minute," said the Voice, penetratingly, tremulous with self-control.

"Well?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel, with a strange feeling of having been dug in the chest by a finger.

"You think I'm just imagination? Just imagination?"

290

"What else *can* you be?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Very well," said the Voice, in a tone of relief. "Then I'm going to throw flints at you till you think differently."

"But where *are* yer?"

The Voice made no answer. Whizz came a flint, apparently out of the air, and missed Mr. Marvel's shoulder by a hair's-breadth. Mr. Marvel, turning, saw a flint jerk up into the air, trace a complicated path, hang for a moment, and then fling at his feet with almost invisible rapidity. He was too amazed to dodge. Whizz it came, and ricocheted from a bare toe into the ditch. Mr. Thomas Marvel jumped a foot and howled aloud. Then he started to run, tripped over an unseen obstacle, and came head over heels into a sitting position.

"Now," said the Voice, as a third stone curved upward and hung in the air above the tramp. "Am I imagination?"

295

Mr. Marvel by way of reply struggled to his feet, and was immediately rolled over again. He lay quiet for a moment. "If you struggle any more," said the Voice, "I shall throw the flint at your head."

"It's a fair do," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, sitting up, taking his wounded toe in hand and fixing his eye on the third missile. "I don't understand it. Stones flinging themselves. Stones talking. Put yourself down. Rot away. I'm done."

The third flint fell.

"It's very simple," said the Voice. "I'm an invisible man."

"Tell us something I don't know," said Mr. Marvel, gasping with pain. "Where you've hid—how you do it—I *don't* know. I'm beat."

300

"That's all," said the Voice. "I'm invisible. That's what I want you to understand."

"Anyone could see that. There is no need for you to be so confounded impatient, mister. *Now* then. Give us a notion. How are you hid?"

"I'm invisible. That's the great point. And what I want you to understand is this—"

"But whereabouts?" interrupted Mr. Marvel.

"Here! Six yards in front of you."

305

"Oh, *come!* I ain't blind. You'll be telling me next you're just thin air. I'm not one of your ignorant tramps—"

"Yes, I am—thin air. You're looking through me."

"What! Ain't there any stuff to you. *Vox et*—what is it?—jabber. Is it that?"

"I am just a human being—solid, needing food and drink, needing covering too—But I'm invisible. You see? Invisible. Simple idea. Invisible."

"What, real like?"

310

"Yes, real."

"Let's have a hand of you," said Marvel, "if you *are* real. It won't be so darn out-of-the-way like, then—*Lord!*" he said, "how you made me jump!—gripping me like that!"

He felt the hand that had closed round his wrist with his disengaged fingers, and his fingers went timorously up the arm, patted a muscular chest, and explored a bearded face. Marvel's face was astonishment.

"I'm dashed!" he said. "If this don't beat cock-fighting! Most remarkable!—And there I can see a rabbit clean through you, 'arf a mile away! Not a bit of you visible—except—"

He scrutinised the apparently empty space keenly. "You 'aven't been eatin' bread and cheese?" he asked, holding the invisible arm.

315

"You're quite right, and it's not quite assimilated into the system."

"Ah!" said Mr. Marvel. "Sort of ghostly, though."

"Of course, all this isn't half so wonderful as you think."

"It's quite wonderful enough for *my* modest wants," said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "Howjer manage it! How the dooce is it done?"

"It's too long a story. And besides—"

320

"I tell you, the whole business fairly beats me," said Mr. Marvel.

"What I want to say at present is this: I need help. I have come to that—I came upon you suddenly. I was wandering, mad with rage, naked, impotent. I could have murdered. And I saw you—"

"*Lord!*" said Mr. Marvel.

"I came up behind you—hesitated—went on—"

Mr. Marvel's expression was eloquent.

"—then stopped. 'Here,' I said, 'is an outcast like myself. This is the man for me.' So I turned back and came to you—you. And —"

"*Lord!*" said Mr. Marvel. "But I'm all in a tizzy. May I ask—How is it? And what you may be requiring in the way of help?—Invisible!"

"I want you to help me get clothes—and shelter—and then, with other things. I've left them long enough. If you won't—well! But you *will—must*."

"Look here," said Mr. Marvel. "I'm too flabbergasted. Don't knock me about any more. And leave me go. I must get steady a bit. And you've pretty near broken my toe. It's all so unreasonable. Empty downs, empty sky. Nothing visible for miles except the bosom of Nature. And then comes a voice. A voice out of heaven! And stones! And a fist—*Lord!*"

"Pull yourself together," said the Voice, "for you have to do the job I've chosen for you."

Mr. Marvel blew out his cheeks, and his eyes were round.

"I've chosen you," said the Voice. "You are the only man except some of those fools down there, who knows there is such a thing as an invisible man. You have to be my helper. Help me—and I will do great things for you. An invisible man is a man of power." He stopped for a moment to sneeze violently.

"But if you betray me," he said, "if you fail to do as I direct you—" He paused and tapped Mr. Marvel's shoulder smartly. Mr. Marvel gave a yelp of terror at the touch. "I don't want to betray you," said Mr. Marvel, edging away from the direction of the fingers. "Don't you go a-thinking that, whatever you do. All I want to do is to help you—just tell me what I got to do. (*Lord!*) Whatever you want done, that I'm most willing to do."

X. Mr. Marvel's Visit to Iping

After the first gusty panic had spent itself Iping became argumentative. Scepticism suddenly reared its head—rather nervous scepticism, not at all assured of its back, but scepticism

nevertheless. It is so much easier not to believe in an invisible man; and those who had actually seen him dissolve into air, or felt the strength of his arm, could be counted on the fingers of two hands. And of these witnesses Mr. Wadgers was presently missing, having retired impregnably behind the bolts and bars of his own house, and Jaffers was lying stunned in the parlour of the "Coach and Horses." Great and strange ideas transcending experience often have less effect upon men and women than smaller, more tangible considerations. Iping was gay with bunting, and everybody was in gala dress. Whit Monday had been looked forward to for a month or more. By the afternoon even those who believed in the Unseen were beginning to resume their little amusements in a tentative fashion, on the supposition that he had quite gone away, and with the sceptics he was already a jest. But people, sceptics and believers alike, were remarkably sociable all that day.

Haysman's meadow was gay with a tent, in which Mrs. Bunting and other ladies were preparing tea, while, without, the Sunday-school children ran races and played games under the noisy guidance of the curate and the Misses Cuss and Sackbut. No doubt there was a slight uneasiness in the air, but people for the most part had the sense to conceal whatever imaginative qualms they experienced. On the village green an inclined strong [rope?], down which, clinging the while to a pulley-swung handle, one could be hurled violently against a sack at the other end, came in for considerable favour among the adolescents, as also did the swings and the cocoanut shies. There was also promenading, and the steam organ attached to a small roundabout filled the air with a pungent flavour of oil and with equally pungent music. Members of the club, who had attended church in the morning, were splendid in badges of pink and green, and some of the gayer-minded had also adorned their bowler hats with brilliant-coloured favours of ribbon. Old Fletcher, whose conceptions of holiday-making were severe, was visible through the jasmine about his window or through the open door (whichever way you chose to look), poised delicately on a plank

supported on two chairs, and whitewashing the ceiling of his front room.

About four o'clock a stranger entered the village from the direction of the downs. He was a short, stout person in an extraordinarily shabby top hat, and he appeared to be very much out of breath. His cheeks were alternately limp and tightly puffed. His mottled face was apprehensive, and he moved with a sort of reluctant alacrity. He turned the corner of the church, and directed his way to the "Coach and Horses." Among others old Fletcher remembers seeing him, and indeed the old gentleman was so struck by his peculiar agitation that he inadvertently allowed a quantity of whitewash to run down the brush into the sleeve of his coat while regarding him.

This stranger, to the perceptions of the proprietor of the cocoanut shy, appeared to be talking to himself, and Mr. Huxter remarked the same thing. He stopped at the foot of the "Coach and Horses" steps, and, according to Mr. Huxter, appeared to undergo a severe internal struggle before he could induce himself to enter the house. Finally he marched up the steps, and was seen by Mr. Huxter to turn to the left and open the door of the parlour. Mr. Huxter heard voices from within the room and from the bar apprising the man of his error. "That room's private!" said Hall, and the stranger shut the door clumsily and went into the bar.

In the course of a few minutes he reappeared, wiping his lips with the back of his hand with an air of quiet satisfaction that somehow impressed Mr. Huxter as assumed. He stood looking about him for some moments, and then Mr. Huxter saw him walk in an oddly furtive manner towards the gates of the yard, upon which the parlour window opened. The stranger, after some hesitation, leant against one of the gate-posts, produced a short clay pipe, and prepared to fill it. His fingers trembled while doing so. He lit it clumsily, and folding his arms began to smoke in a languid attitude, an attitude which his occasional glances up the yard altogether belied.

All this Mr. Huxter saw over the canisters of the tobacco window, and the singularity of the man's behaviour prompted him to maintain his observation.

Presently the stranger stood up abruptly and put his pipe in his pocket. Then he vanished into the yard. Forthwith Mr. Huxter, conceiving he was witness of some petty larceny, leapt round his counter and ran out into the road to intercept the thief. As he did so, Mr. Marvel reappeared, his hat askew, a big bundle in a blue table-cloth in one hand, and three books tied together—as it proved afterwards with the Vicar's braces—in the other. Directly he saw Huxter he gave a sort of gasp, and turning sharply to the left, began to run. "Stop, thief!" cried Huxter, and set off after him. Mr. Huxter's sensations were vivid but brief. He saw the man just before him and spurting briskly for the church corner and the hill road. He saw the village flags and festivities beyond, and a face or so turned towards him. He bawled, "Stop!" again. He had hardly gone ten strides before his shin was caught in some mysterious fashion, and he was no longer running, but flying with inconceivable rapidity through the air. He saw the ground suddenly close to his face. The world seemed to splash into a million whirling specks of light, and subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

XI. In the "Coach and Horses"

Now in order clearly to understand what had happened in the inn, it is necessary to go back to the moment when Mr. Marvel first came into view of Mr. Huxter's window.

At that precise moment Mr. Cuss and Mr. Bunting were in the parlour. They were seriously investigating the strange occurrences of the morning, and were, with Mr. Hall's permission, making a thorough examination of the Invisible Man's belongings. Jaffers had partially recovered from his fall and had gone home in the charge of his sympathetic friends. The stranger's scattered garments had been removed by Mrs. Hall and the room tidied up. And on the table under the window where the stranger had been wont to work, Cuss had hit almost at once on three big books in manuscript labelled "Diary."

"Diary!" said Cuss, putting the three books on the table. "Now, at any rate, we shall learn something." The Vicar stood with his

hands on the table.

"Diary," repeated Cuss, sitting down, putting two volumes to support the third, and opening it. "H'm—no name on the fly-leaf. Bother!—cypher. And figures."

The vicar came round to look over his shoulder.

345

Cuss turned the pages over with a face suddenly disappointed. "I'm—dear me! It's all cypher, Bunting."

"There are no diagrams?" asked Mr. Bunting. "No illustrations throwing light—"

"See for yourself," said Mr. Cuss. "Some of it's mathematical and some of it's Russian or some such language (to judge by the letters), and some of it's Greek. Now the Greek I thought *you*—"

"Of course," said Mr. Bunting, taking out and wiping his spectacles and feeling suddenly very uncomfortable—for he had no Greek left in his mind worth talking about; "yes—the Greek, of course, may furnish a clue."

"I'll find you a place."

350

"I'd rather glance through the volumes first," said Mr. Bunting, still wiping. "A general impression first, Cuss, and *then*, you know, we can go looking for clues."

He coughed, put on his glasses, arranged them fastidiously, coughed again, and wished something would happen to avert the seemingly inevitable exposure. Then he took the volume Cuss handed him in a leisurely manner. And then something did happen.

The door opened suddenly.

Both gentlemen started violently, looked round, and were relieved to see a sporadically rosy face beneath a furry silk hat. "Tap?" asked the face, and stood staring.

"No," said both gentlemen at once.

355

"Over the other side, my man," said Mr. Bunting. And "Please shut that door," said Mr. Cuss, irritably.

"All right," said the intruder, as it seemed in a low voice curiously different from the huskiness of its first inquiry. "Right you are," said the intruder in the former voice. "Stand clear!" and he vanished and closed the door.

"A sailor, I should judge," said Mr. Bunting. "Amusing fellows, they are. Stand clear! indeed. A nautical term, referring to his getting back out of the room, I suppose."

"I daresay so," said Cuss. "My nerves are all loose to-day. It quite made me jump—the door opening like that."

Mr. Bunting smiled as if he had not jumped. "And now," he said with a sigh, "these books."

360

Someone sniffed as he did so.

"One thing is indisputable," said Bunting, drawing up a chair next to that of Cuss. "There certainly have been very strange things happen in Iping during the last few days—very strange. I cannot of course believe in this absurd invisibility story—"

"It's incredible," said Cuss—"incredible. But the fact remains that I saw—I certainly saw right down his sleeve—"

"But did you—are you sure? Suppose a mirror, for instance—hallucinations are so easily produced. I don't know if you have ever seen a really good conjuror—"

"I won't argue again," said Cuss. "We've thrashed that out, Bunting. And just now there's these books—Ah! here's some of what I take to be Greek! Greek letters certainly."

365

He pointed to the middle of the page. Mr. Bunting flushed slightly and brought his face nearer, apparently finding some difficulty with his glasses. Suddenly he became aware of a strange feeling at the nape of his neck. He tried to raise his head, and encountered an immovable resistance. The feeling was a curious pressure, the grip of a heavy, firm hand, and it bore his chin irresistibly to the table. "Don't move, little men," whispered a voice, "or I'll brain you both!" He looked into the face of Cuss, close to his own, and each saw a horrified reflection of his own sickly astonishment.

"I'm sorry to handle you so roughly," said the Voice, "but it's unavoidable."

"Since when did you learn to pry into an investigator's private memoranda," said the Voice; and two chins struck the table simultaneously, and two sets of teeth rattled.

"Since when did you learn to invade the private rooms of a man in misfortune?" and the concussion was repeated.

"Where have they put my clothes?"

"Listen," said the Voice. "The windows are fastened and I've taken the key out of the door. I am a fairly strong man, and I have the poker handy—besides being invisible. There's not the slightest doubt that I could kill you both and get away quite easily if I wanted to—do you understand? Very well. If I let you go will you promise not to try any nonsense and do what I tell you?"

The vicar and the doctor looked at one another, and the doctor pulled a face. "Yes," said Mr. Bunting, and the doctor repeated it. Then the pressure on the necks relaxed, and the doctor and the vicar sat up, both very red in the face and wriggling their heads.

"Please keep sitting where you are," said the Invisible Man. "Here's the poker, you see."

"When I came into this room," continued the Invisible Man, after presenting the poker to the tip of the nose of each of his visitors, "I did not expect to find it occupied, and I expected to find, in addition to my books of memoranda, an outfit of clothing. Where is it? No—don't rise. I can see it's gone. Now, just at present, though the days are quite warm enough for an invisible man to run about stark, the evenings are quite chilly. I want clothing—and other accommodation; and I must also have those three books."

XII. The Invisible Man Loses His Temper

It is unavoidable that at this point the narrative should break off again, for a certain very painful reason that will presently be apparent. While these things were going on in the parlour, and while Mr. Huxter was watching Mr. Marvel smoking his pipe against the gate, not a dozen yards away were Mr. Hall and Teddy Henfrey discussing in a state of cloudy puzzlement the one Iping topic.

Suddenly there came a violent thud against the door of the parlour, a sharp cry, and then—silence.

"Hul-lo!" said Teddy Henfrey.

"Hul-lo!" from the Tap.

Mr. Hall took things in slowly but surely. "That ain't right," he said, and came round from behind the bar towards the parlour door.

He and Teddy approached the door together, with intent faces. Their eyes considered. "Summat wrong," said Hall, and Henfrey nodded agreement. Whiffs of an unpleasant chemical odour met them, and there was a muffled sound of conversation, very rapid and subdued.

"You all right thur?" asked Hall, rapping.

The muttered conversation ceased abruptly, for a moment silence, then the conversation was resumed, in hissing whispers, then a sharp cry of "No! no, you don't!" There came a sudden motion and the oversetting of a chair, a brief struggle. Silence again.

"What the dooce?" exclaimed Henfrey, *sotto voce*.

"You—all—right thur?" asked Mr. Hall, sharply, again.

The Vicar's voice answered with a curious jerking intonation: "Quite ri-right. Please don't—interrupt."

"Odd!" said Mr. Henfrey.

"Odd!" said Mr. Hall.

"Says, 'Don't interrupt,'" said Henfrey.

"I heerd'n," said Hall.

"And a sniff," said Henfrey.

They remained listening. The conversation was rapid and subdued. "I *can't*," said Mr. Bunting, his voice rising; "I tell you, sir, I *will* not."

"What was that?" asked Henfrey.

"Says he wi' nart," said Hall. "Warn't speaking to us, wuz he?"

"Disgraceful!" said Mr. Bunting, within.

"Disgraceful," said Mr. Henfrey. "I heard it—distinct."

"Who's that speaking now?" asked Henfrey.

"Mr. Cuss, I s'pose," said Hall. "Can you hear—anything?"

Silence. The sounds within indistinct and perplexing.

"Sounds like throwing the table-cloth about," said Hall.

Mrs. Hall appeared behind the bar. Hall made gestures of silence and invitation. This aroused Mrs. Hall's wifely opposition.

"What yer listenin' there for, Hall?" she asked. "Ain't you nothin' better to do—busy day like this?"

Hall tried to convey everything by grimaces and dumb show, but Mrs. Hall was obdurate. She raised her voice. So Hall and Henfrey, rather crestfallen, tiptoed back to the bar, gesticulating to explain to her.

At first she refused to see anything in what they had heard at all. Then she insisted on Hall keeping silence, while Henfrey told her his story. She was inclined to think the whole business nonsense—perhaps they were just moving the furniture about. "I heerd'n say 'disgraceful'; *that* I did," said Hall.

"I heerd that, Mrs. Hall," said Henfrey.

"Like as not—" began Mrs. Hall.

"Hsh!" said Mr. Teddy Henfrey. "Didn't I hear the window?"

405

"What window?" asked Mrs. Hall.

"Parlour window," said Henfrey.

Everyone stood listening intently. Mrs. Hall's eyes, directed straight before her, saw without seeing the brilliant oblong of the inn door, the road white and vivid, and Huxter's shop-front blistering in the June sun. Abruptly Huxter's door opened and Huxter appeared, eyes staring with excitement, arms gesticulating. "Yap!" cried Huxter. "Stop thief!" and he ran obliquely across the oblong towards the yard gates, and vanished.

Simultaneously came a tumult from the parlour, and a sound of windows being closed.

Hall, Henfrey, and the human contents of the tap rushed out at once pell-mell into the street. They saw someone whisk round the corner towards the road, and Mr. Huxter executing a complicated leap in the air that ended on his face and shoulder. Down the street people were standing astonished or running towards them.

410

Mr. Huxter was stunned. Henfrey stopped to discover this, but Hall and the two labourers from the Tap rushed at once to the corner, shouting incoherent things, and saw Mr. Marvel vanishing by the corner of the church wall. They appear to have jumped to the impossible conclusion that this was the Invisible Man suddenly become visible, and set off at once along the lane in pursuit. But Hall had hardly run a dozen yards before he gave a

loud shout of astonishment and went flying headlong sideways, clutching one of the labourers and bringing him to the ground. He had been charged just as one charges a man at football. The second labourer came round in a circle, stared, and conceiving that Hall had tumbled over of his own accord, turned to resume the pursuit, only to be tripped by the ankle just as Huxter had been. Then, as the first labourer struggled to his feet, he was kicked sideways by a blow that might have felled an ox.

As he went down, the rush from the direction of the village green came round the corner. The first to appear was the proprietor of the cocoanut shy, a burly man in a blue jersey. He was astonished to see the lane empty save for three men sprawling absurdly on the ground. And then something happened to his rear-most foot, and he went headlong and rolled sideways just in time to graze the feet of his brother and partner, following headlong. The two were then kicked, knelt on, fallen over, and cursed by quite a number of over-hasty people.

Now when Hall and Henfrey and the labourers ran out of the house, Mrs. Hall, who had been disciplined by years of experience, remained in the bar next the till. And suddenly the parlour door was opened, and Mr. Cuss appeared, and without glancing at her rushed at once down the steps toward the corner. "Hold him!" he cried. "Don't let him drop that parcel."

He knew nothing of the existence of Marvel. For the Invisible Man had handed over the books and bundle in the yard. The face of Mr. Cuss was angry and resolute, but his costume was defective, a sort of limp white kilt that could only have passed muster in Greece. "Hold him!" he bawled. "He's got my trousers! And every stitch of the Vicar's clothes!"

"Tend to him in a minute!" he cried to Henfrey as he passed the prostrate Huxter, and, coming round the corner to join the tumult, was promptly knocked off his feet into an indecorous sprawl. Somebody in full flight trod heavily on his finger. He yelled, struggled to regain his feet, was knocked against and thrown on all fours again, and became aware that he was involved not in a capture, but a rout. Everyone was running back to the village. He rose again and was hit severely behind the ear. He

staggered and set off back to the "Coach and Horses" forthwith, leaping over the deserted Huxter, who was now sitting up, on his way.

Behind him as he was halfway up the inn steps he heard a sudden yell of rage, rising sharply out of the confusion of cries, and a sounding smack in someone's face. He recognised the voice as that of the Invisible Man, and the note was that of a man suddenly infuriated by a painful blow.

In another moment Mr. Cuss was back in the parlour. "He's coming back, Bunting!" he said, rushing in. "Save yourself!"

Mr. Bunting was standing in the window engaged in an attempt to clothe himself in the hearth-rug and a *West Surrey Gazette*. "Who's coming?" he said, so startled that his costume narrowly escaped disintegration.

"Invisible Man," said Cuss, and rushed on to the window. "We'd better clear out from here! He's fighting mad! Mad!"

In another moment he was out in the yard.

420

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Bunting, hesitating between two horrible alternatives. He heard a frightful struggle in the passage of the inn, and his decision was made. He clambered out of the window, adjusted his costume hastily, and fled up the village as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

From the moment when the Invisible Man screamed with rage and Mr. Bunting made his memorable flight up the village, it became impossible to give a consecutive account of affairs in Iping. Possibly the Invisible Man's original intention was simply to cover Marvel's retreat with the clothes and books. But his temper, at no time very good, seems to have gone completely at some chance blow, and forthwith he set to smiting and overthrowing, for the mere satisfaction of hurting.

You must figure the street full of running figures, of doors slamming and fights for hiding-places. You must figure the tumult suddenly striking on the unstable equilibrium of old Fletcher's planks and two chairs—with cataclysmic results. You must figure an appalled couple caught dismally in a swing. And then the whole tumultuous rush has passed and the Iping street with its gauds and flags is deserted save for the still raging unseen, and

littered with cocoanuts, overthrown canvas screens, and the scattered stock in trade of a sweetstuff stall. Everywhere there is a sound of closing shutters and shoving bolts, and the only visible humanity is an occasional flitting eye under a raised eyebrow in the corner of a window pane.

The Invisible Man amused himself for a little while by breaking all the windows in the "Coach and Horses," and then he thrust a street lamp through the parlour window of Mrs. Gribble. He it must have been who cut the telegraph wire to Adderdean just beyond Higgins' cottage on the Adderdean road. And after that, as his peculiar qualities allowed, he passed out of human perceptions altogether, and he was neither heard, seen, nor felt in Iping any more. He vanished absolutely.

But it was the best part of two hours before any human being ventured out again into the desolation of Iping street.

425

XIII. Mr. Marvel Discusses His Resignation

When the dusk was gathering and Iping was just beginning to peep timorously forth again upon the shattered wreckage of its Bank Holiday, a short, thick-set man in a shabby silk hat was marching painfully through the twilight behind the beechwoods on the road to Bramblehurst. He carried three books bound together by some sort of ornamental elastic ligature, and a bundle wrapped in a blue table-cloth. His rubicund face expressed consternation and fatigue; he appeared to be in a spasmodic sort of hurry. He was accompanied by a voice other than his own, and ever and again he winced under the touch of unseen hands.

"If you give me the slip again," said the Voice, "if you attempt to give me the slip again—"

"Lord!" said Mr. Marvel. "That shoulder's a mass of bruises as it is."

"On my honour," said the Voice, "I will kill you."

"I didn't try to give you the slip," said Marvel, in a voice that was not far remote from tears. "I swear I didn't. I didn't know the blessed turning, that was all! How the devil was I to know the blessed turning? As it is, I've been knocked about—"

430

"You'll get knocked about a great deal more if you don't mind," said the Voice, and Mr. Marvel abruptly became silent. He blew out his cheeks, and his eyes were eloquent of despair.

"It's bad enough to let these floundering yokels explode my little secret, without *your* cutting off with my books. It's lucky for some of them they cut and ran when they did! Here am I ... No one knew I was invisible! And now what am I to do?"

"What am *I* to do?" asked Marvel, *sotto voce*.

"It's all about. It will be in the papers! Everybody will be looking for me; everyone on their guard—" The Voice broke off into vivid curses and ceased.

The despair of Mr. Marvel's face deepened, and his pace slackened. 435

"Go on!" said the Voice.

Mr. Marvel's face assumed a greyish tint between the ruddier patches.

"Don't drop those books, stupid," said the Voice, sharply—overtaking him.

"The fact is," said the Voice, "I shall have to make use of you.... You're a poor tool, but I must."

"I'm a *miserable* tool," said Marvel. 440

"You are," said the Voice.

"I'm the worst possible tool you could have," said Marvel.

"I'm not strong," he said after a discouraging silence.

"I'm not over strong," he repeated.

"No?" 445

"And my heart's weak. That little business—I pulled it through, of course—but bless you! I could have dropped."

"Well?"

"I haven't the nerve and strength for the sort of thing you want."

"*I'll* stimulate you."

"I wish you wouldn't. I wouldn't like to mess up your plans, you know. But I might—out of sheer funk and misery." 450

"You'd better not," said the Voice, with quiet emphasis.

"I wish I was dead," said Marvel.

"It ain't justice," he said; "you must admit.... It seems to me I've a perfect right—"

"Get on!" said the Voice.

Mr. Marvel mended his pace, and for a time they went in silence again. 455

"It's devilish hard," said Mr. Marvel.

This was quite ineffectual. He tried another tack.

"What do I make by it?" he began again in a tone of unendurable wrong.

"Oh! *shut up!*" said the Voice, with sudden amazing vigour. "I'll see to you all right. You do what you're told. You'll do it all right. You're a fool and all that, but you'll do—"

"I tell you, sir, I'm not the man for it. Respectfully—but it is so —" 460

"If you don't shut up I shall twist your wrist again," said the Invisible Man. "I want to think."

Presently two oblongs of yellow light appeared through the trees, and the square tower of a church loomed through the gloaming. "I shall keep my hand on your shoulder," said the Voice, "all through the village. Go straight through and try no foolery. It will be the worse for you if you do."

"I know that," sighed Mr. Marvel, "I know all that."

The unhappy-looking figure in the obsolete silk hat passed up the street of the little village with his burdens, and vanished into the gathering darkness beyond the lights of the windows.

XIV. At Port Stowe

Ten o'clock the next morning found Mr. Marvel, unshaven, dirty, and travel-stained, sitting with the books beside him and his hands deep in his pockets, looking very weary, nervous, and uncomfortable, and inflating his cheeks at infrequent intervals, on the bench outside a little inn on the outskirts of Port Stowe. Beside him were the books, but now they were tied with string. The bundle had been abandoned in the pine-woods beyond Bramblehurst, in accordance with a change in the plans of the Invisible Man. Mr. Marvel sat on the bench, and although no one 465

took the slightest notice of him, his agitation remained at fever heat. His hands would go over and again to his various pockets with a curious nervous fumbling.

When he had been sitting for the best part of an hour, however, an elderly mariner, carrying a newspaper, came out of the inn and sat down beside him. "Pleasant day," said the mariner.

Mr. Marvel glanced about him with something very like terror. "Very," he said.

"Just seasonable weather for the time of year," said the mariner, taking no denial.

"Quite," said Mr. Marvel.

The mariner produced a toothpick, and (saving his regard) was engrossed thereby for some minutes. His eyes meanwhile were at liberty to examine Mr. Marvel's dusty figure, and the books beside him. As he had approached Mr. Marvel he had heard a sound like the dropping of coins into a pocket. He was struck by the contrast of Mr. Marvel's appearance with this suggestion of opulence. Thence his mind wandered back again to a topic that had taken a curiously firm hold of his imagination.

470

"Books?" he said suddenly, noisily finishing with the toothpick.

Mr. Marvel started and looked at them. "Oh, yes," he said. "Yes, they're books."

"There's some extra-ordinary things in books," said the mariner.

"I believe you," said Mr. Marvel.

"And some extra-ordinary things out of 'em," said the mariner.

475

"True likewise," said Mr. Marvel. He eyed his interlocutor, and then glanced about him.

"There's some extra-ordinary things in newspapers, for example," said the mariner.

"There are."

"In *this* newspaper," said the mariner.

"Ah!" said Mr. Marvel.

480

"There's a story," said the mariner, fixing Mr. Marvel with an eye that was firm and deliberate; "there's a story about an Invisible Man, for instance."

Mr. Marvel pulled his mouth askew and scratched his cheek and felt his ears glowing. "What will they be writing next?" he asked faintly. "Ostria, or America?"

"Neither," said the mariner. "*Here.*"

"Lord!" said Mr. Marvel, starting.

"When I say *here*," said the mariner, to Mr. Marvel's intense relief, "I don't of course mean here in this place, I mean hereabouts."

485

"An Invisible Man!" said Mr. Marvel. "And what's *he* been up to?"

"Everything," said the mariner, controlling Marvel with his eye, and then amplifying, "every—blessed—thing."

"I ain't seen a paper these four days," said Marvel.

"Iping's the place he started at," said the mariner.

"In-deed!" said Mr. Marvel.

490

"He started there. And where he came from, nobody don't seem to know. Here it is: 'Pe-culiar Story from Iping.' And it says in this paper that the evidence is extra-ordinary strong—extra-ordinary."

"Lord!" said Mr. Marvel.

"But then, it's an extra-ordinary story. There is a clergyman and a medical gent witnesses—saw 'im all right and proper—or leastways didn't see 'im. He was staying, it says, at the 'Coach an' Horses,' and no one don't seem to have been aware of his misfortune, it says, aware of his misfortune, until in an Altercation in the inn, it says, his bandages on his head was torn off. It was then ob-served that his head was invisible. Attempts were At Once made to secure him, but casting off his garments, it says, he succeeded in escaping, but not until after a desperate struggle, in which he had inflicted serious injuries, it says, on our worthy and able constable, Mr. J. A. Jaffers. Pretty straight story, eh? Names and everything."

"Lord!" said Mr. Marvel, looking nervously about him, trying to count the money in his pockets by his unaided sense of touch, and full of a strange and novel idea. "It sounds most astonishing."

"Don't it? Extra-ordinary, *I* call it. Never heard tell of Invisible Men before, I haven't, but nowadays one hears such a lot of extra-

495

ordinary things—that—"

"That all he did?" asked Marvel, trying to seem at his ease.

"It's enough, ain't it?" said the mariner.

"Didn't go Back by any chance?" asked Marvel. "Just escaped and that's all, eh?"

"All!" said the mariner. "Why!—ain't it enough?"

"Quite enough," said Marvel.

500

"I should think it was enough," said the mariner. "I should think it was enough."

"He didn't have any pals—it don't say he had any pals, does it?" asked Mr. Marvel, anxious.

"Ain't one of a sort enough for you?" asked the mariner. "No, thank Heaven, as one might say, he didn't."

He nodded his head slowly. "It makes me regular uncomfortable, the bare thought of that chap running about the country! He is at present At Large, and from certain evidence it is supposed that he has—taken—took, I suppose they mean—the road to Port Stowe. You see we're right *in* it! None of your American wonders, this time. And just think of the things he might do! Where'd you be, if he took a drop over and above, and had a fancy to go for you? Suppose he wants to rob—who can prevent him? He can trespass, he can burgle, he could walk through a cordon of policemen as easy as me or you could give the slip to a blind man! Easier! For these here blind chaps hear uncommon sharp, I'm told. And wherever there was liquor he fancied—"

"He's got a tremenjous advantage, certainly," said Mr. Marvel. "And—well..."

505

"You're right," said the mariner. "He *has*."

All this time Mr. Marvel had been glancing about him intently, listening for faint footfalls, trying to detect imperceptible movements. He seemed on the point of some great resolution. He coughed behind his hand.

He looked about him again, listened, bent towards the mariner, and lowered his voice: "The fact of it is—I happen—to know just a thing or two about this Invisible Man. From private sources."

"Oh!" said the mariner, interested. "You?"

"Yes," said Mr. Marvel. "Me."

510

"Indeed!" said the mariner. "And may I ask—"

"You'll be astonished," said Mr. Marvel behind his hand. "It's tremenjous."

"Indeed!" said the mariner.

"The fact is," began Mr. Marvel eagerly in a confidential undertone. Suddenly his expression changed marvellously. "Ow!" he said. He rose stiffly in his seat. His face was eloquent of physical suffering. "Wow!" he said.

"What's up?" said the mariner, concerned.

515

"Toothache," said Mr. Marvel, and put his hand to his ear. He caught hold of his books. "I must be getting on, I think," he said. He edged in a curious way along the seat away from his interlocutor. "But you was just a-going to tell me about this here Invisible Man!" protested the mariner. Mr. Marvel seemed to consult with himself. "Hoax," said a Voice. "It's a hoax," said Mr. Marvel.

"But it's in the paper," said the mariner.

"Hoax all the same," said Marvel. "I know the chap that started the lie. There ain't no Invisible Man whatsoever—Blimey."

"But how 'bout this paper? D'you mean to say—?"

"Not a word of it," said Marvel, stoutly.

520

The mariner stared, paper in hand. Mr. Marvel jerkily faced about. "Wait a bit," said the mariner, rising and speaking slowly, "D'you mean to say—?"

"I do," said Mr. Marvel.

"Then why did you let me go on and tell you all this blarsted stuff, then? What d'yer mean by letting a man make a fool of himself like that for? Eh?"

Mr. Marvel blew out his cheeks. The mariner was suddenly very red indeed; he clenched his hands. "I been talking here this ten minutes," he said; "and you, you little pot-bellied, leathery-faced son of an old boot, couldn't have the elementary manners —"

"Don't you come bandying words with *me*," said Mr. Marvel.

525

"Bandyng words! I'm a jolly good mind—"

"Come up," said a Voice, and Mr. Marvel was suddenly whirled about and started marching off in a curious spasmodic manner. "You'd better move on," said the mariner. "Who's moving on?" said Mr. Marvel. He was receding obliquely with a curious hurrying gait, with occasional violent jerks forward. Some way along the road he began a muttered monologue, protests and recriminations.

"Silly devil!" said the mariner, legs wide apart, elbows akimbo, watching the receding figure. "I'll show you, you silly ass—hoaxing *me*! It's here—on the paper!"

Mr. Marvel retorted incoherently and, receding, was hidden by a bend in the road, but the mariner still stood magnificent in the midst of the way, until the approach of a butcher's cart dislodged him. Then he turned himself towards Port Stowe. "Full of extraordinary asses," he said softly to himself. "Just to take me down a bit—that was his silly game—It's on the paper!"

And there was another extraordinary thing he was presently to hear, that had happened quite close to him. And that was a vision of a "fist full of money" (no less) travelling without visible agency, along by the wall at the corner of St. Michael's Lane. A brother mariner had seen this wonderful sight that very morning. He had snatched at the money forthwith and had been knocked headlong, and when he had got to his feet the butterfly money had vanished. Our mariner was in the mood to believe anything, he declared, but that was a bit *too* stiff. Afterwards, however, he began to think things over.

The story of the flying money was true. And all about that neighbourhood, even from the august London and Country Banking Company, from the tills of shops and inns—doors standing that sunny weather entirely open—money had been quietly and dexterously making off that day in handfuls and rouleaux, floating quietly along by walls and shady places, dodging quickly from the approaching eyes of men. And it had, though no man had traced it, invariably ended its mysterious flight in the pocket of that agitated gentleman in the obsolete silk hat, sitting outside the little inn on the outskirts of Port Stowe.

It was ten days after—and indeed only when the Burdock story was already old—that the mariner collated these facts and began to understand how near he had been to the wonderful Invisible Man.

XV. The Man Who Was Running

In the early evening time Dr. Kemp was sitting in his study in the belvedere on the hill overlooking Burdock. It was a pleasant little room, with three windows—north, west, and south—and bookshelves covered with books and scientific publications, and a broad writing-table, and, under the north window, a microscope, glass slips, minute instruments, some cultures, and scattered bottles of reagents. Dr. Kemp's solar lamp was lit, albeit the sky was still bright with the sunset light, and his blinds were up because there was no offence of peering outsiders to require them pulled down. Dr. Kemp was a tall and slender young man, with flaxen hair and a moustache almost white, and the work he was upon would earn him, he hoped, the fellowship of the Royal Society, so highly did he think of it.

And his eye, presently wandering from his work, caught the sunset blazing at the back of the hill that is over against his own. For a minute perhaps he sat, pen in mouth, admiring the rich golden colour above the crest, and then his attention was attracted by the little figure of a man, inky black, running over the hill-brow towards him. He was a shortish little man, and he wore a high hat, and he was running so fast that his legs verily twinkled.

"Another of those fools," said Dr. Kemp. "Like that ass who ran into me this morning round a corner, with the "Visible Man a-coming, sir!" I can't imagine what possesses people. One might think we were in the thirteenth century."

535

He got up, went to the window, and stared at the dusky hillside, and the dark little figure tearing down it. "He seems in a confounded hurry," said Dr. Kemp, "but he doesn't seem to be getting on. If his pockets were full of lead, he couldn't run heavier."

"Spurled, sir," said Dr. Kemp.

In another moment the higher of the villas that had clambered up the hill from Burdock had occulted the running figure. He was visible again for a moment, and again, and then again, three times between the three detached houses that came next, and then the terrace hid him.

"Asses!" said Dr. Kemp, swinging round on his heel and walking back to his writing-table.

But those who saw the fugitive nearer, and perceived the abject terror on his perspiring face, being themselves in the open roadway, did not share in the doctor's contempt. By the man pounded, and as he ran he chinked like a well-filled purse that is tossed to and fro. He looked neither to the right nor the left, but his dilated eyes stared straight downhill to where the lamps were being lit, and the people were crowded in the street. And his ill-shaped mouth fell apart, and a glairy foam lay on his lips, and his breath came hoarse and noisy. All he passed stopped and began staring up the road and down, and interrogating one another with an inkling of discomfort for the reason of his haste.

540

And then presently, far up the hill, a dog playing in the road yelped and ran under a gate, and as they still wondered something—a wind—a pad, pad, pad,—a sound like a panting breathing, rushed by.

People screamed. People sprang off the pavement: It passed in shouts, it passed by instinct down the hill. They were shouting in the street before Marvel was halfway there. They were bolting into houses and slamming the doors behind them, with the news. He heard it and made one last desperate spurt. Fear came striding by, rushed ahead of him, and in a moment had seized the town.

"The Invisible Man is coming! The Invisible Man!"

XVI. In the "Jolly Cricketers"

The "Jolly Cricketers" is just at the bottom of the hill, where the tram-lines begin. The barman leant his fat red arms on the counter and talked of horses with an anaemic cabman, while a black-bearded man in grey snapped up biscuit and cheese, drank Burton, and conversed in American with a policeman off duty.

"What's the shouting about!" said the anaemic cabman, going off at a tangent, trying to see up the hill over the dirty yellow blind in the low window of the inn. Somebody ran by outside. "Fire, perhaps," said the barman.

545

Footsteps approached, running heavily, the door was pushed open violently, and Marvel, weeping and dishevelled, his hat gone, the neck of his coat torn open, rushed in, made a convulsive turn, and attempted to shut the door. It was held half open by a strap.

"Coming!" he bawled, his voice shrieking with terror. "He's coming. The 'Visible Man! After me! For Gawd's sake! 'Elp! 'Elp! 'Elp!"

"Shut the doors," said the policeman. "Who's coming? What's the row?" He went to the door, released the strap, and it slammed. The American closed the other door.

"Lemme go inside," said Marvel, staggering and weeping, but still clutching the books. "Lemme go inside. Lock me in—somewhere. I tell you he's after me. I give him the slip. He said he'd kill me and he will."

"You're safe," said the man with the black beard. "The door's shut. What's it all about?"

550

"Lemme go inside," said Marvel, and shrieked aloud as a blow suddenly made the fastened door shiver and was followed by a hurried rapping and a shouting outside. "Hullo," cried the policeman, "who's there?" Mr. Marvel began to make frantic dives at panels that looked like doors. "He'll kill me—he's got a knife or something. For Gawd's sake—!"

"Here you are," said the barman. "Come in here." And he held up the flap of the bar.

Mr. Marvel rushed behind the bar as the summons outside was repeated. "Don't open the door," he screamed. "*Please* don't open the door. *Where* shall I hide?"

"This, this Invisible Man, then?" asked the man with the black beard, with one hand behind him. "I guess it's about time we saw him."

The window of the inn was suddenly smashed in, and there was a screaming and running to and fro in the street. The

555

policeman had been standing on the settee staring out, craning to see who was at the door. He got down with raised eyebrows. "It's that," he said. The barman stood in front of the bar-parlour door which was now locked on Mr. Marvel, stared at the smashed window, and came round to the two other men.

Everything was suddenly quiet. "I wish I had my truncheon," said the policeman, going irresolutely to the door. "Once we open, in he comes. There's no stopping him."

"Don't you be in too much hurry about that door," said the anaemic cabman, anxiously.

"Draw the bolts," said the man with the black beard, "and if he comes—" He showed a revolver in his hand.

"That won't do," said the policeman; "that's murder."

"I know what country I'm in," said the man with the beard. "I'm going to let off at his legs. Draw the bolts."

560

"Not with that blinking thing going off behind me," said the barman, craning over the blind.

"Very well," said the man with the black beard, and stooping down, revolver ready, drew them himself. Barman, cabman, and policeman faced about.

"Come in," said the bearded man in an undertone, standing back and facing the unbolted doors with his pistol behind him. No one came in, the door remained closed. Five minutes afterwards when a second cabman pushed his head in cautiously, they were still waiting, and an anxious face peered out of the bar-parlour and supplied information. "Are all the doors of the house shut?" asked Marvel. "He's going round—prowling round. He's as artful as the devil."

"Good Lord!" said the burly barman. "There's the back! Just watch them doors! I say—" He looked about him helplessly. The bar-parlour door slammed and they heard the key turn. "There's the yard door and the private door. The yard door—"

He rushed out of the bar.

565

In a minute he reappeared with a carving-knife in his hand. "The yard door was open!" he said, and his fat underlip dropped. "He may be in the house now!" said the first cabman.

"He's not in the kitchen," said the barman. "There's two women there, and I've stabbed every inch of it with this little beef slicer. And they don't think he's come in. They haven't noticed—"

"Have you fastened it?" asked the first cabman.

"I'm out of frocks," said the barman.

The man with the beard replaced his revolver. And even as he did so the flap of the bar was shut down and the bolt clicked, and then with a tremendous thud the catch of the door snapped and the bar-parlour door burst open. They heard Marvel squeal like a caught leveret, and forthwith they were clambering over the bar to his rescue. The bearded man's revolver cracked and the looking-glass at the back of the parlour starred and came smashing and tinkling down.

As the barman entered the room he saw Marvel, curiously crumpled up and struggling against the door that led to the yard and kitchen. The door flew open while the barman hesitated, and Marvel was dragged into the kitchen. There was a scream and a clatter of pans. Marvel, head down, and lugging back obstinately, was forced to the kitchen door, and the bolts were drawn.

Then the policeman, who had been trying to pass the barman, rushed in, followed by one of the cabmen, gripped the wrist of the invisible hand that collared Marvel, was hit in the face and went reeling back. The door opened, and Marvel made a frantic effort to obtain a lodgment behind it. Then the cabman collared something. "I got him," said the cabman. The barman's red hands came clawing at the unseen. "Here he is!" said the barman.

Mr. Marvel, released, suddenly dropped to the ground and made an attempt to crawl behind the legs of the fighting men. The struggle blundered round the edge of the door. The voice of the Invisible Man was heard for the first time, yelling out sharply, as the policeman trod on his foot. Then he cried out passionately and his fists flew round like flails. The cabman suddenly whooped and doubled up, kicked under the diaphragm. The door into the bar-parlour from the kitchen slammed and covered Mr. Marvel's retreat. The men in the kitchen found themselves clutching at and struggling with empty air.

"Where's he gone?" cried the man with the beard. "Out?"

"This way," said the policeman, stepping into the yard and stopping.

575

A piece of tile whizzed by his head and smashed among the crockery on the kitchen table.

"I'll show him," shouted the man with the black beard, and suddenly a steel barrel shone over the policeman's shoulder, and five bullets had followed one another into the twilight whence the missile had come. As he fired, the man with the beard moved his hand in a horizontal curve, so that his shots radiated out into the narrow yard like spokes from a wheel.

A silence followed. "Five cartridges," said the man with the black beard. "That's the best of all. Four aces and a joker. Get a lantern, someone, and come and feel about for his body."

XVII. Dr. Kemp's Visitor

Dr. Kemp had continued writing in his study until the shots aroused him. Crack, crack, crack, they came one after the other.

"Hullo!" said Dr. Kemp, putting his pen into his mouth again and listening. "Who's letting off revolvers in Burdock? What are the asses at now?"

580

He went to the south window, threw it up, and leaning out stared down on the network of windows, beaded gas-lamps and shops, with its black interstices of roof and yard that made up the town at night. "Looks like a crowd down the hill," he said, "by 'The Cricketers,'" and remained watching. Thence his eyes wandered over the town to far away where the ships' lights shone, and the pier glowed—a little illuminated, faceted pavilion like a gem of yellow light. The moon in its first quarter hung over the westward hill, and the stars were clear and almost tropically bright.

After five minutes, during which his mind had travelled into a remote speculation of social conditions of the future, and lost itself at last over the time dimension, Dr. Kemp roused himself with a sigh, pulled down the window again, and returned to his writing desk.

It must have been about an hour after this that the front-door bell rang. He had been writing slackly, and with intervals of abstraction, since the shots. He sat listening. He heard the servant answer the door, and waited for her feet on the staircase, but she did not come. "Wonder what that was," said Dr. Kemp.

He tried to resume his work, failed, got up, went downstairs from his study to the landing, rang, and called over the balustrade to the housemaid as she appeared in the hall below. "Was that a letter?" he asked.

"Only a runaway ring, sir," she answered.

585

"I'm restless to-night," he said to himself. He went back to his study, and this time attacked his work resolutely. In a little while he was hard at work again, and the only sounds in the room were the ticking of the clock and the subdued shrillness of his quill, hurrying in the very centre of the circle of light his lampshade threw on his table.

It was two o'clock before Dr. Kemp had finished his work for the night. He rose, yawned, and went downstairs to bed. He had already removed his coat and vest, when he noticed that he was thirsty. He took a candle and went down to the dining-room in search of a syphon and whiskey.

Dr. Kemp's scientific pursuits have made him a very observant man, and as he recrossed the hall, he noticed a dark spot on the linoleum near the mat at the foot of the stairs. He went on upstairs, and then it suddenly occurred to him to ask himself what the spot on the linoleum might be. Apparently some subconscious element was at work. At any rate, he turned with his burden, went back to the hall, put down the syphon and whiskey, and bending down, touched the spot. Without any great surprise he found it had the stickiness and colour of drying blood.

He took up his burden again, and returned upstairs, looking about him and trying to account for the blood-spot. On the landing he saw something and stopped astonished. The door-handle of his own room was blood-stained.

He looked at his own hand. It was quite clean, and then he remembered that the door of his room had been open when he came down from his study, and that consequently he had not

590

touched the handle at all. He went straight into his room, his face quite calm—perhaps a trifle more resolute than usual. His glance, wandering inquisitively, fell on the bed. On the counterpane was a mess of blood, and the sheet had been torn. He had not noticed this before because he had walked straight to the dressing-table. On the further side the bedclothes were depressed as if someone had been recently sitting there.

Then he had an odd impression that he had heard a low voice say, "Good Heavens!—Kemp!" But Dr. Kemp was no believer in voices.

He stood staring at the tumbled sheets. Was that really a voice? He looked about again, but noticed nothing further than the disordered and blood-stained bed. Then he distinctly heard a movement across the room, near the wash-hand stand. All men, however highly educated, retain some superstitious inklings. The feeling that is called "eerie" came upon him. He closed the door of the room, came forward to the dressing-table, and put down his burdens. Suddenly, with a start, he perceived a coiled and blood-stained bandage of linen rag hanging in mid-air, between him and the wash-hand stand.

He stared at this in amazement. It was an empty bandage, a bandage properly tied but quite empty. He would have advanced to grasp it, but a touch arrested him, and a voice speaking quite close to him.

"Kemp!" said the Voice.

"Eh?" said Kemp, with his mouth open.

595

"Keep your nerve," said the Voice. "I'm an Invisible Man."

Kemp made no answer for a space, simply stared at the bandage. "Invisible Man," he said.

"I am an Invisible Man," repeated the Voice.

The story he had been active to ridicule only that morning rushed through Kemp's brain. He does not appear to have been either very much frightened or very greatly surprised at the moment. Realisation came later.

"I thought it was all a lie," he said. The thought uppermost in his mind was the reiterated arguments of the morning. "Have you a bandage on?" he asked.

600

"Yes," said the Invisible Man.

"Oh!" said Kemp, and then roused himself. "I say!" he said. "But this is nonsense. It's some trick." He stepped forward suddenly, and his hand, extended towards the bandage, met invisible fingers.

He recoiled at the touch and his colour changed.

"Keep steady, Kemp, for God's sake! I want help badly. Stop!"

The hand gripped his arm. He struck at it.

605

"Kemp!" cried the Voice. "Kemp! Keep steady!" and the grip tightened.

A frantic desire to free himself took possession of Kemp. The hand of the bandaged arm gripped his shoulder, and he was suddenly tripped and flung backwards upon the bed. He opened his mouth to shout, and the corner of the sheet was thrust between his teeth. The Invisible Man had him down grimly, but his arms were free and he struck and tried to kick savagely.

"Listen to reason, will you?" said the Invisible Man, sticking to him in spite of a pounding in the ribs. "By Heaven! you'll madden me in a minute!

"Lie still, you fool!" bawled the Invisible Man in Kemp's ear.

Kemp struggled for another moment and then lay still.

610

"If you shout, I'll smash your face," said the Invisible Man, relieving his mouth.

"I'm an Invisible Man. It's no foolishness, and no magic. I really am an Invisible Man. And I want your help. I don't want to hurt you, but if you behave like a frantic rustic, I must. Don't you remember me, Kemp? Griffin, of University College?"

"Let me get up," said Kemp. "I'll stop where I am. And let me sit quiet for a minute."

He sat up and felt his neck.

"I am Griffin, of University College, and I have made myself invisible. I am just an ordinary man—a man you have known—made invisible."

615

"Griffin?" said Kemp.

"Griffin," answered the Voice. A younger student than you were, almost an albino, six feet high, and broad, with a pink and white face and red eyes, who won the medal for chemistry."

"I am confused," said Kemp. "My brain is rioting. What has this to do with Griffin?"

"I *am* Griffin."

Kemp thought. "It's horrible," he said. "But what devilry must happen to make a man invisible?"

620

"It's no devilry. It's a process, sane and intelligible enough—"

"It's horrible!" said Kemp. "How on earth—?"

"It's horrible enough. But I'm wounded and in pain, and tired ... Great God! Kemp, you are a man. Take it steady. Give me some food and drink, and let me sit down here."

Kemp stared at the bandage as it moved across the room, then saw a basket chair dragged across the floor and come to rest near the bed. It creaked, and the seat was depressed the quarter of an inch or so. He rubbed his eyes and felt his neck again. "This beats ghosts," he said, and laughed stupidly.

"That's better. Thank Heaven, you're getting sensible!"

625

"Or silly," said Kemp, and knuckled his eyes.

"Give me some whiskey. I'm near dead."

"It didn't feel so. Where are you? If I get up shall I run into you? *There!* all right. Whiskey? Here. Where shall I give it to you?"

The chair creaked and Kemp felt the glass drawn away from him. He let go by an effort; his instinct was all against it. It came to rest poised twenty inches above the front edge of the seat of the chair. He stared at it in infinite perplexity. "This is—this must be—hypnotism. You have suggested you are invisible."

"Nonsense," said the Voice.

630

"It's frantic."

"Listen to me."

"I demonstrated conclusively this morning," began Kemp, "that invisibility—"

"Never mind what you've demonstrated!—I'm starving," said the Voice, "and the night is chilly to a man without clothes."

"Food?" said Kemp.

635

The tumbler of whiskey tilted itself. "Yes," said the Invisible Man rapping it down. "Have you a dressing-gown?"

Kemp made some exclamation in an undertone. He walked to a wardrobe and produced a robe of dingy scarlet. "This do?" he asked. It was taken from him. It hung limp for a moment in mid-air, fluttered weirdly, stood full and decorous buttoning itself, and sat down in his chair. "Drawers, socks, slippers would be a comfort," said the Unseen, curtly. "And food."

"Anything. But this is the insanest thing I ever was in, in my life!"

He turned out his drawers for the articles, and then went downstairs to ransack his larder. He came back with some cold cutlets and bread, pulled up a light table, and placed them before his guest. "Never mind knives," said his visitor, and a cutlet hung in mid-air, with a sound of gnawing.

"Invisible!" said Kemp, and sat down on a bedroom chair.

640

"I always like to get something about me before I eat," said the Invisible Man, with a full mouth, eating greedily. "Queer fancy!"

"I suppose that wrist is all right," said Kemp.

"Trust me," said the Invisible Man.

"Of all the strange and wonderful—"

"Exactly. But it's odd I should blunder into *your* house to get my bandaging. My first stroke of luck! Anyhow I meant to sleep in this house to-night. You must stand that! It's a filthy nuisance, my blood showing, isn't it? Quite a clot over there. Gets visible as it coagulates, I see. It's only the living tissue I've changed, and only for as long as I'm alive.... I've been in the house three hours."

645

"But how's it done?" began Kemp, in a tone of exasperation. "Confound it! The whole business—it's unreasonable from beginning to end."

"Quite reasonable," said the Invisible Man. "Perfectly reasonable."

He reached over and secured the whiskey bottle. Kemp stared at the devouring dressing gown. A ray of candle-light penetrating a torn patch in the right shoulder, made a triangle of light under the left ribs. "What were the shots?" he asked. "How did the shooting begin?"

"There was a real fool of a man—a sort of confederate of mine—curse him!—who tried to steal my money. *Has* done so."

"Is *he* invisible too?"

650

"No."

"Well?"

"Can't I have some more to eat before I tell you all that? I'm hungry—in pain. And you want me to tell stories!"

Kemp got up. "You didn't do any shooting?" he asked.

"Not me," said his visitor. "Some fool I'd never seen fired at random. A lot of them got scared. They all got scared at me. Curse them!—I say—I want more to eat than this, Kemp."

655

"I'll see what there is to eat downstairs," said Kemp. "Not much, I'm afraid."

After he had done eating, and he made a heavy meal, the Invisible Man demanded a cigar. He bit the end savagely before Kemp could find a knife, and cursed when the outer leaf loosened. It was strange to see him smoking; his mouth, and throat, pharynx and nares, became visible as a sort of whirling smoke cast.

"This blessed gift of smoking!" he said, and puffed vigorously. "I'm lucky to have fallen upon you, Kemp. You must help me. Fancy tumbling on you just now! I'm in a devilish scrape—I've been mad, I think. The things I have been through! But we will do things yet. Let me tell you—"

He helped himself to more whiskey and soda. Kemp got up, looked about him, and fetched a glass from his spare room. "It's wild—but I suppose I may drink."

"You haven't changed much, Kemp, these dozen years. You fair men don't. Cool and methodical—after the first collapse. I must tell you. We will work together!"

660

"But how was it all done?" said Kemp, "and how did you get like this?"

"For God's sake, let me smoke in peace for a little while! And then I will begin to tell you."

But the story was not told that night. The Invisible Man's wrist was growing painful; he was feverish, exhausted, and his mind came round to brood upon his chase down the hill and the struggle about the inn. He spoke in fragments of Marvel, he

smoked faster, his voice grew angry. Kemp tried to gather what he could.

"He was afraid of me, I could see that he was afraid of me," said the Invisible Man many times over. "He meant to give me the slip—he was always casting about! What a fool I was!

"The cur!

665

"I should have killed him!"

"Where did you get the money?" asked Kemp, abruptly.

The Invisible Man was silent for a space. "I can't tell you to-night," he said.

He groaned suddenly and leant forward, supporting his invisible head on invisible hands. "Kemp," he said, "I've had no sleep for near three days, except a couple of dozes of an hour or so. I must sleep soon."

"Well, have my room—have this room."

670

"But how can I sleep? If I sleep—he will get away. Ugh! What does it matter?"

"What's the shot wound?" asked Kemp, abruptly.

"Nothing—scratch and blood. Oh, God! How I want sleep!"

"Why not?"

The Invisible Man appeared to be regarding Kemp. "Because I've a particular objection to being caught by my fellow-men," he said slowly.

675

Kemp started.

"Fool that I am!" said the Invisible Man, striking the table smartly. "I've put the idea into your head."

XVIII. The Invisible Man Sleeps

Exhausted and wounded as the Invisible Man was, he refused to accept Kemp's word that his freedom should be respected. He examined the two windows of the bedroom, drew up the blinds and opened the sashes, to confirm Kemp's statement that a retreat by them would be possible. Outside the night was very quiet and still, and the new moon was setting over the down. Then he examined the keys of the bedroom and the two dressing-room doors, to satisfy himself that these also could be made an

assurance of freedom. Finally he expressed himself satisfied. He stood on the hearth rug and Kemp heard the sound of a yawn.

"I'm sorry," said the Invisible Man, "if I cannot tell you all that I have done to-night. But I am worn out. It's grotesque, no doubt. It's horrible! But believe me, Kemp, in spite of your arguments of this morning, it is quite a possible thing. I have made a discovery. I meant to keep it to myself. I can't. I must have a partner. And you.... We can do such things ... But to-morrow. Now, Kemp, I feel as though I must sleep or perish."

Kemp stood in the middle of the room staring at the headless garment. "I suppose I must leave you," he said. "It's—incredible. Three things happening like this, overturning all my preconceptions—would make me insane. But it's real! Is there anything more that I can get you?"

"Only bid me good-night," said Griffin.

"Good-night," said Kemp, and shook an invisible hand. He walked sideways to the door. Suddenly the dressing-gown walked quickly towards him. "Understand me!" said the dressing-gown. "No attempts to hamper me, or capture me! Or—"

Kemp's face changed a little. "I thought I gave you my word," he said.

Kemp closed the door softly behind him, and the key was turned upon him forthwith. Then, as he stood with an expression of passive amazement on his face, the rapid feet came to the door of the dressing-room and that too was locked. Kemp slapped his brow with his hand. "Am I dreaming? Has the world gone mad—or have I?"

He laughed, and put his hand to the locked door. "Barred out of my own bedroom, by a flagrant absurdity!" he said.

He walked to the head of the staircase, turned, and stared at the locked doors. "It's fact," he said. He put his fingers to his slightly bruised neck. "Undeniable fact!

"But—"

He shook his head hopelessly, turned, and went downstairs.

He lit the dining-room lamp, got out a cigar, and began pacing the room, ejaculating. Now and then he would argue with himself.

"Invisible!" he said.

680

685

690

"Is there such a thing as an invisible animal? ... In the sea, yes. Thousands—millions. All the larvae, all the little nauplii and tornarias, all the microscopic things, the jelly-fish. In the sea there are more things invisible than visible! I never thought of that before. And in the ponds too! All those little pond-life things—specks of colourless translucent jelly! But in air? No!

"It can't be.

"But after all—why not?

"If a man was made of glass he would still be visible."

His meditation became profound. The bulk of three cigars had passed into the invisible or diffused as a white ash over the carpet before he spoke again. Then it was merely an exclamation. He turned aside, walked out of the room, and went into his little consulting-room and lit the gas there. It was a little room, because Dr. Kemp did not live by practice, and in it were the day's newspapers. The morning's paper lay carelessly opened and thrown aside. He caught it up, turned it over, and read the account of a "Strange Story from Iping" that the mariner at Port Stowe had spelt over so painfully to Mr. Marvel. Kemp read it swiftly.

"Wrapped up!" said Kemp. "Disguised! Hiding it! 'No one seems to have been aware of his misfortune.' What the devil is his game?"

He dropped the paper, and his eye went seeking. "Ah!" he said, and caught up the *St. James' Gazette*, lying folded up as it arrived. "Now we shall get at the truth," said Dr. Kemp. He rent the paper open; a couple of columns confronted him. "An Entire Village in Sussex goes Mad" was the heading.

"Good Heavens!" said Kemp, reading eagerly an incredulous account of the events in Iping, of the previous afternoon, that have already been described. Over the leaf the report in the morning paper had been reprinted.

He re-read it. "Ran through the streets striking right and left. Jaffers insensible. Mr. Huxter in great pain—still unable to describe what he saw. Painful humiliation—vicar. Woman ill with terror! Windows smashed. This extraordinary story probably a fabrication. Too good not to print—*cum grano!*"

He dropped the paper and stared blankly in front of him. "Probably a fabrication!"

He caught up the paper again, and re-read the whole business. "But when does the Tramp come in? Why the deuce was he chasing a tramp?"

He sat down abruptly on the surgical bench. "He's not only invisible," he said, "but he's mad! Homicidal!"

When dawn came to mingle its pallor with the lamp-light and cigar smoke of the dining-room, Kemp was still pacing up and down, trying to grasp the incredible.

He was altogether too excited to sleep. His servants, descending sleepily, discovered him, and were inclined to think that over-study had worked this ill on him. He gave them extraordinary but quite explicit instructions to lay breakfast for two in the belvedere study—and then to confine themselves to the basement and ground-floor. Then he continued to pace the dining-room until the morning's paper came. That had much to say and little to tell, beyond the confirmation of the evening before, and a very badly written account of another remarkable tale from Port Burdock. This gave Kemp the essence of the happenings at the "Jolly Cricketers," and the name of Marvel. "He has made me keep with him twenty-four hours," Marvel testified. Certain minor facts were added to the Iping story, notably the cutting of the village telegraph-wire. But there was nothing to throw light on the connexion between the Invisible Man and the Tramp; for Mr. Marvel had supplied no information about the three books, or the money with which he was lined. The incredulous tone had vanished and a shoal of reporters and inquirers were already at work elaborating the matter.

Kemp read every scrap of the report and sent his housemaid out to get every one of the morning papers she could. These also he devoured.

"He is invisible!" he said. "And it reads like rage growing to mania! The things he may do! The things he may do! And he's upstairs free as the air. What on earth ought I to do?"

"For instance, would it be a breach of faith if—? No."

He went to a little untidy desk in the corner, and began a note. He tore this up half written, and wrote another. He read it over and considered it. Then he took an envelope and addressed it to "Colonel Adye, Port Burdock."

The Invisible Man awoke even as Kemp was doing this. He awoke in an evil temper, and Kemp, alert for every sound, heard his pattering feet rush suddenly across the bedroom overhead. Then a chair was flung over and the wash-hand stand tumbler smashed. Kemp hurried upstairs and rapped eagerly.

XIX. Certain First Principles

"What's the matter?" asked Kemp, when the Invisible Man admitted him. 710

"Nothing," was the answer.

"But, confound it! The smash?"

"Fit of temper," said the Invisible Man. "Forgot this arm; and it's sore."

"You're rather liable to that sort of thing."

"I am." 715

Kemp walked across the room and picked up the fragments of broken glass. "All the facts are out about you," said Kemp, standing up with the glass in his hand; "all that happened in Iping, and down the hill. The world has become aware of its invisible citizen. But no one knows you are here."

The Invisible Man swore.

"The secret's out. I gather it was a secret. I don't know what your plans are, but of course I'm anxious to help you."

The Invisible Man sat down on the bed.

"There's breakfast upstairs," said Kemp, speaking as easily as possible, and he was delighted to find his strange guest rose willingly. Kemp led the way up the narrow staircase to the belvedere. 720

"Before we can do anything else," said Kemp, "I must understand a little more about this invisibility of yours." He had sat down, after one nervous glance out of the window, with the air of a man who has talking to do. His doubts of the sanity of the

entire business flashed and vanished again as he looked across to where Griffin sat at the breakfast-table—a headless, handless dressing-gown, wiping unseen lips on a miraculously held serviette.

"It's simple enough—and credible enough," said Griffin, putting the serviette aside and leaning the invisible head on an invisible hand.

"No doubt, to you, but—" Kemp laughed.

"Well, yes; to me it seemed wonderful at first, no doubt. But now, great God! ... But we will do great things yet! I came on the stuff first at Chesilstowe."

"Chesilstowe?"

725

"I went there after I left London. You know I dropped medicine and took up physics? No; well, I did. *Light* fascinated me."

"Ah!"

"Optical density! The whole subject is a network of riddles—a network with solutions glimmering elusively through. And being but two-and-twenty and full of enthusiasm, I said, 'I will devote my life to this. This is worth while.' You know what fools we are at two-and-twenty?"

"Fools then or fools now," said Kemp.

"As though knowing could be any satisfaction to a man!"

730

"But I went to work—like a slave. And I had hardly worked and thought about the matter six months before light came through one of the meshes suddenly—blindingly! I found a general principle of pigments and refraction—a formula, a geometrical expression involving four dimensions. Fools, common men, even common mathematicians, do not know anything of what some general expression may mean to the student of molecular physics. In the books—the books that tramp has hidden—there are marvels, miracles! But this was not a method, it was an idea, that might lead to a method by which it would be possible, without changing any other property of matter—except, in some instances colours—to lower the refractive index of a substance, solid or liquid, to that of air—so far as all practical purposes are concerned."

"Phew!" said Kemp. "That's odd! But still I don't see quite ... I can understand that thereby you could spoil a valuable stone, but personal invisibility is a far cry."

"Precisely," said Griffin. "But consider, visibility depends on the action of the visible bodies on light. Either a body absorbs light, or it reflects or refracts it, or does all these things. If it neither reflects nor refracts nor absorbs light, it cannot of itself be visible. You see an opaque red box, for instance, because the colour absorbs some of the light and reflects the rest, all the red part of the light, to you. If it did not absorb any particular part of the light, but reflected it all, then it would be a shining white box. Silver! A diamond box would neither absorb much of the light nor reflect much from the general surface, but just here and there where the surfaces were favourable the light would be reflected and refracted, so that you would get a brilliant appearance of flashing reflections and translucencies—a sort of skeleton of light. A glass box would not be so brilliant, nor so clearly visible, as a diamond box, because there would be less refraction and reflection. See that? From certain points of view you would see quite clearly through it. Some kinds of glass would be more visible than others, a box of flint glass would be brighter than a box of ordinary window glass. A box of very thin common glass would be hard to see in a bad light, because it would absorb hardly any light and refract and reflect very little. And if you put a sheet of common white glass in water, still more if you put it in some denser liquid than water, it would vanish almost altogether, because light passing from water to glass is only slightly refracted or reflected or indeed affected in any way. It is almost as invisible as a jet of coal gas or hydrogen is in air. And for precisely the same reason!"

"Yes," said Kemp, "that is pretty plain sailing."

"And here is another fact you will know to be true. If a sheet of glass is smashed, Kemp, and beaten into a powder, it becomes much more visible while it is in the air; it becomes at last an opaque white powder. This is because the powdering multiplies the surfaces of the glass at which refraction and reflection occur. In the sheet of glass there are only two surfaces; in the powder the

light is reflected or refracted by each grain it passes through, and very little gets right through the powder. But if the white powdered glass is put into water, it forthwith vanishes. The powdered glass and water have much the same refractive index; that is, the light undergoes very little refraction or reflection in passing from one to the other.

"You make the glass invisible by putting it into a liquid of nearly the same refractive index; a transparent thing becomes invisible if it is put in any medium of almost the same refractive index. And if you will consider only a second, you will see also that the powder of glass might be made to vanish in air, if its refractive index could be made the same as that of air; for then there would be no refraction or reflection as the light passed from glass to air."

"Yes, yes," said Kemp. "But a man's not powdered glass!"

"No," said Griffin. "He's more transparent!"

"Nonsense!"

"That from a doctor! How one forgets! Have you already forgotten your physics, in ten years? Just think of all the things that are transparent and seem not to be so. Paper, for instance, is made up of transparent fibres, and it is white and opaque only for the same reason that a powder of glass is white and opaque. Oil white paper, fill up the interstices between the particles with oil so that there is no longer refraction or reflection except at the surfaces, and it becomes as transparent as glass. And not only paper, but cotton fibre, linen fibre, wool fibre, woody fibre, and *bone*, Kemp, *flesh*, Kemp, *hair*, Kemp, *nails* and *nerves*, Kemp, in fact the whole fabric of a man except the red of his blood and the black pigment of hair, are all made up of transparent, colourless tissue. So little suffices to make us visible one to the other. For the most part the fibres of a living creature are no more opaque than water."

"Great Heavens!" cried Kemp. "Of course, of course! I was thinking only last night of the sea larvae and all jelly-fish!"

"Now you have me! And all that I knew and had in mind a year after I left London—six years ago. But I kept it to myself. I had to do my work under frightful disadvantages. Oliver, my professor,

was a scientific bounder, a journalist by instinct, a thief of ideas—he was always prying! And you know the knavish system of the scientific world. I simply would not publish, and let him share my credit. I went on working; I got nearer and nearer making my formula into an experiment, a reality. I told no living soul, because I meant to flash my work upon the world with crushing effect and become famous at a blow. I took up the question of pigments to fill up certain gaps. And suddenly, not by design but by accident, I made a discovery in physiology."

"Yes?"

"You know the red colouring matter of blood; it can be made white—colourless—and remain with all the functions it has now!"

Kemp gave a cry of incredulous amazement.

745

The Invisible Man rose and began pacing the little study. "You may well exclaim. I remember that night. It was late at night—in the daytime one was bothered with the gaping, silly students—and I worked then sometimes till dawn. It came suddenly, splendid and complete in my mind. I was alone; the laboratory was still, with the tall lights burning brightly and silently. In all my great moments I have been alone. 'One could make an animal—a tissue—transparent! One could make it invisible! All except the pigments—I could be invisible!' I said, suddenly realising what it meant to be an albino with such knowledge. It was overwhelming. I left the filtering I was doing, and went and stared out of the great window at the stars. 'I could be invisible!' I repeated.

"To do such a thing would be to transcend magic. And I beheld, unclouded by doubt, a magnificent vision of all that invisibility might mean to a man—the mystery, the power, the freedom. Drawbacks I saw none. You have only to think! And I, a shabby, poverty-struck, hemmed-in demonstrator, teaching fools in a provincial college, might suddenly become—this. I ask you, Kemp if *you* ... Anyone, I tell you, would have flung himself upon that research. And I worked three years, and every mountain of difficulty I toiled over showed another from its summit. The infinite details! And the exasperation! A professor, a provincial

professor, always prying. 'When are you going to publish this work of yours?' was his everlasting question. And the students, the cramped means! Three years I had of it—

"And after three years of secrecy and exasperation, I found that to complete it was impossible—impossible."

"How?" asked Kemp.

"Money," said the Invisible Man, and went again to stare out of the window. 750

He turned around abruptly. "I robbed the old man—robbed my father.

"The money was not his, and he shot himself."

XX. At the House in Great Portland Street

For a moment Kemp sat in silence, staring at the back of the headless figure at the window. Then he started, struck by a thought, rose, took the Invisible Man's arm, and turned him away from the outlook.

"You are tired," he said, "and while I sit, you walk about. Have my chair."

He placed himself between Griffin and the nearest window. 755

For a space Griffin sat silent, and then he resumed abruptly:

"I had left the Chesilstowe cottage already," he said, "when that happened. It was last December. I had taken a room in London, a large unfurnished room in a big ill-managed lodging-house in a slum near Great Portland Street. The room was soon full of the appliances I had bought with his money; the work was going on steadily, successfully, drawing near an end. I was like a man emerging from a thicket, and suddenly coming on some unmeaning tragedy. I went to bury him. My mind was still on this research, and I did not lift a finger to save his character. I remember the funeral, the cheap hearse, the scant ceremony, the windy frost-bitten hillside, and the old college friend of his who read the service over him—a shabby, black, bent old man with a snivelling cold.

"I remember walking back to the empty house, through the place that had once been a village and was now patched and

tinkered by the jerry builders into the ugly likeness of a town. Every way the roads ran out at last into the desecrated fields and ended in rubble heaps and rank wet weeds. I remember myself as a gaunt black figure, going along the slippery, shiny pavement, and the strange sense of detachment I felt from the squalid respectability, the sordid commercialism of the place.

"I did not feel a bit sorry for my father. He seemed to me to be the victim of his own foolish sentimentality. The current cant required my attendance at his funeral, but it was really not my affair.

"But going along the High Street, my old life came back to me for a space, for I met the girl I had known ten years since. Our eyes met.

"Something moved me to turn back and talk to her. She was a very ordinary person.

"It was all like a dream, that visit to the old places. I did not feel then that I was lonely, that I had come out from the world into a desolate place. I appreciated my loss of sympathy, but I put it down to the general inanity of things. Re-entering my room seemed like the recovery of reality. There were the things I knew and loved. There stood the apparatus, the experiments arranged and waiting. And now there was scarcely a difficulty left, beyond the planning of details.

"I will tell you, Kemp, sooner or later, all the complicated processes. We need not go into that now. For the most part, saving certain gaps I chose to remember, they are written in cypher in those books that tramp has hidden. We must hunt him down. We must get those books again. But the essential phase was to place the transparent object whose refractive index was to be lowered between two radiating centres of a sort of ethereal vibration, of which I will tell you more fully later. No, not those Röntgen vibrations—I don't know that these others of mine have been described. Yet they are obvious enough. I needed two little dynamos, and these I worked with a cheap gas engine. My first experiment was with a bit of white wool fabric. It was the strangest thing in the world to see it in the flicker of the flashes

soft and white, and then to watch it fade like a wreath of smoke and vanish.

"I could scarcely believe I had done it. I put my hand into the emptiness, and there was the thing as solid as ever. I felt it awkwardly, and threw it on the floor. I had a little trouble finding it again.

"And then came a curious experience. I heard a miaow behind me, and turning, saw a lean white cat, very dirty, on the cistern cover outside the window. A thought came into my head. 'Everything ready for you,' I said, and went to the window, opened it, and called softly. She came in, purring—the poor beast was starving—and I gave her some milk. All my food was in a cupboard in the corner of the room. After that she went smelling round the room, evidently with the idea of making herself at home. The invisible rag upset her a bit; you should have seen her spit at it! But I made her comfortable on the pillow of my truckle-bed. And I gave her butter to get her to wash."

765

"And you processed her?"

"I processed her. But giving drugs to a cat is no joke, Kemp! And the process failed."

"Failed!"

"In two particulars. These were the claws and the pigment stuff, what is it?—at the back of the eye in a cat. You know?"

"*Tapetum*."

770

"Yes, the *tapetum*. It didn't go. After I'd given the stuff to bleach the blood and done certain other things to her, I gave the beast opium, and put her and the pillow she was sleeping on, on the apparatus. And after all the rest had faded and vanished, there remained two little ghosts of her eyes."

"Odd!"

"I can't explain it. She was bandaged and clamped, of course—so I had her safe; but she woke while she was still misty, and miaowed dismally, and someone came knocking. It was an old woman from downstairs, who suspected me of vivisecting—a drink-sodden old creature, with only a white cat to care for in all the world. I whipped out some chloroform, applied it, and answered the door. 'Did I hear a cat?' she asked. 'My cat?' 'Not

here,' said I, very politely. She was a little doubtful and tried to peer past me into the room; strange enough to her no doubt—bare walls, uncurtained windows, truckle-bed, with the gas engine vibrating, and the seethe of the radiant points, and that faint ghastly stinging of chloroform in the air. She had to be satisfied at last and went away again."

"How long did it take?" asked Kemp.

"Three or four hours—the cat. The bones and sinews and the fat were the last to go, and the tips of the coloured hairs. And, as I say, the back part of the eye, tough, iridescent stuff it is, wouldn't go at all.

775

"It was night outside long before the business was over, and nothing was to be seen but the dim eyes and the claws. I stopped the gas engine, felt for and stroked the beast, which was still insensible, and then, being tired, left it sleeping on the invisible pillow and went to bed. I found it hard to sleep. I lay awake thinking weak aimless stuff, going over the experiment over and over again, or dreaming feverishly of things growing misty and vanishing about me, until everything, the ground I stood on, vanished, and so I came to that sickly falling nightmare one gets. About two, the cat began miaowing about the room. I tried to hush it by talking to it, and then I decided to turn it out. I remember the shock I had when striking a light—there were just the round eyes shining green—and nothing round them. I would have given it milk, but I hadn't any. It wouldn't be quiet, it just sat down and miaowed at the door. I tried to catch it, with an idea of putting it out of the window, but it wouldn't be caught, it vanished. Then it began miaowing in different parts of the room. At last I opened the window and made a bustle. I suppose it went out at last. I never saw any more of it.

"Then—Heaven knows why—I fell thinking of my father's funeral again, and the dismal windy hillside, until the day had come. I found sleeping was hopeless, and, locking my door after me, wandered out into the morning streets."

"You don't mean to say there's an invisible cat at large!" said Kemp.

"If it hasn't been killed," said the Invisible Man. "Why not?"

"Why not?" said Kemp. "I didn't mean to interrupt."

"It's very probably been killed," said the Invisible Man. "It was alive four days after, I know, and down a grating in Great Titchfield Street; because I saw a crowd round the place, trying to see whence the miaowing came."

He was silent for the best part of a minute. Then he resumed abruptly:

"I remember that morning before the change very vividly. I must have gone up Great Portland Street. I remember the barracks in Albany Street, and the horse soldiers coming out, and at last I found the summit of Primrose Hill. It was a sunny day in January—one of those sunny, frosty days that came before the snow this year. My weary brain tried to formulate the position, to plot out a plan of action.

"I was surprised to find, now that my prize was within my grasp, how inconclusive its attainment seemed. As a matter of fact I was worked out; the intense stress of nearly four years' continuous work left me incapable of any strength of feeling. I was apathetic, and I tried in vain to recover the enthusiasm of my first inquiries, the passion of discovery that had enabled me to compass even the downfall of my father's grey hairs. Nothing seemed to matter. I saw pretty clearly this was a transient mood, due to overwork and want of sleep, and that either by drugs or rest it would be possible to recover my energies.

"All I could think clearly was that the thing had to be carried through; the fixed idea still ruled me. And soon, for the money I had was almost exhausted. I looked about me at the hillside, with children playing and girls watching them, and tried to think of all the fantastic advantages an invisible man would have in the world. After a time I crawled home, took some food and a strong dose of strychnine, and went to sleep in my clothes on my unmade bed. Strychnine is a grand tonic, Kemp, to take the flabbiness out of a man."

"It's the devil," said Kemp. "It's the palaeolithic in a bottle."

"I awoke vastly invigorated and rather irritable. You know?"

"I know the stuff."

"And there was someone rapping at the door. It was my landlord with threats and inquiries, an old Polish Jew in a long grey coat and greasy slippers. I had been tormenting a cat in the night, he was sure—the old woman's tongue had been busy. He insisted on knowing all about it. The laws in this country against vivisection were very severe—he might be liable. I denied the cat. Then the vibration of the little gas engine could be felt all over the house, he said. That was true, certainly. He edged round me into the room, peering about over his German-silver spectacles, and a sudden dread came into my mind that he might carry away something of my secret. I tried to keep between him and the concentrating apparatus I had arranged, and that only made him more curious. What was I doing? Why was I always alone and secretive? Was it legal? Was it dangerous? I paid nothing but the usual rent. His had always been a most respectable house—in a disreputable neighbourhood. Suddenly my temper gave way. I told him to get out. He began to protest, to jabber of his right of entry. In a moment I had him by the collar; something ripped, and he went spinning out into his own passage. I slammed and locked the door and sat down quivering.

"He made a fuss outside, which I disregarded, and after a time he went away.

790

"But this brought matters to a crisis. I did not know what he would do, nor even what he had the power to do. To move to fresh apartments would have meant delay; altogether I had barely twenty pounds left in the world, for the most part in a bank—and I could not afford that. Vanish! It was irresistible. Then there would be an inquiry, the sacking of my room.

"At the thought of the possibility of my work being exposed or interrupted at its very climax, I became very angry and active. I hurried out with my three books of notes, my cheque-book—the tramp has them now—and directed them from the nearest Post Office to a house of call for letters and parcels in Great Portland Street. I tried to go out noiselessly. Coming in, I found my landlord going quietly upstairs; he had heard the door close, I suppose. You would have laughed to see him jump aside on the landing as I came tearing after him. He glared at me as I went by

him, and I made the house quiver with the slamming of my door. I heard him come shuffling up to my floor, hesitate, and go down. I set to work upon my preparations forthwith.

"It was all done that evening and night. While I was still sitting under the sickly, drowsy influence of the drugs that decolourise blood, there came a repeated knocking at the door. It ceased, footsteps went away and returned, and the knocking was resumed. There was an attempt to push something under the door—a blue paper. Then in a fit of irritation I rose and went and flung the door wide open. 'Now then?' said I.

"It was my landlord, with a notice of ejectment or something. He held it out to me, saw something odd about my hands, I expect, and lifted his eyes to my face.

"For a moment he gaped. Then he gave a sort of inarticulate cry, dropped candle and writ together, and went blundering down the dark passage to the stairs. I shut the door, locked it, and went to the looking-glass. Then I understood his terror.... My face was white—like white stone.

"But it was all horrible. I had not expected the suffering. A night of racking anguish, sickness and fainting. I set my teeth, though my skin was presently afire, all my body afire; but I lay there like grim death. I understood now how it was the cat had howled until I chloroformed it. Lucky it was I lived alone and untended in my room. There were times when I sobbed and groaned and talked. But I stuck to it.... I became insensible and woke languid in the darkness.

"The pain had passed. I thought I was killing myself and I did not care. I shall never forget that dawn, and the strange horror of seeing that my hands had become as clouded glass, and watching them grow clearer and thinner as the day went by, until at last I could see the sickly disorder of my room through them, though I closed my transparent eyelids. My limbs became glassy, the bones and arteries faded, vanished, and the little white nerves went last. I gritted my teeth and stayed there to the end. At last only the dead tips of the fingernails remained, pallid and white, and the brown stain of some acid upon my fingers.

"I struggled up. At first I was as incapable as a swathed infant—stepping with limbs I could not see. I was weak and very hungry. I went and stared at nothing in my shaving-glass, at nothing save where an attenuated pigment still remained behind the retina of my eyes, fainter than mist. I had to hang on to the table and press my forehead against the glass.

"It was only by a frantic effort of will that I dragged myself back to the apparatus and completed the process.

"I slept during the forenoon, pulling the sheet over my eyes to shut out the light, and about midday I was awakened again by a knocking. My strength had returned. I sat up and listened and heard a whispering. I sprang to my feet and as noiselessly as possible began to detach the connections of my apparatus, and to distribute it about the room, so as to destroy the suggestions of its arrangement. Presently the knocking was renewed and voices called, first my landlord's, and then two others. To gain time I answered them. The invisible rag and pillow came to hand and I opened the window and pitched them out on to the cistern cover. As the window opened, a heavy crash came at the door. Someone had charged it with the idea of smashing the lock. But the stout bolts I had screwed up some days before stopped him. That startled me, made me angry. I began to tremble and do things hurriedly.

"I tossed together some loose paper, straw, packing paper and so forth, in the middle of the room, and turned on the gas. Heavy blows began to rain upon the door. I could not find the matches. I beat my hands on the wall with rage. I turned down the gas again, stepped out of the window on the cistern cover, very softly lowered the sash, and sat down, secure and invisible, but quivering with anger, to watch events. They split a panel, I saw, and in another moment they had broken away the staples of the bolts and stood in the open doorway. It was the landlord and his two step-sons, sturdy young men of three or four and twenty. Behind them fluttered the old hag of a woman from downstairs.

"You may imagine their astonishment to find the room empty. One of the younger men rushed to the window at once, flung it up and stared out. His staring eyes and thick-lipped bearded face

came a foot from my face. I was half minded to hit his silly countenance, but I arrested my doubled fist. He stared right through me. So did the others as they joined him. The old man went and peered under the bed, and then they all made a rush for the cupboard. They had to argue about it at length in Yiddish and Cockney English. They concluded I had not answered them, that their imagination had deceived them. A feeling of extraordinary elation took the place of my anger as I sat outside the window and watched these four people—for the old lady came in, glancing suspiciously about her like a cat, trying to understand the riddle of my behaviour.

"The old man, so far as I could understand his *patois*, agreed with the old lady that I was a vivisectionist. The sons protested in garbled English that I was an electrician, and appealed to the dynamos and radiators. They were all nervous about my arrival, although I found subsequently that they had bolted the front door. The old lady peered into the cupboard and under the bed, and one of the young men pushed up the register and stared up the chimney. One of my fellow lodgers, a coster-monger who shared the opposite room with a butcher, appeared on the landing, and he was called in and told incoherent things.

"It occurred to me that the radiators, if they fell into the hands of some acute well-educated person, would give me away too much, and watching my opportunity, I came into the room and tilted one of the little dynamos off its fellow on which it was standing, and smashed both apparatus. Then, while they were trying to explain the smash, I dodged out of the room and went softly downstairs.

"I went into one of the sitting-rooms and waited until they came down, still speculating and argumentative, all a little disappointed at finding no 'horrors,' and all a little puzzled how they stood legally towards me. Then I slipped up again with a box of matches, fired my heap of paper and rubbish, put the chairs and bedding thereby, led the gas to the affair, by means of an india-rubber tube, and waving a farewell to the room left it for the last time."

"You fired the house!" exclaimed Kemp.

"Fired the house. It was the only way to cover my trail—and no doubt it was insured. I slipped the bolts of the front door quietly and went out into the street. I was invisible, and I was only just beginning to realise the extraordinary advantage my invisibility gave me. My head was already teeming with plans of all the wild and wonderful things I had now impunity to do."

XXI. In Oxford Street

"In going downstairs the first time I found an unexpected difficulty because I could not see my feet; indeed I stumbled twice, and there was an unaccustomed clumsiness in gripping the bolt. By not looking down, however, I managed to walk on the level passably well.

"My mood, I say, was one of exaltation. I felt as a seeing man might do, with padded feet and noiseless clothes, in a city of the blind. I experienced a wild impulse to jest, to startle people, to clap men on the back, fling people's hats astray, and generally revel in my extraordinary advantage.

"But hardly had I emerged upon Great Portland Street, however (my lodging was close to the big draper's shop there), when I heard a clashing concussion and was hit violently behind, and turning saw a man carrying a basket of soda-water syphons, and looking in amazement at his burden. Although the blow had really hurt me, I found something so irresistible in his astonishment that I laughed aloud. 'The devil's in the basket,' I said, and suddenly twisted it out of his hand. He let go incontinently, and I swung the whole weight into the air.

"But a fool of a cabman, standing outside a public house, made a sudden rush for this, and his extending fingers took me with excruciating violence under the ear. I let the whole down with a smash on the cabman, and then, with shouts and the clatter of feet about me, people coming out of shops, vehicles pulling up, I realised what I had done for myself, and cursing my folly, backed against a shop window and prepared to dodge out of the confusion. In a moment I should be wedged into a crowd and inevitably discovered. I pushed by a butcher boy, who luckily did

not turn to see the nothingness that shoved him aside, and dodged behind the cab-man's four-wheeler. I do not know how they settled the business. I hurried straight across the road, which was happily clear, and hardly heeding which way I went, in the fright of detection the incident had given me, plunged into the afternoon throng of Oxford Street.

"I tried to get into the stream of people, but they were too thick for me, and in a moment my heels were being trodden upon. I took to the gutter, the roughness of which I found painful to my feet, and forthwith the shaft of a crawling hansom dug me forcibly under the shoulder blade, reminding me that I was already bruised severely. I staggered out of the way of the cab, avoided a perambulator by a convulsive movement, and found myself behind the hansom. A happy thought saved me, and as this drove slowly along I followed in its immediate wake, trembling and astonished at the turn of my adventure. And not only trembling, but shivering. It was a bright day in January and I was stark naked and the thin slime of mud that covered the road was freezing. Foolish as it seems to me now, I had not reckoned that, transparent or not, I was still amenable to the weather and all its consequences.

"Then suddenly a bright idea came into my head. I ran round and got into the cab. And so, shivering, scared, and sniffing with the first intimations of a cold, and with the bruises in the small of my back growing upon my attention, I drove slowly along Oxford Street and past Tottenham Court Road. My mood was as different from that in which I had sallied forth ten minutes ago as it is possible to imagine. This invisibility indeed! The one thought that possessed me was—how was I to get out of the scrape I was in.

"We crawled past Mudie's, and there a tall woman with five or six yellow-labelled books hailed my cab, and I sprang out just in time to escape her, shaving a railway van narrowly in my flight. I made off up the roadway to Bloomsbury Square, intending to strike north past the Museum and so get into the quiet district. I was now cruelly chilled, and the strangeness of my situation so unnerved me that I whimpered as I ran. At the northward corner

of the Square a little white dog ran out of the Pharmaceutical Society's offices, and incontinently made for me, nose down.

"I had never realised it before, but the nose is to the mind of a dog what the eye is to the mind of a seeing man. Dogs perceive the scent of a man moving as men perceive his vision. This brute began barking and leaping, showing, as it seemed to me, only too plainly that he was aware of me. I crossed Great Russell Street, glancing over my shoulder as I did so, and went some way along Montague Street before I realised what I was running towards.

"Then I became aware of a blare of music, and looking along the street saw a number of people advancing out of Russell Square, red shirts, and the banner of the Salvation Army to the fore. Such a crowd, chanting in the roadway and scoffing on the pavement, I could not hope to penetrate, and dreading to go back and farther from home again, and deciding on the spur of the moment, I ran up the white steps of a house facing the museum railings, and stood there until the crowd should have passed. Happily the dog stopped at the noise of the band too, hesitated, and turned tail, running back to Bloomsbury Square again.

"On came the band, bawling with unconscious irony some hymn about 'When shall we see His face?' and it seemed an interminable time to me before the tide of the crowd washed along the pavement by me. Thud, thud, thud, came the drum with a vibrating resonance, and for the moment I did not notice two urchins stopping at the railings by me. 'See 'em,' said one. 'See what?' said the other. 'Why—them footmarks—bare. Like what you makes in mud.'

"I looked down and saw the youngsters had stopped and were gaping at the muddy footmarks I had left behind me up the newly whitened steps. The passing people elbowed and jostled them, but their confounded intelligence was arrested. 'Thud, thud, thud, when, thud, shall we see, thud, his face, thud, thud.' 'There's a barefoot man gone up them steps, or I don't know nothing,' said one. 'And he ain't never come down again. And his foot was a-bleeding.'

"The thick of the crowd had already passed. 'Looky there, Ted,' quoth the younger of the detectives, with the sharpness of surprise

in his voice, and pointed straight to my feet. I looked down and saw at once the dim suggestion of their outline sketched in splashes of mud. For a moment I was paralysed.

"'Why, that's rum,' said the elder. 'Dashed rum! It's just like the ghost of a foot, ain't it?' He hesitated and advanced with outstretched hand. A man pulled up short to see what he was catching, and then a girl. In another moment he would have touched me. Then I saw what to do. I made a step, the boy started back with an exclamation, and with a rapid movement I swung myself over into the portico of the next house. But the smaller boy was sharp-eyed enough to follow the movement, and before I was well down the steps and upon the pavement, he had recovered from his momentary astonishment and was shouting out that the feet had gone over the wall.

"They rushed round and saw my new footmarks flash into being on the lower step and upon the pavement. 'What's up?' asked someone. 'Feet! Look! Feet running!'

"Everybody in the road, except my three pursuers, was pouring along after the Salvation Army, and this blow not only impeded me but them. There was an eddy of surprise and interrogation. At the cost of bowling over one young fellow I got through, and in another moment I was rushing headlong round the circuit of Russell Square, with six or seven astonished people following my footmarks. There was no time for explanation, or else the whole host would have been after me.

"Twice I doubled round corners, thrice I crossed the road and came back upon my tracks, and then, as my feet grew hot and dry, the damp impressions began to fade. At last I had a breathing space and rubbed my feet clean with my hands, and so got away altogether. The last I saw of the chase was a little group of a dozen people perhaps, studying with infinite perplexity a slowly drying footprint that had resulted from a puddle in Tavistock Square, a footprint as isolated and incomprehensible to them as Crusoe's solitary discovery.

"This running warmed me to a certain extent, and I went on with a better courage through the maze of less frequented roads that runs hereabouts. My back had now become very stiff and

sore, my tonsils were painful from the cabman's fingers, and the skin of my neck had been scratched by his nails; my feet hurt exceedingly and I was lame from a little cut on one foot. I saw in time a blind man approaching me, and fled limping, for I feared his subtle intuitions. Once or twice accidental collisions occurred and I left people amazed, with unaccountable curses ringing in their ears. Then came something silent and quiet against my face, and across the Square fell a thin veil of slowly falling flakes of snow. I had caught a cold, and do as I would I could not avoid an occasional sneeze. And every dog that came in sight, with its pointing nose and curious sniffing, was a terror to me.

"Then came men and boys running, first one and then others, and shouting as they ran. It was a fire. They ran in the direction of my lodging, and looking back down a street I saw a mass of black smoke streaming up above the roofs and telephone wires. It was my lodging burning; my clothes, my apparatus, all my resources indeed, except my cheque-book and the three volumes of memoranda that awaited me in Great Portland Street, were there. Burning! I had burnt my boats—if ever a man did! The place was blazing."

The Invisible Man paused and thought. Kemp glanced nervously out of the window. "Yes?" he said. "Go on."

XXII. In the Emporium

"So last January, with the beginning of a snowstorm in the air about me—and if it settled on me it would betray me!—weary, cold, painful, inexpressibly wretched, and still but half convinced of my invisible quality, I began this new life to which I am committed. I had no refuge, no appliances, no human being in the world in whom I could confide. To have told my secret would have given me away—made a mere show and rarity of me. Nevertheless, I was half-minded to accost some passer-by and throw myself upon his mercy. But I knew too clearly the terror and brutal cruelty my advances would evoke. I made no plans in the street. My sole object was to get shelter from the snow, to get myself covered and warm; then I might hope to plan. But even to

me, an Invisible Man, the rows of London houses stood latched, barred, and bolted impregnably.

"Only one thing could I see clearly before me—the cold exposure and misery of the snowstorm and the night.

"And then I had a brilliant idea. I turned down one of the roads leading from Gower Street to Tottenham Court Road, and found myself outside Omniums, the big establishment where everything is to be bought—you know the place: meat, grocery, linen, furniture, clothing, oil paintings even—a huge meandering collection of shops rather than a shop. I had thought I should find the doors open, but they were closed, and as I stood in the wide entrance a carriage stopped outside, and a man in uniform—you know the kind of personage with 'Omnium' on his cap—flung open the door. I contrived to enter, and walking down the shop—it was a department where they were selling ribbons and gloves and stockings and that kind of thing—came to a more spacious region devoted to picnic baskets and wicker furniture.

"I did not feel safe there, however; people were going to and fro, and I prowled restlessly about until I came upon a huge section in an upper floor containing multitudes of bedsteads, and over these I clambered, and found a resting-place at last among a huge pile of folded flock mattresses. The place was already lit up and agreeably warm, and I decided to remain where I was, keeping a cautious eye on the two or three sets of shopmen and customers who were meandering through the place, until closing time came. Then I should be able, I thought, to rob the place for food and clothing, and disguised, prowl through it and examine its resources, perhaps sleep on some of the bedding. That seemed an acceptable plan. My idea was to procure clothing to make myself a muffled but acceptable figure, to get money, and then to recover my books and parcels where they awaited me, take a lodging somewhere and elaborate plans for the complete realisation of the advantages my invisibility gave me (as I still imagined) over my fellow-men.

"Closing time arrived quickly enough. It could not have been more than an hour after I took up my position on the mattresses before I noticed the blinds of the windows being drawn, and

customers being marched doorward. And then a number of brisk young men began with remarkable alacrity to tidy up the goods that remained disturbed. I left my lair as the crowds diminished, and prowled cautiously out into the less desolate parts of the shop. I was really surprised to observe how rapidly the young men and women whipped away the goods displayed for sale during the day. All the boxes of goods, the hanging fabrics, the festoons of lace, the boxes of sweets in the grocery section, the displays of this and that, were being whipped down, folded up, slapped into tidy receptacles, and everything that could not be taken down and put away had sheets of some coarse stuff like sacking flung over them. Finally all the chairs were turned up on to the counters, leaving the floor clear. Directly each of these young people had done, he or she made promptly for the door with such an expression of animation as I have rarely observed in a shop assistant before. Then came a lot of youngsters scattering sawdust and carrying pails and brooms. I had to dodge to get out of the way, and as it was, my ankle got stung with the sawdust. For some time, wandering through the swathed and darkened departments, I could hear the brooms at work. And at last a good hour or more after the shop had been closed, came a noise of locking doors. Silence came upon the place, and I found myself wandering through the vast and intricate shops, galleries, show-rooms of the place, alone. It was very still; in one place I remember passing near one of the Tottenham Court Road entrances and listening to the tapping of boot-heels of the passers-by.

"My first visit was to the place where I had seen stockings and gloves for sale. It was dark, and I had the devil of a hunt after matches, which I found at last in the drawer of the little cash desk. Then I had to get a candle. I had to tear down wrappings and ransack a number of boxes and drawers, but at last I managed to turn out what I sought; the box label called them lambswool pants, and lambswool vests. Then socks, a thick comforter, and then I went to the clothing place and got trousers, a lounge jacket, an overcoat and a slouch hat—a clerical sort of hat with the brim

turned down. I began to feel a human being again, and my next thought was food.

"Upstairs was a refreshment department, and there I got cold meat. There was coffee still in the urn, and I lit the gas and warmed it up again, and altogether I did not do badly. Afterwards, prowling through the place in search of blankets—I had to put up at last with a heap of down quilts—I came upon a grocery section with a lot of chocolate and candied fruits, more than was good for me indeed—and some white burgundy. And near that was a toy department, and I had a brilliant idea. I found some artificial noses—dummy noses, you know, and I thought of dark spectacles. But Omniums had no optical department. My nose had been a difficulty indeed—I had thought of paint. But the discovery set my mind running on wigs and masks and the like. Finally I went to sleep in a heap of down quilts, very warm and comfortable.

"My last thoughts before sleeping were the most agreeable I had had since the change. I was in a state of physical serenity, and that was reflected in my mind. I thought that I should be able to slip out unobserved in the morning with my clothes upon me, muffling my face with a white wrapper I had taken, purchase, with the money I had taken, spectacles and so forth, and so complete my disguise. I lapsed into disorderly dreams of all the fantastic things that had happened during the last few days. I saw the ugly little Jew of a landlord vociferating in his rooms; I saw his two sons marvelling, and the wrinkled old woman's gnarled face as she asked for her cat. I experienced again the strange sensation of seeing the cloth disappear, and so I came round to the windy hillside and the sniffing old clergyman mumbling 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' at my father's open grave.

"'You also,' said a voice, and suddenly I was being forced towards the grave. I struggled, shouted, appealed to the mourners, but they continued stonily following the service; the old clergyman, too, never faltered droning and sniffing through the ritual. I realised I was invisible and inaudible, that overwhelming forces had their grip on me. I struggled in vain, I was forced over the brink, the coffin rang hollow as I fell upon it, and the gravel

came flying after me in spadefuls. Nobody heeded me, nobody was aware of me. I made convulsive struggles and awoke.

"The pale London dawn had come, the place was full of a chilly grey light that filtered round the edges of the window blinds. I sat up, and for a time I could not think where this ample apartment, with its counters, its piles of rolled stuff, its heap of quilts and cushions, its iron pillars, might be. Then, as recollection came back to me, I heard voices in conversation.

"Then far down the place, in the brighter light of some department which had already raised its blinds, I saw two men approaching. I scrambled to my feet, looking about me for some way of escape, and even as I did so the sound of my movement made them aware of me. I suppose they saw merely a figure moving quietly and quickly away. 'Who's that?' cried one, and 'Stop there!' shouted the other. I dashed around a corner and came full tilt—a faceless figure, mind you!—on a lanky lad of fifteen. He yelled and I bowled him over, rushed past him, turned another corner, and by a happy inspiration threw myself behind a counter. In another moment feet went running past and I heard voices shouting, 'All hands to the doors!' asking what was 'up,' and giving one another advice how to catch me.

"Lying on the ground, I felt scared out of my wits. But—odd as it may seem—it did not occur to me at the moment to take off my clothes as I should have done. I had made up my mind, I suppose, to get away in them, and that ruled me. And then down the vista of the counters came a bawling of 'Here he is!'

"I sprang to my feet, whipped a chair off the counter, and sent it whirling at the fool who had shouted, turned, came into another round a corner, sent him spinning, and rushed up the stairs. He kept his footing, gave a view hallo, and came up the staircase hot after me. Up the staircase were piled a multitude of those bright-coloured pot things—what are they?"

"Art pots," suggested Kemp.

"That's it! Art pots. Well, I turned at the top step and swung round, plucked one out of a pile and smashed it on his silly head as he came at me. The whole pile of pots went headlong, and I heard shouting and footsteps running from all parts. I made a mad

rush for the refreshment place, and there was a man in white like a man cook, who took up the chase. I made one last desperate turn and found myself among lamps and ironmongery. I went behind the counter of this, and waited for my cook, and as he bolted in at the head of the chase, I doubled him up with a lamp. Down he went, and I crouched down behind the counter and began whipping off my clothes as fast as I could. Coat, jacket, trousers, shoes were all right, but a lambswool vest fits a man like a skin. I heard more men coming, my cook was lying quiet on the other side of the counter, stunned or scared speechless, and I had to make another dash for it, like a rabbit hunted out of a wood-pile.

"This way, policeman!" I heard someone shouting. I found myself in my bedstead storeroom again, and at the end of a wilderness of wardrobes. I rushed among them, went flat, got rid of my vest after infinite wriggling, and stood a free man again, panting and scared, as the policeman and three of the shopmen came round the corner. They made a rush for the vest and pants, and collared the trousers. 'He's dropping his plunder,' said one of the young men. 'He *must* be somewhere here.'

"But they did not find me all the same.

"I stood watching them hunt for me for a time, and cursing my ill-luck in losing the clothes. Then I went into the refreshment-room, drank a little milk I found there, and sat down by the fire to consider my position.

"In a little while two assistants came in and began to talk over the business very excitedly and like the fools they were. I heard a magnified account of my depredations, and other speculations as to my whereabouts. Then I fell to scheming again. The insurmountable difficulty of the place, especially now it was alarmed, was to get any plunder out of it. I went down into the warehouse to see if there was any chance of packing and addressing a parcel, but I could not understand the system of checking. About eleven o'clock, the snow having thawed as it fell, and the day being finer and a little warmer than the previous one, I decided that the Emporium was hopeless, and went out again, exasperated at my want of success, with only the vaguest plans of action in my mind."

XXIII. In Drury Lane

"But you begin now to realise," said the Invisible Man, "the full disadvantage of my condition. I had no shelter—no covering—to get clothing was to forego all my advantage, to make myself a strange and terrible thing. I was fasting; for to eat, to fill myself with unassimilated matter, would be to become grotesquely visible again."

"I never thought of that," said Kemp.

"Nor had I. And the snow had warned me of other dangers. I could not go abroad in snow—it would settle on me and expose me. Rain, too, would make me a watery outline, a glistening surface of a man—a bubble. And fog—I should be like a fainter bubble in a fog, a surface, a greasy glimmer of humanity. Moreover, as I went abroad—in the London air—I gathered dirt about my ankles, floating smuts and dust upon my skin. I did not know how long it would be before I should become visible from that cause also. But I saw clearly it could not be for long.

"Not in London at any rate.

"I went into the slums towards Great Portland Street, and found myself at the end of the street in which I had lodged. I did not go that way, because of the crowd halfway down it opposite to the still smoking ruins of the house I had fired. My most immediate problem was to get clothing. What to do with my face puzzled me. Then I saw in one of those little miscellaneous shops—news, sweets, toys, stationery, belated Christmas tomfoolery, and so forth—an array of masks and noses. I realised that problem was solved. In a flash I saw my course. I turned about, no longer aimless, and went—circuitously in order to avoid the busy ways, towards the back streets north of the Strand; for I remembered, though not very distinctly where, that some theatrical costumiers had shops in that district.

"The day was cold, with a nipping wind down the northward running streets. I walked fast to avoid being overtaken. Every crossing was a danger, every passenger a thing to watch alertly. One man as I was about to pass him at the top of Bedford Street, turned upon me abruptly and came into me, sending me into the

road and almost under the wheel of a passing hansom. The verdict of the cab-rank was that he had had some sort of stroke. I was so unnerved by this encounter that I went into Covent Garden Market and sat down for some time in a quiet corner by a stall of violets, panting and trembling. I found I had caught a fresh cold, and had to turn out after a time lest my sneezes should attract attention.

"At last I reached the object of my quest, a dirty, fly-blown little shop in a by-way near Drury Lane, with a window full of tinsel robes, sham jewels, wigs, slippers, dominoes and theatrical photographs. The shop was old-fashioned and low and dark, and the house rose above it for four storeys, dark and dismal. I peered through the window and, seeing no one within, entered. The opening of the door set a clanking bell ringing. I left it open, and walked round a bare costume stand, into a corner behind a cheval glass. For a minute or so no one came. Then I heard heavy feet striding across a room, and a man appeared down the shop.

"My plans were now perfectly definite. I proposed to make my way into the house, secrete myself upstairs, watch my opportunity, and when everything was quiet, rummage out a wig, mask, spectacles, and costume, and go into the world, perhaps a grotesque but still a credible figure. And incidentally of course I could rob the house of any available money.

"The man who had just entered the shop was a short, slight, hunched, beetle-browed man, with long arms and very short bandy legs. Apparently I had interrupted a meal. He stared about the shop with an expression of expectation. This gave way to surprise, and then to anger, as he saw the shop empty. 'Damn the boys!' he said. He went to stare up and down the street. He came in again in a minute, kicked the door to with his foot spitefully, and went muttering back to the house door.

"I came forward to follow him, and at the noise of my movement he stopped dead. I did so too, startled by his quickness of ear. He slammed the house door in my face.

"I stood hesitating. Suddenly I heard his quick footsteps returning, and the door reopened. He stood looking about the shop like one who was still not satisfied. Then, murmuring to

himself, he examined the back of the counter and peered behind some fixtures. Then he stood doubtful. He had left the house door open and I slipped into the inner room.

"It was a queer little room, poorly furnished and with a number of big masks in the corner. On the table was his belated breakfast, and it was a confoundedly exasperating thing for me, Kemp, to have to sniff his coffee and stand watching while he came in and resumed his meal. And his table manners were irritating. Three doors opened into the little room, one going upstairs and one down, but they were all shut. I could not get out of the room while he was there; I could scarcely move because of his alertness, and there was a draught down my back. Twice I strangled a sneeze just in time.

"The spectacular quality of my sensations was curious and novel, but for all that I was heartily tired and angry long before he had done his eating. But at last he made an end and putting his beggarly crockery on the black tin tray upon which he had had his teapot, and gathering all the crumbs up on the mustard stained cloth, he took the whole lot of things after him. His burden prevented his shutting the door behind him—as he would have done; I never saw such a man for shutting doors—and I followed him into a very dirty underground kitchen and scullery. I had the pleasure of seeing him begin to wash up, and then, finding no good in keeping down there, and the brick floor being cold on my feet, I returned upstairs and sat in his chair by the fire. It was burning low, and scarcely thinking, I put on a little coal. The noise of this brought him up at once, and he stood aglare. He peered about the room and was within an ace of touching me. Even after that examination, he scarcely seemed satisfied. He stopped in the doorway and took a final inspection before he went down.

"I waited in the little parlour for an age, and at last he came up and opened the upstairs door. I just managed to get by him.

"On the staircase he stopped suddenly, so that I very nearly blundered into him. He stood looking back right into my face and listening. 'I could have sworn,' he said. His long hairy hand pulled

at his lower lip. His eye went up and down the staircase. Then he grunted and went on up again.

"His hand was on the handle of a door, and then he stopped again with the same puzzled anger on his face. He was becoming aware of the faint sounds of my movements about him. The man must have had diabolically acute hearing. He suddenly flashed into rage. 'If there's anyone in this house—' he cried with an oath, and left the threat unfinished. He put his hand in his pocket, failed to find what he wanted, and rushing past me went blundering noisily and pugnaciously downstairs. But I did not follow him. I sat on the head of the staircase until his return.

"Presently he came up again, still muttering. He opened the door of the room, and before I could enter, slammed it in my face.

"I resolved to explore the house, and spent some time in doing so as noiselessly as possible. The house was very old and tumble-down, damp so that the paper in the attics was peeling from the walls, and rat infested. Some of the door handles were stiff and I was afraid to turn them. Several rooms I did inspect were unfurnished, and others were littered with theatrical lumber, bought second-hand, I judged, from its appearance. In one room next to his I found a lot of old clothes. I began routing among these, and in my eagerness forgot again the evident sharpness of his ears. I heard a stealthy footstep and, looking up just in time, saw him peering in at the tumbled heap and holding an old-fashioned revolver in his hand. I stood perfectly still while he stared about open-mouthed and suspicious. 'It must have been her,' he said slowly. 'Damn her!'

"He shut the door quietly, and immediately I heard the key turn in the lock. Then his footsteps retreated. I realised abruptly that I was locked in. For a minute I did not know what to do. I walked from door to window and back, and stood perplexed. A gust of anger came upon me. But I decided to inspect the clothes before I did anything further, and my first attempt brought down a pile from an upper shelf. This brought him back, more sinister than ever. That time he actually touched me, jumped back with amazement and stood astonished in the middle of the room.

"Presently he calmed a little. 'Rats,' he said in an undertone, fingers on lips. He was evidently a little scared. I edged quietly out of the room, but a plank creaked. Then the infernal little brute started going all over the house, revolver in hand and locking door after door and pocketing the keys. When I realised what he was up to I had a fit of rage—I could hardly control myself sufficiently to watch my opportunity. By this time I knew he was alone in the house, and so I made no more ado, but knocked him on the head."

865

"Knocked him on the head?" exclaimed Kemp.

"Yes—stunned him—as he was going downstairs. Hit him from behind with a stool that stood on the landing. He went downstairs like a bag of old boots."

"But—I say! The common conventions of humanity—"

"Are all very well for common people. But the point was, Kemp, that I had to get out of that house in a disguise without his seeing me. I couldn't think of any other way of doing it. And then I gagged him with a Louis Quatorze vest and tied him up in a sheet."

"Tied him up in a sheet!"

870

"Made a sort of bag of it. It was rather a good idea to keep the idiot scared and quiet, and a devilish hard thing to get out of—head away from the string. My dear Kemp, it's no good your sitting glaring as though I was a murderer. It had to be done. He had his revolver. If once he saw me he would be able to describe me—"

"But still," said Kemp, "in England—to-day. And the man was in his own house, and you were—well, robbing."

"Robbing! Confound it! You'll call me a thief next! Surely, Kemp, you're not fool enough to dance on the old strings. Can't you see my position?"

"And his too," said Kemp.

The Invisible Man stood up sharply. "What do you mean to say?"

875

Kemp's face grew a trifle hard. He was about to speak and checked himself. "I suppose, after all," he said with a sudden

change of manner, "the thing had to be done. You were in a fix. But still—"

"Of course I was in a fix—an infernal fix. And he made me wild too—hunting me about the house, fooling about with his revolver, locking and unlocking doors. He was simply exasperating. You don't blame me, do you? You don't blame me?"

"I never blame anyone," said Kemp. "It's quite out of fashion. What did you do next?"

"I was hungry. Downstairs I found a loaf and some rank cheese—more than sufficient to satisfy my hunger. I took some brandy and water, and then went up past my impromptu bag—he was lying quite still—to the room containing the old clothes. This looked out upon the street, two lace curtains brown with dirt guarding the window. I went and peered out through their interstices. Outside the day was bright—by contrast with the brown shadows of the dismal house in which I found myself, dazzlingly bright. A brisk traffic was going by, fruit carts, a hansom, a four-wheeler with a pile of boxes, a fishmonger's cart. I turned with spots of colour swimming before my eyes to the shadowy fixtures behind me. My excitement was giving place to a clear apprehension of my position again. The room was full of a faint scent of benzoline, used, I suppose, in cleaning the garments.

"I began a systematic search of the place. I should judge the hunchback had been alone in the house for some time. He was a curious person. Everything that could possibly be of service to me I collected in the clothes storeroom, and then I made a deliberate selection. I found a handbag I thought a suitable possession, and some powder, rouge, and sticking-plaster.

"I had thought of painting and powdering my face and all that there was to show of me, in order to render myself visible, but the disadvantage of this lay in the fact that I should require turpentine and other appliances and a considerable amount of time before I could vanish again. Finally I chose a mask of the better type, slightly grotesque but not more so than many human beings, dark glasses, greyish whiskers, and a wig. I could find no underclothing, but that I could buy subsequently, and for the time

I swathed myself in calico dominoes and some white cashmere scarfs. I could find no socks, but the hunchback's boots were rather a loose fit and sufficed. In a desk in the shop were three sovereigns and about thirty shillings' worth of silver, and in a locked cupboard I burst in the inner room were eight pounds in gold. I could go forth into the world again, equipped.

"Then came a curious hesitation. Was my appearance really credible? I tried myself with a little bedroom looking-glass, inspecting myself from every point of view to discover any forgotten chink, but it all seemed sound. I was grotesque to the theatrical pitch, a stage miser, but I was certainly not a physical impossibility. Gathering confidence, I took my looking-glass down into the shop, pulled down the shop blinds, and surveyed myself from every point of view with the help of the cheval glass in the corner.

"I spent some minutes screwing up my courage and then unlocked the shop door and marched out into the street, leaving the little man to get out of his sheet again when he liked. In five minutes a dozen turnings intervened between me and the costumier's shop. No one appeared to notice me very pointedly. My last difficulty seemed overcome."

He stopped again.

"And you troubled no more about the hunchback?" said Kemp.

885

"No," said the Invisible Man. "Nor have I heard what became of him. I suppose he untied himself or kicked himself out. The knots were pretty tight."

He became silent and went to the window and stared out.

"What happened when you went out into the Strand?"

"Oh!—disillusionment again. I thought my troubles were over. Practically I thought I had impunity to do whatever I chose, everything—save to give away my secret. So I thought. Whatever I did, whatever the consequences might be, was nothing to me. I had merely to fling aside my garments and vanish. No person could hold me. I could take my money where I found it. I decided to treat myself to a sumptuous feast, and then put up at a good hotel, and accumulate a new outfit of property. I felt amazingly confident; it's not particularly pleasant recalling that I was an ass.

I went into a place and was already ordering lunch, when it occurred to me that I could not eat unless I exposed my invisible face. I finished ordering the lunch, told the man I should be back in ten minutes, and went out exasperated. I don't know if you have ever been disappointed in your appetite."

"Not quite so badly," said Kemp, "but I can imagine it."

890

"I could have smashed the silly devils. At last, faint with the desire for tasteful food, I went into another place and demanded a private room. 'I am disfigured,' I said. 'Badly.' They looked at me curiously, but of course it was not their affair—and so at last I got my lunch. It was not particularly well served, but it sufficed; and when I had had it, I sat over a cigar, trying to plan my line of action. And outside a snowstorm was beginning.

"The more I thought it over, Kemp, the more I realised what a helpless absurdity an Invisible Man was—in a cold and dirty climate and a crowded civilised city. Before I made this mad experiment I had dreamt of a thousand advantages. That afternoon it seemed all disappointment. I went over the heads of the things a man reckons desirable. No doubt invisibility made it possible to get them, but it made it impossible to enjoy them when they are got. Ambition—what is the good of pride of place when you cannot appear there? What is the good of the love of woman when her name must needs be Delilah? I have no taste for politics, for the blackguardisms of fame, for philanthropy, for sport. What was I to do? And for this I had become a wrapped-up mystery, a swathed and bandaged caricature of a man!"

He paused, and his attitude suggested a roving glance at the window.

"But how did you get to Iping?" said Kemp, anxious to keep his guest busy talking.

"I went there to work. I had one hope. It was a half idea! I have it still. It is a full blown idea now. A way of getting back! Of restoring what I have done. When I choose. When I have done all I mean to do invisibly. And that is what I chiefly want to talk to you about now."

895

"You went straight to Iping?"

"Yes. I had simply to get my three volumes of memoranda and my cheque-book, my luggage and underclothing, order a quantity of chemicals to work out this idea of mine—I will show you the calculations as soon as I get my books—and then I started. Jove! I remember the snowstorm now, and the accursed bother it was to keep the snow from damping my pasteboard nose."

"At the end," said Kemp, "the day before yesterday, when they found you out, you rather—to judge by the papers—"

"I did. Rather. Did I kill that fool of a constable?"

"No," said Kemp. "He's expected to recover."

900

"That's his luck, then. I clean lost my temper, the fools! Why couldn't they leave me alone? And that grocer lout?"

"There are no deaths expected," said Kemp.

"I don't know about that tramp of mine," said the Invisible Man, with an unpleasant laugh.

"By Heaven, Kemp, you don't know what rage *is*! ... To have worked for years, to have planned and plotted, and then to get some fumbling purblind idiot messing across your course! ... Every conceivable sort of silly creature that has ever been created has been sent to cross me.

"If I have much more of it, I shall go wild—I shall start mowing 'em.

905

"As it is, they've made things a thousand times more difficult."

"No doubt it's exasperating," said Kemp, drily.

XXIV. The Plan That Failed

"But now," said Kemp, with a side glance out of the window, "what are we to do?"

He moved nearer his guest as he spoke in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of a sudden glimpse of the three men who were advancing up the hill road—with an intolerable slowness, as it seemed to Kemp.

"What were you planning to do when you were heading for Port Burdock? *Had* you any plan?"

910

"I was going to clear out of the country. But I have altered that plan rather since seeing you. I thought it would be wise, now the

weather is hot and invisibility possible, to make for the South. Especially as my secret was known, and everyone would be on the lookout for a masked and muffled man. You have a line of steamers from here to France. My idea was to get aboard one and run the risks of the passage. Thence I could go by train into Spain, or else get to Algiers. It would not be difficult. There a man might always be invisible—and yet live. And do things. I was using that tramp as a money box and luggage carrier, until I decided how to get my books and things sent over to meet me."

"That's clear."

"And then the filthy brute must needs try and rob me! He *has* hidden my books, Kemp. Hidden my books! If I can lay my hands on him!"

"Best plan to get the books out of him first."

"But where is he? Do you know?"

915

"He's in the town police station, locked up, by his own request, in the strongest cell in the place."

"Cur!" said the Invisible Man.

"But that hangs up your plans a little."

"We must get those books; those books are vital."

"Certainly," said Kemp, a little nervously, wondering if he heard footsteps outside. "Certainly we must get those books. But that won't be difficult, if he doesn't know they're for you."

920

"No," said the Invisible Man, and thought.

Kemp tried to think of something to keep the talk going, but the Invisible Man resumed of his own accord.

"Blundering into your house, Kemp," he said, "changes all my plans. For you are a man that can understand. In spite of all that has happened, in spite of this publicity, of the loss of my books, of what I have suffered, there still remain great possibilities, huge possibilities—"

"You have told no one I am here?" he asked abruptly.

Kemp hesitated. "That was implied," he said.

925

"No one?" insisted Griffin.

"Not a soul."

"Ah! Now—" The Invisible Man stood up, and sticking his arms akimbo began to pace the study.

"I made a mistake, Kemp, a huge mistake, in carrying this thing through alone. I have wasted strength, time, opportunities. Alone—it is wonderful how little a man can do alone! To rob a little, to hurt a little, and there is the end.

"What I want, Kemp, is a goal-keeper, a helper, and a hiding-place, an arrangement whereby I can sleep and eat and rest in peace, and unsuspected. I must have a confederate. With a confederate, with food and rest—a thousand things are possible.

930

"Hitherto I have gone on vague lines. We have to consider all that invisibility means, all that it does not mean. It means little advantage for eavesdropping and so forth—one makes sounds. It's of little help—a little help perhaps—in housebreaking and so forth. Once you've caught me you could easily imprison me. But on the other hand I am hard to catch. This invisibility, in fact, is only good in two cases: It's useful in getting away, it's useful in approaching. It's particularly useful, therefore, in killing. I can walk round a man, whatever weapon he has, choose my point, strike as I like. Dodge as I like. Escape as I like."

Kemp's hand went to his moustache. Was that a movement downstairs?

"And it is killing we must do, Kemp."

"It is killing we must do," repeated Kemp. "I'm listening to your plan, Griffin, but I'm not agreeing, mind. *Why* killing?"

"Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying. The point is, they know there is an Invisible Man—as well as we know there is an Invisible Man. And that Invisible Man, Kemp, must now establish a Reign of Terror. Yes; no doubt it's startling. But I mean it. A Reign of Terror. He must take some town like your Burdock and terrify and dominate it. He must issue his orders. He can do that in a thousand ways—scraps of paper thrust under doors would suffice. And all who disobey his orders he must kill, and kill all who would defend them."

935

"Humph!" said Kemp, no longer listening to Griffin but to the sound of his front door opening and closing.

"It seems to me, Griffin," he said, to cover his wandering attention, "that your confederate would be in a difficult position."

"No one would know he was a confederate," said the Invisible Man, eagerly. And then suddenly, "Hush! What's that downstairs?"

"Nothing," said Kemp, and suddenly began to speak loud and fast. "I don't agree to this, Griffin," he said. "Understand me, I don't agree to this. Why dream of playing a game against the race? How can you hope to gain happiness? Don't be a lone wolf. Publish your results; take the world—take the nation at least—into your confidence. Think what you might do with a million helpers—"

The Invisible Man interrupted—arm extended. "There are footsteps coming upstairs," he said in a low voice.

"Nonsense," said Kemp.

"Let me see," said the Invisible Man, and advanced, arm extended, to the door.

And then things happened very swiftly. Kemp hesitated for a second and then moved to intercept him. The Invisible Man started and stood still. "Traitor!" cried the Voice, and suddenly the dressing-gown opened, and sitting down the Unseen began to disrobe. Kemp made three swift steps to the door, and forthwith the Invisible Man—his legs had vanished—sprang to his feet with a shout. Kemp flung the door open.

As it opened, there came a sound of hurrying feet downstairs and voices.

With a quick movement Kemp thrust the Invisible Man back, sprang aside, and slammed the door. The key was outside and ready. In another moment Griffin would have been alone in the belvedere study, a prisoner. Save for one little thing. The key had been slipped in hastily that morning. As Kemp slammed the door it fell noisily upon the carpet.

Kemp's face became white. He tried to grip the door handle with both hands. For a moment he stood lugging. Then the door gave six inches. But he got it closed again. The second time it was jerked a foot wide, and the dressing-gown came wedging itself into the opening. His throat was gripped by invisible fingers, and he left his hold on the handle to defend himself. He was forced

940

945

back, tripped and pitched heavily into the corner of the landing. The empty dressing-gown was flung on the top of him.

Halfway up the staircase was Colonel Adye, the recipient of Kemp's letter, the chief of the Burdock police. He was staring aghast at the sudden appearance of Kemp, followed by the extraordinary sight of clothing tossing empty in the air. He saw Kemp felled, and struggling to his feet. He saw him rush forward, and go down again, felled like an ox.

Then suddenly he was struck violently. By nothing! A vast weight, it seemed, leapt upon him, and he was hurled headlong down the staircase, with a grip on his throat and a knee in his groin. An invisible foot trod on his back, a ghostly patter passed downstairs, he heard the two police officers in the hall shout and run, and the front door of the house slammed violently.

He rolled over and sat up staring. He saw, staggering down the staircase, Kemp, dusty and disheveled, one side of his face white from a blow, his lip bleeding, and a pink dressing-gown and some underclothing held in his arms.

"My God!" cried Kemp, "the game's up! He's gone!"

950

XXV. The Hunting of the Invisible Man

For a space Kemp was too inarticulate to make Adye understand the swift things that had just happened. They stood on the landing, Kemp speaking swiftly, the grotesque swathings of Griffin still on his arm. But presently Adye began to grasp something of the situation.

"He is mad," said Kemp; "inhuman. He is pure selfishness. He thinks of nothing but his own advantage, his own safety. I have listened to such a story this morning of brutal self-seeking.... He has wounded men. He will kill them unless we can prevent him. He will create a panic. Nothing can stop him. He is going out now—furious!"

"He must be caught," said Adye. "That is certain."

"But how?" cried Kemp, and suddenly became full of ideas. "You must begin at once. You must set every available man to work; you must prevent his leaving this district. Once he gets

away, he may go through the countryside as he wills, killing and maiming. He dreams of a reign of terror! A reign of terror, I tell you. You must set a watch on trains and roads and shipping. The garrison must help. You must wire for help. The only thing that may keep him here is the thought of recovering some books of notes he counts of value. I will tell you of that! There is a man in your police station—Marvel."

"I know," said Adye, "I know. Those books—yes. But the tramp...."

955

"Says he hasn't them. But he thinks the tramp has. And you must prevent him from eating or sleeping; day and night the country must be astir for him. Food must be locked up and secured, all food, so that he will have to break his way to it. The houses everywhere must be barred against him. Heaven send us cold nights and rain! The whole country-side must begin hunting and keep hunting. I tell you, Adye, he is a danger, a disaster; unless he is pinned and secured, it is frightful to think of the things that may happen."

"What else can we do?" said Adye. "I must go down at once and begin organising. But why not come? Yes—you come too! Come, and we must hold a sort of council of war—get Hopps to help—and the railway managers. By Jove! it's urgent. Come along—tell me as we go. What else is there we can do? Put that stuff down."

In another moment Adye was leading the way downstairs. They found the front door open and the policemen standing outside staring at empty air. "He's got away, sir," said one.

"We must go to the central station at once," said Adye. "One of you go on down and get a cab to come up and meet us—quickly. And now, Kemp, what else?"

"Dogs," said Kemp. "Get dogs. They don't see him, but they wind him. Get dogs."

960

"Good," said Adye. "It's not generally known, but the prison officials over at Halstead know a man with bloodhounds. Dogs. What else?"

"Bear in mind," said Kemp, "his food shows. After eating, his food shows until it is assimilated. So that he has to hide after

eating. You must keep on beating. Every thicket, every quiet corner. And put all weapons—all implements that might be weapons, away. He can't carry such things for long. And what he can snatch up and strike men with must be hidden away."

"Good again," said Adye. "We shall have him yet!"

"And on the roads," said Kemp, and hesitated.

"Yes?" said Adye.

965

"Powdered glass," said Kemp. "It's cruel, I know. But think of what he may do!"

Adye drew the air in sharply between his teeth. "It's unsportsmanlike. I don't know. But I'll have powdered glass got ready. If he goes too far...."

"The man's become inhuman, I tell you," said Kemp. "I am as sure he will establish a reign of terror—so soon as he has got over the emotions of this escape—as I am sure I am talking to you. Our only chance is to be ahead. He has cut himself off from his kind. His blood be upon his own head."

XXVI. The Wicksteed Murder

The Invisible Man seems to have rushed out of Kemp's house in a state of blind fury. A little child playing near Kemp's gateway was violently caught up and thrown aside, so that its ankle was broken, and thereafter for some hours the Invisible Man passed out of human perceptions. No one knows where he went nor what he did. But one can imagine him hurrying through the hot June forenoon, up the hill and on to the open downland behind Port Burdock, raging and despairing at his intolerable fate, and sheltering at last, heated and weary, amid the thickets of Hintondean, to piece together again his shattered schemes against his species. That seems the most probable refuge for him, for there it was he re-asserted himself in a grimly tragical manner about two in the afternoon.

One wonders what his state of mind may have been during that time, and what plans he devised. No doubt he was almost ecstatically exasperated by Kemp's treachery, and though we may be able to understand the motives that led to that deceit, we may

970

still imagine and even sympathise a little with the fury the attempted surprise must have occasioned. Perhaps something of the stunned astonishment of his Oxford Street experiences may have returned to him, for he had evidently counted on Kemp's co-operation in his brutal dream of a terrorised world. At any rate he vanished from human ken about midday, and no living witness can tell what he did until about half-past two. It was a fortunate thing, perhaps, for humanity, but for him it was a fatal inaction.

During that time a growing multitude of men scattered over the countryside were busy. In the morning he had still been simply a legend, a terror; in the afternoon, by virtue chiefly of Kemp's drily worded proclamation, he was presented as a tangible antagonist, to be wounded, captured, or overcome, and the countryside began organising itself with inconceivable rapidity. By two o'clock even he might still have removed himself out of the district by getting aboard a train, but after two that became impossible. Every passenger train along the lines on a great parallelogram between Southampton, Manchester, Brighton and Horsham, travelled with locked doors, and the goods traffic was almost entirely suspended. And in a great circle of twenty miles round Port Burdock, men armed with guns and bludgeons were presently setting out in groups of three and four, with dogs, to beat the roads and fields.

Mounted policemen rode along the country lanes, stopping at every cottage and warning the people to lock up their houses, and keep indoors unless they were armed, and all the elementary schools had broken up by three o'clock, and the children, scared and keeping together in groups, were hurrying home. Kemp's proclamation—signed indeed by Adye—was posted over almost the whole district by four or five o'clock in the afternoon. It gave briefly but clearly all the conditions of the struggle, the necessity of keeping the Invisible Man from food and sleep, the necessity for incessant watchfulness and for a prompt attention to any evidence of his movements. And so swift and decided was the action of the authorities, so prompt and universal was the belief in this strange being, that before nightfall an area of several hundred square miles was in a stringent state of siege. And before

nightfall, too, a thrill of horror went through the whole watching nervous countryside. Going from whispering mouth to mouth, swift and certain over the length and breadth of the country, passed the story of the murder of Mr. Wicksteed.

If our supposition that the Invisible Man's refuge was the Hintondean thickets, then we must suppose that in the early afternoon he sallied out again bent upon some project that involved the use of a weapon. We cannot know what the project was, but the evidence that he had the iron rod in hand before he met Wicksteed is to me at least overwhelming.

Of course we can know nothing of the details of that encounter. It occurred on the edge of a gravel pit, not two hundred yards from Lord Burdock's lodge gate. Everything points to a desperate struggle—the trampled ground, the numerous wounds Mr. Wicksteed received, his splintered walking-stick; but why the attack was made, save in a murderous frenzy, it is impossible to imagine. Indeed the theory of madness is almost unavoidable. Mr. Wicksteed was a man of forty-five or forty-six, steward to Lord Burdock, of inoffensive habits and appearance, the very last person in the world to provoke such a terrible antagonist. Against him it would seem the Invisible Man used an iron rod dragged from a broken piece of fence. He stopped this quiet man, going quietly home to his midday meal, attacked him, beat down his feeble defences, broke his arm, felled him, and smashed his head to a jelly.

Of course, he must have dragged this rod out of the fencing before he met his victim—he must have been carrying it ready in his hand. Only two details beyond what has already been stated seem to bear on the matter. One is the circumstance that the gravel pit was not in Mr. Wicksteed's direct path home, but nearly a couple of hundred yards out of his way. The other is the assertion of a little girl to the effect that, going to her afternoon school, she saw the murdered man "trotting" in a peculiar manner across a field towards the gravel pit. Her pantomime of his action suggests a man pursuing something on the ground before him and striking at it ever and again with his walking-stick. She was the last person to see him alive. He passed out of her sight to his

death, the struggle being hidden from her only by a clump of beech trees and a slight depression in the ground.

Now this, to the present writer's mind at least, lifts the murder out of the realm of the absolutely wanton. We may imagine that Griffin had taken the rod as a weapon indeed, but without any deliberate intention of using it in murder. Wicksteed may then have come by and noticed this rod inexplicably moving through the air. Without any thought of the Invisible Man—for Port Burdock is ten miles away—he may have pursued it. It is quite conceivable that he may not even have heard of the Invisible Man. One can then imagine the Invisible Man making off—quietly in order to avoid discovering his presence in the neighbourhood, and Wicksteed, excited and curious, pursuing this unaccountably locomotive object—finally striking at it.

No doubt the Invisible Man could easily have distanced his middle-aged pursuer under ordinary circumstances, but the position in which Wicksteed's body was found suggests that he had the ill luck to drive his quarry into a corner between a drift of stinging nettles and the gravel pit. To those who appreciate the extraordinary irascibility of the Invisible Man, the rest of the encounter will be easy to imagine.

But this is pure hypothesis. The only undeniable facts—for stories of children are often unreliable—are the discovery of Wicksteed's body, done to death, and of the blood-stained iron rod flung among the nettles. The abandonment of the rod by Griffin, suggests that in the emotional excitement of the affair, the purpose for which he took it—if he had a purpose—was abandoned. He was certainly an intensely egotistical and unfeeling man, but the sight of his victim, his first victim, bloody and pitiful at his feet, may have released some long pent fountain of remorse which for a time may have flooded whatever scheme of action he had contrived.

After the murder of Mr. Wicksteed, he would seem to have struck across the country towards the downland. There is a story of a voice heard about sunset by a couple of men in a field near Fern Bottom. It was wailing and laughing, sobbing and groaning, and ever and again it shouted. It must have been queer hearing. It

drove up across the middle of a clover field and died away towards the hills.

That afternoon the Invisible Man must have learnt something of the rapid use Kemp had made of his confidences. He must have found houses locked and secured; he may have loitered about railway stations and prowled about inns, and no doubt he read the proclamations and realised something of the nature of the campaign against him. And as the evening advanced, the fields became dotted here and there with groups of three or four men, and noisy with the yelping of dogs. These men-hunters had particular instructions in the case of an encounter as to the way they should support one another. But he avoided them all. We may understand something of his exasperation, and it could have been none the less because he himself had supplied the information that was being used so remorselessly against him. For that day at least he lost heart; for nearly twenty-four hours, save when he turned on Wicksteed, he was a hunted man. In the night, he must have eaten and slept; for in the morning he was himself again, active, powerful, angry, and malignant, prepared for his last great struggle against the world.

980

XXVII. The Siege of Kemp's House

Kemp read a strange missive, written in pencil on a greasy sheet of paper.

"You have been amazingly energetic and clever," this letter ran, "though what you stand to gain by it I cannot imagine. You are against me. For a whole day you have chased me; you have tried to rob me of a night's rest. But I have had food in spite of you, I have slept in spite of you, and the game is only beginning. The game is only beginning. There is nothing for it, but to start the Terror. This announces the first day of the Terror. Port Burdock is no longer under the Queen, tell your Colonel of Police, and the rest of them; it is under me—the Terror! This is day one of year one of the new epoch—the Epoch of the Invisible Man. I am Invisible Man the First. To begin with the rule will be easy. The first day there will be one execution for the sake of

example—a man named Kemp. Death starts for him to-day. He may lock himself away, hide himself away, get guards about him, put on armour if he likes—Death, the unseen Death, is coming. Let him take precautions; it will impress my people. Death starts from the pillar box by midday. The letter will fall in as the postman comes along, then off! The game begins. Death starts. Help him not, my people, lest Death fall upon you also. To-day Kemp is to die."

Kemp read this letter twice, "It's no hoax," he said. "That's his voice! And he means it."

He turned the folded sheet over and saw on the addressed side of it the postmark Hintondean, and the prosaic detail "2d. to pay."

He got up slowly, leaving his lunch unfinished—the letter had come by the one o'clock post—and went into his study. He rang for his housekeeper, and told her to go round the house at once, examine all the fastenings of the windows, and close all the shutters. He closed the shutters of his study himself. From a locked drawer in his bedroom he took a little revolver, examined it carefully, and put it into the pocket of his lounge jacket. He wrote a number of brief notes, one to Colonel Adye, gave them to his servant to take, with explicit instructions as to her way of leaving the house. "There is no danger," he said, and added a mental reservation, "to you." He remained meditative for a space after doing this, and then returned to his cooling lunch.

He ate with gaps of thought. Finally he struck the table sharply. "We will have him!" he said; "and I am the bait. He will come too far."

He went up to the belvedere, carefully shutting every door after him. "It's a game," he said, "an odd game—but the chances are all for me, Mr. Griffin, in spite of your invisibility. Griffin *contra mundum* ... with a vengeance."

He stood at the window staring at the hot hillside. "He must get food every day—and I don't envy him. Did he really sleep last night? Out in the open somewhere—secure from collisions. I wish we could get some good cold wet weather instead of the heat.

"He may be watching me now."

He went close to the window. Something rapped smartly against the brickwork over the frame, and made him start violently back.

990

"I'm getting nervous," said Kemp. But it was five minutes before he went to the window again. "It must have been a sparrow," he said.

Presently he heard the front-door bell ringing, and hurried downstairs. He unbolted and unlocked the door, examined the chain, put it up, and opened cautiously without showing himself. A familiar voice hailed him. It was Adye.

"Your servant's been assaulted, Kemp," he said round the door.

"What!" exclaimed Kemp.

"Had that note of yours taken away from her. He's close about here. Let me in."

995

Kemp released the chain, and Adye entered through as narrow an opening as possible. He stood in the hall, looking with infinite relief at Kemp refastening the door. "Note was snatched out of her hand. Scared her horribly. She's down at the station. Hysterics. He's close here. What was it about?"

Kemp swore.

"What a fool I was," said Kemp. "I might have known. It's not an hour's walk from Hintondean. Already?"

"What's up?" said Adye.

"Look here!" said Kemp, and led the way into his study. He handed Adye the Invisible Man's letter. Adye read it and whistled softly. "And you—?" said Adye.

1000

"Proposed a trap—like a fool," said Kemp, "and sent my proposal out by a maid servant. To him."

Adye followed Kemp's profanity.

"He'll clear out," said Adye.

"Not he," said Kemp.

A resounding smash of glass came from upstairs. Adye had a silvery glimpse of a little revolver half out of Kemp's pocket. "It's a window, upstairs!" said Kemp, and led the way up. There came a second smash while they were still on the staircase. When they reached the study they found two of the three windows smashed, half the room littered with splintered glass, and one big flint lying

1005

on the writing table. The two men stopped in the doorway, contemplating the wreckage. Kemp swore again, and as he did so the third window went with a snap like a pistol, hung starred for a moment, and collapsed in jagged, shivering triangles into the room.

"What's this for?" said Adye.

"It's a beginning," said Kemp.

"There's no way of climbing up here?"

"Not for a cat," said Kemp.

"No shutters?"

1010

"Not here. All the downstairs rooms—Hullo!"

Smash, and then whack of boards hit hard came from downstairs. "Confound him!" said Kemp. "That must be—yes—it's one of the bedrooms. He's going to do all the house. But he's a fool. The shutters are up, and the glass will fall outside. He'll cut his feet."

Another window proclaimed its destruction. The two men stood on the landing perplexed. "I have it!" said Adye. "Let me have a stick or something, and I'll go down to the station and get the bloodhounds put on. That ought to settle him! They're hard by—not ten minutes—"

Another window went the way of its fellows.

"You haven't a revolver?" asked Adye.

1015

Kemp's hand went to his pocket. Then he hesitated. "I haven't one—at least to spare."

"I'll bring it back," said Adye, "you'll be safe here."

Kemp, ashamed of his momentary lapse from truthfulness, handed him the weapon.

"Now for the door," said Adye.

As they stood hesitating in the hall, they heard one of the first-floor bedroom windows crack and clash. Kemp went to the door and began to slip the bolts as silently as possible. His face was a little paler than usual. "You must step straight out," said Kemp. In another moment Adye was on the doorstep and the bolts were dropping back into the staples. He hesitated for a moment, feeling more comfortable with his back against the door. Then he marched, upright and square, down the steps. He crossed the lawn

1020

and approached the gate. A little breeze seemed to ripple over the grass. Something moved near him. "Stop a bit," said a Voice, and Adye stopped dead and his hand tightened on the revolver.

"Well?" said Adye, white and grim, and every nerve tense.

"Oblige me by going back to the house," said the Voice, as tense and grim as Adye's.

"Sorry," said Adye a little hoarsely, and moistened his lips with his tongue. The Voice was on his left front, he thought. Suppose he were to take his luck with a shot?

"What are you going for?" said the Voice, and there was a quick movement of the two, and a flash of sunlight from the open lip of Adye's pocket.

Adye desisted and thought. "Where I go," he said slowly, "is my own business." The words were still on his lips, when an arm came round his neck, his back felt a knee, and he was sprawling backward. He drew clumsily and fired absurdly, and in another moment he was struck in the mouth and the revolver wrested from his grip. He made a vain clutch at a slippery limb, tried to struggle up and fell back. "Damn!" said Adye. The Voice laughed. "I'd kill you now if it wasn't the waste of a bullet," it said. He saw the revolver in mid-air, six feet off, covering him.

1025

"Well?" said Adye, sitting up.

"Get up," said the Voice.

Adye stood up.

"Attention," said the Voice, and then fiercely, "Don't try any games. Remember I can see your face if you can't see mine. You've got to go back to the house."

"He won't let me in," said Adye.

1030

"That's a pity," said the Invisible Man. "I've got no quarrel with you."

Adye moistened his lips again. He glanced away from the barrel of the revolver and saw the sea far off very blue and dark under the midday sun, the smooth green down, the white cliff of the Head, and the multitudinous town, and suddenly he knew that life was very sweet. His eyes came back to this little metal thing hanging between heaven and earth, six yards away. "What am I to do?" he said sullenly.

"What am *I* to do?" asked the Invisible Man. "You will get help. The only thing is for you to go back."

"I will try. If he lets me in will you promise not to rush the door?"

"I've got no quarrel with you," said the Voice.

1035

Kemp had hurried upstairs after letting Adye out, and now crouching among the broken glass and peering cautiously over the edge of the study window sill, he saw Adye stand parleying with the Unseen. "Why doesn't he fire?" whispered Kemp to himself. Then the revolver moved a little and the glint of the sunlight flashed in Kemp's eyes. He shaded his eyes and tried to see the source of the blinding beam.

"Surely!" he said, "Adye has given up the revolver."

"Promise not to rush the door," Adye was saying. "Don't push a winning game too far. Give a man a chance."

"You go back to the house. I tell you flatly I will not promise anything."

Adye's decision seemed suddenly made. He turned towards the house, walking slowly with his hands behind him. Kemp watched him—puzzled. The revolver vanished, flashed again into sight, vanished again, and became evident on a closer scrutiny as a little dark object following Adye. Then things happened very quickly. Adye leapt backwards, swung around, clutched at this little object, missed it, threw up his hands and fell forward on his face, leaving a little puff of blue in the air. Kemp did not hear the sound of the shot. Adye writhed, raised himself on one arm, fell forward, and lay still.

1040

For a space Kemp remained staring at the quiet carelessness of Adye's attitude. The afternoon was very hot and still, nothing seemed stirring in all the world save a couple of yellow butterflies chasing each other through the shrubbery between the house and the road gate. Adye lay on the lawn near the gate. The blinds of all the villas down the hill-road were drawn, but in one little green summer-house was a white figure, apparently an old man asleep. Kemp scrutinised the surroundings of the house for a glimpse of the revolver, but it had vanished. His eyes came back to Adye. The game was opening well.

Then came a ringing and knocking at the front door, that grew at last tumultuous, but pursuant to Kemp's instructions the servants had locked themselves into their rooms. This was followed by a silence. Kemp sat listening and then began peering cautiously out of the three windows, one after another. He went to the staircase head and stood listening uneasily. He armed himself with his bedroom poker, and went to examine the interior fastenings of the ground-floor windows again. Everything was safe and quiet. He returned to the belvedere. Adye lay motionless over the edge of the gravel just as he had fallen. Coming along the road by the villas were the housemaid and two policemen.

Everything was deadly still. The three people seemed very slow in approaching. He wondered what his antagonist was doing.

He started. There was a smash from below. He hesitated and went downstairs again. Suddenly the house resounded with heavy blows and the splintering of wood. He heard a smash and the destructive clang of the iron fastenings of the shutters. He turned the key and opened the kitchen door. As he did so, the shutters, split and splintering, came flying inward. He stood aghast. The window frame, save for one crossbar, was still intact, but only little teeth of glass remained in the frame. The shutters had been driven in with an axe, and now the axe was descending in sweeping blows upon the window frame and the iron bars defending it. Then suddenly it leapt aside and vanished. He saw the revolver lying on the path outside, and then the little weapon sprang into the air. He dodged back. The revolver cracked just too late, and a splinter from the edge of the closing door flashed over his head. He slammed and locked the door, and as he stood outside he heard Griffin shouting and laughing. Then the blows of the axe with its splitting and smashing consequences, were resumed.

Kemp stood in the passage trying to think. In a moment the Invisible Man would be in the kitchen. This door would not keep him a moment, and then—

1045

A ringing came at the front door again. It would be the policemen. He ran into the hall, put up the chain, and drew the bolts. He made the girl speak before he dropped the chain, and the

three people blundered into the house in a heap, and Kemp slammed the door again.

"The Invisible Man!" said Kemp. "He has a revolver, with two shots—left. He's killed Adye. Shot him anyhow. Didn't you see him on the lawn? He's lying there."

"Who?" said one of the policemen.

"Adye," said Kemp.

"We came in the back way," said the girl.

1050

"What's that smashing?" asked one of the policemen.

"He's in the kitchen—or will be. He has found an axe—"

Suddenly the house was full of the Invisible Man's resounding blows on the kitchen door. The girl stared towards the kitchen, shuddered, and retreated into the dining-room. Kemp tried to explain in broken sentences. They heard the kitchen door give.

"This way," said Kemp, starting into activity, and bundled the policemen into the dining-room doorway.

"Poker," said Kemp, and rushed to the fender. He handed the poker he had carried to the policeman and the dining-room one to the other. He suddenly flung himself backward.

1055

"Whup!" said one policeman, ducked, and caught the axe on his poker. The pistol snapped its penultimate shot and ripped a valuable Sidney Cooper. The second policeman brought his poker down on the little weapon, as one might knock down a wasp, and sent it rattling to the floor.

At the first clash the girl screamed, stood screaming for a moment by the fireplace, and then ran to open the shutters—possibly with an idea of escaping by the shattered window.

The axe receded into the passage, and fell to a position about two feet from the ground. They could hear the Invisible Man breathing. "Stand away, you two," he said. "I want that man Kemp."

"We want you," said the first policeman, making a quick step forward and wiping with his poker at the Voice. The Invisible Man must have started back, and he blundered into the umbrella stand.

Then, as the policeman staggered with the swing of the blow he had aimed, the Invisible Man countered with the axe, the

1060

helmet crumpled like paper, and the blow sent the man spinning to the floor at the head of the kitchen stairs. But the second policeman, aiming behind the axe with his poker, hit something soft that snapped. There was a sharp exclamation of pain and then the axe fell to the ground. The policeman wiped again at vacancy and hit nothing; he put his foot on the axe, and struck again. Then he stood, poker clubbed, listening intent for the slightest movement.

He heard the dining-room window open, and a quick rush of feet within. His companion rolled over and sat up, with the blood running down between his eye and ear. "Where is he?" asked the man on the floor.

"Don't know. I've hit him. He's standing somewhere in the hall. Unless he's slipped past you. Doctor Kemp—sir."

Pause.

"Doctor Kemp," cried the policeman again.

The second policeman began struggling to his feet. He stood up. Suddenly the faint pad of bare feet on the kitchen stairs could be heard. "Yap!" cried the first policeman, and incontinently flung his poker. It smashed a little gas bracket. 1065

He made as if he would pursue the Invisible Man downstairs. Then he thought better of it and stepped into the dining-room.

"Doctor Kemp—" he began, and stopped short.

"Doctor Kemp's a hero," he said, as his companion looked over his shoulder.

The dining-room window was wide open, and neither housemaid nor Kemp was to be seen.

The second policeman's opinion of Kemp was terse and vivid. 1070

XXVIII. The Hunter Hunted

Mr. Heelas, Mr. Kemp's nearest neighbour among the villa holders, was asleep in his summer house when the siege of Kemp's house began. Mr. Heelas was one of the sturdy minority who refused to believe "in all this nonsense" about an Invisible Man. His wife, however, as he was subsequently to be reminded, did. He insisted upon walking about his garden just as if nothing

was the matter, and he went to sleep in the afternoon in accordance with the custom of years. He slept through the smashing of the windows, and then woke up suddenly with a curious persuasion of something wrong. He looked across at Kemp's house, rubbed his eyes and looked again. Then he put his feet to the ground, and sat listening. He said he was damned, but still the strange thing was visible. The house looked as though it had been deserted for weeks—after a violent riot. Every window was broken, and every window, save those of the belvedere study, was blinded by the internal shutters.

"I could have sworn it was all right"—he looked at his watch—"twenty minutes ago."

He became aware of a measured concussion and the clash of glass, far away in the distance. And then, as he sat open-mouthed, came a still more wonderful thing. The shutters of the drawing-room window were flung open violently, and the housemaid in her outdoor hat and garments, appeared struggling in a frantic manner to throw up the sash. Suddenly a man appeared beside her, helping her—Dr. Kemp! In another moment the window was open, and the housemaid was struggling out; she pitched forward and vanished among the shrubs. Mr. Heelas stood up, exclaiming vaguely and vehemently at all these wonderful things. He saw Kemp stand on the sill, spring from the window, and reappear almost instantaneously running along a path in the shrubbery and stooping as he ran, like a man who evades observation. He vanished behind a laburnum, and appeared again clambering over a fence that abutted on the open down. In a second he had tumbled over and was running at a tremendous pace down the slope towards Mr. Heelas.

"Lord!" cried Mr. Heelas, struck with an idea; "it's that Invisible Man brute! It's right, after all!"

With Mr. Heelas to think things like that was to act, and his cook watching him from the top window was amazed to see him come pelting towards the house at a good nine miles an hour. There was a slamming of doors, a ringing of bells, and the voice of Mr. Heelas bellowing like a bull. "Shut the doors, shut the windows, shut everything!—the Invisible Man is coming!"

Instantly the house was full of screams and directions, and scurrying feet. He ran himself to shut the French windows that opened on the veranda; as he did so Kemp's head and shoulders and knee appeared over the edge of the garden fence. In another moment Kemp had ploughed through the asparagus, and was running across the tennis lawn to the house.

"You can't come in," said Mr. Heelas, shutting the bolts. "I'm very sorry if he's after you, but you can't come in!"

Kemp appeared with a face of terror close to the glass, rapping and then shaking frantically at the French window. Then, seeing his efforts were useless, he ran along the veranda, vaulted the end, and went to hammer at the side door. Then he ran round by the side gate to the front of the house, and so into the hill-road. And Mr. Heelas staring from his window—a face of horror—had scarcely witnessed Kemp vanish, ere the asparagus was being trampled this way and that by feet unseen. At that Mr. Heelas fled precipitately upstairs, and the rest of the chase is beyond his purview. But as he passed the staircase window, he heard the side gate slam.

Emerging into the hill-road, Kemp naturally took the downward direction, and so it was he came to run in his own person the very race he had watched with such a critical eye from the belvedere study only four days ago. He ran it well, for a man out of training, and though his face was white and wet, his wits were cool to the last. He ran with wide strides, and wherever a patch of rough ground intervened, wherever there came a patch of raw flints, or a bit of broken glass shone dazzling, he crossed it and left the bare invisible feet that followed to take what line they would.

For the first time in his life Kemp discovered that the hill-road was indescribably vast and desolate, and that the beginnings of the town far below at the hill foot were strangely remote. Never had there been a slower or more painful method of progression than running. All the gaunt villas, sleeping in the afternoon sun, looked locked and barred; no doubt they were locked and barred—by his own orders. But at any rate they might have kept a lookout for an eventuality like this! The town was rising up now,

the sea had dropped out of sight behind it, and people down below were stirring. A tram was just arriving at the hill foot. Beyond that was the police station. Was that footsteps he heard behind him? Spurt.

The people below were staring at him, one or two were running, and his breath was beginning to saw in his throat. The tram was quite near now, and the "Jolly Cricketers" was noisily barring its doors. Beyond the tram were posts and heaps of gravel—the drainage works. He had a transitory idea of jumping into the tram and slamming the doors, and then he resolved to go for the police station. In another moment he had passed the door of the "Jolly Cricketers," and was in the blistering fag end of the street, with human beings about him. The tram driver and his helper—arrested by the sight of his furious haste—stood staring with the tram horses unhitched. Further on the astonished features of navvies appeared above the mounds of gravel.

1080

His pace broke a little, and then he heard the swift pad of his pursuer, and leapt forward again. "The Invisible Man!" he cried to the navvies, with a vague indicative gesture, and by an inspiration leapt the excavation and placed a burly group between him and the chase. Then abandoning the idea of the police station he turned into a little side street, rushed by a greengrocer's cart, hesitated for the tenth of a second at the door of a sweetstuff shop, and then made for the mouth of an alley that ran back into the main Hill Street again. Two or three little children were playing here, and shrieked and scattered at his apparition, and forthwith doors and windows opened and excited mothers revealed their hearts. Out he shot into Hill Street again, three hundred yards from the tram-line end, and immediately he became aware of a tumultuous vociferation and running people.

He glanced up the street towards the hill. Hardly a dozen yards off ran a huge navvy, cursing in fragments and slashing viciously with a spade, and hard behind him came the tram conductor with his fists clenched. Up the street others followed these two, striking and shouting. Down towards the town, men and women were running, and he noticed clearly one man coming out of a shop-door with a stick in his hand. "Spread out! Spread out!"

cried some one. Kemp suddenly grasped the altered condition of the chase. He stopped, and looked round, panting. "He's close here!" he cried. "Form a line across—"

He was hit hard under the ear, and went reeling, trying to face round towards his unseen antagonist. He just managed to keep his feet, and he struck a vain counter in the air. Then he was hit again under the jaw, and sprawled headlong on the ground. In another moment a knee compressed his diaphragm, and a couple of eager hands gripped his throat, but the grip of one was weaker than the other; he grasped the wrists, heard a cry of pain from his assailant, and then the spade of the navvy came whirling through the air above him, and struck something with a dull thud. He felt a drop of moisture on his face. The grip at his throat suddenly relaxed, and with a convulsive effort, Kemp loosed himself, grasped a limp shoulder, and rolled uppermost. He gripped the unseen elbows near the ground. "I've got him!" screamed Kemp. "Help! Help—hold! He's down! Hold his feet!"

In another second there was a simultaneous rush upon the struggle, and a stranger coming into the road suddenly might have thought an exceptionally savage game of Rugby football was in progress. And there was no shouting after Kemp's cry—only a sound of blows and feet and heavy breathing.

Then came a mighty effort, and the Invisible Man threw off a couple of his antagonists and rose to his knees. Kemp clung to him in front like a hound to a stag, and a dozen hands gripped, clutched, and tore at the Unseen. The tram conductor suddenly got the neck and shoulders and lugged him back.

1085

Down went the heap of struggling men again and rolled over. There was, I am afraid, some savage kicking. Then suddenly a wild scream of "Mercy! Mercy!" that died down swiftly to a sound like choking.

"Get back, you fools!" cried the muffled voice of Kemp, and there was a vigorous shoving back of stalwart forms. "He's hurt, I tell you. Stand back!"

There was a brief struggle to clear a space, and then the circle of eager faces saw the doctor kneeling, as it seemed, fifteen

inches in the air, and holding invisible arms to the ground. Behind him a constable gripped invisible ankles.

"Don't you leave go of en," cried the big navvy, holding a blood-stained spade; "he's shamming."

"He's not shamming," said the doctor, cautiously raising his knee; "and I'll hold him." His face was bruised and already going red; he spoke thickly because of a bleeding lip. He released one hand and seemed to be feeling at the face. "The mouth's all wet," he said. And then, "Good God!"

1090

He stood up abruptly and then knelt down on the ground by the side of the thing unseen. There was a pushing and shuffling, a sound of heavy feet as fresh people turned up to increase the pressure of the crowd. People now were coming out of the houses. The doors of the "Jolly Cricketers" stood suddenly wide open. Very little was said.

Kemp felt about, his hand seeming to pass through empty air. "He's not breathing," he said, and then, "I can't feel his heart. His side—ugh!"

Suddenly an old woman, peering under the arm of the big navvy, screamed sharply. "Looky there!" she said, and thrust out a wrinkled finger.

And looking where she pointed, everyone saw, faint and transparent as though it was made of glass, so that veins and arteries and bones and nerves could be distinguished, the outline of a hand, a hand limp and prone. It grew clouded and opaque even as they stared.

"Hullo!" cried the constable. "Here's his feet a-showing!"

1095

And so, slowly, beginning at his hands and feet and creeping along his limbs to the vital centres of his body, that strange change continued. It was like the slow spreading of a poison. First came the little white nerves, a hazy grey sketch of a limb, then the glassy bones and intricate arteries, then the flesh and skin, first a faint foggiess, and then growing rapidly dense and opaque. Presently they could see his crushed chest and his shoulders, and the dim outline of his drawn and battered features.

When at last the crowd made way for Kemp to stand erect, there lay, naked and pitiful on the ground, the bruised and broken

body of a young man about thirty. His hair and brow were white—not grey with age, but white with the whiteness of albinism—and his eyes were like garnets. His hands were clenched, his eyes wide open, and his expression was one of anger and dismay.

"Cover his face!" said a man. "For Gawd's sake, cover that face!" and three little children, pushing forward through the crowd, were suddenly twisted round and sent packing off again.

Someone brought a sheet from the "Jolly Cricketers," and having covered him, they carried him into that house. And there it was, on a shabby bed in a tawdry, ill-lighted bedroom, surrounded by a crowd of ignorant and excited people, broken and wounded, betrayed and unpitied, that Griffin, the first of all men to make himself invisible, Griffin, the most gifted physicist the world has ever seen, ended in infinite disaster his strange and terrible career.

The Epilogue

So ends the story of the strange and evil experiments of the Invisible Man. And if you would learn more of him you must go to a little inn near Port Stowe and talk to the landlord. The sign of the inn is an empty board save for a hat and boots, and the name is the title of this story. The landlord is a short and corpulent little man with a nose of cylindrical proportions, wiry hair, and a sporadic rosiness of visage. Drink generously, and he will tell you generously of all the things that happened to him after that time, and of how the lawyers tried to do him out of the treasure found upon him.

1100

"When they found they couldn't prove whose money was which, I'm blessed," he says, "if they didn't try to make me out a blooming treasure trove! Do I *look* like a Treasure Trove? And then a gentleman gave me a guinea a night to tell the story at the Empire Music 'All—just to tell 'em in my own words—barring one."

And if you want to cut off the flow of his reminiscences abruptly, you can always do so by asking if there weren't three manuscript books in the story. He admits there were and proceeds to explain, with asseverations that everybody thinks *he* has 'em!

But bless you! he hasn't. "The Invisible Man it was took 'em off to hide 'em when I cut and ran for Port Stowe. It's that Mr. Kemp put people on with the idea of *my* having 'em."

And then he subsides into a pensive state, watches you furtively, bustles nervously with glasses, and presently leaves the bar.

He is a bachelor man—his tastes were ever bachelor, and there are no women folk in the house. Outwardly he buttons—it is expected of him—but in his more vital privacies, in the matter of braces for example, he still turns to string. He conducts his house without enterprise, but with eminent decorum. His movements are slow, and he is a great thinker. But he has a reputation for wisdom and for a respectable parsimony in the village, and his knowledge of the roads of the South of England would beat Cobbett.

And on Sunday mornings, every Sunday morning, all the year round, while he is closed to the outer world, and every night after ten, he goes into his bar parlour, bearing a glass of gin faintly tinged with water, and having placed this down, he locks the door and examines the blinds, and even looks under the table. And then, being satisfied of his solitude, he unlocks the cupboard and a box in the cupboard and a drawer in that box, and produces three volumes bound in brown leather, and places them solemnly in the middle of the table. The covers are weather-worn and tinged with an algal green—for once they sojourned in a ditch and some of the pages have been washed blank by dirty water. The landlord sits down in an armchair, fills a long clay pipe slowly—gloating over the books the while. Then he pulls one towards him and opens it, and begins to study it—turning over the leaves backwards and forwards.

His brows are knit and his lips move painfully. "Hex, little two up in the air, cross and a fiddle-de-dee. Lord! what a one he was for intellect!"

Presently he relaxes and leans back, and blinks through his smoke across the room at things invisible to other eyes. "Full of secrets," he says. "Wonderful secrets!"

"Once I get the haul of them—*Lord!*"

"I wouldn't do what *he* did; I'd just—well!" He pulls at his pipe.

So he lapses into a dream, the undying wonderful dream of his life. And though Kemp has fished unceasingly, no human being save the landlord knows those books are there, with the subtle secret of invisibility and a dozen other strange secrets written therein. And none other will know of them until he dies.

1110

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU

License: Public Domain

H.G. Wells

Introduction

On February the First 1887, the *Lady Vain* was lost by collision with a derelict when about the latitude 1° S. and longitude 107° W.

On January the Fifth, 1888—that is eleven months and four days after—my uncle, Edward Prendick, a private gentleman, who certainly went aboard the *Lady Vain* at Callao, and who had been considered drowned, was picked up in latitude $5^{\circ} 3'$ S. and longitude 101° W. in a small open boat of which the name was illegible, but which is supposed to have belonged to the missing schooner *Ipecacuanha*. He gave such a strange account of himself that he was supposed demented. Subsequently he alleged that his mind was a blank from the moment of his escape from the *Lady Vain*. His case was discussed among psychologists at the time as a curious instance of the lapse of memory consequent upon physical and mental stress. The following narrative was found among his papers by the undersigned, his nephew and heir, but unaccompanied by any definite request for publication.

The only island known to exist in the region in which my uncle was picked up is Noble's Isle, a small volcanic islet and uninhabited. It was visited in 1891 by *H. M. S. Scorpion*. A party of sailors then landed, but found nothing living thereon except certain curious white moths, some hogs and rabbits, and some rather peculiar rats. So that this narrative is without confirmation in its most essential particular. With that understood, there seems no harm in putting this strange story before the public in accordance, as I believe, with my uncle's intentions. There is at least this much in its behalf: my uncle passed out of human knowledge about latitude 5° S. and longitude 105° E., and reappeared in the same part of the ocean after a space of eleven months. In some way he must have lived during the interval. And it seems that a schooner called the *Ipecacuanha* with a drunken captain, John Davies, did start from Africa with a puma and

certain other animals aboard in January, 1887, that the vessel was well known at several ports in the South Pacific, and that it finally disappeared from those seas (with a considerable amount of copra aboard), sailing to its unknown fate from Bayna in December, 1887, a date that tallies entirely with my uncle's story.

Charles Edward Prendick.

(The Story written by Edward Prendick.)

I. In the Dingey of the "Lady Vain"

I DO not propose to add anything to what has already been written concerning the loss of the *Lady Vain*. As everyone knows, she collided with a derelict when ten days out from Callao. The longboat, with seven of the crew, was picked up eighteen days after by H. M. gunboat *Myrtle*, and the story of their terrible privations has become quite as well known as the far more horrible *Medusa* case. But I have to add to the published story of the *Lady Vain* another, possibly as horrible and far stranger. It has hitherto been supposed that the four men who were in the dingey perished, but this is incorrect. I have the best of evidence for this assertion: I was one of the four men.

But in the first place I must state that there never were four men in the dingey,—the number was three. Constans, who was "seen by the captain to jump into the gig" (*Daily News*, March 17, 1887), luckily for us and unluckily for himself did not reach us. He came down out of the tangle of ropes under the stays of the smashed bowsprit, some small rope caught his heel as he let go, and he hung for a moment head downward, and then fell and struck a block or spar floating in the water. We pulled towards him, but he never came up.

I say luckily for us he did not reach us, and I might almost say luckily for himself; for we had only a small beaker of water and some soddened ship's biscuits with us, so sudden had been the alarm, so unprepared the ship for any disaster. We thought the people on the launch would be better provisioned (though it seems they were not), and we tried to hail them. They could not

have heard us, and the next morning when the drizzle cleared,—which was not until past midday,—we could see nothing of them. We could not stand up to look about us, because of the pitching of the boat. The two other men who had escaped so far with me were a man named Helmar, a passenger like myself, and a seaman whose name I don't know,—a short sturdy man, with a stammer.

We drifted famishing, and, after our water had come to an end, tormented by an intolerable thirst, for eight days altogether. After the second day the sea subsided slowly to a glassy calm. It is quite impossible for the ordinary reader to imagine those eight days. He has not, luckily for himself, anything in his memory to imagine with. After the first day we said little to one another, and lay in our places in the boat and stared at the horizon, or watched, with eyes that grew larger and more haggard every day, the misery and weakness gaining upon our companions. The sun became pitiless. The water ended on the fourth day, and we were already thinking strange things and saying them with our eyes; but it was, I think, the sixth before Helmar gave voice to the thing we had all been thinking. I remember our voices were dry and thin, so that we bent towards one another and spared our words. I stood out against it with all my might, was rather for scuttling the boat and perishing together among the sharks that followed us; but when Helmar said that if his proposal was accepted we should have drink, the sailor came round to him.

I would not draw lots however, and in the night the sailor whispered to Helmar again and again, and I sat in the bows with my clasp-knife in my hand, though I doubt if I had the stuff in me to fight; and in the morning I agreed to Helmar's proposal, and we handed halfpence to find the odd man. The lot fell upon the sailor; but he was the strongest of us and would not abide by it, and attacked Helmar with his hands. They grappled together and almost stood up. I crawled along the boat to them, intending to help Helmar by grasping the sailor's leg; but the sailor stumbled with the swaying of the boat, and the two fell upon the gunwale and rolled overboard together. They sank like stones. I remember laughing at that, and wondering why I laughed. The laugh caught me suddenly like a thing from without.

I lay across one of the thwarts for I know not how long, thinking that if I had the strength I would drink sea-water and madden myself to die quickly. And even as I lay there I saw, with no more interest than if it had been a picture, a sail come up towards me over the sky-line. My mind must have been wandering, and yet I remember all that happened, quite distinctly. I remember how my head swayed with the seas, and the horizon with the sail above it danced up and down; but I also remember as distinctly that I had a persuasion that I was dead, and that I thought what a jest it was that they should come too late by such a little to catch me in my body.

For an endless period, as it seemed to me, I lay with my head on the thwart watching the schooner (she was a little ship, schooner-rigged fore and aft) come up out of the sea. She kept tacking to and fro in a widening compass, for she was sailing dead into the wind. It never entered my head to attempt to attract attention, and I do not remember anything distinctly after the sight of her side until I found myself in a little cabin aft. There's a dim half-memory of being lifted up to the gangway, and of a big round countenance covered with freckles and surrounded with red hair staring at me over the bulwarks. I also had a disconnected impression of a dark face, with extraordinary eyes, close to mine; but that I thought was a nightmare, until I met it again. I fancy I recollect some stuff being poured in between my teeth; and that is all.

10

II. The Man Who Was Going Nowhere

The cabin in which I found myself was small and rather untidy. A youngish man with flaxen hair, a bristly straw-coloured moustache, and a dropping nether lip, was sitting and holding my wrist. For a minute we stared at each other without speaking. He had watery grey eyes, oddly void of expression. Then just overhead came a sound like an iron bedstead being knocked about, and the low angry growling of some large animal. At the same time the man spoke. He repeated his question,—“How do you feel now?”

I think I said I felt all right. I could not recollect how I had got there. He must have seen the question in my face, for my voice was inaccessible to me.

"You were picked up in a boat, starving. The name on the boat was the *Lady Vain*, and there were spots of blood on the gunwale."

At the same time my eye caught my hand, so thin that it looked like a dirty skin-purse full of loose bones, and all the business of the boat came back to me.

"Have some of this," said he, and gave me a dose of some scarlet stuff, iced.

15

It tasted like blood, and made me feel stronger.

"You were in luck," said he, "to get picked up by a ship with a medical man aboard." He spoke with a slobbering articulation, with the ghost of a lisp.

"What ship is this?" I said slowly, hoarse from my long silence.

"It's a little trader from Arica and Callao. I never asked where she came from in the beginning,—out of the land of born fools, I guess. I'm a passenger myself, from Arica. The silly ass who owns her,—he's captain too, named Davies,—he's lost his certificate, or something. You know the kind of man,—calls the thing the *Ipecacuanha*, of all silly, infernal names; though when there's much of a sea without any wind, she certainly acts according."

(Then the noise overhead began again, a snarling growl and the voice of a human being together. Then another voice, telling some "Heaven-forsaken idiot" to desist.)

20

"You were nearly dead," said my interlocutor. "It was a very near thing, indeed. But I've put some stuff into you now. Notice your arm's sore? Injections. You've been insensible for nearly thirty hours."

I thought slowly. (I was distracted now by the yelping of a number of dogs.) "Am I eligible for solid food?" I asked.

"Thanks to me," he said. "Even now the mutton is boiling."

"Yes," I said with assurance; "I could eat some mutton."

"But," said he with a momentary hesitation, "you know I'm dying to hear of how you came to be alone in that boat. *Damn that howling!*" I thought I detected a certain suspicion in his eyes.

He suddenly left the cabin, and I heard him in violent controversy with some one, who seemed to me to talk gibberish in response to him. The matter sounded as though it ended in blows, but in that I thought my ears were mistaken. Then he shouted at the dogs, and returned to the cabin.

"Well?" said he in the doorway. "You were just beginning to tell me."

I told him my name, Edward Prendick, and how I had taken to Natural History as a relief from the dulness of my comfortable independence.

He seemed interested in this. "I've done some science myself. I did my Biology at University College,—getting out the ovary of the earthworm and the radula of the snail, and all that. Lord! It's ten years ago. But go on! go on! tell me about the boat."

He was evidently satisfied with the frankness of my story, which I told in concise sentences enough, for I felt horribly weak; and when it was finished he reverted at once to the topic of Natural History and his own biological studies. He began to question me closely about Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street. "Is Caplatzi still flourishing? What a shop that was!" He had evidently been a very ordinary medical student, and drifted incontinently to the topic of the music halls. He told me some anecdotes.

"Left it all," he said, "ten years ago. How jolly it all used to be! But I made a young ass of myself,—played myself out before I was twenty-one. I daresay it's all different now. But I must look up that ass of a cook, and see what he's done to your mutton."

The growling overhead was renewed, so suddenly and with so much savage anger that it startled me. "What's that?" I called after him, but the door had closed. He came back again with the boiled mutton, and I was so excited by the appetising smell of it that I forgot the noise of the beast that had troubled me.

After a day of alternate sleep and feeding I was so far recovered as to be able to get from my bunk to the scuttle, and see

the green seas trying to keep pace with us. I judged the schooner was running before the wind. Montgomery—that was the name of the flaxen-haired man—came in again as I stood there, and I asked him for some clothes. He lent me some duck things of his own, for those I had worn in the boat had been thrown overboard. They were rather loose for me, for he was large and long in his limbs. He told me casually that the captain was three-parts drunk in his own cabin. As I assumed the clothes, I began asking him some questions about the destination of the ship. He said the ship was bound to Hawaii, but that it had to land him first.

"Where?" said I.

"It's an island, where I live. So far as I know, it hasn't got a name."

35

He stared at me with his nether lip dropping, and looked so wilfully stupid of a sudden that it came into my head that he desired to avoid my questions. I had the discretion to ask no more.

III. The Strange Face

We left the cabin and found a man at the companion obstructing our way. He was standing on the ladder with his back to us, peering over the combing of the hatchway. He was, I could see, a misshapen man, short, broad, and clumsy, with a crooked back, a hairy neck, and a head sunk between his shoulders. He was dressed in dark-blue serge, and had peculiarly thick, coarse, black hair. I heard the unseen dogs growl furiously, and forthwith he ducked back,—coming into contact with the hand I put out to fend him off from myself. He turned with animal swiftness.

In some indefinable way the black face thus flashed upon me shocked me profoundly. It was a singularly deformed one. The facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle, and the huge half-open mouth showed as big white teeth as I had ever seen in a human mouth. His eyes were blood-shot at the edges, with scarcely a rim of white round the hazel pupils. There was a curious glow of excitement in his face.

"Confound you!" said Montgomery. "Why the devil don't you get out of the way?"

The black-faced man started aside without a word. I went on up the companion, staring at him instinctively as I did so. Montgomery stayed at the foot for a moment. "You have no business here, you know," he said in a deliberate tone. "Your place is forward."

The black-faced man cowered. "They—won't have me forward." He spoke slowly, with a queer, hoarse quality in his voice.

"Won't have you forward!" said Montgomery, in a menacing voice. "But I tell you to go!" He was on the brink of saying something further, then looked up at me suddenly and followed me up the ladder.

I had paused half way through the hatchway, looking back, still astonished beyond measure at the grotesque ugliness of this black-faced creature. I had never beheld such a repulsive and extraordinary face before, and yet—if the contradiction is credible—I experienced at the same time an odd feeling that in some way I *had* already encountered exactly the features and gestures that now amazed me. Afterwards it occurred to me that probably I had seen him as I was lifted aboard; and yet that scarcely satisfied my suspicion of a previous acquaintance. Yet how one could have set eyes on so singular a face and yet have forgotten the precise occasion, passed my imagination.

Montgomery's movement to follow me released my attention, and I turned and looked about me at the flush deck of the little schooner. I was already half prepared by the sounds I had heard for what I saw. Certainly I never beheld a deck so dirty. It was littered with scraps of carrot, shreds of green stuff, and indescribable filth. Fastened by chains to the mainmast were a number of grisly staghounds, who now began leaping and barking at me, and by the mizzen a huge puma was cramped in a little iron cage far too small even to give it turning room. Farther under the starboard bulwark were some big hutches containing a number of rabbits, and a solitary llama was squeezed in a mere box of a cage

forward. The dogs were muzzled by leather straps. The only human being on deck was a gaunt and silent sailor at the wheel.

The patched and dirty spankers were tense before the wind, and up aloft the little ship seemed carrying every sail she had. The sky was clear, the sun midway down the western sky; long waves, capped by the breeze with froth, were running with us. We went past the steersman to the taffrail, and saw the water come foaming under the stern and the bubbles go dancing and vanishing in her wake. I turned and surveyed the unsavoury length of the ship.

"Is this an ocean menagerie?" said I.

"Looks like it," said Montgomery.

"What are these beasts for? Merchandise, curios? Does the captain think he is going to sell them somewhere in the South Seas?"

"It looks like it, doesn't it?" said Montgomery, and turned towards the wake again.

Suddenly we heard a yelp and a volley of furious blasphemy from the companion hatchway, and the deformed man with the black face came up hurriedly. He was immediately followed by a heavy red-haired man in a white cap. At the sight of the former the staghounds, who had all tired of barking at me by this time, became furiously excited, howling and leaping against their chains. The black hesitated before them, and this gave the red-haired man time to come up with him and deliver a tremendous blow between the shoulder-blades. The poor devil went down like a felled ox, and rolled in the dirt among the furiously excited dogs. It was lucky for him that they were muzzled. The red-haired man gave a yawp of exultation and stood staggering, and as it seemed to me in serious danger of either going backwards down the companion hatchway or forwards upon his victim.

So soon as the second man had appeared, Montgomery had started forward. "Steady on there!" he cried, in a tone of remonstrance. A couple of sailors appeared on the forecastle. The black-faced man, howling in a singular voice rolled about under the feet of the dogs. No one attempted to help him. The brutes did their best to worry him, butting their muzzles at him. There was a quick dance of their lithe grey-figured bodies over the clumsy,

prostrate figure. The sailors forward shouted, as though it was admirable sport. Montgomery gave an angry exclamation, and went striding down the deck, and I followed him. The black-faced man scrambled up and staggered forward, going and leaning over the bulwark by the main shrouds, where he remained, panting and glaring over his shoulder at the dogs. The red-haired man laughed a satisfied laugh.

"Look here, Captain," said Montgomery, with his lisp a little accentuated, gripping the elbows of the red-haired man, "this won't do!"

I stood behind Montgomery. The captain came half round, and regarded him with the dull and solemn eyes of a drunken man. "Wha' won't do?" he said, and added, after looking sleepily into Montgomery's face for a minute, "Blasted Sawbones!"

With a sudden movement he shook his arms free, and after two ineffectual attempts stuck his freckled fists into his side pockets.

"That man's a passenger," said Montgomery. "I'd advise you to keep your hands off him."

55

"Go to hell!" said the captain, loudly. He suddenly turned and staggered towards the side. "Do what I like on my own ship," he said.

I think Montgomery might have left him then, seeing the brute was drunk; but he only turned a shade paler, and followed the captain to the bulwarks.

"Look you here, Captain," he said; "that man of mine is not to be ill-treated. He has been hazed ever since he came aboard."

For a minute, alcoholic fumes kept the captain speechless. "Blasted Sawbones!" was all he considered necessary.

I could see that Montgomery had one of those slow, pertinacious tempers that will warm day after day to a white heat, and never again cool to forgiveness; and I saw too that this quarrel had been some time growing. "The man's drunk," said I, perhaps officiously; "you'll do no good."

60

Montgomery gave an ugly twist to his dropping lip. "He's always drunk. Do you think that excuses his assaulting his passengers?"

"My ship," began the captain, waving his hand unsteadily towards the cages, "was a clean ship. Look at it now!" It was certainly anything but clean. "Crew," continued the captain, "clean, respectable crew."

"You agreed to take the beasts."

"I wish I'd never set eyes on your infernal island. What the devil—want beasts for on an island like that? Then, that man of yours—understood he was a man. He's a lunatic; and he hadn't no business aft. Do you think the whole damned ship belongs to you?"

"Your sailors began to haze the poor devil as soon as he came aboard."

65

"That's just what he is—he's a devil! an ugly devil! My men can't stand him. *I* can't stand him. None of us can't stand him. Nor *you* either!"

Montgomery turned away. "*You* leave that man alone, anyhow," he said, nodding his head as he spoke.

But the captain meant to quarrel now. He raised his voice. "If he comes this end of the ship again I'll cut his insides out, I tell you. Cut out his blasted insides! Who are you, to tell me what I'm to do? I tell you I'm captain of this ship,—captain and owner. I'm the law here, I tell you,—the law and the prophets. I bargained to take a man and his attendant to and from Arica, and bring back some animals. I never bargained to carry a mad devil and a silly Sawbones, a—"

Well, never mind what he called Montgomery. I saw the latter take a step forward, and interposed. "He's drunk," said I. The captain began some abuse even fouler than the last. "Shut up!" I said, turning on him sharply, for I had seen danger in Montgomery's white face. With that I brought the downpour on myself.

However, I was glad to avert what was uncommonly near a scuffle, even at the price of the captain's drunken ill-will. I do not think I have ever heard quite so much vile language come in a continuous stream from any man's lips before, though I have frequented eccentric company enough. I found some of it hard to endure, though I am a mild-tempered man; but, certainly, when I

70

told the captain to "shut up" I had forgotten that I was merely a bit of human flotsam, cut off from my resources and with my fare unpaid; a mere casual dependant on the bounty, or speculative enterprise, of the ship. He reminded me of it with considerable vigour; but at any rate I prevented a fight.

IV. At the Schooner's Rail

That night land was sighted after sundown, and the schooner hove to. Montgomery intimated that was his destination. It was too far to see any details; it seemed to me then simply a low-lying patch of dim blue in the uncertain blue-grey sea. An almost vertical streak of smoke went up from it into the sky. The captain was not on deck when it was sighted. After he had vented his wrath on me he had staggered below, and I understand he went to sleep on the floor of his own cabin. The mate practically assumed the command. He was the gaunt, taciturn individual we had seen at the wheel. Apparently he was in an evil temper with Montgomery. He took not the slightest notice of either of us. We dined with him in a sulky silence, after a few ineffectual efforts on my part to talk. It struck me too that the men regarded my companion and his animals in a singularly unfriendly manner. I found Montgomery very reticent about his purpose with these creatures, and about his destination; and though I was sensible of a growing curiosity as to both, I did not press him.

We remained talking on the quarter deck until the sky was thick with stars. Except for an occasional sound in the yellow-lit forecastle and a movement of the animals now and then, the night was very still. The puma lay crouched together, watching us with shining eyes, a black heap in the corner of its cage. Montgomery produced some cigars. He talked to me of London in a tone of half-painful reminiscence, asking all kinds of questions about changes that had taken place. He spoke like a man who had loved his life there, and had been suddenly and irrevocably cut off from it. I gossiped as well as I could of this and that. All the time the strangeness of him was shaping itself in my mind; and as I talked I peered at his odd, pallid face in the dim light of the binnacle

lantern behind me. Then I looked out at the darkling sea, where in the dimness his little island was hidden.

This man, it seemed to me, had come out of Immensity merely to save my life. To-morrow he would drop over the side, and vanish again out of my existence. Even had it been under commonplace circumstances, it would have made me a trifle thoughtful; but in the first place was the singularity of an educated man living on this unknown little island, and coupled with that the extraordinary nature of his luggage. I found myself repeating the captain's question. What did he want with the beasts? Why, too, had he pretended they were not his when I had remarked about them at first? Then, again, in his personal attendant there was a bizarre quality which had impressed me profoundly. These circumstances threw a haze of mystery round the man. They laid hold of my imagination, and hampered my tongue.

Towards midnight our talk of London died away, and we stood side by side leaning over the bulwarks and staring dreamily over the silent, starlit sea, each pursuing his own thoughts. It was the atmosphere for sentiment, and I began upon my gratitude.

"If I may say it," said I, after a time, "you have saved my life."

75

"Chance," he answered. "Just chance."

"I prefer to make my thanks to the accessible agent."

"Thank no one. You had the need, and I had the knowledge; and I injected and fed you much as I might have collected a specimen. I was bored and wanted something to do. If I'd been jaded that day, or hadn't liked your face, well—it's a curious question where you would have been now!"

This damped my mood a little. "At any rate," I began.

"It's a chance, I tell you," he interrupted, "as everything is in a man's life. Only the asses won't see it! Why am I here now, an outcast from civilisation, instead of being a happy man enjoying all the pleasures of London? Simply because eleven years ago—I lost my head for ten minutes on a foggy night."

80

He stopped. "Yes?" said I.

"That's all."

We relapsed into silence. Presently he laughed. "There's something in this starlight that loosens one's tongue. I'm an ass, and yet somehow I would like to tell you."

"Whatever you tell me, you may rely upon my keeping to myself—if that's it."

He was on the point of beginning, and then shook his head, doubtfully.

"Don't," said I. "It is all the same to me. After all, it is better to keep your secret. There's nothing gained but a little relief if I respect your confidence. If I don't—well?"

He grunted undecidedly. I felt I had him at a disadvantage, had caught him in the mood of indiscretion; and to tell the truth I was not curious to learn what might have driven a young medical student out of London. I have an imagination. I shrugged my shoulders and turned away. Over the taffrail leant a silent black figure, watching the stars. It was Montgomery's strange attendant. It looked over its shoulder quickly with my movement, then looked away again.

It may seem a little thing to you, perhaps, but it came like a sudden blow to me. The only light near us was a lantern at the wheel. The creature's face was turned for one brief instant out of the dimness of the stern towards this illumination, and I saw that the eyes that glanced at me shone with a pale-green light. I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The thing came to me as stark inhumanity. That black figure with its eyes of fire struck down through all my adult thoughts and feelings, and for a moment the forgotten horrors of childhood came back to my mind. Then the effect passed as it had come. An uncouth black figure of a man, a figure of no particular import, hung over the taffrail against the starlight, and I found Montgomery was speaking to me.

"I'm thinking of turning in, then," said he, "if you've had enough of this."

I answered him incongruously. We went below, and he wished me good-night at the door of my cabin.

That night I had some very unpleasant dreams. The waning moon rose late. Its light struck a ghostly white beam across my

cabin, and made an ominous shape on the planking by my bunk. Then the staghounds woke, and began howling and baying; so that I dreamt fitfully, and scarcely slept until the approach of dawn.

V. The Man Who Had Nowhere to Go

In the early morning (it was the second morning after my recovery, and I believe the fourth after I was picked up), I awoke through an avenue of tumultuous dreams,—dreams of guns and howling mobs,—and became sensible of a hoarse shouting above me. I rubbed my eyes and lay listening to the noise, doubtful for a little while of my whereabouts. Then came a sudden pattering of bare feet, the sound of heavy objects being thrown about, a violent creaking and the rattling of chains. I heard the swish of the water as the ship was suddenly brought round, and a foamy yellow-green wave flew across the little round window and left it streaming. I jumped into my clothes and went on deck.

As I came up the ladder I saw against the flushed sky—for the sun was just rising—the broad back and red hair of the captain, and over his shoulder the puma spinning from a tackle rigged on to the mizzen spanker-boom.

The poor brute seemed horribly scared, and crouched in the bottom of its little cage.

"Overboard with 'em!" bawled the captain. "Overboard with 'em! We'll have a clean ship soon of the whole bilin' of 'em."

95

He stood in my way, so that I had perforce to tap his shoulder to come on deck. He came round with a start, and staggered back a few paces to stare at me. It needed no expert eye to tell that the man was still drunk.

"Hullo!" said he, stupidly; and then with a light coming into his eyes, "Why, it's Mister—Mister?"

"Prendick," said I.

"Prendick be damned!" said he. "Shut-up,—that's your name. Mister Shut-up."

It was no good answering the brute; but I certainly did not expect his next move. He held out his hand to the gangway by

100

which Montgomery stood talking to a massive grey-haired man in dirty-blue flannels, who had apparently just come aboard.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up! that way!" roared the captain.

Montgomery and his companion turned as he spoke.

"What do you mean?" I said.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up,—that's what I mean! Overboard, Mister Shut-up,—and sharp! We're cleaning the ship out,—cleaning the whole blessed ship out; and overboard you go!"

I stared at him dumfounded. Then it occurred to me that it was exactly the thing I wanted. The lost prospect of a journey as sole passenger with this quarrelsome sot was not one to mourn over. I turned towards Montgomery.

"Can't have you," said Montgomery's companion, concisely.

"You can't have me!" said I, aghast. He had the squarest and most resolute face I ever set eyes upon.

"Look here," I began, turning to the captain.

"Overboard!" said the captain. "This ship aint for beasts and cannibals and worse than beasts, any more. Overboard you go, Mister Shut-up. If they can't have you, you goes overboard. But, anyhow, you go—with your friends. I've done with this blessed island for evermore, amen! I've had enough of it."

"But, Montgomery," I appealed.

He distorted his lower lip, and nodded his head hopelessly at the grey-haired man beside him, to indicate his powerlessness to help me.

"I'll see to *you*, presently," said the captain.

Then began a curious three-cornered altercation. Alternately I appealed to one and another of the three men,—first to the grey-haired man to let me land, and then to the drunken captain to keep me aboard. I even bawled entreaties to the sailors. Montgomery said never a word, only shook his head. "You're going overboard, I tell you," was the captain's refrain. "Law be damned! I'm king here." At last I must confess my voice suddenly broke in the middle of a vigorous threat. I felt a gust of hysterical petulance, and went aft and stared dismally at nothing.

Meanwhile the sailors progressed rapidly with the task of unshipping the packages and caged animals. A large launch, with two standing lugs, lay under the lee of the schooner; and into this the strange assortment of goods were swung. I did not then see the hands from the island that were receiving the packages, for the hull of the launch was hidden from me by the side of the schooner. Neither Montgomery nor his companion took the slightest notice of me, but busied themselves in assisting and directing the four or five sailors who were unloading the goods. The captain went forward interfering rather than assisting. I was alternately despairful and desperate. Once or twice as I stood waiting there for things to accomplish themselves, I could not resist an impulse to laugh at my miserable quandary. I felt all the wretcheder for the lack of a breakfast. Hunger and a lack of blood-corpuscles take all the manhood from a man. I perceived pretty clearly that I had not the stamina either to resist what the captain chose to do to expel me, or to force myself upon Montgomery and his companion. So I waited passively upon fate; and the work of transferring Montgomery's possessions to the launch went on as if I did not exist.

Presently that work was finished, and then came a struggle. I was hauled, resisting weakly enough, to the gangway. Even then I noticed the oddness of the brown faces of the men who were with Montgomery in the launch; but the launch was now fully laden, and was shoved off hastily. A broadening gap of green water appeared under me, and I pushed back with all my strength to avoid falling headlong. The hands in the launch shouted derisively, and I heard Montgomery curse at them; and then the captain, the mate, and one of the seamen helping him, ran me aft towards the stern.

The dingey of the *Lady Vain* had been towing behind; it was half full of water, had no oars, and was quite unvictualled. I refused to go aboard her, and flung myself full length on the deck. In the end, they swung me into her by a rope (for they had no stern ladder), and then they cut me adrift. I drifted slowly from the schooner. In a kind of stupor I watched all hands take to the rigging, and slowly but surely she came round to the wind; the

sails fluttered, and then bellied out as the wind came into them. I stared at her weather-beaten side heeling steeply towards me; and then she passed out of my range of view.

I did not turn my head to follow her. At first I could scarcely believe what had happened. I crouched in the bottom of the dingey, stunned, and staring blankly at the vacant, oily sea. Then I realised that I was in that little hell of mine again, now half swamped; and looking back over the gunwale, I saw the schooner standing away from me, with the red-haired captain mocking at me over the taffrail, and turning towards the island saw the launch growing smaller as she approached the beach.

Abruptly the cruelty of this desertion became clear to me. I had no means of reaching the land unless I should chance to drift there. I was still weak, you must remember, from my exposure in the boat; I was empty and very faint, or I should have had more heart. But as it was I suddenly began to sob and weep, as I had never done since I was a little child. The tears ran down my face. In a passion of despair I struck with my fists at the water in the bottom of the boat, and kicked savagely at the gunwale. I prayed aloud for God to let me die.

VI. The Evil-Looking Boatmen

But the islanders, seeing that I was really adrift, took pity on me. I drifted very slowly to the eastward, approaching the island slantingly; and presently I saw, with hysterical relief, the launch come round and return towards me. She was heavily laden, and I could make out as she drew nearer Montgomery's white-haired, broad-shouldered companion sitting cramped up with the dogs and several packing-cases in the stern sheets. This individual stared fixedly at me without moving or speaking. The black-faced cripple was glaring at me as fixedly in the bows near the puma. There were three other men besides,—three strange brutish-looking fellows, at whom the staghounds were snarling savagely. Montgomery, who was steering, brought the boat by me, and rising, caught and fastened my painter to the tiller to tow me, for there was no room aboard.

I had recovered from my hysterical phase by this time and answered his hail, as he approached, bravely enough. I told him the dingey was nearly swamped, and he reached me a piggin. I was jerked back as the rope tightened between the boats. For some time I was busy baling.

It was not until I had got the water under (for the water in the dingey had been shipped; the boat was perfectly sound) that I had leisure to look at the people in the launch again.

The white-haired man I found was still regarding me steadfastly, but with an expression, as I now fancied, of some perplexity. When my eyes met his, he looked down at the staghound that sat between his knees. He was a powerfully-built man, as I have said, with a fine forehead and rather heavy features; but his eyes had that odd drooping of the skin above the lids which often comes with advancing years, and the fall of his heavy mouth at the corners gave him an expression of pugnacious resolution. He talked to Montgomery in a tone too low for me to hear.

From him my eyes travelled to his three men; and a strange crew they were. I saw only their faces, yet there was something in their faces—I knew not what—that gave me a queer spasm of disgust. I looked steadily at them, and the impression did not pass, though I failed to see what had occasioned it. They seemed to me then to be brown men; but their limbs were oddly swathed in some thin, dirty, white stuff down even to the fingers and feet: I have never seen men so wrapped up before, and women so only in the East. They wore turbans too, and thereunder peered out their elfin faces at me,—faces with protruding lower-jaws and bright eyes. They had lank black hair, almost like horsehair, and seemed as they sat to exceed in stature any race of men I have seen. The white-haired man, who I knew was a good six feet in height, sat a head below any one of the three. I found afterwards that really none were taller than myself; but their bodies were abnormally long, and the thigh-part of the leg short and curiously twisted. At any rate, they were an amazingly ugly gang, and over the heads of them under the forward lug peered the black face of the man whose eyes were luminous in the dark. As I stared at

them, they met my gaze; and then first one and then another turned away from my direct stare, and looked at me in an odd, furtive manner. It occurred to me that I was perhaps annoying them, and I turned my attention to the island we were approaching.

It was low, and covered with thick vegetation,—chiefly a kind of palm, that was new to me. From one point a thin white thread of vapour rose slantingly to an immense height, and then frayed out like a down feather. We were now within the embrace of a broad bay flanked on either hand by a low promontory. The beach was of dull-grey sand, and sloped steeply up to a ridge, perhaps sixty or seventy feet above the sea-level, and irregularly set with trees and undergrowth. Half way up was a square enclosure of some greyish stone, which I found subsequently was built partly of coral and partly of pumiceous lava. Two thatched roofs peeped from within this enclosure. A man stood awaiting us at the water's edge. I fancied while we were still far off that I saw some other and very grotesque-looking creatures scuttle into the bushes upon the slope; but I saw nothing of these as we drew nearer. This man was of a moderate size, and with a black negroid face. He had a large, almost lipless, mouth, extraordinary lank arms, long thin feet, and bow-legs, and stood with his heavy face thrust forward staring at us. He was dressed like Montgomery and his white-haired companion, in jacket and trousers of blue serge. As we came still nearer, this individual began to run to and fro on the beach, making the most grotesque movements.

At a word of command from Montgomery, the four men in the launch sprang up, and with singularly awkward gestures struck the lugs. Montgomery steered us round and into a narrow little dock excavated in the beach. Then the man on the beach hastened towards us. This dock, as I call it, was really a mere ditch just long enough at this phase of the tide to take the longboat. I heard the bows ground in the sand, staved the dingey off the rudder of the big boat with my piggin, and freeing the painter, landed. The three muffled men, with the clumsiest movements, scrambled out upon the sand, and forthwith set to landing the cargo, assisted by the man on the beach. I was struck especially by the curious

movements of the legs of the three swathed and bandaged boatmen,—not stiff they were, but distorted in some odd way, almost as if they were jointed in the wrong place. The dogs were still snarling, and strained at their chains after these men, as the white-haired man landed with them. The three big fellows spoke to one another in odd guttural tones, and the man who had waited for us on the beach began chattering to them excitedly—a foreign language, as I fancied—as they laid hands on some bales piled near the stern. Somewhere I had heard such a voice before, and I could not think where. The white-haired man stood, holding in a tumult of six dogs, and bawling orders over their din. Montgomery, having unshipped the rudder, landed likewise, and all set to work at unloading. I was too faint, what with my long fast and the sun beating down on my bare head, to offer any assistance.

Presently the white-haired man seemed to recollect my presence, and came up to me.

"You look," said he, "as though you had scarcely breakfasted." His little eyes were a brilliant black under his heavy brows. "I must apologise for that. Now you are our guest, we must make you comfortable,—though you are uninvited, you know." He looked keenly into my face. "Montgomery says you are an educated man, Mr. Prendick; says you know something of science. May I ask what that signifies?"

I told him I had spent some years at the Royal College of Science, and had done some researches in biology under Huxley. He raised his eyebrows slightly at that.

"That alters the case a little, Mr. Prendick," he said, with a trifle more respect in his manner. "As it happens, we are biologists here. This is a biological station—of a sort." His eye rested on the men in white who were busily hauling the puma, on rollers, towards the walled yard. "I and Montgomery, at least," he added. Then, "When you will be able to get away, I can't say. We're off the track to anywhere. We see a ship once in a twelve-month or so."

He left me abruptly, and went up the beach past this group, and I think entered the enclosure. The other two men were with

Montgomery, erecting a pile of smaller packages on a low-wheeled truck. The llama was still on the launch with the rabbit hutches; the staghounds were still lashed to the thwarts. The pile of things completed, all three men laid hold of the truck and began shoving the ton-weight or so upon it after the puma. Presently Montgomery left them, and coming back to me held out his hand.

"I'm glad," said he, "for my own part. That captain was a silly ass. He'd have made things lively for you."

"It was you," said I, "that saved me again."

"That depends. You'll find this island an infernally rum place, I promise you. I'd watch my goings carefully, if I were you. *He—*" He hesitated, and seemed to alter his mind about what was on his lips. "I wish you'd help me with these rabbits," he said.

His procedure with the rabbits was singular. I waded in with him, and helped him lug one of the hutches ashore. No sooner was that done than he opened the door of it, and tilting the thing on one end turned its living contents out on the ground. They fell in a struggling heap one on the top of the other. He clapped his hands, and forthwith they went off with that hopping run of theirs, fifteen or twenty of them I should think, up the beach.

"Increase and multiply, my friends," said Montgomery. "Replenish the island. Hitherto we've had a certain lack of meat here."

135

As I watched them disappearing, the white-haired man returned with a brandy-flask and some biscuits. "Something to go on with, Prendick," said he, in a far more familiar tone than before. I made no ado, but set to work on the biscuits at once, while the white-haired man helped Montgomery to release about a score more of the rabbits. Three big hutches, however, went up to the house with the puma. The brandy I did not touch, for I have been an abstainer from my birth.

VII. The Locked Door

The reader will perhaps understand that at first everything was so strange about me, and my position was the outcome of such

unexpected adventures, that I had no discernment of the relative strangeness of this or that thing. I followed the llama up the beach, and was overtaken by Montgomery, who asked me not to enter the stone enclosure. I noticed then that the puma in its cage and the pile of packages had been placed outside the entrance to this quadrangle.

I turned and saw that the launch had now been unloaded, run out again, and was being beached, and the white-haired man was walking towards us. He addressed Montgomery.

"And now comes the problem of this uninvited guest. What are we to do with him?"

"He knows something of science," said Montgomery.

140

"I'm itching to get to work again—with this new stuff," said the white-haired man, nodding towards the enclosure. His eyes grew brighter.

"I daresay you are," said Montgomery, in anything but a cordial tone.

"We can't send him over there, and we can't spare the time to build him a new shanty; and we certainly can't take him into our confidence just yet."

"I'm in your hands," said I. I had no idea of what he meant by "over there."

"I've been thinking of the same things," Montgomery answered. "There's my room with the outer door—"

145

"That's it," said the elder man, promptly, looking at Montgomery; and all three of us went towards the enclosure. "I'm sorry to make a mystery, Mr. Prendick; but you'll remember you're uninvited. Our little establishment here contains a secret or so, is a kind of Blue-Beard's chamber, in fact. Nothing very dreadful, really, to a sane man; but just now, as we don't know you—"

"Decidedly," said I, "I should be a fool to take offence at any want of confidence."

He twisted his heavy mouth into a faint smile—he was one of those saturnine people who smile with the corners of the mouth down,—and bowed his acknowledgment of my complaisance. The main entrance to the enclosure was passed; it was a heavy

wooden gate, framed in iron and locked, with the cargo of the launch piled outside it, and at the corner we came to a small doorway I had not previously observed. The white-haired man produced a bundle of keys from the pocket of his greasy blue jacket, opened this door, and entered. His keys, and the elaborate locking-up of the place even while it was still under his eye, struck me as peculiar. I followed him, and found myself in a small apartment, plainly but not uncomfortably furnished and with its inner door, which was slightly ajar, opening into a paved courtyard. This inner door Montgomery at once closed. A hammock was slung across the darker corner of the room, and a small unglazed window defended by an iron bar looked out towards the sea.

This the white-haired man told me was to be my apartment; and the inner door, which "for fear of accidents," he said, he would lock on the other side, was my limit inward. He called my attention to a convenient deck-chair before the window, and to an array of old books, chiefly, I found, surgical works and editions of the Latin and Greek classics (languages I cannot read with any comfort), on a shelf near the hammock. He left the room by the outer door, as if to avoid opening the inner one again.

"We usually have our meals in here," said Montgomery, and then, as if in doubt, went out after the other. "Moreau!" I heard him call, and for the moment I do not think I noticed. Then as I handled the books on the shelf it came up in consciousness: Where had I heard the name of Moreau before? I sat down before the window, took out the biscuits that still remained to me, and ate them with an excellent appetite. Moreau!

150

Through the window I saw one of those unaccountable men in white, lugging a packing-case along the beach. Presently the window-frame hid him. Then I heard a key inserted and turned in the lock behind me. After a little while I heard through the locked door the noise of the staghounds, that had now been brought up from the beach. They were not barking, but sniffing and growling in a curious fashion. I could hear the rapid patter of their feet, and Montgomery's voice soothing them.

I was very much impressed by the elaborate secrecy of these two men regarding the contents of the place, and for some time I was thinking of that and of the unaccountable familiarity of the name of Moreau; but so odd is the human memory that I could not then recall that well-known name in its proper connection. From that my thoughts went to the indefinable queerness of the deformed man on the beach. I never saw such a gait, such odd motions as he pulled at the box. I recalled that none of these men had spoken to me, though most of them I had found looking at me at one time or another in a peculiarly furtive manner, quite unlike the frank stare of your unsophisticated savage. Indeed, they had all seemed remarkably taciturn, and when they did speak, endowed with very uncanny voices. What was wrong with them? Then I recalled the eyes of Montgomery's ungainly attendant.

Just as I was thinking of him he came in. He was now dressed in white, and carried a little tray with some coffee and boiled vegetables thereon. I could hardly repress a shuddering recoil as he came, bending amiably, and placed the tray before me on the table. Then astonishment paralysed me. Under his stringy black locks I saw his ear; it jumped upon me suddenly close to my face. The man had pointed ears, covered with a fine brown fur!

"Your breakfast, sair," he said.

I stared at his face without attempting to answer him. He turned and went towards the door, regarding me oddly over his shoulder. I followed him out with my eyes; and as I did so, by some odd trick of unconscious cerebration, there came surging into my head the phrase, "The Moreau Hollows"—was it? "The Moreau—" Ah! It sent my memory back ten years. "The Moreau Horrors!" The phrase drifted loose in my mind for a moment, and then I saw it in red lettering on a little buff-coloured pamphlet, to read which made one shiver and creep. Then I remembered distinctly all about it. That long-forgotten pamphlet came back with startling vividness to my mind. I had been a mere lad then, and Moreau was, I suppose, about fifty,—a prominent and masterful physiologist, well-known in scientific circles for his extraordinary imagination and his brutal directness in discussion.

Was this the same Moreau? He had published some very astonishing facts in connection with the transfusion of blood, and in addition was known to be doing valuable work on morbid growths. Then suddenly his career was closed. He had to leave England. A journalist obtained access to his laboratory in the capacity of laboratory-assistant, with the deliberate intention of making sensational exposures; and by the help of a shocking accident (if it was an accident), his gruesome pamphlet became notorious. On the day of its publication a wretched dog, flayed and otherwise mutilated, escaped from Moreau's house. It was in the silly season, and a prominent editor, a cousin of the temporary laboratory-assistant, appealed to the conscience of the nation. It was not the first time that conscience has turned against the methods of research. The doctor was simply howled out of the country. It may be that he deserved to be; but I still think that the tepid support of his fellow-investigators and his desertion by the great body of scientific workers was a shameful thing. Yet some of his experiments, by the journalist's account, were wantonly cruel. He might perhaps have purchased his social peace by abandoning his investigations; but he apparently preferred the latter, as most men would who have once fallen under the overmastering spell of research. He was unmarried, and had indeed nothing but his own interest to consider.

I felt convinced that this must be the same man. Everything pointed to it. It dawned upon me to what end the puma and the other animals—which had now been brought with other luggage into the enclosure behind the house—were destined; and a curious faint odour, the halitus of something familiar, an odour that had been in the background of my consciousness hitherto, suddenly came forward into the forefront of my thoughts. It was the antiseptic odour of the dissecting-room. I heard the puma growling through the wall, and one of the dogs yelped as though it had been struck.

Yet surely, and especially to another scientific man, there was nothing so horrible in vivisection as to account for this secrecy; and by some odd leap in my thoughts the pointed ears and luminous eyes of Montgomery's attendant came back again before

me with the sharpest definition. I stared before me out at the green sea, frothing under a freshening breeze, and let these and other strange memories of the last few days chase one another through my mind.

What could it all mean? A locked enclosure on a lonely island, a notorious vivisector, and these crippled and distorted men?

VIII. The Crying of the Puma

Montgomery interrupted my tangle of mystification and suspicion about one o'clock, and his grotesque attendant followed him with a tray bearing bread, some herbs and other eatables, a flask of whiskey, a jug of water, and three glasses and knives. I glanced askance at this strange creature, and found him watching me with his queer, restless eyes. Montgomery said he would lunch with me, but that Moreau was too preoccupied with some work to come.

160

"Moreau!" said I. "I know that name."

"The devil you do!" said he. "What an ass I was to mention it to you! I might have thought. Anyhow, it will give you an inkling of our—mysteries. Whiskey?"

"No, thanks; I'm an abstainer."

"I wish I'd been. But it's no use locking the door after the steed is stolen. It was that infernal stuff which led to my coming here, —that, and a foggy night. I thought myself in luck at the time, when Moreau offered to get me off. It's queer—"

"Montgomery," said I, suddenly, as the outer door closed, "why has your man pointed ears?"

165

"Damn!" he said, over his first mouthful of food. He stared at me for a moment, and then repeated, "Pointed ears?"

"Little points to them," said I, as calmly as possible, with a catch in my breath; "and a fine black fur at the edges?"

He helped himself to whiskey and water with great deliberation. "I was under the impression—that his hair covered his ears."

"I saw them as he stooped by me to put that coffee you sent to me on the table. And his eyes shine in the dark."

By this time Montgomery had recovered from the surprise of my question. "I always thought," he said deliberately, with a certain accentuation of his flavouring of lisp, "that there was something the matter with his ears, from the way he covered them. What were they like?"

170

I was persuaded from his manner that this ignorance was a pretence. Still, I could hardly tell the man that I thought him a liar. "Pointed," I said; "rather small and furry,—distinctly furry. But the whole man is one of the strangest beings I ever set eyes on."

A sharp, hoarse cry of animal pain came from the enclosure behind us. Its depth and volume testified to the puma. I saw Montgomery wince.

"Yes?" he said.

"Where did you pick up the creature?"

"San Francisco. He's an ugly brute, I admit. Half-witted, you know. Can't remember where he came from. But I'm used to him, you know. We both are. How does he strike you?"

175

"He's unnatural," I said. "There's something about him—don't think me fanciful, but it gives me a nasty little sensation, a tightening of my muscles, when he comes near me. It's a touch—of the diabolical, in fact."

Montgomery had stopped eating while I told him this. "Rum!" he said. "I can't see it." He resumed his meal. "I had no idea of it," he said, and masticated. "The crew of the schooner must have felt it the same. Made a dead set at the poor devil. You saw the captain?"

Suddenly the puma howled again, this time more painfully. Montgomery swore under his breath. I had half a mind to attack him about the men on the beach. Then the poor brute within gave vent to a series of short, sharp cries.

"Your men on the beach," said I; "what race are they?"

"Excellent fellows, aren't they?" said he, absentmindedly, knitting his brows as the animal yelled out sharply.

180

I said no more. There was another outcry worse than the former. He looked at me with his dull grey eyes, and then took some more whiskey. He tried to draw me into a discussion about

alcohol, professing to have saved my life with it. He seemed anxious to lay stress on the fact that I owed my life to him. I answered him distractedly.

Presently our meal came to an end; the misshapen monster with the pointed ears cleared the remains away, and Montgomery left me alone in the room again. All the time he had been in a state of ill-concealed irritation at the noise of the vivisected puma. He had spoken of his odd want of nerve, and left me to the obvious application.

I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance. I flung aside a crib of Horace I had been reading, and began to clench my fists, to bite my lips, and to pace the room. Presently I got to stopping my ears with my fingers.

The emotional appeal of those yells grew upon me steadily, grew at last to such an exquisite expression of suffering that I could stand it in that confined room no longer. I stepped out of the door into the slumberous heat of the late afternoon, and walking past the main entrance—locked again, I noticed—turned the corner of the wall.

The crying sounded even louder out of doors. It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe—I have thought since—I could have stood it well enough. It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us. But in spite of the brilliant sunlight and the green fans of the trees waving in the soothing sea-breeze, the world was a confusion, blurred with drifting black and red phantasms, until I was out of earshot of the house in the chequered wall.

185

IX. The Thing in the Forest

I STRODE through the undergrowth that clothed the ridge behind the house, scarcely heeding whither I went; passed on

through the shadow of a thick cluster of straight-stemmed trees beyond it, and so presently found myself some way on the other side of the ridge, and descending towards a streamlet that ran through a narrow valley. I paused and listened. The distance I had come, or the intervening masses of thicket, deadened any sound that might be coming from the enclosure. The air was still. Then with a rustle a rabbit emerged, and went scampering up the slope before me. I hesitated, and sat down in the edge of the shade.

The place was a pleasant one. The rivulet was hidden by the luxuriant vegetation of the banks save at one point, where I caught a triangular patch of its glittering water. On the farther side I saw through a bluish haze a tangle of trees and creepers, and above these again the luminous blue of the sky. Here and there a splash of white or crimson marked the blooming of some trailing epiphyte. I let my eyes wander over this scene for a while, and then began to turn over in my mind again the strange peculiarities of Montgomery's man. But it was too hot to think elaborately, and presently I fell into a tranquil state midway between dozing and waking.

From this I was aroused, after I know not how long, by a rustling amidst the greenery on the other side of the stream. For a moment I could see nothing but the waving summits of the ferns and reeds. Then suddenly upon the bank of the stream appeared something—at first I could not distinguish what it was. It bowed its round head to the water, and began to drink. Then I saw it was a man, going on all-fours like a beast. He was clothed in bluish cloth, and was of a copper-coloured hue, with black hair. It seemed that grotesque ugliness was an invariable character of these islanders. I could hear the suck of the water at his lips as he drank.

I leant forward to see him better, and a piece of lava, detached by my hand, went pattering down the slope. He looked up guiltily, and his eyes met mine. Forthwith he scrambled to his feet, and stood wiping his clumsy hand across his mouth and regarding me. His legs were scarcely half the length of his body. So, staring one another out of countenance, we remained for perhaps the space of a minute. Then, stopping to look back once or twice, he slunk off

among the bushes to the right of me, and I heard the swish of the fronds grow faint in the distance and die away. Long after he had disappeared, I remained sitting up staring in the direction of his retreat. My drowsy tranquillity had gone.

I was startled by a noise behind me, and turning suddenly saw the flapping white tail of a rabbit vanishing up the slope. I jumped to my feet. The apparition of this grotesque, half-bestial creature had suddenly populated the stillness of the afternoon for me. I looked around me rather nervously, and regretted that I was unarmed. Then I thought that the man I had just seen had been clothed in bluish cloth, had not been naked as a savage would have been; and I tried to persuade myself from that fact that he was after all probably a peaceful character, that the dull ferocity of his countenance belied him.

Yet I was greatly disturbed at the apparition. I walked to the left along the slope, turning my head about and peering this way and that among the straight stems of the trees. Why should a man go on all-fours and drink with his lips? Presently I heard an animal wailing again, and taking it to be the puma, I turned about and walked in a direction diametrically opposite to the sound. This led me down to the stream, across which I stepped and pushed my way up through the undergrowth beyond.

I was startled by a great patch of vivid scarlet on the ground, and going up to it found it to be a peculiar fungus, branched and corrugated like a foliaceous lichen, but deliquescing into slime at the touch; and then in the shadow of some luxuriant ferns I came upon an unpleasant thing,—the dead body of a rabbit covered with shining flies, but still warm and with the head torn off. I stopped aghast at the sight of the scattered blood. Here at least was one visitor to the island disposed of! There were no traces of other violence about it. It looked as though it had been suddenly snatched up and killed; and as I stared at the little furry body came the difficulty of how the thing had been done. The vague dread that had been in my mind since I had seen the inhuman face of the man at the stream grew distincter as I stood there. I began to realise the hardihood of my expedition among these unknown people. The thicket about me became altered to my imagination.

Every shadow became something more than a shadow,—became an ambush; every rustle became a threat. Invisible things seemed watching me. I resolved to go back to the enclosure on the beach. I suddenly turned away and thrust myself violently, possibly even frantically, through the bushes, anxious to get a clear space about me again.

I stopped just in time to prevent myself emerging upon an open space. It was a kind of glade in the forest, made by a fall; seedlings were already starting up to struggle for the vacant space; and beyond, the dense growth of stems and twining vines and splashes of fungus and flowers closed in again. Before me, squatting together upon the fungoid ruins of a huge fallen tree and still unaware of my approach, were three grotesque human figures. One was evidently a female; the other two were men. They were naked, save for swathings of scarlet cloth about the middle; and their skins were of a dull pinkish-drab colour, such as I had seen in no savages before. They had fat, heavy, chinless faces, retreating foreheads, and a scant bristly hair upon their heads. I never saw such bestial-looking creatures.

They were talking, or at least one of the men was talking to the other two, and all three had been too closely interested to heed the rustling of my approach. They swayed their heads and shoulders from side to side. The speaker's words came thick and sloppy, and though I could hear them distinctly I could not distinguish what he said. He seemed to me to be reciting some complicated gibberish. Presently his articulation became shriller, and spreading his hands he rose to his feet. At that the others began to gibber in unison, also rising to their feet, spreading their hands and swaying their bodies in rhythm with their chant. I noticed then the abnormal shortness of their legs, and their lank, clumsy feet. All three began slowly to circle round, raising and stamping their feet and waving their arms; a kind of tune crept into their rhythmic recitation, and a refrain,—"Aloola," or "Balloola," it sounded like. Their eyes began to sparkle, and their ugly faces to brighten, with an expression of strange pleasure. Saliva dripped from their lipless mouths.

Suddenly, as I watched their grotesque and unaccountable gestures, I perceived clearly for the first time what it was that had offended me, what had given me the two inconsistent and conflicting impressions of utter strangeness and yet of the strangest familiarity. The three creatures engaged in this mysterious rite were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal. Each of these creatures, despite its human form, its rag of clothing, and the rough humanity of its bodily form, had woven into it—into its movements, into the expression of its countenance, into its whole presence—some now irresistible suggestion of a hog, a swinish taint, the unmistakable mark of the beast.

I stood overcome by this amazing realisation and then the most horrible questionings came rushing into my mind. They began leaping in the air, first one and then the other, whooping and grunting. Then one slipped, and for a moment was on all-fours,—to recover, indeed, forthwith. But that transitory gleam of the true animalism of these monsters was enough.

I turned as noiselessly as possible, and becoming every now and then rigid with the fear of being discovered, as a branch cracked or a leaf rustled, I pushed back into the bushes. It was long before I grew bolder, and dared to move freely. My only idea for the moment was to get away from these foul beings, and I scarcely noticed that I had emerged upon a faint pathway amidst the trees. Then suddenly traversing a little glade, I saw with an unpleasant start two clumsy legs among the trees, walking with noiseless footsteps parallel with my course, and perhaps thirty yards away from me. The head and upper part of the body were hidden by a tangle of creeper. I stopped abruptly, hoping the creature did not see me. The feet stopped as I did. So nervous was I that I controlled an impulse to headlong flight with the utmost difficulty. Then looking hard, I distinguished through the interlacing network the head and body of the brute I had seen drinking. He moved his head. There was an emerald flash in his eyes as he glanced at me from the shadow of the trees, a half-luminous colour that vanished as he turned his head again. He was motionless for a moment, and then with a noiseless tread

began running through the green confusion. In another moment he had vanished behind some bushes. I could not see him, but I felt that he had stopped and was watching me again.

What on earth was he,—man or beast? What did he want with me? I had no weapon, not even a stick. Flight would be madness. At any rate the Thing, whatever it was, lacked the courage to attack me. Setting my teeth hard, I walked straight towards him. I was anxious not to show the fear that seemed chilling my backbone. I pushed through a tangle of tall white-flowered bushes, and saw him twenty paces beyond, looking over his shoulder at me and hesitating. I advanced a step or two, looking steadfastly into his eyes.

"Who are you?" said I.

He tried to meet my gaze. "No!" he said suddenly, and turning went bounding away from me through the undergrowth. Then he turned and stared at me again. His eyes shone brightly out of the dusk under the trees.

200

My heart was in my mouth; but I felt my only chance was bluff, and walked steadily towards him. He turned again, and vanished into the dusk. Once more I thought I caught the glint of his eyes, and that was all.

For the first time I realised how the lateness of the hour might affect me. The sun had set some minutes since, the swift dusk of the tropics was already fading out of the eastern sky, and a pioneer moth fluttered silently by my head. Unless I would spend the night among the unknown dangers of the mysterious forest, I must hasten back to the enclosure. The thought of a return to that pain-haunted refuge was extremely disagreeable, but still more so was the idea of being overtaken in the open by darkness and all that darkness might conceal. I gave one more look into the blue shadows that had swallowed up this odd creature, and then retraced my way down the slope towards the stream, going as I judged in the direction from which I had come.

I walked eagerly, my mind confused with many things, and presently found myself in a level place among scattered trees. The colourless clearness that comes after the sunset flush was darkling; the blue sky above grew momentarily deeper, and the

little stars one by one pierced the attenuated light; the interspaces of the trees, the gaps in the further vegetation, that had been hazy blue in the daylight, grew black and mysterious. I pushed on. The colour vanished from the world. The tree-tops rose against the luminous blue sky in inky silhouette, and all below that outline melted into one formless blackness. Presently the trees grew thinner, and the shrubby undergrowth more abundant. Then there was a desolate space covered with a white sand, and then another expanse of tangled bushes. I did not remember crossing the sand-opening before. I began to be tormented by a faint rustling upon my right hand. I thought at first it was fancy, for whenever I stopped there was silence, save for the evening breeze in the tree-tops. Then when I turned to hurry on again there was an echo to my footsteps.

I turned away from the thickets, keeping to the more open ground, and endeavouring by sudden turns now and then to surprise something in the act of creeping upon me. I saw nothing, and nevertheless my sense of another presence grew steadily. I increased my pace, and after some time came to a slight ridge, crossed it, and turned sharply, regarding it steadfastly from the further side. It came out black and clear-cut against the darkling sky; and presently a shapeless lump heaved up momentarily against the sky-line and vanished again. I felt assured now that my tawny-faced antagonist was stalking me once more; and coupled with that was another unpleasant realisation, that I had lost my way.

For a time I hurried on hopelessly perplexed, and pursued by that stealthy approach. Whatever it was, the Thing either lacked the courage to attack me, or it was waiting to take me at some disadvantage. I kept studiously to the open. At times I would turn and listen; and presently I had half persuaded myself that my pursuer had abandoned the chase, or was a mere creation of my disordered imagination. Then I heard the sound of the sea. I quickened my footsteps almost into a run, and immediately there was a stumble in my rear.

I turned suddenly, and stared at the uncertain trees behind me. One black shadow seemed to leap into another. I listened, rigid,

and heard nothing but the creep of the blood in my ears. I thought that my nerves were unstrung, and that my imagination was tricking me, and turned resolutely towards the sound of the sea again.

In a minute or so the trees grew thinner, and I emerged upon a bare, low headland running out into the sombre water. The night was calm and clear, and the reflection of the growing multitude of the stars shivered in the tranquil heaving of the sea. Some way out, the wash upon an irregular band of reef shone with a pallid light of its own. Westward I saw the zodiacal light mingling with the yellow brilliance of the evening star. The coast fell away from me to the east, and westward it was hidden by the shoulder of the cape. Then I recalled the fact that Moreau's beach lay to the west.

A twig snapped behind me, and there was a rustle. I turned, and stood facing the dark trees. I could see nothing—or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness. So I stood for perhaps a minute, and then, with an eye to the trees still, turned westward to cross the headland; and as I moved, one among the lurking shadows moved to follow me.

My heart beat quickly. Presently the broad sweep of a bay to the westward became visible, and I halted again. The noiseless shadow halted a dozen yards from me. A little point of light shone on the further bend of the curve, and the grey sweep of the sandy beach lay faint under the starlight. Perhaps two miles away was that little point of light. To get to the beach I should have to go through the trees where the shadows lurked, and down a bushy slope.

I could see the Thing rather more distinctly now. It was no animal, for it stood erect. At that I opened my mouth to speak, and found a hoarse phlegm choked my voice. I tried again, and shouted, "Who is there?" There was no answer. I advanced a step. The Thing did not move, only gathered itself together. My foot struck a stone. That gave me an idea. Without taking my eyes off the black form before me, I stooped and picked up this lump of rock; but at my motion the Thing turned abruptly as a dog might have done, and slunk obliquely into the further darkness. Then I

recalled a schoolboy expedient against big dogs, and twisted the rock into my handkerchief, and gave this a turn round my wrist. I heard a movement further off among the shadows, as if the Thing was in retreat. Then suddenly my tense excitement gave way; I broke into a profuse perspiration and fell a-trembling, with my adversary routed and this weapon in my hand.

It was some time before I could summon resolution to go down through the trees and bushes upon the flank of the headland to the beach. At last I did it at a run; and as I emerged from the thicket upon the sand, I heard some other body come crashing after me. At that I completely lost my head with fear, and began running along the sand. Forthwith there came the swift patter of soft feet in pursuit. I gave a wild cry, and redoubled my pace. Some dim, black things about three or four times the size of rabbits went running or hopping up from the beach towards the bushes as I passed.

So long as I live, I shall remember the terror of that chase. I ran near the water's edge, and heard every now and then the splash of the feet that gained upon me. Far away, hopelessly far, was the yellow light. All the night about us was black and still. Splash, splash, came the pursuing feet, nearer and nearer. I felt my breath going, for I was quite out of training; it whooped as I drew it, and I felt a pain like a knife at my side. I perceived the Thing would come up with me long before I reached the enclosure, and, desperate and sobbing for my breath, I wheeled round upon it and struck at it as it came up to me,—struck with all my strength. The stone came out of the sling of the handkerchief as I did so. As I turned, the Thing, which had been running on all-fours, rose to its feet, and the missile fell fair on its left temple. The skull rang loud, and the animal-man blundered into me, thrust me back with its hands, and went staggering past me to fall headlong upon the sand with its face in the water; and there it lay still.

I could not bring myself to approach that black heap. I left it there, with the water rippling round it, under the still stars, and giving it a wide berth pursued my way towards the yellow glow of the house; and presently, with a positive effect of relief, came

the pitiful moaning of the puma, the sound that had originally driven me out to explore this mysterious island. At that, though I was faint and horribly fatigued, I gathered together all my strength, and began running again towards the light. I thought I heard a voice calling me.

X. The Crying of the Man

As I drew near the house I saw that the light shone from the open door of my room; and then I heard coming from out of the darkness at the side of that orange oblong of light, the voice of Montgomery shouting, "Prendick!" I continued running. Presently I heard him again. I replied by a feeble "Hullo!" and in another moment had staggered up to him.

"Where have you been?" said he, holding me at arm's length, so that the light from the door fell on my face. "We have both been so busy that we forgot you until about half an hour ago." He led me into the room and sat me down in the deck chair. For awhile I was blinded by the light. "We did not think you would start to explore this island of ours without telling us," he said; and then, "I was afraid—But—what—Hullo!"

215

My last remaining strength slipped from me, and my head fell forward on my chest. I think he found a certain satisfaction in giving me brandy.

"For God's sake," said I, "fasten that door."

"You've been meeting some of our curiosities, eh?" said he.

He locked the door and turned to me again. He asked me no questions, but gave me some more brandy and water and pressed me to eat. I was in a state of collapse. He said something vague about his forgetting to warn me, and asked me briefly when I left the house and what I had seen.

I answered him as briefly, in fragmentary sentences. "Tell me what it all means," said I, in a state bordering on hysterics.

220

"It's nothing so very dreadful," said he. "But I think you have had about enough for one day." The puma suddenly gave a sharp yell of pain. At that he swore under his breath. "I'm damned," said he, "if this place is not as bad as Gower Street, with its cats."

"Montgomery," said I, "what was that thing that came after me? Was it a beast or was it a man?"

"If you don't sleep to-night," he said, "you'll be off your head to-morrow."

I stood up in front of him. "What was that thing that came after me?" I asked.

He looked me squarely in the eyes, and twisted his mouth askew. His eyes, which had seemed animated a minute before, went dull. "From your account," said he, "I'm thinking it was a bogle."

225

I felt a gust of intense irritation, which passed as quickly as it came. I flung myself into the chair again, and pressed my hands on my forehead. The puma began once more.

Montgomery came round behind me and put his hand on my shoulder. "Look here, Prendick," he said, "I had no business to let you drift out into this silly island of ours. But it's not so bad as you feel, man. Your nerves are worked to rags. Let me give you something that will make you sleep. *That*—will keep on for hours yet. You must simply get to sleep, or I won't answer for it."

I did not reply. I bowed forward, and covered my face with my hands. Presently he returned with a small measure containing a dark liquid. This he gave me. I took it unresistingly, and he helped me into the hammock.

When I awoke, it was broad day. For a little while I lay flat, staring at the roof above me. The rafters, I observed, were made out of the timbers of a ship. Then I turned my head, and saw a meal prepared for me on the table. I perceived that I was hungry, and prepared to clamber out of the hammock, which, very politely anticipating my intention, twisted round and deposited me upon all-fours on the floor.

I got up and sat down before the food. I had a heavy feeling in my head, and only the vaguest memory at first of the things that had happened over night. The morning breeze blew very pleasantly through the unglazed window, and that and the food contributed to the sense of animal comfort which I experienced. Presently the door behind me—the door inward towards the yard of the enclosure—opened. I turned and saw Montgomery's face.

230

"All right," said he. "I'm frightfully busy." And he shut the door.

Afterwards I discovered that he forgot to re-lock it. Then I recalled the expression of his face the previous night, and with that the memory of all I had experienced reconstructed itself before me. Even as that fear came back to me came a cry from within; but this time it was not the cry of a puma. I put down the mouthful that hesitated upon my lips, and listened. Silence, save for the whisper of the morning breeze. I began to think my ears had deceived me.

After a long pause I resumed my meal, but with my ears still vigilant. Presently I heard something else, very faint and low. I sat as if frozen in my attitude. Though it was faint and low, it moved me more profoundly than all that I had hitherto heard of the abominations behind the wall. There was no mistake this time in the quality of the dim, broken sounds; no doubt at all of their source. For it was groaning, broken by sobs and gasps of anguish. It was no brute this time; it was a human being in torment!

As I realised this I rose, and in three steps had crossed the room, seized the handle of the door into the yard, and flung it open before me.

"Prendick, man! Stop!" cried Montgomery, intervening.

235

A startled deerhound yelped and snarled. There was blood, I saw, in the sink,—brown, and some scarlet—and I smelt the peculiar smell of carbolic acid. Then through an open doorway beyond, in the dim light of the shadow, I saw something bound painfully upon a framework, scarred, red, and bandaged; and then blotting this out appeared the face of old Moreau, white and terrible. In a moment he had gripped me by the shoulder with a hand that was smeared red, had twisted me off my feet, and flung me headlong back into my own room. He lifted me as though I was a little child. I fell at full length upon the floor, and the door slammed and shut out the passionate intensity of his face. Then I heard the key turn in the lock, and Montgomery's voice in expostulation.

"Ruin the work of a lifetime," I heard Moreau say.

"He does not understand," said Montgomery. and other things that were inaudible.

"I can't spare the time yet," said Moreau.

The rest I did not hear. I picked myself up and stood trembling, my mind a chaos of the most horrible misgivings. Could it be possible, I thought, that such a thing as the vivisection of men was carried on here? The question shot like lightning across a tumultuous sky; and suddenly the clouded horror of my mind condensed into a vivid realisation of my own danger.

240

XI. The Hunting of the Man

It came before my mind with an unreasonable hope of escape that the outer door of my room was still open to me. I was convinced now, absolutely assured, that Moreau had been vivisectioning a human being. All the time since I had heard his name, I had been trying to link in my mind in some way the grotesque animalism of the islanders with his abominations; and now I thought I saw it all. The memory of his work on the transfusion of blood recurred to me. These creatures I had seen were the victims of some hideous experiment. These sickening scoundrels had merely intended to keep me back, to fool me with their display of confidence, and presently to fall upon me with a fate more horrible than death,—with torture; and after torture the most hideous degradation it is possible to conceive,—to send me off a lost soul, a beast, to the rest of their Comus rout.

I looked round for some weapon. Nothing. Then with an inspiration I turned over the deck chair, put my foot on the side of it, and tore away the side rail. It happened that a nail came away with the wood, and projecting, gave a touch of danger to an otherwise petty weapon. I heard a step outside, and incontinently flung open the door and found Montgomery within a yard of it. He meant to lock the outer door! I raised this nailed stick of mine and cut at his face; but he sprang back. I hesitated a moment, then turned and fled, round the corner of the house. "Prendick, man!" I heard his astonished cry, "don't be a silly ass, man!"

Another minute, thought I, and he would have had me locked in, and as ready as a hospital rabbit for my fate. He emerged behind the corner, for I heard him shout, "Prendick!" Then he began to run after me, shouting things as he ran. This time running blindly, I went northeastward in a direction at right angles to my previous expedition. Once, as I went running headlong up the beach, I glanced over my shoulder and saw his attendant with him. I ran furiously up the slope, over it, then turning eastward along a rocky valley fringed on either side with jungle I ran for perhaps a mile altogether, my chest straining, my heart beating in my ears; and then hearing nothing of Montgomery or his man, and feeling upon the verge of exhaustion, I doubled sharply back towards the beach as I judged, and lay down in the shelter of a canebrake. There I remained for a long time, too fearful to move, and indeed too fearful even to plan a course of action. The wild scene about me lay sleeping silently under the sun, and the only sound near me was the thin hum of some small gnats that had discovered me. Presently I became aware of a drowsy breathing sound, the sougning of the sea upon the beach.

After about an hour I heard Montgomery shouting my name, far away to the north. That set me thinking of my plan of action. As I interpreted it then, this island was inhabited only by these two vivisectors and their animalised victims. Some of these no doubt they could press into their service against me if need arose. I knew both Moreau and Montgomery carried revolvers; and, save for a feeble bar of deal spiked with a small nail, the merest mockery of a mace, I was unarmed.

So I lay still there, until I began to think of food and drink; and at that thought the real hopelessness of my position came home to me. I knew no way of getting anything to eat. I was too ignorant of botany to discover any resort of root or fruit that might lie about me; I had no means of trapping the few rabbits upon the island. It grew blanker the more I turned the prospect over. At last in the desperation of my position, my mind turned to the animal men I had encountered. I tried to find some hope in what I remembered of them. In turn I recalled each one I had seen, and tried to draw some augury of assistance from my memory.

Then suddenly I heard a staghound bay, and at that realised a new danger. I took little time to think, or they would have caught me then, but snatching up my nailed stick, rushed headlong from my hiding-place towards the sound of the sea. I remember a growth of thorny plants, with spines that stabbed like pen-knives. I emerged bleeding and with torn clothes upon the lip of a long creek opening northward. I went straight into the water without a minute's hesitation, wading up the creek, and presently finding myself kneedeep in a little stream. I scrambled out at last on the westward bank, and with my heart beating loudly in my ears, crept into a tangle of ferns to await the issue. I heard the dog (there was only one) draw nearer, and yelp when it came to the thorns. Then I heard no more, and presently began to think I had escaped.

The minutes passed; the silence lengthened out, and at last after an hour of security my courage began to return to me. By this time I was no longer very much terrified or very miserable. I had, as it were, passed the limit of terror and despair. I felt now that my life was practically lost, and that persuasion made me capable of daring anything. I had even a certain wish to encounter Moreau face to face; and as I had waded into the water, I remembered that if I were too hard pressed at least one path of escape from torment still lay open to me,—they could not very well prevent my drowning myself. I had half a mind to drown myself then; but an odd wish to see the whole adventure out, a queer, impersonal, spectacular interest in myself, restrained me. I stretched my limbs, sore and painful from the pricks of the spiny plants, and stared around me at the trees; and, so suddenly that it seemed to jump out of the green tracery about it, my eyes lit upon a black face watching me. I saw that it was the simian creature who had met the launch upon the beach. He was clinging to the oblique stem of a palm-tree. I gripped my stick, and stood up facing him. He began chattering. "You, you, you," was all I could distinguish at first. Suddenly he dropped from the tree, and in another moment was holding the fronds apart and staring curiously at me.

I did not feel the same repugnance towards this creature which I had experienced in my encounters with the other Beast Men. "You," he said, "in the boat." He was a man, then,—at least as much of a man as Montgomery's attendant,—for he could talk.

"Yes," I said, "I came in the boat. From the ship."

"Oh!" he said, and his bright, restless eyes travelled over me, to my hands, to the stick I carried, to my feet, to the tattered places in my coat, and the cuts and scratches I had received from the thorns. He seemed puzzled at something. His eyes came back to my hands. He held his own hand out and counted his digits slowly, "One, two, three, four, five—eigh?"

250

I did not grasp his meaning then; afterwards I was to find that a great proportion of these Beast People had malformed hands, lacking sometimes even three digits. But guessing this was in some way a greeting, I did the same thing by way of reply. He grinned with immense satisfaction. Then his swift roving glance went round again; he made a swift movement—and vanished. The fern fronds he had stood between came swishing together.

I pushed out of the brake after him, and was astonished to find him swinging cheerfully by one lank arm from a rope of creepers that looped down from the foliage overhead. His back was to me.

"Hullo!" said I.

He came down with a twisting jump, and stood facing me.

"I say," said I, "where can I get something to eat?"

255

"Eat!" he said. "Eat Man's food, now." And his eye went back to the swing of ropes. "At the huts."

"But where are the huts?"

"Oh!"

"I'm new, you know."

At that he swung round, and set off at a quick walk. All his motions were curiously rapid. "Come along," said he.

260

I went with him to see the adventure out. I guessed the huts were some rough shelter where he and some more of these Beast People lived. I might perhaps find them friendly, find some handle in their minds to take hold of. I did not know how far they had forgotten their human heritage.

My ape-like companion trotted along by my side, with his hands hanging down and his jaw thrust forward. I wondered what memory he might have in him. "How long have you been on this island?" said I.

"How long?" he asked; and after having the question repeated, he held up three fingers.

The creature was little better than an idiot. I tried to make out what he meant by that, and it seems I bored him. After another question or two he suddenly left my side and went leaping at some fruit that hung from a tree. He pulled down a handful of prickly husks and went on eating the contents. I noted this with satisfaction, for here at least was a hint for feeding. I tried him with some other questions, but his chattering, prompt responses were as often as not quite at cross purposes with my question. Some few were appropriate, others quite parrot-like.

I was so intent upon these peculiarities that I scarcely noticed the path we followed. Presently we came to trees, all charred and brown, and so to a bare place covered with a yellow-white incrustation, across which a drifting smoke, pungent in whiffs to nose and eyes, went drifting. On our right, over a shoulder of bare rock, I saw the level blue of the sea. The path coiled down abruptly into a narrow ravine between two tumbled and knotty masses of blackish scoriae. Into this we plunged.

It was extremely dark, this passage, after the blinding sunlight reflected from the sulphurous ground. Its walls grew steep, and approached each other. Blotches of green and crimson drifted across my eyes. My conductor stopped suddenly. "Home!" said he, and I stood in a floor of a chasm that was at first absolutely dark to me. I heard some strange noises, and thrust the knuckles of my left hand into my eyes. I became aware of a disagreeable odor, like that of a monkey's cage ill-cleaned. Beyond, the rock opened again upon a gradual slope of sunlit greenery, and on either hand the light smote down through narrow ways into the central gloom.

265

XII. The Sayers of the Law

Then something cold touched my hand. I started violently, and saw close to me a dim pinkish thing, looking more like a flayed child than anything else in the world. The creature had exactly the mild but repulsive features of a sloth, the same low forehead and slow gestures.

As the first shock of the change of light passed, I saw about me more distinctly. The little sloth-like creature was standing and staring at me. My conductor had vanished. The place was a narrow passage between high walls of lava, a crack in the knotted rock, and on either side interwoven heaps of sea-mat, palm-fans, and reeds leaning against the rock formed rough and impenetrably dark dens. The winding way up the ravine between these was scarcely three yards wide, and was disfigured by lumps of decaying fruit-pulp and other refuse, which accounted for the disagreeable stench of the place.

The little pink sloth-creature was still blinking at me when my Ape-man reappeared at the aperture of the nearest of these dens, and beckoned me in. As he did so a slouching monster wriggled out of one of the places, further up this strange street, and stood up in featureless silhouette against the bright green beyond, staring at me. I hesitated, having half a mind to bolt the way I had come; and then, determined to go through with the adventure, I gripped my nailed stick about the middle and crawled into the little evil-smelling lean-to after my conductor.

It was a semi-circular space, shaped like the half of a bee-hive; and against the rocky wall that formed the inner side of it was a pile of variegated fruits, cocoa-nuts among others. Some rough vessels of lava and wood stood about the floor, and one on a rough stool. There was no fire. In the darkest corner of the hut sat a shapeless mass of darkness that grunted "Hey!" as I came in, and my Ape-man stood in the dim light of the doorway and held out a split cocoa-nut to me as I crawled into the other corner and squatted down. I took it, and began gnawing it, as serenely as possible, in spite of a certain trepidation and the nearly intolerable closeness of the den. The little pink sloth-creature stood in the aperture of the hut, and something else with a drab face and bright eyes came staring over its shoulder.

"Hey!" came out of the lump of mystery opposite. "It is a man."

"It is a man," gabbled my conductor, "a man, a man, a five-man, like me."

"Shut up!" said the voice from the dark, and grunted. I gnawed my cocoa-nut amid an impressive stillness.

I peered hard into the blackness, but could distinguish nothing.

"It is a man," the voice repeated. "He comes to live with us?"

275

It was a thick voice, with something in it—a kind of whistling overtone—that struck me as peculiar; but the English accent was strangely good.

The Ape-man looked at me as though he expected something. I perceived the pause was interrogative. "He comes to live with you," I said.

"It is a man. He must learn the Law."

I began to distinguish now a deeper blackness in the black, a vague outline of a hunched-up figure. Then I noticed the opening of the place was darkened by two more black heads. My hand tightened on my stick.

The thing in the dark repeated in a louder tone, "Say the words." I had missed its last remark. "Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law," it repeated in a kind of sing-song.

280

I was puzzled.

"Say the words," said the Ape-man, repeating, and the figures in the doorway echoed this, with a threat in the tone of their voices.

I realised that I had to repeat this idiotic formula; and then began the insanest ceremony. The voice in the dark began intoning a mad litany, line by line, and I and the rest to repeat it. As they did so, they swayed from side to side in the oddest way, and beat their hands upon their knees; and I followed their example. I could have imagined I was already dead and in another world. That dark hut, these grotesque dim figures, just flecked here and there by a glimmer of light, and all of them swaying in unison and chanting,

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

285

"Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to claw the Bark of Trees; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

And so from the prohibition of these acts of folly, on to the prohibition of what I thought then were the maddest, most impossible, and most indecent things one could well imagine. A kind of rhythmic fervour fell on all of us; we gabbled and swayed faster and faster, repeating this amazing Law. Superficially the contagion of these brutes was upon me, but deep down within me the laughter and disgust struggled together. We ran through a long list of prohibitions, and then the chant swung round to a new formula.

"*His* is the House of Pain.

290

"*His* is the Hand that makes.

"*His* is the Hand that wounds.

"*His* is the Hand that heals."

And so on for another long series, mostly quite incomprehensible gibberish to me about *Him*, whoever he might be. I could have fancied it was a dream, but never before have I heard chanting in a dream.

"*His* is the lightning flash," we sang. "*His* is the deep, salt sea."

295

A horrible fancy came into my head that Moreau, after animalising these men, had infected their dwarfed brains with a kind of deification of himself. However, I was too keenly aware of white teeth and strong claws about me to stop my chanting on that account.

"*His* are the stars in the sky."

At last that song ended. I saw the Ape-man's face shining with perspiration; and my eyes being now accustomed to the darkness, I saw more distinctly the figure in the corner from which the voice came. It was the size of a man, but it seemed covered with a dull grey hair almost like a Skye-terrier. What was it? What were they all? Imagine yourself surrounded by all the most horrible cripples and maniacs it is possible to conceive, and you may understand a little of my feelings with these grotesque caricatures of humanity about me.

"He is a five-man, a five-man, a five-man—like me," said the Ape-man.

I held out my hands. The grey creature in the corner leant forward. 300

"Not to run on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?" he said.

He put out a strangely distorted talon and gripped my fingers. The thing was almost like the hoof of a deer produced into claws. I could have yelled with surprise and pain. His face came forward and peered at my nails, came forward into the light of the opening of the hut and I saw with a quivering disgust that it was like the face of neither man nor beast, but a mere shock of grey hair, with three shadowy over-archings to mark the eyes and mouth.

"He has little nails," said this grisly creature in his hairy beard. "It is well."

He threw my hand down, and instinctively I gripped my stick.

"Eat roots and herbs; it is His will," said the Ape-man. 305

"I am the Sayer of the Law," said the grey figure. "Here come all that be new to learn the Law. I sit in the darkness and say the Law."

"It is even so," said one of the beasts in the doorway.

"Evil are the punishments of those who break the Law. None escape."

"None escape," said the Beast Folk, glancing furtively at one another.

"None, none," said the Ape-man,— "none escape. See! I did a little thing, a wrong thing, once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking. None could understand. I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great. He is good!" 310

"None escape," said the grey creature in the corner.

"None escape," said the Beast People, looking askance at one another.

"For every one the want that is bad," said the grey Sayer of the Law. "What you will want we do not know; we shall know. Some want to follow things that move, to watch and slink and wait and spring; to kill and bite, bite deep and rich, sucking the blood. It is

bad. 'Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men? Not to eat Flesh or Fish; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'"

"None escape," said a dappled brute standing in the doorway.

"For every one the want is bad," said the grey Sayer of the Law. "Some want to go tearing with teeth and hands into the roots of things, snuffing into the earth. It is bad."

"None escape," said the men in the door.

"Some go clawing trees; some go scratching at the graves of the dead; some go fighting with foreheads or feet or claws; some bite suddenly, none giving occasion; some love uncleanness."

"None escape," said the Ape-man, scratching his calf.

"None escape," said the little pink sloth-creature.

"Punishment is sharp and sure. Therefore learn the Law. Say the words."

And incontinently he began again the strange litany of the Law, and again I and all these creatures began singing and swaying. My head reeled with this jabbering and the close stench of the place; but I kept on, trusting to find presently some chance of a new development.

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

We were making such a noise that I noticed nothing of a tumult outside, until some one, who I think was one of the two Swine Men I had seen, thrust his head over the little pink sloth-creature and shouted something excitedly, something that I did not catch. Incontinently those at the opening of the hut vanished; my Ape-man rushed out; the thing that had sat in the dark followed him (I only observed that it was big and clumsy, and covered with silvery hair), and I was left alone. Then before I reached the aperture I heard the yelp of a staghound.

In another moment I was standing outside the hovel, my chair-rail in my hand, every muscle of me quivering. Before me were the clumsy backs of perhaps a score of these Beast People, their misshapen heads half hidden by their shoulder-blades. They were gesticulating excitedly. Other half-animal faces glared interrogation out of the hovels. Looking in the direction in which they faced, I saw coming through the haze under the trees beyond the end of the passage of dens the dark figure and awful white

315

320

face of Moreau. He was holding the leaping staghound back, and close behind him came Montgomery revolver in hand.

For a moment I stood horror-struck. I turned and saw the passage behind me blocked by another heavy brute, with a huge grey face and twinkling little eyes, advancing towards me. I looked round and saw to the right of me and a half-dozen yards in front of me a narrow gap in the wall of rock through which a ray of light slanted into the shadows.

"Stop!" cried Moreau as I strode towards this, and then, "Hold him!"

At that, first one face turned towards me and then others. Their bestial minds were happily slow. I dashed my shoulder into a clumsy monster who was turning to see what Moreau meant, and flung him forward into another. I felt his hands fly round, clutching at me and missing me. The little pink sloth-creature dashed at me, and I gashed down its ugly face with the nail in my stick and in another minute was scrambling up a steep side pathway, a kind of sloping chimney, out of the ravine. I heard a howl behind me, and cries of "Catch him!" "Hold him!" and the grey-faced creature appeared behind me and jammed his huge bulk into the cleft. "Go on! go on!" they howled. I clambered up the narrow cleft in the rock and came out upon the sulphur on the westward side of the village of the Beast Men.

That gap was altogether fortunate for me, for the narrow chimney, slanting obliquely upward, must have impeded the nearer pursuers. I ran over the white space and down a steep slope, through a scattered growth of trees, and came to a low-lying stretch of tall reeds, through which I pushed into a dark, thick undergrowth that was black and succulent under foot. As I plunged into the reeds, my foremost pursuers emerged from the gap. I broke my way through this undergrowth for some minutes. The air behind me and about me was soon full of threatening cries. I heard the tumult of my pursuers in the gap up the slope, then the crashing of the reeds, and every now and then the crackling crash of a branch. Some of the creatures roared like excited beasts of prey. The staghound yelped to the left. I heard Moreau and Montgomery shouting in the same direction. I turned

sharply to the right. It seemed to me even then that I heard Montgomery shouting for me to run for my life.

Presently the ground gave rich and oozy under my feet; but I was desperate and went headlong into it, struggled through kneedeep, and so came to a winding path among tall canes. The noise of my pursuers passed away to my left. In one place three strange, pink, hopping animals, about the size of cats, bolted before my footsteps. This pathway ran up hill, across another open space covered with white incrustation, and plunged into a canebrake again. Then suddenly it turned parallel with the edge of a steep-walled gap, which came without warning, like the ha-ha of an English park,—turned with an unexpected abruptness. I was still running with all my might, and I never saw this drop until I was flying headlong through the air.

I fell on my forearms and head, among thorns, and rose with a torn ear and bleeding face. I had fallen into a precipitous ravine, rocky and thorny, full of a hazy mist which drifted about me in wisps, and with a narrow streamlet from which this mist came meandering down the centre. I was astonished at this thin fog in the full blaze of daylight; but I had no time to stand wondering then. I turned to my right, down-stream, hoping to come to the sea in that direction, and so have my way open to drown myself. It was only later I found that I had dropped my nailed stick in my fall.

Presently the ravine grew narrower for a space, and carelessly I stepped into the stream. I jumped out again pretty quickly, for the water was almost boiling. I noticed too there was a thin sulphurous scum drifting upon its coiling water. Almost immediately came a turn in the ravine, and the indistinct blue horizon. The nearer sea was flashing the sun from a myriad facets. I saw my death before me; but I was hot and panting, with the warm blood oozing out on my face and running pleasantly through my veins. I felt more than a touch of exultation too, at having distanced my pursuers. It was not in me then to go out and drown myself yet. I stared back the way I had come.

I listened. Save for the hum of the gnats and the chirp of some small insects that hopped among the thorns, the air was absolutely

still. Then came the yelp of a dog, very faint, and a chattering and gibbering, the snap of a whip, and voices. They grew louder, then fainter again. The noise receded up the stream and faded away. For a while the chase was over; but I knew now how much hope of help for me lay in the Beast People.

XIII. A Parley

I TURNED again and went on down towards the sea. I found the hot stream broadened out to a shallow, weedy sand, in which an abundance of crabs and long-bodied, many-legged creatures started from my footfall. I walked to the very edge of the salt water, and then I felt I was safe. I turned and stared, arms akimbo, at the thick green behind me, into which the steamy ravine cut like a smoking gash. But, as I say, I was too full of excitement and (a true saying, though those who have never known danger may doubt it) too desperate to die.

Then it came into my head that there was one chance before me yet. While Moreau and Montgomery and their bestial rabble chased me through the island, might I not go round the beach until I came to their enclosure,—make a flank march upon them, in fact, and then with a rock lugged out of their loosely-built wall, perhaps, smash in the lock of the smaller door and see what I could find (knife, pistol, or what not) to fight them with when they returned? It was at any rate something to try.

So I turned to the westward and walked along by the water's edge. The setting sun flashed his blinding heat into my eyes. The slight Pacific tide was running in with a gentle ripple. Presently the shore fell away southward, and the sun came round upon my right hand. Then suddenly, far in front of me, I saw first one and then several figures emerging from the bushes,—Moreau, with his grey staghound, then Montgomery, and two others. At that I stopped.

They saw me, and began gesticulating and advancing. I stood watching them approach. The two Beast Men came running forward to cut me off from the undergrowth, inland. Montgomery

came, running also, but straight towards me. Moreau followed slower with the dog.

At last I roused myself from my inaction, and turning seaward walked straight into the water. The water was very shallow at first. I was thirty yards out before the waves reached to my waist. Dimly I could see the intertidal creatures darting away from my feet.

"What are you doing, man?" cried Montgomery.

I turned, standing waist deep, and stared at them. Montgomery stood panting at the margin of the water. His face was bright-red with exertion, his long flaxen hair blown about his head, and his dropping nether lip showed his irregular teeth. Moreau was just coming up, his face pale and firm, and the dog at his hand barked at me. Both men had heavy whips. Farther up the beach stared the Beast Men.

"What am I doing? I am going to drown myself," said I.

340

Montgomery and Moreau looked at each other. "Why?" asked Moreau.

"Because that is better than being tortured by you."

"I told you so," said Montgomery, and Moreau said something in a low tone.

"What makes you think I shall torture you?" asked Moreau.

"What I saw," I said. "And those—yonder."

345

"Hush!" said Moreau, and held up his hand.

"I will not," said I. "They were men: what are they now? I at least will not be like them."

I looked past my interlocutors. Up the beach were M'ling, Montgomery's attendant, and one of the white-swathed brutes from the boat. Farther up, in the shadow of the trees, I saw my little Ape-man, and behind him some other dim figures.

"Who are these creatures?" said I, pointing to them and raising my voice more and more that it might reach them. "They were men, men like yourselves, whom you have infected with some bestial taint,—men whom you have enslaved, and whom you still fear.

"You who listen," I cried, pointing now to Moreau and shouting past him to the Beast Men,—"You who listen! Do you

350

not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why, then, do you fear them? You are many—"

"For God's sake," cried Montgomery, "stop that, Prendick!"

"Prendick!" cried Moreau.

They both shouted together, as if to drown my voice; and behind them lowered the staring faces of the Beast Men, wondering, their deformed hands hanging down, their shoulders hunched up. They seemed, as I fancied, to be trying to understand me, to remember, I thought, something of their human past.

I went on shouting, I scarcely remember what,—that Moreau and Montgomery could be killed, that they were not to be feared: that was the burden of what I put into the heads of the Beast People. I saw the green-eyed man in the dark rags, who had met me on the evening of my arrival, come out from among the trees, and others followed him, to hear me better. At last for want of breath I paused.

"Listen to me for a moment," said the steady voice of Moreau; "and then say what you will."

355

"Well?" said I.

He coughed, thought, then shouted: "Latin, Prendick! bad Latin, schoolboy Latin; but try and understand. *Hi non sunt homines; sunt animalia qui nos habemus*—vivisected. A humanising process. I will explain. Come ashore."

I laughed. "A pretty story," said I. "They talk, build houses. They were men. It's likely I'll come ashore."

"The water just beyond where you stand is deep—and full of sharks."

"That's my way," said I. "Short and sharp. Presently."

360

"Wait a minute." He took something out of his pocket that flashed back the sun, and dropped the object at his feet. "That's a loaded revolver," said he. "Montgomery here will do the same. Now we are going up the beach until you are satisfied the distance is safe. Then come and take the revolvers."

"Not I! You have a third between you."

"I want you to think over things, Prendick. In the first place, I never asked you to come upon this island. If we vivisected men, we should import men, not beasts. In the next, we had you

drugged last night, had we wanted to work you any mischief; and in the next, now your first panic is over and you can think a little, is Montgomery here quite up to the character you give him? We have chased you for your good. Because this island is full of inimical phenomena. Besides, why should we want to shoot you when you have just offered to drown yourself?"

"Why did you set—your people onto me when I was in the hut?"

"We felt sure of catching you, and bringing you out of danger. Afterwards we drew away from the scent, for your good."

365

I mused. It seemed just possible. Then I remembered something again. "But I saw," said I, "in the enclosure—"

"That was the puma."

"Look here, Prendick," said Montgomery, "you're a silly ass! Come out of the water and take these revolvers, and talk. We can't do anything more than we could do now."

I will confess that then, and indeed always, I distrusted and dreaded Moreau; but Montgomery was a man I felt I understood.

"Go up the beach," said I, after thinking, and added, "holding your hands up."

370

"Can't do that," said Montgomery, with an explanatory nod over his shoulder. "Undignified."

"Go up to the trees, then," said I, "as you please."

"It's a damned silly ceremony," said Montgomery.

Both turned and faced the six or seven grotesque creatures, who stood there in the sunlight, solid, casting shadows, moving, and yet so incredibly unreal. Montgomery cracked his whip at them, and forthwith they all turned and fled helter-skelter into the trees; and when Montgomery and Moreau were at a distance I judged sufficient, I waded ashore, and picked up and examined the revolvers. To satisfy myself against the subtlest trickery, I discharged one at a round lump of lava, and had the satisfaction of seeing the stone pulverised and the beach splashed with lead. Still I hesitated for a moment.

"I'll take the risk," said I, at last; and with a revolver in each hand I walked up the beach towards them.

375

"That's better," said Moreau, without affectation. "As it is, you have wasted the best part of my day with your confounded imagination." And with a touch of contempt which humiliated me, he and Montgomery turned and went on in silence before me.

The knot of Beast Men, still wondering, stood back among the trees. I passed them as serenely as possible. One started to follow me, but retreated again when Montgomery cracked his whip. The rest stood silent—watching. They may once have been animals; but I never before saw an animal trying to think.

XIV. Doctor Moreau Explains

"AND now, Prendick, I will explain," said Doctor Moreau, so soon as we had eaten and drunk. "I must confess that you are the most dictatorial guest I ever entertained. I warn you that this is the last I shall do to oblige you. The next thing you threaten to commit suicide about, I shan't do,—even at some personal inconvenience."

He sat in my deck chair, a cigar half consumed in his white, dexterous-looking fingers. The light of the swinging lamp fell on his white hair; he stared through the little window out at the starlight. I sat as far away from him as possible, the table between us and the revolvers to hand. Montgomery was not present. I did not care to be with the two of them in such a little room.

"You admit that the vivisected human being, as you called it, is, after all, only the puma?" said Moreau. He had made me visit that horror in the inner room, to assure myself of its inhumanity.

"It is the puma," I said, "still alive, but so cut and mutilated as I pray I may never see living flesh again. Of all vile—"

"Never mind that," said Moreau; "at least, spare me those youthful horrors. Montgomery used to be just the same. You admit that it is the puma. Now be quiet, while I reel off my physiological lecture to you."

And forthwith, beginning in the tone of a man supremely bored, but presently warming a little, he explained his work to me. He was very simple and convincing. Now and then there was

a touch of sarcasm in his voice. Presently I found myself hot with shame at our mutual positions.

The creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals, humanised animals,—triumphs of vivisection.

"You forget all that a skilled vivisector can do with living things," said Moreau. "For my own part, I'm puzzled why the things I have done here have not been done before. Small efforts, of course, have been made,—amputation, tongue-cutting, excisions. Of course you know a squint may be induced or cured by surgery? Then in the case of excisions you have all kinds of secondary changes, pigmentary disturbances, modifications of the passions, alterations in the secretion of fatty tissue. I have no doubt you have heard of these things?"

"Of course," said I. "But these foul creatures of yours—"

"All in good time," said he, waving his hand at me; "I am only beginning. Those are trivial cases of alteration. Surgery can do better things than that. There is building up as well as breaking down and changing. You have heard, perhaps, of a common surgical operation resorted to in cases where the nose has been destroyed: a flap of skin is cut from the forehead, turned down on the nose, and heals in the new position. This is a kind of grafting in a new position of part of an animal upon itself. Grafting of freshly obtained material from another animal is also possible,—the case of teeth, for example. The grafting of skin and bone is done to facilitate healing: the surgeon places in the middle of the wound pieces of skin snipped from another animal, or fragments of bone from a victim freshly killed. Hunter's cock-spur—possibly you have heard of that—flourished on the bull's neck; and the rhinoceros rats of the Algerian zouaves are also to be thought of,—monsters manufactured by transferring a slip from the tail of an ordinary rat to its snout, and allowing it to heal in that position."

"Monsters manufactured!" said I. "Then you mean to tell me —"

"Yes. These creatures you have seen are animals carven and wrought into new shapes. To that, to the study of the plasticity of

living forms, my life has been devoted. I have studied for years, gaining in knowledge as I go. I see you look horrified, and yet I am telling you nothing new. It all lay in the surface of practical anatomy years ago, but no one had the temerity to touch it. It is not simply the outward form of an animal which I can change. The physiology, the chemical rhythm of the creature, may also be made to undergo an enduring modification,—of which vaccination and other methods of inoculation with living or dead matter are examples that will, no doubt, be familiar to you. A similar operation is the transfusion of blood,—with which subject, indeed, I began. These are all familiar cases. Less so, and probably far more extensive, were the operations of those mediaeval practitioners who made dwarfs and beggar-cripples, show-monsters,—some vestiges of whose art still remain in the preliminary manipulation of the young mountebank or contortionist. Victor Hugo gives an account of them in 'L'Homme qui Rit.'—But perhaps my meaning grows plain now. You begin to see that it is a possible thing to transplant tissue from one part of an animal to another, or from one animal to another; to alter its chemical reactions and methods of growth; to modify the articulations of its limbs; and, indeed, to change it in its most intimate structure.

"And yet this extraordinary branch of knowledge has never been sought as an end, and systematically, by modern investigators until I took it up! Some such things have been hit upon in the last resort of surgery; most of the kindred evidence that will recur to your mind has been demonstrated as it were by accident,—by tyrants, by criminals, by the breeders of horses and dogs, by all kinds of untrained clumsy-handed men working for their own immediate ends. I was the first man to take up this question armed with antiseptic surgery, and with a really scientific knowledge of the laws of growth. Yet one would imagine it must have been practised in secret before. Such creatures as the Siamese Twins—And in the vaults of the Inquisition. No doubt their chief aim was artistic torture, but some at least of the inquisitors must have had a touch of scientific curiosity."

"But," said I, "these things—these animals talk!"

He said that was so, and proceeded to point out that the possibility of vivisection does not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis. A pig may be educated. The mental structure is even less determinate than the bodily. In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of superseding old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas. Very much indeed of what we call moral education, he said, is such an artificial modification and perversion of instinct; pugnacity is trained into courageous self-sacrifice, and suppressed sexuality into religious emotion. And the great difference between man and monkey is in the larynx, he continued,—in the incapacity to frame delicately different sound-symbols by which thought could be sustained. In this I failed to agree with him, but with a certain incivility he declined to notice my objection. He repeated that the thing was so, and continued his account of his work.

I asked him why he had taken the human form as a model. There seemed to me then, and there still seems to me now, a strange wickedness for that choice.

He confessed that he had chosen that form by chance. "I might just as well have worked to form sheep into llamas and llamas into sheep. I suppose there is something in the human form that appeals to the artistic turn of mind more powerfully than any animal shape can. But I've not confined myself to man-making. Once or twice—" He was silent, for a minute perhaps. "These years! How they have slipped by! And here I have wasted a day saving your life, and am now wasting an hour explaining myself!"

"But," said I, "I still do not understand. Where is your justification for inflicting all this pain? The only thing that could excuse vivisection to me would be some application—"

"Precisely," said he. "But, you see, I am differently constituted. We are on different platforms. You are a materialist."

"I am *not* a materialist," I began hotly.

"In my view—in my view. For it is just this question of pain that parts us. So long as visible or audible pain turns you sick; so long as your own pains drive you; so long as pain underlies your

propositions about sin,—so long, I tell you, you are an animal, thinking a little less obscurely what an animal feels. This pain—"

I gave an impatient shrug at such sophistry.

"Oh, but it is such a little thing! A mind truly opened to what science has to teach must see that it is a little thing. It may be that save in this little planet, this speck of cosmic dust, invisible long before the nearest star could be attained—it may be, I say, that nowhere else does this thing called pain occur. But the laws we feel our way towards—Why, even on this earth, even among living things, what pain is there?"

400

As he spoke he drew a little penknife from his pocket, opened the smaller blade, and moved his chair so that I could see his thigh. Then, choosing the place deliberately, he drove the blade into his leg and withdrew it.

"No doubt," he said, "you have seen that before. It does not hurt a pin-prick. But what does it show? The capacity for pain is not needed in the muscle, and it is not placed there,—is but little needed in the skin, and only here and there over the thigh is a spot capable of feeling pain. Pain is simply our intrinsic medical adviser to warn us and stimulate us. Not all living flesh is painful; nor is all nerve, not even all sensory nerve. There's no taint of pain, real pain, in the sensations of the optic nerve. If you wound the optic nerve, you merely see flashes of light,—just as disease of the auditory nerve merely means a humming in our ears. Plants do not feel pain, nor the lower animals; it's possible that such animals as the starfish and crayfish do not feel pain at all. Then with men, the more intelligent they become, the more intelligently they will see after their own welfare, and the less they will need the goad to keep them out of danger. I never yet heard of a useless thing that was not ground out of existence by evolution sooner or later. Did you? And pain gets needless.

"Then I am a religious man, Prendick, as every sane man must be. It may be, I fancy, that I have seen more of the ways of this world's Maker than you,—for I have sought his laws, in *my* way, all my life, while you, I understand, have been collecting butterflies. And I tell you, pleasure and pain have nothing to do with heaven or hell. Pleasure and pain—bah! What is your

theologian's ecstasy but Mahomet's houri in the dark? This store which men and women set on pleasure and pain, Prendick, is the mark of the beast upon them,—the mark of the beast from which they came! Pain, pain and pleasure, they are for us only so long as we wriggle in the dust.

"You see, I went on with this research just the way it led me. That is the only way I ever heard of true research going. I asked a question, devised some method of obtaining an answer, and got a fresh question. Was this possible or that possible? You cannot imagine what this means to an investigator, what an intellectual passion grows upon him! You cannot imagine the strange, colourless delight of these intellectual desires! The thing before you is no longer an animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem! Sympathetic pain,—all I know of it I remember as a thing I used to suffer from years ago. I wanted—it was the one thing I wanted—to find out the extreme limit of plasticity in a living shape."

"But," said I, "the thing is an abomination—"

405

"To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter," he continued. "The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature. I have gone on, not heeding anything but the question I was pursuing; and the material has—dripped into the huts yonder. It is nearly eleven years since we came here, I and Montgomery and six Kanakas. I remember the green stillness of the island and the empty ocean about us, as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me.

"The stores were landed and the house was built. The Kanakas founded some huts near the ravine. I went to work here upon what I had brought with me. There were some disagreeable things happened at first. I began with a sheep, and killed it after a day and a half by a slip of the scalpel. I took another sheep, and made a thing of pain and fear and left it bound up to heal. It looked quite human to me when I had finished it; but when I went to it I was discontented with it. It remembered me, and was terrified beyond imagination; and it had no more than the wits of a sheep. The more I looked at it the clumsier it seemed, until at last I put the monster out of its misery. These animals without courage, these fear-haunted, pain-driven things, without a spark of

pugnacious energy to face torment,—they are no good for man-making.

"Then I took a gorilla I had; and upon that, working with infinite care and mastering difficulty after difficulty, I made my first man. All the week, night and day, I moulded him. With him it was chiefly the brain that needed moulding; much had to be added, much changed. I thought him a fair specimen of the negroid type when I had finished him, and he lay bandaged, bound, and motionless before me. It was only when his life was assured that I left him and came into this room again, and found Montgomery much as you are. He had heard some of the cries as the thing grew human,—cries like those that disturbed *you* so. I didn't take him completely into my confidence at first. And the Kanakas too, had realised something of it. They were scared out of their wits by the sight of me. I got Montgomery over to me—in a way; but I and he had the hardest job to prevent the Kanakas deserting. Finally they did; and so we lost the yacht. I spent many days educating the brute,—altogether I had him for three or four months. I taught him the rudiments of English; gave him ideas of counting; even made the thing read the alphabet. But at that he was slow, though I've met with idiots slower. He began with a clean sheet, mentally; had no memories left in his mind of what he had been. When his scars were quite healed, and he was no longer anything but painful and stiff, and able to converse a little, I took him yonder and introduced him to the Kanakas as an interesting stowaway.

"They were horribly afraid of him at first, somehow,—which offended me rather, for I was conceited about him; but his ways seemed so mild, and he was so abject, that after a time they received him and took his education in hand. He was quick to learn, very imitative and adaptive, and built himself a hovel rather better, it seemed to me, than their own shanties. There was one among the boys a bit of a missionary, and he taught the thing to read, or at least to pick out letters, and gave him some rudimentary ideas of morality; but it seems the beast's habits were not all that is desirable.

"I rested from work for some days after this, and was in a mind to write an account of the whole affair to wake up English physiology. Then I came upon the creature squatting up in a tree and gibbering at two of the Kanakas who had been teasing him. I threatened him, told him the inhumanity of such a proceeding, aroused his sense of shame, and came home resolved to do better before I took my work back to England. I have been doing better. But somehow the things drift back again: the stubborn beast-flesh grows day by day back again. But I mean to do better things still. I mean to conquer that. This puma—

410

"But that's the story. All the Kanaka boys are dead now; one fell overboard of the launch, and one died of a wounded heel that he poisoned in some way with plant-juice. Three went away in the yacht, and I suppose and hope were drowned. The other one—was killed. Well, I have replaced them. Montgomery went on much as you are disposed to do at first, and then—

"What became of the other one?" said I, sharply,— "the other Kanaka who was killed?"

"The fact is, after I had made a number of human creatures I made a Thing—" He hesitated.

"Yes?" said I.

"It was killed."

415

"I don't understand," said I; "do you mean to say—"

"It killed the Kanaka—yes. It killed several other things that it caught. We chased it for a couple of days. It only got loose by accident—I never meant it to get away. It wasn't finished. It was purely an experiment. It was a limbless thing, with a horrible face, that writhed along the ground in a serpentine fashion. It was immensely strong, and in infuriating pain. It lurked in the woods for some days, until we hunted it; and then it wriggled into the northern part of the island, and we divided the party to close in upon it. Montgomery insisted upon coming with me. The man had a rifle; and when his body was found, one of the barrels was curved into the shape of an S and very nearly bitten through. Montgomery shot the thing. After that I stuck to the ideal of humanity—except for little things."

He became silent. I sat in silence watching his face.

"So for twenty years altogether—counting nine years in England—I have been going on; and there is still something in everything I do that defeats me, makes me dissatisfied, challenges me to further effort. Sometimes I rise above my level, sometimes I fall below it; but always I fall short of the things I dream. The human shape I can get now, almost with ease, so that it is lithe and graceful, or thick and strong; but often there is trouble with the hands and the claws,—painful things, that I dare not shape too freely. But it is in the subtle grafting and reshaping one must needs do to the brain that my trouble lies. The intelligence is often oddly low, with unaccountable blank ends, unexpected gaps. And least satisfactory of all is something that I cannot touch, somewhere—I cannot determine where—in the seat of the emotions. Cravings, instincts, desires that harm humanity, a strange hidden reservoir to burst forth suddenly and inundate the whole being of the creature with anger, hate, or fear. These creatures of mine seemed strange and uncanny to you so soon as you began to observe them; but to me, just after I make them, they seem to be indisputably human beings. It's afterwards, as I observe them, that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me. But I will conquer yet! Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, 'This time I will burn out all the animal; this time I will make a rational creature of my own!' After all, what is ten years? Men have been a hundred thousand in the making." He thought darkly. "But I am drawing near the fastness. This puma of mine—" After a silence, "And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again." Another long silence.

"Then you take the things you make into those dens?" said I.

420

"They go. I turn them out when I begin to feel the beast in them, and presently they wander there. They all dread this house and me. There is a kind of travesty of humanity over there. Montgomery knows about it, for he interferes in their affairs. He has trained one or two of them to our service. He's ashamed of it, but I believe he half likes some of those beasts. It's his business, not mine. They only sicken me with a sense of failure. I take no

interest in them. I fancy they follow in the lines the Kanaka missionary marked out, and have a kind of mockery of a rational life, poor beasts! There's something they call the Law. Sing hymns about 'all thine.' They build themselves their dens, gather fruit, and pull herbs—marry even. But I can see through it all, see into their very souls, and see there nothing but the souls of beasts, beasts that perish, anger and the lusts to live and gratify themselves.—Yet they're odd; complex, like everything else alive. There is a kind of upward striving in them, part vanity, part waste sexual emotion, part waste curiosity. It only mocks me. I have some hope of this puma. I have worked hard at her head and brain —

"And now," said he, standing up after a long gap of silence, during which we had each pursued our own thoughts, "what do you think? Are you in fear of me still?"

I looked at him, and saw but a white-faced, white-haired man, with calm eyes. Save for his serenity, the touch almost of beauty that resulted from his set tranquillity and his magnificent build, he might have passed muster among a hundred other comfortable old gentlemen. Then I shivered. By way of answer to his second question, I handed him a revolver with either hand.

"Keep them," he said, and snatched at a yawn. He stood up, stared at me for a moment, and smiled. "You have had two eventful days," said he. "I should advise some sleep. I'm glad it's all clear. Good-night." He thought me over for a moment, then went out by the inner door.

I immediately turned the key in the outer one. I sat down again; sat for a time in a kind of stagnant mood, so weary, emotionally, mentally, and physically, that I could not think beyond the point at which he had left me. The black window stared at me like an eye. At last with an effort I put out the light and got into the hammock. Very soon I was asleep.

425

XV. Concerning the Beast Folk

I WOKE early. Moreau's explanation stood before my mind, clear and definite, from the moment of my awakening. I got out

of the hammock and went to the door to assure myself that the key was turned. Then I tried the window-bar, and found it firmly fixed. That these man-like creatures were in truth only bestial monsters, mere grotesque travesties of men, filled me with a vague uncertainty of their possibilities which was far worse than any definite fear.

A tapping came at the door, and I heard the glutinous accents of M'ling speaking. I pocketed one of the revolvers (keeping one hand upon it), and opened to him.

"Good-morning, sair," he said, bringing in, in addition to the customary herb-breakfast, an ill-cooked rabbit. Montgomery followed him. His roving eye caught the position of my arm and he smiled askew.

The puma was resting to heal that day; but Moreau, who was singularly solitary in his habits, did not join us. I talked with Montgomery to clear my ideas of the way in which the Beast Folk lived. In particular, I was urgent to know how these inhuman monsters were kept from falling upon Moreau and Montgomery and from rending one another. He explained to me that the comparative safety of Moreau and himself was due to the limited mental scope of these monsters. In spite of their increased intelligence and the tendency of their animal instincts to reawaken, they had certain fixed ideas implanted by Moreau in their minds, which absolutely bounded their imaginations. They were really hypnotised; had been told that certain things were impossible, and that certain things were not to be done, and these prohibitions were woven into the texture of their minds beyond any possibility of disobedience or dispute.

Certain matters, however, in which old instinct was at war with Moreau's convenience, were in a less stable condition. A series of propositions called the Law (I had already heard them recited) battled in their minds with the deep-seated, ever-rebellious cravings of their animal natures. This Law they were ever repeating, I found, and ever breaking. Both Montgomery and Moreau displayed particular solicitude to keep them ignorant of the taste of blood; they feared the inevitable suggestions of that flavour. Montgomery told me that the Law, especially among the

feline Beast People, became oddly weakened about nightfall; that then the animal was at its strongest; that a spirit of adventure sprang up in them at the dusk, when they would dare things they never seemed to dream about by day. To that I owed my stalking by the Leopard-man, on the night of my arrival. But during these earlier days of my stay they broke the Law only furtively and after dark; in the daylight there was a general atmosphere of respect for its multifarious prohibitions.

And here perhaps I may give a few general facts about the island and the Beast People. The island, which was of irregular outline and lay low upon the wide sea, had a total area, I suppose, of seven or eight square miles.* It was volcanic in origin, and was now fringed on three sides by coral reefs; some fumaroles to the northward, and a hot spring, were the only vestiges of the forces that had long since originated it. Now and then a faint quiver of earthquake would be sensible, and sometimes the ascent of the spire of smoke would be rendered tumultuous by gusts of steam; but that was all. The population of the island, Montgomery informed me, now numbered rather more than sixty of these strange creations of Moreau's art, not counting the smaller monstrosities which lived in the undergrowth and were without human form. Altogether he had made nearly a hundred and twenty; but many had died, and others—like the writhing Footless Thing of which he had told me—had come by violent ends. In answer to my question, Montgomery said that they actually bore offspring, but that these generally died. When they lived, Moreau took them and stamped the human form upon them. There was no evidence of the inheritance of their acquired human characteristics. The females were less numerous than the males, and liable to much furtive persecution in spite of the monogamy the Law enjoined. *This description corresponds in every respect to Noble's Isle.— C. E. P.

It would be impossible for me to describe these Beast People in detail; my eye has had no training in details, and unhappily I cannot sketch. Most striking, perhaps, in their general appearance was the disproportion between the legs of these creatures and the length of their bodies; and yet—so relative is our idea of grace—

my eye became habituated to their forms, and at last I even fell in with their persuasion that my own long thighs were ungainly. Another point was the forward carriage of the head and the clumsy and inhuman curvature of the spine. Even the Ape-man lacked that inward sinuous curve of the back which makes the human figure so graceful. Most had their shoulders hunched clumsily, and their short forearms hung weakly at their sides. Few of them were conspicuously hairy, at least until the end of my time upon the island.

The next most obvious deformity was in their faces, almost all of which were prognathous, malformed about the ears, with large and protuberant noses, very furry or very bristly hair, and often strangely-coloured or strangely-placed eyes. None could laugh, though the Ape-man had a chattering titter. Beyond these general characters their heads had little in common; each preserved the quality of its particular species: the human mark distorted but did not hide the leopard, the ox, or the sow, or other animal or animals, from which the creature had been moulded. The voices, too, varied exceedingly. The hands were always malformed; and though some surprised me by their unexpected human appearance, almost all were deficient in the number of the digits, clumsy about the finger-nails, and lacking any tactile sensibility.

The two most formidable Animal Men were my Leopard-man and a creature made of hyena and swine. Larger than these were the three bull-creatures who pulled in the boat. Then came the silvery-hairy-man, who was also the Sayer of the Law, M'ling, and a satyr-like creature of ape and goat. There were three Swine-men and a Swine-woman, a mare-rhinoceros-creature, and several other females whose sources I did not ascertain. There were several wolf-creatures, a bear-bull, and a Saint-Bernard-man. I have already described the Ape-man, and there was a particularly hateful (and evil-smelling) old woman made of vixen and bear, whom I hated from the beginning. She was said to be a passionate votary of the Law. Smaller creatures were certain dappled youths and my little sloth-creature. But enough of this catalogue.

At first I had a shivering horror of the brutes, felt all too keenly that they were still brutes; but insensibly I became a little

habituated to the idea of them, and moreover I was affected by Montgomery's attitude towards them. He had been with them so long that he had come to regard them as almost normal human beings. His London days seemed a glorious, impossible past to him. Only once in a year or so did he go to Arica to deal with Moreau's agent, a trader in animals there. He hardly met the finest type of mankind in that seafaring village of Spanish mongrels. The men aboard-ship, he told me, seemed at first just as strange to him as the Beast Men seemed to me,—unnaturally long in the leg, flat in the face, prominent in the forehead, suspicious, dangerous, and cold-hearted. In fact, he did not like men: his heart had warmed to me, he thought, because he had saved my life. I fancied even then that he had a sneaking kindness for some of these metamorphosed brutes, a vicious sympathy with some of their ways, but that he attempted to veil it from me at first.

M'ling, the black-faced man, Montgomery's attendant, the first of the Beast Folk I had encountered, did not live with the others across the island, but in a small kennel at the back of the enclosure. The creature was scarcely so intelligent as the Ape-man, but far more docile, and the most human-looking of all the Beast Folk; and Montgomery had trained it to prepare food, and indeed to discharge all the trivial domestic offices that were required. It was a complex trophy of Moreau's horrible skill,—a bear, tainted with dog and ox, and one of the most elaborately made of all his creatures. It treated Montgomery with a strange tenderness and devotion. Sometimes he would notice it, pat it, call it half-mocking, half-jocular names, and so make it caper with extraordinary delight; sometimes he would ill-treat it, especially after he had been at the whiskey, kicking it, beating it, pelting it with stones or lighted fusees. But whether he treated it well or ill, it loved nothing so much as to be near him.

I say I became habituated to the Beast People, that a thousand things which had seemed unnatural and repulsive speedily became natural and ordinary to me. I suppose everything in existence takes its colour from the average hue of our surroundings. Montgomery and Moreau were too peculiar and individual to keep my general impressions of humanity well

defined. I would see one of the clumsy bovine-creatures who worked the launch treading heavily through the undergrowth, and find myself asking, trying hard to recall, how he differed from some really human yokel trudging home from his mechanical labours; or I would meet the Fox-bear woman's vulpine, shifty face, strangely human in its speculative cunning, and even imagine I had met it before in some city byway.

Yet every now and then the beast would flash out upon me beyond doubt or denial. An ugly-looking man, a hunch-backed human savage to all appearance, squatting in the aperture of one of the dens, would stretch his arms and yawn, showing with startling suddenness scissor-edged incisors and sabre-like canines, keen and brilliant as knives. Or in some narrow pathway, glancing with a transitory daring into the eyes of some lithe, white-swathed female figure, I would suddenly see (with a spasmodic revulsion) that she had slit-like pupils, or glancing down note the curving nail with which she held her shapeless wrap about her. It is a curious thing, by the bye, for which I am quite unable to account, that these weird creatures—the females, I mean—had in the earlier days of my stay an instinctive sense of their own repulsive clumsiness, and displayed in consequence a more than human regard for the decency and decorum of extensive costume.

XVI. How the Beast Folk Taste Blood

My inexperience as a writer betrays me, and I wander from the thread of my story.

After I had breakfasted with Montgomery, he took me across the island to see the fumarole and the source of the hot spring into whose scalding waters I had blundered on the previous day. Both of us carried whips and loaded revolvers. While going through a leafy jungle on our road thither, we heard a rabbit squealing. We stopped and listened, but we heard no more; and presently we went on our way, and the incident dropped out of our minds. Montgomery called my attention to certain little pink animals with long hind-legs, that went leaping through the undergrowth. He told me they were creatures made of the offspring of the Beast

People, that Moreau had invented. He had fancied they might serve for meat, but a rabbit-like habit of devouring their young had defeated this intention. I had already encountered some of these creatures,—once during my moonlight flight from the Leopard-man, and once during my pursuit by Moreau on the previous day. By chance, one hopping to avoid us leapt into the hole caused by the uprooting of a wind-blown tree; before it could extricate itself we managed to catch it. It spat like a cat, scratched and kicked vigorously with its hind-legs, and made an attempt to bite; but its teeth were too feeble to inflict more than a painless pinch. It seemed to me rather a pretty little creature; and as Montgomery stated that it never destroyed the turf by burrowing, and was very cleanly in its habits, I should imagine it might prove a convenient substitute for the common rabbit in gentlemen's parks.

We also saw on our way the trunk of a tree barked in long strips and splintered deeply. Montgomery called my attention to this. "Not to claw bark of trees, *that* is the Law," he said. "Much some of them care for it!" It was after this, I think, that we met the Satyr and the Ape-man. The Satyr was a gleam of classical memory on the part of Moreau,—his face ovine in expression, like the coarser Hebrew type; his voice a harsh bleat, his nether extremities Satanic. He was gnawing the husk of a pod-like fruit as he passed us. Both of them saluted Montgomery.

"Hail," said they, "to the Other with the Whip!"

"There's a Third with a Whip now," said Montgomery. "So you'd better mind!"

"Was he not made?" said the Ape-man. "He said—he said he was made."

The Satyr-man looked curiously at me. "The Third with the Whip, he that walks weeping into the sea, has a thin white face."

"He has a thin long whip," said Montgomery.

"Yesterday he bled and wept," said the Satyr. "You never bleed nor weep. The Master does not bleed or weep."

"Ollendorffian beggar!" said Montgomery, "you'll bleed and weep if you don't look out!"

"He has five fingers, he is a five-man like me," said the Ape-man.

"Come along, Prendick," said Montgomery, taking my arm; and I went on with him. 450

The Satyr and the Ape-man stood watching us and making other remarks to each other.

"He says nothing," said the Satyr. "Men have voices."

"Yesterday he asked me of things to eat," said the Ape-man. "He did not know."

Then they spoke inaudible things, and I heard the Satyr laughing.

It was on our way back that we came upon the dead rabbit. The red body of the wretched little beast was rent to pieces, many of the ribs stripped white, and the backbone indisputably gnawed. 455

At that Montgomery stopped. "Good God!" said he, stooping down, and picking up some of the crushed vertebrae to examine them more closely. "Good God!" he repeated, "what can this mean?"

"Some carnivore of yours has remembered its old habits," I said after a pause. "This backbone has been bitten through."

He stood staring, with his face white and his lip pulled askew. "I don't like this," he said slowly.

"I saw something of the same kind," said I, "the first day I came here."

"The devil you did! What was it?" 460

"A rabbit with its head twisted off."

"The day you came here?"

"The day I came here. In the undergrowth at the back of the enclosure, when I went out in the evening. The head was completely wrung off."

He gave a long, low whistle.

"And what is more, I have an idea which of your brutes did the thing. It's only a suspicion, you know. Before I came on the rabbit I saw one of your monsters drinking in the stream." 465

"Sucking his drink?"

"Yes."

"Not to suck your drink; that is the Law.' Much the brutes care for the Law, eh? when Moreau's not about!"

"It was the brute who chased me."

"Of course," said Montgomery; "it's just the way with carnivores. After a kill, they drink. It's the taste of blood, you know.—What was the brute like?" he continued. "Would you know him again?" He glanced about us, standing astride over the mess of dead rabbit, his eyes roving among the shadows and screens of greenery, the lurking-places and ambuscades of the forest that bounded us in. "The taste of blood," he said again.

470

He took out his revolver, examined the cartridges in it and replaced it. Then he began to pull at his dropping lip.

"I think I should know the brute again," I said. "I stunned him. He ought to have a handsome bruise on the forehead of him."

"But then we have to *prove* that he killed the rabbit," said Montgomery. "I wish I'd never brought the things here."

I should have gone on, but he stayed there thinking over the mangled rabbit in a puzzle-headed way. As it was, I went to such a distance that the rabbit's remains were hidden.

"Come on!" I said.

475

Presently he woke up and came towards me. "You see," he said, almost in a whisper, "they are all supposed to have a fixed idea against eating anything that runs on land. If some brute has by any accident tasted blood—"

We went on some way in silence. "I wonder what can have happened," he said to himself. Then, after a pause again: "I did a foolish thing the other day. That servant of mine—I showed him how to skin and cook a rabbit. It's odd—I saw him licking his hands—It never occurred to me."

Then: "We must put a stop to this. I must tell Moreau."

He could think of nothing else on our homeward journey.

Moreau took the matter even more seriously than Montgomery, and I need scarcely say that I was affected by their evident consternation.

480

"We must make an example," said Moreau. "I've no doubt in my own mind that the Leopard-man was the sinner. But how can we prove it? I wish, Montgomery, you had kept your taste for

meat in hand, and gone without these exciting novelties. We may find ourselves in a mess yet, through it."

"I was a silly ass," said Montgomery. "But the thing's done now; and you said I might have them, you know."

"We must see to the thing at once," said Moreau. "I suppose if anything should turn up, M'ling can take care of himself?"

"I'm not so sure of M'ling," said Montgomery. "I think I ought to know him."

In the afternoon, Moreau, Montgomery, myself, and M'ling went across the island to the huts in the ravine. We three were armed; M'ling carried the little hatchet he used in chopping firewood, and some coils of wire. Moreau had a huge cowherd's horn slung over his shoulder.

485

"You will see a gathering of the Beast People," said Montgomery. "It is a pretty sight!"

Moreau said not a word on the way, but the expression of his heavy, white-fringed face was grimly set.

We crossed the ravine down which smoked the stream of hot water, and followed the winding pathway through the canebrakes until we reached a wide area covered over with a thick, powdery yellow substance which I believe was sulphur. Above the shoulder of a weedy bank the sea glittered. We came to a kind of shallow natural amphitheatre, and here the four of us halted. Then Moreau sounded the horn, and broke the sleeping stillness of the tropical afternoon. He must have had strong lungs. The hooting note rose and rose amidst its echoes, to at last an ear-penetrating intensity.

"Ah!" said Moreau, letting the curved instrument fall to his side again.

Immediately there was a crashing through the yellow canes, and a sound of voices from the dense green jungle that marked the morass through which I had run on the previous day. Then at three or four points on the edge of the sulphurous area appeared the grotesque forms of the Beast People hurrying towards us. I could not help a creeping horror, as I perceived first one and then another trot out from the trees or reeds and come shambling along

490

over the hot dust. But Moreau and Montgomery stood calmly enough; and, perforce, I stuck beside them.

First to arrive was the Satyr, strangely unreal for all that he cast a shadow and tossed the dust with his hoofs. After him from the brake came a monstrous lout, a thing of horse and rhinoceros, chewing a straw as it came; then appeared the Swine-woman and two Wolf-women; then the Fox-bear witch, with her red eyes in her peaked red face, and then others,—all hurrying eagerly. As they came forward they began to cringe towards Moreau and chant, quite regardless of one another, fragments of the latter half of the litany of the Law,—“His is the Hand that wounds; His is the Hand that heals,” and so forth. As soon as they had approached within a distance of perhaps thirty yards they halted, and bowing on knees and elbows began flinging the white dust upon their heads.

Imagine the scene if you can! We three blue-clad men, with our misshapen black-faced attendant, standing in a wide expanse of sunlit yellow dust under the blazing blue sky, and surrounded by this circle of crouching and gesticulating monstrosities,—some almost human save in their subtle expression and gestures, some like cripples, some so strangely distorted as to resemble nothing but the denizens of our wildest dreams; and, beyond, the reedy lines of a canebrake in one direction, a dense tangle of palm-trees on the other, separating us from the ravine with the huts, and to the north the hazy horizon of the Pacific Ocean.

“Sixty-two, sixty-three,” counted Moreau. “There are four more.”

“I do not see the Leopard-man,” said I.

Presently Moreau sounded the great horn again, and at the sound of it all the Beast People writhed and grovelled in the dust. Then, slinking out of the canebrake, stooping near the ground and trying to join the dust-throwing circle behind Moreau's back, came the Leopard-man. The last of the Beast People to arrive was the little Ape-man. The earlier animals, hot and weary with their grovelling, shot vicious glances at him.

“Cease!” said Moreau, in his firm, loud voice; and the Beast People sat back upon their hams and rested from their

worshipping.

"Where is the Sayer of the Law?" said Moreau, and the hairy-grey monster bowed his face in the dust.

"Say the words!" said Moreau.

Forthwith all in the kneeling assembly, swaying from side to side and dashing up the sulphur with their hands,—first the right hand and a puff of dust, and then the left,—began once more to chant their strange litany. When they reached, "Not to eat Flesh or Fish, that is the Law," Moreau held up his lank white hand.

"Stop!" he cried, and there fell absolute silence upon them all.

500

I think they all knew and dreaded what was coming. I looked round at their strange faces. When I saw their wincing attitudes and the furtive dread in their bright eyes, I wondered that I had ever believed them to be men.

"That Law has been broken!" said Moreau.

"None escape," from the faceless creature with the silvery hair. "None escape," repeated the kneeling circle of Beast People.

"Who is he?" cried Moreau, and looked round at their faces, cracking his whip. I fancied the Hyena-swine looked dejected, so too did the Leopard-man. Moreau stopped, facing this creature, who cringed towards him with the memory and dread of infinite torment.

"Who is he?" repeated Moreau, in a voice of thunder.

505

"Evil is he who breaks the Law," chanted the Sayer of the Law.

Moreau looked into the eyes of the Leopard-man, and seemed to be dragging the very soul out of the creature.

"Who breaks the Law—" said Moreau, taking his eyes off his victim, and turning towards us (it seemed to me there was a touch of exultation in his voice).

"Goes back to the House of Pain," they all clamoured,— "goes back to the House of Pain, O Master!"

"Back to the House of Pain,—back to the House of Pain," gabbled the Ape-man, as though the idea was sweet to him.

510

"Do you hear?" said Moreau, turning back to the criminal, "my friend—Hullo!"

For the Leopard-man, released from Moreau's eye, had risen straight from his knees, and now, with eyes aflame and his huge

feline tusks flashing out from under his curling lips, leapt towards his tormentor. I am convinced that only the madness of unendurable fear could have prompted this attack. The whole circle of threescore monsters seemed to rise about us. I drew my revolver. The two figures collided. I saw Moreau reeling back from the Leopard-man's blow. There was a furious yelling and howling all about us. Every one was moving rapidly. For a moment I thought it was a general revolt. The furious face of the Leopard-man flashed by mine, with M'ling close in pursuit. I saw the yellow eyes of the Hyena-swine blazing with excitement, his attitude as if he were half resolved to attack me. The Satyr, too, glared at me over the Hyena-swine's hunched shoulders. I heard the crack of Moreau's pistol, and saw the pink flash dart across the tumult. The whole crowd seemed to swing round in the direction of the glint of fire, and I too was swung round by the magnetism of the movement. In another second I was running, one of a tumultuous shouting crowd, in pursuit of the escaping Leopard-man.

That is all I can tell definitely. I saw the Leopard-man strike Moreau, and then everything spun about me until I was running headlong. M'ling was ahead, close in pursuit of the fugitive. Behind, their tongues already lolling out, ran the Wolf-women in great leaping strides. The Swine folk followed, squealing with excitement, and the two Bull-men in their swathings of white. Then came Moreau in a cluster of the Beast People, his wide-brimmed straw hat blown off, his revolver in hand, and his lank white hair streaming out. The Hyena-swine ran beside me, keeping pace with me and glancing furtively at me out of his feline eyes, and the others came pattering and shouting behind us.

The Leopard-man went bursting his way through the long canes, which sprang back as he passed, and rattled in M'ling's face. We others in the rear found a trampled path for us when we reached the brake. The chase lay through the brake for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then plunged into a dense thicket, which retarded our movements exceedingly, though we went through it in a crowd together,—fronds flicking into our faces, ropy creepers

catching us under the chin or gripping our ankles, thorny plants hooking into and tearing cloth and flesh together.

"He has gone on all-fours through this," panted Moreau, now just ahead of me.

515

"None escape," said the Wolf-bear, laughing into my face with the exultation of hunting. We burst out again among rocks, and saw the quarry ahead running lightly on all-fours and snarling at us over his shoulder. At that the Wolf Folk howled with delight. The Thing was still clothed, and at a distance its face still seemed human; but the carriage of its four limbs was feline, and the furtive droop of its shoulder was distinctly that of a hunted animal. It leapt over some thorny yellow-flowering bushes, and was hidden. M'ling was halfway across the space.

Most of us now had lost the first speed of the chase, and had fallen into a longer and steadier stride. I saw as we traversed the open that the pursuit was now spreading from a column into a line. The Hyena-swine still ran close to me, watching me as it ran, every now and then puckering its muzzle with a snarling laugh. At the edge of the rocks the Leopard-man, realising that he was making for the projecting cape upon which he had stalked me on the night of my arrival, had doubled in the undergrowth; but Montgomery had seen the manoeuvre, and turned him again. So, panting, tumbling against rocks, torn by brambles, impeded by ferns and reeds, I helped to pursue the Leopard-man who had broken the Law, and the Hyena-swine ran, laughing savagely, by my side. I staggered on, my head reeling and my heart beating against my ribs, tired almost to death, and yet not daring to lose sight of the chase lest I should be left alone with this horrible companion. I staggered on in spite of infinite fatigue and the dense heat of the tropical afternoon.

At last the fury of the hunt slackened. We had pinned the wretched brute into a corner of the island. Moreau, whip in hand, marshalled us all into an irregular line, and we advanced now slowly, shouting to one another as we advanced and tightening the cordon about our victim. He lurked noiseless and invisible in the bushes through which I had run from him during that midnight pursuit.

"Steady!" cried Moreau, "steady!" as the ends of the line crept round the tangle of undergrowth and hemmed the brute in.

"Ware a rush!" came the voice of Montgomery from beyond the thicket.

520

I was on the slope above the bushes; Montgomery and Moreau beat along the beach beneath. Slowly we pushed in among the fretted network of branches and leaves. The quarry was silent.

"Back to the House of Pain, the House of Pain, the House of Pain!" yelled the voice of the Ape-man, some twenty yards to the right.

When I heard that, I forgave the poor wretch all the fear he had inspired in me. I heard the twigs snap and the boughs swish aside before the heavy tread of the Horse-rhinoceros upon my right. Then suddenly through a polygon of green, in the half darkness under the luxuriant growth, I saw the creature we were hunting. I halted. He was crouched together into the smallest possible compass, his luminous green eyes turned over his shoulder regarding me.

It may seem a strange contradiction in me,—I cannot explain the fact,—but now, seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light gleaming in its eyes and its imperfectly human face distorted with terror, I realised again the fact of its humanity. In another moment other of its pursuers would see it, and it would be overpowered and captured, to experience once more the horrible tortures of the enclosure. Abruptly I slipped out my revolver, aimed between its terror-struck eyes, and fired. As I did so, the Hyena-swine saw the Thing, and flung itself upon it with an eager cry, thrusting thirsty teeth into its neck. All about me the green masses of the thicket were swaying and cracking as the Beast People came rushing together. One face and then another appeared.

"Don't kill it, Prendick!" cried Moreau. "Don't kill it!" and I saw him stooping as he pushed through under the fronds of the big ferns.

525

In another moment he had beaten off the Hyena-swine with the handle of his whip, and he and Montgomery were keeping away the excited carnivorous Beast People, and particularly M'ling,

from the still quivering body. The hairy-grey Thing came sniffing at the corpse under my arm. The other animals, in their animal ardour, jostled me to get a nearer view.

"Confound you, Prendick!" said Moreau. "I wanted him."

"I'm sorry," said I, though I was not. "It was the impulse of the moment." I felt sick with exertion and excitement. Turning, I pushed my way out of the crowding Beast People and went on alone up the slope towards the higher part of the headland. Under the shouted directions of Moreau I heard the three white-swathed Bull-men begin dragging the victim down towards the water.

It was easy now for me to be alone. The Beast People manifested a quite human curiosity about the dead body, and followed it in a thick knot, sniffing and growling at it as the Bull-men dragged it down the beach. I went to the headland and watched the bull-men, black against the evening sky as they carried the weighted dead body out to sea; and like a wave across my mind came the realisation of the unspeakable aimlessness of things upon the island. Upon the beach among the rocks beneath me were the Ape-man, the Hyena-swine, and several other of the Beast People, standing about Montgomery and Moreau. They were all still intensely excited, and all overflowing with noisy expressions of their loyalty to the Law; yet I felt an absolute assurance in my own mind that the Hyena-swine was implicated in the rabbit-killing. A strange persuasion came upon me, that, save for the grossness of the line, the grotesqueness of the forms, I had here before me the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and fate in its simplest form. The Leopard-man had happened to go under: that was all the difference. Poor brute!

Poor brutes! I began to see the viler aspect of Moreau's cruelty. I had not thought before of the pain and trouble that came to these poor victims after they had passed from Moreau's hands. I had shivered only at the days of actual torment in the enclosure. But now that seemed to me the lesser part. Before, they had been beasts, their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they

could not understand; their mock-human existence, begun in an agony, was one long internal struggle, one long dread of Moreau—and for what? It was the wantonness of it that stirred me.

Had Moreau had any intelligible object, I could have sympathised at least a little with him. I am not so squeamish about pain as that. I could have forgiven him a little even, had his motive been only hate. But he was so irresponsible, so utterly careless! His curiosity, his mad, aimless investigations, drove him on; and the Things were thrown out to live a year or so, to struggle and blunder and suffer, and at last to die painfully. They were wretched in themselves; the old animal hate moved them to trouble one another; the Law held them back from a brief hot struggle and a decisive end to their natural animosities.

In those days my fear of the Beast People went the way of my personal fear for Moreau. I fell indeed into a morbid state, deep and enduring, and alien to fear, which has left permanent scars upon my mind. I must confess that I lost faith in the sanity of the world when I saw it suffering the painful disorder of this island. A blind Fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence and I, Moreau (by his passion for research), Montgomery (by his passion for drink), the Beast People with their instincts and mental restrictions, were torn and crushed, ruthlessly, inevitably, amid the infinite complexity of its incessant wheels. But this condition did not come all at once: I think indeed that I anticipate a little in speaking of it now.

XVII. A Catastrophe

Scarcely six weeks passed before I had lost every feeling but dislike and abhorrence for this infamous experiment of Moreau's. My one idea was to get away from these horrible caricatures of my Maker's image, back to the sweet and wholesome intercourse of men. My fellow-creatures, from whom I was thus separated, began to assume idyllic virtue and beauty in my memory. My first friendship with Montgomery did not increase. His long separation from humanity, his secret vice of drunkenness, his evident sympathy with the Beast People, tainted him to me. Several times

I let him go alone among them. I avoided intercourse with them in every possible way. I spent an increasing proportion of my time upon the beach, looking for some liberating sail that never appeared,—until one day there fell upon us an appalling disaster, which put an altogether different aspect upon my strange surroundings.

It was about seven or eight weeks after my landing,—rather more, I think, though I had not troubled to keep account of the time,—when this catastrophe occurred. It happened in the early morning—I should think about six. I had risen and breakfasted early, having been aroused by the noise of three Beast Men carrying wood into the enclosure.

After breakfast I went to the open gateway of the enclosure, and stood there smoking a cigarette and enjoying the freshness of the early morning. Moreau presently came round the corner of the enclosure and greeted me. He passed by me, and I heard him behind me unlock and enter his laboratory. So indurated was I at that time to the abomination of the place, that I heard without a touch of emotion the puma victim begin another day of torture. It met its persecutor with a shriek, almost exactly like that of an angry virago.

Then suddenly something happened,—I do not know what, to this day. I heard a short, sharp cry behind me, a fall, and turning saw an awful face rushing upon me,—not human, not animal, but hellish, brown, seamed with red branching scars, red drops starting out upon it, and the lidless eyes ablaze. I threw up my arm to defend myself from the blow that flung me headlong with a broken forearm; and the great monster, swathed in lint and with red-stained bandages fluttering about it, leapt over me and passed. I rolled over and over down the beach, tried to sit up, and collapsed upon my broken arm. Then Moreau appeared, his massive white face all the more terrible for the blood that trickled from his forehead. He carried a revolver in one hand. He scarcely glanced at me, but rushed off at once in pursuit of the puma.

I tried the other arm and sat up. The muffled figure in front ran in great striding leaps along the beach, and Moreau followed her. She turned her head and saw him, then doubling abruptly made

for the bushes. She gained upon him at every stride. I saw her plunge into them, and Moreau, running slantingly to intercept her, fired and missed as she disappeared. Then he too vanished in the green confusion. I stared after them, and then the pain in my arm flamed up, and with a groan I staggered to my feet. Montgomery appeared in the doorway, dressed, and with his revolver in his hand.

"Great God, Prendick!" he said, not noticing that I was hurt, "that brute's loose! Tore the fetter out of the wall! Have you seen them?" Then sharply, seeing I gripped my arm, "What's the matter?"

"I was standing in the doorway," said I.

He came forward and took my arm. "Blood on the sleeve," said he, and rolled back the flannel. He pocketed his weapon, felt my arm about painfully, and led me inside. "Your arm is broken," he said, and then, "Tell me exactly how it happened—what happened?"

I told him what I had seen; told him in broken sentences, with gasps of pain between them, and very dexterously and swiftly he bound my arm meanwhile. He slung it from my shoulder, stood back and looked at me.

"You'll do," he said. "And now?"

He thought. Then he went out and locked the gates of the enclosure. He was absent some time.

I was chiefly concerned about my arm. The incident seemed merely one more of many horrible things. I sat down in the deck chair, and I must admit swore heartily at the island. The first dull feeling of injury in my arm had already given way to a burning pain when Montgomery reappeared. His face was rather pale, and he showed more of his lower gums than ever.

"I can neither see nor hear anything of him," he said. "I've been thinking he may want my help." He stared at me with his expressionless eyes. "That was a strong brute," he said. "It simply wrenched its fetter out of the wall." He went to the window, then to the door, and there turned to me. "I shall go after him," he said. "There's another revolver I can leave with you. To tell you the truth, I feel anxious somehow."

540

545

He obtained the weapon, and put it ready to my hand on the table; then went out, leaving a restless contagion in the air. I did not sit long after he left, but took the revolver in hand and went to the doorway.

The morning was as still as death. Not a whisper of wind was stirring; the sea was like polished glass, the sky empty, the beach desolate. In my half-excited, half-feverish state, this stillness of things oppressed me. I tried to whistle, and the tune died away. I swore again,—the second time that morning. Then I went to the corner of the enclosure and stared inland at the green bush that had swallowed up Moreau and Montgomery. When would they return, and how? Then far away up the beach a little grey Beast Man appeared, ran down to the water's edge and began splashing about. I strolled back to the doorway, then to the corner again, and so began pacing to and fro like a sentinel upon duty. Once I was arrested by the distant voice of Montgomery bawling, "Coo-ee—Moreau!" My arm became less painful, but very hot. I got feverish and thirsty. My shadow grew shorter. I watched the distant figure until it went away again. Would Moreau and Montgomery never return? Three sea-birds began fighting for some stranded treasure.

Then from far away behind the enclosure I heard a pistol-shot. A long silence, and then came another. Then a yelling cry nearer, and another dismal gap of silence. My unfortunate imagination set to work to torment me. Then suddenly a shot close by. I went to the corner, startled, and saw Montgomery,—his face scarlet, his hair disordered, and the knee of his trousers torn. His face expressed profound consternation. Behind him slouched the Beast Man, M'ling, and round M'ling's jaws were some queer dark stains.

"Has he come?" said Montgomery.

"Moreau?" said I. "No."

"My God!" The man was panting, almost sobbing. "Go back in," he said, taking my arm. "They're mad. They're all rushing about mad. What can have happened? I don't know. I'll tell you, when my breath comes. Where's some brandy?"

Montgomery limped before me into the room and sat down in the deck chair. M'ling flung himself down just outside the doorway and began panting like a dog. I got Montgomery some brandy-and-water. He sat staring in front of him at nothing, recovering his breath. After some minutes he began to tell me what had happened.

He had followed their track for some way. It was plain enough at first on account of the crushed and broken bushes, white rags torn from the puma's bandages, and occasional smears of blood on the leaves of the shrubs and undergrowth. He lost the track, however, on the stony ground beyond the stream where I had seen the Beast Man drinking, and went wandering aimlessly westward shouting Moreau's name. Then M'ling had come to him carrying a light hatchet. M'ling had seen nothing of the puma affair; had been felling wood, and heard him calling. They went on shouting together. Two Beast Men came crouching and peering at them through the undergrowth, with gestures and a furtive carriage that alarmed Montgomery by their strangeness. He hailed them, and they fled guiltily. He stopped shouting after that, and after wandering some time farther in an undecided way, determined to visit the huts.

He found the ravine deserted.

Growing more alarmed every minute, he began to retrace his steps. Then it was he encountered the two Swine-men I had seen dancing on the night of my arrival; blood-stained they were about the mouth, and intensely excited. They came crashing through the ferns, and stopped with fierce faces when they saw him. He cracked his whip in some trepidation, and forthwith they rushed at him. Never before had a Beast Man dared to do that. One he shot through the head; M'ling flung himself upon the other, and the two rolled grappling. M'ling got his brute under and with his teeth in its throat, and Montgomery shot that too as it struggled in M'ling's grip. He had some difficulty in inducing M'ling to come on with him. Thence they had hurried back to me. On the way, M'ling had suddenly rushed into a thicket and driven out an under-sized Ocelot-man, also blood-stained, and lame through a wound in the foot. This brute had run a little way and then turned

savagely at bay, and Montgomery—with a certain wantonness, I thought—had shot him.

"What does it all mean?" said I.

He shook his head, and turned once more to the brandy.

XVIII. The Finding of Moreau

When I saw Montgomery swallow a third dose of brandy, I took it upon myself to interfere. He was already more than half fuddled. I told him that some serious thing must have happened to Moreau by this time, or he would have returned before this, and that it behoved us to ascertain what that catastrophe was. Montgomery raised some feeble objections, and at last agreed. We had some food, and then all three of us started.

It is possibly due to the tension of my mind, at the time, but even now that start into the hot stillness of the tropical afternoon is a singularly vivid impression. M'ling went first, his shoulder hunched, his strange black head moving with quick starts as he peered first on this side of the way and then on that. He was unarmed; his axe he had dropped when he encountered the Swine-man. Teeth were *his* weapons, when it came to fighting. Montgomery followed with stumbling footsteps, his hands in his pockets, his face downcast; he was in a state of muddled sullenness with me on account of the brandy. My left arm was in a sling (it was lucky it was my left), and I carried my revolver in my right. Soon we traced a narrow path through the wild luxuriance of the island, going northwestward; and presently M'ling stopped, and became rigid with watchfulness. Montgomery almost staggered into him, and then stopped too. Then, listening intently, we heard coming through the trees the sound of voices and footsteps approaching us.

"He is dead," said a deep, vibrating voice.

"He is not dead; he is not dead," jabbered another.

"We saw, we saw," said several voices.

"Hullo!" suddenly shouted Montgomery, "Hullo, there!"

"Confound you!" said I, and gripped my pistol.

There was a silence, then a crashing among the interlacing vegetation, first here, then there, and then half-a-dozen faces appeared,—strange faces, lit by a strange light. M'ling made a growling noise in his throat. I recognised the Ape-man: I had indeed already identified his voice, and two of the white-swathed brown-featured creatures I had seen in Montgomery's boat. With these were the two dappled brutes and that grey, horribly crooked creature who said the Law, with grey hair streaming down its cheeks, heavy grey eyebrows, and grey locks pouring off from a central parting upon its sloping forehead,—a heavy, faceless thing, with strange red eyes, looking at us curiously from amidst the green.

For a space no one spoke. Then Montgomery hiccoughed, "Who—said he was dead?"

The Monkey-man looked guiltily at the hairy-grey Thing. "He is dead," said this monster. "They saw."

There was nothing threatening about this detachment, at any rate. They seemed awestricken and puzzled.

"Where is he?" said Montgomery.

"Beyond," and the grey creature pointed.

570

"Is there a Law now?" asked the Monkey-man. "Is it still to be this and that? Is he dead indeed?"

"Is there a Law?" repeated the man in white. "Is there a Law, thou Other with the Whip?"

"He is dead," said the hairy-grey Thing. And they all stood watching us.

"Prendick," said Montgomery, turning his dull eyes to me. "He's dead, evidently."

I had been standing behind him during this colloquy. I began to see how things lay with them. I suddenly stepped in front of Montgomery and lifted up my voice:—"Children of the Law," I said, "he is *not* dead!" M'ling turned his sharp eyes on me. "He has changed his shape; he has changed his body," I went on. "For a time you will not see him. He is—there," I pointed upward, "where he can watch you. You cannot see him, but he can see you. Fear the Law!"

575

I looked at them squarely. They flinched.

"He is great, he is good," said the Ape-man, peering fearfully upward among the dense trees.

"And the other Thing?" I demanded.

"The Thing that bled, and ran screaming and sobbing,—that is dead too," said the grey Thing, still regarding me.

"That's well," grunted Montgomery.

580

"The Other with the Whip—" began the grey Thing.

"Well?" said I.

"Said he was dead."

But Montgomery was still sober enough to understand my motive in denying Moreau's death. "He is not dead," he said slowly, "not dead at all. No more dead than I am."

"Some," said I, "have broken the Law: they will die. Some have died. Show us now where his old body lies,—the body he cast away because he had no more need of it."

585

"It is this way, Man who walked in the Sea," said the grey Thing.

And with these six creatures guiding us, we went through the tumult of ferns and creepers and tree-stems towards the northwest. Then came a yelling, a crashing among the branches, and a little pink homunculus rushed by us shrieking. Immediately after appeared a monster in headlong pursuit, blood-bedabbled, who was amongst us almost before he could stop his career. The grey Thing leapt aside. M'ling, with a snarl, flew at it, and was struck aside. Montgomery fired and missed, bowed his head, threw up his arm, and turned to run. I fired, and the Thing still came on; fired again, point-blank, into its ugly face. I saw its features vanish in a flash: its face was driven in. Yet it passed me, gripped Montgomery, and holding him, fell headlong beside him and pulled him sprawling upon itself in its death-agony.

I found myself alone with M'ling, the dead brute, and the prostrate man. Montgomery raised himself slowly and stared in a muddled way at the shattered Beast Man beside him. It more than half sobered him. He scrambled to his feet. Then I saw the grey Thing returning cautiously through the trees.

"See," said I, pointing to the dead brute, "is the Law not alive? This came of breaking the Law."

He peered at the body. "He sends the Fire that kills," said he, in his deep voice, repeating part of the Ritual. The others gathered round and stared for a space.

At last we drew near the westward extremity of the island. We came upon the gnawed and mutilated body of the puma, its shoulder-bone smashed by a bullet, and perhaps twenty yards farther found at last what we sought. Moreau lay face downward in a trampled space in a canebrake. One hand was almost severed at the wrist and his silvery hair was dabbled in blood. His head had been battered in by the fetters of the puma. The broken canes beneath him were smeared with blood. His revolver we could not find. Montgomery turned him over. Resting at intervals, and with the help of the seven Beast People (for he was a heavy man), we carried Moreau back to the enclosure. The night was darkling. Twice we heard unseen creatures howling and shrieking past our little band, and once the little pink sloth-creature appeared and stared at us, and vanished again. But we were not attacked again. At the gates of the enclosure our company of Beast People left us, M'ling going with the rest. We locked ourselves in, and then took Moreau's mangled body into the yard and laid it upon a pile of brushwood. Then we went into the laboratory and put an end to all we found living there.

XIX. Montgomery's "Bank Holiday"

When this was accomplished, and we had washed and eaten, Montgomery and I went into my little room and seriously discussed our position for the first time. It was then near midnight. He was almost sober, but greatly disturbed in his mind. He had been strangely under the influence of Moreau's personality: I do not think it had ever occurred to him that Moreau could die. This disaster was the sudden collapse of the habits that had become part of his nature in the ten or more monotonous years he had spent on the island. He talked vaguely, answered my questions crookedly, wandered into general questions.

"This silly ass of a world," he said; "what a muddle it all is! I haven't had any life. I wonder when it's going to begin. Sixteen years being bullied by nurses and schoolmasters at their own sweet will; five in London grinding hard at medicine, bad food, shabby lodgings, shabby clothes, shabby vice, a blunder,—I didn't know any better,—and hustled off to this beastly island. Ten years here! What's it all for, Prendick? Are we bubbles blown by a baby?"

It was hard to deal with such ravings. "The thing we have to think of now," said I, "is how to get away from this island."

"What's the good of getting away? I'm an outcast. Where am I to join on? It's all very well for *you*, Prendick. Poor old Moreau! We can't leave him here to have his bones picked. As it is—And besides, what will become of the decent part of the Beast Folk?"

595

"Well," said I, "that will do to-morrow. I've been thinking we might make the brushwood into a pyre and burn his body—and those other things. Then what will happen with the Beast Folk?"

"I don't know. I suppose those that were made of beasts of prey will make silly asses of themselves sooner or later. We can't massacre the lot—can we? I suppose that's what *your* humanity would suggest? But they'll change. They are sure to change."

He talked thus inconclusively until at last I felt my temper going.

"Damnation!" he exclaimed at some petulance of mine; "can't you see I'm in a worse hole than you are?" And he got up, and went for the brandy. "Drink!" he said returning, "you logic-chopping, chalky-faced saint of an atheist, drink!"

"Not I," said I, and sat grimly watching his face under the yellow paraffine flare, as he drank himself into a garrulous misery.

600

I have a memory of infinite tedium. He wandered into a maudlin defence of the Beast People and of M'ling. M'ling, he said, was the only thing that had ever really cared for him. And suddenly an idea came to him.

"I'm damned!" said he, staggering to his feet and clutching the brandy bottle.

By some flash of intuition I knew what it was he intended. "You don't give drink to that beast!" I said, rising and facing him.

"Beast!" said he. "You're the beast. He takes his liquor like a Christian. Come out of the way, Prendick!"

"For God's sake," said I.

605

"Get—out of the way!" he roared, and suddenly whipped out his revolver.

"Very well," said I, and stood aside, half-minded to fall upon him as he put his hand upon the latch, but deterred by the thought of my useless arm. "You've made a beast of yourself,—to the beasts you may go."

He flung the doorway open, and stood half facing me between the yellow lamp-light and the pallid glare of the moon; his eye-sockets were blotches of black under his stubbly eyebrows.

"You're a solemn prig, Prendick, a silly ass! You're always fearing and fancying. We're on the edge of things. I'm bound to cut my throat to-morrow. I'm going to have a damned Bank Holiday to-night." He turned and went out into the moonlight. "M'ling!" he cried; "M'ling, old friend!"

Three dim creatures in the silvery light came along the edge of the wan beach,—one a white-wrapped creature, the other two blotches of blackness following it. They halted, staring. Then I saw M'ling's hunched shoulders as he came round the corner of the house.

610

"Drink!" cried Montgomery, "drink, you brutes! Drink and be men! Damme, I'm the cleverest. Moreau forgot this; this is the last touch. Drink, I tell you!" And waving the bottle in his hand he started off at a kind of quick trot to the westward, M'ling ranging himself between him and the three dim creatures who followed.

I went to the doorway. They were already indistinct in the mist of the moonlight before Montgomery halted. I saw him administer a dose of the raw brandy to M'ling, and saw the five figures melt into one vague patch.

"Sing!" I heard Montgomery shout,—"sing all together, 'Confound old Prendick!' That's right; now again, 'Confound old Prendick!'"

The black group broke up into five separate figures, and wound slowly away from me along the band of shining beach. Each went howling at his own sweet will, yelping insults at me, or giving whatever other vent this new inspiration of brandy demanded. Presently I heard Montgomery's voice shouting, "Right turn!" and they passed with their shouts and howls into the blackness of the landward trees. Slowly, very slowly, they receded into silence.

The peaceful splendour of the night healed again. The moon was now past the meridian and travelling down the west. It was at its full, and very bright riding through the empty blue sky. The shadow of the wall lay, a yard wide and of inky blackness, at my feet. The eastward sea was a featureless grey, dark and mysterious; and between the sea and the shadow the grey sands (of volcanic glass and crystals) flashed and shone like a beach of diamonds. Behind me the paraffine lamp flared hot and ruddy.

615

Then I shut the door, locked it, and went into the enclosure where Moreau lay beside his latest victims,—the staghounds and the llama and some other wretched brutes,—with his massive face calm even after his terrible death, and with the hard eyes open, staring at the dead white moon above. I sat down upon the edge of the sink, and with my eyes upon that ghastly pile of silvery light and ominous shadows began to turn over my plans. In the morning I would gather some provisions in the dingey, and after setting fire to the pyre before me, push out into the desolation of the high sea once more. I felt that for Montgomery there was no help; that he was, in truth, half akin to these Beast Folk, unfitted for human kindred.

I do not know how long I sat there scheming. It must have been an hour or so. Then my planning was interrupted by the return of Montgomery to my neighbourhood. I heard a yelling from many throats, a tumult of exultant cries passing down towards the beach, whooping and howling, and excited shrieks that seemed to come to a stop near the water's edge. The riot rose and fell; I heard heavy blows and the splintering smash of wood, but it did not trouble me then. A discordant chanting began.

My thoughts went back to my means of escape. I got up, brought the lamp, and went into a shed to look at some kegs I had seen there. Then I became interested in the contents of some biscuit-tins, and opened one. I saw something out of the tail of my eye,—a red figure,—and turned sharply.

Behind me lay the yard, vividly black-and-white in the moonlight, and the pile of wood and faggots on which Moreau and his mutilated victims lay, one over another. They seemed to be gripping one another in one last revengeful grapple. His wounds gaped, black as night, and the blood that had dripped lay in black patches upon the sand. Then I saw, without understanding, the cause of my phantom,—a ruddy glow that came and danced and went upon the wall opposite. I misinterpreted this, fancied it was a reflection of my flickering lamp, and turned again to the stores in the shed. I went on rummaging among them, as well as a one-armed man could, finding this convenient thing and that, and putting them aside for to-morrow's launch. My movements were slow, and the time passed quickly. Insensibly the daylight crept upon me.

The chanting died down, giving place to a clamour; then it began again, and suddenly broke into a tumult. I heard cries of, "More! more!" a sound like quarrelling, and a sudden wild shriek. The quality of the sounds changed so greatly that it arrested my attention. I went out into the yard and listened. Then cutting like a knife across the confusion came the crack of a revolver.

I rushed at once through my room to the little doorway. As I did so I heard some of the packing-cases behind me go sliding down and smash together with a clatter of glass on the floor of the shed. But I did not heed these. I flung the door open and looked out.

Up the beach by the boathouse a bonfire was burning, raining up sparks into the indistinctness of the dawn. Around this struggled a mass of black figures. I heard Montgomery call my name. I began to run at once towards this fire, revolver in hand. I saw the pink tongue of Montgomery's pistol lick out once, close to the ground. He was down. I shouted with all my strength and fired into the air. I heard some one cry, "The Master!" The knotted

black struggle broke into scattering units, the fire leapt and sank down. The crowd of Beast People fled in sudden panic before me, up the beach. In my excitement I fired at their retreating backs as they disappeared among the bushes. Then I turned to the black heaps upon the ground.

Montgomery lay on his back, with the hairy-grey Beast-man sprawling across his body. The brute was dead, but still gripping Montgomery's throat with its curving claws. Near by lay M'ling on his face and quite still, his neck bitten open and the upper part of the smashed brandy-bottle in his hand. Two other figures lay near the fire,—the one motionless, the other groaning fitfully, every now and then raising its head slowly, then dropping it again.

I caught hold of the grey man and pulled him off Montgomery's body; his claws drew down the torn coat reluctantly as I dragged him away. Montgomery was dark in the face and scarcely breathing. I splashed sea-water on his face and pillowed his head on my rolled-up coat. M'ling was dead. The wounded creature by the fire—it was a Wolf-brute with a bearded grey face—lay, I found, with the fore part of its body upon the still glowing timber. The wretched thing was injured so dreadfully that in mercy I blew its brains out at once. The other brute was one of the Bull-men swathed in white. He too was dead. The rest of the Beast People had vanished from the beach.

I went to Montgomery again and knelt beside him, cursing my ignorance of medicine. The fire beside me had sunk down, and only charred beams of timber glowing at the central ends and mixed with a grey ash of brushwood remained. I wondered casually where Montgomery had got his wood. Then I saw that the dawn was upon us. The sky had grown brighter, the setting moon was becoming pale and opaque in the luminous blue of the day. The sky to the eastward was rimmed with red.

Suddenly I heard a thud and a hissing behind me, and, looking round, sprang to my feet with a cry of horror. Against the warm dawn great tumultuous masses of black smoke were boiling up out of the enclosure, and through their stormy darkness shot flickering threads of blood-red flame. Then the thatched roof

caught. I saw the curving charge of the flames across the sloping straw. A spurt of fire jetted from the window of my room.

I knew at once what had happened. I remembered the crash I had heard. When I had rushed out to Montgomery's assistance, I had overturned the lamp.

The hopelessness of saving any of the contents of the enclosure stared me in the face. My mind came back to my plan of flight, and turning swiftly I looked to see where the two boats lay upon the beach. They were gone! Two axes lay upon the sands beside me; chips and splinters were scattered broadcast, and the ashes of the bonfire were blackening and smoking under the dawn. Montgomery had burnt the boats to revenge himself upon me and prevent our return to mankind!

A sudden convulsion of rage shook me. I was almost moved to batter his foolish head in, as he lay there helpless at my feet. Then suddenly his hand moved, so feebly, so pitifully, that my wrath vanished. He groaned, and opened his eyes for a minute. I knelt down beside him and raised his head. He opened his eyes again, staring silently at the dawn, and then they met mine. The lids fell.

"Sorry," he said presently, with an effort. He seemed trying to think. "The last," he murmured, "the last of this silly universe. What a mess—"

630

I listened. His head fell helplessly to one side. I thought some drink might revive him; but there was neither drink nor vessel in which to bring drink at hand. He seemed suddenly heavier. My heart went cold. I bent down to his face, put my hand through the rent in his blouse. He was dead; and even as he died a line of white heat, the limb of the sun, rose eastward beyond the projection of the bay, splashing its radiance across the sky and turning the dark sea into a weltering tumult of dazzling light. It fell like a glory upon his death-shrunken face.

I let his head fall gently upon the rough pillow I had made for him, and stood up. Before me was the glittering desolation of the sea, the awful solitude upon which I had already suffered so much; behind me the island, hushed under the dawn, its Beast People silent and unseen. The enclosure, with all its provisions and ammunition, burnt noisily, with sudden gusts of flame, a fitful

crackling, and now and then a crash. The heavy smoke drove up the beach away from me, rolling low over the distant tree-tops towards the huts in the ravine. Beside me were the charred vestiges of the boats and these five dead bodies.

Then out of the bushes came three Beast People, with hunched shoulders, protruding heads, misshapen hands awkwardly held, and inquisitive, unfriendly eyes and advanced towards me with hesitating gestures.

XX. Alone with the Beast Folk

I FACED these people, facing my fate in them, single-handed now,—literally single-handed, for I had a broken arm. In my pocket was a revolver with two empty chambers. Among the chips scattered about the beach lay the two axes that had been used to chop up the boats. The tide was creeping in behind me. There was nothing for it but courage. I looked squarely into the faces of the advancing monsters. They avoided my eyes, and their quivering nostrils investigated the bodies that lay beyond me on the beach. I took half-a-dozen steps, picked up the blood-stained whip that lay beneath the body of the Wolf-man, and cracked it. They stopped and stared at me.

"Salute!" said I. "Bow down!"

635

They hesitated. One bent his knees. I repeated my command, with my heart in my mouth, and advanced upon them. One knelt, then the other two.

I turned and walked towards the dead bodies, keeping my face towards the three kneeling Beast Men, very much as an actor passing up the stage faces the audience.

"They broke the Law," said I, putting my foot on the Sayer of the Law. "They have been slain,—even the Sayer of the Law; even the Other with the Whip. Great is the Law! Come and see."

"None escape," said one of them, advancing and peering.

"None escape," said I. "Therefore hear and do as I command." They stood up, looking questioningly at one another.

640

"Stand there," said I.

I picked up the hatchets and swung them by their heads from the sling of my arm; turned Montgomery over; picked up his revolver still loaded in two chambers, and bending down to rummage, found half-a-dozen cartridges in his pocket.

"Take him," said I, standing up again and pointing with the whip; "take him, and carry him out and cast him into the sea."

They came forward, evidently still afraid of Montgomery, but still more afraid of my cracking red whip-lash; and after some fumbling and hesitation, some whip-cracking and shouting, they lifted him gingerly, carried him down to the beach, and went splashing into the dazzling welter of the sea.

"On!" said I, "on! Carry him far."

645

They went in up to their armpits and stood regarding me.

"Let go," said I; and the body of Montgomery vanished with a splash. Something seemed to tighten across my chest.

"Good!" said I, with a break in my voice; and they came back, hurrying and fearful, to the margin of the water, leaving long wakes of black in the silver. At the water's edge they stopped, turning and glaring into the sea as though they presently expected Montgomery to arise therefrom and exact vengeance.

"Now these," said I, pointing to the other bodies.

They took care not to approach the place where they had thrown Montgomery into the water, but instead, carried the four dead Beast People slantingly along the beach for perhaps a hundred yards before they waded out and cast them away.

650

As I watched them disposing of the mangled remains of M'ling, I heard a light footfall behind me, and turning quickly saw the big Hyena-swine perhaps a dozen yards away. His head was bent down, his bright eyes were fixed upon me, his stumpy hands clenched and held close by his side. He stopped in this crouching attitude when I turned, his eyes a little averted.

For a moment we stood eye to eye. I dropped the whip and snatched at the pistol in my pocket; for I meant to kill this brute, the most formidable of any left now upon the island, at the first excuse. It may seem treacherous, but so I was resolved. I was far more afraid of him than of any other two of the Beast Folk. His continued life was I knew a threat against mine.

I was perhaps a dozen seconds collecting myself. Then cried I, "Salute! Bow down!"

His teeth flashed upon me in a snarl. "Who are *you* that I should—"

Perhaps a little too spasmodically I drew my revolver, aimed quickly and fired. I heard him yelp, saw him run sideways and turn, knew I had missed, and clicked back the cock with my thumb for the next shot. But he was already running headlong, jumping from side to side, and I dared not risk another miss. Every now and then he looked back at me over his shoulder. He went slanting along the beach, and vanished beneath the driving masses of dense smoke that were still pouring out from the burning enclosure. For some time I stood staring after him. I turned to my three obedient Beast Folk again and signalled them to drop the body they still carried. Then I went back to the place by the fire where the bodies had fallen and kicked the sand until all the brown blood-stains were absorbed and hidden.

I dismissed my three serfs with a wave of the hand, and went up the beach into the thickets. I carried my pistol in my hand, my whip thrust with the hatchets in the sling of my arm. I was anxious to be alone, to think out the position in which I was now placed. A dreadful thing that I was only beginning to realise was, that over all this island there was now no safe place where I could be alone and secure to rest or sleep. I had recovered strength amazingly since my landing, but I was still inclined to be nervous and to break down under any great stress. I felt that I ought to cross the island and establish myself with the Beast People, and make myself secure in their confidence. But my heart failed me. I went back to the beach, and turning eastward past the burning enclosure, made for a point where a shallow spit of coral sand ran out towards the reef. Here I could sit down and think, my back to the sea and my face against any surprise. And there I sat, chin on knees, the sun beating down upon my head and unspeakable dread in my mind, plotting how I could live on against the hour of my rescue (if ever rescue came). I tried to review the whole situation as calmly as I could, but it was difficult to clear the thing of emotion.

I began turning over in my mind the reason of Montgomery's despair. "They will change," he said; "they are sure to change." And Moreau, what was it that Moreau had said? "The stubborn beast-flesh grows day by day back again." Then I came round to the Hyena-swine. I felt sure that if I did not kill that brute, he would kill me. The Sayer of the Law was dead: worse luck. They knew now that we of the Whips could be killed even as they themselves were killed. Were they peering at me already out of the green masses of ferns and palms over yonder, watching until I came within their spring? Were they plotting against me? What was the Hyena-swine telling them? My imagination was running away with me into a morass of unsubstantial fears.

My thoughts were disturbed by a crying of sea-birds hurrying towards some black object that had been stranded by the waves on the beach near the enclosure. I knew what that object was, but I had not the heart to go back and drive them off. I began walking along the beach in the opposite direction, designing to come round the eastward corner of the island and so approach the ravine of the huts, without traversing the possible ambushes of the thickets.

Perhaps half a mile along the beach I became aware of one of my three Beast Folk advancing out of the landward bushes towards me. I was now so nervous with my own imaginings that I immediately drew my revolver. Even the propitiatory gestures of the creature failed to disarm me. He hesitated as he approached.

"Go away!" cried I.

660

There was something very suggestive of a dog in the cringing attitude of the creature. It retreated a little way, very like a dog being sent home, and stopped, looking at me imploringly with canine brown eyes.

"Go away," said I. "Do not come near me."

"May I not come near you?" it said.

"No; go away," I insisted, and snapped my whip. Then putting my whip in my teeth, I stooped for a stone, and with that threat drove the creature away.

So in solitude I came round by the ravine of the Beast People, and hiding among the weeds and reeds that separated this crevice

665

from the sea I watched such of them as appeared, trying to judge from their gestures and appearance how the death of Moreau and Montgomery and the destruction of the House of Pain had affected them. I know now the folly of my cowardice. Had I kept my courage up to the level of the dawn, had I not allowed it to ebb away in solitary thought, I might have grasped the vacant sceptre of Moreau and ruled over the Beast People. As it was I lost the opportunity, and sank to the position of a mere leader among my fellows.

Towards noon certain of them came and squatted basking in the hot sand. The imperious voices of hunger and thirst prevailed over my dread. I came out of the bushes, and, revolver in hand, walked down towards these seated figures. One, a Wolf-woman, turned her head and stared at me, and then the others. None attempted to rise or salute me. I felt too faint and weary to insist, and I let the moment pass.

"I want food," said I, almost apologetically, and drawing near.

"There is food in the huts," said an Ox-boar-man, drowsily, and looking away from me.

I passed them, and went down into the shadow and odours of the almost deserted ravine. In an empty hut I feasted on some specked and half-decayed fruit; and then after I had propped some branches and sticks about the opening, and placed myself with my face towards it and my hand upon my revolver, the exhaustion of the last thirty hours claimed its own, and I fell into a light slumber, hoping that the flimsy barricade I had erected would cause sufficient noise in its removal to save me from surprise.

XXI. The Reversion of the Beast Folk

In this way I became one among the Beast People in the Island of Doctor Moreau. When I awoke, it was dark about me. My arm ached in its bandages. I sat up, wondering at first where I might be. I heard coarse voices talking outside. Then I saw that my barricade had gone, and that the opening of the hut stood clear. My revolver was still in my hand.

I heard something breathing, saw something crouched together close beside me. I held my breath, trying to see what it was. It began to move slowly, interminably. Then something soft and warm and moist passed across my hand. All my muscles contracted. I snatched my hand away. A cry of alarm began and was stifled in my throat. Then I just realised what had happened sufficiently to stay my fingers on the revolver.

"Who is that?" I said in a hoarse whisper, the revolver still pointed.

"I—Master."

"Who are you?"

"They say there is no Master now. But I know, I know. I carried the bodies into the sea, O Walker in the Sea! the bodies of those you slew. I am your slave, Master."

675

"Are you the one I met on the beach?" I asked.

"The same, Master."

The Thing was evidently faithful enough, for it might have fallen upon me as I slept. "It is well," I said, extending my hand for another licking kiss. I began to realise what its presence meant, and the tide of my courage flowed. "Where are the others?" I asked.

"They are mad; they are fools," said the Dog-man. "Even now they talk together beyond there. They say, 'The Master is dead. The Other with the Whip is dead. That Other who walked in the Sea is as we are. We have no Master, no Whips, no House of Pain, any more. There is an end. We love the Law, and will keep it; but there is no Pain, no Master, no Whips for ever again.' So they say. But I know, Master, I know."

I felt in the darkness, and patted the Dog-man's head. "It is well," I said again.

680

"Presently you will slay them all," said the Dog-man.

"Presently," I answered, "I will slay them all,—after certain days and certain things have come to pass. Every one of them save those you spare, every one of them shall be slain."

"What the Master wishes to kill, the Master kills," said the Dog-man with a certain satisfaction in his voice.

"And that their sins may grow," I said, "let them live in their folly until their time is ripe. Let them not know that I am the Master."

"The Master's will is sweet," said the Dog-man, with the ready tact of his canine blood.

685

"But one has sinned," said I. "Him I will kill, whenever I may meet him. When I say to you, '*That is he*,' see that you fall upon him. And now I will go to the men and women who are assembled together."

For a moment the opening of the hut was blackened by the exit of the Dog-man. Then I followed and stood up, almost in the exact spot where I had been when I had heard Moreau and his staghound pursuing me. But now it was night, and all the miasmatic ravine about me was black; and beyond, instead of a green, sunlit slope, I saw a red fire, before which hunched, grotesque figures moved to and fro. Farther were the thick trees, a bank of darkness, fringed above with the black lace of the upper branches. The moon was just riding up on the edge of the ravine, and like a bar across its face drove the spire of vapour that was for ever streaming from the fumaroles of the island.

"Walk by me," said I, nerving myself; and side by side we walked down the narrow way, taking little heed of the dim Things that peered at us out of the huts.

None about the fire attempted to salute me. Most of them disregarded me, ostentatiously. I looked round for the Hyena-swine, but he was not there. Altogether, perhaps twenty of the Beast Folk squatted, staring into the fire or talking to one another.

"He is dead, he is dead! the Master is dead!" said the voice of the Ape-man to the right of me. "The House of Pain—there is no House of Pain!"

690

"He is not dead," said I, in a loud voice. "Even now he watches us!"

This startled them. Twenty pairs of eyes regarded me.

"The House of Pain is gone," said I. "It will come again. The Master you cannot see; yet even now he listens among you."

"True, true!" said the Dog-man.

They were staggered at my assurance. An animal may be ferocious and cunning enough, but it takes a real man to tell a lie.

"The Man with the Bandaged Arm speaks a strange thing," said one of the Beast Folk.

"I tell you it is so," I said. "The Master and the House of Pain will come again. Woe be to him who breaks the Law!"

They looked curiously at one another. With an affectation of indifference I began to chop idly at the ground in front of me with my hatchet. They looked, I noticed, at the deep cuts I made in the turf.

Then the Satyr raised a doubt. I answered him. Then one of the dappled things objected, and an animated discussion sprang up round the fire. Every moment I began to feel more convinced of my present security. I talked now without the catching in my breath, due to the intensity of my excitement, that had troubled me at first. In the course of about an hour I had really convinced several of the Beast Folk of the truth of my assertions, and talked most of the others into a dubious state. I kept a sharp eye for my enemy the Hyena-swine, but he never appeared. Every now and then a suspicious movement would startle me, but my confidence grew rapidly. Then as the moon crept down from the zenith, one by one the listeners began to yawn (showing the oddest teeth in the light of the sinking fire), and first one and then another retired towards the dens in the ravine; and I, dreading the silence and darkness, went with them, knowing I was safer with several of them than with one alone.

In this manner began the longer part of my sojourn upon this Island of Doctor Moreau. But from that night until the end came, there was but one thing happened to tell save a series of innumerable small unpleasant details and the fretting of an incessant uneasiness. So that I prefer to make no chronicle for that gap of time, to tell only one cardinal incident of the ten months I spent as an intimate of these half-humanised brutes. There is much that sticks in my memory that I could write,—things that I would cheerfully give my right hand to forget; but they do not help the telling of the story.

In the retrospect it is strange to remember how soon I fell in with these monsters' ways, and gained my confidence again. I had my quarrels with them of course, and could show some of their teeth-marks still; but they soon gained a wholesome respect for my trick of throwing stones and for the bite of my hatchet. And my Saint-Bernard-man's loyalty was of infinite service to me. I found their simple scale of honour was based mainly on the capacity for inflicting trenchant wounds. Indeed, I may say—without vanity, I hope—that I held something like pre-eminence among them. One or two, whom in a rare access of high spirits I had scarred rather badly, bore me a grudge; but it vented itself chiefly behind my back, and at a safe distance from my missiles, in grimaces.

The Hyena-swine avoided me, and I was always on the alert for him. My inseparable Dog-man hated and dreaded him intensely. I really believe that was at the root of the brute's attachment to me. It was soon evident to me that the former monster had tasted blood, and gone the way of the Leopard-man. He formed a lair somewhere in the forest, and became solitary. Once I tried to induce the Beast Folk to hunt him, but I lacked the authority to make them co-operate for one end. Again and again I tried to approach his den and come upon him unaware; but always he was too acute for me, and saw or winded me and got away. He too made every forest pathway dangerous to me and my ally with his lurking ambuscades. The Dog-man scarcely dared to leave my side.

In the first month or so the Beast Folk, compared with their latter condition, were human enough, and for one or two besides my canine friend I even conceived a friendly tolerance. The little pink sloth-creature displayed an odd affection for me, and took to following me about. The Monkey-man bored me, however; he assumed, on the strength of his five digits, that he was my equal, and was for ever jabbering at me,—jabbering the most arrant nonsense. One thing about him entertained me a little: he had a fantastic trick of coining new words. He had an idea, I believe, that to gabble about names that meant nothing was the proper use of speech. He called it "Big Thinks" to distinguish it from "Little

Thinks," the sane every-day interests of life. If ever I made a remark he did not understand, he would praise it very much, ask me to say it again, learn it by heart, and go off repeating it, with a word wrong here or there, to all the milder of the Beast People. He thought nothing of what was plain and comprehensible. I invented some very curious "Big Thinks" for his especial use. I think now that he was the silliest creature I ever met; he had developed in the most wonderful way the distinctive silliness of man without losing one jot of the natural folly of a monkey.

This, I say, was in the earlier weeks of my solitude among these brutes. During that time they respected the usage established by the Law, and behaved with general decorum. Once I found another rabbit torn to pieces,—by the Hyena-swine, I am assured,—but that was all. It was about May when I first distinctly perceived a growing difference in their speech and carriage, a growing coarseness of articulation, a growing disinclination to talk. My Monkey-man's jabber multiplied in volume but grew less and less comprehensible, more and more simian. Some of the others seemed altogether slipping their hold upon speech, though they still understood what I said to them at that time. (Can you imagine language, once clear-cut and exact, softening and guttering, losing shape and import, becoming mere lumps of sound again?) And they walked erect with an increasing difficulty. Though they evidently felt ashamed of themselves, every now and then I would come upon one or another running on toes and finger-tips, and quite unable to recover the vertical attitude. They held things more clumsily; drinking by suction, feeding by gnawing, grew commoner every day. I realised more keenly than ever what Moreau had told me about the "stubborn beast-flesh." They were reverting, and reverting very rapidly.

Some of them—the pioneers in this, I noticed with some surprise, were all females—began to disregard the injunction of decency, deliberately for the most part. Others even attempted public outrages upon the institution of monogamy. The tradition of the Law was clearly losing its force. I cannot pursue this disagreeable subject.

My Dog-man imperceptibly slipped back to the dog again; day by day he became dumb, quadrupedal, hairy. I scarcely noticed the transition from the companion on my right hand to the lurching dog at my side.

As the carelessness and disorganisation increased from day to day, the lane of dwelling places, at no time very sweet, became so loathsome that I left it, and going across the island made myself a hovel of boughs amid the black ruins of Moreau's enclosure. Some memory of pain, I found, still made that place the safest from the Beast Folk.

It would be impossible to detail every step of the lapsing of these monsters,—to tell how, day by day, the human semblance left them; how they gave up bandagings and wrappings, abandoned at last every stitch of clothing; how the hair began to spread over the exposed limbs; how their foreheads fell away and their faces projected; how the quasi-human intimacy I had permitted myself with some of them in the first month of my loneliness became a shuddering horror to recall.

The change was slow and inevitable. For them and for me it came without any definite shock. I still went among them in safety, because no jolt in the downward glide had released the increasing charge of explosive animalism that ousted the human day by day. But I began to fear that soon now that shock must come. My Saint-Bernard-brute followed me to the enclosure every night, and his vigilance enabled me to sleep at times in something like peace. The little pink sloth-thing became shy and left me, to crawl back to its natural life once more among the tree-branches. We were in just the state of equilibrium that would remain in one of those "Happy Family" cages which animal-tamers exhibit, if the tamer were to leave it for ever.

Of course these creatures did not decline into such beasts as the reader has seen in zoological gardens,—into ordinary bears, wolves, tigers, oxen, swine, and apes. There was still something strange about each; in each Moreau had blended this animal with that. One perhaps was ursine chiefly, another feline chiefly, another bovine chiefly; but each was tainted with other creatures,—a kind of generalised animalism appearing through the specific

dispositions. And the dwindling shreds of the humanity still startled me every now and then,—a momentary recrudescence of speech perhaps, an unexpected dexterity of the fore-feet, a pitiful attempt to walk erect.

I too must have undergone strange changes. My clothes hung about me as yellow rags, through whose rents showed the tanned skin. My hair grew long, and became matted together. I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement.

At first I spent the daylight hours on the southward beach watching for a ship, hoping and praying for a ship. I counted on the *Ipecacuanha* returning as the year wore on; but she never came. Five times I saw sails, and thrice smoke; but nothing ever touched the island. I always had a bonfire ready, but no doubt the volcanic reputation of the island was taken to account for that.

It was only about September or October that I began to think of making a raft. By that time my arm had healed, and both my hands were at my service again. At first, I found my helplessness appalling. I had never done any carpentry or such-like work in my life, and I spent day after day in experimental chopping and binding among the trees. I had no ropes, and could hit on nothing wherewith to make ropes; none of the abundant creepers seemed limber or strong enough, and with all my litter of scientific education I could not devise any way of making them so. I spent more than a fortnight grubbing among the black ruins of the enclosure and on the beach where the boats had been burnt, looking for nails and other stray pieces of metal that might prove of service. Now and then some Beast-creature would watch me, and go leaping off when I called to it. There came a season of thunder-storms and heavy rain, which greatly retarded my work; but at last the raft was completed.

I was delighted with it. But with a certain lack of practical sense which has always been my bane, I had made it a mile or more from the sea; and before I had dragged it down to the beach the thing had fallen to pieces. Perhaps it is as well that I was saved from launching it; but at the time my misery at my failure

was so acute that for some days I simply moped on the beach, and stared at the water and thought of death.

I did not, however, mean to die, and an incident occurred that warned me unmistakably of the folly of letting the days pass so,—for each fresh day was fraught with increasing danger from the Beast People.

I was lying in the shade of the enclosure wall, staring out to sea, when I was startled by something cold touching the skin of my heel, and starting round found the little pink sloth-creature blinking into my face. He had long since lost speech and active movement, and the lank hair of the little brute grew thicker every day and his stumpy claws more askew. He made a moaning noise when he saw he had attracted my attention, went a little way towards the bushes and looked back at me.

At first I did not understand, but presently it occurred to me that he wished me to follow him; and this I did at last,—slowly, for the day was hot. When we reached the trees he clambered into them, for he could travel better among their swinging creepers than on the ground. And suddenly in a trampled space I came upon a ghastly group. My Saint-Bernard-creature lay on the ground, dead; and near his body crouched the Hyena-swine, gripping the quivering flesh with its misshapen claws, gnawing at it, and snarling with delight. As I approached, the monster lifted its glaring eyes to mine, its lips went trembling back from its red-stained teeth, and it growled menacingly. It was not afraid and not ashamed; the last vestige of the human taint had vanished. I advanced a step farther, stopped, and pulled out my revolver. At last I had him face to face.

The brute made no sign of retreat; but its ears went back, its hair bristled, and its body crouched together. I aimed between the eyes and fired. As I did so, the Thing rose straight at me in a leap, and I was knocked over like a ninepin. It clutched at me with its crippled hand, and struck me in the face. Its spring carried it over me. I fell under the hind part of its body; but luckily I had hit as I meant, and it had died even as it leapt. I crawled out from under its unclean weight and stood up trembling, staring at its quivering

body. That danger at least was over; but this, I knew was only the first of the series of relapses that must come.

I burnt both of the bodies on a pyre of brushwood; but after that I saw that unless I left the island my death was only a question of time. The Beast People by that time had, with one or two exceptions, left the ravine and made themselves lairs according to their taste among the thickets of the island. Few prowled by day, most of them slept, and the island might have seemed deserted to a new-comer; but at night the air was hideous with their calls and howling. I had half a mind to make a massacre of them; to build traps, or fight them with my knife. Had I possessed sufficient cartridges, I should not have hesitated to begin the killing. There could now be scarcely a score left of the dangerous carnivores; the braver of these were already dead. After the death of this poor dog of mine, my last friend, I too adopted to some extent the practice of slumbering in the daytime in order to be on my guard at night. I rebuilt my den in the walls of the enclosure, with such a narrow opening that anything attempting to enter must necessarily make a considerable noise. The creatures had lost the art of fire too, and recovered their fear of it. I turned once more, almost passionately now, to hammering together stakes and branches to form a raft for my escape.

I found a thousand difficulties. I am an extremely unhandy man (my schooling was over before the days of Slöjd); but most of the requirements of a raft I met at last in some clumsy, circuitous way or other, and this time I took care of the strength. The only insurmountable obstacle was that I had no vessel to contain the water I should need if I floated forth upon these untravelled seas. I would have even tried pottery, but the island contained no clay. I used to go moping about the island trying with all my might to solve this one last difficulty. Sometimes I would give way to wild outbursts of rage, and hack and splinter some unlucky tree in my intolerable vexation. But I could think of nothing.

And then came a day, a wonderful day, which I spent in ecstasy. I saw a sail to the southwest, a small sail like that of a little schooner; and forthwith I lit a great pile of brushwood, and

stood by it in the heat of it, and the heat of the midday sun, watching. All day I watched that sail, eating or drinking nothing, so that my head reeled; and the Beasts came and glared at me, and seemed to wonder, and went away. It was still distant when night came and swallowed it up; and all night I toiled to keep my blaze bright and high, and the eyes of the Beasts shone out of the darkness, marvelling. In the dawn the sail was nearer, and I saw it was the dirty lug-sail of a small boat. But it sailed strangely. My eyes were weary with watching, and I peered and could not believe them. Two men were in the boat, sitting low down,—one by the bows, the other at the rudder. The head was not kept to the wind; it yawed and fell away.

As the day grew brighter, I began waving the last rag of my jacket to them; but they did not notice me, and sat still, facing each other. I went to the lowest point of the low headland, and gesticulated and shouted. There was no response, and the boat kept on her aimless course, making slowly, very slowly, for the bay. Suddenly a great white bird flew up out of the boat, and neither of the men stirred nor noticed it; it circled round, and then came sweeping overhead with its strong wings outspread.

Then I stopped shouting, and sat down on the headland and rested my chin on my hands and stared. Slowly, slowly, the boat drove past towards the west. I would have swum out to it, but something—a cold, vague fear—kept me back. In the afternoon the tide stranded the boat, and left it a hundred yards or so to the westward of the ruins of the enclosure. The men in it were dead, had been dead so long that they fell to pieces when I tilted the boat on its side and dragged them out. One had a shock of red hair, like the captain of the *Ipecacuanha*, and a dirty white cap lay in the bottom of the boat.

As I stood beside the boat, three of the Beasts came slinking out of the bushes and sniffing towards me. One of my spasms of disgust came upon me. I thrust the little boat down the beach and clambered on board her. Two of the brutes were Wolf-beasts, and came forward with quivering nostrils and glittering eyes; the third was the horrible nondescript of bear and bull. When I saw them approaching those wretched remains, heard them snarling at one

another and caught the gleam of their teeth, a frantic horror succeeded my repulsion. I turned my back upon them, struck the lug and began paddling out to sea. I could not bring myself to look behind me.

I lay, however, between the reef and the island that night, and the next morning went round to the stream and filled the empty keg aboard with water. Then, with such patience as I could command, I collected a quantity of fruit, and waylaid and killed two rabbits with my last three cartridges. While I was doing this I left the boat moored to an inward projection of the reef, for fear of the Beast People.

725

XXII. The Man Alone

In the evening I started, and drove out to sea before a gentle wind from the southwest, slowly, steadily; and the island grew smaller and smaller, and the lank spire of smoke dwindled to a finer and finer line against the hot sunset. The ocean rose up around me, hiding that low, dark patch from my eyes. The daylight, the trailing glory of the sun, went streaming out of the sky, was drawn aside like some luminous curtain, and at last I looked into the blue gulf of immensity which the sunshine hides, and saw the floating hosts of the stars. The sea was silent, the sky was silent. I was alone with the night and silence.

So I drifted for three days, eating and drinking sparingly, and meditating upon all that had happened to me,—not desiring very greatly then to see men again. One unclean rag was about me, my hair a black tangle: no doubt my discoverers thought me a madman.

It is strange, but I felt no desire to return to mankind. I was only glad to be quit of the foulness of the Beast People. And on the third day I was picked up by a brig from Apia to San Francisco. Neither the captain nor the mate would believe my story, judging that solitude and danger had made me mad; and fearing their opinion might be that of others, I refrained from telling my adventure further, and professed to recall nothing that

had happened to me between the loss of the *Lady Vain* and the time when I was picked up again,—the space of a year.

I had to act with the utmost circumspection to save myself from the suspicion of insanity. My memory of the Law, of the two dead sailors, of the ambuscades of the darkness, of the body in the canebrake, haunted me; and, unnatural as it seems, with my return to mankind came, instead of that confidence and sympathy I had expected, a strange enhancement of the uncertainty and dread I had experienced during my stay upon the island. No one would believe me; I was almost as queer to men as I had been to the Beast People. I may have caught something of the natural wildness of my companions. They say that terror is a disease, and anyhow I can witness that for several years now a restless fear has dwelt in my mind,—such a restless fear as a half-tamed lion cub may feel.

My trouble took the strangest form. I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not also another Beast People, animals half wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would presently begin to revert,—to show first this bestial mark and then that. But I have confided my case to a strangely able man,—a man who had known Moreau, and seemed half to credit my story; a mental specialist,—and he has helped me mightily, though I do not expect that the terror of that island will ever altogether leave me. At most times it lies far in the back of my mind, a mere distant cloud, a memory, and a faint distrust; but there are times when the little cloud spreads until it obscures the whole sky. Then I look about me at my fellow-men; and I go in fear. I see faces, keen and bright; others dull or dangerous; others, unsteady, insincere,—none that have the calm authority of a reasonable soul. I feel as though the animal was surging up through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale. I know this is an illusion; that these seeming men and women about me are indeed men and women,—men and women for ever, perfectly reasonable creatures, full of human desires and tender solicitude, emancipated from instinct and the slaves of no fantastic Law,—beings altogether different from the Beast Folk. Yet I shrink from

them, from their curious glances, their inquiries and assistance, and long to be away from them and alone. For that reason I live near the broad free downland, and can escape thither when this shadow is over my soul; and very sweet is the empty downland then, under the wind-swept sky.

When I lived in London the horror was well-nigh insupportable. I could not get away from men: their voices came through windows; locked doors were flimsy safeguards. I would go out into the streets to fight with my delusion, and prowling women would mew after me; furtive, craving men glance jealously at me; weary, pale workers go coughing by me with tired eyes and eager paces, like wounded deer dripping blood; old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves; and, all unheeding, a ragged tail of gibing children. Then I would turn aside into some chapel,—and even there, such was my disturbance, it seemed that the preacher gibbered "Big Thinks," even as the Ape-man had done; or into some library, and there the intent faces over the books seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey. Particularly nauseous were the blank, expressionless faces of people in trains and omnibuses; they seemed no more my fellow-creatures than dead bodies would be, so that I did not dare to travel unless I was assured of being alone. And even it seemed that I too was not a reasonable creature, but only an animal tormented with some strange disorder in its brain which sent it to wander alone, like a sheep stricken with gid.

This is a mood, however, that comes to me now, I thank God, more rarely. I have withdrawn myself from the confusion of cities and multitudes, and spend my days surrounded by wise books,—bright windows in this life of ours, lit by the shining souls of men. I see few strangers, and have but a small household. My days I devote to reading and to experiments in chemistry, and I spend many of the clear nights in the study of astronomy. There is—though I do not know how there is or why there is—a sense of infinite peace and protection in the glittering hosts of heaven. There it must be, I think, in the vast and eternal laws of matter, and not in the daily cares and sins and troubles of men, that

whatever is more than animal within us must find its solace and its hope. I hope, or I could not live.

And so, in hope and solitude, my story ends.

Edward Prendick.

Note. The substance of the chapter entitled "Doctor Moreau explains," which contains the essential idea of the story, appeared as a middle article in the *Saturday Review* in January, 1895. This is the only portion of this story that has been previously published, and it has been entirely recast to adapt it to the narrative form.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

License: Public Domain

H.G. Wells

But who shall dwell in these worlds if they be inhabited? . . . Are we or they Lords of the World? . . . And how are all things made for man?

— KEPLER (QUOTED IN *THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY*)

Book One: The Coming of the Martians

Chapter One

The Eve of the War

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

The planet Mars, I scarcely need remind the reader, revolves about the sun at a mean distance of 140,000,000 miles, and the

light and heat it receives from the sun is barely half of that received by this world. It must be, if the nebular hypothesis has any truth, older than our world; and long before this earth ceased to be molten, life upon its surface must have begun its course. The fact that it is scarcely one seventh of the volume of the earth must have accelerated its cooling to the temperature at which life could begin. It has air and water and all that is necessary for the support of animated existence.

Yet so vain is man, and so blinded by his vanity, that no writer, up to the very end of the nineteenth century, expressed any idea that intelligent life might have developed there far, or indeed at all, beyond its earthly level. Nor was it generally understood that since Mars is older than our earth, with scarcely a quarter of the superficial area and remoter from the sun, it necessarily follows that it is not only more distant from time's beginning but nearer its end.

The secular cooling that must someday overtake our planet has already gone far indeed with our neighbour. Its physical condition is still largely a mystery, but we know now that even in its equatorial region the midday temperature barely approaches that of our coldest winter. Its air is much more attenuated than ours, its oceans have shrunk until they cover but a third of its surface, and as its slow seasons change huge snowcaps gather and melt about either pole and periodically inundate its temperate zones. That last stage of exhaustion, which to us is still incredibly remote, has become a present-day problem for the inhabitants of Mars. The immediate pressure of necessity has brightened their intellects, enlarged their powers, and hardened their hearts. And looking across space with instruments, and intelligences such as we have scarcely dreamed of, they see, at its nearest distance only 35,000,000 of miles sunward of them, a morning star of hope, our own warmer planet, green with vegetation and grey with water, with a cloudy atmosphere eloquent of fertility, with glimpses through its drifting cloud wisps of broad stretches of populous country and narrow, navy-crowded seas.

And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs to

us. The intellectual side of man already admits that life is an incessant struggle for existence, and it would seem that this too is the belief of the minds upon Mars. Their world is far gone in its cooling and this world is still crowded with life, but crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that, generation after generation, creeps upon them.

And before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?

The Martians seem to have calculated their descent with amazing subtlety--their mathematical learning is evidently far in excess of ours--and to have carried out their preparations with a well-nigh perfect unanimity. Had our instruments permitted it, we might have seen the gathering trouble far back in the nineteenth century. Men like Schiaparelli watched the red planet--it is odd, by-the-by, that for countless centuries Mars has been the star of war--but failed to interpret the fluctuating appearances of the markings they mapped so well. All that time the Martians must have been getting ready.

During the opposition of 1894 a great light was seen on the illuminated part of the disk, first at the Lick Observatory, then by Perrotin of Nice, and then by other observers. English readers heard of it first in the issue of *Nature* dated August 2. I am inclined to think that this blaze may have been the casting of the huge gun, in the vast pit sunk into their planet, from which their shots were fired at us. Peculiar markings, as yet unexplained, were seen near the site of that outbreak during the next two oppositions.

The storm burst upon us six years ago now. As Mars approached opposition, Lavelle of Java set the wires of the astronomical exchange palpitating with the amazing intelligence

of a huge outbreak of incandescent gas upon the planet. It had occurred towards midnight of the twelfth; and the spectroscope, to which he had at once resorted, indicated a mass of flaming gas, chiefly hydrogen, moving with an enormous velocity towards this earth. This jet of fire had become invisible about a quarter past twelve. He compared it to a colossal puff of flame suddenly and violently squirted out of the planet, "as flaming gases rushed out of a gun."

A singularly appropriate phrase it proved. Yet the next day there was nothing of this in the papers except a little note in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the world went in ignorance of one of the gravest dangers that ever threatened the human race. I might not have heard of the eruption at all had I not met Ogilvy, the well-known astronomer, at Ottershaw. He was immensely excited at the news, and in the excess of his feelings invited me up to take a turn with him that night in a scrutiny of the red planet.

10

In spite of all that has happened since, I still remember that vigil very distinctly: the black and silent observatory, the shadowed lantern throwing a feeble glow upon the floor in the corner, the steady ticking of the clockwork of the telescope, the little slit in the roof--an oblong profundity with the stardust streaked across it. Ogilvy moved about, invisible but audible. Looking through the telescope, one saw a circle of deep blue and the little round planet swimming in the field. It seemed such a little thing, so bright and small and still, faintly marked with transverse stripes, and slightly flattened from the perfect round. But so little it was, so silvery warm--a pin's-head of light! It was as if it quivered, but really this was the telescope vibrating with the activity of the clockwork that kept the planet in view.

As I watched, the planet seemed to grow larger and smaller and to advance and recede, but that was simply that my eye was tired. Forty millions of miles it was from us--more than forty millions of miles of void. Few people realise the immensity of vacancy in which the dust of the material universe swims.

Near it in the field, I remember, were three faint points of light, three telescopic stars infinitely remote, and all around it was the unfathomable darkness of empty space. You know how that

blackness looks on a frosty starlight night. In a telescope it seems far profounder. And invisible to me because it was so remote and small, flying swiftly and steadily towards me across that incredible distance, drawing nearer every minute by so many thousands of miles, came the Thing they were sending us, the Thing that was to bring so much struggle and calamity and death to the earth. I never dreamed of it then as I watched; no one on earth dreamed of that unerring missile.

That night, too, there was another jetting out of gas from the distant planet. I saw it. A reddish flash at the edge, the slightest projection of the outline just as the chronometer struck midnight; and at that I told Ogilvy and he took my place. The night was warm and I was thirsty, and I went stretching my legs clumsily and feeling my way in the darkness, to the little table where the siphon stood, while Ogilvy exclaimed at the streamer of gas that came out towards us.

That night another invisible missile started on its way to the earth from Mars, just a second or so under twenty-four hours after the first one. I remember how I sat on the table there in the blackness, with patches of green and crimson swimming before my eyes. I wished I had a light to smoke by, little suspecting the meaning of the minute gleam I had seen and all that it would presently bring me. Ogilvy watched till one, and then gave it up; and we lit the lantern and walked over to his house. Down below in the darkness were Ottershaw and Chertsey and all their hundreds of people, sleeping in peace.

He was full of speculation that night about the condition of Mars, and scoffed at the vulgar idea of its having inhabitants who were signalling us. His idea was that meteorites might be falling in a heavy shower upon the planet, or that a huge volcanic explosion was in progress. He pointed out to me how unlikely it was that organic evolution had taken the same direction in the two adjacent planets.

"The chances against anything manlike on Mars are a million to one," he said.

Hundreds of observers saw the flame that night and the night after about midnight, and again the night after; and so for ten

nights, a flame each night. Why the shots ceased after the tenth no one on earth has attempted to explain. It may be the gases of the firing caused the Martians inconvenience. Dense clouds of smoke or dust, visible through a powerful telescope on earth as little grey, fluctuating patches, spread through the clearness of the planet's atmosphere and obscured its more familiar features.

Even the daily papers woke up to the disturbances at last, and popular notes appeared here, there, and everywhere concerning the volcanoes upon Mars. The seriocomic periodical *Punch*, I remember, made a happy use of it in the political cartoon. And, all unsuspected, those missiles the Martians had fired at us drew earthward, rushing now at a pace of many miles a second through the empty gulf of space, hour by hour and day by day, nearer and nearer. It seems to me now almost incredibly wonderful that, with that swift fate hanging over us, men could go about their petty concerns as they did. I remember how jubilant Markham was at securing a new photograph of the planet for the illustrated paper he edited in those days. People in these latter times scarcely realise the abundance and enterprise of our nineteenth-century papers. For my own part, I was much occupied in learning to ride the bicycle, and busy upon a series of papers discussing the probable developments of moral ideas as civilisation progressed.

One night (the first missile then could scarcely have been 10,000,000 miles away) I went for a walk with my wife. It was starlight and I explained the Signs of the Zodiac to her, and pointed out Mars, a bright dot of light creeping zenithward, towards which so many telescopes were pointed. It was a warm night. Coming home, a party of excursionists from Chertsey or Isleworth passed us singing and playing music. There were lights in the upper windows of the houses as the people went to bed. From the railway station in the distance came the sound of shunting trains, ringing and rumbling, softened almost into melody by the distance. My wife pointed out to me the brightness of the red, green, and yellow signal lights hanging in a framework against the sky. It seemed so safe and tranquil.

20

Chapter Two

The Falling Star

Then came the night of the first falling star. It was seen early in the morning, rushing over Winchester eastward, a line of flame high in the atmosphere. Hundreds must have seen it, and taken it for an ordinary falling star. Albin described it as leaving a greenish streak behind it that glowed for some seconds. Denning, our greatest authority on meteorites, stated that the height of its first appearance was about ninety or one hundred miles. It seemed to him that it fell to earth about one hundred miles east of him.

I was at home at that hour and writing in my study; and although my French windows face towards Ottershaw and the blind was up (for I loved in those days to look up at the night sky), I saw nothing of it. Yet this strangest of all things that ever came to earth from outer space must have fallen while I was sitting there, visible to me had I only looked up as it passed. Some of those who saw its flight say it travelled with a hissing sound. I myself heard nothing of that. Many people in Berkshire, Surrey, and Middlesex must have seen the fall of it, and, at most, have thought that another meteorite had descended. No one seems to have troubled to look for the fallen mass that night.

But very early in the morning poor Ogilvy, who had seen the shooting star and who was persuaded that a meteorite lay somewhere on the common between Horsell, Ottershaw, and Woking, rose early with the idea of finding it. Find it he did, soon after dawn, and not far from the sand pits. An enormous hole had been made by the impact of the projectile, and the sand and gravel had been flung violently in every direction over the heath, forming heaps visible a mile and a half away. The heather was on fire eastward, and a thin blue smoke rose against the dawn.

The Thing itself lay almost entirely buried in sand, amidst the scattered splinters of a fir tree it had shivered to fragments in its descent. The uncovered part had the appearance of a huge cylinder, caked over and its outline softened by a thick scaly dun-coloured incrustation. It had a diameter of about thirty yards. He approached the mass, surprised at the size and more so at the shape, since most meteorites are rounded more or less completely.

It was, however, still so hot from its flight through the air as to forbid his near approach. A stirring noise within its cylinder he ascribed to the unequal cooling of its surface; for at that time it had not occurred to him that it might be hollow.

He remained standing at the edge of the pit that the Thing had made for itself, staring at its strange appearance, astonished chiefly at its unusual shape and colour, and dimly perceiving even then some evidence of design in its arrival. The early morning was wonderfully still, and the sun, just clearing the pine trees towards Weybridge, was already warm. He did not remember hearing any birds that morning, there was certainly no breeze stirring, and the only sounds were the faint movements from within the cindery cylinder. He was all alone on the common.

Then suddenly he noticed with a start that some of the grey clinker, the ashy incrustation that covered the meteorite, was falling off the circular edge of the end. It was dropping off in flakes and raining down upon the sand. A large piece suddenly came off and fell with a sharp noise that brought his heart into his mouth.

For a minute he scarcely realised what this meant, and, although the heat was excessive, he clambered down into the pit close to the bulk to see the Thing more clearly. He fancied even then that the cooling of the body might account for this, but what disturbed that idea was the fact that the ash was falling only from the end of the cylinder.

And then he perceived that, very slowly, the circular top of the cylinder was rotating on its body. It was such a gradual movement that he discovered it only through noticing that a black mark that had been near him five minutes ago was now at the other side of the circumference. Even then he scarcely understood what this indicated, until he heard a muffled grating sound and saw the black mark jerk forward an inch or so. Then the thing came upon him in a flash. The cylinder was artificial--hollow--with an end that screwed out! Something within the cylinder was unscrewing the top!

"Good heavens!" said Ogilvy. "There's a man in it--men in it! Half roasted to death! Trying to escape!"

At once, with a quick mental leap, he linked the Thing with the flash upon Mars.

30

The thought of the confined creature was so dreadful to him that he forgot the heat and went forward to the cylinder to help turn. But luckily the dull radiation arrested him before he could burn his hands on the still-glowing metal. At that he stood irresolute for a moment, then turned, scrambled out of the pit, and set off running wildly into Woking. The time then must have been somewhere about six o'clock. He met a waggoner and tried to make him understand, but the tale he told and his appearance were so wild--his hat had fallen off in the pit--that the man simply drove on. He was equally unsuccessful with the potman who was just unlocking the doors of the public-house by Horsell Bridge. The fellow thought he was a lunatic at large and made an unsuccessful attempt to shut him into the taproom. That sobered him a little; and when he saw Henderson, the London journalist, in his garden, he called over the palings and made himself understood.

"Henderson," he called, "you saw that shooting star last night?"

"Well?" said Henderson.

"It's out on Horsell Common now."

"Good Lord!" said Henderson. "Fallen meteorite! That's good."

35

"But it's something more than a meteorite. It's a cylinder--an artificial cylinder, man! And there's something inside."

Henderson stood up with his spade in his hand.

"What's that?" he said. He was deaf in one ear.

Ogilvy told him all that he had seen. Henderson was a minute or so taking it in. Then he dropped his spade, snatched up his jacket, and came out into the road. The two men hurried back at once to the common, and found the cylinder still lying in the same position. But now the sounds inside had ceased, and a thin circle of bright metal showed between the top and the body of the cylinder. Air was either entering or escaping at the rim with a thin, sizzling sound.

They listened, rapped on the scaly burnt metal with a stick, and, meeting with no response, they both concluded the man or

40

men inside must be insensible or dead.

Of course the two were quite unable to do anything. They shouted consolation and promises, and went off back to the town again to get help. One can imagine them, covered with sand, excited and disordered, running up the little street in the bright sunlight just as the shop folks were taking down their shutters and people were opening their bedroom windows. Henderson went into the railway station at once, in order to telegraph the news to London. The newspaper articles had prepared men's minds for the reception of the idea.

By eight o'clock a number of boys and unemployed men had already started for the common to see the "dead men from Mars." That was the form the story took. I heard of it first from my newspaper boy about a quarter to nine when I went out to get my *Daily Chronicle*. I was naturally startled, and lost no time in going out and across the Ottershaw bridge to the sand pits.

Chapter Three

On Horsell Common

I found a little crowd of perhaps twenty people surrounding the huge hole in which the cylinder lay. I have already described the appearance of that colossal bulk, embedded in the ground. The turf and gravel about it seemed charred as if by a sudden explosion. No doubt its impact had caused a flash of fire. Henderson and Ogilvy were not there. I think they perceived that nothing was to be done for the present, and had gone away to breakfast at Henderson's house.

There were four or five boys sitting on the edge of the Pit, with their feet dangling, and amusing themselves--until I stopped them--by throwing stones at the giant mass. After I had spoken to them about it, they began playing at "touch" in and out of the group of bystanders.

Among these were a couple of cyclists, a jobbing gardener I employed sometimes, a girl carrying a baby, Gregg the butcher and his little boy, and two or three loafers and golf caddies who

were accustomed to hang about the railway station. There was very little talking. Few of the common people in England had anything but the vaguest astronomical ideas in those days. Most of them were staring quietly at the big table like end of the cylinder, which was still as Ogilvy and Henderson had left it. I fancy the popular expectation of a heap of charred corpses was disappointed at this inanimate bulk. Some went away while I was there, and other people came. I clambered into the pit and fancied I heard a faint movement under my feet. The top had certainly ceased to rotate.

It was only when I got thus close to it that the strangeness of this object was at all evident to me. At the first glance it was really no more exciting than an overturned carriage or a tree blown across the road. Not so much so, indeed. It looked like a rusty gas float. It required a certain amount of scientific education to perceive that the grey scale of the Thing was no common oxide, that the yellowish-white metal that gleamed in the crack between the lid and the cylinder had an unfamiliar hue. "Extra-terrestrial" had no meaning for most of the onlookers.

At that time it was quite clear in my own mind that the Thing had come from the planet Mars, but I judged it improbable that it contained any living creature. I thought the unscrewing might be automatic. In spite of Ogilvy, I still believed that there were men in Mars. My mind ran fancifully on the possibilities of its containing manuscript, on the difficulties in translation that might arise, whether we should find coins and models in it, and so forth. Yet it was a little too large for assurance on this idea. I felt an impatience to see it opened. About eleven, as nothing seemed happening, I walked back, full of such thought, to my home in Maybury. But I found it difficult to get to work upon my abstract investigations.

In the afternoon the appearance of the common had altered very much. The early editions of the evening papers had startled London with enormous headlines:

A MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM MARS.

REMARKABLE STORY FROM WOKING,

and so forth. In addition, Ogilvy's wire to the Astronomical Exchange had roused every observatory in the three kingdoms.

There were half a dozen flies or more from the Woking station standing in the road by the sand pits, a basket-chaise from Chobham, and a rather lordly carriage. Besides that, there was quite a heap of bicycles. In addition, a large number of people must have walked, in spite of the heat of the day, from Woking and Chertsey, so that there was altogether quite a considerable crowd--one or two gaily dressed ladies among the others.

It was glaringly hot, not a cloud in the sky nor a breath of wind, and the only shadow was that of the few scattered pine trees. The burning heather had been extinguished, but the level ground towards Ottershaw was blackened as far as one could see, and still giving off vertical streamers of smoke. An enterprising sweet-stuff dealer in the Chobham Road had sent up his son with a barrow-load of green apples and ginger beer.

Going to the edge of the pit, I found it occupied by a group of about half a dozen men--Henderson, Ogilvy, and a tall, fair-haired man that I afterwards learned was Stent, the Astronomer Royal, with several workmen wielding spades and pickaxes. Stent was giving directions in a clear, high-pitched voice. He was standing on the cylinder, which was now evidently much cooler; his face was crimson and streaming with perspiration, and something seemed to have irritated him.

A large portion of the cylinder had been uncovered, though its lower end was still embedded. As soon as Ogilvy saw me among the staring crowd on the edge of the pit he called to me to come down, and asked me if I would mind going over to see Lord Hilton, the lord of the manor.

The growing crowd, he said, was becoming a serious impediment to their excavations, especially the boys. They wanted a light railing put up, and help to keep the people back. He told me that a faint stirring was occasionally still audible within the case, but that the workmen had failed to unscrew the top, as it afforded no grip to them. The case appeared to be enormously thick, and it was possible that the faint sounds we heard represented a noisy tumult in the interior.

I was very glad to do as he asked, and so become one of the privileged spectators within the contemplated enclosure. I failed to find Lord Hilton at his house, but I was told he was expected from London by the six o'clock train from Waterloo; and as it was then about a quarter past five, I went home, had some tea, and walked up to the station to waylay him.

55

Chapter Four

The Cylinder Opens

When I returned to the common the sun was setting. Scattered groups were hurrying from the direction of Woking, and one or two persons were returning. The crowd about the pit had increased, and stood out black against the lemon yellow of the sky--a couple of hundred people, perhaps. There were raised voices, and some sort of struggle appeared to be going on about the pit. Strange imaginings passed through my mind. As I drew nearer I heard Stent's voice:

"Keep back! Keep back!"

A boy came running towards me.

"It's a-movin'," he said to me as he passed; "a-screwin' and a-screwin' out. I don't like it. I'm a-goin' 'ome, I am."

I went on to the crowd. There were really, I should think, two or three hundred people elbowing and jostling one another, the one or two ladies there being by no means the least active.

60

"He's fallen in the pit!" cried some one.

"Keep back!" said several.

The crowd swayed a little, and I elbowed my way through. Every one seemed greatly excited. I heard a peculiar humming sound from the pit.

"I say!" said Ogilvy; "help keep these idiots back. We don't know what's in the confounded thing, you know!"

I saw a young man, a shop assistant in Woking I believe he was, standing on the cylinder and trying to scramble out of the hole again. The crowd had pushed him in.

65

The end of the cylinder was being screwed out from within. Nearly two feet of shining screw projected. Somebody blundered against me, and I narrowly missed being pitched onto the top of the screw. I turned, and as I did so the screw must have come out, for the lid of the cylinder fell upon the gravel with a ringing concussion. I stuck my elbow into the person behind me, and turned my head towards the Thing again. For a moment that circular cavity seemed perfectly black. I had the sunset in my eyes.

I think everyone expected to see a man emerge--possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man. I know I did. But, looking, I presently saw something stirring within the shadow: greyish billowy movements, one above another, and then two luminous disks--like eyes. Then something resembling a little grey snake, about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled in the air towards me--and then another.

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I saw the shopman struggling still on the edge of the pit. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I looked again at the cylinder, and ungovernable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring.

A big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear, was rising slowly and painfully out of the cylinder. As it bulged up and caught the light, it glistened like wet leather.

Two large dark-coloured eyes were regarding me steadfastly. The mass that framed them, the head of the thing, was rounded, and had, one might say, a face. There was a mouth under the eyes, the lipless brim of which quivered and panted, and dropped saliva. The whole creature heaved and pulsated convulsively. A

lank tentacular appendage gripped the edge of the cylinder, another swayed in the air.

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedgelike lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth--above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes--were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread.

Suddenly the monster vanished. It had toppled over the brim of the cylinder and fallen into the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather. I heard it give a peculiar thick cry, and forthwith another of these creatures appeared darkly in the deep shadow of the aperture.

I turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees, perhaps a hundred yards away; but I ran slantingly and stumbling, for I could not avert my face from these things.

There, among some young pine trees and furze bushes, I stopped, panting, and waited further developments. The common round the sand pits was dotted with people, standing like myself in a half-fascinated terror, staring at these creatures, or rather at the heaped gravel at the edge of the pit in which they lay. And then, with a renewed horror, I saw a round, black object bobbing up and down on the edge of the pit. It was the head of the shopman who had fallen in, but showing as a little black object against the hot western sun. Now he got his shoulder and knee up, and again he seemed to slip back until only his head was visible. Suddenly he vanished, and I could have fancied a faint shriek had reached me. I had a momentary impulse to go back and help him that my fears overruled.

Everything was then quite invisible, hidden by the deep pit and the heap of sand that the fall of the cylinder had made. Anyone coming along the road from Chobham or Woking would have been amazed at the sight--a dwindling multitude of perhaps a hundred people or more standing in a great irregular circle, in ditches, behind bushes, behind gates and hedges, saying little to one another and that in short, excited shouts, and staring, staring hard at a few heaps of sand. The barrow of ginger beer stood, a queer derelict, black against the burning sky, and in the sand pits was a row of deserted vehicles with their horses feeding out of nosebags or pawing the ground.

Chapter Five

The Heat-Ray

After the glimpse I had had of the Martians emerging from the cylinder in which they had come to the earth from their planet, a kind of fascination paralysed my actions. I remained standing knee-deep in the heather, staring at the mound that hid them. I was a battleground of fear and curiosity.

I did not dare to go back towards the pit, but I felt a passionate longing to peer into it. I began walking, therefore, in a big curve, seeking some point of vantage and continually looking at the sand heaps that hid these new-comers to our earth. Once a leash of thin black whips, like the arms of an octopus, flashed across the sunset and was immediately withdrawn, and afterwards a thin rod rose up, joint by joint, bearing at its apex a circular disk that spun with a wobbling motion. What could be going on there?

Most of the spectators had gathered in one or two groups--one a little crowd towards Woking, the other a knot of people in the direction of Chobham. Evidently they shared my mental conflict. There were few near me. One man I approached--he was, I perceived, a neighbour of mine, though I did not know his name--and accosted. But it was scarcely a time for articulate conversation.

"What ugly *brutes!*" he said. "Good God! What ugly brutes!" He repeated this over and over again.

"Did you see a man in the pit?" I said; but he made no answer to that. We became silent, and stood watching for a time side by side, deriving, I fancy, a certain comfort in one another's company. Then I shifted my position to a little knoll that gave me the advantage of a yard or more of elevation and when I looked for him presently he was walking towards Woking.

80

The sunset faded to twilight before anything further happened. The crowd far away on the left, towards Woking, seemed to grow, and I heard now a faint murmur from it. The little knot of people towards Chobham dispersed. There was scarcely an intimation of movement from the pit.

It was this, as much as anything, that gave people courage, and I suppose the new arrivals from Woking also helped to restore confidence. At any rate, as the dusk came on a slow, intermittent movement upon the sand pits began, a movement that seemed to gather force as the stillness of the evening about the cylinder remained unbroken. Vertical black figures in twos and threes would advance, stop, watch, and advance again, spreading out as they did so in a thin irregular crescent that promised to enclose the pit in its attenuated horns. I, too, on my side began to move towards the pit.

Then I saw some cabmen and others had walked boldly into the sand pits, and heard the clatter of hoofs and the gride of wheels. I saw a lad trundling off the barrow of apples. And then, within thirty yards of the pit, advancing from the direction of Horsell, I noted a little black knot of men, the foremost of whom was waving a white flag.

This was the Deputation. There had been a hasty consultation, and since the Martians were evidently, in spite of their repulsive forms, intelligent creatures, it had been resolved to show them, by approaching them with signals, that we too were intelligent.

Flutter, flutter, went the flag, first to the right, then to the left. It was too far for me to recognise anyone there, but afterwards I learned that Ogilvy, Stent, and Henderson were with others in this attempt at communication. This little group had in its advance

85

dragged inward, so to speak, the circumference of the now almost complete circle of people, and a number of dim black figures followed it at discreet distances.

Suddenly there was a flash of light, and a quantity of luminous greenish smoke came out of the pit in three distinct puffs, which drove up, one after the other, straight into the still air.

This smoke (or flame, perhaps, would be the better word for it) was so bright that the deep blue sky overhead and the hazy stretches of brown common towards Chertsey, set with black pine trees, seemed to darken abruptly as these puffs arose, and to remain the darker after their dispersal. At the same time a faint hissing sound became audible.

Beyond the pit stood the little wedge of people with the white flag at its apex, arrested by these phenomena, a little knot of small vertical black shapes upon the black ground. As the green smoke arose, their faces flashed out pallid green, and faded again as it vanished. Then slowly the hissing passed into a humming, into a long, loud, droning noise. Slowly a humped shape rose out of the pit, and the ghost of a beam of light seemed to flicker out from it.

Forthwith flashes of actual flame, a bright glare leaping from one to another, sprang from the scattered group of men. It was as if some invisible jet impinged upon them and flashed into white flame. It was as if each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire.

Then, by the light of their own destruction, I saw them staggering and falling, and their supporters turning to run.

90

I stood staring, not as yet realising that this was death leaping from man to man in that little distant crowd. All I felt was that it was something very strange. An almost noiseless and blinding flash of light, and a man fell headlong and lay still; and as the unseen shaft of heat passed over them, pine trees burst into fire, and every dry furze bush became with one dull thud a mass of flames. And far away towards Knaphill I saw the flashes of trees and hedges and wooden buildings suddenly set alight.

It was sweeping round swiftly and steadily, this flaming death, this invisible, inevitable sword of heat. I perceived it coming towards me by the flashing bushes it touched, and was too

astounded and stupefied to stir. I heard the crackle of fire in the sand pits and the sudden squeal of a horse that was as suddenly stilled. Then it was as if an invisible yet intensely heated finger were drawn through the heather between me and the Martians, and all along a curving line beyond the sand pits the dark ground smoked and crackled. Something fell with a crash far away to the left where the road from Woking station opens out on the common. Forth-with the hissing and humming ceased, and the black, dome-like object sank slowly out of sight into the pit.

All this had happened with such swiftness that I had stood motionless, dumbfounded and dazzled by the flashes of light. Had that death swept through a full circle, it must inevitably have slain me in my surprise. But it passed and spared me, and left the night about me suddenly dark and unfamiliar.

The undulating common seemed now dark almost to blackness, except where its roadways lay grey and pale under the deep blue sky of the early night. It was dark, and suddenly void of men. Overhead the stars were mustering, and in the west the sky was still a pale, bright, almost greenish blue. The tops of the pine trees and the roofs of Horsell came out sharp and black against the western afterglow. The Martians and their appliances were altogether invisible, save for that thin mast upon which their restless mirror wobbled. Patches of bush and isolated trees here and there smoked and glowed still, and the houses towards Woking station were sending up spires of flame into the stillness of the evening air.

Nothing was changed save for that and a terrible astonishment. The little group of black specks with the flag of white had been swept out of existence, and the stillness of the evening, so it seemed to me, had scarcely been broken.

It came to me that I was upon this dark common, helpless, unprotected, and alone. Suddenly, like a thing falling upon me from without, came--fear.

With an effort I turned and began a stumbling run through the heather.

The fear I felt was no rational fear, but a panic terror not only of the Martians, but of the dusk and stillness all about me. Such

an extraordinary effect in unmanning me it had that I ran weeping silently as a child might do. Once I had turned, I did not dare to look back.

I remember I felt an extraordinary persuasion that I was being played with, that presently, when I was upon the very verge of safety, this mysterious death--as swift as the passage of light--would leap after me from the pit about the cylinder and strike me down.

Chapter Six

The Heat-Ray in the Chobham Road

It is still a matter of wonder how the Martians are able to slay men so swiftly and so silently. Many think that in some way they are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute non-conductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam against any object they choose, by means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the parabolic mirror of a lighthouse projects a beam of light. But no one has absolutely proved these details. However it is done, it is certain that a beam of heat is the essence of the matter. Heat, and invisible, instead of visible, light. Whatever is combustible flashes into flame at its touch, lead runs like water, it softens iron, cracks and melts glass, and when it falls upon water, incontinently that explodes into steam.

100

That night nearly forty people lay under the starlight about the pit, charred and distorted beyond recognition, and all night long the common from Horsell to Maybury was deserted and brightly ablaze.

The news of the massacre probably reached Chobham, Woking, and Ottershaw about the same time. In Woking the shops had closed when the tragedy happened, and a number of people, shop people and so forth, attracted by the stories they had heard, were walking over the Horsell Bridge and along the road between the hedges that runs out at last upon the common. You may imagine the young people brushed up after the labours of the day,

and making this novelty, as they would make any novelty, the excuse for walking together and enjoying a trivial flirtation. You may figure to yourself the hum of voices along the road in the gloaming. . . .

As yet, of course, few people in Woking even knew that the cylinder had opened, though poor Henderson had sent a messenger on a bicycle to the post office with a special wire to an evening paper.

As these folks came out by twos and threes upon the open, they found little knots of people talking excitedly and peering at the spinning mirror over the sand pits, and the newcomers were, no doubt, soon infected by the excitement of the occasion.

By half past eight, when the Deputation was destroyed, there may have been a crowd of three hundred people or more at this place, besides those who had left the road to approach the Martians nearer. There were three policemen too, one of whom was mounted, doing their best, under instructions from Stent, to keep the people back and deter them from approaching the cylinder. There was some booing from those more thoughtless and excitable souls to whom a crowd is always an occasion for noise and horse-play.

Stent and Ogilvy, anticipating some possibilities of a collision, had telegraphed from Horsell to the barracks as soon as the Martians emerged, for the help of a company of soldiers to protect these strange creatures from violence. After that they returned to lead that ill-fated advance. The description of their death, as it was seen by the crowd, tallies very closely with my own impressions: the three puffs of green smoke, the deep humming note, and the flashes of flame.

But that crowd of people had a far narrower escape than mine. Only the fact that a hummock of heathery sand intercepted the lower part of the Heat-Ray saved them. Had the elevation of the parabolic mirror been a few yards higher, none could have lived to tell the tale. They saw the flashes and the men falling and an invisible hand, as it were, lit the bushes as it hurried towards them through the twilight. Then, with a whistling note that rose above the droning of the pit, the beam swung close over their heads,

lighting the tops of the beech trees that line the road, and splitting the bricks, smashing the windows, firing the window frames, and bringing down in crumbling ruin a portion of the gable of the house nearest the corner.

In the sudden thud, hiss, and glare of the igniting trees, the panic-stricken crowd seems to have swayed hesitatingly for some moments. Sparks and burning twigs began to fall into the road, and single leaves like puffs of flame. Hats and dresses caught fire. Then came a crying from the common. There were shrieks and shouts, and suddenly a mounted policeman came galloping through the confusion with his hands clasped over his head, screaming.

"They're coming!" a woman shrieked, and incontinently everyone was turning and pushing at those behind, in order to clear their way to Woking again. They must have bolted as blindly as a flock of sheep. Where the road grows narrow and black between the high banks the crowd jammed, and a desperate struggle occurred. All that crowd did not escape; three persons at least, two women and a little boy, were crushed and trampled there, and left to die amid the terror and the darkness.

Chapter Seven

How I Reached Home

For my own part, I remember nothing of my flight except the stress of blundering against trees and stumbling through the heather. All about me gathered the invisible terrors of the Martians; that pitiless sword of heat seemed whirling to and fro, flourishing overhead before it descended and smote me out of life. I came into the road between the crossroads and Horsell, and ran along this to the crossroads.

110

At last I could go no further; I was exhausted with the violence of my emotion and of my flight, and I staggered and fell by the wayside. That was near the bridge that crosses the canal by the gasworks. I fell and lay still.

I must have remained there some time.

I sat up, strangely perplexed. For a moment, perhaps, I could not clearly understand how I came there. My terror had fallen from me like a garment. My hat had gone, and my collar had burst away from its fastener. A few minutes before, there had only been three real things before me--the immensity of the night and space and nature, my own feebleness and anguish, and the near approach of death. Now it was as if something turned over, and the point of view altered abruptly. There was no sensible transition from one state of mind to the other. I was immediately the self of every day again--a decent, ordinary citizen. The silent common, the impulse of my flight, the starting flames, were as if they had been in a dream. I asked myself had these latter things indeed happened? I could not credit it.

I rose and walked unsteadily up the steep incline of the bridge. My mind was blank wonder. My muscles and nerves seemed drained of their strength. I dare say I staggered drunkenly. A head rose over the arch, and the figure of a workman carrying a basket appeared. Beside him ran a little boy. He passed me, wishing me good night. I was minded to speak to him, but did not. I answered his greeting with a meaningless mumble and went on over the bridge.

Over the Maybury arch a train, a billowing tumult of white, firelit smoke, and a long caterpillar of lighted windows, went flying south--clatter, clatter, clap, rap, and it had gone. A dim group of people talked in the gate of one of the houses in the pretty little row of gables that was called Oriental Terrace. It was all so real and so familiar. And that behind me! It was frantic, fantastic! Such things, I told myself, could not be.

115

Perhaps I am a man of exceptional moods. I do not know how far my experience is common. At times I suffer from the strangest sense of detachment from myself and the world about me; I seem to watch it all from the outside, from somewhere inconceivably remote, out of time, out of space, out of the stress and tragedy of it all. This feeling was very strong upon me that night. Here was another side to my dream.

But the trouble was the blank incongruity of this serenity and the swift death flying yonder, not two miles away. There was a

noise of business from the gasworks, and the electric lamps were all alight. I stopped at the group of people.

"What news from the common?" said I.

There were two men and a woman at the gate.

"Eh?" said one of the men, turning.

120

"What news from the common?" I said.

"'Ain't yer just *been* there?" asked the men.

"People seem fair silly about the common," said the woman over the gate. "What's it all abart?"

"Haven't you heard of the men from Mars?" said I; "the creatures from Mars?"

"Quite enough," said the woman over the gate. "Thenks"; and all three of them laughed.

125

I felt foolish and angry. I tried and found I could not tell them what I had seen. They laughed again at my broken sentences.

"You'll hear more yet," I said, and went on to my home.

I startled my wife at the doorway, so haggard was I. I went into the dining room, sat down, drank some wine, and so soon as I could collect myself sufficiently I told her the things I had seen. The dinner, which was a cold one, had already been served, and remained neglected on the table while I told my story.

"There is one thing," I said, to allay the fears I had aroused; "they are the most sluggish things I ever saw crawl. They may keep the pit and kill people who come near them, but they cannot get out of it. . . . But the horror of them!"

"Don't, dear!" said my wife, knitting her brows and putting her hand on mine.

130

"Poor Ogilvy!" I said. "To think he may be lying dead there!"

My wife at least did not find my experience incredible. When I saw how deadly white her face was, I ceased abruptly.

"They may come here," she said again and again.

I pressed her to take wine, and tried to reassure her.

"They can scarcely move," I said.

135

I began to comfort her and myself by repeating all that Ogilvy had told me of the impossibility of the Martians establishing themselves on the earth. In particular I laid stress on the gravitational difficulty. On the surface of the earth the force of

gravity is three times what it is on the surface of Mars. A Martian, therefore, would weigh three times more than on Mars, albeit his muscular strength would be the same. His own body would be a cope of lead to him. That, indeed, was the general opinion. Both *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, insisted on it the next morning, and both overlooked, just as I did, two obvious modifying influences.

The atmosphere of the earth, we now know, contains far more oxygen or far less argon (whichever way one likes to put it) than does Mars. The invigorating influences of this excess of oxygen upon the Martians indisputably did much to counterbalance the increased weight of their bodies. And, in the second place, we all overlooked the fact that such mechanical intelligence as the Martian possessed was quite able to dispense with muscular exertion at a pinch.

But I did not consider these points at the time, and so my reasoning was dead against the chances of the invaders. With wine and food, the confidence of my own table, and the necessity of reassuring my wife, I grew by insensible degrees courageous and secure.

"They have done a foolish thing," said I, fingering my wineglass. "They are dangerous because, no doubt, they are mad with terror. Perhaps they expected to find no living things--certainly no intelligent living things."

"A shell in the pit" said I, "if the worst comes to the worst will kill them all."

140

The intense excitement of the events had no doubt left my perceptive powers in a state of erethism. I remember that dinner table with extraordinary vividness even now. My dear wife's sweet anxious face peering at me from under the pink lamp shade, the white cloth with its silver and glass table furniture--for in those days even philosophical writers had many little luxuries--the crimson-purple wine in my glass, are photographically distinct. At the end of it I sat, tempering nuts with a cigarette, regretting Ogilvy's rashness, and denouncing the shortsighted timidity of the Martians.

So some respectable dodo in the Mauritius might have lorded it in his nest, and discussed the arrival of that shipful of pitiless sailors in want of animal food. "We will peck them to death tomorrow, my dear."

I did not know it, but that was the last civilised dinner I was to eat for very many strange and terrible days.

Chapter Eight

Friday Night

The most extraordinary thing to my mind, of all the strange and wonderful things that happened upon that Friday, was the dovetailing of the commonplace habits of our social order with the first beginnings of the series of events that was to topple that social order headlong. If on Friday night you had taken a pair of compasses and drawn a circle with a radius of five miles round the Woking sand pits, I doubt if you would have had one human being outside it, unless it were some relation of Stent or of the three or four cyclists or London people lying dead on the common, whose emotions or habits were at all affected by the new-comers. Many people had heard of the cylinder, of course, and talked about it in their leisure, but it certainly did not make the sensation that an ultimatum to Germany would have done.

In London that night poor Henderson's telegram describing the gradual unscrewing of the shot was judged to be a canard, and his evening paper, after wiring for authentication from him and receiving no reply--the man was killed--decided not to print a special edition.

145

Even within the five-mile circle the great majority of people were inert. I have already described the behaviour of the men and women to whom I spoke. All over the district people were dining and supping; working men were gardening after the labours of the day, children were being put to bed, young people were wandering through the lanes love-making, students sat over their books.

Maybe there was a murmur in the village streets, a novel and dominant topic in the public-houses, and here and there a messenger, or even an eye-witness of the later occurrences, caused a whirl of excitement, a shouting, and a running to and fro; but for the most part the daily routine of working, eating, drinking, sleeping, went on as it had done for countless years--as though no planet Mars existed in the sky. Even at Woking station and Horsell and Chobham that was the case.

In Woking junction, until a late hour, trains were stopping and going on, others were shunting on the sidings, passengers were alighting and waiting, and everything was proceeding in the most ordinary way. A boy from the town, trenching on Smith's monopoly, was selling papers with the afternoon's news. The ringing impact of trucks, the sharp whistle of the engines from the junction, mingled with their shouts of "Men from Mars!" Excited men came into the station about nine o'clock with incredible tidings, and caused no more disturbance than drunkards might have done. People rattling Londonwards peered into the darkness outside the carriage windows, and saw only a rare, flickering, vanishing spark dance up from the direction of Horsell, a red glow and a thin veil of smoke driving across the stars, and thought that nothing more serious than a heath fire was happening. It was only round the edge of the common that any disturbance was perceptible. There were half a dozen villas burning on the Woking border. There were lights in all the houses on the common side of the three villages, and the people there kept awake till dawn.

A curious crowd lingered restlessly, people coming and going but the crowd remaining, both on the Chobham and Horsell bridges. One or two adventurous souls, it was afterwards found, went into the darkness and crawled quite near the Martians; but they never returned, for now and again a light-ray, like the beam of a warship's searchlight swept the common, and the Heat-Ray was ready to follow. Save for such, that big area of common was silent and desolate, and the charred bodies lay about on it all night under the stars, and all the next day. A noise of hammering from the pit was heard by many people.

So you have the state of things on Friday night. In the centre, sticking into the skin of our old planet Earth like a poisoned dart, was this cylinder. But the poison was scarcely working yet. Around it was a patch of silent common, smouldering in places, and with a few dark, dimly seen objects lying in contorted attitudes here and there. Here and there was a burning bush or tree. Beyond was a fringe of excitement, and farther than that fringe the inflammation had not crept as yet. In the rest of the world the stream of life still flowed as it had flowed for immemorial years. The fever of war that would presently clog vein and artery, deaden nerve and destroy brain, had still to develop.

All night long the Martians were hammering and stirring, sleepless, indefatigable, at work upon the machines they were making ready, and ever and again a puff of greenish-white smoke whirled up to the starlit sky.

About eleven a company of soldiers came through Horsell, and deployed along the edge of the common to form a cordon. Later a second company marched through Chobham to deploy on the north side of the common. Several officers from the Inkerman barracks had been on the common earlier in the day, and one, Major Eden, was reported to be missing. The colonel of the regiment came to the Chobham bridge and was busy questioning the crowd at midnight. The military authorities were certainly alive to the seriousness of the business. About eleven, the next morning's papers were able to say, a squadron of hussars, two Maxims, and about four hundred men of the Cardigan regiment started from Aldershot.

A few seconds after midnight the crowd in the Chertsey road, Woking, saw a star fall from heaven into the pine woods to the northwest. It had a greenish colour, and caused a silent brightness like summer lightning. This was the second cylinder.

Chapter Nine

The Fighting Begins

Saturday lives in my memory as a day of suspense. It was a day of lassitude too, hot and close, with, I am told, a rapidly fluctuating barometer. I had slept but little, though my wife had succeeded in sleeping, and I rose early. I went into my garden before breakfast and stood listening, but towards the common there was nothing stirring but a lark.

The milkman came as usual. I heard the rattle of his chariot and I went round to the side gate to ask the latest news. He told me that during the night the Martians had been surrounded by troops, and that guns were expected. Then--a familiar, reassuring note--I heard a train running towards Woking.

155

"They aren't to be killed," said the milkman, "if that can possibly be avoided."

I saw my neighbour gardening, chatted with him for a time, and then strolled in to breakfast. It was a most unexceptional morning. My neighbour was of opinion that the troops would be able to capture or to destroy the Martians during the day.

"It's a pity they make themselves so unapproachable," he said. "It would be curious to know how they live on another planet; we might learn a thing or two."

He came up to the fence and extended a handful of strawberries, for his gardening was as generous as it was enthusiastic. At the same time he told me of the burning of the pine woods about the Byfleet Golf Links.

"They say," said he, "that there's another of those blessed things fallen there--number two. But one's enough, surely. This lot'll cost the insurance people a pretty penny before everything's settled." He laughed with an air of the greatest good humour as he said this. The woods, he said, were still burning, and pointed out a haze of smoke to me. "They will be hot under foot for days, on account of the thick soil of pine needles and turf," he said, and then grew serious over "poor Ogilvy."

160

After breakfast, instead of working, I decided to walk down towards the common. Under the railway bridge I found a group of soldiers--sappers, I think, men in small round caps, dirty red jackets unbuttoned, and showing their blue shirts, dark trousers, and boots coming to the calf. They told me no one was allowed

over the canal, and, looking along the road towards the bridge, I saw one of the Cardigan men standing sentinel there. I talked with these soldiers for a time; I told them of my sight of the Martians on the previous evening. None of them had seen the Martians, and they had but the vaguest ideas of them, so that they plied me with questions. They said that they did not know who had authorised the movements of the troops; their idea was that a dispute had arisen at the Horse Guards. The ordinary sapper is a great deal better educated than the common soldier, and they discussed the peculiar conditions of the possible fight with some acuteness. I described the Heat-Ray to them, and they began to argue among themselves.

"Crawl up under cover and rush 'em, say I," said one.

"Get aht!" said another. "What's cover against this 'ere 'eat? Sticks to cook yer! What we got to do is to go as near as the ground'll let us, and then drive a trench."

"Blow yer trenches! You always want trenches; you ought to ha' been born a rabbit Snippy."

"Ain't they got any necks, then?" said a third, abruptly--a little, contemplative, dark man, smoking a pipe.

165

I repeated my description.

"Octopuses," said he, "that's what I calls 'em. Talk about fishers of men--fighters of fish it is this time!"

"It ain't no murder killing beasts like that," said the first speaker.

"Why not shell the darned things strite off and finish 'em?" said the little dark man. "You carn tell what they might do."

"Where's your shells?" said the first speaker. "There ain't no time. Do it in a rush, that's my tip, and do it at once."

170

So they discussed it. After a while I left them, and went on to the railway station to get as many morning papers as I could.

But I will not weary the reader with a description of that long morning and of the longer afternoon. I did not succeed in getting a glimpse of the common, for even Horsell and Chobham church towers were in the hands of the military authorities. The soldiers I addressed didn't know anything; the officers were mysterious as well as busy. I found people in the town quite secure again in the

presence of the military, and I heard for the first time from Marshall, the tobacconist, that his son was among the dead on the common. The soldiers had made the people on the outskirts of Horsell lock up and leave their houses.

I got back to lunch about two, very tired for, as I have said, the day was extremely hot and dull; and in order to refresh myself I took a cold bath in the afternoon. About half past four I went up to the railway station to get an evening paper, for the morning papers had contained only a very inaccurate description of the killing of Stent, Henderson, Ogilvy, and the others. But there was little I didn't know. The Martians did not show an inch of themselves. They seemed busy in their pit, and there was a sound of hammering and an almost continuous streamer of smoke. Apparently they were busy getting ready for a struggle. "Fresh attempts have been made to signal, but without success," was the stereotyped formula of the papers. A sapper told me it was done by a man in a ditch with a flag on a long pole. The Martians took as much notice of such advances as we should of the lowing of a cow.

I must confess the sight of all this armament, all this preparation, greatly excited me. My imagination became belligerent, and defeated the invaders in a dozen striking ways; something of my schoolboy dreams of battle and heroism came back. It hardly seemed a fair fight to me at that time. They seemed very helpless in that pit of theirs.

About three o'clock there began the thud of a gun at measured intervals from Chertsey or Addlestone. I learned that the smouldering pine wood into which the second cylinder had fallen was being shelled, in the hope of destroying that object before it opened. It was only about five, however, that a field gun reached Chobham for use against the first body of Martians.

About six in the evening, as I sat at tea with my wife in the summerhouse talking vigorously about the battle that was lowering upon us, I heard a muffled detonation from the common, and immediately after a gust of firing. Close on the heels of that came a violent rattling crash, quite close to us, that shook the ground; and, starting out upon the lawn, I saw the tops of the trees

about the Oriental College burst into smoky red flame, and the tower of the little church beside it slide down into ruin. The pinnacle of the mosque had vanished, and the roof line of the college itself looked as if a hundred-ton gun had been at work upon it. One of our chimneys cracked as if a shot had hit it, flew, and a piece of it came clattering down the tiles and made a heap of broken red fragments upon the flower bed by my study window.

I and my wife stood amazed. Then I realised that the crest of Maybury Hill must be within range of the Martians' Heat-Ray now that the college was cleared out of the way.

At that I gripped my wife's arm, and without ceremony ran her out into the road. Then I fetched out the servant, telling her I would go upstairs myself for the box she was clamouring for.

"We can't possibly stay here," I said; and as I spoke the firing reopened for a moment upon the common.

"But where are we to go?" said my wife in terror.

180

I thought perplexed. Then I remembered her cousins at Leatherhead.

"Leatherhead!" I shouted above the sudden noise.

She looked away from me downhill. The people were coming out of their houses, astonished.

"How are we to get to Leatherhead?" she said.

Down the hill I saw a bevy of hussars ride under the railway bridge; three galloped through the open gates of the Oriental College; two others dismounted, and began running from house to house. The sun, shining through the smoke that drove up from the tops of the trees, seemed blood red, and threw an unfamiliar lurid light upon everything.

185

"Stop here," said I; "you are safe here"; and I started off at once for the Spotted Dog, for I knew the landlord had a horse and dog cart. I ran, for I perceived that in a moment everyone upon this side of the hill would be moving. I found him in his bar, quite unaware of what was going on behind his house. A man stood with his back to me, talking to him.

"I must have a pound," said the landlord, "and I've no one to drive it."

"I'll give you two," said I, over the stranger's shoulder.

"What for?"

"And I'll bring it back by midnight," I said.

190

"Lord!" said the landlord; "what's the hurry? I'm selling my bit of a pig. Two pounds, and you bring it back? What's going on now?"

I explained hastily that I had to leave my home, and so secured the dog cart. At the time it did not seem to me nearly so urgent that the landlord should leave his. I took care to have the cart there and then, drove it off down the road, and, leaving it in charge of my wife and servant, rushed into my house and packed a few valuables, such plate as we had, and so forth. The beech trees below the house were burning while I did this, and the palings up the road glowed red. While I was occupied in this way, one of the dismounted hussars came running up. He was going from house to house, warning people to leave. He was going on as I came out of my front door, lugging my treasures, done up in a tablecloth. I shouted after him:

"What news?"

He turned, stared, bawled something about "crawling out in a thing like a dish cover," and ran on to the gate of the house at the crest. A sudden whirl of black smoke driving across the road hid him for a moment. I ran to my neighbour's door and rapped to satisfy myself of what I already knew, that his wife had gone to London with him and had locked up their house. I went in again, according to my promise, to get my servant's box, lugged it out, clapped it beside her on the tail of the dog cart, and then caught the reins and jumped up into the driver's seat beside my wife. In another moment we were clear of the smoke and noise, and spanking down the opposite slope of Maybury Hill towards Old Woking.

In front was a quiet sunny landscape, a wheat field ahead on either side of the road, and the Maybury Inn with its swinging sign. I saw the doctor's cart ahead of me. At the bottom of the hill I turned my head to look at the hillside I was leaving. Thick streamers of black smoke shot with threads of red fire were driving up into the still air, and throwing dark shadows upon the

195

green treetops eastward. The smoke already extended far away to the east and west--to the Byfleet pine woods eastward, and to Woking on the west. The road was dotted with people running towards us. And very faint now, but very distinct through the hot, quiet air, one heard the whirr of a machine-gun that was presently stilled, and an intermittent cracking of rifles. Apparently the Martians were setting fire to everything within range of their Heat-Ray.

I am not an expert driver, and I had immediately to turn my attention to the horse. When I looked back again the second hill had hidden the black smoke. I slashed the horse with the whip, and gave him a loose rein until Woking and Send lay between us and that quivering tumult. I overtook and passed the doctor between Woking and Send.

Chapter Ten

In the Storm

Leatherhead is about twelve miles from Maybury Hill. The scent of hay was in the air through the lush meadows beyond Pyrford, and the hedges on either side were sweet and gay with multitudes of dog-roses. The heavy firing that had broken out while we were driving down Maybury Hill ceased as abruptly as it began, leaving the evening very peaceful and still. We got to Leatherhead without misadventure about nine o'clock, and the horse had an hour's rest while I took supper with my cousins and commended my wife to their care.

My wife was curiously silent throughout the drive, and seemed oppressed with forebodings of evil. I talked to her reassuringly, pointing out that the Martians were tied to the Pit by sheer heaviness, and at the utmost could but crawl a little out of it; but she answered only in monosyllables. Had it not been for my promise to the innkeeper, she would, I think, have urged me to stay in Leatherhead that night. Would that I had! Her face, I remember, was very white as we parted.

For my own part, I had been feverishly excited all day. Something very like the war fever that occasionally runs through a civilised community had got into my blood, and in my heart I was not so very sorry that I had to return to Maybury that night. I was even afraid that that last fusillade I had heard might mean the extermination of our invaders from Mars. I can best express my state of mind by saying that I wanted to be in at the death.

It was nearly eleven when I started to return. The night was unexpectedly dark; to me, walking out of the lighted passage of my cousins' house, it seemed indeed black, and it was as hot and close as the day. Overhead the clouds were driving fast, albeit not a breath stirred the shrubs about us. My cousins' man lit both lamps. Happily, I knew the road intimately. My wife stood in the light of the doorway, and watched me until I jumped up into the dog cart. Then abruptly she turned and went in, leaving my cousins side by side wishing me good hap.

200

I was a little depressed at first with the contagion of my wife's fears, but very soon my thoughts reverted to the Martians. At that time I was absolutely in the dark as to the course of the evening's fighting. I did not know even the circumstances that had precipitated the conflict. As I came through Ockham (for that was the way I returned, and not through Send and Old Woking) I saw along the western horizon a blood-red glow, which as I drew nearer, crept slowly up the sky. The driving clouds of the gathering thunderstorm mingled there with masses of black and red smoke.

Ripley Street was deserted, and except for a lighted window or so the village showed not a sign of life; but I narrowly escaped an accident at the corner of the road to Pyrford, where a knot of people stood with their backs to me. They said nothing to me as I passed. I do not know what they knew of the things happening beyond the hill, nor do I know if the silent houses I passed on my way were sleeping securely, or deserted and empty, or harassed and watching against the terror of the night.

From Ripley until I came through Pyrford I was in the valley of the Wey, and the red glare was hidden from me. As I ascended the little hill beyond Pyrford Church the glare came into view

again, and the trees about me shivered with the first intimation of the storm that was upon me. Then I heard midnight pealing out from Pyrford Church behind me, and then came the silhouette of Maybury Hill, with its tree-tops and roofs black and sharp against the red.

Even as I beheld this a lurid green glare lit the road about me and showed the distant woods towards Addlestone. I felt a tug at the reins. I saw that the driving clouds had been pierced as it were by a thread of green fire, suddenly lighting their confusion and falling into the field to my left. It was the third falling star!

Close on its apparition, and blindingly violet by contrast, danced out the first lightning of the gathering storm, and the thunder burst like a rocket overhead. The horse took the bit between his teeth and bolted.

A moderate incline runs towards the foot of Maybury Hill, and down this we clattered. Once the lightning had begun, it went on in as rapid a succession of flashes as I have ever seen. The thunderclaps, treading one on the heels of another and with a strange crackling accompaniment, sounded more like the working of a gigantic electric machine than the usual detonating reverberations. The flickering light was blinding and confusing, and a thin hail smote gustily at my face as I drove down the slope.

At first I regarded little but the road before me, and then abruptly my attention was arrested by something that was moving rapidly down the opposite slope of Maybury Hill. At first I took it for the wet roof of a house, but one flash following another showed it to be in swift rolling movement. It was an elusive vision--a moment of bewildering darkness, and then, in a flash like daylight, the red masses of the Orphanage near the crest of the hill, the green tops of the pine trees, and this problematical object came out clear and sharp and bright.

And this Thing I saw! How can I describe it? A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine trees, and smashing them aside in its career; a walking engine of glittering metal, striding now across the heather; articulate ropes of steel dangling from it, and the clattering tumult of its passage mingling with the riot of the thunder. A flash, and it came out

vividly, heeling over one way with two feet in the air, to vanish and reappear almost instantly as it seemed, with the next flash, a hundred yards nearer. Can you imagine a milking stool tilted and bowled violently along the ground? That was the impression those instant flashes gave. But instead of a milking stool imagine it a great body of machinery on a tripod stand.

Then suddenly the trees in the pine wood ahead of me were parted, as brittle reeds are parted by a man thrusting through them; they were snapped off and driven headlong, and a second huge tripod appeared, rushing, as it seemed, headlong towards me. And I was galloping hard to meet it! At the sight of the second monster my nerve went altogether. Not stopping to look again, I wrenched the horse's head hard round to the right and in another moment the dog cart had heeled over upon the horse; the shafts smashed noisily, and I was flung sideways and fell heavily into a shallow pool of water.

I crawled out almost immediately, and crouched, my feet still in the water, under a clump of furze. The horse lay motionless (his neck was broken, poor brute!) and by the lightning flashes I saw the black bulk of the overturned dog cart and the silhouette of the wheel still spinning slowly. In another moment the colossal mechanism went striding by me, and passed uphill towards Pyrford.

210

Seen nearer, the Thing was incredibly strange, for it was no mere insensate machine driving on its way. Machine it was, with a ringing metallic pace, and long, flexible, glittering tentacles (one of which gripped a young pine tree) swinging and rattling about its strange body. It picked its road as it went striding along, and the brazen hood that surmounted it moved to and fro with the inevitable suggestion of a head looking about. Behind the main body was a huge mass of white metal like a gigantic fisherman's basket, and puffs of green smoke squirted out from the joints of the limbs as the monster swept by me. And in an instant it was gone.

So much I saw then, all vaguely for the flickering of the lightning, in blinding highlights and dense black shadows.

As it passed it set up an exultant deafening howl that drowned the thunder--"Aloo! Aloo!"--and in another minute it was with its companion, half a mile away, stooping over something in the field. I have no doubt this Thing in the field was the third of the ten cylinders they had fired at us from Mars.

For some minutes I lay there in the rain and darkness watching, by the intermittent light, these monstrous beings of metal moving about in the distance over the hedge tops. A thin hail was now beginning, and as it came and went their figures grew misty and then flashed into clearness again. Now and then came a gap in the lightning, and the night swallowed them up.

I was soaked with hail above and puddle water below. It was some time before my blank astonishment would let me struggle up the bank to a drier position, or think at all of my imminent peril.

Not far from me was a little one-roomed squatter's hut of wood, surrounded by a patch of potato garden. I struggled to my feet at last, and, crouching and making use of every chance of cover, I made a run for this. I hammered at the door, but I could not make the people hear (if there were any people inside), and after a time I desisted, and, availing myself of a ditch for the greater part of the way, succeeded in crawling, unobserved by these monstrous machines, into the pine woods towards Maybury.

Under cover of this I pushed on, wet and shivering now, towards my own house. I walked among the trees trying to find the footpath. It was very dark indeed in the wood, for the lightning was now becoming infrequent, and the hail, which was pouring down in a torrent, fell in columns through the gaps in the heavy foliage.

If I had fully realised the meaning of all the things I had seen I should have immediately worked my way round through Byfleet to Street Cobham, and so gone back to rejoin my wife at Leatherhead. But that night the strangeness of things about me, and my physical wretchedness, prevented me, for I was bruised, weary, wet to the skin, deafened and blinded by the storm.

I had a vague idea of going on to my own house, and that was as much motive as I had. I staggered through the trees, fell into a

ditch and bruised my knees against a plank, and finally splashed out into the lane that ran down from the College Arms. I say splashed, for the storm water was sweeping the sand down the hill in a muddy torrent. There in the darkness a man blundered into me and sent me reeling back.

He gave a cry of terror, sprang sideways, and rushed on before I could gather my wits sufficiently to speak to him. So heavy was the stress of the storm just at this place that I had the hardest task to win my way up the hill. I went close up to the fence on the left and worked my way along its palings.

Near the top I stumbled upon something soft, and, by a flash of lightning, saw between my feet a heap of black broadcloth and a pair of boots. Before I could distinguish clearly how the man lay, the flicker of light had passed. I stood over him waiting for the next flash. When it came, I saw that he was a sturdy man, cheaply but not shabbily dressed; his head was bent under his body, and he lay crumpled up close to the fence, as though he had been flung violently against it.

Overcoming the repugnance natural to one who had never before touched a dead body, I stooped and turned him over to feel for his heart. He was quite dead. Apparently his neck had been broken. The lightning flashed for a third time, and his face leaped upon me. I sprang to my feet. It was the landlord of the Spotted Dog, whose conveyance I had taken.

I stepped over him gingerly and pushed on up the hill. I made my way by the police station and the College Arms towards my own house. Nothing was burning on the hillside, though from the common there still came a red glare and a rolling tumult of ruddy smoke beating up against the drenching hail. So far as I could see by the flashes, the houses about me were mostly uninjured. By the College Arms a dark heap lay in the road.

Down the road towards Maybury Bridge there were voices and the sound of feet, but I had not the courage to shout or to go to them. I let myself in with my latchkey, closed, locked and bolted the door, staggered to the foot of the staircase, and sat down. My imagination was full of those striding metallic monsters, and of the dead body smashed against the fence.

I crouched at the foot of the staircase with my back to the wall, shivering violently.

225

Chapter Eleven

At the Window

I have already said that my storms of emotion have a trick of exhausting themselves. After a time I discovered that I was cold and wet, and with little pools of water about me on the stair carpet. I got up almost mechanically, went into the dining room and drank some whiskey, and then I was moved to change my clothes.

After I had done that I went upstairs to my study, but why I did so I do not know. The window of my study looks over the trees and the railway towards Horsell Common. In the hurry of our departure this window had been left open. The passage was dark, and, by contrast with the picture the window frame enclosed, the side of the room seemed impenetrably dark. I stopped short in the doorway.

The thunderstorm had passed. The towers of the Oriental College and the pine trees about it had gone, and very far away, lit by a vivid red glare, the common about the sand pits was visible. Across the light huge black shapes, grotesque and strange, moved busily to and fro.

It seemed indeed as if the whole country in that direction was on fire--a broad hillside set with minute tongues of flame, swaying and writhing with the gusts of the dying storm, and throwing a red reflection upon the cloud-scud above. Every now and then a haze of smoke from some nearer conflagration drove across the window and hid the Martian shapes. I could not see what they were doing, nor the clear form of them, nor recognise the black objects they were busied upon. Neither could I see the nearer fire, though the reflections of it danced on the wall and ceiling of the study. A sharp, resinous tang of burning was in the air.

I closed the door noiselessly and crept towards the window. As I did so, the view opened out until, on the one hand, it reached to the houses about Woking station, and on the other to the charred and blackened pine woods of Byfleet. There was a light down below the hill, on the railway, near the arch, and several of the houses along the Maybury road and the streets near the station were glowing ruins. The light upon the railway puzzled me at first; there were a black heap and a vivid glare, and to the right of that a row of yellow oblongs. Then I perceived this was a wrecked train, the fore part smashed and on fire, the hinder carriages still upon the rails.

Between these three main centres of light--the houses, the train, and the burning country towards Chobham--stretched irregular patches of dark country, broken here and there by intervals of dimly glowing and smoking ground. It was the strangest spectacle, that black expanse set with fire. It reminded me, more than anything else, of the Potteries at night. At first I could distinguish no people at all, though I peered intently for them. Later I saw against the light of Woking station a number of black figures hurrying one after the other across the line.

And this was the little world in which I had been living securely for years, this fiery chaos! What had happened in the last seven hours I still did not know; nor did I know, though I was beginning to guess, the relation between these mechanical colossi and the sluggish lumps I had seen disgorged from the cylinder. With a queer feeling of impersonal interest I turned my desk chair to the window, sat down, and stared at the blackened country, and particularly at the three gigantic black things that were going to and fro in the glare about the sand pits.

They seemed amazingly busy. I began to ask myself what they could be. Were they intelligent mechanisms? Such a thing I felt was impossible. Or did a Martian sit within each, ruling, directing, using, much as a man's brain sits and rules in his body? I began to compare the things to human machines, to ask myself for the first time in my life how an ironclad or a steam engine would seem to an intelligent lower animal.

The storm had left the sky clear, and over the smoke of the burning land the little fading pinpoint of Mars was dropping into the west, when a soldier came into my garden. I heard a slight scraping at the fence, and rousing myself from the lethargy that had fallen upon me, I looked down and saw him dimly, clambering over the palings. At the sight of another human being my torpor passed, and I leaned out of the window eagerly.

"Hist!" said I, in a whisper.

235

He stopped astride of the fence in doubt. Then he came over and across the lawn to the corner of the house. He bent down and stepped softly.

"Who's there?" he said, also whispering, standing under the window and peering up.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"God knows."

"Are you trying to hide?"

240

"That's it."

"Come into the house," I said.

I went down, unfastened the door, and let him in, and locked the door again. I could not see his face. He was hatless, and his coat was unbuttoned.

"My God!" he said, as I drew him in.

"What has happened?" I asked.

245

"What hasn't?" In the obscurity I could see he made a gesture of despair. "They wiped us out--simply wiped us out," he repeated again and again.

He followed me, almost mechanically, into the dining room.

"Take some whiskey," I said, pouring out a stiff dose.

He drank it. Then abruptly he sat down before the table, put his head on his arms, and began to sob and weep like a little boy, in a perfect passion of emotion, while I, with a curious forgetfulness of my own recent despair, stood beside him, wondering.

It was a long time before he could steady his nerves to answer my questions, and then he answered perplexingly and brokenly. He was a driver in the artillery, and had only come into action about seven. At that time firing was going on across the common,

250

and it was said the first party of Martians were crawling slowly towards their second cylinder under cover of a metal shield.

Later this shield staggered up on tripod legs and became the first of the fighting-machines I had seen. The gun he drove had been unlimbered near Horsell, in order to command the sand pits, and its arrival it was that had precipitated the action. As the limber gunners went to the rear, his horse trod in a rabbit hole and came down, throwing him into a depression of the ground. At the same moment the gun exploded behind him, the ammunition blew up, there was fire all about him, and he found himself lying under a heap of charred dead men and dead horses.

"I lay still," he said, "scared out of my wits, with the fore quarter of a horse atop of me. We'd been wiped out. And the smell--good God! Like burnt meat! I was hurt across the back by the fall of the horse, and there I had to lie until I felt better. Just like parade it had been a minute before--then stumble, bang, swish!"

"Wiped out!" he said.

He had hid under the dead horse for a long time, peeping out furtively across the common. The Cardigan men had tried a rush, in skirmishing order, at the pit, simply to be swept out of existence. Then the monster had risen to its feet and had begun to walk leisurely to and fro across the common among the few fugitives, with its headlike hood turning about exactly like the head of a cowed human being. A kind of arm carried a complicated metallic case, about which green flashes scintillated, and out of the funnel of this there smoked the Heat-Ray.

In a few minutes there was, so far as the soldier could see, not a living thing left upon the common, and every bush and tree upon it that was not already a blackened skeleton was burning. The hussars had been on the road beyond the curvature of the ground, and he saw nothing of them. He heard the Maxims rattle for a time and then become still. The giant saved Woking station and its cluster of houses until the last; then in a moment the Heat-Ray was brought to bear, and the town became a heap of fiery ruins. Then the Thing shut off the Heat-Ray, and turning its back upon the artilleryman, began to waddle away towards the

smouldering pine woods that sheltered the second cylinder. As it did so a second glittering Titan built itself up out of the pit.

The second monster followed the first, and at that the artilleryman began to crawl very cautiously across the hot heather ash towards Horsell. He managed to get alive into the ditch by the side of the road, and so escaped to Woking. There his story became ejaculatory. The place was impassable. It seems there were a few people alive there, frantic for the most part and many burned and scalded. He was turned aside by the fire, and hid among some almost scorching heaps of broken wall as one of the Martian giants returned. He saw this one pursue a man, catch him up in one of its steely tentacles, and knock his head against the trunk of a pine tree. At last, after nightfall, the artilleryman made a rush for it and got over the railway embankment.

Since then he had been skulking along towards Maybury, in the hope of getting out of danger Londonward. People were hiding in trenches and cellars, and many of the survivors had made off towards Woking village and Send. He had been consumed with thirst until he found one of the water mains near the railway arch smashed, and the water bubbling out like a spring upon the road.

That was the story I got from him, bit by bit. He grew calmer telling me and trying to make me see the things he had seen. He had eaten no food since midday, he told me early in his narrative, and I found some mutton and bread in the pantry and brought it into the room. We lit no lamp for fear of attracting the Martians, and ever and again our hands would touch upon bread or meat. As he talked, things about us came darkly out of the darkness, and the trampled bushes and broken rose trees outside the window grew distinct. It would seem that a number of men or animals had rushed across the lawn. I began to see his face, blackened and haggard, as no doubt mine was also.

When we had finished eating we went softly upstairs to my study, and I looked again out of the open window. In one night the valley had become a valley of ashes. The fires had dwindled now. Where flames had been there were now streamers of smoke; but the countless ruins of shattered and gutted houses and blasted and

blackened trees that the night had hidden stood out now gaunt and terrible in the pitiless light of dawn. Yet here and there some object had had the luck to escape--a white railway signal here, the end of a greenhouse there, white and fresh amid the wreckage. Never before in the history of warfare had destruction been so indiscriminate and so universal. And shining with the growing light of the east, three of the metallic giants stood about the pit, their cowls rotating as though they were surveying the desolation they had made.

It seemed to me that the pit had been enlarged, and ever and again puffs of vivid green vapour streamed up and out of it towards the brightening dawn--streamed up, whirled, broke, and vanished.

260

Beyond were the pillars of fire about Chobham. They became pillars of bloodshot smoke at the first touch of day.

Chapter Twelve

What I Saw of the Destruction of Weybridge and Shepperton

As the dawn grew brighter we withdrew from the window from which we had watched the Martians, and went very quietly downstairs.

The artilleryman agreed with me that the house was no place to stay in. He proposed, he said, to make his way Londonward, and thence rejoin his battery--No. 12, of the Horse Artillery. My plan was to return at once to Leatherhead; and so greatly had the strength of the Martians impressed me that I had determined to take my wife to Newhaven, and go with her out of the country forthwith. For I already perceived clearly that the country about London must inevitably be the scene of a disastrous struggle before such creatures as these could be destroyed.

Between us and Leatherhead, however, lay the third cylinder, with its guarding giants. Had I been alone, I think I should have taken my chance and struck across country. But the artilleryman dissuaded me: "It's no kindness to the right sort of wife," he said,

"to make her a widow"; and in the end I agreed to go with him, under cover of the woods, northward as far as Street Cobham before I parted with him. Thence I would make a big detour by Epsom to reach Leatherhead.

I should have started at once, but my companion had been in active service and he knew better than that. He made me ransack the house for a flask, which he filled with whiskey; and we lined every available pocket with packets of biscuits and slices of meat. Then we crept out of the house, and ran as quickly as we could down the ill-made road by which I had come overnight. The houses seemed deserted. In the road lay a group of three charred bodies close together, struck dead by the Heat-Ray; and here and there were things that people had dropped--a clock, a slipper, a silver spoon, and the like poor valuables. At the corner turning up towards the post office a little cart, filled with boxes and furniture, and horseless, heeled over on a broken wheel. A cash box had been hastily smashed open and thrown under the debris.

265

Except the lodge at the Orphanage, which was still on fire, none of the houses had suffered very greatly here. The Heat-Ray had shaved the chimney tops and passed. Yet, save ourselves, there did not seem to be a living soul on Maybury Hill. The majority of the inhabitants had escaped, I suppose, by way of the Old Woking road--the road I had taken when I drove to Leatherhead--or they had hidden.

We went down the lane, by the body of the man in black, sodden now from the overnight hail, and broke into the woods at the foot of the hill. We pushed through these towards the railway without meeting a soul. The woods across the line were but the scarred and blackened ruins of woods; for the most part the trees had fallen, but a certain proportion still stood, dismal grey stems, with dark brown foliage instead of green.

On our side the fire had done no more than scorch the nearer trees; it had failed to secure its footing. In one place the woodmen had been at work on Saturday; trees, felled and freshly trimmed, lay in a clearing, with heaps of sawdust by the sawing-machine and its engine. Hard by was a temporary hut, deserted. There was not a breath of wind this morning, and everything was strangely

still. Even the birds were hushed, and as we hurried along I and the artilleryman talked in whispers and looked now and again over our shoulders. Once or twice we stopped to listen.

After a time we drew near the road, and as we did so we heard the clatter of hoofs and saw through the tree stems three cavalry soldiers riding slowly towards Woking. We hailed them, and they halted while we hurried towards them. It was a lieutenant and a couple of privates of the 8th Hussars, with a stand like a theodolite, which the artilleryman told me was a heliograph.

"You are the first men I've seen coming this way this morning," said the lieutenant. "What's brewing?" 270

His voice and face were eager. The men behind him stared curiously. The artilleryman jumped down the bank into the road and saluted.

"Gun destroyed last night, sir. Have been hiding. Trying to rejoin battery, sir. You'll come in sight of the Martians, I expect, about half a mile along this road."

"What the dickens are they like?" asked the lieutenant.

"Giants in armour, sir. Hundred feet high. Three legs and a body like 'luminium, with a mighty great head in a hood, sir."

"Get out!" said the lieutenant. "What confounded nonsense!" 275

"You'll see, sir. They carry a kind of box, sir, that shoots fire and strikes you dead."

"What d'ye mean--a gun?"

"No, sir," and the artilleryman began a vivid account of the Heat-Ray. Halfway through, the lieutenant interrupted him and looked up at me. I was still standing on the bank by the side of the road.

"It's perfectly true," I said.

"Well," said the lieutenant, "I suppose it's my business to see it too. Look here"--to the artilleryman--"we're detailed here clearing people out of their houses. You'd better go along and report yourself to Brigadier-General Marvin, and tell him all you know. He's at Weybridge. Know the way?" 280

"I do," I said; and he turned his horse southward again.

"Half a mile, you say?" said he.

"At most," I answered, and pointed over the treetops southward. He thanked me and rode on, and we saw them no more.

Farther along we came upon a group of three women and two children in the road, busy clearing out a labourer's cottage. They had got hold of a little hand truck, and were piling it up with unclean-looking bundles and shabby furniture. They were all too assiduously engaged to talk to us as we passed.

By Byfleet station we emerged from the pine trees, and found the country calm and peaceful under the morning sunlight. We were far beyond the range of the Heat-Ray there, and had it not been for the silent desertion of some of the houses, the stirring movement of packing in others, and the knot of soldiers standing on the bridge over the railway and staring down the line towards Woking, the day would have seemed very like any other Sunday.

285

Several farm waggons and carts were moving creakily along the road to Addlestone, and suddenly through the gate of a field we saw, across a stretch of flat meadow, six twelve-pounders standing neatly at equal distances pointing towards Woking. The gunners stood by the guns waiting, and the ammunition waggons were at a business-like distance. The men stood almost as if under inspection.

"That's good!" said I. "They will get one fair shot, at any rate."

The artilleryman hesitated at the gate.

"I shall go on," he said.

Farther on towards Weybridge, just over the bridge, there were a number of men in white fatigue jackets throwing up a long rampart, and more guns behind.

290

"It's bows and arrows against the lightning, anyhow," said the artilleryman. "They 'aven't seen that fire-beam yet."

The officers who were not actively engaged stood and stared over the treetops southwestward, and the men digging would stop every now and again to stare in the same direction.

Byfleet was in a tumult; people packing, and a score of hussars, some of them dismounted, some on horseback, were hunting them about. Three or four black government waggons, with crosses in white circles, and an old omnibus, among other

vehicles, were being loaded in the village street. There were scores of people, most of them sufficiently sabbatical to have assumed their best clothes. The soldiers were having the greatest difficulty in making them realise the gravity of their position. We saw one shrivelled old fellow with a huge box and a score or more of flower pots containing orchids, angrily expostulating with the corporal who would leave them behind. I stopped and gripped his arm.

"Do you know what's over there?" I said, pointing at the pine tops that hid the Martians.

"Eh?" said he, turning. "I was explainin' these is vallyble."

295

"Death!" I shouted. "Death is coming! Death!" and leaving him to digest that if he could, I hurried on after the artillery-man. At the corner I looked back. The soldier had left him, and he was still standing by his box, with the pots of orchids on the lid of it, and staring vaguely over the trees.

No one in Weybridge could tell us where the headquarters were established; the whole place was in such confusion as I had never seen in any town before. Carts, carriages everywhere, the most astonishing miscellany of conveyances and horseflesh. The respectable inhabitants of the place, men in golf and boating costumes, wives prettily dressed, were packing, river-side loafers energetically helping, children excited, and, for the most part, highly delighted at this astonishing variation of their Sunday experiences. In the midst of it all the worthy vicar was very pluckily holding an early celebration, and his bell was jangling out above the excitement.

I and the artilleryman, seated on the step of the drinking fountain, made a very passable meal upon what we had brought with us. Patrols of soldiers--here no longer hussars, but grenadiers in white--were warning people to move now or to take refuge in their cellars as soon as the firing began. We saw as we crossed the railway bridge that a growing crowd of people had assembled in and about the railway station, and the swarming platform was piled with boxes and packages. The ordinary traffic had been stopped, I believe, in order to allow of the passage of troops and guns to Chertsey, and I have heard since that a savage struggle

occurred for places in the special trains that were put on at a later hour.

We remained at Weybridge until midday, and at that hour we found ourselves at the place near Shepperton Lock where the Wey and Thames join. Part of the time we spent helping two old women to pack a little cart. The Wey has a treble mouth, and at this point boats are to be hired, and there was a ferry across the river. On the Shepperton side was an inn with a lawn, and beyond that the tower of Shepperton Church--it has been replaced by a spire--rose above the trees.

Here we found an excited and noisy crowd of fugitives. As yet the flight had not grown to a panic, but there were already far more people than all the boats going to and fro could enable to cross. People came panting along under heavy burdens; one husband and wife were even carrying a small outhouse door between them, with some of their household goods piled thereon. One man told us he meant to try to get away from Shepperton station.

300

There was a lot of shouting, and one man was even jesting. The idea people seemed to have here was that the Martians were simply formidable human beings, who might attack and sack the town, to be certainly destroyed in the end. Every now and then people would glance nervously across the Wey, at the meadows towards Chertsey, but everything over there was still.

Across the Thames, except just where the boats landed, everything was quiet, in vivid contrast with the Surrey side. The people who landed there from the boats went tramping off down the lane. The big ferryboat had just made a journey. Three or four soldiers stood on the lawn of the inn, staring and jesting at the fugitives, without offering to help. The inn was closed, as it was now within prohibited hours.

"What's that?" cried a boatman, and "Shut up, you fool!" said a man near me to a yelping dog. Then the sound came again, this time from the direction of Chertsey, a muffled thud--the sound of a gun.

The fighting was beginning. Almost immediately unseen batteries across the river to our right, unseen because of the trees,

took up the chorus, firing heavily one after the other. A woman screamed. Everyone stood arrested by the sudden stir of battle, near us and yet invisible to us. Nothing was to be seen save flat meadows, cows feeding unconcernedly for the most part, and silvery pollard willows motionless in the warm sunlight.

"The sojers'll stop 'em," said a woman beside me, doubtfully. A haziness rose over the treetops.

305

Then suddenly we saw a rush of smoke far away up the river, a puff of smoke that jerked up into the air and hung; and forthwith the ground heaved under foot and a heavy explosion shook the air, smashing two or three windows in the houses near, and leaving us astonished.

"Here they are!" shouted a man in a blue jersey. "Yonder! D'yer see them? Yonder!"

Quickly, one after the other, one, two, three, four of the armoured Martians appeared, far away over the little trees, across the flat meadows that stretched towards Chertsey, and striding hurriedly towards the river. Little cowed figures they seemed at first, going with a rolling motion and as fast as flying birds.

Then, advancing obliquely towards us, came a fifth. Their armoured bodies glittered in the sun as they swept swiftly forward upon the guns, growing rapidly larger as they drew nearer. One on the extreme left, the remotest that is, flourished a huge case high in the air, and the ghostly, terrible Heat-Ray I had already seen on Friday night smote towards Chertsey, and struck the town.

At sight of these strange, swift, and terrible creatures the crowd near the water's edge seemed to me to be for a moment horror-struck. There was no screaming or shouting, but a silence. Then a hoarse murmur and a movement of feet--a splashing from the water. A man, too frightened to drop the portmanteau he carried on his shoulder, swung round and sent me staggering with a blow from the corner of his burden. A woman thrust at me with her hand and rushed past me. I turned with the rush of the people, but I was not too terrified for thought. The terrible Heat-Ray was in my mind. To get under water! That was it!

310

"Get under water!" I shouted, unheeded.

I faced about again, and rushed towards the approaching Martian, rushed right down the gravelly beach and headlong into the water. Others did the same. A boatload of people putting back came leaping out as I rushed past. The stones under my feet were muddy and slippery, and the river was so low that I ran perhaps twenty feet scarcely waist-deep. Then, as the Martian towered overhead scarcely a couple of hundred yards away, I flung myself forward under the surface. The splashes of the people in the boats leaping into the river sounded like thunderclaps in my ears. People were landing hastily on both sides of the river. But the Martian machine took no more notice for the moment of the people running this way and that than a man would of the confusion of ants in a nest against which his foot has kicked. When, half suffocated, I raised my head above water, the Martian's hood pointed at the batteries that were still firing across the river, and as it advanced it swung loose what must have been the generator of the Heat-Ray.

In another moment it was on the bank, and in a stride wading halfway across. The knees of its foremost legs bent at the farther bank, and in another moment it had raised itself to its full height again, close to the village of Shepperton. Forthwith the six guns which, unknown to anyone on the right bank, had been hidden behind the outskirts of that village, fired simultaneously. The sudden near concussion, the last close upon the first, made my heart jump. The monster was already raising the case generating the Heat-Ray as the first shell burst six yards above the hood.

I gave a cry of astonishment. I saw and thought nothing of the other four Martian monsters; my attention was riveted upon the nearer incident. Simultaneously two other shells burst in the air near the body as the hood twisted round in time to receive, but not in time to dodge, the fourth shell.

The shell burst clean in the face of the Thing. The hood bulged, flashed, was whirled off in a dozen tattered fragments of red flesh and glittering metal.

"Hit!" shouted I, with something between a scream and a cheer.

I heard answering shouts from the people in the water about me. I could have leaped out of the water with that momentary exultation.

The decapitated colossus reeled like a drunken giant; but it did not fall over. It recovered its balance by a miracle, and, no longer heeding its steps and with the camera that fired the Heat-Ray now rigidly upheld, it reeled swiftly upon Shepperton. The living intelligence, the Martian within the hood, was slain and splashed to the four winds of heaven, and the Thing was now but a mere intricate device of metal whirling to destruction. It drove along in a straight line, incapable of guidance. It struck the tower of Shepperton Church, smashing it down as the impact of a battering ram might have done, swerved aside, blundered on and collapsed with tremendous force into the river out of my sight.

A violent explosion shook the air, and a spout of water, steam, mud, and shattered metal shot far up into the sky. As the camera of the Heat-Ray hit the water, the latter had immediately flashed into steam. In another moment a huge wave, like a muddy tidal bore but almost scaldingly hot, came sweeping round the bend upstream. I saw people struggling shorewards, and heard their screaming and shouting faintly above the seething and roar of the Martian's collapse.

For a moment I heeded nothing of the heat, forgot the patent need of self-preservation. I splashed through the tumultuous water, pushing aside a man in black to do so, until I could see round the bend. Half a dozen deserted boats pitched aimlessly upon the confusion of the waves. The fallen Martian came into sight downstream, lying across the river, and for the most part submerged.

Thick clouds of steam were pouring off the wreckage, and through the tumultuously whirling wisps I could see, intermittently and vaguely, the gigantic limbs churning the water and flinging a splash and spray of mud and froth into the air. The tentacles swayed and struck like living arms, and, save for the helpless purposelessness of these movements, it was as if some wounded thing were struggling for its life amid the waves.

Enormous quantities of a ruddy-brown fluid were spurting up in noisy jets out of the machine.

My attention was diverted from this death flurry by a furious yelling, like that of the thing called a siren in our manufacturing towns. A man, knee-deep near the towing path, shouted inaudibly to me and pointed. Looking back, I saw the other Martians advancing with gigantic strides down the riverbank from the direction of Chertsey. The Shepperton guns spoke this time unavailingly.

At that I ducked at once under water, and, holding my breath until movement was an agony, blundered painfully ahead under the surface as long as I could. The water was in a tumult about me, and rapidly growing hotter.

When for a moment I raised my head to take breath and throw the hair and water from my eyes, the steam was rising in a whirling white fog that at first hid the Martians altogether. The noise was deafening. Then I saw them dimly, colossal figures of grey, magnified by the mist. They had passed by me, and two were stooping over the frothing, tumultuous ruins of their comrade.

The third and fourth stood beside him in the water, one perhaps two hundred yards from me, the other towards Laleham. The generators of the Heat-Rays waved high, and the hissing beams smote down this way and that.

The air was full of sound, a deafening and confusing conflict of noises--the clangorous din of the Martians, the crash of falling houses, the thud of trees, fences, sheds flashing into flame, and the crackling and roaring of fire. Dense black smoke was leaping up to mingle with the steam from the river, and as the Heat-Ray went to and fro over Weybridge its impact was marked by flashes of incandescent white, that gave place at once to a smoky dance of lurid flames. The nearer houses still stood intact, awaiting their fate, shadowy, faint and pallid in the steam, with the fire behind them going to and fro.

For a moment perhaps I stood there, breast-high in the almost boiling water, dumbfounded at my position, hopeless of escape. Through the reek I could see the people who had been with me in

the river scrambling out of the water through the reeds, like little frogs hurrying through grass from the advance of a man, or running to and fro in utter dismay on the towing path.

Then suddenly the white flashes of the Heat-Ray came leaping towards me. The houses caved in as they dissolved at its touch, and darted out flames; the trees changed to fire with a roar. The Ray flickered up and down the towing path, licking off the people who ran this way and that, and came down to the water's edge not fifty yards from where I stood. It swept across the river to Shepperton, and the water in its track rose in a boiling weal crested with steam. I turned shoreward.

In another moment the huge wave, well-nigh at the boiling-point had rushed upon me. I screamed aloud, and scalded, half blinded, agonised, I staggered through the leaping, hissing water towards the shore. Had my foot stumbled, it would have been the end. I fell helplessly, in full sight of the Martians, upon the broad, bare gravelly spit that runs down to mark the angle of the Wey and Thames. I expected nothing but death.

I have a dim memory of the foot of a Martian coming down within a score of yards of my head, driving straight into the loose gravel, whirling it this way and that and lifting again; of a long suspense, and then of the four carrying the debris of their comrade between them, now clear and then presently faint through a veil of smoke, receding interminably, as it seemed to me, across a vast space of river and meadow. And then, very slowly, I realised that by a miracle I had escaped.

330

Chapter Thirteen

How I Fell in with the Curate

After getting this sudden lesson in the power of terrestrial weapons, the Martians retreated to their original position upon Horsell Common; and in their haste, and encumbered with the debris of their smashed companion, they no doubt overlooked many such a stray and negligible victim as myself. Had they left their comrade and pushed on forthwith, there was nothing at that

time between them and London but batteries of twelve-pounder guns, and they would certainly have reached the capital in advance of the tidings of their approach; as sudden, dreadful, and destructive their advent would have been as the earthquake that destroyed Lisbon a century ago.

But they were in no hurry. Cylinder followed cylinder on its interplanetary flight; every twenty-four hours brought them reinforcement. And meanwhile the military and naval authorities, now fully alive to the tremendous power of their antagonists, worked with furious energy. Every minute a fresh gun came into position until, before twilight, every copse, every row of suburban villas on the hilly slopes about Kingston and Richmond, masked an expectant black muzzle. And through the charred and desolated area--perhaps twenty square miles altogether--that encircled the Martian encampment on Horsell Common, through charred and ruined villages among the green trees, through the blackened and smoking arcades that had been but a day ago pine spinneys, crawled the devoted scouts with the heliographs that were presently to warn the gunners of the Martian approach. But the Martians now understood our command of artillery and the danger of human proximity, and not a man ventured within a mile of either cylinder, save at the price of his life.

It would seem that these giants spent the earlier part of the afternoon in going to and fro, transferring everything from the second and third cylinders--the second in Addlestone Golf Links and the third at Pyrford--to their original pit on Horsell Common. Over that, above the blackened heather and ruined buildings that stretched far and wide, stood one as sentinel, while the rest abandoned their vast fighting-machines and descended into the pit. They were hard at work there far into the night, and the towering pillar of dense green smoke that rose therefrom could be seen from the hills about Merrow, and even, it is said, from Banstead and Epsom Downs.

And while the Martians behind me were thus preparing for their next sally, and in front of me Humanity gathered for the battle, I made my way with infinite pains and labour from the fire and smoke of burning Weybridge towards London.

I saw an abandoned boat, very small and remote, drifting down-stream; and throwing off the most of my sodden clothes, I went after it, gained it, and so escaped out of that destruction. There were no oars in the boat, but I contrived to paddle, as well as my parboiled hands would allow, down the river towards Halliford and Walton, going very tediously and continually looking behind me, as you may well understand. I followed the river, because I considered that the water gave me my best chance of escape should these giants return.

The hot water from the Martian's overthrow drifted downstream with me, so that for the best part of a mile I could see little of either bank. Once, however, I made out a string of black figures hurrying across the meadows from the direction of Weybridge. Halliford, it seemed, was deserted, and several of the houses facing the river were on fire. It was strange to see the place quite tranquil, quite desolate under the hot blue sky, with the smoke and little threads of flame going straight up into the heat of the afternoon. Never before had I seen houses burning without the accompaniment of an obstructive crowd. A little farther on the dry reeds up the bank were smoking and glowing, and a line of fire inland was marching steadily across a late field of hay.

For a long time I drifted, so painful and weary was I after the violence I had been through, and so intense the heat upon the water. Then my fears got the better of me again, and I resumed my paddling. The sun scorched my bare back. At last, as the bridge at Walton was coming into sight round the bend, my fever and faintness overcame my fears, and I landed on the Middlesex bank and lay down, deadly sick, amid the long grass. I suppose the time was then about four or five o'clock. I got up presently, walked perhaps half a mile without meeting a soul, and then lay down again in the shadow of a hedge. I seem to remember talking, wanderingly, to myself during that last spurt. I was also very thirsty, and bitterly regretful I had drunk no more water. It is a curious thing that I felt angry with my wife; I cannot account for it, but my impotent desire to reach Leatherhead worried me excessively.

I do not clearly remember the arrival of the curate, so that probably I dozed. I became aware of him as a seated figure in soot-smudged shirt sleeves, and with his upturned, clean-shaven face staring at a faint flickering that danced over the sky. The sky was what is called a mackerel sky--rows and rows of faint down-plumes of cloud, just tinted with the midsummer sunset.

I sat up, and at the rustle of my motion he looked at me quickly.

"Have you any water?" I asked abruptly.

340

He shook his head.

"You have been asking for water for the last hour," he said.

For a moment we were silent, taking stock of each other. I dare say he found me a strange enough figure, naked, save for my water-soaked trousers and socks, scalded, and my face and shoulders blackened by the smoke. His face was a fair weakness, his chin retreated, and his hair lay in crisp, almost flaxen curls on his low forehead; his eyes were rather large, pale blue, and blankly staring. He spoke abruptly, looking vacantly away from me.

"What does it mean?" he said. "What do these things mean?"

I stared at him and made no answer.

345

He extended a thin white hand and spoke in almost a complaining tone.

"Why are these things permitted? What sins have we done? The morning service was over, I was walking through the roads to clear my brain for the afternoon, and then--fire, earthquake, death! As if it were Sodom and Gomorrah! All our work undone, all the work---- What are these Martians?"

"What are we?" I answered, clearing my throat.

He gripped his knees and turned to look at me again. For half a minute, perhaps, he stared silently.

"I was walking through the roads to clear my brain," he said. "And suddenly--fire, earthquake, death!"

350

He relapsed into silence, with his chin now sunken almost to his knees.

Presently he began waving his hand.

"All the work--all the Sunday schools--What have we done--what has Weybridge done? Everything gone--everything destroyed. The church! We rebuilt it only three years ago. Gone! Swept out of existence! Why?"

Another pause, and he broke out again like one demented.

"The smoke of her burning goeth up for ever and ever!" he shouted.

355

His eyes flamed, and he pointed a lean finger in the direction of Weybridge.

By this time I was beginning to take his measure. The tremendous tragedy in which he had been involved--it was evident he was a fugitive from Weybridge--had driven him to the very verge of his reason.

"Are we far from Sunbury?" I said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"What are we to do?" he asked. "Are these creatures everywhere? Has the earth been given over to them?"

"Are we far from Sunbury?"

360

"Only this morning I officiated at early celebration----"

"Things have changed," I said, quietly. "You must keep your head. There is still hope."

"Hope!"

"Yes. Plentiful hope--for all this destruction!"

I began to explain my view of our position. He listened at first, but as I went on the interest dawning in his eyes gave place to their former stare, and his regard wandered from me.

365

"This must be the beginning of the end," he said, interrupting me. "The end! The great and terrible day of the Lord! When men shall call upon the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them and hide them--hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne!"

I began to understand the position. I ceased my laboured reasoning, struggled to my feet, and, standing over him, laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Be a man!" said I. "You are scared out of your wits! What good is religion if it collapses under calamity? Think of what earthquakes and floods, wars and volcanoes, have done before to

men! Did you think God had exempted Weybridge? He is not an insurance agent."

For a time he sat in blank silence.

"But how can we escape?" he asked, suddenly. "They are invulnerable, they are pitiless." 370

"Neither the one nor, perhaps, the other," I answered. "And the mightier they are the more sane and wary should we be. One of them was killed yonder not three hours ago."

"Killed!" he said, staring about him. "How can God's ministers be killed?"

"I saw it happen." I proceeded to tell him. "We have chanced to come in for the thick of it," said I, "and that is all."

"What is that flicker in the sky?" he asked abruptly.

I told him it was the heliograph signalling--that it was the sign of human help and effort in the sky. 375

"We are in the midst of it," I said, "quiet as it is. That flicker in the sky tells of the gathering storm. Yonder, I take it are the Martians, and Londonward, where those hills rise about Richmond and Kingston and the trees give cover, earthworks are being thrown up and guns are being placed. Presently the Martians will be coming this way again."

And even as I spoke he sprang to his feet and stopped me by a gesture.

"Listen!" he said.

From beyond the low hills across the water came the dull resonance of distant guns and a remote weird crying. Then everything was still. A cockchafer came droning over the hedge and past us. High in the west the crescent moon hung faint and pale above the smoke of Weybridge and Shepperton and the hot, still splendour of the sunset.

"We had better follow this path," I said, "northward." 380

Chapter Fourteen

In London

My younger brother was in London when the Martians fell at Woking. He was a medical student working for an imminent examination, and he heard nothing of the arrival until Saturday morning. The morning papers on Saturday contained, in addition to lengthy special articles on the planet Mars, on life in the planets, and so forth, a brief and vaguely worded telegram, all the more striking for its brevity.

The Martians, alarmed by the approach of a crowd, had killed a number of people with a quick-firing gun, so the story ran. The telegram concluded with the words: "Formidable as they seem to be, the Martians have not moved from the pit into which they have fallen, and, indeed, seem incapable of doing so. Probably this is due to the relative strength of the earth's gravitational energy." On that last text their leader-writer expanded very comfortably.

Of course all the students in the crammer's biology class, to which my brother went that day, were intensely interested, but there were no signs of any unusual excitement in the streets. The afternoon papers puffed scraps of news under big headlines. They had nothing to tell beyond the movements of troops about the common, and the burning of the pine woods between Woking and Weybridge, until eight. Then the *St. James's Gazette*, in an extra-special edition, announced the bare fact of the interruption of telegraphic communication. This was thought to be due to the falling of burning pine trees across the line. Nothing more of the fighting was known that night, the night of my drive to Leatherhead and back.

My brother felt no anxiety about us, as he knew from the description in the papers that the cylinder was a good two miles from my house. He made up his mind to run down that night to me, in order, as he says, to see the Things before they were killed. He dispatched a telegram, which never reached me, about four o'clock, and spent the evening at a music hall.

In London, also, on Saturday night there was a thunderstorm, and my brother reached Waterloo in a cab. On the platform from which the midnight train usually starts he learned, after some waiting, that an accident prevented trains from reaching Woking

that night. The nature of the accident he could not ascertain; indeed, the railway authorities did not clearly know at that time. There was very little excitement in the station, as the officials, failing to realise that anything further than a breakdown between Byfleet and Woking junction had occurred, were running the theatre trains which usually passed through Woking round by Virginia Water or Guildford. They were busy making the necessary arrangements to alter the route of the Southampton and Portsmouth Sunday League excursions. A nocturnal newspaper reporter, mistaking my brother for the traffic manager, to whom he bears a slight resemblance, waylaid and tried to interview him. Few people, excepting the railway officials, connected the breakdown with the Martians.

I have read, in another account of these events, that on Sunday morning "all London was electrified by the news from Woking." As a matter of fact, there was nothing to justify that very extravagant phrase. Plenty of Londoners did not hear of the Martians until the panic of Monday morning. Those who did took some time to realise all that the hastily worded telegrams in the Sunday papers conveyed. The majority of people in London do not read Sunday papers.

The habit of personal security, moreover, is so deeply fixed in the Londoner's mind, and startling intelligence so much a matter of course in the papers, that they could read without any personal tremors: "About seven o'clock last night the Martians came out of the cylinder, and, moving about under an armour of metallic shields, have completely wrecked Woking station with the adjacent houses, and massacred an entire battalion of the Cardigan Regiment. No details are known. Maxims have been absolutely useless against their armour; the field guns have been disabled by them. Flying hussars have been galloping into Chertsey. The Martians appear to be moving slowly towards Chertsey or Windsor. Great anxiety prevails in West Surrey, and earthworks are being thrown up to check the advance Londonward." That was how the *Sunday Sun* put it, and a clever and remarkably prompt "handbook" article in the *Referee* compared the affair to a menagerie suddenly let loose in a village.

No one in London knew positively of the nature of the armoured Martians, and there was still a fixed idea that these monsters must be sluggish: "crawling," "creeping painfully"--such expressions occurred in almost all the earlier reports. None of the telegrams could have been written by an eyewitness of their advance. The Sunday papers printed separate editions as further news came to hand, some even in default of it. But there was practically nothing more to tell people until late in the afternoon, when the authorities gave the press agencies the news in their possession. It was stated that the people of Walton and Weybridge, and all the district were pouring along the roads Londonward, and that was all.

My brother went to church at the Foundling Hospital in the morning, still in ignorance of what had happened on the previous night. There he heard allusions made to the invasion, and a special prayer for peace. Coming out, he bought a *Referee*. He became alarmed at the news in this, and went again to Waterloo station to find out if communication were restored. The omnibuses, carriages, cyclists, and innumerable people walking in their best clothes seemed scarcely affected by the strange intelligence that the news venders were disseminating. People were interested, or, if alarmed, alarmed only on account of the local residents. At the station he heard for the first time that the Windsor and Chertsey lines were now interrupted. The porters told him that several remarkable telegrams had been received in the morning from Byfleet and Chertsey stations, but that these had abruptly ceased. My brother could get very little precise detail out of them.

"There's fighting going on about Weybridge" was the extent of their information.

390

The train service was now very much disorganised. Quite a number of people who had been expecting friends from places on the South-Western network were standing about the station. One grey-headed old gentleman came and abused the South-Western Company bitterly to my brother. "It wants showing up," he said.

One or two trains came in from Richmond, Putney, and Kingston, containing people who had gone out for a day's boating

and found the locks closed and a feeling of panic in the air. A man in a blue and white blazer addressed my brother, full of strange tidings.

"There's hosts of people driving into Kingston in traps and carts and things, with boxes of valuables and all that," he said. "They come from Molesey and Weybridge and Walton, and they say there's been guns heard at Chertsey, heavy firing, and that mounted soldiers have told them to get off at once because the Martians are coming. We heard guns firing at Hampton Court station, but we thought it was thunder. What the dickens does it all mean? The Martians can't get out of their pit, can they?"

My brother could not tell him.

Afterwards he found that the vague feeling of alarm had spread to the clients of the underground railway, and that the Sunday excursionists began to return from all over the South-Western "lung"--Barnes, Wimbledon, Richmond Park, Kew, and so forth--at unnaturally early hours; but not a soul had anything more than vague hearsay to tell of. Everyone connected with the terminus seemed ill-tempered.

About five o'clock the gathering crowd in the station was immensely excited by the opening of the line of communication, which is almost invariably closed, between the South-Eastern and the South-Western stations, and the passage of carriage trucks bearing huge guns and carriages crammed with soldiers. These were the guns that were brought up from Woolwich and Chatham to cover Kingston. There was an exchange of pleasantries: "You'll get eaten!" "We're the beast-tamers!" and so forth. A little while after that a squad of police came into the station and began to clear the public off the platforms, and my brother went out into the street again.

The church bells were ringing for evensong, and a squad of Salvation Army lassies came singing down Waterloo Road. On the bridge a number of loafers were watching a curious brown scum that came drifting down the stream in patches. The sun was just setting, and the Clock Tower and the Houses of Parliament rose against one of the most peaceful skies it is possible to imagine, a sky of gold, barred with long transverse stripes of

reddish-purple cloud. There was talk of a floating body. One of the men there, a reservist he said he was, told my brother he had seen the heliograph flickering in the west.

In Wellington Street my brother met a couple of sturdy roughs who had just been rushed out of Fleet Street with still-wet newspapers and staring placards. "Dreadful catastrophe!" they bawled one to the other down Wellington Street. "Fighting at Weybridge! Full description! Repulse of the Martians! London in Danger!" He had to give threepence for a copy of that paper.

Then it was, and then only, that he realised something of the full power and terror of these monsters. He learned that they were not merely a handful of small sluggish creatures, but that they were minds swaying vast mechanical bodies; and that they could move swiftly and smite with such power that even the mightiest guns could not stand against them.

They were described as "vast spiderlike machines, nearly a hundred feet high, capable of the speed of an express train, and able to shoot out a beam of intense heat." Masked batteries, chiefly of field guns, had been planted in the country about Horsell Common, and especially between the Woking district and London. Five of the machines had been seen moving towards the Thames, and one, by a happy chance, had been destroyed. In the other cases the shells had missed, and the batteries had been at once annihilated by the Heat-Rays. Heavy losses of soldiers were mentioned, but the tone of the dispatch was optimistic.

400

The Martians had been repulsed; they were not invulnerable. They had retreated to their triangle of cylinders again, in the circle about Woking. Signallers with heliographs were pushing forward upon them from all sides. Guns were in rapid transit from Windsor, Portsmouth, Aldershot, Woolwich--even from the north; among others, long wire-guns of ninety-five tons from Woolwich. Altogether one hundred and sixteen were in position or being hastily placed, chiefly covering London. Never before in England had there been such a vast or rapid concentration of military material.

Any further cylinders that fell, it was hoped, could be destroyed at once by high explosives, which were being rapidly

manufactured and distributed. No doubt, ran the report, the situation was of the strangest and gravest description, but the public was exhorted to avoid and discourage panic. No doubt the Martians were strange and terrible in the extreme, but at the outside there could not be more than twenty of them against our millions.

The authorities had reason to suppose, from the size of the cylinders, that at the outside there could not be more than five in each cylinder--fifteen altogether. And one at least was disposed of--perhaps more. The public would be fairly warned of the approach of danger, and elaborate measures were being taken for the protection of the people in the threatened southwestern suburbs. And so, with reiterated assurances of the safety of London and the ability of the authorities to cope with the difficulty, this quasi-proclamation closed.

This was printed in enormous type on paper so fresh that it was still wet, and there had been no time to add a word of comment. It was curious, my brother said, to see how ruthlessly the usual contents of the paper had been hacked and taken out to give this place.

All down Wellington Street people could be seen fluttering out the pink sheets and reading, and the Strand was suddenly noisy with the voices of an army of hawkers following these pioneers. Men came scrambling off buses to secure copies. Certainly this news excited people intensely, whatever their previous apathy. The shutters of a map shop in the Strand were being taken down, my brother said, and a man in his Sunday raiment, lemon-yellow gloves even, was visible inside the window hastily fastening maps of Surrey to the glass.

Going on along the Strand to Trafalgar Square, the paper in his hand, my brother saw some of the fugitives from West Surrey. There was a man with his wife and two boys and some articles of furniture in a cart such as greengrocers use. He was driving from the direction of Westminster Bridge; and close behind him came a hay waggon with five or six respectable-looking people in it, and some boxes and bundles. The faces of these people were haggard, and their entire appearance contrasted conspicuously with the

Sabbath-best appearance of the people on the omnibuses. People in fashionable clothing peeped at them out of cabs. They stopped at the Square as if undecided which way to take, and finally turned eastward along the Strand. Some way behind these came a man in workday clothes, riding one of those old-fashioned tricycles with a small front wheel. He was dirty and white in the face.

My brother turned down towards Victoria, and met a number of such people. He had a vague idea that he might see something of me. He noticed an unusual number of police regulating the traffic. Some of the refugees were exchanging news with the people on the omnibuses. One was professing to have seen the Martians. "Boilers on stilts, I tell you, striding along like men." Most of them were excited and animated by their strange experience.

Beyond Victoria the public-houses were doing a lively trade with these arrivals. At all the street corners groups of people were reading papers, talking excitedly, or staring at these unusual Sunday visitors. They seemed to increase as night drew on, until at last the roads, my brother said, were like Epsom High Street on a Derby Day. My brother addressed several of these fugitives and got unsatisfactory answers from most.

None of them could tell him any news of Woking except one man, who assured him that Woking had been entirely destroyed on the previous night.

"I come from Byfleet," he said; "man on a bicycle came through the place in the early morning, and ran from door to door warning us to come away. Then came soldiers. We went out to look, and there were clouds of smoke to the south--nothing but smoke, and not a soul coming that way. Then we heard the guns at Chertsey, and folks coming from Weybridge. So I've locked up my house and come on."

410

At the time there was a strong feeling in the streets that the authorities were to blame for their incapacity to dispose of the invaders without all this inconvenience.

About eight o'clock a noise of heavy firing was distinctly audible all over the south of London. My brother could not hear it

for the traffic in the main thoroughfares, but by striking through the quiet back streets to the river he was able to distinguish it quite plainly.

He walked from Westminster to his apartments near Regent's Park, about two. He was now very anxious on my account, and disturbed at the evident magnitude of the trouble. His mind was inclined to run, even as mine had run on Saturday, on military details. He thought of all those silent, expectant guns, of the suddenly nomadic countryside; he tried to imagine "boilers on stilts" a hundred feet high.

There were one or two cartloads of refugees passing along Oxford Street, and several in the Marylebone Road, but so slowly was the news spreading that Regent Street and Portland Place were full of their usual Sunday-night promenaders, albeit they talked in groups, and along the edge of Regent's Park there were as many silent couples "walking out" together under the scattered gas lamps as ever there had been. The night was warm and still, and a little oppressive; the sound of guns continued intermittently, and after midnight there seemed to be sheet lightning in the south.

He read and re-read the paper, fearing the worst had happened to me. He was restless, and after supper prowled out again aimlessly. He returned and tried in vain to divert his attention to his examination notes. He went to bed a little after midnight, and was awakened from lurid dreams in the small hours of Monday by the sound of door knockers, feet running in the street, distant drumming, and a clamour of bells. Red reflections danced on the ceiling. For a moment he lay astonished, wondering whether day had come or the world gone mad. Then he jumped out of bed and ran to the window.

415

His room was an attic and as he thrust his head out, up and down the street there were a dozen echoes to the noise of his window sash, and heads in every kind of night disarray appeared. Enquiries were being shouted. "They are coming!" bawled a policeman, hammering at the door; "the Martians are coming!" and hurried to the next door.

The sound of drumming and trumpeting came from the Albany Street Barracks, and every church within earshot was hard at

work killing sleep with a vehement disorderly tocsin. There was a noise of doors opening, and window after window in the houses opposite flashed from darkness into yellow illumination.

Up the street came galloping a closed carriage, bursting abruptly into noise at the corner, rising to a clattering climax under the window, and dying away slowly in the distance. Close on the rear of this came a couple of cabs, the forerunners of a long procession of flying vehicles, going for the most part to Chalk Farm station, where the North-Western special trains were loading up, instead of coming down the gradient into Euston.

For a long time my brother stared out of the window in blank astonishment, watching the policemen hammering at door after door, and delivering their incomprehensible message. Then the door behind him opened, and the man who lodged across the landing came in, dressed only in shirt, trousers, and slippers, his braces loose about his waist, his hair disordered from his pillow.

"What the devil is it?" he asked. "A fire? What a devil of a row!"

420

They both craned their heads out of the window, straining to hear what the policemen were shouting. People were coming out of the side streets, and standing in groups at the corners talking.

"What the devil is it all about?" said my brother's fellow lodger.

My brother answered him vaguely and began to dress, running with each garment to the window in order to miss nothing of the growing excitement. And presently men selling unnaturally early newspapers came bawling into the street:

"London in danger of suffocation! The Kingston and Richmond defences forced! Fearful massacres in the Thames Valley!"

And all about him--in the rooms below, in the houses on each side and across the road, and behind in the Park Terraces and in the hundred other streets of that part of Marylebone, and the Westbourne Park district and St. Pancras, and westward and northward in Kilburn and St. John's Wood and Hampstead, and eastward in Shoreditch and Highbury and Haggerston and Hoxton, and, indeed, through all the vastness of London from

425

Ealing to East Ham--people were rubbing their eyes, and opening windows to stare out and ask aimless questions, dressing hastily as the first breath of the coming storm of Fear blew through the streets. It was the dawn of the great panic. London, which had gone to bed on Sunday night oblivious and inert, was awakened, in the small hours of Monday morning, to a vivid sense of danger.

Unable from his window to learn what was happening, my brother went down and out into the street, just as the sky between the parapets of the houses grew pink with the early dawn. The flying people on foot and in vehicles grew more numerous every moment. "Black Smoke!" he heard people crying, and again "Black Smoke!" The contagion of such a unanimous fear was inevitable. As my brother hesitated on the door-step, he saw another news vender approaching, and got a paper forthwith. The man was running away with the rest, and selling his papers for a shilling each as he ran--a grotesque mingling of profit and panic.

And from this paper my brother read that catastrophic dispatch of the Commander-in-Chief:

"The Martians are able to discharge enormous clouds of a black and poisonous vapour by means of rockets. They have smothered our batteries, destroyed Richmond, Kingston, and Wimbledon, and are advancing slowly towards London, destroying everything on the way. It is impossible to stop them. There is no safety from the Black Smoke but in instant flight."

That was all, but it was enough. The whole population of the great six-million city was stirring, slipping, running; presently it would be pouring *en masse* northward.

"Black Smoke!" the voices cried. "Fire!"

430

The bells of the neighbouring church made a jangling tumult, a cart carelessly driven smashed, amid shrieks and curses, against the water trough up the street. Sickly yellow lights went to and fro in the houses, and some of the passing cabs flaunted unextinguished lamps. And overhead the dawn was growing brighter, clear and steady and calm.

He heard footsteps running to and fro in the rooms, and up and down stairs behind him. His landlady came to the door, loosely

wrapped in dressing gown and shawl; her husband followed ejaculating.

As my brother began to realise the import of all these things, he turned hastily to his own room, put all his available money--some ten pounds altogether--into his pockets, and went out again into the streets.

Chapter Fifteen

What Had Happened in Surrey

It was while the curate had sat and talked so wildly to me under the hedge in the flat meadows near Halliford, and while my brother was watching the fugitives stream over Westminster Bridge, that the Martians had resumed the offensive. So far as one can ascertain from the conflicting accounts that have been put forth, the majority of them remained busied with preparations in the Horsell pit until nine that night, hurrying on some operation that disengaged huge volumes of green smoke.

But three certainly came out about eight o'clock and, advancing slowly and cautiously, made their way through Byfleet and Pyrford towards Ripley and Weybridge, and so came in sight of the expectant batteries against the setting sun. These Martians did not advance in a body, but in a line, each perhaps a mile and a half from his nearest fellow. They communicated with one another by means of sirenlike howls, running up and down the scale from one note to another.

It was this howling and firing of the guns at Ripley and St. George's Hill that we had heard at Upper Halliford. The Ripley gunners, unseasoned artillery volunteers who ought never to have been placed in such a position, fired one wild, premature, ineffectual volley, and bolted on horse and foot through the deserted village, while the Martian, without using his Heat-Ray, walked serenely over their guns, stepped gingerly among them, passed in front of them, and so came unexpectedly upon the guns in Painshill Park, which he destroyed.

The St. George's Hill men, however, were better led or of a better mettle. Hidden by a pine wood as they were, they seem to have been quite unsuspected by the Martian nearest to them. They laid their guns as deliberately as if they had been on parade, and fired at about a thousand yards' range.

The shells flashed all round him, and he was seen to advance a few paces, stagger, and go down. Everybody yelled together, and the guns were reloaded in frantic haste. The overthrown Martian set up a prolonged ululation, and immediately a second glittering giant, answering him, appeared over the trees to the south. It would seem that a leg of the tripod had been smashed by one of the shells. The whole of the second volley flew wide of the Martian on the ground, and, simultaneously, both his companions brought their Heat-Rays to bear on the battery. The ammunition blew up, the pine trees all about the guns flashed into fire, and only one or two of the men who were already running over the crest of the hill escaped.

After this it would seem that the three took counsel together and halted, and the scouts who were watching them report that they remained absolutely stationary for the next half hour. The Martian who had been overthrown crawled tediously out of his hood, a small brown figure, oddly suggestive from that distance of a speck of blight, and apparently engaged in the repair of his support. About nine he had finished, for his cowl was then seen above the trees again.

It was a few minutes past nine that night when these three sentinels were joined by four other Martians, each carrying a thick black tube. A similar tube was handed to each of the three, and the seven proceeded to distribute themselves at equal distances along a curved line between St. George's Hill, Weybridge, and the village of Send, southwest of Ripley.

A dozen rockets sprang out of the hills before them so soon as they began to move, and warned the waiting batteries about Ditton and Esher. At the same time four of their fighting machines, similarly armed with tubes, crossed the river, and two of them, black against the western sky, came into sight of myself and the curate as we hurried wearily and painfully along the road

that runs northward out of Halliford. They moved, as it seemed to us, upon a cloud, for a milky mist covered the fields and rose to a third of their height.

At this sight the curate cried faintly in his throat, and began running; but I knew it was no good running from a Martian, and I turned aside and crawled through dewy nettles and brambles into the broad ditch by the side of the road. He looked back, saw what I was doing, and turned to join me.

The two halted, the nearer to us standing and facing Sunbury, the remoter being a grey indistinctness towards the evening star, away towards Staines.

The occasional howling of the Martians had ceased; they took up their positions in the huge crescent about their cylinders in absolute silence. It was a crescent with twelve miles between its horns. Never since the devising of gunpowder was the beginning of a battle so still. To us and to an observer about Ripley it would have had precisely the same effect--the Martians seemed in solitary possession of the darkling night, lit only as it was by the slender moon, the stars, the afterglow of the daylight, and the ruddy glare from St. George's Hill and the woods of Painshill.

But facing that crescent everywhere--at Staines, Hounslow, Ditton, Esher, Ockham, behind hills and woods south of the river, and across the flat grass meadows to the north of it, wherever a cluster of trees or village houses gave sufficient cover--the guns were waiting. The signal rockets burst and rained their sparks through the night and vanished, and the spirit of all those watching batteries rose to a tense expectation. The Martians had but to advance into the line of fire, and instantly those motionless black forms of men, those guns glittering so darkly in the early night, would explode into a thunderous fury of battle.

No doubt the thought that was uppermost in a thousand of those vigilant minds, even as it was uppermost in mine, was the riddle--how much they understood of us. Did they grasp that we in our millions were organized, disciplined, working together? Or did they interpret our spurts of fire, the sudden stinging of our shells, our steady investment of their encampment, as we should the furious unanimity of onslaught in a disturbed hive of bees?

Did they dream they might exterminate us? (At that time no one knew what food they needed.) A hundred such questions struggled together in my mind as I watched that vast sentinel shape. And in the back of my mind was the sense of all the huge unknown and hidden forces Londonward. Had they prepared pitfalls? Were the powder mills at Hounslow ready as a snare? Would the Londoners have the heart and courage to make a greater Moscow of their mighty province of houses?

Then, after an interminable time, as it seemed to us, crouching and peering through the hedge, came a sound like the distant concussion of a gun. Another nearer, and then another. And then the Martian beside us raised his tube on high and discharged it, gunwise, with a heavy report that made the ground heave. The one towards Staines answered him. There was no flash, no smoke, simply that loaded detonation.

I was so excited by these heavy minute-guns following one another that I so far forgot my personal safety and my scalded hands as to clamber up into the hedge and stare towards Sunbury. As I did so a second report followed, and a big projectile hurtled overhead towards Hounslow. I expected at least to see smoke or fire, or some such evidence of its work. But all I saw was the deep blue sky above, with one solitary star, and the white mist spreading wide and low beneath. And there had been no crash, no answering explosion. The silence was restored; the minute lengthened to three.

"What has happened?" said the curate, standing up beside me.

"Heaven knows!" said I.

A bat flickered by and vanished. A distant tumult of shouting began and ceased. I looked again at the Martian, and saw he was now moving eastward along the riverbank, with a swift, rolling motion.

Every moment I expected the fire of some hidden battery to spring upon him; but the evening calm was unbroken. The figure of the Martian grew smaller as he receded, and presently the mist and the gathering night had swallowed him up. By a common impulse we clambered higher. Towards Sunbury was a dark appearance, as though a conical hill had suddenly come into being

there, hiding our view of the farther country; and then, remoter across the river, over Walton, we saw another such summit. These hill-like forms grew lower and broader even as we stared.

Moved by a sudden thought, I looked northward, and there I perceived a third of these cloudy black kopjes had risen.

Everything had suddenly become very still. Far away to the southeast, marking the quiet, we heard the Martians hooting to one another, and then the air quivered again with the distant thud of their guns. But the earthly artillery made no reply.

Now at the time we could not understand these things, but later I was to learn the meaning of these ominous kopjes that gathered in the twilight. Each of the Martians, standing in the great crescent I have described, had discharged, by means of the gunlike tube he carried, a huge canister over whatever hill, copse, cluster of houses, or other possible cover for guns, chanced to be in front of him. Some fired only one of these, some two--as in the case of the one we had seen; the one at Ripley is said to have discharged no fewer than five at that time. These canisters smashed on striking the ground--they did not explode--and incontinently disengaged an enormous volume of heavy, inky vapour, coiling and pouring upward in a huge and ebony cumulus cloud, a gaseous hill that sank and spread itself slowly over the surrounding country. And the touch of that vapour, the inhaling of its pungent wisps, was death to all that breathes.

It was heavy, this vapour, heavier than the densest smoke, so that, after the first tumultuous uprush and outflow of its impact, it sank down through the air and poured over the ground in a manner rather liquid than gaseous, abandoning the hills, and streaming into the valleys and ditches and watercourses even as I have heard the carbonic-acid gas that pours from volcanic clefts is wont to do. And where it came upon water some chemical action occurred, and the surface would be instantly covered with a powdery scum that sank slowly and made way for more. The scum was absolutely insoluble, and it is a strange thing, seeing the instant effect of the gas, that one could drink without hurt the water from which it had been strained. The vapour did not diffuse as a true gas would do. It hung together in banks, flowing

sluggishly down the slope of the land and driving reluctantly before the wind, and very slowly it combined with the mist and moisture of the air, and sank to the earth in the form of dust. Save that an unknown element giving a group of four lines in the blue of the spectrum is concerned, we are still entirely ignorant of the nature of this substance.

Once the tumultuous upheaval of its dispersion was over, the black smoke clung so closely to the ground, even before its precipitation, that fifty feet up in the air, on the roofs and upper stories of high houses and on great trees, there was a chance of escaping its poison altogether, as was proved even that night at Street Cobham and Ditton.

The man who escaped at the former place tells a wonderful story of the strangeness of its coiling flow, and how he looked down from the church spire and saw the houses of the village rising like ghosts out of its inky nothingness. For a day and a half he remained there, weary, starving and sun-scorched, the earth under the blue sky and against the prospect of the distant hills a velvet-black expanse, with red roofs, green trees, and, later, black-veiled shrubs and gates, barns, outhouses, and walls, rising here and there into the sunlight.

But that was at Street Cobham, where the black vapour was allowed to remain until it sank of its own accord into the ground. As a rule the Martians, when it had served its purpose, cleared the air of it again by wading into it and directing a jet of steam upon it.

This they did with the vapour banks near us, as we saw in the starlight from the window of a deserted house at Upper Halliford, whither we had returned. From there we could see the searchlights on Richmond Hill and Kingston Hill going to and fro, and about eleven the windows rattled, and we heard the sound of the huge siege guns that had been put in position there. These continued intermittently for the space of a quarter of an hour, sending chance shots at the invisible Martians at Hampton and Ditton, and then the pale beams of the electric light vanished, and were replaced by a bright red glow.

Then the fourth cylinder fell--a brilliant green meteor--as I learned afterwards, in Bushey Park. Before the guns on the Richmond and Kingston line of hills began, there was a fitful cannonade far away in the southwest, due, I believe, to guns being fired haphazard before the black vapour could overwhelm the gunners.

So, setting about it as methodically as men might smoke out a wasps' nest, the Martians spread this strange stifling vapour over the Londonward country. The horns of the crescent slowly moved apart, until at last they formed a line from Hanwell to Coombe and Malden. All night through their destructive tubes advanced. Never once, after the Martian at St. George's Hill was brought down, did they give the artillery the ghost of a chance against them. Wherever there was a possibility of guns being laid for them unseen, a fresh canister of the black vapour was discharged, and where the guns were openly displayed the Heat-Ray was brought to bear.

By midnight the blazing trees along the slopes of Richmond Park and the glare of Kingston Hill threw their light upon a network of black smoke, blotting out the whole valley of the Thames and extending as far as the eye could reach. And through this two Martians slowly waded, and turned their hissing steam jets this way and that.

They were sparing of the Heat-Ray that night, either because they had but a limited supply of material for its production or because they did not wish to destroy the country but only to crush and overawe the opposition they had aroused. In the latter aim they certainly succeeded. Sunday night was the end of the organised opposition to their movements. After that no body of men would stand against them, so hopeless was the enterprise. Even the crews of the torpedo-boats and destroyers that had brought their quick-firers up the Thames refused to stop, mutinied, and went down again. The only offensive operation men ventured upon after that night was the preparation of mines and pitfalls, and even in that their energies were frantic and spasmodic.

One has to imagine, as well as one may, the fate of those batteries towards Esher, waiting so tensely in the twilight. Survivors there were none. One may picture the orderly expectation, the officers alert and watchful, the gunners ready, the ammunition piled to hand, the limber gunners with their horses and waggons, the groups of civilian spectators standing as near as they were permitted, the evening stillness, the ambulances and hospital tents with the burned and wounded from Weybridge; then the dull resonance of the shots the Martians fired, and the clumsy projectile whirling over the trees and houses and smashing amid the neighbouring fields.

One may picture, too, the sudden shifting of the attention, the swiftly spreading coils and bellyings of that blackness advancing headlong, towering heavenward, turning the twilight to a palpable darkness, a strange and horrible antagonist of vapour striding upon its victims, men and horses near it seen dimly, running, shrieking, falling headlong, shouts of dismay, the guns suddenly abandoned, men choking and writhing on the ground, and the swift broadening-out of the opaque cone of smoke. And then night and extinction--nothing but a silent mass of impenetrable vapour hiding its dead.

Before dawn the black vapour was pouring through the streets of Richmond, and the disintegrating organism of government was, with a last expiring effort, rousing the population of London to the necessity of flight.

Chapter Sixteen

The Exodus from London

So you understand the roaring wave of fear that swept through the greatest city in the world just as Monday was dawning--the stream of flight rising swiftly to a torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult round the railway stations, banked up into a horrible struggle about the shipping in the Thames, and hurrying by every available channel northward and eastward. By ten o'clock the police organisation, and by midday even the railway

organisations, were losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body.

All the railway lines north of the Thames and the South-Eastern people at Cannon Street had been warned by midnight on Sunday, and trains were being filled. People were fighting savagely for standing-room in the carriages even at two o'clock. By three, people were being trampled and crushed even in Bishopsgate Street, a couple of hundred yards or more from Liverpool Street station; revolvers were fired, people stabbed, and the policemen who had been sent to direct the traffic, exhausted and infuriated, were breaking the heads of the people they were called out to protect.

And as the day advanced and the engine drivers and stokers refused to return to London, the pressure of the flight drove the people in an ever-thickening multitude away from the stations and along the northward-running roads. By midday a Martian had been seen at Barnes, and a cloud of slowly sinking black vapour drove along the Thames and across the flats of Lambeth, cutting off all escape over the bridges in its sluggish advance. Another bank drove over Ealing, and surrounded a little island of survivors on Castle Hill, alive, but unable to escape.

470

After a fruitless struggle to get aboard a North-Western train at Chalk Farm--the engines of the trains that had loaded in the goods yard there *ploughed* through shrieking people, and a dozen stalwart men fought to keep the crowd from crushing the driver against his furnace--my brother emerged upon the Chalk Farm road, dodged across through a hurrying swarm of vehicles, and had the luck to be foremost in the sack of a cycle shop. The front tire of the machine he got was punctured in dragging it through the window, but he got up and off, notwithstanding, with no further injury than a cut wrist. The steep foot of Haverstock Hill was impassable owing to several overturned horses, and my brother struck into Belsize Road.

So he got out of the fury of the panic, and, skirting the Edgware Road, reached Edgware about seven, fasting and wearied, but well ahead of the crowd. Along the road people were

standing in the roadway, curious, wondering. He was passed by a number of cyclists, some horsemen, and two motor cars. A mile from Edgware the rim of the wheel broke, and the machine became unridable. He left it by the roadside and trudged through the village. There were shops half opened in the main street of the place, and people crowded on the pavement and in the doorways and windows, staring astonished at this extraordinary procession of fugitives that was beginning. He succeeded in getting some food at an inn.

For a time he remained in Edgware not knowing what next to do. The flying people increased in number. Many of them, like my brother, seemed inclined to loiter in the place. There was no fresh news of the invaders from Mars.

At that time the road was crowded, but as yet far from congested. Most of the fugitives at that hour were mounted on cycles, but there were soon motor cars, hansom cabs, and carriages hurrying along, and the dust hung in heavy clouds along the road to St. Albans.

It was perhaps a vague idea of making his way to Chelmsford, where some friends of his lived, that at last induced my brother to strike into a quiet lane running eastward. Presently he came upon a stile, and, crossing it, followed a footpath northeastward. He passed near several farmhouses and some little places whose names he did not learn. He saw few fugitives until, in a grass lane towards High Barnet, he happened upon two ladies who became his fellow travellers. He came upon them just in time to save them.

475

He heard their screams, and, hurrying round the corner, saw a couple of men struggling to drag them out of the little pony-chaise in which they had been driving, while a third with difficulty held the frightened pony's head. One of the ladies, a short woman dressed in white, was simply screaming; the other, a dark, slender figure, slashed at the man who gripped her arm with a whip she held in her disengaged hand.

My brother immediately grasped the situation, shouted, and hurried towards the struggle. One of the men desisted and turned towards him, and my brother, realising from his antagonist's face

that a fight was unavoidable, and being an expert boxer, went into him forthwith and sent him down against the wheel of the chaise.

It was no time for pugilistic chivalry and my brother laid him quiet with a kick, and gripped the collar of the man who pulled at the slender lady's arm. He heard the clatter of hoofs, the whip stung across his face, a third antagonist struck him between the eyes, and the man he held wrenched himself free and made off down the lane in the direction from which he had come.

Partly stunned, he found himself facing the man who had held the horse's head, and became aware of the chaise receding from him down the lane, swaying from side to side, and with the women in it looking back. The man before him, a burly rough, tried to close, and he stopped him with a blow in the face. Then, realising that he was deserted, he dodged round and made off down the lane after the chaise, with the sturdy man close behind him, and the fugitive, who had turned now, following remotely.

Suddenly he stumbled and fell; his immediate pursuer went headlong, and he rose to his feet to find himself with a couple of antagonists again. He would have had little chance against them had not the slender lady very pluckily pulled up and returned to his help. It seems she had had a revolver all this time, but it had been under the seat when she and her companion were attacked. She fired at six yards' distance, narrowly missing my brother. The less courageous of the robbers made off, and his companion followed him, cursing his cowardice. They both stopped in sight down the lane, where the third man lay insensible.

"Take this!" said the slender lady, and she gave my brother her revolver.

"Go back to the chaise," said my brother, wiping the blood from his split lip.

She turned without a word--they were both panting--and they went back to where the lady in white struggled to hold back the frightened pony.

The robbers had evidently had enough of it. When my brother looked again they were retreating.

"I'll sit here," said my brother, "if I may"; and he got upon the empty front seat. The lady looked over her shoulder.

480

485

"Give me the reins," she said, and laid the whip along the pony's side. In another moment a bend in the road hid the three men from my brother's eyes.

So, quite unexpectedly, my brother found himself, panting, with a cut mouth, a bruised jaw, and bloodstained knuckles, driving along an unknown lane with these two women.

He learned they were the wife and the younger sister of a surgeon living at Stanmore, who had come in the small hours from a dangerous case at Pinner, and heard at some railway station on his way of the Martian advance. He had hurried home, roused the women--their servant had left them two days before--packed some provisions, put his revolver under the seat--luckily for my brother--and told them to drive on to Edgware, with the idea of getting a train there. He stopped behind to tell the neighbours. He would overtake them, he said, at about half past four in the morning, and now it was nearly nine and they had seen nothing of him. They could not stop in Edgware because of the growing traffic through the place, and so they had come into this side lane.

That was the story they told my brother in fragments when presently they stopped again, nearer to New Barnet. He promised to stay with them, at least until they could determine what to do, or until the missing man arrived, and professed to be an expert shot with the revolver--a weapon strange to him--in order to give them confidence.

They made a sort of encampment by the wayside, and the pony became happy in the hedge. He told them of his own escape out of London, and all that he knew of these Martians and their ways. The sun crept higher in the sky, and after a time their talk died out and gave place to an uneasy state of anticipation. Several wayfarers came along the lane, and of these my brother gathered such news as he could. Every broken answer he had deepened his impression of the great disaster that had come on humanity, deepened his persuasion of the immediate necessity for prosecuting this flight. He urged the matter upon them.

"We have money," said the slender woman, and hesitated.

Her eyes met my brother's, and her hesitation ended.

"So have I," said my brother.

She explained that they had as much as thirty pounds in gold, besides a five-pound note, and suggested that with that they might get upon a train at St. Albans or New Barnet. My brother thought that was hopeless, seeing the fury of the Londoners to crowd upon the trains, and broached his own idea of striking across Essex towards Harwich and thence escaping from the country altogether.

Mrs. Elphinstone--that was the name of the woman in white--would listen to no reasoning, and kept calling upon "George"; but her sister-in-law was astonishingly quiet and deliberate, and at last agreed to my brother's suggestion. So, designing to cross the Great North Road, they went on towards Barnet, my brother leading the pony to save it as much as possible. As the sun crept up the sky the day became excessively hot, and under foot a thick, whitish sand grew burning and blinding, so that they travelled only very slowly. The hedges were grey with dust. And as they advanced towards Barnet a tumultuous murmuring grew stronger.

They began to meet more people. For the most part these were staring before them, murmuring indistinct questions, jaded, haggard, unclean. One man in evening dress passed them on foot, his eyes on the ground. They heard his voice, and, looking back at him, saw one hand clutched in his hair and the other beating invisible things. His paroxysm of rage over, he went on his way without once looking back.

As my brother's party went on towards the crossroads to the south of Barnet they saw a woman approaching the road across some fields on their left, carrying a child and with two other children; and then passed a man in dirty black, with a thick stick in one hand and a small portmanteau in the other. Then round the corner of the lane, from between the villas that guarded it at its confluence with the high road, came a little cart drawn by a sweating black pony and driven by a sallow youth in a bowler hat, grey with dust. There were three girls, East End factory girls, and a couple of little children crowded in the cart.

"This'll tike us rahnd Edgware?" asked the driver, wild-eyed, white-faced; and when my brother told him it would if he turned

to the left, he whipped up at once without the formality of thanks.

My brother noticed a pale grey smoke or haze rising among the houses in front of them, and veiling the white facade of a terrace beyond the road that appeared between the backs of the villas. Mrs. Elphinstone suddenly cried out at a number of tongues of smoky red flame leaping up above the houses in front of them against the hot, blue sky. The tumultuous noise resolved itself now into the disorderly mingling of many voices, the gride of many wheels, the creaking of waggons, and the staccato of hoofs. The lane came round sharply not fifty yards from the crossroads.

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Elphinstone. "What is this you are driving us into?"

500

My brother stopped.

For the main road was a boiling stream of people, a torrent of human beings rushing northward, one pressing on another. A great bank of dust, white and luminous in the blaze of the sun, made everything within twenty feet of the ground grey and indistinct and was perpetually renewed by the hurrying feet of a dense crowd of horses and of men and women on foot, and by the wheels of vehicles of every description.

"Way!" my brother heard voices crying. "Make way!"

It was like riding into the smoke of a fire to approach the meeting point of the lane and road; the crowd roared like a fire, and the dust was hot and pungent. And, indeed, a little way up the road a villa was burning and sending rolling masses of black smoke across the road to add to the confusion.

Two men came past them. Then a dirty woman, carrying a heavy bundle and weeping. A lost retriever dog, with hanging tongue, circled dubiously round them, scared and wretched, and fled at my brother's threat.

505

So much as they could see of the road Londonward between the houses to the right was a tumultuous stream of dirty, hurrying people, pent in between the villas on either side; the black heads, the crowded forms, grew into distinctness as they rushed towards the corner, hurried past, and merged their individuality again in a

receding multitude that was swallowed up at last in a cloud of dust.

"Go on! Go on!" cried the voices. "Way! Way!"

One man's hands pressed on the back of another. My brother stood at the pony's head. Irresistibly attracted, he advanced slowly, pace by pace, down the lane.

Edgware had been a scene of confusion, Chalk Farm a riotous tumult, but this was a whole population in movement. It is hard to imagine that host. It had no character of its own. The figures poured out past the corner, and receded with their backs to the group in the lane. Along the margin came those who were on foot threatened by the wheels, stumbling in the ditches, blundering into one another.

The carts and carriages crowded close upon one another, making little way for those swifter and more impatient vehicles that darted forward every now and then when an opportunity showed itself of doing so, sending the people scattering against the fences and gates of the villas.

510

"Push on!" was the cry. "Push on! They are coming!"

In one cart stood a blind man in the uniform of the Salvation Army, gesticulating with his crooked fingers and bawling, "Eternity! Eternity!" His voice was hoarse and very loud so that my brother could hear him long after he was lost to sight in the dust. Some of the people who crowded in the carts whipped stupidly at their horses and quarrelled with other drivers; some sat motionless, staring at nothing with miserable eyes; some gnawed their hands with thirst, or lay prostrate in the bottoms of their conveyances. The horses' bits were covered with foam, their eyes bloodshot.

There were cabs, carriages, shop cars, waggons, beyond counting; a mail cart, a road-cleaner's cart marked "Vestry of St. Pancras," a huge timber waggon crowded with roughs. A brewer's dray rumbled by with its two near wheels splashed with fresh blood.

"Clear the way!" cried the voices. "Clear the way!"

"Eter-nity! Eter-nity!" came echoing down the road.

515

There were sad, haggard women tramping by, well dressed, with children that cried and stumbled, their dainty clothes smothered in dust, their weary faces smeared with tears. With many of these came men, sometimes helpful, sometimes lowering and savage. Fighting side by side with them pushed some weary street outcast in faded black rags, wide-eyed, loud-voiced, and foul-mouthed. There were sturdy workmen thrusting their way along, wretched, unkempt men, clothed like clerks or shopmen, struggling spasmodically; a wounded soldier my brother noticed, men dressed in the clothes of railway porters, one wretched creature in a nightshirt with a coat thrown over it.

But varied as its composition was, certain things all that host had in common. There were fear and pain on their faces, and fear behind them. A tumult up the road, a quarrel for a place in a waggon, sent the whole host of them quickening their pace; even a man so scared and broken that his knees bent under him was galvanised for a moment into renewed activity. The heat and dust had already been at work upon this multitude. Their skins were dry, their lips black and cracked. They were all thirsty, weary, and footsore. And amid the various cries one heard disputes, reproaches, groans of weariness and fatigue; the voices of most of them were hoarse and weak. Through it all ran a refrain:

"Way! Way! The Martians are coming!"

Few stopped and came aside from that flood. The lane opened slantingly into the main road with a narrow opening, and had a delusive appearance of coming from the direction of London. Yet a kind of eddy of people drove into its mouth; weaklings elbowed out of the stream, who for the most part rested but a moment before plunging into it again. A little way down the lane, with two friends bending over him, lay a man with a bare leg, wrapped about with bloody rags. He was a lucky man to have friends.

A little old man, with a grey military moustache and a filthy black frock coat, limped out and sat down beside the trap, removed his boot--his sock was blood-stained--shook out a pebble, and hobbled on again; and then a little girl of eight or nine, all alone, threw herself under the hedge close by my brother, weeping.

"I can't go on! I can't go on!"

My brother woke from his torpor of astonishment and lifted her up, speaking gently to her, and carried her to Miss Elphinstone. So soon as my brother touched her she became quite still, as if frightened.

"Ellen!" shrieked a woman in the crowd, with tears in her voice--"Ellen!" And the child suddenly darted away from my brother, crying "Mother!"

"They are coming," said a man on horseback, riding past along the lane.

"Out of the way, there!" bawled a coachman, towering high; and my brother saw a closed carriage turning into the lane.

525

The people crushed back on one another to avoid the horse. My brother pushed the pony and chaise back into the hedge, and the man drove by and stopped at the turn of the way. It was a carriage, with a pole for a pair of horses, but only one was in the traces. My brother saw dimly through the dust that two men lifted out something on a white stretcher and put it gently on the grass beneath the privet hedge.

One of the men came running to my brother.

"Where is there any water?" he said. "He is dying fast, and very thirsty. It is Lord Garrick."

"Lord Garrick!" said my brother; "the Chief Justice?"

"The water?" he said.

530

"There may be a tap," said my brother, "in some of the houses. We have no water. I dare not leave my people."

The man pushed against the crowd towards the gate of the corner house.

"Go on!" said the people, thrusting at him. "They are coming! Go on!"

Then my brother's attention was distracted by a bearded, eagle-faced man lugging a small handbag, which split even as my brother's eyes rested on it and disgorged a mass of sovereigns that seemed to break up into separate coins as it struck the ground. They rolled hither and thither among the struggling feet of men and horses. The man stopped and looked stupidly at the heap, and the shaft of a cab struck his shoulder and sent him reeling. He

gave a shriek and dodged back, and a cartwheel shaved him narrowly.

"Way!" cried the men all about him. "Make way!"

535

So soon as the cab had passed, he flung himself, with both hands open, upon the heap of coins, and began thrusting handfuls in his pocket. A horse rose close upon him, and in another moment, half rising, he had been borne down under the horse's hoofs.

"Stop!" screamed my brother, and pushing a woman out of his way, tried to clutch the bit of the horse.

Before he could get to it, he heard a scream under the wheels, and saw through the dust the rim passing over the poor wretch's back. The driver of the cart slashed his whip at my brother, who ran round behind the cart. The multitudinous shouting confused his ears. The man was writhing in the dust among his scattered money, unable to rise, for the wheel had broken his back, and his lower limbs lay limp and dead. My brother stood up and yelled at the next driver, and a man on a black horse came to his assistance.

"Get him out of the road," said he; and, clutching the man's collar with his free hand, my brother lugged him sideways. But he still clutched after his money, and regarded my brother fiercely, hammering at his arm with a handful of gold. "Go on! Go on!" shouted angry voices behind.

"Way! Way!"

540

There was a smash as the pole of a carriage crashed into the cart that the man on horseback stopped. My brother looked up, and the man with the gold twisted his head round and bit the wrist that held his collar. There was a concussion, and the black horse came staggering sideways, and the carthorse pushed beside it. A hoof missed my brother's foot by a hair's breadth. He released his grip on the fallen man and jumped back. He saw anger change to terror on the face of the poor wretch on the ground, and in a moment he was hidden and my brother was borne backward and carried past the entrance of the lane, and had to fight hard in the torrent to recover it.

He saw Miss Elphinstone covering her eyes, and a little child, with all a child's want of sympathetic imagination, staring with

dilated eyes at a dusty something that lay black and still, ground and crushed under the rolling wheels. "Let us go back!" he shouted, and began turning the pony round. "We cannot cross this--hell," he said and they went back a hundred yards the way they had come, until the fighting crowd was hidden. As they passed the bend in the lane my brother saw the face of the dying man in the ditch under the privet, deadly white and drawn, and shining with perspiration. The two women sat silent, crouching in their seat and shivering.

Then beyond the bend my brother stopped again. Miss Elphinstone was white and pale, and her sister-in-law sat weeping, too wretched even to call upon "George." My brother was horrified and perplexed. So soon as they had retreated he realised how urgent and unavoidable it was to attempt this crossing. He turned to Miss Elphinstone, suddenly resolute.

"We must go that way," he said, and led the pony round again.

For the second time that day this girl proved her quality. To force their way into the torrent of people, my brother plunged into the traffic and held back a cab horse, while she drove the pony across its head. A waggon locked wheels for a moment and ripped a long splinter from the chaise. In another moment they were caught and swept forward by the stream. My brother, with the cabman's whip marks red across his face and hands, scrambled into the chaise and took the reins from her.

"Point the revolver at the man behind," he said, giving it to her, "if he presses us too hard. No!--point it at his horse."

Then he began to look out for a chance of edging to the right across the road. But once in the stream he seemed to lose volition, to become a part of that dusty rout. They swept through Chipping Barnet with the torrent; they were nearly a mile beyond the centre of the town before they had fought across to the opposite side of the way. It was din and confusion indescribable; but in and beyond the town the road forks repeatedly, and this to some extent relieved the stress.

They struck eastward through Hadley, and there on either side of the road, and at another place farther on they came upon a great multitude of people drinking at the stream, some fighting to

come at the water. And farther on, from a lull near East Barnet, they saw two trains running slowly one after the other without signal or order--trains swarming with people, with men even among the coals behind the engines--going northward along the Great Northern Railway. My brother supposes they must have filled outside London, for at that time the furious terror of the people had rendered the central termini impossible.

Near this place they halted for the rest of the afternoon, for the violence of the day had already utterly exhausted all three of them. They began to suffer the beginnings of hunger; the night was cold, and none of them dared to sleep. And in the evening many people came hurrying along the road nearby their stopping place, fleeing from unknown dangers before them, and going in the direction from which my brother had come.

Chapter Seventeen

The "Thunder Child"

Had the Martians aimed only at destruction, they might on Monday have annihilated the entire population of London, as it spread itself slowly through the home counties. Not only along the road through Barnet, but also through Edgware and Waltham Abbey, and along the roads eastward to Southend and Shoeburyness, and south of the Thames to Deal and Broadstairs, poured the same frantic rout. If one could have hung that June morning in a balloon in the blazing blue above London every northward and eastward road running out of the tangled maze of streets would have seemed stippled black with the streaming fugitives, each dot a human agony of terror and physical distress. I have set forth at length in the last chapter my brother's account of the road through Chipping Barnet, in order that my readers may realise how that swarming of black dots appeared to one of those concerned. Never before in the history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together. The legendary hosts of Goths and Huns, the hugest armies Asia has ever seen, would have been but a drop in that current. And this

was no disciplined march; it was a stampede--a stampede gigantic and terrible--without order and without a goal, six million people unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the rout of civilisation, of the massacre of mankind.

Directly below him the balloonist would have seen the network of streets far and wide, houses, churches, squares, crescents, gardens--already derelict--spread out like a huge map, and in the southward *blotted*. Over Ealing, Richmond, Wimbledon, it would have seemed as if some monstrous pen had flung ink upon the chart. Steadily, incessantly, each black splash grew and spread, shooting out ramifications this way and that, now banking itself against rising ground, now pouring swiftly over a crest into a new-found valley, exactly as a gout of ink would spread itself upon blotting paper.

And beyond, over the blue hills that rise southward of the river, the glittering Martians went to and fro, calmly and methodically spreading their poison cloud over this patch of country and then over that, laying it again with their steam jets when it had served its purpose, and taking possession of the conquered country. They do not seem to have aimed at extermination so much as at complete demoralisation and the destruction of any opposition. They exploded any stores of powder they came upon, cut every telegraph, and wrecked the railways here and there. They were hamstringing mankind. They seemed in no hurry to extend the field of their operations, and did not come beyond the central part of London all that day. It is possible that a very considerable number of people in London stuck to their houses through Monday morning. Certain it is that many died at home suffocated by the Black Smoke.

Until about midday the Pool of London was an astonishing scene. Steamboats and shipping of all sorts lay there, tempted by the enormous sums of money offered by fugitives, and it is said that many who swam out to these vessels were thrust off with boathooks and drowned. About one o'clock in the afternoon the thinning remnant of a cloud of the black vapour appeared between the arches of Blackfriars Bridge. At that the Pool became a scene of mad confusion, fighting, and collision, and for some

time a multitude of boats and barges jammed in the northern arch of the Tower Bridge, and the sailors and lightermen had to fight savagely against the people who swarmed upon them from the riverfront. People were actually clambering down the piers of the bridge from above.

When, an hour later, a Martian appeared beyond the Clock Tower and waded down the river, nothing but wreckage floated above Limehouse.

Of the falling of the fifth cylinder I have presently to tell. The sixth star fell at Wimbledon. My brother, keeping watch beside the women in the chaise in a meadow, saw the green flash of it far beyond the hills. On Tuesday the little party, still set upon getting across the sea, made its way through the swarming country towards Colchester. The news that the Martians were now in possession of the whole of London was confirmed. They had been seen at Highgate, and even, it was said, at Neasden. But they did not come into my brother's view until the morrow.

555

That day the scattered multitudes began to realise the urgent need of provisions. As they grew hungry the rights of property ceased to be regarded. Farmers were out to defend their cattle-sheds, granaries, and ripening root crops with arms in their hands. A number of people now, like my brother, had their faces eastward, and there were some desperate souls even going back towards London to get food. These were chiefly people from the northern suburbs, whose knowledge of the Black Smoke came by hearsay. He heard that about half the members of the government had gathered at Birmingham, and that enormous quantities of high explosives were being prepared to be used in automatic mines across the Midland counties.

He was also told that the Midland Railway Company had replaced the desertions of the first day's panic, had resumed traffic, and was running northward trains from St. Albans to relieve the congestion of the home counties. There was also a placard in Chipping Ongar announcing that large stores of flour were available in the northern towns and that within twenty-four hours bread would be distributed among the starving people in the neighbourhood. But this intelligence did not deter him from the

plan of escape he had formed, and the three pressed eastward all day, and heard no more of the bread distribution than this promise. Nor, as a matter of fact, did anyone else hear more of it. That night fell the seventh star, falling upon Primrose Hill. It fell while Miss Elphinstone was watching, for she took that duty alternately with my brother. She saw it.

On Wednesday the three fugitives--they had passed the night in a field of unripe wheat--reached Chelmsford, and there a body of the inhabitants, calling itself the Committee of Public Supply, seized the pony as provisions, and would give nothing in exchange for it but the promise of a share in it the next day. Here there were rumours of Martians at Epping, and news of the destruction of Waltham Abbey Powder Mills in a vain attempt to blow up one of the invaders.

People were watching for Martians here from the church towers. My brother, very luckily for him as it chanced, preferred to push on at once to the coast rather than wait for food, although all three of them were very hungry. By midday they passed through Tillingham, which, strangely enough, seemed to be quite silent and deserted, save for a few furtive plunderers hunting for food. Near Tillingham they suddenly came in sight of the sea, and the most amazing crowd of shipping of all sorts that it is possible to imagine.

For after the sailors could no longer come up the Thames, they came on to the Essex coast, to Harwich and Walton and Clacton, and afterwards to Foulness and Shoebury, to bring off the people. They lay in a huge sickle-shaped curve that vanished into mist at last towards the Naze. Close inshore was a multitude of fishing smacks--English, Scotch, French, Dutch, and Swedish; steam launches from the Thames, yachts, electric boats; and beyond were ships of large burden, a multitude of filthy colliers, trim merchantmen, cattle ships, passenger boats, petroleum tanks, ocean tramps, an old white transport even, neat white and grey liners from Southampton and Hamburg; and along the blue coast across the Blackwater my brother could make out dimly a dense swarm of boats chaffering with the people on the beach, a swarm which also extended up the Blackwater almost to Maldon.

About a couple of miles out lay an ironclad, very low in the water, almost, to my brother's perception, like a water-logged ship. This was the ram *Thunder Child*. It was the only warship in sight, but far away to the right over the smooth surface of the sea--for that day there was a dead calm--lay a serpent of black smoke to mark the next ironclads of the Channel Fleet, which hovered in an extended line, steam up and ready for action, across the Thames estuary during the course of the Martian conquest, vigilant and yet powerless to prevent it.

At the sight of the sea, Mrs. Elphinstone, in spite of the assurances of her sister-in-law, gave way to panic. She had never been out of England before, she would rather die than trust herself friendless in a foreign country, and so forth. She seemed, poor woman, to imagine that the French and the Martians might prove very similar. She had been growing increasingly hysterical, fearful, and depressed during the two days' journeyings. Her great idea was to return to Stanmore. Things had been always well and safe at Stanmore. They would find George at Stanmore.

It was with the greatest difficulty they could get her down to the beach, where presently my brother succeeded in attracting the attention of some men on a paddle steamer from the Thames. They sent a boat and drove a bargain for thirty-six pounds for the three. The steamer was going, these men said, to Ostend.

It was about two o'clock when my brother, having paid their fares at the gangway, found himself safely aboard the steamboat with his charges. There was food aboard, albeit at exorbitant prices, and the three of them contrived to eat a meal on one of the seats forward.

There were already a couple of score of passengers aboard, some of whom had expended their last money in securing a passage, but the captain lay off the Blackwater until five in the afternoon, picking up passengers until the seated decks were even dangerously crowded. He would probably have remained longer had it not been for the sound of guns that began about that hour in the south. As if in answer, the ironclad seaward fired a small gun and hoisted a string of flags. A jet of smoke sprang out of her funnels.

Some of the passengers were of opinion that this firing came from Shoeburyness, until it was noticed that it was growing louder. At the same time, far away in the southeast the masts and upperworks of three ironclads rose one after the other out of the sea, beneath clouds of black smoke. But my brother's attention speedily reverted to the distant firing in the south. He fancied he saw a column of smoke rising out of the distant grey haze.

The little steamer was already flapping her way eastward of the big crescent of shipping, and the low Essex coast was growing blue and hazy, when a Martian appeared, small and faint in the remote distance, advancing along the muddy coast from the direction of Foulness. At that the captain on the bridge swore at the top of his voice with fear and anger at his own delay, and the paddles seemed infected with his terror. Every soul aboard stood at the bulwarks or on the seats of the steamer and stared at that distant shape, higher than the trees or church towers inland, and advancing with a leisurely parody of a human stride.

It was the first Martian my brother had seen, and he stood, more amazed than terrified, watching this Titan advancing deliberately towards the shipping, wading farther and farther into the water as the coast fell away. Then, far away beyond the Crouch, came another, striding over some stunted trees, and then yet another, still farther off, wading deeply through a shiny mudflat that seemed to hang halfway up between sea and sky. They were all stalking seaward, as if to intercept the escape of the multitudinous vessels that were crowded between Foulness and the Naze. In spite of the throbbing exertions of the engines of the little paddle-boat, and the pouring foam that her wheels flung behind her, she receded with terrifying slowness from this ominous advance.

Glancing northwestward, my brother saw the large crescent of shipping already writhing with the approaching terror; one ship passing behind another, another coming round from broadside to end on, steamships whistling and giving off volumes of steam, sails being let out, launches rushing hither and thither. He was so fascinated by this and by the creeping danger away to the left that he had no eyes for anything seaward. And then a swift movement

of the steamboat (she had suddenly come round to avoid being run down) flung him headlong from the seat upon which he was standing. There was a shouting all about him, a trampling of feet, and a cheer that seemed to be answered faintly. The steamboat lurched and rolled him over upon his hands.

He sprang to his feet and saw to starboard, and not a hundred yards from their heeling, pitching boat, a vast iron bulk like the blade of a plough tearing through the water, tossing it on either side in huge waves of foam that leaped towards the steamer, flinging her paddles helplessly in the air, and then sucking her deck down almost to the waterline.

A douche of spray blinded my brother for a moment. When his eyes were clear again he saw the monster had passed and was rushing landward. Big iron upperworks rose out of this headlong structure, and from that twin funnels projected and spat a smoking blast shot with fire. It was the torpedo ram, *Thunder Child*, steaming headlong, coming to the rescue of the threatened shipping.

Keeping his footing on the heaving deck by clutching the bulwarks, my brother looked past this charging leviathan at the Martians again, and he saw the three of them now close together, and standing so far out to sea that their tripod supports were almost entirely submerged. Thus sunken, and seen in remote perspective, they appeared far less formidable than the huge iron bulk in whose wake the steamer was pitching so helplessly. It would seem they were regarding this new antagonist with astonishment. To their intelligence, it may be, the giant was even such another as themselves. The *Thunder Child* fired no gun, but simply drove full speed towards them. It was probably her not firing that enabled her to get so near the enemy as she did. They did not know what to make of her. One shell, and they would have sent her to the bottom forthwith with the Heat-Ray.

She was steaming at such a pace that in a minute she seemed halfway between the steamboat and the Martians--a diminishing black bulk against the receding horizontal expanse of the Essex coast.

Suddenly the foremost Martian lowered his tube and discharged a canister of the black gas at the ironclad. It hit her larboard side and glanced off in an inky jet that rolled away to seaward, an unfolding torrent of Black Smoke, from which the ironclad drove clear. To the watchers from the steamer, low in the water and with the sun in their eyes, it seemed as though she were already among the Martians.

They saw the gaunt figures separating and rising out of the water as they retreated shoreward, and one of them raised the camera-like generator of the Heat-Ray. He held it pointing obliquely downward, and a bank of steam sprang from the water at its touch. It must have driven through the iron of the ship's side like a white-hot iron rod through paper.

A flicker of flame went up through the rising steam, and then the Martian reeled and staggered. In another moment he was cut down, and a great body of water and steam shot high in the air. The guns of the *Thunder Child* sounded through the reek, going off one after the other, and one shot splashed the water high close by the steamer, ricocheted towards the other flying ships to the north, and smashed a smack to matchwood.

But no one heeded that very much. At the sight of the Martian's collapse the captain on the bridge yelled inarticulately, and all the crowding passengers on the steamer's stern shouted together. And then they yelled again. For, surging out beyond the white tumult, drove something long and black, the flames streaming from its middle parts, its ventilators and funnels spouting fire.

She was alive still; the steering gear, it seems, was intact and her engines working. She headed straight for a second Martian, and was within a hundred yards of him when the Heat-Ray came to bear. Then with a violent thud, a blinding flash, her decks, her funnels, leaped upward. The Martian staggered with the violence of her explosion, and in another moment the flaming wreckage, still driving forward with the impetus of its pace, had struck him and crumpled him up like a thing of cardboard. My brother shouted involuntarily. A boiling tumult of steam hid everything again.

"Two!" yelled the captain.

Everyone was shouting. The whole steamer from end to end rang with frantic cheering that was taken up first by one and then by all in the crowding multitude of ships and boats that was driving out to sea.

The steam hung upon the water for many minutes, hiding the third Martian and the coast altogether. And all this time the boat was paddling steadily out to sea and away from the fight; and when at last the confusion cleared, the drifting bank of black vapour intervened, and nothing of the *Thunder Child* could be made out, nor could the third Martian be seen. But the ironclads to seaward were now quite close and standing in towards shore past the steamboat.

The little vessel continued to beat its way seaward, and the ironclads receded slowly towards the coast, which was hidden still by a marbled bank of vapour, part steam, part black gas, eddying and combining in the strangest way. The fleet of refugees was scattering to the northeast; several smacks were sailing between the ironclads and the steamboat. After a time, and before they reached the sinking cloud bank, the warships turned northward, and then abruptly went about and passed into the thickening haze of evening southward. The coast grew faint, and at last indistinguishable amid the low banks of clouds that were gathering about the sinking sun.

Then suddenly out of the golden haze of the sunset came the vibration of guns, and a form of black shadows moving. Everyone struggled to the rail of the steamer and peered into the blinding furnace of the west, but nothing was to be distinguished clearly. A mass of smoke rose slanting and barred the face of the sun. The steamboat throbbed on its way through an interminable suspense.

The sun sank into grey clouds, the sky flushed and darkened, the evening star trembled into sight. It was deep twilight when the captain cried out and pointed. My brother strained his eyes. Something rushed up into the sky out of the greyness--rushed slantingly upward and very swiftly into the luminous clearness above the clouds in the western sky; something flat and broad, and very large, that swept round in a vast curve, grew smaller,

sank slowly, and vanished again into the grey mystery of the night. And as it flew it rained down darkness upon the land.

Book Two:
The Earth under the Martians

Chapter One

Under Foot

In the first book I have wandered so much from my own adventures to tell of the experiences of my brother that all through the last two chapters I and the curate have been lurking in the empty house at Halliford whither we fled to escape the Black Smoke. There I will resume. We stopped there all Sunday night and all the next day--the day of the panic--in a little island of daylight, cut off by the Black Smoke from the rest of the world. We could do nothing but wait in aching inactivity during those two weary days.

585

My mind was occupied by anxiety for my wife. I figured her at Leatherhead, terrified, in danger, mourning me already as a dead man. I paced the rooms and cried aloud when I thought of how I was cut off from her, of all that might happen to her in my absence. My cousin I knew was brave enough for any emergency, but he was not the sort of man to realise danger quickly, to rise promptly. What was needed now was not bravery, but circumspection. My only consolation was to believe that the Martians were moving London-ward and away from her. Such vague anxieties keep the mind sensitive and painful. I grew very weary and irritable with the curate's perpetual ejaculations; I tired of the sight of his selfish despair. After some ineffectual remonstrance I kept away from him, staying in a room--evidently a children's schoolroom--containing globes, forms, and copybooks. When he followed me thither, I went to a box room at the top of the house and, in order to be alone with my aching miseries, locked myself in.

We were hopelessly hemmed in by the Black Smoke all that day and the morning of the next. There were signs of people in the next house on Sunday evening--a face at a window and moving lights, and later the slamming of a door. But I do not know who these people were, nor what became of them. We saw nothing of them next day. The Black Smoke drifted slowly riverward all through Monday morning, creeping nearer and nearer to us, driving at last along the roadway outside the house that hid us.

A Martian came across the fields about midday, laying the stuff with a jet of superheated steam that hissed against the walls, smashed all the windows it touched, and scalded the curate's hand as he fled out of the front room. When at last we crept across the sodden rooms and looked out again, the country northward was as though a black snowstorm had passed over it. Looking towards the river, we were astonished to see an unaccountable redness mingling with the black of the scorched meadows.

For a time we did not see how this change affected our position, save that we were relieved of our fear of the Black Smoke. But later I perceived that we were no longer hemmed in, that now we might get away. So soon as I realised that the way of escape was open, my dream of action returned. But the curate was lethargic, unreasonable.

"We are safe here," he repeated; "safe here."

590

I resolved to leave him--would that I had! Wiser now for the artilleryman's teaching, I sought out food and drink. I had found oil and rags for my burns, and I also took a hat and a flannel shirt that I found in one of the bedrooms. When it was clear to him that I meant to go alone--had reconciled myself to going alone--he suddenly roused himself to come. And all being quiet throughout the afternoon, we started about five o'clock, as I should judge, along the blackened road to Sunbury.

In Sunbury, and at intervals along the road, were dead bodies lying in contorted attitudes, horses as well as men, overturned carts and luggage, all covered thickly with black dust. That pall of cindery powder made me think of what I had read of the destruction of Pompeii. We got to Hampton Court without

misadventure, our minds full of strange and unfamiliar appearances, and at Hampton Court our eyes were relieved to find a patch of green that had escaped the suffocating drift. We went through Bushey Park, with its deer going to and fro under the chestnuts, and some men and women hurrying in the distance towards Hampton, and so we came to Twickenham. These were the first people we saw.

Away across the road the woods beyond Ham and Petersham were still afire. Twickenham was uninjured by either Heat-Ray or Black Smoke, and there were more people about here, though none could give us news. For the most part they were like ourselves, taking advantage of a lull to shift their quarters. I have an impression that many of the houses here were still occupied by scared inhabitants, too frightened even for flight. Here too the evidence of a hasty rout was abundant along the road. I remember most vividly three smashed bicycles in a heap, pounded into the road by the wheels of subsequent carts. We crossed Richmond Bridge about half past eight. We hurried across the exposed bridge, of course, but I noticed floating down the stream a number of red masses, some many feet across. I did not know what these were--there was no time for scrutiny--and I put a more horrible interpretation on them than they deserved. Here again on the Surrey side were black dust that had once been smoke, and dead bodies--a heap near the approach to the station; but we had no glimpse of the Martians until we were some way towards Barnes.

We saw in the blackened distance a group of three people running down a side street towards the river, but otherwise it seemed deserted. Up the hill Richmond town was burning briskly; outside the town of Richmond there was no trace of the Black Smoke.

Then suddenly, as we approached Kew, came a number of people running, and the upperworks of a Martian fighting-machine loomed in sight over the housetops, not a hundred yards away from us. We stood aghast at our danger, and had the Martian looked down we must immediately have perished. We were so terrified that we dared not go on, but turned aside and hid in a

shed in a garden. There the curate crouched, weeping silently, and refusing to stir again.

But my fixed idea of reaching Leatherhead would not let me rest, and in the twilight I ventured out again. I went through a shrubbery, and along a passage beside a big house standing in its own grounds, and so emerged upon the road towards Kew. The curate I left in the shed, but he came hurrying after me.

That second start was the most foolhardy thing I ever did. For it was manifest the Martians were about us. No sooner had the curate overtaken me than we saw either the fighting-machine we had seen before or another, far away across the meadows in the direction of Kew Lodge. Four or five little black figures hurried before it across the green-grey of the field, and in a moment it was evident this Martian pursued them. In three strides he was among them, and they ran radiating from his feet in all directions. He used no Heat-Ray to destroy them, but picked them up one by one. Apparently he tossed them into the great metallic carrier which projected behind him, much as a workman's basket hangs over his shoulder.

It was the first time I realised that the Martians might have any other purpose than destruction with defeated humanity. We stood for a moment petrified, then turned and fled through a gate behind us into a walled garden, fell into, rather than found, a fortunate ditch, and lay there, scarce daring to whisper to each other until the stars were out.

I suppose it was nearly eleven o'clock before we gathered courage to start again, no longer venturing into the road, but sneaking along hedgerows and through plantations, and watching keenly through the darkness, he on the right and I on the left, for the Martians, who seemed to be all about us. In one place we blundered upon a scorched and blackened area, now cooling and ashen, and a number of scattered dead bodies of men, burned horribly about the heads and trunks but with their legs and boots mostly intact; and of dead horses, fifty feet, perhaps, behind a line of four ripped guns and smashed gun carriages.

Sheen, it seemed, had escaped destruction, but the place was silent and deserted. Here we happened on no dead, though the

night was too dark for us to see into the side roads of the place. In Sheen my companion suddenly complained of faintness and thirst, and we decided to try one of the houses.

The first house we entered, after a little difficulty with the window, was a small semi-detached villa, and I found nothing eatable left in the place but some mouldy cheese. There was, however, water to drink; and I took a hatchet, which promised to be useful in our next house-breaking.

We then crossed to a place where the road turns towards Mortlake. Here there stood a white house within a walled garden, and in the pantry of this domicile we found a store of food--two loaves of bread in a pan, an uncooked steak, and the half of a ham. I give this catalogue so precisely because, as it happened, we were destined to subsist upon this store for the next fortnight. Bottled beer stood under a shelf, and there were two bags of haricot beans and some limp lettuces. This pantry opened into a kind of wash-up kitchen, and in this was firewood; there was also a cupboard, in which we found nearly a dozen of burgundy, tinned soups and salmon, and two tins of biscuits.

We sat in the adjacent kitchen in the dark--for we dared not strike a light--and ate bread and ham, and drank beer out of the same bottle. The curate, who was still timorous and restless, was now, oddly enough, for pushing on, and I was urging him to keep up his strength by eating when the thing happened that was to imprison us.

"It can't be midnight yet," I said, and then came a blinding glare of vivid green light. Everything in the kitchen leaped out, clearly visible in green and black, and vanished again. And then followed such a concussion as I have never heard before or since. So close on the heels of this as to seem instantaneous came a thud behind me, a clash of glass, a crash and rattle of falling masonry all about us, and the plaster of the ceiling came down upon us, smashing into a multitude of fragments upon our heads. I was knocked headlong across the floor against the oven handle and stunned. I was insensible for a long time, the curate told me, and when I came to we were in darkness again, and he, with a face

wet, as I found afterwards, with blood from a cut forehead, was dabbing water over me.

For some time I could not recollect what had happened. Then things came to me slowly. A bruise on my temple asserted itself.

605

"Are you better?" asked the curate in a whisper.

At last I answered him. I sat up.

"Don't move," he said. "The floor is covered with smashed crockery from the dresser. You can't possibly move without making a noise, and I fancy *they* are outside."

We both sat quite silent, so that we could scarcely hear each other breathing. Everything seemed deadly still, but once something near us, some plaster or broken brickwork, slid down with a rumbling sound. Outside and very near was an intermittent, metallic rattle.

"That!" said the curate, when presently it happened again.

610

"Yes," I said. "But what is it?"

"A Martian!" said the curate.

I listened again.

"It was not like the Heat-Ray," I said, and for a time I was inclined to think one of the great fighting-machines had stumbled against the house, as I had seen one stumble against the tower of Shepperton Church.

Our situation was so strange and incomprehensible that for three or four hours, until the dawn came, we scarcely moved. And then the light filtered in, not through the window, which remained black, but through a triangular aperture between a beam and a heap of broken bricks in the wall behind us. The interior of the kitchen we now saw greyly for the first time.

615

The window had been burst in by a mass of garden mould, which flowed over the table upon which we had been sitting and lay about our feet. Outside, the soil was banked high against the house. At the top of the window frame we could see an uprooted drainpipe. The floor was littered with smashed hardware; the end of the kitchen towards the house was broken into, and since the daylight shone in there, it was evident the greater part of the house had collapsed. Contrasting vividly with this ruin was the neat dresser, stained in the fashion, pale green, and with a number

of copper and tin vessels below it, the wallpaper imitating blue and white tiles, and a couple of coloured supplements fluttering from the walls above the kitchen range.

As the dawn grew clearer, we saw through the gap in the wall the body of a Martian, standing sentinel, I suppose, over the still glowing cylinder. At the sight of that we crawled as circumspectly as possible out of the twilight of the kitchen into the darkness of the scullery.

Abruptly the right interpretation dawned upon my mind.

"The fifth cylinder," I whispered, "the fifth shot from Mars, has struck this house and buried us under the ruins!"

For a time the curate was silent, and then he whispered:

"God have mercy upon us!"

I heard him presently whimpering to himself.

Save for that sound we lay quite still in the scullery; I for my part scarce dared breathe, and sat with my eyes fixed on the faint light of the kitchen door. I could just see the curate's face, a dim, oval shape, and his collar and cuffs. Outside there began a metallic hammering, then a violent hooting, and then again, after a quiet interval, a hissing like the hissing of an engine. These noises, for the most part problematical, continued intermittently, and seemed if anything to increase in number as time wore on. Presently a measured thudding and a vibration that made everything about us quiver and the vessels in the pantry ring and shift, began and continued. Once the light was eclipsed, and the ghostly kitchen doorway became absolutely dark. For many hours we must have crouched there, silent and shivering, until our tired attention failed. . . .

At last I found myself awake and very hungry. I am inclined to believe we must have spent the greater portion of a day before that awakening. My hunger was at a stride so insistent that it moved me to action. I told the curate I was going to seek food, and felt my way towards the pantry. He made me no answer, but so soon as I began eating the faint noise I made stirred him up and I heard him crawling after me.

What We Saw from the Ruined House

625

After eating we crept back to the scullery, and there I must have dozed again, for when presently I looked round I was alone. The thudding vibration continued with wearisome persistence. I whispered for the curate several times, and at last felt my way to the door of the kitchen. It was still daylight, and I perceived him across the room, lying against the triangular hole that looked out upon the Martians. His shoulders were hunched, so that his head was hidden from me.

I could hear a number of noises almost like those in an engine shed; and the place rocked with that beating thud. Through the aperture in the wall I could see the top of a tree touched with gold and the warm blue of a tranquil evening sky. For a minute or so I remained watching the curate, and then I advanced, crouching and stepping with extreme care amid the broken crockery that littered the floor.

I touched the curate's leg, and he started so violently that a mass of plaster went sliding down outside and fell with a loud impact. I gripped his arm, fearing he might cry out, and for a long time we crouched motionless. Then I turned to see how much of our rampart remained. The detachment of the plaster had left a vertical slit open in the debris, and by raising myself cautiously across a beam I was able to see out of this gap into what had been overnight a quiet suburban roadway. Vast, indeed, was the change that we beheld.

The fifth cylinder must have fallen right into the midst of the house we had first visited. The building had vanished, completely smashed, pulverised, and dispersed by the blow. The cylinder lay now far beneath the original foundations--deep in a hole, already vastly larger than the pit I had looked into at Woking. The earth all round it had splashed under that tremendous impact--"splashed" is the only word--and lay in heaped piles that hid the masses of the adjacent houses. It had behaved exactly like mud under the violent blow of a hammer. Our house had collapsed backward; the front portion, even on the ground floor, had been destroyed completely; by a chance the kitchen and scullery had

escaped, and stood buried now under soil and ruins, closed in by tons of earth on every side save towards the cylinder. Over that aspect we hung now on the very edge of the great circular pit the Martians were engaged in making. The heavy beating sound was evidently just behind us, and ever and again a bright green vapour drove up like a veil across our peephole.

The cylinder was already opened in the centre of the pit, and on the farther edge of the pit, amid the smashed and gravel-heaped shrubbery, one of the great fighting-machines, deserted by its occupant, stood stiff and tall against the evening sky. At first I scarcely noticed the pit and the cylinder, although it has been convenient to describe them first, on account of the extraordinary glittering mechanism I saw busy in the excavation, and on account of the strange creatures that were crawling slowly and painfully across the heaped mould near it.

The mechanism it certainly was that held my attention first. It was one of those complicated fabrics that have since been called handling-machines, and the study of which has already given such an enormous impetus to terrestrial invention. As it dawned upon me first, it presented a sort of metallic spider with five jointed, agile legs, and with an extraordinary number of jointed levers, bars, and reaching and clutching tentacles about its body. Most of its arms were retracted, but with three long tentacles it was fishing out a number of rods, plates, and bars which lined the covering and apparently strengthened the walls of the cylinder. These, as it extracted them, were lifted out and deposited upon a level surface of earth behind it.

Its motion was so swift, complex, and perfect that at first I did not see it as a machine, in spite of its metallic glitter. The fighting-machines were coordinated and animated to an extraordinary pitch, but nothing to compare with this. People who have never seen these structures, and have only the ill-imagined efforts of artists or the imperfect descriptions of such eye-witnesses as myself to go upon, scarcely realise that living quality.

I recall particularly the illustration of one of the first pamphlets to give a consecutive account of the war. The artist had evidently

made a hasty study of one of the fighting-machines, and there his knowledge ended. He presented them as tilted, stiff tripods, without either flexibility or subtlety, and with an altogether misleading monotony of effect. The pamphlet containing these renderings had a considerable vogue, and I mention them here simply to warn the reader against the impression they may have created. They were no more like the Martians I saw in action than a Dutch doll is like a human being. To my mind, the pamphlet would have been much better without them.

At first, I say, the handling-machine did not impress me as a machine, but as a crablike creature with a glittering integument, the controlling Martian whose delicate tentacles actuated its movements seeming to be simply the equivalent of the crab's cerebral portion. But then I perceived the resemblance of its grey-brown, shiny, leathery integument to that of the other sprawling bodies beyond, and the true nature of this dexterous workman dawned upon me. With that realisation my interest shifted to those other creatures, the real Martians. Already I had had a transient impression of these, and the first nausea no longer obscured my observation. Moreover, I was concealed and motionless, and under no urgency of action.

They were, I now saw, the most unearthly creatures it is possible to conceive. They were huge round bodies--or, rather, heads--about four feet in diameter, each body having in front of it a face. This face had no nostrils--indeed, the Martians do not seem to have had any sense of smell, but it had a pair of very large dark-coloured eyes, and just beneath this a kind of fleshy beak. In the back of this head or body--I scarcely know how to speak of it--was the single tight tympanic surface, since known to be anatomically an ear, though it must have been almost useless in our dense air. In a group round the mouth were sixteen slender, almost whiplike tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each. These bunches have since been named rather aptly, by that distinguished anatomist, Professor Howes, the *hands*. Even as I saw these Martians for the first time they seemed to be endeavouring to raise themselves on these hands, but of course, with the increased weight of terrestrial conditions, this was

impossible. There is reason to suppose that on Mars they may have progressed upon them with some facility.

The internal anatomy, I may remark here, as dissection has since shown, was almost equally simple. The greater part of the structure was the brain, sending enormous nerves to the eyes, ear, and tactile tentacles. Besides this were the bulky lungs, into which the mouth opened, and the heart and its vessels. The pulmonary distress caused by the denser atmosphere and greater gravitational attraction was only too evident in the convulsive movements of the outer skin.

And this was the sum of the Martian organs. Strange as it may seem to a human being, all the complex apparatus of digestion, which makes up the bulk of our bodies, did not exist in the Martians. They were heads--merely heads. Entrails they had none. They did not eat, much less digest. Instead, they took the fresh, living blood of other creatures, and *injected* it into their own veins. I have myself seen this being done, as I shall mention in its place. But, squeamish as I may seem, I cannot bring myself to describe what I could not endure even to continue watching. Let it suffice to say, blood obtained from a still living animal, in most cases from a human being, was run directly by means of a little pipette into the recipient canal. . . .

The bare idea of this is no doubt horribly repulsive to us, but at the same time I think that we should remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit.

The physiological advantages of the practice of injection are undeniable, if one thinks of the tremendous waste of human time and energy occasioned by eating and the digestive process. Our bodies are half made up of glands and tubes and organs, occupied in turning heterogeneous food into blood. The digestive processes and their reaction upon the nervous system sap our strength and colour our minds. Men go happy or miserable as they have healthy or unhealthy livers, or sound gastric glands. But the Martians were lifted above all these organic fluctuations of mood and emotion.

Their undeniable preference for men as their source of nourishment is partly explained by the nature of the remains of

the victims they had brought with them as provisions from Mars. These creatures, to judge from the shrivelled remains that have fallen into human hands, were bipeds with flimsy, silicious skeletons (almost like those of the silicious sponges) and feeble musculature, standing about six feet high and having round, erect heads, and large eyes in flinty sockets. Two or three of these seem to have been brought in each cylinder, and all were killed before earth was reached. It was just as well for them, for the mere attempt to stand upright upon our planet would have broken every bone in their bodies.

And while I am engaged in this description, I may add in this place certain further details which, although they were not all evident to us at the time, will enable the reader who is unacquainted with them to form a clearer picture of these offensive creatures.

640

In three other points their physiology differed strangely from ours. Their organisms did not sleep, any more than the heart of man sleeps. Since they had no extensive muscular mechanism to recuperate, that periodical extinction was unknown to them. They had little or no sense of fatigue, it would seem. On earth they could never have moved without effort, yet even to the last they kept in action. In twenty-four hours they did twenty-four hours of work, as even on earth is perhaps the case with the ants.

In the next place, wonderful as it seems in a sexual world, the Martians were absolutely without sex, and therefore without any of the tumultuous emotions that arise from that difference among men. A young Martian, there can now be no dispute, was really born upon earth during the war, and it was found attached to its parent, partially *budded* off, just as young lilybulbs bud off, or like the young animals in the fresh-water polyp.

In man, in all the higher terrestrial animals, such a method of increase has disappeared; but even on this earth it was certainly the primitive method. Among the lower animals, up even to those first cousins of the vertebrated animals, the Tunicates, the two processes occur side by side, but finally the sexual method superseded its competitor altogether. On Mars, however, just the reverse has apparently been the case.

It is worthy of remark that a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute, writing long before the Martian invasion, did forecast for man a final structure not unlike the actual Martian condition. His prophecy, I remember, appeared in November or December, 1893, in a long-defunct publication, the *Pall Mall Budget*, and I recall a caricature of it in a pre-Martian periodical called *Punch*. He pointed out--writing in a foolish, facetious tone--that the perfection of mechanical appliances must ultimately supersede limbs; the perfection of chemical devices, digestion; that such organs as hair, external nose, teeth, ears, and chin were no longer essential parts of the human being, and that the tendency of natural selection would lie in the direction of their steady diminution through the coming ages. The brain alone remained a cardinal necessity. Only one other part of the body had a strong case for survival, and that was the hand, "teacher and agent of the brain." While the rest of the body dwindled, the hands would grow larger.

There is many a true word written in jest, and here in the Martians we have beyond dispute the actual accomplishment of such a suppression of the animal side of the organism by the intelligence. To me it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brain and hands (the latter giving rise to the two bunches of delicate tentacles at last) at the expense of the rest of the body. Without the body the brain would, of course, become a mere selfish intelligence, without any of the emotional substratum of the human being.

The last salient point in which the systems of these creatures differed from ours was in what one might have thought a very trivial particular. Micro-organisms, which cause so much disease and pain on earth, have either never appeared upon Mars or Martian sanitary science eliminated them ages ago. A hundred diseases, all the fevers and contagions of human life, consumption, cancers, tumours and such morbidities, never enter the scheme of their life. And speaking of the differences between the life on Mars and terrestrial life, I may allude here to the curious suggestions of the red weed.

Apparently the vegetable kingdom in Mars, instead of having green for a dominant colour, is of a vivid blood-red tint. At any rate, the seeds which the Martians (intentionally or accidentally) brought with them gave rise in all cases to red-coloured growths. Only that known popularly as the red weed, however, gained any footing in competition with terrestrial forms. The red creeper was quite a transitory growth, and few people have seen it growing. For a time, however, the red weed grew with astonishing vigour and luxuriance. It spread up the sides of the pit by the third or fourth day of our imprisonment, and its cactus-like branches formed a carmine fringe to the edges of our triangular window. And afterwards I found it broadcast throughout the country, and especially wherever there was a stream of water.

The Martians had what appears to have been an auditory organ, a single round drum at the back of the head-body, and eyes with a visual range not very different from ours except that, according to Philips, blue and violet were as black to them. It is commonly supposed that they communicated by sounds and tentacular gesticulations; this is asserted, for instance, in the able but hastily compiled pamphlet (written evidently by someone not an eye-witness of Martian actions) to which I have already alluded, and which, so far, has been the chief source of information concerning them. Now no surviving human being saw so much of the Martians in action as I did. I take no credit to myself for an accident, but the fact is so. And I assert that I watched them closely time after time, and that I have seen four, five, and (once) six of them sluggishly performing the most elaborately complicated operations together without either sound or gesture. Their peculiar hooting invariably preceded feeding; it had no modulation, and was, I believe, in no sense a signal, but merely the expiration of air preparatory to the suctional operation. I have a certain claim to at least an elementary knowledge of psychology, and in this matter I am convinced--as firmly as I am convinced of anything--that the Martians interchanged thoughts without any physical intermediation. And I have been convinced of this in spite of strong preconceptions. Before the Martian invasion, as an occasional reader here or there may remember, I

had written with some little vehemence against the telepathic theory.

The Martians wore no clothing. Their conceptions of ornament and decorum were necessarily different from ours; and not only were they evidently much less sensible of changes of temperature than we are, but changes of pressure do not seem to have affected their health at all seriously. Yet though they wore no clothing, it was in the other artificial additions to their bodily resources that their great superiority over man lay. We men, with our bicycles and road-skates, our Lilienthal soaring-machines, our guns and sticks and so forth, are just in the beginning of the evolution that the Martians have worked out. They have become practically mere brains, wearing different bodies according to their needs just as men wear suits of clothes and take a bicycle in a hurry or an umbrella in the wet. And of their appliances, perhaps nothing is more wonderful to a man than the curious fact that what is the dominant feature of almost all human devices in mechanism is absent--the *wheel* is absent; among all the things they brought to earth there is no trace or suggestion of their use of wheels. One would have at least expected it in locomotion. And in this connection it is curious to remark that even on this earth Nature has never hit upon the wheel, or has preferred other expedients to its development. And not only did the Martians either not know of (which is incredible), or abstain from, the wheel, but in their apparatus singularly little use is made of the fixed pivot or relatively fixed pivot, with circular motions thereabout confined to one plane. Almost all the joints of the machinery present a complicated system of sliding parts moving over small but beautifully curved friction bearings. And while upon this matter of detail, it is remarkable that the long leverages of their machines are in most cases actuated by a sort of sham musculature of the disks in an elastic sheath; these disks become polarised and drawn closely and powerfully together when traversed by a current of electricity. In this way the curious parallelism to animal motions, which was so striking and disturbing to the human beholder, was attained. Such quasi-muscles abounded in the crablike handling-machine which, on my first peeping out of the slit, I watched

unpacking the cylinder. It seemed infinitely more alive than the actual Martians lying beyond it in the sunset light, panting, stirring ineffectual tentacles, and moving feebly after their vast journey across space.

While I was still watching their sluggish motions in the sunlight, and noting each strange detail of their form, the curate reminded me of his presence by pulling violently at my arm. I turned to a scowling face, and silent, eloquent lips. He wanted the slit, which permitted only one of us to peep through; and so I had to forego watching them for a time while he enjoyed that privilege.

650

When I looked again, the busy handling-machine had already put together several of the pieces of apparatus it had taken out of the cylinder into a shape having an unmistakable likeness to its own; and down on the left a busy little digging mechanism had come into view, emitting jets of green vapour and working its way round the pit, excavating and embanking in a methodical and discriminating manner. This it was which had caused the regular beating noise, and the rhythmic shocks that had kept our ruinous refuge quivering. It piped and whistled as it worked. So far as I could see, the thing was without a directing Martian at all.

Chapter Three

The Days of Imprisonment

The arrival of a second fighting-machine drove us from our peephole into the scullery, for we feared that from his elevation the Martian might see down upon us behind our barrier. At a later date we began to feel less in danger of their eyes, for to an eye in the dazzle of the sunlight outside our refuge must have been blank blackness, but at first the slightest suggestion of approach drove us into the scullery in heart-throbbing retreat. Yet terrible as was the danger we incurred, the attraction of peeping was for both of us irresistible. And I recall now with a sort of wonder that, in spite of the infinite danger in which we were between starvation and a still more terrible death, we could yet struggle bitterly for

that horrible privilege of sight. We would race across the kitchen in a grotesque way between eagerness and the dread of making a noise, and strike each other, and thrust and kick, within a few inches of exposure.

The fact is that we had absolutely incompatible dispositions and habits of thought and action, and our danger and isolation only accentuated the incompatibility. At Halliford I had already come to hate the curate's trick of helpless exclamation, his stupid rigidity of mind. His endless muttering monologue vitiated every effort I made to think out a line of action, and drove me at times, thus pent up and intensified, almost to the verge of craziness. He was as lacking in restraint as a silly woman. He would weep for hours together, and I verily believe that to the very end this spoiled child of life thought his weak tears in some way efficacious. And I would sit in the darkness unable to keep my mind off him by reason of his importunities. He ate more than I did, and it was in vain I pointed out that our only chance of life was to stop in the house until the Martians had done with their pit, that in that long patience a time might presently come when we should need food. He ate and drank impulsively in heavy meals at long intervals. He slept little.

As the days wore on, his utter carelessness of any consideration so intensified our distress and danger that I had, much as I loathed doing it, to resort to threats, and at last to blows. That brought him to reason for a time. But he was one of those weak creatures, void of pride, timorous, anaemic, hateful souls, full of shifty cunning, who face neither God nor man, who face not even themselves.

It is disagreeable for me to recall and write these things, but I set them down that my story may lack nothing. Those who have escaped the dark and terrible aspects of life will find my brutality, my flash of rage in our final tragedy, easy enough to blame; for they know what is wrong as well as any, but not what is possible to tortured men. But those who have been under the shadow, who have gone down at last to elemental things, will have a wider charity.

And while within we fought out our dark, dim contest of whispers, snatched food and drink, and gripping hands and blows, without, in the pitiless sunlight of that terrible June, was the strange wonder, the unfamiliar routine of the Martians in the pit. Let me return to those first new experiences of mine. After a long time I ventured back to the peephole, to find that the new-comers had been reinforced by the occupants of no fewer than three of the fighting-machines. These last had brought with them certain fresh appliances that stood in an orderly manner about the cylinder. The second handling-machine was now completed, and was busied in serving one of the novel contrivances the big machine had brought. This was a body resembling a milk can in its general form, above which oscillated a pear-shaped receptacle, and from which a stream of white powder flowed into a circular basin below.

The oscillatory motion was imparted to this by one tentacle of the handling-machine. With two spatulate hands the handling-machine was digging out and flinging masses of clay into the pear-shaped receptacle above, while with another arm it periodically opened a door and removed rusty and blackened clinkers from the middle part of the machine. Another steely tentacle directed the powder from the basin along a ribbed channel towards some receiver that was hidden from me by the mound of bluish dust. From this unseen receiver a little thread of green smoke rose vertically into the quiet air. As I looked, the handling-machine, with a faint and musical clinking, extended, telescopic fashion, a tentacle that had been a moment before a mere blunt projection, until its end was hidden behind the mound of clay. In another second it had lifted a bar of white aluminium into sight, untarnished as yet, and shining dazzlingly, and deposited it in a growing stack of bars that stood at the side of the pit. Between sunset and starlight this dexterous machine must have made more than a hundred such bars out of the crude clay, and the mound of bluish dust rose steadily until it topped the side of the pit.

The contrast between the swift and complex movements of these contrivances and the inert panting clumsiness of their

masters was acute, and for days I had to tell myself repeatedly that these latter were indeed the living of the two things.

The curate had possession of the slit when the first men were brought to the pit. I was sitting below, huddled up, listening with all my ears. He made a sudden movement backward, and I, fearful that we were observed, crouched in a spasm of terror. He came sliding down the rubbish and crept beside me in the darkness, inarticulate, gesticulating, and for a moment I shared his panic. His gesture suggested a resignation of the slit, and after a little while my curiosity gave me courage, and I rose up, stepped across him, and clambered up to it. At first I could see no reason for his frantic behaviour. The twilight had now come, the stars were little and faint, but the pit was illuminated by the flickering green fire that came from the aluminium-making. The whole picture was a flickering scheme of green gleams and shifting rusty black shadows, strangely trying to the eyes. Over and through it all went the bats, heeding it not at all. The sprawling Martians were no longer to be seen, the mound of blue-green powder had risen to cover them from sight, and a fighting-machine, with its legs contracted, crumpled, and abbreviated, stood across the corner of the pit. And then, amid the clangour of the machinery, came a drifting suspicion of human voices, that I entertained at first only to dismiss.

I crouched, watching this fighting-machine closely, satisfying myself now for the first time that the hood did indeed contain a Martian. As the green flames lifted I could see the oily gleam of his integument and the brightness of his eyes. And suddenly I heard a yell, and saw a long tentacle reaching over the shoulder of the machine to the little cage that hunched upon its back. Then something--something struggling violently--was lifted high against the sky, a black, vague enigma against the starlight; and as this black object came down again, I saw by the green brightness that it was a man. For an instant he was clearly visible. He was a stout, ruddy, middle-aged man, well dressed; three days before, he must have been walking the world, a man of considerable consequence. I could see his staring eyes and gleams of light on his studs and watch chain. He vanished behind the mound, and for

a moment there was silence. And then began a shrieking and a sustained and cheerful hooting from the Martians.

I slid down the rubbish, struggled to my feet, clapped my hands over my ears, and bolted into the scullery. The curate, who had been crouching silently with his arms over his head, looked up as I passed, cried out quite loudly at my desertion of him, and came running after me.

That night, as we lurked in the scullery, balanced between our horror and the terrible fascination this peeping had, although I felt an urgent need of action I tried in vain to conceive some plan of escape; but afterwards, during the second day, I was able to consider our position with great clearness. The curate, I found, was quite incapable of discussion; this new and culminating atrocity had robbed him of all vestiges of reason or forethought. Practically he had already sunk to the level of an animal. But as the saying goes, I gripped myself with both hands. It grew upon my mind, once I could face the facts, that terrible as our position was, there was as yet no justification for absolute despair. Our chief chance lay in the possibility of the Martians making the pit nothing more than a temporary encampment. Or even if they kept it permanently, they might not consider it necessary to guard it, and a chance of escape might be afforded us. I also weighed very carefully the possibility of our digging a way out in a direction away from the pit, but the chances of our emerging within sight of some sentinel fighting-machine seemed at first too great. And I should have had to do all the digging myself. The curate would certainly have failed me.

It was on the third day, if my memory serves me right, that I saw the lad killed. It was the only occasion on which I actually saw the Martians feed. After that experience I avoided the hole in the wall for the better part of a day. I went into the scullery, removed the door, and spent some hours digging with my hatchet as silently as possible; but when I had made a hole about a couple of feet deep the loose earth collapsed noisily, and I did not dare continue. I lost heart, and lay down on the scullery floor for a long time, having no spirit even to move. And after that I abandoned altogether the idea of escaping by excavation.

It says much for the impression the Martians had made upon me that at first I entertained little or no hope of our escape being brought about by their overthrow through any human effort. But on the fourth or fifth night I heard a sound like heavy guns.

It was very late in the night, and the moon was shining brightly. The Martians had taken away the excavating-machine, and, save for a fighting-machine that stood in the remoter bank of the pit and a handling-machine that was buried out of my sight in a corner of the pit immediately beneath my peephole, the place was deserted by them. Except for the pale glow from the handling-machine and the bars and patches of white moonlight the pit was in darkness, and, except for the clinking of the handling-machine, quite still. That night was a beautiful serenity; save for one planet, the moon seemed to have the sky to herself. I heard a dog howling, and that familiar sound it was that made me listen. Then I heard quite distinctly a booming exactly like the sound of great guns. Six distinct reports I counted, and after a long interval six again. And that was all.

665

Chapter Four

The Death of the Curate

It was on the sixth day of our imprisonment that I peeped for the last time, and presently found myself alone. Instead of keeping close to me and trying to oust me from the slit, the curate had gone back into the scullery. I was struck by a sudden thought. I went back quickly and quietly into the scullery. In the darkness I heard the curate drinking. I snatched in the darkness, and my fingers caught a bottle of burgundy.

For a few minutes there was a tussle. The bottle struck the floor and broke, and I desisted and rose. We stood panting and threatening each other. In the end I planted myself between him and the food, and told him of my determination to begin a discipline. I divided the food in the pantry, into rations to last us ten days. I would not let him eat any more that day. In the afternoon he made a feeble effort to get at the food. I had been

dozing, but in an instant I was awake. All day and all night we sat face to face, I weary but resolute, and he weeping and complaining of his immediate hunger. It was, I know, a night and a day, but to me it seemed--it seems now--an interminable length of time.

And so our widened incompatibility ended at last in open conflict. For two vast days we struggled in undertones and wrestling contests. There were times when I beat and kicked him madly, times when I cajoled and persuaded him, and once I tried to bribe him with the last bottle of burgundy, for there was a rain-water pump from which I could get water. But neither force nor kindness availed; he was indeed beyond reason. He would neither desist from his attacks on the food nor from his noisy babbling to himself. The rudimentary precautions to keep our imprisonment endurable he would not observe. Slowly I began to realise the complete overthrow of his intelligence, to perceive that my sole companion in this close and sickly darkness was a man insane.

From certain vague memories I am inclined to think my own mind wandered at times. I had strange and hideous dreams whenever I slept. It sounds paradoxical, but I am inclined to think that the weakness and insanity of the curate warned me, braced me, and kept me a sane man.

On the eighth day he began to talk aloud instead of whispering, and nothing I could do would moderate his speech.

"It is just, O God!" he would say, over and over again. "It is just. On me and mine be the punishment laid. We have sinned, we have fallen short. There was poverty, sorrow; the poor were trodden in the dust, and I held my peace. I preached acceptable folly--my God, what folly!--when I should have stood up, though I died for it, and called upon them to repent—repent! . . . Oppressors of the poor and needy . . . ! The wine press of God!"

Then he would suddenly revert to the matter of the food I withheld from him, praying, begging, weeping, at last threatening. He began to raise his voice--I prayed him not to. He perceived a hold on me--he threatened he would shout and bring the Martians upon us. For a time that scared me; but any concession would have shortened our chance of escape beyond estimating. I defied

him, although I felt no assurance that he might not do this thing. But that day, at any rate, he did not. He talked with his voice rising slowly, through the greater part of the eighth and ninth days--threats, entreaties, mingled with a torrent of half-sane and always frothy repentance for his vacant sham of God's service, such as made me pity him. Then he slept awhile, and began again with renewed strength, so loudly that I must needs make him desist.

"Be still!" I implored.

He rose to his knees, for he had been sitting in the darkness near the copper.

"I have been still too long," he said, in a tone that must have reached the pit, "and now I must bear my witness. Woe unto this unfaithful city! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! To the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet----"

675

"Shut up!" I said, rising to my feet, and in a terror lest the Martians should hear us. "For God's sake----"

"Nay," shouted the curate, at the top of his voice, standing likewise and extending his arms. "Speak! The word of the Lord is upon me!"

In three strides he was at the door leading into the kitchen.

"I must bear my witness! I go! It has already been too long delayed."

I put out my hand and felt the meat chopper hanging to the wall. In a flash I was after him. I was fierce with fear. Before he was halfway across the kitchen I had overtaken him. With one last touch of humanity I turned the blade back and struck him with the butt. He went headlong forward and lay stretched on the ground. I stumbled over him and stood panting. He lay still.

680

Suddenly I heard a noise without, the run and smash of slipping plaster, and the triangular aperture in the wall was darkened. I looked up and saw the lower surface of a handling-machine coming slowly across the hole. One of its gripping limbs curled amid the debris; another limb appeared, feeling its way over the fallen beams. I stood petrified, staring. Then I saw through a sort of glass plate near the edge of the body the face, as we may call it, and the large dark eyes of a Martian, peering, and

then a long metallic snake of tentacle came feeling slowly through the hole.

I turned by an effort, stumbled over the curate, and stopped at the scullery door. The tentacle was now some way, two yards or more, in the room, and twisting and turning, with queer sudden movements, this way and that. For a while I stood fascinated by that slow, fitful advance. Then, with a faint, hoarse cry, I forced myself across the scullery. I trembled violently; I could scarcely stand upright. I opened the door of the coal cellar, and stood there in the darkness staring at the faintly lit doorway into the kitchen, and listening. Had the Martian seen me? What was it doing now?

Something was moving to and fro there, very quietly; every now and then it tapped against the wall, or started on its movements with a faint metallic ringing, like the movements of keys on a split-ring. Then a heavy body--I knew too well what--was dragged across the floor of the kitchen towards the opening. Irresistibly attracted, I crept to the door and peeped into the kitchen. In the triangle of bright outer sunlight I saw the Martian, in its Briareus of a handling-machine, scrutinizing the curate's head. I thought at once that it would infer my presence from the mark of the blow I had given him.

I crept back to the coal cellar, shut the door, and began to cover myself up as much as I could, and as noiselessly as possible in the darkness, among the firewood and coal therein. Every now and then I paused, rigid, to hear if the Martian had thrust its tentacles through the opening again.

Then the faint metallic jingle returned. I traced it slowly feeling over the kitchen. Presently I heard it nearer--in the scullery, as I judged. I thought that its length might be insufficient to reach me. I prayed copiously. It passed, scraping faintly across the cellar door. An age of almost intolerable suspense intervened; then I heard it fumbling at the latch! It had found the door! The Martians understood doors!

It worried at the catch for a minute, perhaps, and then the door opened.

In the darkness I could just see the thing--like an elephant's trunk more than anything else--waving towards me and touching

and examining the wall, coals, wood and ceiling. It was like a black worm swaying its blind head to and fro.

Once, even, it touched the heel of my boot. I was on the verge of screaming; I bit my hand. For a time the tentacle was silent. I could have fancied it had been withdrawn. Presently, with an abrupt click, it gripped something--I thought it had me!--and seemed to go out of the cellar again. For a minute I was not sure. Apparently it had taken a lump of coal to examine.

I seized the opportunity of slightly shifting my position, which had become cramped, and then listened. I whispered passionate prayers for safety.

Then I heard the slow, deliberate sound creeping towards me again. Slowly, slowly it drew near, scratching against the walls and tapping the furniture.

690

While I was still doubtful, it rapped smartly against the cellar door and closed it. I heard it go into the pantry, and the biscuit-tins rattled and a bottle smashed, and then came a heavy bump against the cellar door. Then silence that passed into an infinity of suspense.

Had it gone?

At last I decided that it had.

It came into the scullery no more; but I lay all the tenth day in the close darkness, buried among coals and firewood, not daring even to crawl out for the drink for which I craved. It was the eleventh day before I ventured so far from my security.

Chapter Five

The Stillness

My first act before I went into the pantry was to fasten the door between the kitchen and the scullery. But the pantry was empty; every scrap of food had gone. Apparently, the Martian had taken it all on the previous day. At that discovery I despaired for the first time. I took no food, or no drink either, on the eleventh or the twelfth day.

695

At first my mouth and throat were parched, and my strength ebbed sensibly. I sat about in the darkness of the scullery, in a state of despondent wretchedness. My mind ran on eating. I thought I had become deaf, for the noises of movement I had been accustomed to hear from the pit had ceased absolutely. I did not feel strong enough to crawl noiselessly to the peephole, or I would have gone there.

On the twelfth day my throat was so painful that, taking the chance of alarming the Martians, I attacked the creaking rain-water pump that stood by the sink, and got a couple of glassfuls of blackened and tainted rain water. I was greatly refreshed by this, and emboldened by the fact that no enquiring tentacle followed the noise of my pumping.

During these days, in a rambling, inconclusive way, I thought much of the curate and of the manner of his death.

On the thirteenth day I drank some more water, and dozed and thought disjointedly of eating and of vague impossible plans of escape. Whenever I dozed I dreamt of horrible phantasms, of the death of the curate, or of sumptuous dinners; but, asleep or awake, I felt a keen pain that urged me to drink again and again. The light that came into the scullery was no longer grey, but red. To my disordered imagination it seemed the colour of blood.

On the fourteenth day I went into the kitchen, and I was surprised to find that the fronds of the red weed had grown right across the hole in the wall, turning the half-light of the place into a crimson-coloured obscurity.

It was early on the fifteenth day that I heard a curious, familiar sequence of sounds in the kitchen, and, listening, identified it as the snuffing and scratching of a dog. Going into the kitchen, I saw a dog's nose peering in through a break among the ruddy fronds. This greatly surprised me. At the scent of me he barked shortly.

I thought if I could induce him to come into the place quietly I should be able, perhaps, to kill and eat him; and in any case, it would be advisable to kill him, lest his actions attracted the attention of the Martians.

I crept forward, saying "Good dog!" very softly; but he suddenly withdrew his head and disappeared.

I listened--I was not deaf--but certainly the pit was still. I heard a sound like the flutter of a bird's wings, and a hoarse croaking, but that was all.

For a long while I lay close to the peephole, but not daring to move aside the red plants that obscured it. Once or twice I heard a faint pitter-patter like the feet of the dog going hither and thither on the sand far below me, and there were more birdlike sounds, but that was all. At length, encouraged by the silence, I looked out.

Except in the corner, where a multitude of crows hopped and fought over the skeletons of the dead the Martians had consumed, there was not a living thing in the pit.

I stared about me, scarcely believing my eyes. All the machinery had gone. Save for the big mound of greyish-blue powder in one corner, certain bars of aluminium in another, the black birds, and the skeletons of the killed, the place was merely an empty circular pit in the sand.

Slowly I thrust myself out through the red weed, and stood upon the mound of rubble. I could see in any direction save behind me, to the north, and neither Martians nor sign of Martians were to be seen. The pit dropped sheerly from my feet, but a little way along the rubbish afforded a practicable slope to the summit of the ruins. My chance of escape had come. I began to tremble.

I hesitated for some time, and then, in a gust of desperate resolution, and with a heart that throbbed violently, I scrambled to the top of the mound in which I had been buried so long.

I looked about again. To the northward, too, no Martian was visible.

When I had last seen this part of Sheen in the daylight it had been a straggling street of comfortable white and red houses, interspersed with abundant shady trees. Now I stood on a mound of smashed brickwork, clay, and gravel, over which spread a multitude of red cactus-shaped plants, knee-high, without a solitary terrestrial growth to dispute their footing. The trees near me were dead and brown, but further a network of red thread scaled the still living stems.

705

710

The neighbouring houses had all been wrecked, but none had been burned; their walls stood, sometimes to the second story, with smashed windows and shattered doors. The red weed grew tumultuously in their roofless rooms. Below me was the great pit, with the crows struggling for its refuse. A number of other birds hopped about among the ruins. Far away I saw a gaunt cat slink crouching along a wall, but traces of men there were none.

The day seemed, by contrast with my recent confinement, dazzlingly bright, the sky a glowing blue. A gentle breeze kept the red weed that covered every scrap of unoccupied ground gently swaying. And oh! the sweetness of the air!

Chapter Six

The Work of Fifteen Days

For some time I stood tottering on the mound regardless of my safety. Within that noisome den from which I had emerged I had thought with a narrow intensity only of our immediate security. I had not realised what had been happening to the world, had not anticipated this startling vision of unfamiliar things. I had expected to see Sheen in ruins--I found about me the landscape, weird and lurid, of another planet.

For that moment I touched an emotion beyond the common range of men, yet one that the poor brutes we dominate know only too well. I felt as a rabbit might feel returning to his burrow and suddenly confronted by the work of a dozen busy navvies digging the foundations of a house. I felt the first inkling of a thing that presently grew quite clear in my mind, that oppressed me for many days, a sense of dethronement, a persuasion that I was no longer a master, but an animal among the animals, under the Martian heel. With us it would be as with them, to lurk and watch, to run and hide; the fear and empire of man had passed away.

But so soon as this strangeness had been realised it passed, and my dominant motive became the hunger of my long and dismal fast. In the direction away from the pit I saw, beyond a red-

covered wall, a patch of garden ground unburied. This gave me a hint, and I went knee-deep, and sometimes neck-deep, in the red weed. The density of the weed gave me a reassuring sense of hiding. The wall was some six feet high, and when I attempted to clamber it I found I could not lift my feet to the crest. So I went along by the side of it, and came to a corner and a rockwork that enabled me to get to the top, and tumble into the garden I coveted. Here I found some young onions, a couple of gladiolus bulbs, and a quantity of immature carrots, all of which I secured, and, scrambling over a ruined wall, went on my way through scarlet and crimson trees towards Kew--it was like walking through an avenue of gigantic blood drops--possessed with two ideas: to get more food, and to limp, as soon and as far as my strength permitted, out of this accursed unearthly region of the pit.

Some way farther, in a grassy place, was a group of mushrooms which also I devoured, and then I came upon a brown sheet of flowing shallow water, where meadows used to be. These fragments of nourishment served only to whet my hunger. At first I was surprised at this flood in a hot, dry summer, but afterwards I discovered that it was caused by the tropical exuberance of the red weed. Directly this extraordinary growth encountered water it straightway became gigantic and of unparalleled fecundity. Its seeds were simply poured down into the water of the Wey and Thames, and its swiftly growing and Titanic water fronds speedily choked both those rivers.

At Putney, as I afterwards saw, the bridge was almost lost in a tangle of this weed, and at Richmond, too, the Thames water poured in a broad and shallow stream across the meadows of Hampton and Twickenham. As the water spread the weed followed them, until the ruined villas of the Thames valley were for a time lost in this red swamp, whose margin I explored, and much of the desolation the Martians had caused was concealed.

In the end the red weed succumbed almost as quickly as it had spread. A cankering disease, due, it is believed, to the action of certain bacteria, presently seized upon it. Now by the action of natural selection, all terrestrial plants have acquired a resisting power against bacterial diseases--they never succumb without a

severe struggle, but the red weed rotted like a thing already dead. The fronds became bleached, and then shrivelled and brittle. They broke off at the least touch, and the waters that had stimulated their early growth carried their last vestiges out to sea.

My first act on coming to this water was, of course, to slake my thirst. I drank a great deal of it and, moved by an impulse, gnawed some fronds of red weed; but they were watery, and had a sickly, metallic taste. I found the water was sufficiently shallow for me to wade securely, although the red weed impeded my feet a little; but the flood evidently got deeper towards the river, and I turned back to Mortlake. I managed to make out the road by means of occasional ruins of its villas and fences and lamps, and so presently I got out of this spate and made my way to the hill going up towards Roehampton and came out on Putney Common.

Here the scenery changed from the strange and unfamiliar to the wreckage of the familiar: patches of ground exhibited the devastation of a cyclone, and in a few score yards I would come upon perfectly undisturbed spaces, houses with their blinds trimly drawn and doors closed, as if they had been left for a day by the owners, or as if their inhabitants slept within. The red weed was less abundant; the tall trees along the lane were free from the red creeper. I hunted for food among the trees, finding nothing, and I also raided a couple of silent houses, but they had already been broken into and ransacked. I rested for the remainder of the daylight in a shrubbery, being, in my enfeebled condition, too fatigued to push on.

All this time I saw no human beings, and no signs of the Martians. I encountered a couple of hungry-looking dogs, but both hurried circuitously away from the advances I made them. Near Roehampton I had seen two human skeletons--not bodies, but skeletons, picked clean--and in the wood by me I found the crushed and scattered bones of several cats and rabbits and the skull of a sheep. But though I gnawed parts of these in my mouth, there was nothing to be got from them.

After sunset I struggled on along the road towards Putney, where I think the Heat-Ray must have been used for some reason. And in the garden beyond Roehampton I got a quantity of

immature potatoes, sufficient to stay my hunger. From this garden one looked down upon Putney and the river. The aspect of the place in the dusk was singularly desolate: blackened trees, blackened, desolate ruins, and down the hill the sheets of the flooded river, red-tinged with the weed. And over all--silence. It filled me with indescribable terror to think how swiftly that desolating change had come.

For a time I believed that mankind had been swept out of existence, and that I stood there alone, the last man left alive. Hard by the top of Putney Hill I came upon another skeleton, with the arms dislocated and removed several yards from the rest of the body. As I proceeded I became more and more convinced that the extermination of mankind was, save for such stragglers as myself, already accomplished in this part of the world. The Martians, I thought, had gone on and left the country desolated, seeking food elsewhere. Perhaps even now they were destroying Berlin or Paris, or it might be they had gone northward.

Chapter Seven

The Man on Putney Hill

I spent that night in the inn that stands at the top of Putney Hill, sleeping in a made bed for the first time since my flight to Leatherhead. I will not tell the needless trouble I had breaking into that house--afterwards I found the front door was on the latch--nor how I ransacked every room for food, until just on the verge of despair, in what seemed to me to be a servant's bedroom, I found a rat-gnawed crust and two tins of pineapple. The place had been already searched and emptied. In the bar I afterwards found some biscuits and sandwiches that had been overlooked. The latter I could not eat, they were too rotten, but the former not only stayed my hunger, but filled my pockets. I lit no lamps, fearing some Martian might come beating that part of London for food in the night. Before I went to bed I had an interval of restlessness, and prowled from window to window, peering out for some sign of these monsters. I slept little. As I lay in bed I

found myself thinking consecutively--a thing I do not remember to have done since my last argument with the curate. During all the intervening time my mental condition had been a hurrying succession of vague emotional states or a sort of stupid receptivity. But in the night my brain, reinforced, I suppose, by the food I had eaten, grew clear again, and I thought.

Three things struggled for possession of my mind: the killing of the curate, the whereabouts of the Martians, and the possible fate of my wife. The former gave me no sensation of horror or remorse to recall; I saw it simply as a thing done, a memory infinitely disagreeable but quite without the quality of remorse. I saw myself then as I see myself now, driven step by step towards that hasty blow, the creature of a sequence of accidents leading inevitably to that. I felt no condemnation; yet the memory, static, unprogressive, haunted me. In the silence of the night, with that sense of the nearness of God that sometimes comes into the stillness and the darkness, I stood my trial, my only trial, for that moment of wrath and fear. I retraced every step of our conversation from the moment when I had found him crouching beside me, heedless of my thirst, and pointing to the fire and smoke that streamed up from the ruins of Weybridge. We had been incapable of co-operation--grim chance had taken no heed of that. Had I foreseen, I should have left him at Halliford. But I did not foresee; and crime is to foresee and do. And I set this down as I have set all this story down, as it was. There were no witnesses--all these things I might have concealed. But I set it down, and the reader must form his judgment as he will.

And when, by an effort, I had set aside that picture of a prostrate body, I faced the problem of the Martians and the fate of my wife. For the former I had no data; I could imagine a hundred things, and so, unhappily, I could for the latter. And suddenly that night became terrible. I found myself sitting up in bed, staring at the dark. I found myself praying that the Heat-Ray might have suddenly and painlessly struck her out of being. Since the night of my return from Leatherhead I had not prayed. I had uttered prayers, fetish prayers, had prayed as heathens mutter charms when I was in extremity; but now I prayed indeed, pleading

steadfastly and sanely, face to face with the darkness of God. Strange night! Strangest in this, that so soon as dawn had come, I, who had talked with God, crept out of the house like a rat leaving its hiding place--a creature scarcely larger, an inferior animal, a thing that for any passing whim of our masters might be hunted and killed. Perhaps they also prayed confidently to God. Surely, if we have learned nothing else, this war has taught us pity--pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion.

The morning was bright and fine, and the eastern sky glowed pink, and was fretted with little golden clouds. In the road that runs from the top of Putney Hill to Wimbledon was a number of poor vestiges of the panic torrent that must have poured Londonward on the Sunday night after the fighting began. There was a little two-wheeled cart inscribed with the name of Thomas Lobb, Greengrocer, New Malden, with a smashed wheel and an abandoned tin trunk; there was a straw hat trampled into the now hardened mud, and at the top of West Hill a lot of blood-stained glass about the overturned water trough. My movements were languid, my plans of the vaguest. I had an idea of going to Leatherhead, though I knew that there I had the poorest chance of finding my wife. Certainly, unless death had overtaken them suddenly, my cousins and she would have fled thence; but it seemed to me I might find or learn there whither the Surrey people had fled. I knew I wanted to find my wife, that my heart ached for her and the world of men, but I had no clear idea how the finding might be done. I was also sharply aware now of my intense loneliness. From the corner I went, under cover of a thicket of trees and bushes, to the edge of Wimbledon Common, stretching wide and far.

That dark expanse was lit in patches by yellow gorse and broom; there was no red weed to be seen, and as I prowled, hesitating, on the verge of the open, the sun rose, flooding it all with light and vitality. I came upon a busy swarm of little frogs in a swampy place among the trees. I stopped to look at them, drawing a lesson from their stout resolve to live. And presently, turning suddenly, with an odd feeling of being watched, I beheld something crouching amid a clump of bushes. I stood regarding

this. I made a step towards it, and it rose up and became a man armed with a cutlass. I approached him slowly. He stood silent and motionless, regarding me.

As I drew nearer I perceived he was dressed in clothes as dusty and filthy as my own; he looked, indeed, as though he had been dragged through a culvert. Nearer, I distinguished the green slime of ditches mixing with the pale drab of dried clay and shiny, coaly patches. His black hair fell over his eyes, and his face was dark and dirty and sunken, so that at first I did not recognise him. There was a red cut across the lower part of his face.

730

"Stop!" he cried, when I was within ten yards of him, and I stopped. His voice was hoarse. "Where do you come from?" he said.

I thought, surveying him.

"I come from Mortlake," I said. "I was buried near the pit the Martians made about their cylinder. I have worked my way out and escaped."

"There is no food about here," he said. "This is my country. All this hill down to the river, and back to Clapham, and up to the edge of the common. There is only food for one. Which way are you going?"

I answered slowly.

735

"I don't know," I said. "I have been buried in the ruins of a house thirteen or fourteen days. I don't know what has happened."

He looked at me doubtfully, then started, and looked with a changed expression.

"I've no wish to stop about here," said I. "I think I shall go to Leatherhead, for my wife was there."

He shot out a pointing finger.

"It is you," said he; "the man from Woking. And you weren't killed at Weybridge?"

740

I recognised him at the same moment.

"You are the artilleryman who came into my garden."

"Good luck!" he said. "We are lucky ones! Fancy *you*!" He put out a hand, and I took it. "I crawled up a drain," he said. "But they didn't kill everyone. And after they went away I got off towards Walton across the fields. But---- It's not sixteen days altogether--

and your hair is grey." He looked over his shoulder suddenly. "Only a rook," he said. "One gets to know that birds have shadows these days. This is a bit open. Let us crawl under those bushes and talk."

"Have you seen any Martians?" I said. "Since I crawled out----

"They've gone away across London," he said. "I guess they've got a bigger camp there. Of a night, all over there, Hampstead way, the sky is alive with their lights. It's like a great city, and in the glare you can just see them moving. By daylight you can't. But nearer--I haven't seen them--" (he counted on his fingers) "five days. Then I saw a couple across Hammersmith way carrying something big. And the night before last"--he stopped and spoke impressively--"it was just a matter of lights, but it was something up in the air. I believe they've built a flying-machine, and are learning to fly."

745

I stopped, on hands and knees, for we had come to the bushes.

"Fly!"

"Yes," he said, "fly."

I went on into a little bower, and sat down.

"It is all over with humanity," I said. "If they can do that they will simply go round the world."

750

He nodded.

"They will. But---- It will relieve things over here a bit. And besides----" He looked at me. "Aren't you satisfied it is up with humanity? I am. We're down; we're beat."

I stared. Strange as it may seem, I had not arrived at this fact--a fact perfectly obvious so soon as he spoke. I had still held a vague hope; rather, I had kept a lifelong habit of mind. He repeated his words, "We're beat." They carried absolute conviction.

"It's all over," he said. "They've lost *one*--just *one*. And they've made their footing good and crippled the greatest power in the world. They've walked over us. The death of that one at Weybridge was an accident. And these are only pioneers. They kept on coming. These green stars--I've seen none these five or

six days, but I've no doubt they're falling somewhere every night. Nothing's to be done. We're under! We're beat!"

I made him no answer. I sat staring before me, trying in vain to devise some countervailing thought.

"This isn't a war," said the artilleryman. "It never was a war, any more than there's war between man and ants."

Suddenly I recalled the night in the observatory.

"After the tenth shot they fired no more--at least, until the first cylinder came."

"How do you know?" said the artilleryman. I explained. He thought. "Something wrong with the gun," he said. "But what if there is? They'll get it right again. And even if there's a delay, how can it alter the end? It's just men and ants. There's the ants builds their cities, live their lives, have wars, revolutions, until the men want them out of the way, and then they go out of the way. That's what we are now--just ants. Only----"

"Yes," I said.

"We're eatable ants."

We sat looking at each other.

"And what will they do with us?" I said.

"That's what I've been thinking," he said; "that's what I've been thinking. After Weybridge I went south--thinking. I saw what was up. Most of the people were hard at it squealing and exciting themselves. But I'm not so fond of squealing. I've been in sight of death once or twice; I'm not an ornamental soldier, and at the best and worst, death--it's just death. And it's the man that keeps on thinking comes through. I saw everyone tracking away south. Says I, 'Food won't last this way,' and I turned right back. I went for the Martians like a sparrow goes for man. All round"--he waved a hand to the horizon--"they're starving in heaps, bolting, treading on each other. . . ."

He saw my face, and halted awkwardly.

"No doubt lots who had money have gone away to France," he said. He seemed to hesitate whether to apologise, met my eyes, and went on: "There's food all about here. Canned things in shops; wines, spirits, mineral waters; and the water mains and drains are empty. Well, I was telling you what I was thinking.

'Here's intelligent things,' I said, 'and it seems they want us for food. First, they'll smash us up--ships, machines, guns, cities, all the order and organisation. All that will go. If we were the size of ants we might pull through. But we're not. It's all too bulky to stop. That's the first certainty.' Eh?"

I assented.

"It is; I've thought it out. Very well, then--next; at present we're caught as we're wanted. A Martian has only to go a few miles to get a crowd on the run. And I saw one, one day, out by Wandsworth, picking houses to pieces and routing among the wreckage. But they won't keep on doing that. So soon as they've settled all our guns and ships, and smashed our railways, and done all the things they are doing over there, they will begin catching us systematic, picking the best and storing us in cages and things. That's what they will start doing in a bit. Lord! They haven't begun on us yet. Don't you see that?"

"Not begun!" I exclaimed.

"Not begun. All that's happened so far is through our not having the sense to keep quiet--worrying them with guns and such foolery. And losing our heads, and rushing off in crowds to where there wasn't any more safety than where we were. They don't want to bother us yet. They're making their things--making all the things they couldn't bring with them, getting things ready for the rest of their people. Very likely that's why the cylinders have stopped for a bit, for fear of hitting those who are here. And instead of our rushing about blind, on the howl, or getting dynamite on the chance of busting them up, we've got to fix ourselves up according to the new state of affairs. That's how I figure it out. It isn't quite according to what a man wants for his species, but it's about what the facts point to. And that's the principle I acted upon. Cities, nations, civilisation, progress--it's all over. That game's up. We're beat."

"But if that is so, what is there to live for?"

The artilleryman looked at me for a moment.

"There won't be any more blessed concerts for a million years or so; there won't be any Royal Academy of Arts, and no nice little feeds at restaurants. If it's amusement you're after, I reckon

the game is up. If you've got any drawing-room manners or a dislike to eating peas with a knife or dropping aitches, you'd better chuck 'em away. They ain't no further use."

"You mean----"

"I mean that men like me are going on living--for the sake of the breed. I tell you, I'm grim set on living. And if I'm not mistaken, you'll show what insides *you've* got, too, before long. We aren't going to be exterminated. And I don't mean to be caught either, and tamed and fattened and bred like a thundering ox. Ugh! Fancy those brown creepers!"

"You don't mean to say----"

"I do. I'm going on, under their feet. I've got it planned; I've thought it out. We men are beat. We don't know enough. We've got to learn before we've got a chance. And we've got to live and keep independent while we learn. See! That's what has to be done."

I stared, astonished, and stirred profoundly by the man's resolution.

"Great God!" cried I. "But you are a man indeed!" And suddenly I gripped his hand.

"Eh!" he said, with his eyes shining. "I've thought it out, eh?"

"Go on," I said.

"Well, those who mean to escape their catching must get ready. I'm getting ready. Mind you, it isn't all of us that are made for wild beasts; and that's what it's got to be. That's why I watched you. I had my doubts. You're slender. I didn't know that it was you, you see, or just how you'd been buried. All these--the sort of people that lived in these houses, and all those damn little clerks that used to live down that way--they'd be no good. They haven't any spirit in them--no proud dreams and no proud lusts; and a man who hasn't one or the other--Lord! What is he but funk and precautions? They just used to skedaddle off to work--I've seen hundreds of 'em, bit of breakfast in hand, running wild and shining to catch their little season-ticket train, for fear they'd get dismissed if they didn't; working at businesses they were afraid to take the trouble to understand; skedaddling back for fear they wouldn't be in time for dinner; keeping indoors after dinner for

fear of the back streets, and sleeping with the wives they married, not because they wanted them, but because they had a bit of money that would make for safety in their one little miserable skedaddle through the world. Lives insured and a bit invested for fear of accidents. And on Sundays--fear of the hereafter. As if hell was built for rabbits! Well, the Martians will just be a godsend to these. Nice roomy cages, fattening food, careful breeding, no worry. After a week or so chasing about the fields and lands on empty stomachs, they'll come and be caught cheerful. They'll be quite glad after a bit. They'll wonder what people did before there were Martians to take care of them. And the bar loafers, and mashers, and singers--I can imagine them. I can imagine them," he said, with a sort of sombre gratification. "There'll be any amount of sentiment and religion loose among them. There's hundreds of things I saw with my eyes that I've only begun to see clearly these last few days. There's lots will take things as they are--fat and stupid; and lots will be worried by a sort of feeling that it's all wrong, and that they ought to be doing something. Now whenever things are so that a lot of people feel they ought to be doing something, the weak, and those who go weak with a lot of complicated thinking, always make for a sort of do-nothing religion, very pious and superior, and submit to persecution and the will of the Lord. Very likely you've seen the same thing. It's energy in a gale of funk, and turned clean inside out. These cages will be full of psalms and hymns and piety. And those of a less simple sort will work in a bit of--what is it?--eroticism."

He paused.

"Very likely these Martians will make pets of some of them; train them to do tricks--who knows?--get sentimental over the pet boy who grew up and had to be killed. And some, maybe, they will train to hunt us."

"No," I cried, "that's impossible! No human being----"

785

"What's the good of going on with such lies?" said the artilleryman. "There's men who'd do it cheerful. What nonsense to pretend there isn't!"

And I succumbed to his conviction.

"If they come after me," he said; "Lord, if they come after me!" and subsided into a grim meditation.

I sat contemplating these things. I could find nothing to bring against this man's reasoning. In the days before the invasion no one would have questioned my intellectual superiority to his--I, a professed and recognised writer on philosophical themes, and he, a common soldier; and yet he had already formulated a situation that I had scarcely realised.

"What are you doing?" I said presently. "What plans have you made?"

790

He hesitated.

"Well, it's like this," he said. "What have we to do? We have to invent a sort of life where men can live and breed, and be sufficiently secure to bring the children up. Yes--wait a bit, and I'll make it clearer what I think ought to be done. The tame ones will go like all tame beasts; in a few generations they'll be big, beautiful, rich-blooded, stupid--rubbish! The risk is that we who keep wild will go savage--degenerate into a sort of big, savage rat. . . . You see, how I mean to live is underground. I've been thinking about the drains. Of course those who don't know drains think horrible things; but under this London are miles and miles--hundreds of miles--and a few days rain and London empty will leave them sweet and clean. The main drains are big enough and airy enough for anyone. Then there's cellars, vaults, stores, from which bolting passages may be made to the drains. And the railway tunnels and subways. Eh? You begin to see? And we form a band--able-bodied, clean-minded men. We're not going to pick up any rubbish that drifts in. Weaklings go out again."

"As you meant me to go?"

"Well--I parleyed, didn't I?"

"We won't quarrel about that. Go on."

795

"Those who stop obey orders. Able-bodied, clean-minded women we want also--mothers and teachers. No lackadaisical ladies--no blasted rolling eyes. We can't have any weak or silly. Life is real again, and the useless and cumbersome and mischievous have to die. They ought to die. They ought to be willing to die. It's a sort of disloyalty, after all, to live and taint the

race. And they can't be happy. Moreover, dying's none so dreadful; it's the funking makes it bad. And in all those places we shall gather. Our district will be London. And we may even be able to keep a watch, and run about in the open when the Martians keep away. Play cricket, perhaps. That's how we shall save the race. Eh? It's a possible thing? But saving the race is nothing in itself. As I say, that's only being rats. It's saving our knowledge and adding to it is the thing. There men like you come in. There's books, there's models. We must make great safe places down deep, and get all the books we can; not novels and poetry swipes, but ideas, science books. That's where men like you come in. We must go to the British Museum and pick all those books through. Especially we must keep up our science--learn more. We must watch these Martians. Some of us must go as spies. When it's all working, perhaps I will. Get caught, I mean. And the great thing is, we must leave the Martians alone. We mustn't even steal. If we get in their way, we clear out. We must show them we mean no harm. Yes, I know. But they're intelligent things, and they won't hunt us down if they have all they want, and think we're just harmless vermin."

The artilleryman paused and laid a brown hand upon my arm.

"After all, it may not be so much we may have to learn before--Just imagine this: four or five of their fighting machines suddenly starting off--Heat-Rays right and left, and not a Martian in 'em. Not a Martian in 'em, but men--men who have learned the way how. It may be in my time, even--those men. Fancy having one of them lovely things, with its Heat-Ray wide and free! Fancy having it in control! What would it matter if you smashed to smithereens at the end of the run, after a bust like that? I reckon the Martians'll open their beautiful eyes! Can't you see them, man? Can't you see them hurrying, hurrying--puffing and blowing and hooting to their other mechanical affairs? Something out of gear in every case. And swish, bang, rattle, swish! Just as they are fumbling over it, *swish* comes the Heat-Ray, and, behold! man has come back to his own."

For a while the imaginative daring of the artilleryman, and the tone of assurance and courage he assumed, completely dominated

my mind. I believed unhesitatingly both in his forecast of human destiny and in the practicability of his astonishing scheme, and the reader who thinks me susceptible and foolish must contrast his position, reading steadily with all his thoughts about his subject, and mine, crouching fearfully in the bushes and listening, distracted by apprehension. We talked in this manner through the early morning time, and later crept out of the bushes, and, after scanning the sky for Martians, hurried precipitately to the house on Putney Hill where he had made his lair. It was the coal cellar of the place, and when I saw the work he had spent a week upon--it was a burrow scarcely ten yards long, which he designed to reach to the main drain on Putney Hill--I had my first inkling of the gulf between his dreams and his powers. Such a hole I could have dug in a day. But I believed in him sufficiently to work with him all that morning until past midday at his digging. We had a garden barrow and shot the earth we removed against the kitchen range. We refreshed ourselves with a tin of mock-turtle soup and wine from the neighbouring pantry. I found a curious relief from the aching strangeness of the world in this steady labour. As we worked, I turned his project over in my mind, and presently objections and doubts began to arise; but I worked there all the morning, so glad was I to find myself with a purpose again. After working an hour I began to speculate on the distance one had to go before the cloaca was reached, the chances we had of missing it altogether. My immediate trouble was why we should dig this long tunnel, when it was possible to get into the drain at once down one of the manholes, and work back to the house. It seemed to me, too, that the house was inconveniently chosen, and required a needless length of tunnel. And just as I was beginning to face these things, the artilleryman stopped digging, and looked at me.

"We're working well," he said. He put down his spade. "Let us knock off a bit" he said. "I think it's time we reconnoitred from the roof of the house."

800

I was for going on, and after a little hesitation he resumed his spade; and then suddenly I was struck by a thought. I stopped, and so did he at once.

"Why were you walking about the common," I said, "instead of being here?"

"Taking the air," he said. "I was coming back. It's safer by night."

"But the work?"

"Oh, one can't always work," he said, and in a flash I saw the man plain. He hesitated, holding his spade. "We ought to reconnoitre now," he said, "because if any come near they may hear the spades and drop upon us unawares."

805

I was no longer disposed to object. We went together to the roof and stood on a ladder peeping out of the roof door. No Martians were to be seen, and we ventured out on the tiles, and slipped down under shelter of the parapet.

From this position a shrubbery hid the greater portion of Putney, but we could see the river below, a bubbly mass of red weed, and the low parts of Lambeth flooded and red. The red creeper swarmed up the trees about the old palace, and their branches stretched gaunt and dead, and set with shrivelled leaves, from amid its clusters. It was strange how entirely dependent both these things were upon flowing water for their propagation. About us neither had gained a footing; laburnums, pink mays, snowballs, and trees of arbor-vitae, rose out of laurels and hydrangeas, green and brilliant into the sunlight. Beyond Kensington dense smoke was rising, and that and a blue haze hid the northward hills.

The artilleryman began to tell me of the sort of people who still remained in London.

"One night last week," he said, "some fools got the electric light in order, and there was all Regent Street and the Circus ablaze, crowded with painted and ragged drunkards, men and women, dancing and shouting till dawn. A man who was there told me. And as the day came they became aware of a fighting-machine standing near by the Langham and looking down at them. Heaven knows how long he had been there. It must have given some of them a nasty turn. He came down the road towards them, and picked up nearly a hundred too drunk or frightened to run away."

Grotesque gleam of a time no history will ever fully describe!

810

From that, in answer to my questions, he came round to his grandiose plans again. He grew enthusiastic. He talked so eloquently of the possibility of capturing a fighting-machine that I more than half believed in him again. But now that I was beginning to understand something of his quality, I could divine the stress he laid on doing nothing precipitately. And I noted that now there was no question that he personally was to capture and fight the great machine.

After a time we went down to the cellar. Neither of us seemed disposed to resume digging, and when he suggested a meal, I was nothing loath. He became suddenly very generous, and when we had eaten he went away and returned with some excellent cigars. We lit these, and his optimism glowed. He was inclined to regard my coming as a great occasion.

"There's some champagne in the cellar," he said.

"We can dig better on this Thames-side burgundy," said I.

"No," said he; "I am host today. Champagne! Great God! We've a heavy enough task before us! Let us take a rest and gather strength while we may. Look at these blistered hands!"

815

And pursuant to this idea of a holiday, he insisted upon playing cards after we had eaten. He taught me euchre, and after dividing London between us, I taking the northern side and he the southern, we played for parish points. Grotesque and foolish as this will seem to the sober reader, it is absolutely true, and what is more remarkable, I found the card game and several others we played extremely interesting.

Strange mind of man! that, with our species upon the edge of extermination or appalling degradation, with no clear prospect before us but the chance of a horrible death, we could sit following the chance of this painted pasteboard, and playing the "joker" with vivid delight. Afterwards he taught me poker, and I beat him at three tough chess games. When dark came we decided to take the risk, and lit a lamp.

After an interminable string of games, we supped, and the artilleryman finished the champagne. We went on smoking the cigars. He was no longer the energetic regenerator of his species I

had encountered in the morning. He was still optimistic, but it was a less kinetic, a more thoughtful optimism. I remember he wound up with my health, proposed in a speech of small variety and considerable intermittence. I took a cigar, and went upstairs to look at the lights of which he had spoken that blazed so greenly along the Highgate hills.

At first I stared unintelligently across the London valley. The northern hills were shrouded in darkness; the fires near Kensington glowed redly, and now and then an orange-red tongue of flame flashed up and vanished in the deep blue night. All the rest of London was black. Then, nearer, I perceived a strange light, a pale, violet-purple fluorescent glow, quivering under the night breeze. For a space I could not understand it, and then I knew that it must be the red weed from which this faint irradiation proceeded. With that realisation my dormant sense of wonder, my sense of the proportion of things, awoke again. I glanced from that to Mars, red and clear, glowing high in the west, and then gazed long and earnestly at the darkness of Hampstead and Highgate.

I remained a very long time upon the roof, wondering at the grotesque changes of the day. I recalled my mental states from the midnight prayer to the foolish card-playing. I had a violent revulsion of feeling. I remember I flung away the cigar with a certain wasteful symbolism. My folly came to me with glaring exaggeration. I seemed a traitor to my wife and to my kind; I was filled with remorse. I resolved to leave this strange undisciplined dreamer of great things to his drink and gluttony, and to go on into London. There, it seemed to me, I had the best chance of learning what the Martians and my fellowmen were doing. I was still upon the roof when the late moon rose.

820

Chapter Eight

Dead London

After I had parted from the artilleryman, I went down the hill, and by the High Street across the bridge to Fulham. The red weed

was tumultuous at that time, and nearly choked the bridge roadway; but its fronds were already whitened in patches by the spreading disease that presently removed it so swiftly.

At the corner of the lane that runs to Putney Bridge station I found a man lying. He was as black as a sweep with the black dust, alive, but helplessly and speechlessly drunk. I could get nothing from him but curses and furious lunges at my head. I think I should have stayed by him but for the brutal expression of his face.

There was black dust along the roadway from the bridge onwards, and it grew thicker in Fulham. The streets were horribly quiet. I got food--sour, hard, and mouldy, but quite eatable--in a baker's shop here. Some way towards Walham Green the streets became clear of powder, and I passed a white terrace of houses on fire; the noise of the burning was an absolute relief. Going on towards Brompton, the streets were quiet again.

Here I came once more upon the black powder in the streets and upon dead bodies. I saw altogether about a dozen in the length of the Fulham Road. They had been dead many days, so that I hurried quickly past them. The black powder covered them over, and softened their outlines. One or two had been disturbed by dogs.

Where there was no black powder, it was curiously like a Sunday in the City, with the closed shops, the houses locked up and the blinds drawn, the desertion, and the stillness. In some places plunderers had been at work, but rarely at other than the provision and wine shops. A jeweller's window had been broken open in one place, but apparently the thief had been disturbed, and a number of gold chains and a watch lay scattered on the pavement. I did not trouble to touch them. Farther on was a tattered woman in a heap on a doorstep; the hand that hung over her knee was gashed and bled down her rusty brown dress, and a smashed magnum of champagne formed a pool across the pavement. She seemed asleep, but she was dead.

The farther I penetrated into London, the profounder grew the stillness. But it was not so much the stillness of death--it was the stillness of suspense, of expectation. At any time the destruction

that had already singed the northwestern borders of the metropolis, and had annihilated Ealing and Kilburn, might strike among these houses and leave them smoking ruins. It was a city condemned and derelict. . . .

In South Kensington the streets were clear of dead and of black powder. It was near South Kensington that I first heard the howling. It crept almost imperceptibly upon my senses. It was a sobbing alternation of two notes, "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," keeping on perpetually. When I passed streets that ran northward it grew in volume, and houses and buildings seemed to deaden and cut it off again. It came in a full tide down Exhibition Road. I stopped, staring towards Kensington Gardens, wondering at this strange, remote wailing. It was as if that mighty desert of houses had found a voice for its fear and solitude.

"Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," wailed that superhuman note--great waves of sound sweeping down the broad, sunlit roadway, between the tall buildings on each side. I turned northwards, marvelling, towards the iron gates of Hyde Park. I had half a mind to break into the Natural History Museum and find my way up to the summits of the towers, in order to see across the park. But I decided to keep to the ground, where quick hiding was possible, and so went on up the Exhibition Road. All the large mansions on each side of the road were empty and still, and my footsteps echoed against the sides of the houses. At the top, near the park gate, I came upon a strange sight--a bus overturned, and the skeleton of a horse picked clean. I puzzled over this for a time, and then went on to the bridge over the Serpentine. The voice grew stronger and stronger, though I could see nothing above the housetops on the north side of the park, save a haze of smoke to the northwest.

"Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," cried the voice, coming, as it seemed to me, from the district about Regent's Park. The desolating cry worked upon my mind. The mood that had sustained me passed. The wailing took possession of me. I found I was intensely weary, footsore, and now again hungry and thirsty.

It was already past noon. Why was I wandering alone in this city of the dead? Why was I alone when all London was lying in

state, and in its black shroud? I felt intolerably lonely. My mind ran on old friends that I had forgotten for years. I thought of the poisons in the chemists' shops, of the liquors the wine merchants stored; I recalled the two sodden creatures of despair, who so far as I knew, shared the city with myself. . . .

I came into Oxford Street by the Marble Arch, and here again were black powder and several bodies, and an evil, ominous smell from the gratings of the cellars of some of the houses. I grew very thirsty after the heat of my long walk. With infinite trouble I managed to break into a public-house and get food and drink. I was weary after eating, and went into the parlour behind the bar, and slept on a black horsehair sofa I found there.

I awoke to find that dismal howling still in my ears, "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla." It was now dusk, and after I had routed out some biscuits and a cheese in the bar--there was a meat safe, but it contained nothing but maggots--I wandered on through the silent residential squares to Baker Street--Portman Square is the only one I can name--and so came out at last upon Regent's Park. And as I emerged from the top of Baker Street, I saw far away over the trees in the clearness of the sunset the hood of the Martian giant from which this howling proceeded. I was not terrified. I came upon him as if it were a matter of course. I watched him for some time, but he did not move. He appeared to be standing and yelling, for no reason that I could discover.

I tried to formulate a plan of action. That perpetual sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," confused my mind. Perhaps I was too tired to be very fearful. Certainly I was more curious to know the reason of this monotonous crying than afraid. I turned back away from the park and struck into Park Road, intending to skirt the park, went along under the shelter of the terraces, and got a view of this stationary, howling Martian from the direction of St. John's Wood. A couple of hundred yards out of Baker Street I heard a yelping chorus, and saw, first a dog with a piece of putrescent red meat in his jaws coming headlong towards me, and then a pack of starving mongrels in pursuit of him. He made a wide curve to avoid me, as though he feared I might prove a fresh competitor.

As the yelping died away down the silent road, the wailing sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," reasserted itself.

I came upon the wrecked handling-machine halfway to St. John's Wood station. At first I thought a house had fallen across the road. It was only as I clambered among the ruins that I saw, with a start, this mechanical Samson lying, with its tentacles bent and smashed and twisted, among the ruins it had made. The forepart was shattered. It seemed as if it had driven blindly straight at the house, and had been overwhelmed in its overthrow. It seemed to me then that this might have happened by a handling-machine escaping from the guidance of its Martian. I could not clamber among the ruins to see it, and the twilight was now so far advanced that the blood with which its seat was smeared, and the gnawed gristle of the Martian that the dogs had left, were invisible to me.

Wondering still more at all that I had seen, I pushed on towards Primrose Hill. Far away, through a gap in the trees, I saw a second Martian, as motionless as the first, standing in the park towards the Zoological Gardens, and silent. A little beyond the ruins about the smashed handling-machine I came upon the red weed again, and found the Regent's Canal, a spongy mass of dark-red vegetation.

835

As I crossed the bridge, the sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," ceased. It was, as it were, cut off. The silence came like a thunderclap.

The dusky houses about me stood faint and tall and dim; the trees towards the park were growing black. All about me the red weed clambered among the ruins, writhing to get above me in the dimness. Night, the mother of fear and mystery, was coming upon me. But while that voice sounded the solitude, the desolation, had been endurable; by virtue of it London had still seemed alive, and the sense of life about me had upheld me. Then suddenly a change, the passing of something--I knew not what--and then a stillness that could be felt. Nothing but this gaunt quiet.

London about me gazed at me spectrally. The windows in the white houses were like the eye sockets of skulls. About me my imagination found a thousand noiseless enemies moving. Terror

seized me, a horror of my temerity. In front of me the road became pitchy black as though it was tarred, and I saw a contorted shape lying across the pathway. I could not bring myself to go on. I turned down St. John's Wood Road, and ran headlong from this unendurable stillness towards Kilburn. I hid from the night and the silence, until long after midnight, in a cabmen's shelter in Harrow Road. But before the dawn my courage returned, and while the stars were still in the sky I turned once more towards Regent's Park. I missed my way among the streets, and presently saw down a long avenue, in the half-light of the early dawn, the curve of Primrose Hill. On the summit, towering up to the fading stars, was a third Martian, erect and motionless like the others.

An insane resolve possessed me. I would die and end it. And I would save myself even the trouble of killing myself. I marched on recklessly towards this Titan, and then, as I drew nearer and the light grew, I saw that a multitude of black birds was circling and clustering about the hood. At that my heart gave a bound, and I began running along the road.

I hurried through the red weed that choked St. Edmund's Terrace (I waded breast-high across a torrent of water that was rushing down from the waterworks towards the Albert Road), and emerged upon the grass before the rising of the sun. Great mounds had been heaped about the crest of the hill, making a huge redoubt of it--it was the final and largest place the Martians had made--and from behind these heaps there rose a thin smoke against the sky. Against the sky line an eager dog ran and disappeared. The thought that had flashed into my mind grew real, grew credible. I felt no fear, only a wild, trembling exultation, as I ran up the hill towards the motionless monster. Out of the hood hung lank shreds of brown, at which the hungry birds pecked and tore.

In another moment I had scrambled up the earthen rampart and stood upon its crest, and the interior of the redoubt was below me. A mighty space it was, with gigantic machines here and there within it, huge mounds of material and strange shelter places. And scattered about it, some in their overturned war-machines,

some in the now rigid handling-machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians--*dead!*--slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared; slain as the red weed was being slain; slain, after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth.

For so it had come about, as indeed I and many men might have foreseen had not terror and disaster blinded our minds. These germs of disease have taken toll of humanity since the beginning of things--taken toll of our prehuman ancestors since life began here. But by virtue of this natural selection of our kind we have developed resisting power; to no germs do we succumb without a struggle, and to many--those that cause putrefaction in dead matter, for instance--our living frames are altogether immune. But there are no bacteria in Mars, and directly these invaders arrived, directly they drank and fed, our microscopic allies began to work their overthrow. Already when I watched them they were irrevocably doomed, dying and rotting even as they went to and fro. It was inevitable. By the toll of a billion deaths man has bought his birthright of the earth, and it is his against all comers; it would still be his were the Martians ten times as mighty as they are. For neither do men live nor die in vain.

Here and there they were scattered, nearly fifty altogether, in that great gulf they had made, overtaken by a death that must have seemed to them as incomprehensible as any death could be. To me also at that time this death was incomprehensible. All I knew was that these things that had been alive and so terrible to men were dead. For a moment I believed that the destruction of Sennacherib had been repeated, that God had repented, that the Angel of Death had slain them in the night.

I stood staring into the pit, and my heart lightened gloriously, even as the rising sun struck the world to fire about me with his rays. The pit was still in darkness; the mighty engines, so great and wonderful in their power and complexity, so unearthly in their tortuous forms, rose weird and vague and strange out of the shadows towards the light. A multitude of dogs, I could hear,

fought over the bodies that lay darkly in the depth of the pit, far below me. Across the pit on its farther lip, flat and vast and strange, lay the great flying-machine with which they had been experimenting upon our denser atmosphere when decay and death arrested them. Death had come not a day too soon. At the sound of a cawing overhead I looked up at the huge fighting-machine that would fight no more for ever, at the tattered red shreds of flesh that dripped down upon the overturned seats on the summit of Primrose Hill.

I turned and looked down the slope of the hill to where, enhaloed now in birds, stood those other two Martians that I had seen overnight, just as death had overtaken them. The one had died, even as it had been crying to its companions; perhaps it was the last to die, and its voice had gone on perpetually until the force of its machinery was exhausted. They glittered now, harmless tripod towers of shining metal, in the brightness of the rising sun.

845

All about the pit, and saved as by a miracle from everlasting destruction, stretched the great Mother of Cities. Those who have only seen London veiled in her sombre robes of smoke can scarcely imagine the naked clearness and beauty of the silent wilderness of houses.

Eastward, over the blackened ruins of the Albert Terrace and the splintered spire of the church, the sun blazed dazzling in a clear sky, and here and there some facet in the great wilderness of roofs caught the light and glared with a white intensity.

Northward were Kilburn and Hampsted, blue and crowded with houses; westward the great city was dimmed; and southward, beyond the Martians, the green waves of Regent's Park, the Langham Hotel, the dome of the Albert Hall, the Imperial Institute, and the giant mansions of the Brompton Road came out clear and little in the sunrise, the jagged ruins of Westminster rising hazily beyond. Far away and blue were the Surrey hills, and the towers of the Crystal Palace glittered like two silver rods. The dome of St. Paul's was dark against the sunrise, and injured, I saw for the first time, by a huge gaping cavity on its western side.

And as I looked at this wide expanse of houses and factories and churches, silent and abandoned; as I thought of the multitudinous hopes and efforts, the innumerable hosts of lives that had gone to build this human reef, and of the swift and ruthless destruction that had hung over it all; when I realised that the shadow had been rolled back, and that men might still live in the streets, and this dear vast dead city of mine be once more alive and powerful, I felt a wave of emotion that was near akin to tears.

The torment was over. Even that day the healing would begin. The survivors of the people scattered over the country--leaderless, lawless, foodless, like sheep without a shepherd--the thousands who had fled by sea, would begin to return; the pulse of life, growing stronger and stronger, would beat again in the empty streets and pour across the vacant squares. Whatever destruction was done, the hand of the destroyer was stayed. All the gaunt wrecks, the blackened skeletons of houses that stared so dismally at the sunlit grass of the hill, would presently be echoing with the hammers of the restorers and ringing with the tapping of their trowels. At the thought I extended my hands towards the sky and began thanking God. In a year, thought I--in a year. . .

850

With overwhelming force came the thought of myself, of my wife, and the old life of hope and tender helpfulness that had ceased for ever.

Chapter Nine

Wreckage

And now comes the strangest thing in my story. Yet, perhaps, it is not altogether strange. I remember, clearly and coldly and vividly, all that I did that day until the time that I stood weeping and praising God upon the summit of Primrose Hill. And then I forget.

Of the next three days I know nothing. I have learned since that, so far from my being the first discoverer of the Martian overthrow, several such wanderers as myself had already

discovered this on the previous night. One man--the first--had gone to St. Martin's-le-Grand, and, while I sheltered in the cabmen's hut, had contrived to telegraph to Paris. Thence the joyful news had flashed all over the world; a thousand cities, chilled by ghastly apprehensions, suddenly flashed into frantic illuminations; they knew of it in Dublin, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, at the time when I stood upon the verge of the pit. Already men, weeping with joy, as I have heard, shouting and staying their work to shake hands and shout, were making up trains, even as near as Crewe, to descend upon London. The church bells that had ceased a fortnight since suddenly caught the news, until all England was bell-ringing. Men on cycles, lean-faced, unkempt, scorched along every country lane shouting of unhopd deliverance, shouting to gaunt, staring figures of despair. And for the food! Across the Channel, across the Irish Sea, across the Atlantic, corn, bread, and meat were tearing to our relief. All the shipping in the world seemed going Londonward in those days. But of all this I have no memory. I drifted--a demented man. I found myself in a house of kindly people, who had found me on the third day wandering, weeping, and raving through the streets of St. John's Wood. They have told me since that I was singing some insane doggerel about "The Last Man Left Alive! Hurrah! The Last Man Left Alive!" Troubled as they were with their own affairs, these people, whose name, much as I would like to express my gratitude to them, I may not even give here, nevertheless cumbered themselves with me, sheltered me, and protected me from myself. Apparently they had learned something of my story from me during the days of my lapse.

Very gently, when my mind was assured again, did they break to me what they had learned of the fate of Leatherhead. Two days after I was imprisoned it had been destroyed, with every soul in it, by a Martian. He had swept it out of existence, as it seemed, without any provocation, as a boy might crush an ant hill, in the mere wantonness of power.

I was a lonely man, and they were very kind to me. I was a lonely man and a sad one, and they bore with me. I remained with them four days after my recovery. All that time I felt a vague, a

growing craving to look once more on whatever remained of the little life that seemed so happy and bright in my past. It was a mere hopeless desire to feast upon my misery. They dissuaded me. They did all they could to divert me from this morbidity. But at last I could resist the impulse no longer, and, promising faithfully to return to them, and parting, as I will confess, from these four-day friends with tears, I went out again into the streets that had lately been so dark and strange and empty.

Already they were busy with returning people; in places even there were shops open, and I saw a drinking fountain running water.

I remember how mockingly bright the day seemed as I went back on my melancholy pilgrimage to the little house at Woking, how busy the streets and vivid the moving life about me. So many people were abroad everywhere, busied in a thousand activities, that it seemed incredible that any great proportion of the population could have been slain. But then I noticed how yellow were the skins of the people I met, how shaggy the hair of the men, how large and bright their eyes, and that every other man still wore his dirty rags. Their faces seemed all with one of two expressions--a leaping exultation and energy or a grim resolution. Save for the expression of the faces, London seemed a city of tramps. The vestries were indiscriminately distributing bread sent us by the French government. The ribs of the few horses showed dismally. Haggard special constables with white badges stood at the corners of every street. I saw little of the mischief wrought by the Martians until I reached Wellington Street, and there I saw the red weed clambering over the buttresses of Waterloo Bridge.

At the corner of the bridge, too, I saw one of the common contrasts of that grotesque time--a sheet of paper flaunting against a thicket of the red weed, transfixed by a stick that kept it in place. It was the placard of the first newspaper to resume publication--the *Daily Mail*. I bought a copy for a blackened shilling I found in my pocket. Most of it was in blank, but the solitary compositor who did the thing had amused himself by making a grotesque scheme of advertisement stereo on the back page. The matter he printed was emotional; the news organisation

had not as yet found its way back. I learned nothing fresh except that already in one week the examination of the Martian mechanisms had yielded astonishing results. Among other things, the article assured me what I did not believe at the time, that the "Secret of Flying," was discovered. At Waterloo I found the free trains that were taking people to their homes. The first rush was already over. There were few people in the train, and I was in no mood for casual conversation. I got a compartment to myself, and sat with folded arms, looking greyly at the sunlit devastation that flowed past the windows. And just outside the terminus the train jolted over temporary rails, and on either side of the railway the houses were blackened ruins. To Clapham Junction the face of London was grimy with powder of the Black Smoke, in spite of two days of thunderstorms and rain, and at Clapham Junction the line had been wrecked again; there were hundreds of out-of-work clerks and shopmen working side by side with the customary navvies, and we were jolted over a hasty relaying.

All down the line from there the aspect of the country was gaunt and unfamiliar; Wimbledon particularly had suffered. Walton, by virtue of its unburned pine woods, seemed the least hurt of any place along the line. The Wandle, the Mole, every little stream, was a heaped mass of red weed, in appearance between butcher's meat and pickled cabbage. The Surrey pine woods were too dry, however, for the festoons of the red climber. Beyond Wimbledon, within sight of the line, in certain nursery grounds, were the heaped masses of earth about the sixth cylinder. A number of people were standing about it, and some sappers were busy in the midst of it. Over it flaunted a Union Jack, flapping cheerfully in the morning breeze. The nursery grounds were everywhere crimson with the weed, a wide expanse of livid colour cut with purple shadows, and very painful to the eye. One's gaze went with infinite relief from the scorched greys and sullen reds of the foreground to the blue-green softness of the eastward hills.

The line on the London side of Woking station was still undergoing repair, so I descended at Byfleet station and took the road to Maybury, past the place where I and the artilleryman had

talked to the hussars, and on by the spot where the Martian had appeared to me in the thunderstorm. Here, moved by curiosity, I turned aside to find, among a tangle of red fronds, the warped and broken dog cart with the whitened bones of the horse scattered and gnawed. For a time I stood regarding these vestiges. . . .

Then I returned through the pine wood, neck-high with red weed here and there, to find the landlord of the Spotted Dog had already found burial, and so came home past the College Arms. A man standing at an open cottage door greeted me by name as I passed.

I looked at my house with a quick flash of hope that faded immediately. The door had been forced; it was unfast and was opening slowly as I approached.

It slammed again. The curtains of my study fluttered out of the open window from which I and the artilleryman had watched the dawn. No one had closed it since. The smashed bushes were just as I had left them nearly four weeks ago. I stumbled into the hall, and the house felt empty. The stair carpet was ruffled and discoloured where I had crouched, soaked to the skin from the thunderstorm the night of the catastrophe. Our muddy footsteps I saw still went up the stairs.

I followed them to my study, and found lying on my writing-table still, with the selenite paper weight upon it, the sheet of work I had left on the afternoon of the opening of the cylinder. For a space I stood reading over my abandoned arguments. It was a paper on the probable development of Moral Ideas with the development of the civilising process; and the last sentence was the opening of a prophecy: "In about two hundred years," I had written, "we may expect----" The sentence ended abruptly. I remembered my inability to fix my mind that morning, scarcely a month gone by, and how I had broken off to get my *Daily Chronicle* from the newsboy. I remembered how I went down to the garden gate as he came along, and how I had listened to his odd story of "Men from Mars."

I came down and went into the dining room. There were the mutton and the bread, both far gone now in decay, and a beer bottle overturned, just as I and the artilleryman had left them. My

home was desolate. I perceived the folly of the faint hope I had cherished so long. And then a strange thing occurred. "It is no use," said a voice. "The house is deserted. No one has been here these ten days. Do not stay here to torment yourself. No one escaped but you."

I was startled. Had I spoken my thought aloud? I turned, and the French window was open behind me. I made a step to it, and stood looking out.

And there, amazed and afraid, even as I stood amazed and afraid, were my cousin and my wife--my wife white and tearless. She gave a faint cry.

"I came," she said. "I knew--knew----"

She put her hand to her throat--swayed. I made a step forward, and caught her in my arms.

Chapter Ten

The Epilogue

I cannot but regret, now that I am concluding my story, how little I am able to contribute to the discussion of the many debatable questions which are still unsettled. In one respect I shall certainly provoke criticism. My particular province is speculative philosophy. My knowledge of comparative physiology is confined to a book or two, but it seems to me that Carver's suggestions as to the reason of the rapid death of the Martians is so probable as to be regarded almost as a proven conclusion. I have assumed that in the body of my narrative.

870

At any rate, in all the bodies of the Martians that were examined after the war, no bacteria except those already known as terrestrial species were found. That they did not bury any of their dead, and the reckless slaughter they perpetrated, point also to an entire ignorance of the putrefactive process. But probable as this seems, it is by no means a proven conclusion.

Neither is the composition of the Black Smoke known, which the Martians used with such deadly effect, and the generator of the Heat-Rays remains a puzzle. The terrible disasters at the

Ealing and South Kensington laboratories have disinclined analysts for further investigations upon the latter. Spectrum analysis of the black powder points unmistakably to the presence of an unknown element with a brilliant group of three lines in the green, and it is possible that it combines with argon to form a compound which acts at once with deadly effect upon some constituent in the blood. But such unproven speculations will scarcely be of interest to the general reader, to whom this story is addressed. None of the brown scum that drifted down the Thames after the destruction of Shepperton was examined at the time, and now none is forthcoming.

The results of an anatomical examination of the Martians, so far as the prowling dogs had left such an examination possible, I have already given. But everyone is familiar with the magnificent and almost complete specimen in spirits at the Natural History Museum, and the countless drawings that have been made from it; and beyond that the interest of their physiology and structure is purely scientific.

A question of graver and universal interest is the possibility of another attack from the Martians. I do not think that nearly enough attention is being given to this aspect of the matter. At present the planet Mars is in conjunction, but with every return to opposition I, for one, anticipate a renewal of their adventure. In any case, we should be prepared. It seems to me that it should be possible to define the position of the gun from which the shots are discharged, to keep a sustained watch upon this part of the planet, and to anticipate the arrival of the next attack.

In that case the cylinder might be destroyed with dynamite or artillery before it was sufficiently cool for the Martians to emerge, or they might be butchered by means of guns so soon as the screw opened. It seems to me that they have lost a vast advantage in the failure of their first surprise. Possibly they see it in the same light.

Lessing has advanced excellent reasons for supposing that the Martians have actually succeeded in effecting a landing on the planet Venus. Seven months ago now, Venus and Mars were in alignment with the sun; that is to say, Mars was in opposition from the point of view of an observer on Venus. Subsequently a

peculiar luminous and sinuous marking appeared on the unilluminated half of the inner planet, and almost simultaneously a faint dark mark of a similar sinuous character was detected upon a photograph of the Martian disk. One needs to see the drawings of these appearances in order to appreciate fully their remarkable resemblance in character.

At any rate, whether we expect another invasion or not, our views of the human future must be greatly modified by these events. We have learned now that we cannot regard this planet as being fenced in and a secure abiding place for Man; we can never anticipate the unseen good or evil that may come upon us suddenly out of space. It may be that in the larger design of the universe this invasion from Mars is not without its ultimate benefit for men; it has robbed us of that serene confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of decadence, the gifts to human science it has brought are enormous, and it has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind. It may be that across the immensity of space the Martians have watched the fate of these pioneers of theirs and learned their lesson, and that on the planet Venus they have found a securer settlement. Be that as it may, for many years yet there will certainly be no relaxation of the eager scrutiny of the Martian disk, and those fiery darts of the sky, the shooting stars, will bring with them as they fall an unavoidable apprehension to all the sons of men.

The broadening of men's views that has resulted can scarcely be exaggerated. Before the cylinder fell there was a general persuasion that through all the deep of space no life existed beyond the petty surface of our minute sphere. Now we see further. If the Martians can reach Venus, there is no reason to suppose that the thing is impossible for men, and when the slow cooling of the sun makes this earth uninhabitable, as at last it must do, it may be that the thread of life that has begun here will have streamed out and caught our sister planet within its toils.

Dim and wonderful is the vision I have conjured up in my mind of life spreading slowly from this little seed bed of the solar system throughout the inanimate vastness of sidereal space. But

that is a remote dream. It may be, on the other hand, that the destruction of the Martians is only a reprieve. To them, and not to us, perhaps, is the future ordained.

I must confess the stress and danger of the time have left an abiding sense of doubt and insecurity in my mind. I sit in my study writing by lamplight, and suddenly I see again the healing valley below set with writhing flames, and feel the house behind and about me empty and desolate. I go out into the Byfleet Road, and vehicles pass me, a butcher boy in a cart, a cabful of visitors, a workman on a bicycle, children going to school, and suddenly they become vague and unreal, and I hurry again with the artilleryman through the hot, brooding silence. Of a night I see the black powder darkening the silent streets, and the contorted bodies shrouded in that layer; they rise upon me tattered and dog-bitten. They gibber and grow fiercer, paler, uglier, mad distortions of humanity at last, and I wake, cold and wretched, in the darkness of the night.

I go to London and see the busy multitudes in Fleet Street and the Strand, and it comes across my mind that they are but the ghosts of the past, haunting the streets that I have seen silent and wretched, going to and fro, phantasms in a dead city, the mockery of life in a galvanised body. And strange, too, it is to stand on Primrose Hill, as I did but a day before writing this last chapter, to see the great province of houses, dim and blue through the haze of the smoke and mist, vanishing at last into the vague lower sky, to see the people walking to and fro among the flower beds on the hill, to see the sight-seers about the Martian machine that stands there still, to hear the tumult of playing children, and to recall the time when I saw it all bright and clear-cut, hard and silent, under the dawn of that last great day. . . .

And strangest of all is it to hold my wife's hand again, and to think that I have counted her, and that she has counted me, among the dead.

Bibliography

- Albrecht, Daniel. *W.B. Yeats: The Poems*. J.M. Dent, 1990.
- Barcus, James E., and James T. Boulton. *Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Routledge, 1975.
- Blake, William. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. Edited by Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant, W.W. Norton & Company, 1979.
- Blakemore, Erin. "Elizabeth Barrett Browning was both a Celebrity and a Superfan." *JSTOR Daily*, 29 January 2016, <https://daily.jstor.org/elizabeth-barrett-browning-superfan/>.
- "Christina Rossetti," *Poetry Foundation*. www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/christina-rossetti.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, and H. J. Jackson. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1794-1834*. Oxford University Press, 1968.
- First, Ruth, and Ann Scott. *Olive Schreiner*. Rutgers UP, 1990.
- Flaubert, Gustave. Quoted in "Charles Baudelaire: Poet." *American Academy of Poets, Poets.org*, <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/charles-baudelaire>.
- "Frederick Douglass." *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 7 Jul. 2016. academic.eb.com.libproxy.ung.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Frederick-Douglass/31056. Accessed 1 Sep. 2017.
- Frenz, Horst, editor. *Nobel Lectures: Literature 1901-1967*. *NobelPrize.org*, 1969, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1923/yeats-bio.html.
- Furedi, Frank. "The Media's First Moral Panic." *History Today*, vol. 65, no. 11, 2015, <https://www.historytoday.com/frank-furedi/media%E2%80%99s-first-moral-panic>.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "Why I Wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*." Originally published in *The Forerunner*, 1913, <http://csivc.csi.cuny.edu/history/files/lavender/whyyw.html>.
- "H.G. Wells." *The Victorian Web: Literature, History, and Culture in the Age of Victoria*. <http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/authors/wells/index.html>.
- Haber, John. "More Real than Realism." Review of Georgia O'Keeffe exhibition, 2010, <http://haberarts.com/okeeffe.htm>.
- "Herbert George Wells." *The British Library*. www.bl.uk/people/h-g-wells.
- Holdrege, Craig. "Goethe and the Evolution of Science." *Nature Institute: In Context*, no. 31, 2014, pp. 10-23, <http://natureinstitute.org/pub/ic/ic31/goethe.pdf>.
- Jefferson, Thomas. "The Declaration of Independence." *National Archives, Archives.org*, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>.
- Keats, John. *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*. Introduction by Jim Pollock, The Modern Library, 2001.
- Longley, Edna. *Yeats and Modern Poetry*. Cambridge UP, 2014.
- "Olive Schreiner—A Biographical Introduction." *The Victorian Web: Literature, History, and Culture in the Age of Victoria*. <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/schreiner/bio.html>.
- "Slave narrative." *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 27 Aug. 2012. academic.eb.com.libproxy.ung.edu/levels/collegiate/article/slave-narrative/68166. Accessed 1 Sep. 2017.
- The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*. Thomas J. Collins and Vivienne J. Rundle, Editors. Broadview Press, 1999.
- Tolstoy, Leo. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. Introduction by Ronald Blythe. Random House, 1981.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Second edition, Edited by Carol H. Poston, W.W. Norton & Company, 1988.
- Wordsworth, William. *William Wordsworth's Poetry and Prose*. Edited by Nicholas Halmi, W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.