



CHARACTER SKETCHES.



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BILLY BUTTONS.

ONE evening a ship was getting ready to sail from Valparaiso, when she was boarded by a lady, who was a lady indeed, if judged by her sweet manners. Asking an interview with the captain, she told him that her husband had suddenly been called off by business to a distant town, and that she had in the meantime received letters from Scotland which made it necessary for her to return home without waiting even to consult her husband, as property of considerable value might be sacrificed by any delay on her part. She stated her case in a manner which at once inspired respect; and begging a berth in the ship, she added, "Your well-known character, Captain Wauchope, encourages me to ask this favor, and to sail under your protection only." She at the same time handed to him the money for the pas-

sage. The captain was rather put about; but there was *a something*—who does not know the marvellous power over the spirit of these “some-things?”—which obliged him to say “yes,” apart from the natural desire, for the sake of his owners, to obtain the handsome sum which was offered for the cabin. He felt that others might consider his position an awkward one; but he had an instinctive feeling that all was natural, simple, upright, and that the request was made by a true lady.

She was accompanied by one female friend, with whom she conversed long and earnestly, and from whom she parted with an embrace which was often repeated.

Wauchope was not, it must be confessed, what is called “a religious man;” yet, poor fellow!—Well, it is not for me to defend him from what could be fairly charged against him. Alas! he swore badly, often outrageously. Was he bad-tempered? No. Unkind? A heart more sympathetic with suffering never beat. Was he un-

just? Ask his crew, and hear their verdict in his favor. How could this great fault, then, be accounted for? That is a problem I am not called upon to solve, if, indeed, it is capable of solution. No good excuse can be found for what is wrong. But I may give his own explanation of it, and the gentle reader can then draw what conclusions he pleases, putting Wauchope in the exact niche which he thinks he deserves.

“I ken,” he said to one who had his best interests at heart, “this naisty sweerin’ is no’ to be defended. But I hae to do my duty to my employers, ye see, and unless I gie the crew a run o’ the tongue, they wad get into confusion, or maybe mutiny. My minister tell’d me it was really no’ a Christian hawbit, and he was richt, nae doot, and sae I gied it up for a month, for I hae nae admiration o’t mysel’. But what effect had this on the crew? I plainly tell ye, they lost a’ respect for me! It’s a fac! tho’ ye dinna, I see, believe me. But ainst,” Wauchope went on to say, “I heard a

minister say that it was the *motive* made a man guid or bad. Noo that was a great comfort to me! For when I tell a sailor tae gang—here or there; I needna say whaur,—but Gude forgie me if I ever meant the puir sowl to gang ony bad gate! Na, na! I wad cut off my haun' sooner than do that! But I wished him, ye see, tae ken beyond a' dispute or doot, that I was in doonricht earnest, and no jokin' or palauverin' when I cam to sweer. Ainst I yoked on him in that language, i' faith he believed me, and did his-wark! Sae I consider that I am obligated, as it waur, for the sake o' my employers, to get the wark dune, and no to speer at mysel' whether or no it's pleasant to my ain feelin's. A man, I consider, should do his duty, sweer or no sweer."

Apart from this evil, so defended by sailor casuistry, Wauchope was one of the best captains from the Clyde, and immensely liked by his men. He may seem to my readers to have been rather a rough sort of man for a gentle lady to trust her-

self to so implicitly. But his own wife at home once said, "He's an awfu guid cratur, my John. His heart is as saft as a sponge, and he's jist daft aboot me and the bairns, and I never heard a rough word frae his mouth, tho' I'm sair pit about wi' what he has tell'd me, when gaun tae the kirk, o' hoo he whiles speaks tae thae sailors. He's aye ruein't, but aye doin't. He can help it well eneuch, and it's jist thochtless clavers, ay, and great wickedness, as I tell him, for a guid man like him tae be takin' the holy Name and things in vain."

The mate of the ship was Peter Macintyre, whose voice no one ever heard except when giving orders. He chewed, smoked, spoke gutturally, did his duty, and all apparently without sleep or rest. He crept about the deck muffled up in one rig for day, and another for night, each differing from the other in the number of strata of coats which enveloped him and kept up his internal heat. As he wore soft thick slippers, his presence was no more noted than that of a bucket or

rope. He was the sort of man who, had he fallen overboard, would have taken it as a matter of course, like reefing topsails, and would have drowned quietly.

The crew were of the mixed kind found in most vessels. To the common eye they were a set of machines made for hurrying a ship across the ocean, and employed only because they could not be superseded by any other machinery in the present state of mechanical invention. They emitted the usual grunts and groans when turning out of their hammocks on a squally night; the common wild agonizing cries when pulling hard at some lift or brace in the midst of the storm; and they sprang aloft and lay out on the yard to reef, and battle with the flapping sail, with the most utter indifference to being brained or drowned. They drank their coffee, smothered themselves up in their swinging hammocks, chaffed each other, abused everything, and longed for port. They quarrelled in a calm;

forgot, forgave, and were jolly in a gale ; spent days and nights saturated like sponges with salt water, and did their duty according to the ship's articles—and what more could be expected of them ?

But to our story. The good ship *Clyde* sailed for her destination, having on board the lady passenger, whose name was neither given nor asked for. She got an excellent berth in a private cabin, which I believe the Captain gave up for her use. She had been told there was no stewardess—no luxuries on board—and scarcely any comforts. Everything was done to dissuade her from embarking in this ship. But she so pleaded life-and-death business, and her utter indifference to all such things in comparison with getting to Scotland by the first possible opportunity, that she was accepted.

It was an odd sort of place for a lady to be in all alone. The poor Captain and his mate felt indeed a sense of awkwardness, especially at table. It is true they were very particular in washing

their rough hands, and they even went so far as to brush their hair; while Tom Watson, the cook, had never been so careful about his manipulations in the caboose. Yet when the unknown lady entered the cabin at meal-time with a sweet smile, courteous words, and unobtrusive demeanor, full of thanks for all her comforts, and of expressions of satisfaction in the ship as a home, the Captain and Macintyre could not feel at their ease; and in spite of all the Captain's attempts to tell stories, and to prove himself not unworthy of his guest, he was uncomfortable, and often wondered what tempted him to ship such a passenger.

To the crew, the lady was for some days the subject of great speculation. They seemed to think or speak of nothing else. Many a rude and rough thing was said of her, but no rudeness in look or word was ever offered to her. She had a kind word for every one, and she found out something about their histories—whether they had a mother, a wife, a sister, or child—which enabled

her, by the intuition of genuine benevolence, to speak the right word, whether to the cook, the steward, the cabin-boy, or the man at the wheel, when he could hear her. There was no fuss, no obtrusiveness about her. Yet she touched the heart, and flashed upon it the light of the goodwill and presence of one who really felt kindly to them, and who treated them neither as slaves nor aliens, but as those who bore the image of God, and in whom love existed, however dormant, and was capable of responding to its manifestation in another being. "The lady" became a power in the ship, and her presence was as a bright moon shining over a wild, rough sea. No one expressed to his comrade—for sailors cannot thus express themselves—how much he felt her influence, yet all did feel it. The oldest growlers—men who felt it their duty to growl—such as old Dick Murray and Tom Halliday, although they winked and turned their quid as she passed along the deck in her walk, yet apologized in their own way, saying,

“She’s a fine craft, anyhow—ship-shape, Bristol fashion, all taut from keel to truck, and no mistake.”

The *Clyde* moved along on her voyage from day to day, the great dome of the blue sky ever covering the one ship in the centre of the blue sea, which was only now and then dotted by another sail passing like a sea-bird in the far distance. Each day, however, had its own characteristic weather; for each day, like each person, has a history that no other ever had or ever will have. The course of one day was not, in the ocean below, in the sky above, or in the air around, the same as that of the previous one, except in the foam at the head of the ship, or in her wake astern. She was moving in the vast, shoreless sea, over unknown depths peopled with unknown creatures. As for the crew, every face became stereotyped, and one wondered how it was that a ship did not become a home of brothers, who could not afford to quarrel, or be other than close friends. But the contact of

bodies is not contact of spirits, and mere outward fellowship within wooden walls, even with the question of life or death constantly presenting itself, often produces a separation the more complete from the very circumstances which prevent a greater physical separation. The lady, by a subtle electricity, bound them together.

It may seem odd to some that she should have dared to propose prayers and Bible-reading on Sunday. But she did it, in her own quiet, apologetic, loving way, until the favor she asked was felt to be a favor bestowed. It was wonderful how her reading of appropriate—and most appropriate they were!—passages of Scripture, with a hymn and a prayer, touched those rude hearts. They did not reason about her unselfishness, but felt it; they did not ask if it was love that prompted her, hardly knowing what it was, but they were the better and happier for all they heard.

“Rum un, Jack?” observed one sailor.

“Uncommon, Fred,” he replied; “I’m blowed if I make her out.”

“Nor I,” said Fred: “but she’s a right good un, and reminds me of my cousin Kate.”

“Well,” said Jack, “I was thinking of my uncle Bill the Methodist, the best I knows.”

So both agreed she was “uncommon.”

It was a new thing to see the men turning their hitherto unused Bibles out of their kits. To read them and confess they were saints? Oh dear no! not that yet, but only to recollect what “the lady” was saying, and to read what she had asked them to read.

“Come along, Tom, you’re a scholard,” one would say: “overhaul, will you, what the lady asked us to read.”

The lady knew not what a light of true love from heaven she was to this crew—what a ship’s light, chart, and compass. She knew only that she loved her brother, and this because she loved a common Father. At length her influence was

fully established by a case of severe sickness which occurred on board. It is unnecessary to detail its features and progress, or to say how, with a woman's delicacy, grace, and tact, she ministered to the sick. God-like, woman thus perfects strength in weakness. She heals the body through the greater powers of the heart; or, failing the body, she more than any other can heal the spirit, and thus give a health and life which are everlasting.

The *Clyde* encountered a heavy gale when within a few hundred miles of Cape Clear. It had increased day by day, until it seemed steady as a law of nature. The ship was forced back along her old course. She had to lie to with close-reefed fore-topsails for days together. The voyage was very protracted. They were not only days, but weeks behind their time. Wauchope was getting angry, and seemed to blame the sailors. Macintyre moved about incessantly as if he would walk to land and bring the ship with him. Green seas came on board more frequently than were agreea-

ble. The weather was cold. Heavy squalls with showers of sleet became common. They sailed on amidst spit and spray, a grey wet horizon walling in the ship. The lady could not come on deck. She was not seen even at meals, but was closely confined to her cabin, ordering what she needed from Watson the steward. And day by day the weather got worse, and the voyage seemed interminable. The very provisions threatened to fail; already there were whisperings about short allowances. But the lady's mess was, come what might, to be kept up.

Her face had not been seen for a fortnight, when one evening, the Captain came on deck with a flushed countenance and disconcerted air. He held a long consultation with Macintyre, who seemed utterly nonplussed. The steward thereupon ran down the companion stair and ran up again; and then the Captain darted down, and after a few minutes reappeared. He whispered to Macintyre, dashed his sou'wester from him, and

seemed greatly agitated. Every man on deck, believing the ship was sinking, ran aft, some asking if they should man the pumps. But the captain groaned, and only said, "God have mercy on us! the lady is dead, and a child is alive!" and diving down again, disappeared.

When the Captain went to the lady's cabin, he found her almost speechless, with a fine babe wrapped up in a blanket beside her. She took his hand, and feebly, with broken accents and great effort, said, "I expected to be home—long before this—and to have saved my babe." Then she broke down and fainted. Having recovered, she said, "Be sure and give—and give—my desk with all in it—to Mr. Thompson, Writer, Elgin. Write to my husband at Valparaiso—his name his William—" The tears trickled down her calm and sweet countenance. "God forgive him—tell him—tell him I do!"

"His name?" eagerly inquired the Captain.

“Battens—”

“Buttons did you say?” asked the Captain. “Cheer up, dear lady; God may yet preserve you. Steward—a little brandy—quick!” and the Captain, holding her hands, leant over her, while the tears rolled down his honest face, like the first drops of a thunder-shower. But there was no response save the feeble cry of the little boy from the blanket which his dead mother had wrapped around him.

It was afterwards discovered, that the marriage of Annie Fordyce with William Battens had not been a happy one. She was one of those sweet creatures who are here below called angels. Early in life she was left an orphan, and went to Valparaiso to keep a brother's house. The brother died, and she married Battens, his partner, who turned out very differently from what he had appeared to her sweet, trustful nature. He was vain and selfish, and latterly—But the less said about his character the better for the reader. I need not display the evil which exists in society. All men believe in

that. Rather let it be forgotten over Annie's face, calm and sweet, as if the spirit which once animated it remained awhile to illumine the palace where it had so long dwelt.

Annie had heard of a small property which was left to her, in her own right, but which her husband was resolved to lay hold of to squander on his pleasures. She hoped to be able to reach the home of some near friends before her confinement. But the slow sailing of the ship, and the prolonged gales made this impossible; and what her thoughts and anguish were—with her hopes and fears and uncertainties—delicate-feeling women alone can tell.

It is not easy to comprehend what that death and birth were to the Captain and crew of the ship! They could dispose of the dead body without difficulty. Whatever feelings of pain they experienced, and these were very real, they had been too familiar with death to be much struck by it. They had heaved many a comrade over in his hammock; they had often seen a man at one

moment beside them, and in the next floating like a speck in the boiling surge, when the terrible cry of "A man overboard!" was vain to bring relief. But a tender babe, without a woman near, without a nurse of any kind, and men skilled only in the rough usages of the wild sea, was something very different. The Captain was a father, and loved his children, and he and the steward, also a father, put their heads together and consulted about the babe. The two were seated in the Captain's cabin, the child still wrapped in the blanket, on the Captain's knees.

"Beautiful boy," said Wauchope.

"A jewel," remarked Watson.

"Frail bark," said Wauchope.

"God can steer it into port," responded Watson.

"I pray God he may do so, Watson."

"Thank ye, Captain," continued the steward. "I have been long thinking and contriving what to give it. I may tell you that I have tried—beg

pardon for the liberty—biscuits soaked in weak tea—and I kept, unknown to you, sir—I ax pardon again, sir—some preserved eggs for his poor mother, and I'll beat them up beautiful for the blessed little angel."

"All right, my hearty—try—try—try." And somehow or other, they got it to swallow the nourishment; and the Captain vowed with a grin of joy that he saw the child lick his lips as a spoonful descended his small throat. The hope, however faint, that the boy might reach land, cheered them up.

"We have all been great sinners," said the Captain to Watson, "but He won't, I hope, punish the child for this, but preserve him." And there and then the Captain vowed in his heart that he would swear no more.

When the Captain came on deck to arrange with the carpenter for the lady's burial, he observed a great change for the better in the weather.

It was evening. All the men, not excepting

the watch, petitioned the captain to lay the ship to, and lash the helm, that the whole might come in their best rig to do honor to "the lady." They all had reasons of their own, for wishing to take a part in the ceremony, and, on comparing notes, they found that she had, on different grounds, made each her friend.

Tenderly and lovingly she was wrapped in her canvas coffin, with the ship's flags laid over it. They who bore her paced slowly and solemnly to the bulwarks, and laid the plank on which she lay endwards to the open port. On each side the sailors ranged themselves, clean and tidy, hat in hand. As the procession passed the Captain said, "Halt!" He then went below, and reappeared with the little child in its blanket, over which a dark shawl of its mother's was laid like a funeral pall. "This is the chief mourner," he said, as he stood at the head of the body. Then, after a pause, he continued, "My men, you know I'm no parson, but sailors are Christians, and so I say—"

and he shut his eyes and reverently repeated the Lord's Prayer, ending with the simple words, "in hopes of a glorious resurrection through the mercy of Jesus Christ." Lifting up the shawl, he kissed the child, and made its little hand touch the head of its dead mother. A signal was given, and, the end of the plank being lifted up, the body slipt down into the deep. There was a momentary splash, and the wild waves rolled on as before, their crests gilded by a setting sun of glorious brilliancy, which filled the sky from the far west up to the zenith, and was reflected from the eastern clouds.

"My lads," said the captain, "I will now serve you out an extra glass of grog." The honest fellow intended this for a token of good-will which the crew could understand; and they understood and valued it accordingly.

"May I ask without offence," said an old sailor, hat in hand, to the Captain, "what's the boy's name?"

“Why, Fred,” replied the Captain, “I don’t exactly know till he is baptized, but I think his father’s name is William Buttons.”

“All right,” said Fred; “pass the word for’ard—the young un’s name’s Billy Buttons.”

The next request was that all might see the child; and so they all congregated round the bundle, out of which was visible a small face with winking black dots for eyes, and a little mouth that seemed longing for something it could not get.

This conference was broken up by commands to shake out the reefs in the foretopsail, to set main and foresails, and to bear four points away. The wind had changed into a strong yet favorable quarter-wind, and the prospects of a speedy voyage diffused joy over the ship.

“It’s all owing, I tell you,” said Murray, “to Billy Buttons!”

Perhaps it was. The Lord of Nature was once a child, took children in his arms, and blessed them.

As the crew off watch sat in the evening round the stove while the ship was going along her course with every sail set, the conversation was all about Billy and his mother. The Captain had explained that the husband of the dead lady was in Valparaiso, and that she had hoped to have reached land before her babe was born; and this so far explained some of the mystery which hung around her, and the death and birth on board.

Before tasting their liquor, Archy Hunter from Greenock said, "In memory of;" and all responded, "In memory of;" one adding, "God bless her!" another, "She's blessed aloft—safe in port, lads." Then, after a pause, big Tom said, "Here's a good voyage, lads, to our small craft." "To Billy Buttons!" repeated all hands—"not forgetting our noble Captain." "Towards!" added one of the hands.

The formal toasts, as in duty bound, having been all drunk, the men whiffed their pipes, and

the conversation began to flow imperceptibly in the old channel.

“Do you believe, Dick,” asked one of the crew, addressing the tallest and most robust of the company, “that you were ever as small as Billy?”

“Well, Sam, I can’t quite remember,” answered Dick, “how I looked when launched, and before I was rigged and left port; but I s’pose I was much about it. It ain’t easy to believe I ever gave bother to my mother afore I knowed it.”

“Nor I,” chimed in a third. “And mayhap if any of us had thought it, we might have given less bother to our old mothers after we *did* know it.”

“You have me there,” said Dick, meditatively, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe. “Here we are jolly boys; but if we were all once like Billy Buttons, with mothers a-crying, a-dying, a-walkin’ about with us, and hushing and buzzing with us, day and night, it’s an ugly thing to look astern and to think how little we did for them

when they were fighting with the gale of life, ay, and some sinking in it."

Silence followed Dick's honest attempt at moralizing. It was interrupted by one of the crew asking—

"How are we to bring Billy to shore? Here's the cabin-boy a-nursing him, and Watson a-feeding him, and the Captain watching his edication, and the mate chewing his tobacco over him; but will he live without his mother?"

"The Father in heaven alone knows! None of us lived without our mothers," said a voice from one of the bunks.

"I did!" said another voice, "for I was brought up on the bottle by an uncle and aunt."

This sage remark excited the first laugh they had had during the day.

"Ha, ha!" said Halliday, "and you've ever since stuck to the bottle without the milk."

"It's the feedin' o' Billy that puzzles me; I can't shape my course through it nohows," said Dick.

“I’ve been thinking,” remarked an old sailor, “that a little drop of tobacco-juice might do Billy good!—What are ye all laughing at?” he exclaimed, with honest indignation at the reception his remark met with. “I can tell you that when I could get neither meat nor drink, when shipwrecked on a coral-reef, I was kept alive by tobacco; and it stands to reason that if it saved a man, it might save a child. And I’ll stick to it, and would give all the baccy I have if a drop of the juice would keep Billy alive.”

“His stomach won’t stand it. He is not, ye see, accustomed to it,” sagely remarked another.

“I’ll tell ye, boys,” said Thoms the carpenter, who had not yet spoken, “that all bairns like fun. And what say you, Wallace, to give us a scrape of yer owld fiddle, and we might get up a dance round Billy! Eh? It would open his eyes and make him laugh.”

There was no difference of opinion as to the wisdom and propriety of this proposal.

Billy all this time was utterly unconscious, poor little fellow, of the pan-forecastle synod which was consulting about him, with his trials and pleasures. But he seemed well and not unhappy, though He alone who feeds the sparrows in the winter's cold, and the sea-birds on the stormy waves, could tell how it could be so! The cabin-boy rejoiced in nursing him and putting him to sleep: it so reminded him of his home in the glen, to see which again he was counting the hours. The steward fed the child with his contrivances of eggs, to which he added weak, very weak, brandy and water.

Linen and flannel had been freely given by the Captain to clothe Billy, and he himself undertook the duty of sponging him with lukewarm water every day. And so the little thing sucked its lips and gave sundry groans and grunts, and often sharp cries—prolonged sometimes into continued screams, in which its little red tongue vibrated in its mouth, and which so alarmed even the crew that faces at

times might be seen peering down the companion stairs, asking what ailed Billy. Daily he was aired on deck, and daily each sailor insisted on having the honor of carrying him, and it was indeed a sight to see those jappanned faces chirruping and smirking to the unseen treasure rolled up in the blanket. In a few days the very navigation of the ship was affected by the presence of the child. It was not unfrequent to hear such remarks as these: "I say, Tom, easy with that rope;" or, "Don't make such a clattering on deck;" or, "Heave in that yard handy, for Billy is sleeping." And one would express his delight at the fine breeze and the prospect of sighting land soon, "because they would get a nurse for Billy;" or suggest that the reef in the topsails, taken in an hour before, might be shaken out, and "half a knot more got out of her for Billy." His influence went so far at last that one remarked, "There's no blasphemy in this ship as I have heard. The Captain has dropped it for the sake of Billy, and we're all following his

example, eh?" The men seemed really to have become more cheerful in their work,—for "the Captain was a mother to Billy,"—and more kind to each other from their common sympathies with Billy. Mothers long dead, or mothers expecting them home, brothers and sisters whom they had played with long ago, all the softening remembrances of childhood, the only Eden—though often a poor one—in many a wild and rough life; these were all unconsciously suggested by Billy. Even a bird driven in its weakness away from land to their ship for refuge, would have quickened in them kindly feelings—thanks to the presence of this child, cast at their feet like a waif of the wild sea.

One morning early the look-out paused in his slow walk on the fore-castle, bent down, shaded his eyes with his hands, and then sent the cheering words ringing along the deck, "Land a-head on the weather bow." In an instant the Captain's telescope was directed toward the spot indicated, and a low dark line, from which the haze was

slowly rising, was seen. As soon as the news spread, all hands were peering toward the distant shore, conjecturing what portion of it they had sighted, when Dick Martin said, "Three cheers, my lads, for Billy Buttons—it's him has done it!" A hearty cheer was given, which astonished the Captain, who did not swear, but smile, saying to his mate, "I think it's Kinsale Head. But I am determined to make for the first port and get a proper nurse for Billy, for he doesn't take to his food, except a little raw egg wi' a few drops o' brandy beat up intilt."

"He'll take to the baccy yet before he puts his helm down and goes about!" remarked an old sailor, turning his own quid round with a sly wink to his messmates.

The mate said nothing but "All right; the land will soon come oot, it's loomin' mair and mair; we shall mak' our course soon."

"Well, Captain," said the steward, "we've done the job, I do declare, after all! He'll get into

port; Losh! I could maist greet tae think o't! Wee Peter" (the cabin-boy) "is dancin' about the cabin half daft, pairtly at comin' hame, but mair for Billy."

The *Clyde* put into Cork harbor, and the worthy Captain immediately went on shore in his gig. He said to the crew, "Now, lads, avast heaving with grog. We shall, I promise you, splice the main brace when we get on board with a nurse for Billy, but not till then, lads—not till then, mind."

The men touched their hats, and said, "Never fear, sir, you may depend on us. Good luck to you, sir. You'll find us here any time you come back."

The Captain proceeded direct to the "Lying-in Hospital," where, on stating his case, and, what was a more weighty argument, offering a handsome sum of money, he managed to get a respectable nurse, able and willing to nourish Billy.

Never did men receive into their boat a person with more satisfaction than they did the jolly-

looking blue-eyed Irish nurse, whom the Captain, almost nervous with excitement, handed in; never before did the oars of the gig bend and flash and roll with such quick and regular rhythm; and never was more sincere happiness felt on board a ship, than when the crew of the *Clyde* swung the nurse on board. Her hands were seized with a grasp which made her cry, "Och, don't be a killing my bit fingers, but let me to the little darlint." Soon she had Billy in her arms, and though the orders were given to heave anchor with a will, yet there was such an anxiety to hear the report from the cabin, that it was not until the Captain came up and said, "Draws like the big pump! Heave away now, lads!" that they really set about work. Then with a cheer and a bound, the windlass was manned, and round they went to the tune of "Ho ro, Sally O!" adapting to its refrain impromptu lines fitted to the occasion, such as sailors delight to indulge in. One rough voice would chime in "Billy is my darling, my darling," etc.,; impro-

vised by the next singer into "Buttons and *his* darling, his darling;" and then the united chorus of "Ho ro, my Sally O! Heave it round, my Sally O!" as with more rapid tramp they moved round the windlass.

It was quite true Billy had taken to Bridget. And Bridget declared that it was the "blessed Virgin" alone could have preserved the child alive, but that even the Virgin herself could not be expected to have kept him alive to Glasgow without her coming on board. Pat, her husband, had always declared that her "childer throve like young potaturs," etc. And so the little woman went on talking, after having made Billy comfortable, and blessed him over and over again as a sea wonder.

All this time the good ship, under a steady breeze, was bravely working her way along the Irish coast onward to the Clyde.

The Captain had not neglected to bring on board a large supply of fresh provisions of all kinds

required. He served them out liberally, along with such an allowance of grog as made the crew anticipate with glee the dinner which he had ordered to be prepared for them.

After the dinner was over, one of the crew was deputed to thank the Captain, and to ask, as a great favor, to allow Billy to come on deck, as "they wished to have a dance in honor of the young bo'sun." The Captain—whose nature seemed to have become almost too soft and tender—reminded them how cold the weather had become; that December in the north was not like December in the south; and that if he let Billy up, it could only be for a few minutes. But, as the sun was shining, they might have their fun as soon as Billy could be got ready. It was a busy half hour with Mrs. Bridget M'Dermot to get out of her trunk all the bits of ornament she had crammed into it, along with her new cap, etc.

At length she managed somehow to make Billy quite a young dandy, the Captain having

ordered a large supply of things for the use of the child, from one of the best shops in the city. And when she sallied forth from the companion door, she was followed by the steward and Peter grinning from ear to ear. Billy in her arms was dressed "so handsome," with a fine flowing white shawl about him; and, as for herself, she was like the nurse of a lady, smiling blandly and looking kindly from her fine Irish blue eyes upon her little charge, quite unable to meet the gaze of all the Jacks who were drawn up in line to receive her. It was really, as the Captain said, "a sight for sore eyes"—his own being a little red and watery, as he turned his back for a moment from the group.

"Now for it, Wallace!" cried one of the crew, and Wallace scraped up a sort of reel, and away went the tars heel and toe, until joining hands, they wheeled round Billy and his nurse, to the evident delight of the latter. The dance ended in a mingled burst of laughter and cheers, with "Hoorah for Billy!" "Hoorah for the Captain!"

“Hoorah for the pretty nurse!” which made Mrs. Bridget, chuckling with delight, dive down, assisted by the steward, to her nursery below.

In less than a week the voyage ended in safety, and Billy and Mrs. Bridget were comfortably housed with Mrs. Wauchope. All the dead mother's things were carefully locked up until further orders. The desk was sent as directed, and its receipt immediately acknowledged. The lawyer informed Captain Wauchope that the property bequeathed to the lady was of little value, and her boy's title to it more than doubtful; that no provision was made for him; and that from letters in the desk, addressed by the father to the mother, it was evident that he would have nothing to do with him, as he was selfish and dissipated, had deserted his wife, and was living with another person; that in these circumstances the lawyer hardly knew what was to be done. As the boy had no relations except very distant ones, he suggested a

charity school for him, but left it to Captain Wauchope to decide, as also to settle to whom he should return the desk to be kept for the boy. As the Captain finished the reading of the letter, he only gave a smile, which expressed great satisfaction; and he immediately sallied forth to have an interview with his minister. This ended in the good man heartily agreeing to dispense the sacrament of baptism on Christmas Day, in the ship, adding, almost in a whisper, "Not on this mountain or on that, you know, Captain—but the heart, the heart—spirit and truth!"

That meeting on Christmas Day the reader can easily picture to himself. All the crew mustered in their best attire. A sort of tent was formed on the deck with sails, and decorated with evergreens and flags. And in addition to the crew, the Captain's wife and family were present. On a table covered with a fine white cloth were placed a large Bible and a china bowl with water. The Captain resolved to be the sponsor, or, as the Scotch say,

“to tak on the vows,” having told his minister that he had resolved to bring up Billy as his own child—to treat him as a lamb of his own flock. He would do this, he said, “not only for the boy’s sake, but for his mother’s sake. She was—” But what she was Wauchope seemed unable to tell the minister.

After a prayer, the minister very beautifully and touchingly recalled the chief incidents of the voyage. He then addressed Captain Wauchope, and shortly, but pointedly, expounded to him his duties as the up-bringer of the child. Then, reminding the Captain that he “promised to give this child a Christian education—bringing it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” he asked the boy’s name.

“William Buttons Wauchope Fordyce, or W. B. W. Fordyce; as you think best,” replied the Captain, with a bow.

No sooner was the child baptized and the service over, than the Captain handed him to his wife,

bidding her "pass Billy round." Each of the crew received him and handed him solemnly to his neighbor; and I verily believe some of them thought this an essential part of the holy ceremony. The Captain then ordered him to be laid down to sleep, his little head resting upon the same pillow on which the cheek of his dying mother had reposed. "It's no harm," said Wauchope. "Mayhap she sees him, and may like it."

The Captain provided an appropriate treat for all under the canvas. It would be vain to record the innocent speeches of the sailors after the minister and the Captain, with the "females," had left them to enjoy themselves, under the charge of the mate and steward. But I must not forget to mention that the minister, before parting, made a simple, earnest, cheerful, and what was called by them "a jolly speech," in which he brought out what was in every heart, regarding the boy and his mother, and what the ship's company—more especially the Captain, the steward, and wee Peter

—had been to the child, and the noble part Captain Wauchope had acted in taking him into the bosom of his own family. Even the little hearty Mrs. Bridget was not forgotten. As the minister was pleased to say, “she was, though a Papist, a most kind-hearted, good Christian.” “And now,” concluded the worthy man, “let us all part friends, and endeavor to shape our course so as at last to reach the haven of eternal rest. May God’s word be our chart to show the way, God’s Spirit our compass to direct us in the way, and Jesus Christ be our Captain at all times. A merry Christmas to you all! Both young men and maidens, old men and children, raise your hearts in praise! For unto us a child is born, unto us a Saviour is given, who is Christ the Lord!”

OUR BOB.

MRS. TURNER was a respectable, quiet, good-tempered, half-religious woman; her bones well clothed with flesh, and her flesh well clothed with a dark printed gown and heavy shawl, over many under strata of unseen habiliments. No young women were more industrious, patient, affectionate, than her daughters Jane and Mary. They were not pretty girls, yet comely and meek. But mother and daughters had one cloud which ever rested over their otherwise sunny home, one jar in their hearth music, one fly in their odoriferous ointment, one stumbling-block in their even path, one leper in their camp, one nuisance in their family, and that was Mr. Robert Turner, son and brother, who was known in the family as "our Bob."

Mrs. Turner was the relict of Robert Turner, builder and contractor, of whom history is silent. While he lived he was a bustling, active tradesman, who was seldom at home, but was ceaselessly moving to and fro, building bridges, houses, and every form of structure requiring stone and lime. He left behind, in addition to his wife, daughters, and Bob, a picture of himself, which transmits to posterity the only authentic information regarding his outer man. There he remains day and night over the chimney-piece in the parlor, within a gilt frame pitted by the flies; his black hair combed over a forehead knitted like Peter Bell's with "hows" and "whens;" his sharp, cunning eyes bright with the vision of profitable contracts; and as for his large, bony, ugly hands, one of them grasps a plan of his most famous building, a parish workhouse, while the other holds a large watch, with red ribbon and large seal attached, as if he feared time would be no more ere the workhouse was finished. The family owed nothing to him

except some *débris* secured out of the wreck of several failures, occasioned, as he said, by his kind-heartedness in signing bills for friends who never should have been trusted. His house had been to him but a passing place of call. Yet Mrs. Turner had a great opinion of Robert—she never called *him* Bob; and his daughters were trained to reverence “father,” and to put down all his selfishness (of which he had abundance), his cross temper, and his oft doses of whiskey-toddy, to the cares, the necessities, and unknown mysteries of his craft.

Bob was a strong, healthy, black-headed, round-faced, stout-limbed boy, who whistled loud, never rested in one place, demanded meals at all hours, coaxed or bullied his mother as it suited him, teased his sisters, slammed the doors, broke the chairs, and loved himself supremely. His father left his mother to take care of him, and his mother made over the trust to Bob himself. At his father's death she became the sole guardian of the son and heir. She doated on Bob, and gratified

her own feelings by gratifying his. She had not heart, she said, to find fault with him. Besides, of what use was it to do so? for Bob, she often remarked, would always have his own way. It was very strange and very wrong, no doubt. But so it was. She could not, indeed, understand it. He was not like his sisters, "poor things." She knew she was too kind to Bob; in fact, her indulgence might have melted a heart of stone; but somehow Bob's heart was either not stone, or if metal it would not melt. It was peculiar, and resisted all the warmth of her maternal down. She made every sacrifice to secure his protection. The jelly which she expended upon him during the year in tithe to obtain his pious services, was immense. But all was in vain! Bob remained the same Bob, only more intense, if possible, in his individuality. Her only consolation was the acknowledged impossibility of putting an old head on young shoulders, and the admitted fact that "boys would be boys;" and therefore Bob would be Bob. He was quite

aware of the impression which his powerful will had upon his mother. From his infancy he was convinced, by a series of careful experiments, that to gain any point he had only to make himself thoroughly disagreeable. No position occupied by his mother was ever found impregnable. Perseverance conquered it in the end. He had only to vigorously assail it by a ceaseless fusilade of tears, sulks, kicking of the heels, knocking at the door, with sundry other imperious or peevish modes of demanding immediate submission, and the white flag was sure to be waved by his mother as a sign of capitulation, and some genial nicety awarded as a peace-offering to the victor.

Bob grew up a fine-looking young man, as people remarked. He got some sort of employment as clerk in a counting-house. He dressed well, took lessons on the flute, and told materially upon the nerves of the inhabitants of the upper and lower flats of the house, not to mention those of his own family. But as "our Bob" was fond of

music, he must cultivate his genius. He also wore a Glengarry bonnet, and in all respects did, of course, what other young fellows did. Bob discovered, as he elegantly expressed it, that he was "no muff" to be trammelled by rules of right, and that *he* was not to be tied to his mother's apron-strings. Besides, could he not do with his own what he pleased? and had he not his own salary, his own time, his own companions, his own plans, and his own great self to take care of? Why should he not therefore go out to supper when he pleased, especially as he took only a Welsh rabbit and a glass of ale with Tom Wilson and Watty Snell? Was there any harm in that, he should like to know? If he came home late, he did not ask Jane or Mary to sit up for him. If they liked to do it, it was their own look-out. His mother was growing nervous, and it was quite ridiculous the fuss she made about him! Why should he be different from other fellows? Was he to have no companions? And if he exceeded occasionally, what

could a young fellow do? and what was the use of making such a noise about it? It was really too bad! Bob would "be hanged" if he would stand it! And once or twice poor Bob's heart got really quite soft from sympathy with himself, and his eyes extra red at the thoughts of his ill-usage. "It is a pity of our Bob. He is not so steady as I could wish," his mother would say. But then the thought that "young men would be young men" as an old and admitted axiom in morals and education, gave her consolation. Bob had a number of friends in the country whom he often visited on Saturdays, remaining with them till Monday. Who those friends were, was never accurately ascertained by Mrs. Turner. She was under the pleasing impression, however, that they were junior partners in the mercantile house in which Bob was clerk. Thus he was seldom in the family pew on Sunday. When he did find himself there by accident, he seemed curious to know what was in the Bible or Psalm-book, as he often read them

while the clergyman, an excellent man, was preaching. He seemed also anxious to ascertain the number of the congregation, as well as to pry into the more interesting female countenances in the church. But when he went to the country, Mrs. Turner was assured by him that he always attended church, which comforted her, and convinced her of his respectability and steadiness.

Bob was a great favorite with Wilson, Snell, and Co. If any addition was required to make up a party of pleasure to have "some fun," or "a spree," then all exclaimed, "Bob Turner is sure to come;" and all agreed that "a capital fellow was Bob." His song was the first and last so long as notes were possible. His jokes and stories were all appropriate to the select society in which he moved. He was described by them as "a wild fellow;" "rather gay;" "up to everything;" "very good-hearted, though he sometimes forget himself," as if that were possible to Bob, while memory

lasted, which it generally did till about half-past two in the morning!

But Mrs. Turner and her daughters, in process of time, became really concerned about this said "good-hearted" young man. His late hours and late gettings up, his dissipated looks, his sulks and moody selfishness, began to make a deep impression. "Our Bob" was changed into "our poor Bob." His mother presumed one day to scold him, but she had no cause to congratulate herself on the result; and she fared no better when she began to weep. Bob declared he did not know what "all that stuff was about," and wished to know if she considered him a child? or supposed he could not take care of himself? These scenes were often repeated with similar results. Bob demanded sympathy from his sisters. Mary was silent, but Jane calmly and truly told him what she thought of his character and conduct. Bob remarked that he really did not know she could scold so well. Was she aware who she was speak-

ing to? Did she or Mary set themselves up as saints? What did they know? Did they take him to be a fool who was to be dictated to by girls like them? He wished no more of this nonsense, or he might leave the house! They told him to begone; the sooner the better, as he was becoming a disgrace to them. Bob told *them* to begone, and reminded them that the house was not theirs. Mrs. Turner at last interposed; told her daughters it was "no use speaking to poor Bob." It might make things worse. They must try what kindness could do; and accordingly Bob was permitted to go on without remark. He therefore went and came when he pleased. He only bargained that his meals should wait his time. Something hot and spicy was to be left for him at the fireside at night. He would take even a red herring. He also liked a strong cup of tea in the morning before rising; and so, while Bob snored off his heavy sleep in one room, Mrs. Turner bedewed her pillow with tears in another; and the

wearied sisters often joined in the same exercise unknown to her or to each other. But it was understood that all should meet the kind-hearted young man with smiling and pleased faces in the morning.

No friend or neighbor ever heard a whisper against Bob uttered by one of his suffering household.

Time passed, and Bob was dismissed from his situation. Wilson and Snell were obliged to leave hurriedly for Australia. Bob lent them money to take them away, which of course *they* never repaid, and which, having been borrowed by Bob to oblige his friends, *he* never repaid.

Poor Bob was so "unfortunate!" What now could he do? It was lucky for him, as his mother remarked, that he had a home, "poor fellow." That home was not an affluent one. Mrs. Turner had but £20 a year. Her chief support was from her daughters' sewing. Bob's salary had barely sufficed to keep himself. He was "too

good-hearted to his friends," "did no person harm but himself," was "easily led away," "had not the face to say no!" These were some of the charitable interpretations of his character by his tolerant family. Then those bad young men, Wilson and Snell! Oh, it was shameful how they used him! His employers also had been very harsh to dismiss him so summarily! Bob quite entered into those views. He felt how gratifying it must be to his sisters to work for their suffering and unfortunate brother. His mother's sympathy with him was most soothing to his wounded feelings. But his time was not lost; for he had leisure to read, and play the flute. Alas! his only companion was a dog, half terrier, half bull-dog, whose feeding he said cost very little, while it amused him. Some of his old friends also had compassion on him, and patronized him as often as possible at the Waterloo Tavern. How Bob contrived to get drunk was a silent mystery to his family. But it was, after all, "a pity of poor Bob," because, as

his mother said, "he could not get a situation, and idleness was such a temptation!"

Bob at last obtained a situation, "through a friend," as a traveller to a commercial house, and, as a matter of course, lost it in six weeks. He was always "so unfortunate!"

It was now whispered by various "parties" that Bob Turner was "a thorough scamp."

Not he! He was a very ill-used young man who deserved the compassion of his friends. It was really too bad, he remarked, of his sister Jane to insinuate that it was through his own fault that he lost his situation. Indeed, all of them might have a little more feeling for him.

These sisters worked late and early to be able to give a comfortable meal to "poor Bob." More than once they had to decline taking a trip to the country to visit some friends. The reason they assigned to the world was not the real one. "Between ourselves, we had not a decent dress. We

have had to work very hard, you know, to help 'poor Bob.'"

"How is your mother, Mary?"

"Oh, pretty well. Yes, pretty well."

"She looks care-worn?"

"Do you think so? I have been unwilling to believe it. But I rather fear you are right. Jane made the same remark. But—but—between ourselves, she has been terribly put about with poor Bob."

Yet it is comforting to know that Bob was wonderfully contented all the while. "Nothing like patience," he sagely remarked. He complained, no doubt, that the sort of life he led was rather dull. But he enjoyed, nevertheless, excellent health, was thankful to say that his appetite was as good as ever, and was always glad if any kind friend dropped in at night to join him in a tumbler. It kept his spirits up.

Week after week, month after month, that young man ate and slept, sulked and twaddled,

repented and abused, asked for pity and porter, whined about himself and his misfortunes, and got all he asked.

Bob fell ill. His bad health was caused indirectly by his dissipated habits. But, of course, no one in the family dared to hint to him anything which would give him pain. Jane once tried to touch his conscience, but Bob stopped her by saying, that "this was not the time to talk to a fellow about his faults. She should have more sympathy."

The doctor was, of course, sent for. A thought of how he was to be paid never entered Bob's head. The sisters toiled an extra hour to put this right. Bob thought he might be more attentive, which meant that he should visit him once every day at least, to soothe his feelings, by assuring him of recovery.

Bob was very open to kindness during his sickness; the quantity of clothes over him, the smoothing of the pillow, the exact hour of giving him his medicine, the quality of his food, the care

with which he was watched, the readiness with which his demands, day or night, were answered—all these things engaged his attention. He was not disappointed. Whatever happened, “poor Bob” was always attended to. His mother sat beside him with a constancy which was wonderful. She made all his food, and gave it to him with her own hand. Hour after hour she sat on the large easy-chair beside the fire, her flannel night-cap tied round her head with a black handkerchief. A large collection of pans and bowls, with a brown tea-pot, and small tin kettle, grouped around the grate, were her special charges. She simmered this, stewed that; kept one drink hot, and cooled another; put on coals, and took off coals; helped Bob’s head up, and let it down; turned him, clapped him, coaxed him, watched him, and thought about him day and night. She was never weary, never impatient, and seemed to think that rest and sleep were superfluities of nature which love could dispense with, and all “to

make poor Bob comfortable." The girls wrought hard, but never complained, unless it was that "mother" insisted on doing everything herself.

"Would Bob not like to see the clergyman?" was a question often discussed between Mrs. Turner and her daughters before it was ever proposed to him. But he saw no use of it. It was like signing his death-warrant. He said he would think about it; he did not like making a long mouth—was not one of those who made a profession of religion; knew many who did so that were not better than their neighbors; besides, clergymen were just like other people. If a man could not take care of himself, what could clergymen do for him? He hated humbug and hypocrisy! Such were some of Bob's dying aphorisms about men and things, and so no one wished to hurt his feelings by asking any one to help him in his last days. His mother and sisters were obliged to smother their sorrows, "for it did not do to cross or vex poor Bob."

Bob died. Many friends of the family came to the funeral. Old employers, who forgot old differences; young men, who had been once fellow-workers at the same desk with him; distant relatives, with an uncle and his sons from the country—all assembled out of respect to the family.

“Poor fellow!” some remarked, with more charity than wisdom, “he did no one harm but himself; he was his own worst enemy.” Others said he was “no doubt very foolish,” “thoughtless,” “too easily led astray,” “but kind-hearted!” All acknowledged that “it was a pity for his mother and sisters, who were so very respectable.” An old employer put £5 into Mrs. Turner’s hand as a mark of sympathy. The uncle, a plain weather-beaten farmer, paid the expenses of the funeral. Bob left the house of the living, for the last time, at a slow pace, in a handsome hearse, with angelic figures and cherubic faces shining black and supporting nodding plumes. In the house he had left, his mother and sisters were

catching the last glimpse of the hearse through the chinks of the window-blind, their eyes red with sorrow, their sobs long and deep, and their hearts full of unutterable thoughts.

Bob now lies among long grass, near a mouldy, damp wall, beside his father, and among ten thousand sleepers till the resurrection morn.

On the Sunday following his death, his mother and sisters went to visit his grave and weep there. What memories soothed them? What legacy of love had he left behind him? What ray of calm sun-light did his character cast on that new-made grave?

For many months after, they labored in silent patience to pay several debts for which they had become bound, in order to keep "poor Bob" out of jail.

AUNT MARY.

AUNT MARY belonged to that class of female society designated "old maids." My blessing be upon them!—if the greater can be blessed by the lesser. They have, at least, one devoted admirer among the male sex, whose love, if sobered by years, is yet deepened by whatever experience years have left behind them.

Aunt Mary was, in comparison with "Our Bob," what a blue sky, with balmy air, is to a drizzly day, with muddy streets; or what a green, grassy spot among the hills, with tufts of blooming heather, and a clear bubbling spring, near which sheep repose at evening, and lambs sport at morning, is to a black, treacherous morass, where cattle are smothered, and which the circumspect traveller avoids by a long *détour*.

Amidst the cares and anxieties of life, and the selfishnesses and meannesses of the world, it soothes and refreshes the heart to think of Aunt Mary. Her name is like oil on the troubled waters.

But she was an old maid ! Her niece Georgiana often remarked this ; as if *she* could never earn such an addition to her name. Yet a careful observer might, from sundry indications in her face and disposition, have safely hazarded the conjecture of her being, one day, in this respect at least like her aunt. Her sister, Mrs. Simpson, often remarked, with a certain self-satisfied, yet triumphant manner, as she poured out the tea, " Our Mary, you know, is a confirmed old maid." Nevertheless, Mary, as she quietly surveys Mr. Simpson's unintellectual face, like a purse in which everything interesting or attractive is locked up, as if to keep another leathern purse in countenance, and as she hears Mr. Simpson's apoplectic cough, and listens to his borough-mongering prose, never envies,

and is never tempted to envy, her sister Jane's good fortune.

Yes; Mary was an old maid! Every one knew that. Her dozen nephews and nieces knew it well, and seemed to look upon it, somehow, as a matter of course. So they had found her when they were born; so she had continued to be all their lifetime. But why was Mary never married? Was she ugly?—I mean *plain*, a word which is, at least, smoother, more ambiguous, and less decisive. To me she was always beautiful—in a way; yes, far more so, indeed, than many who are called, and I presume are, beautiful in the estimation of the world. I cannot dissect Mary's features, or determine what was defective in curve, or line, or general cast, whether of chin, nose, cheek, or forehead. All I can say with perfect truth is, that I have seen the beauties of many nations, when presented before the public eye at grand festivities and at royal courts;—when arrayed, trimmed, bejewelled, bedizened, toileted, lustrous, from the top of the adorned

crown to the point of the satin shoe ; and yet that quiet eye of Aunt Mary's, harvesting into the garner of her heart all that was hopeful and good in other human beings, and rejecting the evil only ; those lips around which the lights and shadows of love ever played, and words of kindness ever lurked ; that whole countenance, in spite of the small curls, which clustered round it, and the unartistic cap which crowned it, had a beauty to me which I never felt exist in Madonnas on dead canvas, or in living beauties with dead souls. Those old familiar tones of voice, too, which I have heard joyously chiming at marriages, softly tolling at funerals, and ringing curfews to us boys, ere going to rest, with merry peals on holidays, have lingered in memory's ear as a music, whose echoes are grander and more prolonged than those of sublime oratorios ! I cannot believe Mary was ever thought plain ! Indeed, to do her justice, I never heard any one say so, not even Mrs. Simpson, whose judgment in matters of taste, by the way, would to me

have had little authority, from her studies in that line having been confined too exclusively to Mr. Simpson's face. Nor did I ever hear that Mary "had no admirers," or that she "never was asked in marriage." On the contrary, I remember distinctly an authentic conversation about a love affair of Mary's between my mother and a near relative. It was some forty years ago on a wintry night, at the fire-side, when they thought I was asleep on the sofa. The hero was one who was gentle-born, gentle-hearted, and noble-minded, with accomplishments and refined talents which might have been divided over many rich mercantile firms, and yet leave enough to make the giver still rich in his gifts. But he was "but a tutor!" It was alleged by my mother, who had "reason to know," that his love for Mary was like a possession, though he kept it so quiet that few ever guessed its existence; and the other relative had also a "reason to know" that this was equally true of Mary's feeling toward the tutor. But

why, then, had Mary not been married? Was it his poverty? or Mary's devotion to her father and mother, and to her young brothers and sisters? or what? No one could well tell. But all knew that Mary never breathed his name. It became an understood thing, indeed, long ago, in the family, that no person ever alluded to the tender subject. Her father had, on one occasion, when some person spoke lightly of it, forbade, with a sternness rare in him, that it should be mentioned again in his or in her presence; for he loved Mary "as his own soul." He always called her "his own Mary." And thus, as I have said, she found herself enrolled in the corps of female society called "old maids." Yet she never became discontented or unhappy, but circulated like a star of promise and of hope through the homes of her kindred and friends.

I do not say that all old maids are like Aunt Mary. Some, I know, partake largely of the sins, more or less, clinging to our common humanity, and are stiff, selfish, hard. These, generally speak-

ing, are the best off in the world ; have large quantities of old china, with gods sitting cross-legged on a side-table ; fans, sandal-wood boxes, and silver filagree baskets, all brought home from India by their brother, who left his money to them. They have also a spoiled poodle, asthmatic, ostentatious, and uncourteous. They wear black silk mittens in the house, and are rich in boas and muffs in winter. They pay stately visits once a year—generally on the same returning week, taking Murray, their servant, with them—to aristocratic relations, who have a small property in the country. They are rich in gossip, and rejoice in passing all sorts of crude intelligence about personal and family affairs, along their stiff telegraphic wires ; and are flattered by their nephew, Sam, who is sorry for their colds, but would not be sorry for their deaths. Let these old maids depart in peace without further notice. They might have been great, indeed, had they only used the great talents of their time, their money, and their influence.

There are other old maids, again, who are what is termed sour and discontented. Is that a sin which no one will cover with a mantle of charity? Methinks a small handkerchief of charity might suffice! For was it nothing to have to keep the deepest feelings of their nature pent up within them for life? Was it nothing to be fettered, cribbed, chained, held back, held down, merely because of some defect in the contour of the chin, in the modelling of the nose, or in the color of the eye? Or if with no such defects as these, but, alas, with an incurable defect in the estimation of so many—the want of the god Mammon, and the possession of only his temple, the purse—but empty! Was this no *trial*? But why are there so many old maids who *could* have married, but did not? For reasons, I take it upon me to reply, which, if known, would reveal, in many an old maid, a moral heroism that might exalt her name above thousands of those which emblazon the page of history! Self-respect; refined taste; the love

of an ideal never realized in the coarse materials with which circumstances brought her into contact ; self-sacrifice to duty ; the claims of kindred, old or young, on her ministrations ; aye, self-sacrifice by the true love "which seeketh not its own," but the good and happiness of its beloved object, and which, accordingly, weighs carefully the whole circumstances of the case, making up the result of what is right and suitable for a woman to do, not only for her own sake, but chiefly for *his*. Oh ! how many in the silence of their own heart, in their lonely chamber on their bended knees, or alone beneath the stars, with no eye upon them but that of God, have endured a long struggle and a crisis of great agony, while the knife pierced their hearts as they offered up themselves as a sacrifice at the altar of duty, which is ever the sublimest sight on earth, in the eyes of pitying and admiring angels ! Such offerings as these are the more solemn and touching, because the more secret and unknown to the world, being made in the holy of

holies of a pure and sensitive spirit, beyond whose veil no one can enter, save the one High Priest and Brother-man!

I have unconsciously allowed my feelings to run off with my pen, so far as to betray me into more serious language than I intended to use when wishful to express my respect and sympathy for old maids. But I don't retract a word; for I ask my readers, with perfect confidence as to the reply which the vast majority of them will give, whether among their acquaintances they cannot select from old maids, rich or poor, those who are the most loving, unselfish, considerate, generous, genial, and happy women on earth? Yet these dear ladies are the persons who, forsooth, because they are "old maids," our comfortable matrons often think of so slightly, while they survey all the blessings of their happy homes, and see themselves continued in their children's children. With countenances oily with comfort and complacency, they talk of "our son John's good fortune," "our dear Eliza's

marriage," of "our sweet Flora's engagement," and of the prosperity of their family, and their domestic blessings—among others, not the least, that of having Aunt Mary to help at the weddings, and to save them too much trouble in making the purchases, and to remain with her sister to comfort her when the young couple are gone, etc. And these dear old maids are the persons who are so pitied by those who have married without one grain of love, and who have sold themselves as truly as ever slaves were sold, for so much a year; with pin-money; and with *such* a comfortable house, and *such* a nice drawing-room, and *such* very handsome furniture, damask, and satin, and bronze, and mirrors, and prospects of a footman too, or butler; with a one-horse carriage, to grow into a pair, and a cottage in the country, and a good marriage portion settled all on themselves and "heirs of their body," and then—there was also, to be sure, the husband himself! Poor Aunt Mary! What a pity no one would buy her! Ah! she had too much

worth for that sort of market, so she remains poor, with few changes of fashionable raiment; and her nieces quiz her about her neat everlasting grey gowns. Her travelling baggage, the black trunk, does not cover the carriage; but she comes and goes circulating like a domestic sun among the many planets, male and female, of her house.

Every friend and relation knows when Aunt Mary will come. Is there any sickness? Is Eliza confined to a bed of lingering pain? Are the children ill with measles or whooping-cough, scarlatina or gastric fever? If so, the mother is weary, the girls are always in the way, the boys cannot amuse themselves, and the father is troubled. "Had we not better send for Aunt Mary? She is so kind and useful, and she is sure to come. Besides, she has nothing else to do." And Aunt Mary comes. The boys meet her at the coach. There is the old black trunk. She and her luggage are as unchanged as the equinoxes. Aunt Mary is heartily welcomed, and is soon at her work. What a sick-

nurse she is! How patient, how composed, how cheerful! She is up to the making of every soothing drink, and suggests every bodily appliance which can ease the patient. She has a peculiar knack of arranging the pillows and the bed-clothes, and of contriving support for the sick one's shoulders and wearied back; and as she bends over the sufferer, what sunshine and strength are derived from her looks, her words, and cheering promises, mingled with anecdotes and old stories, that make the white face on the pillow smile! She is a thousand times better than all the doctor's drugs, and much more pleasant. And then she never seems to eat or sleep. She creeps about the room with noiseless step, casting a large shadow from the small night-lamp, and she is sure to give the medicine or the nourishment at the right hour. She sleeps on a sofa, or in a small closet off the sick room. At ten o'clock she puts on that old-fashioned cap and peculiar dressing-gown, and is sure to run off and hide herself, with a quiet laugh,

when papa comes in to bid good-night. She is seldom seen at meals; or if so, is sure to be called off when at her chop, and never appears again. "Anything will do;" "she prefers tea;" "would really rather wait." Dear Aunt Mary!

Is there death? *She* is sure to be there. But no one hears loud sobs from her, or sees any symptoms of hysteria. Yet she feels in her heart of hearts. But the shadows make always a part of her landscape, as well as the lights, and she knows who sends both. In those times of sorrow and bereavement when other hearts are breaking, Aunt Mary is there to soothe them. One mourner leans her head on her shoulder. She holds another with her loving hand. She it is who alone arranges all about the dead, and tells everything that can comfort, and all that they said ere they died, and how they looked in their sleep. She connects too their latter days with all her remembrances of them when they were born, and recalls a thousand

happy reminiscences which were either never heard of before or are now forgotten.

And she is with her friends in more joyous times too. Aunt Mary is sure to be sent for at a birth. I think she is then in her glory. What a child! What eyes! What a sweet expression! How like his father and mother, and grandfather and grandmother! What singularly long hair; or, if there be none, what a fine forehead, and was there ever such a strong fine child? Or if delicate, yet so handsome! Or if very weak, she has "seen a smaller vessel reach the land." If comfort is possible, and hope be not extinct, Aunt Mary is sure to afford the one and light up the other.

She is not absent at marriages, though it must be confessed that on the marriage-day she does not occupy so prominent a place as she did during the previous six weeks of preparation. The crowds of ladies with white dresses, and gentlemen with white ties and white waistcoats, who stream into the room and form the sweeping circle of color

and grandeur, conceal her rather in the background. Yet she does not mind that, for Aunt Mary is always thinking about others. But during the previous weeks how invaluable has she been! She was an early confidante, and would sit up till two in the morning with Alice, the bed-room fire getting more and more buried in ashes, as Alice told the endless details of what William did and said, and *how* and *why* he did it and said it, and how nice it was of him, and how unexpected, and was he not a fine fellow? and would Aunt Mary only say candidly what she *really* thought of him? and did she not think she, Alice, was quite right in all she had done? and in the manner in which she had acted to William, and to his mother and father, and to her own mother and father? and did not Aunt Mary see clearly how it would never have done to have taken mamma's advice on *that* occasion, and how odd it was in her sister Martha to have thought so? Aunt Mary is very sleepy, but she wishes to make Alice happy, and so she

holds her handkerchief between her face and the fire, and listens patiently to all the talk of the girl, which, like a simple melody of love, could be easily sung by her with variations till breakfast time, and Aunt Mary with kind words drops in every bit of wise advice she can give. And then what a preparation for the wedding! If Aunt Mary "would kindly step over to Walpole's shop, and see that he has not forgot the piece of silk, and just call in passing at the milliner's about that trimming? and then there will be time enough before dinner to settle what is to be done about the cloak and morning bonnet." "Oh, do, Jane," says Mrs. Simpson to her daughter, "go take a walk; Aunt Mary will manage all that for you."

Where is she not? Is she at the gay parties? Is she at the pic-nic? Is she at the boating excursion? Is she taken to the concert? Does she make one of the party during the summer tour? "Aunt Mary does not care about these things." Does she not? Who told you? "Herself!"

Ah! dear soul, that is so like her! But why do you not interpret with more charity her sensitive heart? and value more that tender soul, which is incapable of any falsehood, except that of asserting that she cares for nothing save for what helps to please other people? Come! Paterfamilias, don't forget the hour of sickness in your house, but ask Aunt Mary, as a proof of your gratitude, to make one of the party to the Highlands of Scotland, to England, or Ireland, if not farther. Come! good lady wife and mother, see that Aunt Mary is at your best parties, and let her find in her room a new dress, if she needs one. Go and present it with a kiss of love, and warm thanks. Come! Mr. John and Miss Eliza, and all you nephews and nieces, do what you can to make Aunt Mary happy. Love her for her own sake, and use her not merely like a machine for your own convenience. *She* will neither say nor think you have done so. But if you more than suspect that such was your own selfish feeling, repent! Be assured that Aunt

Mary values all that you can give of material things, only in so far as they are signs and seals of the unseen love, which is her most precious earthly treasure.

It was a remarkable fact in Aunt Mary's history, and one which may, apart from every other, make her attractive in the eyes of many, viz., that she was rich; that is, according to the definition of riches given by Sir Thomas Browne, who says, that they are rich "who have enough to be charitable." In this sense, Aunt Mary was richer than the apostles, who have contributed not a little to the wealth of the world, yet who were obliged to make this confession, "Silver and gold have we none!" But Aunt Mary had both; for she had an annuity left her by her father of £30 per annum. Besides this she received a crisp, clean, stiff £10 bank-note from her brother William on every Christmas day, with his annual kiss, crisp a little, and stiff, too, by the way, like a stamp-receipt. Aunt Mary's love had beamed on William like

sunlight on snow, brightening his outer life, and softening its hardness, without, however, penetrating into his inner heart, so as to melt and warm it. But, nevertheless, Aunt Mary was rich, richer than some once illustrious mercantile firms and famous banks are now; richer than even some European empires; for she had no debts, but "something over," to give away, with a heart to do so. And she bestowed her gifts so wisely, so liberally, and with such true love and genuine sympathy, that her barrel of meal, always emptying, was never emptied, and her cruse of oil, always burning and shining, was never wanting some lights for those in darkness, nor did she ever require to borrow oil. What she gave was somehow so twice blessed, that baskets of fragments were gathered after all seemed spent. Aunt Mary had a large circle of acquaintances in the hamlets which here and there nestled in the neighborhood of her brother William's house. *He* always complained of the many demands which were made upon him, being under the chari-

table impression that they were all met, whereas he dismissed them, all and sundry, like a persecuted yet singularly benevolent man. But Aunt Mary got over difficulties with the audacity of thoughtful self-sacrifice. The lions in the way which growled at William, and which made him growl in return, received a portion from Aunt Mary's basket, or were so subdued by her smile, that they slipped off and disappeared.

Was there a marriage in the village? The handkerchief, the small bonnet, the gloves, or the book, which Aunt Mary gave the bride, cost little, but yet were "so unexpected," and accompanied by such words of sympathy and playful fun, that an impression was left as if a large dowry had been bestowed. "Never expected such a thing, and Sally was *so* proud of it," Mrs. Wilkins would say to her neighbors, as if her daughter had received the stamp of aristocratic approval, and goodly character, from one whom all looked up to and respected. But Mrs. Wilkins need not have

supposed that she alone received these honors, for she was immediately informed of small baby frocks girls' bonnets, a spade for old Joe, flannels for Widow Hogan, a doll for this child, and a something else for this man or woman, which had left fireside monuments of love in every family ;—things of small value in the shops, but of immense value to the human heart. Each was an electric spark that flashed messages and brought replies of kindness along the wire of a common humanity.

The sick and suffering declared they did not know what they could have done without Aunt Mary. Yet, what had she given? Could her good have been measured by the exact quantity, more or less, of the broth or soup which she gave? Or by the length and number of her visits? Many an invalid, weak, nervous, and desponding—many a lonely widow and orphan—many an old man and woman tottering in solitude through the dark valley, have received more strength and comfort from the tones of Aunt Mary's voice, from the glance of

her eye, her patient manner, the pressure of her hand, aye, even from her very silence, than whole parishes have from the stiff, unbending, hard, iron legal hand of the poor-rates and their magnificent staff of officials! Yet she gave but "what the poor can give the poor;"—she gave her love, carried another's burden, and so fulfilled the law of Christ, whose saying it was, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

What a marvellous power, also, Aunt Mary exercised over young men who cared very little for the authority of the acknowledged "powers that be!" In a quiet corner of the drawing-room, at the fire-side, or in an easy afternoon walk, she took her own way of giving advice to poor Tom before going to India; or to that nice young fellow Plunkett, whom she pities, and who is evidently making a fool of himself with that cunning heartless little flirt Miss Fitzherbert; and she does not despair even of that reckless, dissipated Jim Yates, who has something in him that attracts her, although

few else can discover it; and so she helps him in her own way, and that way is utterly indescribable! As well might I attempt to describe the delicate ministrations of light, dew, or warmth to a plant. Those who receive the good she bestows, know not how they have got it. Yet, breaches in families are healed, streams flowing the wrong way are turned into new channels, dead hearts are quickened, and all feel that Aunt Mary had something to do with it. Bold lads have frankly confessed that they cannot stand *her*. They could face a battery, or fight the police, or encounter public opinion; but as one of her muscular nephews said, "I can't resist Aunt Mary. She turns me round her little finger, and I am cross at myself for being so often made a spoon of by her; but I can't help it." Such is the mystery, yet such the simplicity, of unselfish and watchful love!

Aunt Mary herself, however, must become an invalid, suffer, and die. Strange that no one ever anticipated that event as being even probable. A

general impression seemed to prevail that all her friends would die before her, and have the comfort of her presence during their last sickness. Like a gold thread, she had been wrought into the woof of their whole life, and they could hardly imagine the family web being continued without this distinctive feature, which had ever formed so marked a portion of it. Her sick-bed was all sunshine and peace. To the last it was the centre of active benevolence and tender sympathy for others. She worked, wrote, talked, smiled, listened, advised, comforted, but always as if she herself required nothing save the happiness of giving. She was, except in body, the same as when she was in health and strength. Her bed was a bed of life rather than one of death.

One scene, only, occurred which broke in upon the calm sameness of every-day life. This was the return of a sailor lad to the village, who had been given up by his friends as being, what we call in Scotland, "a ne'er-do-weel," but in whom Aunt

Mary had taken a great interest. She used to say "they did not understand that lad Roberts;" that she "blamed his rude father and stupid mother, more than himself;" that "he had great power of feeling, with a generous nature, though both had been going in the wrong direction." So it was that she became his friend, and preached to him many sermons, such as Aunt Mary alone could preach. She sang "songs without words," such as the deeper instincts of humanity could interpret and the choral songs of holy and redeemed spirits harmonize with.

Roberts went to sea, with nothing but a Bible, and a little money, given him by Aunt Mary. This was all the poor lad possessed, and for years he had not been heard of. But he returned, the mate of a ship, with a noble figure, and a swarthy sunburnt face—the record of heavy gales, hot climates, and all the day and night mysteries of the great deep. He insisted, politely but firmly, with the servant at the Hall, on seeing Aunt Mary "if

it was possible," and alone, "if the favor could be granted." He had brought a parrot and some sweetmeats, a shark's jaw and a stuffed flying-fish, some bits of coral, and other curiosities. All these he had left with his shoes in the lobby, and, creeping up the stairs, he entered her room. Aunt Mary welcomed him; and when she put forth her thin hand and clasped that lion's paw of his, saying, "How truly rejoiced I am to see you!" poor Roberts knelt down with her hand in his, buried his face in the bed-clothes, and sobbed like a child. "I ax your pardon, mam, but I was shipwrecked, and you took me into harbor, and a sailor cannot forget that; God knows I never forgot you, and never will. So that's all, if you will pardon the freedom." Before they parted, never to meet again, Aunt Mary drank the purest happiness which a human soul can do, that of having made another partaker of its own eternal good. As Roberts left the room, he turned round and took one long look—went out—opened the door again,

and said, without being visible, "Tom was with me three years, and mayhap you'll not be offended when you see and hear him. He's wonderful grateful, and has a real good heart, has old Tom—that's his name, mind." "But who is Tom?" inquired Aunt Mary. The door was shut, and only after Roberts had gone did she hear about the parrot, which entered her room, in its cage, crying "Tom, Old Tom; I belong to Jack Roberts. Reef maintopsails!" Next day Roberts had left the village.

Aunt Mary died. The blank was not fully realized at the time. Her friends had been so accustomed to get that never-failing support when they put forth their hands for long, long years in times of sickness, that it took some time to realize the void when the hand instinctively sought it in the old place, but in vain. She died in her bachelor brother's house, which was chiefly her home. The legacy left by her was immense, and I am glad to think that not a few of the family rejoiced

to serve themselves heirs to it. A more gentle lady was never known, nor was there in their tree a more aristocratic name than that of the Lady Mary. She left riches of love, which were divided among her nephews and nieces, without payment of legacy duty. Beyond this she left nothing, save the old trunk with the round lid and the iron handle on the top, and the tufts of brown hair scattered over its surface, marking like stubble its originally luxuriant skin. Within the trunk were found a few letters from her father and mother. It was believed that there were many others, but they had been consigned to the flames: no eye had seen them, nor could any tongue comment on what Aunt Mary alone could understand. A Bible well thumbed and marked, a few books, some pieces of needlework, and an old embroidered gown, worn by her mother at her marriage, remained with labels attached, to indicate, "with Aunt Mary's tender love," the different nephews and nieces who were to inherit her property. I

must not forget to mention, though I feel it to be like a breach of confidence to do so, that round her neck was hung a small brooch, with a lock of jet-black hair. She never told the secret to her brother, or to any human being, but William said, "I think I know what it means; let it alone, and bury it with her."

The funeral was attended by almost every member of her family. All mourned very truly and deeply, though none wept like little Harry, whose face seemed so pale when contrasted with his black cap and clothes. It was most touching to see how he trembled, with nervous sorrow, as he gazed for the first time in his life into that deep, dark, narrow hole, and saw Aunt Mary's coffin stretched along the bottom, a few bits of brass gleaming out in the darkness. He held a cord, and retained it firmly in his grasp, after all the others had been dropped. For he then vividly remembered his long illness, and the stories, songs, hymns, and Bible-readings, with the affectionate kissings

and clappings, during the long wintry nights, when all the house was still, and the snow fell so death-like without, or the storm roared at the chimney head. As Aunt Mary's coffin lay there, and the earth was thrown upon it with its hollow and never-to-be-forgotten sound, as dust met dust, in the very silence and submission of that body, the voice of her life seemed to say meekly, now as ever, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Rest in peace, Aunt Mary! There are other Marys—and One best of all who was their friend—who will not be ashamed to welcome thee as their sister to their hearts and Home!

T. T. FITZROY, ESQ.

THE one *T* stands for Thaddeus, who was an Irish honorable, and cousin to old Mr. Fitzroy; the other *T* stands for Temple, who was Mrs. Fitzroy's uncle, and who left her son a great part of his fortune.

What first induced me to study the life of young Fitzroy, was a starling, a convict, and a locomotive engine. It happened thus:—

The starling belonged to Tom Parsons, the shoemaker; its cage hung over him as he sat at work close to the window. It sang songs, not in the rude style of uneducated nature, which has not been generous in vocal gifts to starlings: its melodies were the teachings of art, and the result of patient training; and it was wonderful to hear how the creature could trill and modulate out of

that hard bill, "There's a good time coming," "Cheer, boys, cheer," and "A man's a man for a' that." The starling was also rich in a number of moral and political aphorisms, which were echoes of the views and convictions of the shoemaker. When Tom therefore was disposed to backslide into sloth, despondency, or Toryism, the starling brought him back to duty and hope, by exhorting him to "work and win," by reminding him, "First work, then fun!" often adding, "Hurrah for reform and independence!" and interjecting on all occasions his favorite song, "A man's a man for a' that." When asked how he, a poor man, could afford to keep the starling, Tom would launch forth about his wise sentiments, the good which he did to him and his family by his contentment, genial disposition, and cheering influence at all times and in all circumstances. And as to expense, the shoemaker said, he really cost him nothing, except clean water, and a few seeds or crumbs of bread; that he could take a share, without a grumble, of anything that

was going; was a staunch teetotaler, and never smoked, snuffed, or chewed, yet was in good health, and was contented, and merry; in fact, he could not get on without "the Chartist," as he called him."

As I looked at the starling, and thought how much he gave, and how little he received, and of what use he was even to one poor man, I could not help thinking how very unlike he was to T. T. Fitzroy, Esq.

The convict, Jim M'Sweeney, had been for a long time a gentleman at large. His education, whether designedly or not, had been quite in keeping with his own personal likings, if it did not in fact materially mould them and his destiny. Old Pat M'Sweeney did not see very clearly what his son Jim could do, or how he could be useful to his fellow-men, or what necessity there was for teaching him a trade, being persuaded of his ability to pick up what he required without it; nor could he be "bothered," as he said, to "bother

the boy or himself agin' his inclinations." So young Jim assumed that the chief end of man was to enjoy himself in the easiest and cheapest way he could, that is, by following his own inclinations whatever these were, and as far as his means or the police would permit. Hence he early patronized the penny drama and penny balls, and was ambitious to stand well with the free and independent society into which he had been born. By-and-by he naturally took to other forms of amusement, such as gambling for twopence a game; laying bets on the favorite horses at the neighboring races; or sporting on the property of wealthy landlords. In the enjoyment of convivial parties he found relaxation after the fatigues of the past day or of the previous night, and there he talked over recent events while recruiting his wasted energies for future labors. It too frequently happened, however, in Jim's history, that he was obliged to retire from public notice, and take up his abode in Bridewell. "He has cost a

lot of money and trouble, that chap," said the jailer, "for all the good he has done."

Why did the jailor's remark, and M'Sweeney's history cause T. T. Fitzroy, Esq., to start up before my mind's eye?

Another object, I have already said, recalled to me the same aristocratic gentleman. That was a huge locomotive, which I saw one day borne along the street upon a truck, drawn by a number of noble-looking horses, and accompanied by a crowd of men as its attendants. The great machine, with its smokeless chimney, looked most majestic, yet most helpless, and singularly useless. It was a display of promise rather than of performance; an embodiment of the power of doing, rather than the evidence of anything having been done. It was hope deferred, though, in this case, it did not make the heart sick. It was a vision of what might, could, or should be, but, in the meantime, it was a work of art apparently thrown away; an immense expense and nothing to show

for it; a mere dream of fifty miles an hour lying asleep upon a truck. Yet the engine had obviously a noble destiny. But what, I thought, as I gazed upon it, if this destiny were never to be realized? What if the locomotive had a will, and resolved to live for itself entirely, and not to work or leave the station? What if it would run along the line for amusement only, sounding its whistle to indicate its perfect ease, call itself aristocratic, and puff its smoke in the face of Parliamentary-trains, as plebeian, and snort indignantly past all engines that made vulgar alliances with goods-train, or did any work? As this picture passed before my mind's eye, I thought of T. T. Fitzroy, Esq.

Why! Why did objects so utterly dissimilar unite in recalling Mr. T. T. Fitzroy? I shall tell you about him, and then you can judge for yourselves.

His father had amassed wealth in the palmy days of Government contracts, when accounts were passed by the House of Commons with that ample

generosity and gentlemanly spirit which became a great nation that did not look at the half-penny. But an additional fortune was settled, as I have said, upon his only son, by his maternal uncle, Mr. Temple. The one *T*, or "Taddy," as he was called, had estates in Connemara, of which nothing remained except a few family traditions, a hunting whip, a coat of arms, and a few other rags of "owld dacency." But the other *T* was more fortunate, or more saving, I know not which, for he left a large sum, after he himself had gone away from this world, somewhere or other. While John Temple lived, he possessed a vast number of things, without which he said existence even was an impossibility. But he was obliged to leave them all, one midnight, when he suddenly departed, and how he managed to live without them since, no one here knows. Thaddeus Temple Fitzroy inherited all; and his father felt so thankful the possessions were "*secured*" to his son. He liked the emphatic word.

His mother wept at the thought of her brother's generosity in leaving such a fortune behind him. "It was *so* good of John," she said, "and *so* like himself." She never could account for John's death. It seemed an unwarrantable liberty on the part of the destroyer. A slower death, accompanied by all the proprieties, would have had more respectability about it than the hurry, and want of ceremony, connected with John's sudden departure. She blamed the doctors, and above all, the commercial spirit of the age, which she alleged weakened the brain. Young Fitzroy, or Fitz, as he was called by every one except the servants, who of course prefaced the Fitz with "Master," was brought up in every way worthy of his "expectations." What was put to the debit of that boy was quite wonderful, the credit side of the ledger being singularly small. Two nurses protected him, dressed and undressed him, fed him, walked with him, coaxed him, coddled him, sang to him, played with him, and had quite enough to do in the due

discharge of their important duties! Who could enumerate the frocks and frills, the lace and ribbons, with which he was adorned in his babyhood? As years advanced, how carefully selected and prepared the diet for his fine organization; what suits of clothing were cut, and sewed, and fitted to his precious body; what toys and pictures were bought to meet the demands of his taste; what attention was paid to the likings, fancies, and requirements of "Master!" The very winds and rains of heaven were expected to consider his convenience. Governesses and tutors taught him, and seldom gave satisfaction, for the work of bringing up such a boy was immense, the solemnity appalling! This teacher was vulgar, that other too severe, and Fitz himself, the best judge of course, did not like either them or their lessons. The manner in which his birth-days were kept, the distinguished reception he received at table, the presents which were spread at his feet, the multitude of agreeable sensations concentrated upon his mind and body, all

proclaimed the event of his birth to be of singular importance.

Now, we may, without presumption, look at this first decade from a commercial point of view, and ask any practical man to consider, as a matter of business, what young Fitzroy would cost? or for what he himself, "if in that line," would board this young gentleman, and bring him up suitably to his high calling in society? And when he has made up his account, let him further consider how many ordinary families could be decently supported for the same sum? In my humble opinion, the starling was unquestionably a better investment. The Chartist was far more cheery, sang with a much sweeter voice, repeated with greater gusto and greater constancy such wise, moral apothegms as Fitz could not do correctly in a whole year. The starling, moreover, cost less for food and raiment; and required less attendance and less medicine. Moreover he never screamed to get out of his cage, nor disliked the hand that fed him;

never summoned the family around him to soothe his nerves with sweetmeats, or dry his tears, poor bird ! with cambric handkerchiefs, or bathe his feet with hot water, or cool his temples with eau-de-Cologne, or promise him a new hobby-horse if he did not cry. But then Fitz was only preparing for something great. He was a locomotive *in transitu* for the rails and roar of life. He must be educated in a manner worthy, let it never be forgotten, of his "*expectations.*" A great work obviously lay before him. If this little germ was so carefully preserved, the temperature in which it was reared so nicely regulated, the soil so rich in which it was rooted—all this was doubtless in order that a splendid plant, with corresponding fruit, might be produced in the end. Looked at in the light only of this bright hope, his childhood appears proper, pleasing, and amiable.

"Don't you think that Fitz should be sent to some school?" said old Fitzroy one evening, to his wife, as they sat alone, at the drawing-room fire.

“To school!” exclaimed Mrs. Fitzroy with astonishment. “For what purpose? He does not, you know, with his expectations, require education, as if he had to go to the bar, the church, or do something to gain his bread.”

“Very true,” said Mr. Fitzroy, “but you know it is rather the right *thing* to do—to send a boy to one of our public schools, and afterwards to a university.

Mrs. Fitzroy, however, could not think of sending her son where strong boys might hurt his fine body, or rude boys injure his fine feelings, or diligent boys put his indolence to shame. Fitz was not made for that sort of life; besides, it was wholly unnecessary, considering his “expectations.”

Mr. Fitzroy, who was beginning to feel his son rather troublesome, and in the way, at last suggested a “genteel” private school, where he would “pay a handsome, a *very* handsome board, the master of which would act in accordance with Mrs. Fitzroy’s view of education.” Fitz passed a great

portion of his second decade at some such school, with an accommodating teacher, and when he left it, the strongest conviction retained by his mind was that its lessons were a dreadful "bore." He carried away the nicknames of the master; a vivid impression of the fun he had enjoyed, the tricks he had played, the money he had spent, and the "wild fellows," among the boarders, with whom he had become acquainted.

This decade of Fitz's life at last culminated in the production of "a young fellow." What an epoch that was for his family, for the world, and above all for himself! His demands upon creation were amazingly increased, and now required a number of acres to furnish the harvest, which would fill his barns. The clothes for that body—now nearly six feet high—were necessarily varied, select, and in all respects fitting. It required also much time and trouble on the part of various artisans to produce that grand result which walked along the fashionable promenade at the fashionable hour.

During the year, the sum total expended from that toe to that crown for morning suits, walking suits, and evening suits; for riding, driving, hunting; for the hands, for the head, for the feet, in varied texture and shape, was incalculable. The body too, demanded and received a horse to carry it, a barouche to wheel it; a servant to dress it, and go messages for it, and other attendants to minister indirectly to it. And it required also, within itself—being what in Scotland is termed “a self-contained house”—the choicest viands to support it and to cheer it, at breakfast, at luncheon, at dinner, and a little before going to bed. Dancing was arranged to exercise it in an easy way; and agreeable society, to please it and admire it; and music, to solace its large ears; and whatever was gay and brilliant to delight its large eyes.

The only great law was, nothing was to presume to “bore” it. The universe was ordained to pour its treasures at the feet of this body, and to minister to all its craving appetites. Other young

fellows were, of course, summoned to gratify its humors and its vanities, by their smiles, conversation, ready sympathy, and congenial tastes. In slang language, T. T. Fitzroy was "a fast young man." He cultivated ignorance of everything but what a whipper-in could comprehend, a horse-jockey sympathize with, or a groom descant upon. He trained himself to wonder at nothing; to be apparently uninterested in everything that did not enter into the remarkably narrow world of "a young fellow." By-and-by, his mother became, of course, "the Maternity;" his father, "the Gubernor;" every clergyman "a parson;" books, "novels and a cigar." As for religion, it was a sort of mysterious institution, the existence of which was recognized like that of a poor relation, but not admitted to familiar intercourse; though a distant nod might be given it, on rare occasions, when it could not be cut dead. Beyond this it was, "of course, a sort of thing which a young fellow had nothing to do with;" while the inward convic-

tion was strong enough to convey the faint impression, that, besides having some connection, he knew not how, with catechisms and long sermons, it prescribed vulgar rules of life, which, "of course, a young fellow could not comply with."

Mr. Fitzroy had, even at this stage, cost a great deal more than poor Jim the convict, and teased no oakum as he did, to defray even a small portion of his expense. I am not sure but the convict was unfairly treated, supposing that T. T. Fitzroy and he lived under the same laws. Poor M'Sweeney's early habits were much the same as Mr. Fitzroy's, but were indulged at far less expense. M'Sweeney's clothes were indeed chiefly for summer wear, if one might judge from the free access which the breeze had to every part of them, and their consequent coolness. Nor did his boots fit so well, not being Parisian, but home-made, and second or third hand. His operas were not so well got up; nor were his balls so select; while his sport was, from the injustice of keepers, enjoyed more by

night than by day; his cards, too, were blacker, and his gambling debts less heavy. But it was not poor M'Sweeney's fault that his tastes were not gratified to a larger extent. It is true that he became a criminal, having appropriated, without the consent of the owner, a pocket-handkerchief belonging to a respectable grocer, who had several. On a raw and gusty day too, when very hungry, he rather rashly rushed off with three herrings and a few potatoes from a shop-door, in breach of all the rules of fair dealing, which are never transgressed by gentlemen, except for aristocratic sums that destroy banks and railways or ruin shareholders. This was no doubt, very wicked of Jim, and one would be horrified by such a breach of the most ordinary ideas of good manners, as to associate that polished, good-looking, well-got-up young fellow, Fitzroy, with such a snub-nosed, large-mouthed, underbred, ragged, ignorant, and utterly neglected being as M'Sweeney. But were there no black marks against Mr. Fitzroy? Noth-

ing that would be criminal in him were he judged by a higher tribunal? No blasphemies ascending to heaven from his lips? No pouring into the ear of vile temptations and of viler successes? No robberies and murders of human souls dear to God? No corruption in thought, in language, or in purpose? No sewers of iniquity moving, still and fetid, beneath that flowery outside, as beneath a bed of gay flowers, that feed and grow strong on corruption? The police knew nothing of him, but the angels and One higher knew something about him!

What said his companions regarding him? They maintained that "a thoroughly good fellow was Taddy Fitzroy." "A little wild, of course, but they liked him extremely." "He was so good-hearted," was "lucky too from having lots of money," and "much to be envied, as he had nothing to do on earth but to amuse himself." So thought the select few who had the honor of basking in the sunshine of young Fitzroy, and who

were always ready to return his rays with corresponding beams of greater or less intensity.

“Who *is* that young man?” asked Mrs. Dallas, as she and Jane peered from their glasses from the corner of a ball-room. “Oh, that is young Fitzroy, who has bought Broomley,” replied Jane. So Mr. Fitzroy was introduced to the *élite* of the *haut ton* in the provincial town; and not a few of its members were pleased at making his acquaintance; and numerous coteries discussed his “expectations,” and descanted on his “possessions;” and numerous hopes were expressed that they might have the pleasure of meeting him *very* soon again, and of paying their respects to him. All this was natural and kind, and a homage which was most pleasing to Mr. Fitzroy. So he waltzed and galoped and wheeled about the room with his chin up, a star of the first magnitude, while planets, more or less brilliant, accompanied him in his orbit. It is too bad to associate such a constellation as this with that dull, vulgar wick lamp—poor

M'Sweeney, at his penny ball. Yet, Fitzroy "cost a great deal more" than even "that chap."

This decade was ended and another begun on a memorable day at Broomley, the day when Mr. Fitzroy attained his majority. What a gathering of tenants on horseback and on foot, with white favors and flags, the town band the while vigorously playing "See the Conquering Hero comes!" Beer was poured forth *ad libitum*, and there was a dance in the evening. An address was presented in the afternoon, and a reply made by Mr. Fitzroy, who stepped out from a circle of brilliant colors, of blue coats and splendid dresses of ladies from the Halls, Castles, Places, Houses, and Lodges in the neighborhood, with old Fitzroy looking majestic, and Mrs. Fitzroy smiling, and the old nurse prominent, and the servants in plush and white stockings, modest and observant. Young Fitzroy did his part to the best of his ability; and then there was one toast allowed after the great dinner to one speaker, as it was "the toast of the evening," and,

“just one more, as it was the health of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzroy,” with “one cheer more.” Then, after crashes of firing there were a few dropping shots for the tenantry and other hangers-on of the family; all were social and happy, and spent “a very delightful evening,” and everything was pronounced suitable to a young man of his “expectations.” Never were decades entered upon with more promise. “He had,” as was eloquently remarked, “the ball at his foot,” and was fairly established as a county man. One likes to contemplate such harmonious pauses in life. “Well,” we say, “here is a fresh start. Let us hope that these twenty years have laid up a store of something to be expended in doing good during future years.” We are disposed, if we could venture on such a liberty, to take young Fitz by the hand and whisper such a very sober piece of advice as, “Be a man, and a useful one;” and to express the wish that he might act worthy of his position in

society, possessed as he was of youth, health, money, time, influence, and gifts innumerable.

Mr. Fitzroy has now entered on his third and fourth decades. These two eras in his life we must consider as one. They were characterized by the same features, and therefore do not demand a separate analysis. I may mention that it was during this period that his father and mother departed this life. The wife survived her husband several years. Neither old Mr. Fitzroy's illness nor his death was marked by anything very peculiar. It had been noticed for some months that he was falling away—then he became ill, but not seriously—then kept his bed—did not rally as was expected—new symptoms—an eminent physician summoned for consultation—better—not so well—worse—the party at the castle put off—expected visits delayed—alarmingly ill—expresses galloping to and fro—Fitzroy sent for, and comes from the shooting, too late to find his father conscious. No hope. “Old Mr. Fitzroy is dead.”

Then followed the days of mourning, accompanied by enormous expenditure of black cloth on church pews and walls, on chairs, on coaches, on servants. There were escutcheons and symbols of deep grief, requiring a very genius of an undertaker to contrive and execute. But who has so little feeling as to examine closely tradesmen's bills at marriages or funerals? It would look as if in either case the things of this life could occupy the thoughts, which would be an insult to the living or to the dead object of affection. Some tradesmen assume the fact, and get paid accordingly.

Mrs. Fitzroy passed the usual period of sorrow in the usual way when conventionalism has been a habit. She mourned properly, and received the full measure of sympathy due to a lady in her position. She spoke as she had never condescended to do before, with reference to "religion." She acknowledged the necessity of submission. "In fact," she said, "it could not be helped;" and she expressed "her comfort in knowing this at least,

that *he* was happy, and that she would one day meet him again, to share the joys of paradise as she had shared the joys of earth, and that as for this world, it was one only of sorrow and of suffering." Poor old lady! This was always her religious speech after luncheon to her friends, who made their first formal call of condolence.

Then followed a few years, when she went down the vale of tears with becoming dignity. She became composed, and gradually mingled again with society, and compromised the old and the new dresses, and managed wonderfully somehow to make black glitter. Then she had two or three cottages near the gate, the very models of beauty and cleanliness, which all lady-visitors, and the old clergyman and good curates were expected to examine between breakfast and luncheon. The keeper's wife curtseyed in the one, and the coachman's wife in the other, and the children of both bowed, and everything was so shining, pure, polite, and reverential, that, as she remarked, "it reminded

one of Sir Roger de Coverley." And the old nurse had a house also, and expected a visit, and declined, except when pressed, to accept of half-a-crown. She was the family chronicler, and assured the guests what dear people the family were. How she was ready with her tears (for I really think she did weep) for old Mr. Fitzroy, was a mystery to Tomline the keeper, who had frequently heard her declare that she considered him "an old sneak." Finally, there was at the village Mrs. Fitzroy's "Dame's school," understood to be a standing memorial of charity, for it was rent free, and the old dame called Mrs. Fitzroy "My Lady." These spectacles, like her flower-garden and boudoir, were part and parcel of Mrs. Fitzroy's establishment. At last she died, I know not how, but I believe suddenly. So she passed away into the unseen, and the place that had known her knew her no more.

What a tragedy is life! Yet from its incongruities how many are its serio-comic aspects! It

often looks in such a mingled light that it is doubtful whether we weep or laugh. Our laughter has its irresistible tears, and our tears have smiles mingled with them. Did any person mourn for poor old Mr. Fitzroy or his wife? who were sleepless for them? who woke with a hollow sense in the heart, of something having been lost? who had a cloud the size of a man's hand in their sunny sky for them? Some felt disappointed that their deaths marred their party; the inhabitants of the cottages considered how it would affect their fate; Walters, the coachman, got drunk the night of the death, with Tomline, the keeper, because they had so much to do during the day. The nurse speculated about her mourning, and Mrs. Fitzroy's maid, Trotter, had a quarrel with the housekeeper about the arrangement of my lady's wardrobe.

When poor Tom Lazenby, the poacher, was ill, it was wonderful what good he received from Mr. Jenkins, the methodist, who tried to bring him to a sense of his sins. Tom became a very different

man, but not until his soul was riddled and dissected with close and truthful examinations. "Now, Tom," Mr. Jenkins would say, "speak the truth;" "Answer me, Tom;" "I will just ask you, Tom, whether," etc; "Tom, don't escape in that way, come to the point." Honest and kind personal dealing produced a remarkable and permanent change in Tom's character. The old rector, Mr. Markham, had also done a world of good to poor Susan Fairfield, in the village. He had visited her often, and was amazed at her ignorance, though she was living in a Christian land and attending Christian ordinances. He said, however, he was determined that she should know her ignorance by being instructed in the truth, and most thankful she was for all his faithful ministrations. A good neighbor even was not rejected, who with rough yet kindly hands endeavored to save Tom or Susan from the deep waters in which they were sinking. But with poor old Mr. Fitzroy and his wife, at Broomley, it was different! It was difficult, it was

alleged, to take such liberty with them. It was hard to question *their* ignorance, or examine their consciences, or call them to repentance, or hint at the possibility of their lives having been vain, selfish, and ungodly. Would it not have been vulgar, fanatic, methodistical, so odd and unfeeling, to say anything to disturb the serene quiet of that sick-chamber? or to suggest any possible danger to be escaped, any good to be earnestly sought for, or insist on anything so out of the way for them as conversion, repentance, or a new heart? To soothe, comfort, and give "peace at any price" was what was expected. Were there no friends, no true brothers, no one that really loved them in the deepest sense, who would hazard all to do their souls good? Oh, friends! oh, brothers! poor, miserable, selfish men are we all apt to be! and so in hours of darkness and moral weakness we have been afraid to act out what we say we believe, and we seek rather to save our own little reputation for an hour, than our brother's good for ever!

So Mr. and Mrs. Fitzroy died, were buried, and were marvellously soon forgotten. No doubt young Fitzroy sometimes prefaced stories after dinner, or when walking in the grounds, by saying, "My poor father, or my poor mother, intended to do so and so," or, "They used to make it a rule to do this or that." Their portraits remain in the dining-room, dressed in the top of fashion, and smiling; the one as a sportsman on a breezy autumnal day, with a telescope in his hand, and the other in full dress, with a fan in her hand. But as for themselves, where are they?

I must now give my undivided attention to T. T. Fitzroy. That era in his life had arrived when we would naturally expect, after this long waiting, to see these expectations realized in a becoming manner, the hope of which was assumed as justifying the large expenditure and labor of so many years. That expenditure, during the last twenty years of his life, remained a noticeable fact. My brain grows dizzy as I attempt to enumerate, by

means of any measure at my command, what that gentleman cost the universe during that long period. All was quite consistent, however, with the lesson which he seemed to teach himself with unswerving diligence:—"Soul, take thine ease; thou hast much goods laid up for many years: eat, drink, and be merry." What an incredible number of black-faced wedders were brought down from their heathery hills, and from the margin of clear springs, to feed on rich pasture, before being presented by a gloved servant as roast mutton to Mr. Fitzroy! What lambs ceased to sport on the green uplands, to furnish him with chops seasoned with mint sauce! What bullocks were felled to produce juicy steaks or noble roasts garnished with horse-radish! What flocks of poultry ceased to cackle in the farm-yard to be laid in silence before him! Graceful deer sacrificed their haunches for him, and pigs their hams. Esculents of every kind were contributed by bountiful mother earth, aided by kindly and expensive treatment.

Abroad, the choicest grapes were gathered, transferred to vats, and from vats to bottles, and the bottles, with sundry pauses at custom-houses and bonded warehouses, at last reached Mr. Fitzroy's cellars, and were duly opened to cool his thirst and refresh his languid energies. Butchers, grocers, saddlers, coal-miners, tailors, hatters, bootmakers, grooms, gardeners, coach-builders, servants, and tradesmen of every kind, worked day and night for him. The boundaries of the fields from which he reaped included the most distant regions;—tea and coffee plantations in the east, and sugar plantations in the west. The universe was ransacked to feed and clothe him, and to minister to every taste and impulse.

Now, the question must surely press itself upon us more than ever, what was the gain to the universe from his existence? What return did Mr. Fitzroy make for his expenditure of forty years? A thousand rivulets flowed into this sea of his. Was it a dead sea, so far below the level of things

as they ought to be that not one stream issued out of it "of its own sweet will" to turn a mill, refresh a cottage home, give drink to a weary pilgrim, or even to wash an orphan's face? What, I ask with anxiety, was the grand result of all that was being done for and given to this one man? You very naturally reply, "He had his tenantry to look after, or his own household to govern, or his duties as a country gentleman to discharge. He had to do a thousand things by which to make himself useful, and to contribute his quota to the good and happiness of society; for society obviously requires the aid of such men as have influence and time at their disposal, and who can do what others without these gifts cannot do so well, or indeed do at all." Mr. Fitzroy would do none of these things, however, because one of his first principles in middle life, as well as in youth, was never to be "bored." In order to be consistent, this involved a daily protest against transacting any business whatever which made the slightest demands upon his time or

trouble, or which he could get any other person to do for him. Such was his life upon its negative side. Its positive side was manifested in devotion to one great aim and object, and that—— Let us out with the grand secret. It was *sport!* What care and anxiety this cost him! What calculation—what foresight—what money—what skill!

His annual calendar was arranged by sport. His day was divided by sport. All his plans for life were regulated by the preëminent demands of sport. All his expectations in life culminated in sport. There was one period of the year consecrated to shooting ducks in one part of Europe, and to killing salmon in another. One season for bagging grouse, or for deer-stalking in the Highlands; another for shooting pheasants or partridges in more cultivated regions; while fox-hunting or horse-racing filled up the intervals. “And pray, what was wrong in this?” may possibly be asked. “Can any man be blamed for taking recreation?” Certainly not, if his re-creation means the creating

anew of his energies for something worth living for. Let it be granted that it is pleasant and invigorating for soul and body to wander, rod in hand, "by the burnie's side, and no think lang," or pace across the grassy heath gun in hand, or tramp through the turnip-field, or beat the leafy cover in a fresh autumnal day in search of game. Most busy and toiled men, with minds exhausted or nerves shattered by too severe labor, would envy those who could enjoy such pleasant recreation. Let it be granted, even, if you will, that a burst across country, for a light weight with a good horse, is a joyous thing; and that a fox, if he were a conscious being, might reasonably make it a natural object of his ambition, and a boast among his more grovelling and thievish companions, that he had induced country gentlemen and members of both houses of Parliament, Her Majesty's ministers, and diplomatists regulating the affairs of Europe, with renowned officers of both services, to follow his tail and risk their lives

to obtain it. Yet is this all the return which is expected from any man for what is given to him? Is this a means only whereby to attain some end of existence worthy of man, or is it, or amusement in any shape or form, man's chief end? Is it for this that he is born, fed, clothed, tended, and educated? Is it to enable a man to live to himself, even in a form free from vice or crime, that creation groans to keep him alive? "And yet," you perhaps exclaim, "it might have been worse." True, but, alas that it was not better! How sad when the prevalence of crime makes us thankful for mere folly! Is the young man who wraps his talent in a napkin to be commended because he is not a burglar? Is he not "a wicked and slothful servant" who does no good even though he is free from vice and crime?

Now, Fitzroy was evidently fit for something more than mere amusement. His information concerning dogs and horses indicated a good memory and an inquiring mind. No man without some

grasp could comprehend the intricacies of Tattersall's as he did. Yet he continued to profess ignorance on every other branch of human knowledge. Everything serious was pronounced to be "humbug" or a "bore." The progress of the human race was nothing to him in comparison with the way in which his dog Rollo worked among the turnips, or the retriever in the cover. How Jemmy Scott lost or won the race kindled his energies in a way which the state of the four quarters of the globe could never have done. Now, is he not like the locomotive I spoke of? Look at him after dinner, cracking his walnuts with Colonel Travers! Does he not simmer in his shed with as much steam up as makes a quiet undersong? His brass-plates too are so beautifully polished. His coals and water have been given at the right time and in the right quantity, and he feels *so* comfortable; especially as he has run along the line in the forenoon, and exercised his wheels to digest the coals. Yet, after all, of what actual use is he?

Very true, in spite of himself, and by the very law of selfishness, he is compelled to spend his money, and hundreds reap the benefit of his expenditure. He cannot help this. It is beyond his will, and is due to no self-sacrificing choice, but solely to self-gaining intentions. The locomotive, if it never moved off the track, or remained inside its shed, or rushed off the rails over a bank, would still indirectly have been the means of giving food to many artisans by its very structure. Its personal merits, however, would not have increased had it been built and supported by a fortune left it by a late broken-down engine, once the glory of the express, but latterly, when it became asthmatic, attached to the goods train.

We now enter upon Mr. Fitzroy's last term of existence, which was rather a long one, and differed considerably from his previous decades.

One morning, in a snug room, within the old posting-house of the Red Lion, three of the Broomley Hunt were breakfasting. Without, the

day was clear and sunny, the ground crisp with a slight frost, the atmosphere bracing, and the sky cloudless. Within, the fire blazed, the urn hummed, and the pure white table was covered with an ample breakfast; and the white-headed waiter, John Collins, attended, as he had done in the same room for nearly half a century. Tom Jenkinson stood near the fire, opening the *Times*, which had just been laid upon the table. Colonel Travers was beginning breakfast, and young Clinton was pouring out the tea, when both were arrested by Jenkinson exclaiming, "Hillo! Fitzroy dead!"

"Dead!" said Clinton, pausing and turning round; while the Colonel laid down his knife and fork. "You don't say so?"

"Died at Hamburg on the 19th, of a sudden illness caused by exposure, T. T. Fitzroy, Esq., of Broomley Hall, —shire."

"I see how it was," remarked the Colonel; "he went, I know, to shoot ducks on the Elbe. That accounts for it. Poor fellow!"

“Upon my honor,” said Clinton, “I am very sorry; I am really.”

“I could hardly believe my eyes.” said Jenkinson, “but there is no doubt of the fact; here it is. Had we only known sooner, we should not have had our meet to-day so near the house; but we cannot help it now.”

“Luckily, there is no one there to mourn for him,” said the Colonel.

“Who succeeds?” asked Clinton.

“I have not an idea—I believe it will go to the Temples,” said Colonel Travers.

“You envied him his grey mare the other day, Clinton. You can have her now,” remarked Jenkinson.

“Well, it is a horrid idea, after all,” replied Clinton, “to think of dividing his things already, and he so lately among us.”

“Such is life,” said the Colonel. “It is like auctions after a battle. He to-day; you and I to-

morrow. Such is life, and so on it goes! Collins, some more toast and a *little* thinner, please."

Yes, such is life, and so on it goes!

"I have very sad news for you," said Charlotte to her husband, the young rector of the parish, as she entered his study that same morning with a newspaper in her hand. "It is very shocking, indeed. Poor Mr. Fitzroy is dead;" and she read the announcement.

Then followed a few minutes of silence, and Mr. Garrett said, "I am much shocked and much grieved by the intelligence. Poor fellow! So sudden! Among strangers too. I hope, from my soul, he was prepared. Do you know, Charlotte, that it is at such times that one feels how natural are prayers for the dead."

"I hope, dearest," replied his wife, "our prayers for him, when living, were heard and answered, and that, perhaps, when dying, if not before, he thought more seriously."

The rector was what is called a High-Churchman ; but within an outside circle of decorations and rubrics, there was a very loving, earnest Christian heart, which represented the real man. He was not a temple of mere outer courts, altars, and priests, but had within all a holy of holies, in which the Divine light shone. Soon after coming to the parish the young rector had taken an opportunity of helping Fitzroy to become a more thoughtful and different man. The occasion for this was an application made to the rector for advice by a woman from a neighboring town who demanded more generous aid for her children. The claim for obvious reasons was a just one. The conversation which ensued, however, though conducted by the rector with all the unobtrusive propriety of a gentleman, yet with the truth and righteousness of a Christian minister, had been anything but satisfactory. The spirit which Fitzroy had manifested, and the cold, calculating language which he used, had produced the most painful impression on Mr.

Garrett. "It is a mystery of evil," he said, "to think of such cases! Men, educated men, on the whole regular attenders at service, making the responses, assenting with their lips to this petition, with 'Good Lord deliver us,' and to that commandment, with 'Lord, incline our hearts to keep this law;' and yet, though it seems dreadful to say it, and uncharitable even to think it, the conviction was forced upon me, in Fitzroy's case, that he had never received the simplest verities of the Christian religion, or had possessed an idea almost of its essentials in faith or practice."

"I must try to hope," replied his wife, "though the thought of a finished life going up to God for judgment is very solemn."

"And the words of Christ true!" added Mr. Garrett thoughtfully. "How one feels," he continued, "at such times, what it is to carry, as it were, the burden of another's sin as well as our own! Yet, we are too selfish and too unloving to carry any but a very small part of it, and that very

feebly. Alas, poor Fitzroy! He is in the hands of perfect righteousness and love. May God deliver us from evil!"

"What relations has he left?" inquired his wife.

"I know of none," was the reply, "except these two worse than orphan children and that woman whom you saw here."

"I remember her; dressed as a widow—the remains of good looks—lady-like, but so miserable-looking!"

"Was it——?" inquired his wife with a whisper.

"The same. The story is a deeply sad one, and was under the seal of secrecy until now; I could not tell it. I feel it to be an impressive burden to connect it with Fitzroy."

"I wonder if they are provided for?"

"I should think not. Fitzroy told me that if she was civil, and did not bore him, he might possibly settle an annuity upon her and them, but his

sudden death, no doubt, has prevented him doing so. I shall go to Broomley, however, and see if I can be of any use there."

When Mr. Garrett went to the Hall, he found that Mr. Weatherby, the man of business, had just arrived. Weatherby was a little dark man, with a quick eye, and a most honorable spirit, a lawyer of high standing and of large practice. He was glad to meet Mr. Garrett, and to have the benefit of his advice.

"Who succeeds?" asked the rector.

"His cousin, Mr. Temple, beyond doubt," replied Mr. Weatherby; "a thorough gentleman, who will be a blessing to the parish and to the district."

"Did Fitzroy leave a will?"

"No," replied Mr. Weatherby, with a sharp and disappointed voice. "I often urged him to do so, but he disliked being troubled, and so he procrastinated from day to day, always intending to do it, but it has never been done. And so

all is now over! For several reasons I wish he had carried out his intentions."

"And I, too," added the rector.

"I think I know what you mean," replied the agent, catching Mr. Garrett's expression. "I feel assured, however, that Mr. Temple will attend to that painful business, and act justly and generously. But," he continued, "the servants are a set of selfish creatures. They think only of themselves. It is human nature, perhaps, and cannot be severely criticised. I have been pestered with their demands. The nurse asked how she was left; and the housekeeper how *she* was left, while she is quarrelling with the housemaids, and puffing through the house as if this death was intended to be a personal insult, and to put her to inconvenience. The male servants want wages and board-wages, and to be off immediately. And the only one who seems to have any heart is little Sam, the groom. There he is, and he seems to wish to speak to us."

"What *am* I to do with master's mare?"

asked Sam, as he came up with his cap in his hand, and touching his forehead. "He ordered her to be sent to Mr. Nash, at Stamford, and gave me ten pounds to pay expenses. Now here is the ten pounds, because I have paid nothing yet. In fact, I don't know what to do. It is a terrible business this, gentlemen, I do assure you. A sort of thing as how I can't stand." And so Sam turned round his right leg, with its row of buttons, and turned his face still further away in the same direction, clutching at something in his pocket, till he found a blue handkerchief, which he seemed to require for his eyes.

There was no other symbol of grief within the bounds of that property. By-and-by everything in the house was sealed. The servants were made comfortable, and retired to rest. The night came with its quiet stars, and the house looked white and ghostlike in the moonlight. The vases shone around on the terraces. The leaves of the laurels glittered with specks of gold. Masses of shadow

were cast from the great trees in the park. Not a sound was heard, but the ripple of the river that swept round the house, or the cry of the wandering owl, with indistinct noises from afar. And so deep sleep, with the shadow of night, fell over Broomley, while poor Fitzroy slept the deeper sleep in a *Gottesacker*, near Hamburg.

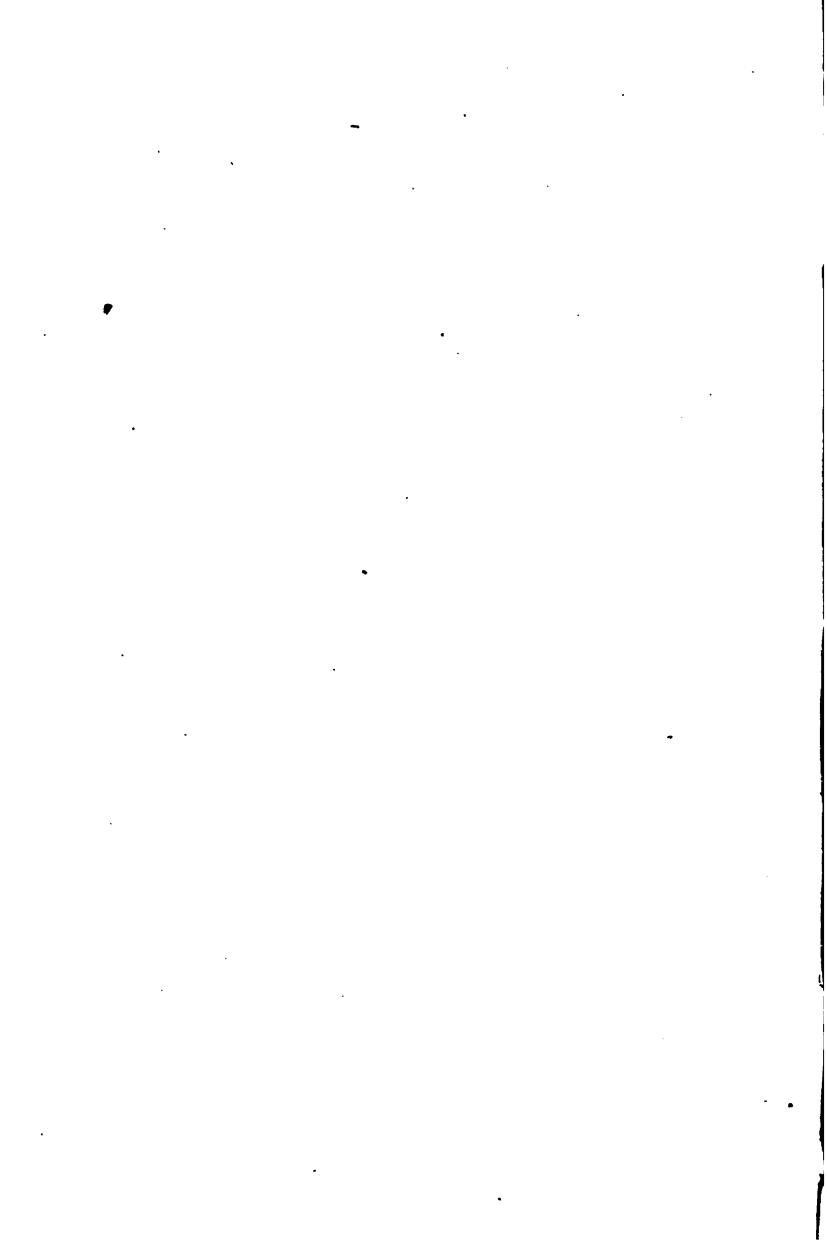
“Take heed, for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

MR. JOSEPH WALKER.

MR. JOSEPH WALKER was what is called "a respectable man"—indeed a highly respectable man. Within a certain circle he was recognized as almost a model man. All his little defects and shortcomings were by that circle put down to the debit of fallen humanity in general, but never to that of Mr. Joseph Walker in particular. Very properly Mrs. Walker looked up to him as an oracle, and wisely accommodated herself to all his opinions and prejudices regarding men and "things in general."

There was nothing very remarkable in Mr. Walker's outward appearance. His hair was short and sandy, his eyes keen and restless, his lips dry and thin, his body lithe and active. When in his Sunday clothes, he might have passed for an ex-





bailie, a physician in good practice, or a retired clergyman with a colored neckcloth.

And yet there must have been something amiss with Mr. Walker, for he was recognized by all beyond the Walker interest as a sort of stumbling-block in their road—an odd figure which lessened the sum total of their enjoyment—a ghost at their feasts of charity.

Was he, then, a bad man? I have already said that the world pronounced him a highly “respectable” man, and the world was so far right, for Joseph was never guilty of any crime or vice. He was, for example, as incapable of being the “worse for liquor” as the east wind is when driest and sharpest. I don’t believe he ever cheated any man, or was ever guilty of an act of dishonesty in his accounts; and that same fact in these days, or in any days since shekels were weighed or bills discounted, is something to say for a man, and forms no small guarantee for his respectability.

Or was he false? To do him justice, it must

be admitted that Mr. Walker reached the mark of the world's standard of truth. I don't think he ever proposed to himself to tell a falsehood, or ever imagined that he could tell a falsehood, or put a "yes" where a "no" should be. But that he was an out-and-out truthful, transparent man, who could not do a very sneaking, mean thing, I will not be so bold as to affirm.

Nor was Joseph a passionate, bad-tempered man, as these infirmities are generally understood. I don't think he ever so far forgot himself as to be in a passion. The flint strikes fire, and straight is cold again; but Joseph, though a good deal of a flint, did not strike fire, from some damp or clay of selfish prudence which adhered to his surface. He was not a man who would, in the heyday of duelling, have ventured to send a challenge to even a hen, or who would ever have laid himself open to the nervous pain of being called out. Whatever anger was in his heart growled far back in its den, or paced noiselessly there with green

eyes flashing in the darkness, but never flew up against the bars of his cage with a thud and a roar. Joseph, therefore, could never have struck a man; but I am inclined to think he would have given a vicious pinch to his neighbor, especially if he were asleep.

Joseph Walker was not even a bore. I never knew a bore who had not more than ordinary confidence in his fellow-men, for he not only craves their sympathy for himself and his schemes—(and what bore is there without a scheme of some kind?)—but relies on their sympathy with a confidence which often creates sympathy. There is also, I think, generally a large amount of kindness and amiability in a genuine bore. If society will only submit to be bored, he will repay society by a large amount of fair value in return. Besides, a bore has often a great deal of generosity in him, and can laugh with others who may even laugh at his hobby. Joseph Walker was too silent, too mysterious, too self-conscious to be a bore.

Were we to classify him according to his skin, we would say at once that he was decidedly not pachydermatous, or thick-skinned. His skin was of the finest texture; it was almost transparent: hence his extreme touchiness. He often shrank back from a brother's approach as from a red-hot iron.

Mr. Walker was very quiet, circumspect, cautious, calculating, prudent. His smile was always arrested and snubbed long before he approached the rash outburst of joyous laughter. I don't believe he ever enjoyed a hearty laugh in his life. When a child he could have been pleased with a rattle, but for him to have been tickled with a straw I think was impossible. Joseph was calm, solid, serious, as became "a highly respectable man."

He was, as we might imagine, intensely sectarian, which means, not that he loved his own Church, for that is not only natural but right, but that he had a grudge against every other Church, as he had against everything on earth which was

not stamped with its own trade-mark, that mark being MY.

As to his religious habits, as the phrase is, he was blameless. No man was more regular at church. He would have been missed there as much as a pillar or a side window would have been. The most gossiping or uncharitable never imagined that a shadow of Scepticism had ever rested on Joseph's brain, any more than on the well-brushed hat which covered it. His church "principles" (as he liked to called them) were all as accurate and clearly arranged in his mind as the squares on a chess-board. He not only believed his Church principles true, but he was thankful for having been delivered from the dangerous weakness of imagining any other principles by any possibility to be other than false, and the men who held them equally so. He tithed rigorously all rue and cummin, but the weightier matters of the law were more difficult to be comprehended by him, and he feared to fall into deadly errors about

works. There are Josephs in all Churches, and they are to be found even among the clergy.

It was Joseph's secret opinion that a man ought to form a fair and just estimate of himself—of his own talents, influence, position in society, or of what was due to him as an exactor of customs from his neighbor. All he wanted was fair play. If he got that, he himself being judge of its amount, he accepted it as his right. If he got less, he complained. If he got more than his due—which, he said, very rarely happened—he was grateful, and smiled. I may just state, in passing, that Joseph was often at variance with society upon this point, his own worth and importance; and that there were great difficulties in adjusting their respective claims. He and society met like cross tides, and created a jumble. The law could not take the matter up, and arbitration was impossible, for Joseph insisted on his wife being one of the arbiters, which no one else would agree to. There was, therefore, great difficulty in adjusting the difference.

As might have been expected, Joseph was very prone to take offence, and required particularly nice and discriminative handling. The brittlest glass or wax was more pliable than he. Was he a member of committee in connection with any work, or "movement," as it is called? If so, let the other members take care that Mr. Joseph Walker's ideas, suggestions, and proposals are respectfully considered, whatever becomes of those of others. Recollect, he and his resolutions are one flesh, and that to touch the one is to touch the other. Measures, not men, may be a very practical aphorism with some, but Joseph's measures and the man were inseparable. In one word, study him, and always have oil with you to pour into his machinery, otherwise it won't work, or will get hot in its gearing.

If on any occasion Mr. Walker was opposed with decision or vigor, the question was always suggested by him, Why so? Why did this man, at this time, oppose *him*? Was it on fair, just, and neces-

sitous grounds? Impossible! How could Joseph be so far wrong? But he saw through it all at last! Knowing, shrewd Joe! It was from pure spite and envy, no doubt of it; and he would smile with a profound shake of his head, looking at the floor, and remark, "It is a queer world, and there is no knowing *what* some people will do!" Ill-used Joseph!

Mr. Walker included within his immediate personality not merely such things as his proposals and his resolutions, but all his plans and schemes, and whatever belonged to his household—everything, in short, having his "mark." He protected them all, demanded homage for them all. The enemies of anything marked with his "MY" he considered as his own enemies. Any want of attention to his dog even, with J. W. on its collar, would have been considered personal; and any dislike which your supposed or real neglect might have engendered in him toward yourself, was not confined to you, but extended to your whole family. And thus he suf-

ferred from a vast number of imaginary grievances, supposed hits against himself,—neglects, or forgets, with reference to his dues.

“Are you and Joseph Walker good friends?” asked Jones of his friend Jenkins.

“Yes ; why do you ask?” replied Jenkins. “Anything wrong?”

“Oh, no, nothing; no—but—”

“Out with it, Jones, what is it? I never knew Walker intimately, but now that your question has suggested the idea, I do think he has been very cold and distant to me.”

“Did you ever travel with his niece, Miss Trotter, to London?”

“Yes! what then?”

“And you did not get her a cab when you reached the station?”

“Whew!” said Jenkins with a whistle, “I see it all. So *that’s* what has offended the fellow! Now hear me,” continued Jenkins, laughing, “I remember the day well: it was last July, for my

wife, then my sweetheart, and her mother, were waiting my arrival. In the hurry and fuss of the exciting moment, I forgot Miss Trotter till it was too late, but I wrote to her, making an ample apology, and expressing my annoyance, and I told it all to Joseph! What a thin-skinned creature, hang him!"

"Well, I will explain the whole matter, Jenkins, to him, and it will be all right."

"Right or wrong, Jones, I hate that hoarding up of little offences. It is paltry. We must all give and take in this world, or the cords of friendship will snap. What a memory Joseph has, to be sure, to have kept this in his mind so long! And he voted against me, canvassed against me at the last municipal election of magistrates, and, I fear, all because of Miss Trotter! Well, give him my compliments, and tell him not to make an ass of himself; not that, Jones—but drop oil with my love into his wounds. I am sorry he has been unhappy."

But after all, I question if Mr. Walker *was* so very unhappy on account of these cruelties of society, and its general conspiracy against him. Our friend did not always like to be disabused of his prejudices and dislikes; there was, if he would confess it, a secret comfort in them which could not be relinquished without consideration—his grievances having their consolations, as shipwrecks have their salvages. Joseph often contemplated himself as a martyr to human ignorance, envy, or spite, and sympathized with himself accordingly. To ponder upon the annoyances of the day was with him a favorite evening exercise. He was often disposed to say to himself—“Joseph, was there ever a man whose merits were so inadequately appreciated as thine? But rise above all these mean and paltry jealousies, which rankle in unworthy bosoms. Rejoice in this, at least, that thou art a green oasis amidst a desert of human hearts, and if no one else will feel for thee, admire thee, and sympathize with thee, be thou just and

true to thyself, excellent Joseph Walker." Ah! there are few forms of worship so constant, so established, so free from dissent, so sincere and unmixed, as self-worship!

A special feature of Mr. Walker's character was his remarkable talent for diplomacy. He had no idea of going straight toward this object, but worked his way to it by zig-zag parallels, as engineers do against a fortress. Nor was he ever seen by the enemy. You could detect his presence only by carefully watching the earth and dust, which, like the mole, he occasionally raised, as he peeped up with half-shut eyes, to disappear again as rapidly. He was therefore a chief man at every species of election, from a beadle to a bailie, from a minister to a member of parliament. In such circumstances, indeed, he became great. His silence was as remarkable as his speech; his caution was sublime; his wisdom unfathomable.

Behold him slowly pacing down the street, arm-in-arm with a confidential friend, whom he is in-

doctrinating with some idea, their heads close together, his stick or umbrella moving in emphatic unison with the sagacious counsel he is breathing into the listening ear of his friend.

“Observe now,” he says: “if Mr. A. gets this situation, the one which he vacates might be filled by Mr. B., and this would enable us to put C. into office instead of B., which would be the very thing, don't you see?”

Equally sagacious were his methods of getting at a voter. If Joseph wished to get his hand into the house that Jack built, it was quite probable that he could not attain his end directly through the influence of the cat, or the rat that eat the malt. But, thinking over the matter, he would remember most fortunately that he knew the “priest all shaven and shorn;” and for certain reasons he believed the priest, who was obliging, could be easily got at. The said priest was well acquainted with the “maiden all forlorn,” for she was one of his own flock, and he had married her to

the man "all tattered and torn;" and there was, therefore, no difficulty of influencing through her the "cow with the crumpled horn," which she herself milked. The cow would arrange everything with the dog, in spite of his tossing; and then the dog knew the cat, who was certain of getting sooner or later at the rat, and then at the malt, and thus at last into the house that Jack built!

When Walker could take no active part himself, his hints were invaluable. "You know Nobbs?" he would say, in a quiet, confidential way, to a friend, when unfolding the mystery of his plan. "Well, then, you are aware that his nephew, Smith, is married to a daughter of old Spencer. Now I know that Mr. Turner, who is a partner with old Spencer, will be opposed like ourselves to Robertson. Why not try through Smith to get Nobbs up to speaking to Spencer, to give a hint to his partner, Turner, about Robertson?"

"Oh, I see, I see!"

"Don't you?" says Walker, with delight;

“that’s your game! that’s your game! there’s no mistake about it. Don’t lose an hour, see Nobbs.” What a knowing man is Mr. Joseph Walker!

But on the other hand, tramp on Joseph’s toe—ruffle his skin—refuse to give him the big fiddle—only offend his vanity or his self-esteem, and let him become your enemy: then, depend upon it that, by shakes of the head, shrugs of the shoulder, and small plots, Mr. Joseph will thwart you, traduce you, throw out hints against you, and, as far as in him lies, demolish you and your prospects; and all this he will accomplish in a highly respectable way. He will express the most kindly hopes that he may have been misinformed and mistaken in what he has heard of you, but he fears, alas! that his information is correct. He is truly sorry (dear kind Joseph!) that he is obliged to conclude that you are not the man—that you will never do. He has no wish to enter into details, but he has the best reasons for saying, that it will be decidedly

better for yourself even, not to get this appointment. Honest Joseph!

Joseph, you see, never forgot himself. He was not a man who had anything open, true, or generous in his disposition; but one who, Sunday and Saturday, saw himself the centre of the universe. He was "highly respectable" in the courts of the temple, yet who would compare him with the poor and miserable publican who stood afar off and smote upon his breast?





THE HIGHLAND WITCH.

(A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR THE BOYS.)

GILLESPIE CEANNMORE, or Archie with the Big Head, was the son of Callum Dhu, or Black Malcolm Cameron, who had a small farm. Callum was a silent, ignorant, rough sort of man, who, it was said, had made money as a smuggler, and by other unknown ways. He owned also a bit of land, and was proud of being a laird, although a very small one. By a lucky chance he had married a remarkably nice girl, who, in temper and disposition, was exactly what he was not. She was tender, affectionate, and gentle. But people said that she had made a new man of him, although the new man in too many points resembled the old. They had one boy only, and this boy was

Archie Big-head. He was called Big-head, or "Ceannmore," from the fact of his being deformed—having a very small, emaciated, and powerless body, with such a large head that it seemed to absorb all the life and energy of his frame. He had large black eyes and man-like features, which contrasted strongly with the crib, near the fire, in which he lay like a child. His whole being had so grown into love, or kindness, as to seem also a deformity, so unbalanced was it by any intellectual thought or care about what ought, at this his twelfth year, to have interested him. He had a passionate attachment to children, and never was pleased unless he was fondling something. He required to have a cat or dog, or such like, in his crib to caress, and make happy as he best could. His mother, like most mothers in similar circumstances, loved this weak child with intense affection. She could not allow herself to find fault with him, the tears in his large eyes giving her inexpressible pain. He could not read, but she communicated

to him, in her own simple way, a great amount of the highest knowledge, telling him stories from the Bible, especially about what Christ did when upon earth. These narratives of His works of love, tenderness, and mercy quite possessed the big-headed, large-eyed compound of man and child. Archie was much liked by the people of a parish where every man knew his neighbor. But by his father, who was very ignorant, silent, and *dour*, as the Scotch say, he was looked upon with a feeling of awe, yet with something akin to disappointment at such a boy being his sole heir and representative. Still his heart could not quite resist the impression made upon it when Archie, in his fond babbling way, would say in Gaelic, "Father dear, Archie loves father!"

In a solitary cottage, among high rocks near the sea-shore, there lived a woman called Big Kirsty. She was tall and powerful, with jet-black hair, high-cheeked bones, stern mouth, powerful chin, and eyes of an indescribable expression,—

uneasy, restless, nervous, and often flashing out hidden passion. Throughout the "country-side," she was believed to possess a vast knowledge of the "black airt." Her mother, as the people of the district affirmed, was "without doot a witch, *that* was weel known!" And Kirsty professed to have inherited this insight into mysteries—to have the power to pacify and influence unseen evil beings and things in favor of all who would trust her and *pay* her. In particular, she was famed for her evil eye, her curse being carefully avoided, and her blessing as eagerly coveted. All admitted that she was not "canny." She took advantage of her powers to make money, and was employed in many a dark deed, from the consequences of which she was only saved by her own cunning, and the selfishness and terror of those who secretly sought her assistance.

It was alleged that this woman had expected Black Callum to marry her, when he was in the smuggling trade, and when she assisted him to conceal his goods in the caves and crannies of the

rocks surrounding the cottage in which she and her old mother lived. At all events she exercised great influence over him. She had, moreover, as might be expected, no great liking for his wife, Mary Og, or "Young Mary." Her hatred may have arisen from jealousy, but more probably it proceeded from the utter abhorrence which Mary had toward her, and which she took no pains to conceal. Mary had repelled all Kirsty's attempts at familiarity, rejecting her assistance in the way of charms or divinations, and despising all the looks of her evil eye. The deformity of little Archie was a little triumph to Big Kirsty. Had she not said that evil would befall the proud young woman? Had she not warned Mary to beware how she provoked *her*? Time would tell!

Years passed, and as Callum Dhu was all the while a prosperous man, he was satisfied. But disasters came. One year his cows died of disease; in another his potatoes failed; in a third his boat was wrecked at the herring fishing. He became

more and more irritable and unhappy ; and as the rent of his farm fell behind he feared he should be obliged to sell his small property. This last stroke was hardest of all to bear. Three days before the Christmas I speak of his last cow died.

“ A curse is on us, I fear ! ” said Callum, as he entered his cottage, telling Mary of his misfortune.

“ Don’t say that, Callum ! ” said Mary. “ My heart is bleeding for you ! There was no curse on Job, who lost his all.”

“ I don’t know about Job,” replied Callum Dhu, “ but a curse is on *me* ! ”

“ The blessed one is between us and that ! ” replied Mary, as she rocked herself too and fro in sorrow of soul before the fire, with her head bent low. Callum was very silent as he sat opposite to her, doggedly looking into the peat fire.

“ We are beggared ! We are beggared ! ” he muttered to himself. “ Some evil is over me and mine.”

Archie was sleeping, and seemed troubled in

his dreams. At last his father abruptly left the hut, saying only that he would be back ere long.

It was a bitter cold and dark night, with a heavy gale blowing. Wrapping his plaid round him, Callum set out for Kirsty's hut. He took the well-known path through the knolls crowned with old pines, howling in the blast, and then cut across the short, bleak moor. When he entered the defiles between the rocks, the wind roared from the sea, and the white billows rose and fell like ghosts at his feet. He at last reached the hut, which was built under the shelter of a great boulder, and gained admittance on shouting out his name. Kirsty was spinning near a blazing peat fire. Cordially welcoming Callum Dhu, she bade him be seated, and after awhile inquired his errand.

Callum, in an under-breath, told her that he had come to seek her aid in his distress. Kirsty's eye glowed with a peculiar expression.

"You are indeed an unfortunate man," she said. "Evil rests on your dwelling, and has been

on it ever since Archie was born; and that foolish woman, your wife—”

“Hold your tongue,” said Callum. “I’ll not let you nor any one else speak against either.”

“Well, well,” replied Kirsty, “I’ll not speak.” Then taking her wheel, she began to spin and sing. Her song was something like this:—

“Spin, spin, spin!
A long long thread;
Spin for the living,
Spin for the dead;
Never give in
Until you win:
St. Michael hear me!

I hear the roar
Of the whirlpool of Vreckan,
On Scarba’s and Jura’s shore.
Round about wheel,
In dance and reel;
Dead men in the tangle!
St. Cormac hear me!

Sooner or later,
The sooner the better,

Let Jura's dame
Play out her game
Of death and hate,
And curse his name !
St. Colomb hear me !

Fair and tall
In fairy land,
Beloved by all
The fairy band ;
Is he the lad !
It makes me mad !
St. Malash hear me !

Let his fields be cursed,
Their cattle, their grain ;
With his boy he has nursed
In weakness and pain.
And now it is wheeled,
Finished and reeled !
Finished and reeled !
Mother Mary hear me !”

A cold shiver came over Callum as he heard these words. Though he could not understand the wild gibberish, yet her loud screaming as it mingled with the screams of the wind, impressed him with a sense of some doom hanging over him.

“You may go,” said Kirsty, rising. “If you won’t trust me, I cannot help you. Go off, and never come back to me, till your fine wife and boy, if a boy he is,” she said in a low tone of voice, as if thinking aloud, “shall die, and you take to your old trade, and search dead men’s pockets again, and—”

“For mercy’s sake be quiet,” said Callum, “and I’ll leave you.”

He rose to depart, but was stopped by Kirsty.

“Do you know,” said she, gazing with her mesmerizing eyes, “who that boy in Jura is that I was singing about?”

“No,” replied Callum, in half-stupid wonder.

“Would you like to know?” she asked, without changing her attitude or expression. “But whether you would or not, I’ll tell you. He is your own son!” and she sat down again beside her wheel and began to sing with an air of indifference—

“Heigho ! heigho !
Turn wheel, twist tow,
The one will come,
The other will go.”

Callum's curiosity was roused, and when Kirsty had worked it up to the right pitch, she said she could tell him the greatest secret he had ever heard.

After a long pause, in which she pretended to have a fierce struggle with some mental difficulty, she at last told Callum that Gillespic Ceanmore was not his real son, but a changeling of the fairies; and that she herself had seen his real son as a beautiful lad, playing among the green hills of Jura! "Your son," continued Kirsty to the astounded Callum, "is a great favorite with the fairies: he is so strong and beautiful; with golden locks, blue eyes, and back as straight as a young ash, as supple as a willow, and as powerful as an oak! He knows all about you, and has got the consent of the fairies to come back to you: and for his sake they wish to take back their own boy, Gillespic Ceanmore. It was your own son that killed your cows, and blasted your crops, that he might persuade you to take him back! All was

done in love, and he got the queen of the fairies to promise to send you health and wealth, and make you happy when he returned. Oh! he is a dear lad! and so like his father! Have pity on him! Oh, have mercy! have mercy!"

"How do you know all that?" asked Callum, with fear and wonder.

Kirsty rose, and, searching in a dark corner, brought out a cloth, in which was wrapped a few bones. These she arranged before the fire, then, stooping down, she began muttering to herself.

Stop that!" said Callum; "may the good one be between us!"

"Since you don't believe me," said Kirsty, "I will let you see the other world in a few minutes with your own eyes, and you will then believe—if spared to come back to this world!" and she clasped her hands and looked up to heaven.

"No more, no more!" exclaimed Callum. "I wish to see nothing; go on, and tell me how I can get my boy back if Archie is a child of the fairies."

“There’s the difficulty,” said Kirsty thoughtfully and sadly. “I fear it is impossible. Poor lad! I do not think he will ever see you more—yet—” and here she rocked herself to and fro, muttering something seemingly in great anguish of mind. At last she said in a low sad voice, “There is only one way; but I need not tell you, for you will not do it.”

“I’ll do anything to get him back,” said Callum, “if wee Archie is not hurt!”

“Come back to-morrow night at the same hour,” said Kirsty, “and I’ll tell you what I hear, for I must take a long journey to-night. But,” she added, rising and lifting her clenched hand above her head, “Callum, you are a dead man if you tell to mortal being what you have seen and heard here this night. Swear by these bones, and over this dirk”—alas! he remembered the dirk well—“that you’ll not tell Mary, or any one, and that you come to me *alone*! If not, you will be altogether ruined; you will carry my curse on your

body, on your wife, and on your land; and that poor, deformed, wasted witting will be with you all your life, when, if you only had courage and trusted me, he would be back a fine fairy child among his own people, while your own beautiful boy, who is pining to see you, would return, and bless you in everything, making you a rich and prosperous man! Yes, or No?" she imperiously demanded.

"Yes," said Callum; "I'll keep my own counsel, and come back."

"Off then!" she said, as she closed the door after the heavy-hearted man, who now sought his way home amid the storm.

Callum lay sleepless and miserable that night; but he would disclose nothing to his anxious wife, who felt some mysterious burden pressing on her heart, which she was powerless to remove. Her husband seemed to be, as she said, "not himself." There was something far wrong, yet what it was she knew not.

Next day Callum Dhu avoided his home as

much as possible. He employed himself restlessly about the doors, doing odd jobs, as if in a dream, in spite of the storm which still raged. He hardly touched the food put at meal hours upon the table ; and took no notice of Archie, beyond giving him a vacant stare, followed by a twitching of the features, as if suppressing a tear which yet forced its way down his cheek, in spite of every effort to check it. Late in the evening—it was Christmas Eve—he told his wife that he had important business to transact with a neighbor, and that, although it might keep him out till late, she need not be the least alarmed. Mary cast upon him an imploring glance, but knowing that he had an iron will, and a fierce temper when roused, she obeyed his look and the wave of his hand, both of which commanded silence.

Callum Dhu proceeded again through the storm to Kirsty's hut. He seemed fascinated by an irresistible power,—a dread of some unknown evil, as much as hope of some good. A sense of duty,

also, to his own child, kept in bondage by the fairies, vaguely mingled with his other impalpable thoughts.

In strange confusion of mind, he reached the cottage. Lifting the latch, he entered. The first question Kirsty put to him was, "Did you keep your oath, Callum?" and, being solemnly assured of his fidelity, she sat down to her wheel. After a few moments of silence, in which she seemed, with knit brows, to be thinking earnestly, she began one of the wild and vague songs, by which she was wont to excite the imagination of those who consulted her in secret, and which had an hysterical power over herself.

" Fire, fire, child of the sun,
Child of the stars and moon,
When you begin the cure is done,
Then comes the blessing soon.
Wheel turn,
Fire burn !
Every spark
Destroys the dark.

Come morn
Newly born,
Come the bright
Light with night.
Come fairy queen,
In glorious sheen,
Bring us the true ;
For the false we give you."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Callum, when she ceased.

"I'll tell you when you can learn," replied Kirsty. "But you must first taste out of my bottle." And she took out of her large chest an old Dutch bottle—the history of which Callum knew well—and, pouring out a glass, handed it to him. Callum, trembling, accepted the offered glass. But what was in it, he knew not, though he soon felt it work powerfully on his brain, which was otherwise hard to drown in the strongest water. "That's some of the old stuff!" said Kirsty, "out of the cask that killed Ewan McLachlan; and well he deserved to be killed; for he was

not innocent of blood, Callum Dhu; and that you and I know well. But never heed—keep quiet! I'm not going to trouble you about that, though;—it will keep for another day. Ha! ha! Times are changed. We have more serious business on hand to-night.”

When, according to Kirsty's judgment, the right moment came for divulging her secret, she sat down beside Callum, and took him kindly by the hand. She expressed her sympathy with all his losses, and her willingness to risk her reputation and life for his welfare. She muttered some charms, and went through some ceremonies, thrice lighting her lamp, and thrice extinguishing it, pacing from east to west across the floor, and such like. She then sat down, and in a strange, hollow voice, began to explain how she was about to communicate the greatest secret of her art—how she had consulted the fairies in Jura since he and she had met, and how the fairies and his son both had besought him to obey her, and to make the wished-

for exchange. Grasping Callum by the wrist, she fixed her large dark eyes upon him. Slowly she continued:—"Callum Dhu! On Christmas-night, at twelve o'clock, you yourself, unknown to any one else, must take that deformed fairy child to the kiln beside the burn, and—what's that?" she exclaimed, bending her head as if anxiously listening for some sound louder than the roar of the midnight gale. But Callum could hear nothing except the angry screams among the rocks, and the dash and roar of the sea. These, however, sufficiently affected his imagination.

"Do you hear anything?" he asked, in a low, trembling voice.

"I thought," replied Kirsty, "that I heard the cries of drowning men."

"God forbid!" replied Callum.

"I was mistaken," said Kirsty; "it is but the storm."

Callum was thus the more prepared to be

affected by the words which again proceeded slowly and solemnly from her mouth.

“Bring him to the kiln,” she said, “for the old body must be purified by fire ere the new body comes, and the soul be set free—set free!” and she wildly repeated, in a half-rhyme, the words—

“He must be
By fire set free!
Angels three
Give help to me!”

Callum, between terror and the exciting influence of the drugged liquor, sprang to his feet, and seizing the wooden stool on which he was sitting, held it with one hand over his head, while he grasped Kirsty's wrist with the other and cried, foaming at the mouth, “Whether you are from hell or not, I cannot tell, but swear to me by —,” and he prescribed a fearful oath, “swear that you are telling me the truth, or—” and the stool was held threateningly over Kirsty's head, as his frame shook with excitement.

“Let me go, you mad brute!” exclaimed Kirsty in a fury, flinging him from her, “or in one moment I will turn you into a toad, to crawl among graves, or into a worm, to lie forever in the skull of a murdered man!” And as if prepared for some such evil transformation, she screamed aloud—

“Evil one take him !
A worm make him,
Never to die,
For ever and ever,
But with dead to lie.
Hear my cry !”

Suddenly seizing the cat by the back of the neck, she pricked it with a pin, until it screamed in agony. Then, opening the window, she flung it out into the dark and stormy night, saying: “Off to Jura, you devil under the power of the mighty ones, and tell them I’m coming to the meeting to revenge myself on him and his pretty boy !”

Callum, crushed by terror, sunk on a chair, saying, “God have mercy on me, I am a done man !”

“Rouse up, you coward!” said Kirsty, shaking him. “Will you keep my secret? Will you bring Gillespic to-morrow night, at twelve, to the kiln? The fire will be ready; I’ll be there alone, and next morning you shall have your boy. Quick, quick, the cat is off and I’ll soon follow her, when that blast is over! Ere the day dawns I shall see your boy. Fly!” and she pointed Callum to the door.

The liquor was rapidly doing its work, and the wretched man seemed in a bewildered state. Kirsty now had him in her power.

“I’ll do anything you bid me!” he said, as his head drooped on his bosom.

“Rouse up, you fool, and again swear on this dirk—”

“On this dirk,” he replied.

“That you meet me at the kiln at twelve to-morrow night with the fairy child,” said Kirsty.

“With the fairy child,” he echoed, with a groan.

“There to commit him to the purifying fire—”

But Callum had by this time sunk into an unconscious and stupid sleep.

Before break of day he was roused by his wife. She had waited for his return until she could no longer endure the feverish anxiety she felt. The violence of the gale having spent itself, she ventured to go to Kirsty's cottage, having a suspicion that her husband was there. She found him alone in the hut, stretched on the floor, near the half-extinguished peat fire. She could hardly awake him from his apoplectic slumber. After some patience and more coaxing, she at last persuaded him to accompany her home, she helping him as best she could to accomplish the short journey. He no sooner entered his own door than he staggered to his bed. Without changing his clothes or uttering a syllable, he threw himself down, and was soon in profound slumber again.

It was the noon of a calm, bright, frosty Christmas when Callum opened his eyes, and began

slowly to recall the events of the previous night. By degrees he unravelled the various threads in the web of incident. They revealed themselves to him as a terrible network, in whose meshes he was irrevocably involved. The first object which fixed his attention was Archie, who, with his fond, sad eyes, was gazing on him from his crib near the fire. Callum covered his head with the blankets, and his wife in vain attempted to extract some kind response as she conveyed Archie's message to him of "A happy Christmas to father. I love father!"

Having been brought up in an old Highland Episcopalian family, Mary had an intelligent appreciation of holy days, such as Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, which Callum could not well comprehend. As for Archie, he had always a special lesson given him at such times. On this Christmas morning he was dressed out in his best; and what between the nice style in which his hair was arranged, and the colored neckerchief tied round his snow-white collar, he looked sagacious as well

as kind. Sitting down with him, his mother said, "Oh! Callum, listen to Archie, as he says his lesson!"

Archie smiled with delight; and replied joyfully to the several questions put to him about Christ and Christmas—about the Saviour being once a little child himself, and about his being kind to children. The boy clasped his weak hands round his mother's neck, kissing her; then he stretched out his arms to his father, as if asking him to come near. "Come, Callum, and speak to Archie," said Mary, with a voice of gentle entreaty. But Callum made no reply. His face was turned to the wall. Mary went to the bed, and, bending over her husband, clapped him fondly, whispering in his ear, "Callum dear, he is a weak boy, but in spite of that he is our greatest earthly fortune; for he is God's own child—so patient, so kind, and so good. And he will never leave us, as a strong boy would do, but be always with us—our own wee laddie!" and Mary gazed with a smile on him.

Callum Dhu heard all, though he pretended not. At last, groaning as if in pain, he said, in a low, sad voice, "He is neither your child nor mine, but a changeling—the fairies' child!"

In a moment Mary solved the mystery of his absence. He had been consulting Kirsty, who had filled his mind with some of her "devil's dreams," as Mary called them; and Archie, some way or other, was involved. Her bosom heaved with honest wrath against Kirsty; while at the same time she felt sincere pity for her husband. He had been consulting his witch of Endor—that was bad enough, but to hear Archie called a fairy-child! "A fairy-child!" she repeated. "How dare you say that to me, his mother, if you have no respect for yourself! It is that she-devil—that black-hearted, foul-tongued witch of darkness, Kirsty, who has lied to you and cheated you. Shame upon you!—you, a man, a father, a husband, and a Christian. A fairy-child! my wee darling!" she sobbed, as she flew to the cradle,

and kissed Archie passionately. "Archie loves mother and loves father," the boy began to repeat in his own way.

After this burst was over, and Mary had given vent to her honest feelings, she became quiet, and began to think how she could best get her husband out of this sinful and unnatural state of mind. She again went up to the bed, and, taking his rough hand, said, "That vile woman has poisoned your mind, and made you believe the blackest lies. Forget all, and ask God to forgive you. I forgive you the wrongs you have done me and mine. Come, gude-man, rise, and speak kindly to Archie." And she tried to lift up her husband, so as to induce him to leave his bed and cast off the memories of the past night. Callum rolled out of bed, and stood beside the crib. Archie stretched out his weak arms, and his father took one of the little white hands into his, and then bent down on his knees, which seemed to tremble under him. He then laid his black, rough hand on the boy's bed, and

as Archie stroked it kindly, saying, " Archie loves father," the man did what he never did before—sobbed hysterically. Then he rose, and muttering something about an oath, went out of doors. Mary, astonished at his abrupt departure, watched him narrowly through the window. Being satisfied that he went in a direction opposite to that of Kirsty's cottage, and to where some respectable people lived, she felt more at ease, and returned to her household duties, persuaded that, for the present, at least, she had exorcised the demon of superstition.

On the other hand Kirsty had every reason to believe that she had fairly got hold of her victim. A cunning plan was soon arranged by which Calum was to get Archie out of the cottage unknown to Mary, and conveyed to the kiln to be burnt. She promised to have the fire in full glow, and to conceal it so that no one would be attracted by its brightness. All the rest was to be done by Calum himself. Though it would break his heart, yet

he, and he alone, was to consign the false child to the flames. Of course the immediate result was to be, that his own boy would be restored, while Archie, to his own joy and the joy of the fairies, was to be as quickly transferred to Jura. This was the programme determined upon, not by Kirsty only, as she said, but also by the fairies, as well as by his own son, whom she had seen and conversed with.

It was a clear frosty night. There was no moon, and the stars shone brilliantly. A thin sprinkling of snow covered the crisp frost on the ground.

Down in a small dank glen, not far from Callum's house, was the kiln. Kirsty had been there for some time, and had kindled the fire. She sat, wrapped in a dark plaid, among the heather, where she was concealed from the light. Would Callum come? would he be firm? would she have her revenge? might not the whole plot be ruined? She watched with nervous anxiety. Soon her

quick ear caught the sound of steps on the frosty ground. Then she saw a form emerge out of the darkness. It was Callum!—and alone!—and he was carrying a large white bundle in his arms. All was right. She rose to meet him.

“Who is there?” asked Kirsty in a low, deep voice.

“It’s me,” replied Callum Dhu.

“What have you there?” she again inquired.

“Gillespic,” he replied. “But speak low, and don’t touch or disturb him,” he continued, “for he is sound asleep, and he may wake and cry. His mother will soon return. What must be must be; quick!” And he began to soothe the child, as if to lull him into deeper slumber. “I won’t do this,” said Callum, as if still in doubt, “unless you declare by all that is holy, that you advised me to do it, and have promised me to bring back my son.”

“I swear!” said Kirsty, and she repeated Callum’s words. Then, stretching her arms to the stars, she said—

“ Let the fire burn
With holy glow !
Bright boy return,
False changeling go !
St. Michael and all saints hear me ! ”

“ Off now ! ” she said, “ and be quick—he may awake ! Shut your eyes, and cast him in, and I’ll stay here, and repeat a charm that will make it all sure and safe.”

Callum carried his silent burden (apparently with much difficulty,) ever and anon lifting the blanket, as if to see the face, if not to kiss it also. He ascended the kiln, and stood in silence between Kirsty and the sky. A second more, and she saw the burden fly from his arms ! All was over. She rushed to the fire, and saw it burn with a fiercer glow ; but no sound was heard either on the cold earth or in the starry sky.

“ Come down, Callum, quick, quick ! ” she cried in a hurried under-breath ; and so saying, she bent her head as if she heard something. But it was only a low whistle. It was enough however,

for she exclaimed, "Some one is coming. Run, Callum, for your life! I'm off!"

"Not yet!" said a voice behind her, as two stalwart Highlanders sprang from behind the thick bushes near which she was standing. Even in the dim light, she soon recognized them as the sons of two respectable tenants in the neighborhood. "We have gripped you at last, you vile wretch!" was the only remark, as they seized her firmly by the arms.

Kirsty was so taken aback by this sudden and wholly unexpected movement, that she was speechless. At last, she said, in a dusky voice, "It's him you should catch! It's him—he has murdered his poor child! He is guilty, not me!"

"He is coming," remarked one of the men, quietly, "and can speak for himself; but we heard all that *you* said, and it was you who tempted him."

In the meantime Callum Dhu, having descended from the kiln, was approaching the group with the same burden in his arms as he had when he ascended

it. He laid the bundle on the ground without speaking a word. Then, slowly removing a pair of blankets, he disclosed some billets of wood, instead of the child! He had not thrown this bundle into the kiln, but had laid it down close by. It was now Kirsty's turn to groan and tremble. She was in the hands of the Philistines. "Is it hang her or burn her, Black Callum?" asked one of the Highlanders.

"Whatever you please," said Callum, "she is in your hands."

"Burnin's the only death for a witch like her," remarked Eachan, as he grasped the trembling woman's arm more firmly. "What think you, Peter?"

"I agree with you, Eachan; and as she said to Callum, 'Quick, quick,' I think we should act on this advice while the kiln is hot!" and they both seemed as if about at once to carry out their resolution.

Kirsty, sensible of her guilt, and feeling herself

utterly powerless, attempted at first to act on the superstitious fears by which she believed they might still be influenced. Assuming a bold and determined bravado, she threatened to inflict every possible form of evil upon them, if they attempted to injure her.

“If that’s your way,” said Peter, “we shall make short work of it;” and they dragged Kirsty toward the burning kiln.

“It would be a pity,” Eachan remarked, “were such a fine fire to be wasted this cold night; more especially as Kirsty would, no doubt, like to be purified, and sent to heaven with the fairies.”

Kirsty now became seriously alarmed. She swore, she prayed, she struggled, she screamed, until at last in abject terror she asked forgiveness, begged for mercy, and promised never, never, to have anything more to do with fairies or the black art.

At last Callum Dhu, who had hitherto spoken little, approached and said; “Kirsty, Mary asked

me to forgive you, more especially as this was Christmas Day. I was a deluded and wicked fool to listen to you, and you was a wicked woman to take advantage of me. We are both sinners, and if these men let you off, as I expect for mercy from God I will freely give it to you. Will you solemnly promise to give up your evil ways?"

Kirsty kneeled down—for she was a great adept at the dramatic—and promised never again to act as she had done.

"Let her go, then," said Callum, who felt himself compromised by the business, about which he had, in his misery, informed his friends, who had insisted on his going through the sham sacrifice in order that they might get a hold of Kirsty.

"Indeed, Callum," said Peter, "if justice was done, you would deserve some punishment yourself, for your ignorant follies. You are a poor calf, but with big horns; and you deserve a good thrashing! And as for this woman, we will *not* let her go, except out of the parish." Then

addressing her, Peter continued, "If you were burned in that kiln, you lying, bad woman, it's only what you deserve. You and your mother have both been curses to the parish, deluding the ignorant people, who were foolish enough to believe you. Now, as sure as my name is Peter MacTavish, and his is Eachan Cameron, we will bring you before the justices for this night's work, and for other work as bad, unless you are off before twelve o'clock to-morrow. Do you hear? Yes or no?"

"Yes, yes! I see it must be—must be. I'll go; I'll go—Ohone—Ohone!"

"None of your groaning," said Eachan. "Many a one you've made groan. We are far too merciful to you. But leave the parish; for to-morrow at twelve your house will be burned. The laird has given us leave to burn it. Take what you like out of it, and run. And should you ever be seen here, this night's business will be a rope round your neck if we are alive."

Without speaking a word, she rose, and vanished in the darkness.

“Hech,” says Peter, “I think she’ll no forget that! And now, Callum Dhu,” he continued, “let me never, never hear of your believing such trash, or I’ll tell the story to the whole parish, and if they hear it they will soon make you trot after Kirsty. Thank your good wife and wise child for saving you from murder and misery.”

Callum Dhu was bowed to the earth with shame and sorrow. He poured out his thanks to his friends, and begged they would never tell what they had seen, and what he had told them, as friends, in his despair.

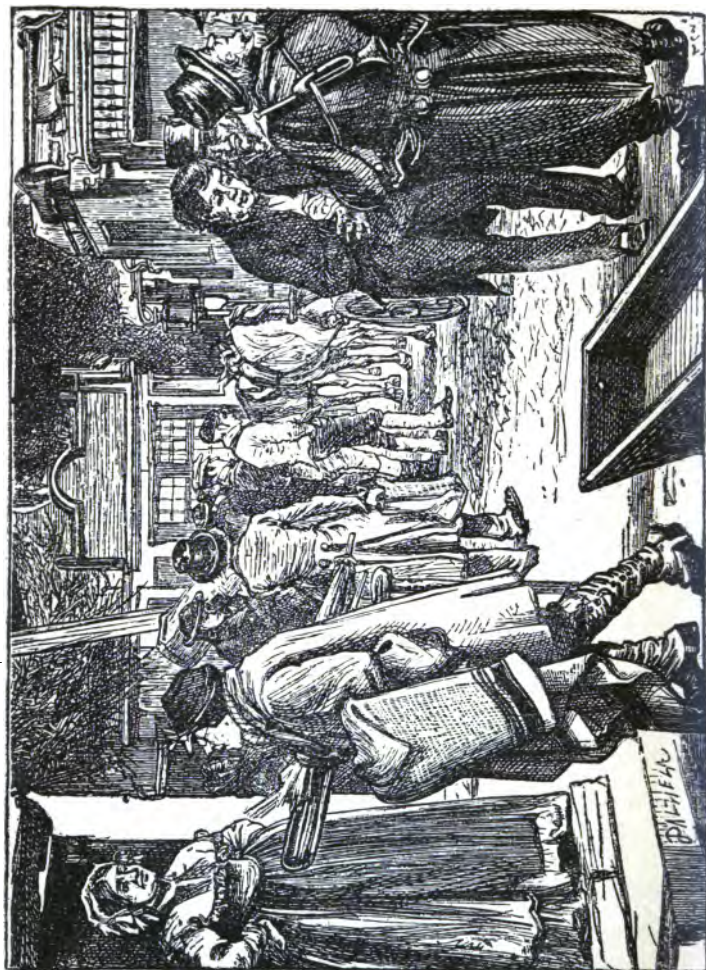
The thick smoke which rose from Kirsty’s cottage next day was the sign that she had fled. It was said that she joined a party of wandering tinkers; at all events she was never seen again near her old haunts. Mary never alluded to the sad story, beyond taking Callum’s hand and saying, “God has been merciful to us and to our child. I

know how sorry you are, Callum. But be of good cheer, your sins are no doubt forgiven you, since you have confessed and forsaken them. Oh! I was terrified that our Christmas was to have been made a dark and wicked one. But no, God has given peace and good-will to our home. Let us always trust Him, and we will never be put to shame."

"Amen," said Callum.

"Come, now," said Mary, "and we will kiss Archie!"





THE OLD GUARD.

“THE Bill has passed!” exclaimed old Sam Joliffe, as he dismounted from his mare in the stable-yard of the Red Lion, and handed the reins to Jim Lazenby, one of its grooms.

“It has, has it!” said Jim.

“It has, and no mistake,” continued Sam, as he stood by his nag, unbuttoning his great coat, and taking off his huge woollen comforter.

“That’s a nice job,” remarked Jim, holding the horse’s bridle with one hand, the other being thrust deep into his waistcoat pocket. At the same time, he tapped the ground with his foot, as he gazed at his master; while his master returned the gaze, looking as if he wished Jim not to believe the news.

Sam entered the kitchen of the famous posting-

house, the Red Lion. Throwing himself into a large arm-chair beside the fire, he stretched out his limbs to receive its heat, gazing round with a vacant stare at the furbished metal which, in the shape of dish-covers, brass pans, and goblets, hung on the walls and reflected the brilliant flames. Jim passed to the stables, and very soon all labor there was suspended for a time. The hissing sound of busy grooms, rubbing down the heated posters, ceased. The post-boys paused disrobing themselves and getting their boots off. Little beyond the repetition of the news was said by any in the yard, although much was thought.

“The Bill has passed, has it? Well, I’m blown!” remarked one.

“Pretty work, ain’t it?” said another.

“Who’ll buy my ’osses?” inquired a third, with a smile.

“Sixpence for the whole lot,” shouted a stable-boy.

Others, again, only shook their heads ominously ;

but all of them, to get rid of the burden of too much speculation, betook themselves once more to their respective occupations.

Mrs. Joliffe, with her round face and rolling gait—a picture of comfort and good cheer—all made subservient to practical business, soon joined her husband in the kitchen. She, too, had heard the news from the chamber-maid, who had heard it from a groom; but she asked her husband no questions on the subject. She moved about, opening this drawer and shutting that, searching the floor as if she had lost something, or dusting a piece of furniture; but all the while she gave forth irregular, half-connected ejaculations like these:—“Such!” “The like!” “Well they may, no doubt.” “It’s *their* business, and not ours, and that’s comfort.” “They *may* do it—may they not? Yes, of course they may! But what I say is, we may do *our* duty, Mr. Joliffe, and defy them. Although you may be like a pelican in the wilderness, and I a sparrow on the house-top, Mr. Joliffe,

I shall say Amen! Well, there is one I know will never go by them rails—that's myself. And there's Mrs. Snodgrass told me t'other day, sitting where you now are, and taking her cup of tea, that she would be sure to die were she to go by them; and no wonder! although she is a healthy and well-to-do woman, like her mother in Cawood. And sure no *lady* would travel by the nasty thing! I would like to know what the Squire says to it? It's all owing to Reform; and yet you *would* vote for Mr. Jenkins, the Radical, although *I* told you what would come of it sooner or later, and so you now see what *has* come of it, Mr. Joliffe!"

Mr. Joliffe made no remark on this sermon; but seemed to be dreaming, as many are apt to do on more public occasions. By-and-by he awoke with a suppressed groan; and, giving a peculiar click with his lips, asked for "summat to drink."

Yes, *the* Railway Bill had passed! Was it possible that this involved the fate of the Red Lion? There it had stood for generations, a very model

of that noble institution, that welcome and cheerful establishment—an old English roadside posting-house. What a comfortable sight for travellers it had been, long even before coaches ran, with its white walls and tall chimneys and bow-windows revealing themselves among the trees, while the sign of the rampant lion swung from the corner! Generations had frequented it; it was known to the sons of the squires far and near, as they stole a last, long, lingering look at it in the distance when returning to school after the holidays, or as they joyfully approached it on their way home. It was remembered by grandfathers and grandmothers when they recalled their marriage tours. Every form of vehicle, from the lumbering conveyance of the last century, to the perfect mail-coach, or London carriage-and-four of the present day, had drawn up at its door. It was among the pleasures of hope and memory, to a long succession of guards and coachmen. And was it to become a thing of the past? How could this be! Was the old

sign-post to fall down from sheer decay, or be sent to the fire as nothing but refuse? Was the pump in the yard to spout no more? What was to become of the bench round the fire-place in the kitchen, where Tom Bilbey the poor curate, and Frank Collison the old huntsman of the York and Ainsty, and Bill Jobson the clerk, and dozens more of the village aristocracy, had sat, polishing its oak? What was to become of the smoke-dimmed pictures in the parlor, of huntsmen and hunters, of race-horses and steeple-chasers, and of the famous sow reared by Ralph Crompton? And was the bar, with its polished tankards and cold chicken, a very babe in the wood, covered with green leaves, to be covered with ivy? and the public room, in which the hunt had breakfasted since last century on many a crisp winter's morning, and dined, too, when the day was over—was it to grow briars? Were rooks to build in the big chimney? Were waiters, chambermaids, barmaids, postilions, grooms, and stable-boys, with landlord and land-

lady—nay, perhaps the very foundations of the Red Lion—to depart, and to be found no more on earth—and all for a railway!

That something evil was coming, Sam anticipated. But we do not think that he had a vision, except the very dimmest, of this coming future. The railway train was as yet only a speck in the far distance. When it came near, it might possibly vanish into thin air, like many another spectre. No definite scene of dissolution, if he had one, passed before Sam's inner eye; nevertheless, fear is increased by the indefinite.

The coach had not yet come up, and Sam was watching most eagerly for its appearance. He was restless and uneasy, walking out and in, and polishing two half-crowns which were in his pocket. At last the horn was heard beyond the plantation, then the roll of distant wheels, and then the sharp ring of horses' hoofs, until with a crack of the whip, as fine a team as ever bowled along an English road drew up at the door. The

box was soon emptied, the passengers went in to dine, and in a few minutes the guard and coachman having received certain mysterious looks and winks, followed Sam into his private parlor.

Guard and coachman! when shall we see the like again? It has taken a big bit out of the century to produce those two specimens. That fine polish on old Bonus the coachman's face, has been the combined work of storm and breeze, heat and cold, summer and winter, for forty seasons, aided by daily supplies of the best home-brewed Yorkshire ale. Reverence those rainbow hues! They are the symbols of earth's changes, photographs of meteorological phenomena which have left no recognizable mark anywhere else on the race. By the law of development their epidermis and that of their descendants should have been more like rainbows. Will the world ever again have an opportunity of producing such a resplendent formation?

And look at his brother, old Ben Cunliffe, the guard, who has followed Bonus a coach-length for

half his lifetime. They began to travel together at the time of the French Revolution, and they have jogged along ever since. They have gone so often to and from the Black Swan in York, that, had there been a road, they could in their time have rattled twenty times through the streets of Peking in their journeys round the globe. And if the face of Bonus never can be produced by any art, neither can the legs of Ben. Are they legs or mere embryo limbs, which find their full development in the walking portion of the human species? for nature never wastes her strength; and of what use are powerful limbs to an old guard? They are short props, the upper portion of them being almost absorbed into the stomach, the tops of the boots reaching the flaps of the large waistcoat. The old guard of Napoleon has vanished, and so has the old guard of Britain. Alas! our children will be ignorant of them, and the nation which owes them so much, remember them no more. And, shame

upon us, there is no specimen of them preserved in the British Museum!

No sooner had Sam received his friends than he shut and barred the door. Filling three tankards of ale, he delivered himself of the important intelligence, which hung like a millstone about his neck,

“ Bonus,” he said, “ Ben,” looking from the one to the other as he spoke, “ the Bill has passed. Had it this morning from Ned Sykes.”

The news was followed by solemn silence, which was broken by Bonus.

“ Well,” he said, “ it’s funny !” putting down his tankard without drinking it.

“ Can’t understand it,” said Ben, “ nohow.”

“ What will the Squire say to it ?” asked Bonus.

“ Or Jamie Bell ?” inquired Ben.

“ Will they ever go by’t trean affair ?” asked Bonus, giving a thick laugh. “ I should think not. Them go w’t ! wi’ that smokin’, burnin’, dust and ashes, chimney-sweepin’ concarn ! Why it’s not fit

for a pig! The Squire, I'se sure, 'ill never put his foot in't; nor will any squire's son, a going to Roogby, or 'Arrow, or Heton! I know all the young uns well, and till they die they'll gang wi' us; and wi' none else! *They'll* not gang w't trean, I'se warrant!"

"Nor Mr. Hubbard," said Sam.

"Nor Dickie Thorp, nor Johnnie Clough," said Ben.

"Nor Bill Eaton, nor any from the Hall," added Bonus. And kindly seizing Sam by the collar, he added, with his peculiar laugh, "We'll keep t'ould coach wheelin' in spite of them radical iron reals—cinders and all!"

Sam appeared mightily relieved, and shook Bonus by the hand. Then, opening a cupboard, he brought out his best brandy instead of the beer, which had not yet been touched by any of them.

"I tell thee what," said Bonus, taking off his hat and setting it down, though he still held his coachman's whip perpendicularly between his

finger and thumb, "the glory of old England will go if them Chartists get the reins! No more coaches and four coming up to't door telling them to turn out, and be quick! No more guards! no more drivers! no more bar-maids! no more brandy and water! no more, not nothing!" and he let the butt end of the whip come down to the ground.

For the first time in their lives the coachman and guard forgot to dine. Sam suggested that they "might feel peckish," and cutting a cold chicken in two, rolled up a half for each with some bread, and stuffed the food into their pockets.

No sooner was the old stage off, and Ben fairly seated, his horn in his basket, than he was addressed by one of the outsiders, a respectable bagman.

"So I hear the Railway Bill has passed," he remarked. "Cut you up, I should think, considerably, by-and-by, eh? To pass this way, I understand; right across the valley. Capital line."

Ben took out his horn, and stood up, prepared to give a blast if there were any obstruction a-head, but the road was clear. He had no sooner resumed his seat than the commercial gentleman again addressed him.

“Why, guard, it will take the shine out of your old posters, won’t it! Only think of thirty miles an hour! No horses could stand *that*. From London to York in half a day—what do you think of that! Hurrah, say I!”

“Why, sir,” said Ben, “we’ll see, whoever lives to see it. Them new affairs will turn out to be the ruin o’ this country as sure as my name is Ben Cunliffe.”

“How?” inquired the traveller.

“Why, every way, and all ways,” said Ben, “like a coach wheel. There will be a precious blow-ooop, and no mistake. Who’s safe? No one, I say! It’s no use taking your head with you, it may be left ten miles ahind afore you miss it; and if the body gings wi’t, it’s a chance if they gather

you oop in a week, as you maun be scattered along the precious line like milestones, a bit here and a bit there; and if not broken oop, why thoul' be flat as a pancake, and need a portfolio like for thy coffin! Ha! ha! ha! Is that Christian burial?"

"All nonsense, Ben," replied the traveller; "we must have speed at all hazards, and save time. It would be equal to three more days a week to me."

"It's my opinion," replied Ben, "that it never was intended that men, women, and children should be like geese or crows, a steeplechasin' with fire and smoke, straight on eend 'cross t' country. Thirteen miles an hour is natur'l for a man travelin' on business or pleasure, but after that it's a sin—a sin, I say, for it's clean agin' natur'. And what is to come o't passengers? Them flyin' ingeins won't stop and pick thee oop; they won't pull up at thy door and take thee on; *they* don't care a grain o' yetts for rich or poor! Be a man wearied or sick, be't lad or lass, a man wi't stick leg or t'ould

woman, they'll have nae more mercy for them than an 'oss flyin' in to't winnin' post! Is that fair and just? Will Parliament, dost think, stand it lang? Or the bishops? Nea! They'll ha' nout to do wi' them when they once see and smell them!"

"Well," ventured Baggie, "if it's for the good of the country, the Parliament *must* stand it, and so must the bishops."

"Good for't country!" replied Ben. "How can it be for't good o't country, when thou can't see t' country? Thou might'st as well be a-ridin' on a gale of wind down hill and no drag! And is the country to depend on a bit o' iron for its prosperity? Is it? I ask thee."

"A bit of iron! What do you mean?" inquired the traveller.

"I mean," said Ben more vehemently than ever—"I mean a bit o' iron. Suppose a black-guard lifts a yard or blows it oop, where art thou? Ha, ha! where—where?" asked Ben, looking

round to the other passengers. "There thou art, a-puffin', a-spittin', and a-blowin' for want of a yard of iron, without a cross-road. There thou art when nout but a coach could save thee!—and to that it'll come yet."

"But," remarked the commercial gentleman, "the swiftest train can stop if there is any danger before it as well as you can."

"Stop!" cried Ben, "but can it go on? And if it's at night, how doest know that t' iron's oop? An 'oss has sense—it can smell t' road and see danger; but that is what none of thy puffin' ingeins can do."

"It's all jealousy!" remarked the commercial gentleman—"it's all jealousy, Ben."

"Jealousy for what?" asked Ben, lifting his eyebrows and spreading out his hands. "Will an ingein ever equal flesh-and-blood four-in-hand? Wilt thou compare pig-iron to t' finest hanimals in creation? Will coal ever be evened to beans or corn? Jealousy! Will one of thy ugly reals ever

be like a good road, windin' sweetly among the fields and trees of old England? Jealousy! Will thy blackguard sweeps, with their oil and tow, holdin' hard by a smoothin' iron, ever equal Bonus there, as fine a hand as ever held the ribbons? Jealousy! I'd despise to put my foot in them! I'd rather ride an old mare, or in that donkey-cart, than go in them. 'Osses and donkeys *were* in t' Ark, but as for them chimney coal-ashes affairs!—it's a Chartist invention. It's knowed as how it was them began it, and there will be some hangin's and blood spilt afore it's ended!" said Ben, as he looked more knowing, and buttoned his coat tighter, adding, "'Osses ha' been and coaches ha' been sin' the days of Moses, and it's agin' Scriptur' to think that they'll ever be put doon by them things. Jealousy! I don't give a puff o' my horn for them. I defy them!"

To make peace the Baggie remarked that he and Bonus would be sure to get situations as guards on the line. This only made matters worse,

especially as Ben felt that he had the best of the argument, and recognized the bagman as giving in.

“ I have had my say,” he said firmly, “ and thou hast heard my mind as a loyal friend o’ king, country, church, and state. As for Bonus, thinkest thou he’d be guard to them ingeins? Him crawl like a parrot along them line o’ coaches, like a long street with Satan runnin’ aff wi’t! Will Bonus handle cinders and small coals? Will he sweep their dirty foul chimneys? He’d as soon hang oop by t’ middle over a shop door in Cripplegate as the sign o’t tup in trouble!” We presume Ben meant thus to describe the sign of the Golden Fleece. “ Now, sirs,” he concluded, “ just let it drop, and don’t ’urt our feelin’s !”

And at this Ben arose, as if to warn some wag-on ahead to keep out of their way, he blew a powerful and winding blast from his horn, which seemed to give relief to his feelings, for he resumed his seat humming a song, which died away into a real or pretended nap.

Months passed. Railway operations had commenced near the Red Lion. The green valley, with its sweet stream and old elms, was being filled up by a huge bank that almost threw the posting-house into deep shadow. The village was half-destroyed, the common cut up; roads, bridges, fields, trees, and houses, which seemed as unchangeable as the mountains, were disappearing before this mound of red earth, which day by day crept onward, like a huge monster, eating everything up. Still no change took place within the old posting-house. The coach was as full as ever. Tom blackened as many boots and shoes as before; and as many posters filled the stables. Sam relieved his despondency by silently questioning, after this experience, whether the cry of railways knocking up posting-houses might not be a fiction, or whether the Red Lion might not, for some reason or other, have had reserved to it a prescriptive right to business. The railway, to be sure, was not yet opened. But Sam did not think of this; all he knew was

that the rails were laid, and that the Red Lion was as flourishing as before. The only real difference he saw, so far as concerned the coach, was that the bank of earth concealed it from view five minutes longer than when it came by the old road near the plantation.

But in a few months more the railway *was* opened!

Soon after this event Squire Randolph was standing toasting himself with his back to the fire in the public room of the Black Swan in York. He was below the middle size, rather obese, with a rosy countenance, although given neither to wine nor to sport. As he stood there his face was beaming with a singular mixture of uneasiness and goodness. A kinder man was not to be found in all Yorkshire, and that is saying much. He had, no doubt, his peculiarities, his whims, and his crotchets; but all of them leant, in almost a dangerous degree, to virtue's side, without those props of safety which wisdom and prudence might have supplied. He

was thus often disposed to defend delinquents even, and to give a lifting hand to those whom others had cast off. He suspected the truth of all opinions which were warmly embraced by majorities, more especially if these opinions were new, and the majorities were suddenly attained. With a singularly deep but suppressed enthusiasm for whatever good cause he espoused, or for whatever person he patronized, he professed to have the greatest contempt for enthusiasm, or, indeed, for the display of feeling of any kind on the part of others, and condemned all such soft ebullitions as being what he called "gammon." One thing only he abhorred and could never forgive, and that was falsehood. If the worst man told him the truth, however much it condemned the teller himself, he was at once recognized as an object of sympathy. And when genuine worth suffered, and suffered quietly without any complaint, and especially if he himself had the charm of making the discovery of such a case, his heart and purse were always open

to dispense charity. Never did a man better answer to the character of the "good old English gentleman who loved the olden time."

Squire Randolph, on the occasion alluded to, rang the bell and asked the waiter to request Ben and Bonus to speak with him. The Squire had known them almost from his boyhood, and as the posting-house was upon his property and the coach passed his gate, he had a special interest in them both. The guard and coachman soon entered and made their respectful obeisance. They asked for the "Missus," and the young squire, the state of the game, and various other general questions. The Squire seemed fidgety, and walked up and down the room with his hands deep in his pockets. At last, suddenly pausing, he turned to his friends, and said,—

"Well, this is a pretty business, isn't it; with this railroad?"

"As you say, Squire," said Ben; "it's all o' them Chartists; but what else could you expect?"

“They can’t wrong me,” said the Squire, “though they would if they could. Yet they may ruin you, and they may ruin the coach, and they may ruin the country.”

“They have done it,” said Ben; “the glory of old England will go if they are on the box—as Mr. Bonus remarked to Sam Joliffe, poor fellow, so I say, with all respect and no offence to you, sir; we’ll be off the road, capsized! All the old things will be done up—the old roads, the old coaches, the old inns, the old guards—”

“And the old Tories,” said the Squire. “And will new England be like the old?” he continued. “Will she have better Pitts?”

“No, nor better posters,” said Bonus.

“Nor George the Thirds, nor Howes, nor Nelsons, nor Wellingtons,” said Mr. Randolph.

“Nor Squires,” said Ben.

“No more peace, no more liberty,” said the Squire.

“Nor nou’t!” added Bonus.

Here Bonus rose and pointed, with a reverence befitting a monk looking at a holy relic, to a notice hung over the chimney, and printed early last century, of a coach which was to travel to and fro between York and London in a week.

“Are we better than our forefathers?” he asked piously. “A good man has time enough to live, I say, and a bad un too much!”

Satisfied with this moral statement, he resumed his seat, adding, nevertheless:—

“I heerd it said, sir, as how Dick Turpin went to Lunnon in that wery coach! and I’se sure Black Bess wud ha’ beat by a length them ingeins, the best o’ them, wi’ Dick on her back; ay, that she would!” And Bonus was comforted by the thought.

All this time the Squire continued his walk up and down the room, delivering a sentiment each time he turned. At last, putting himself once more into his place with his back to the fire, and thinking deeply for a minute with his head bent

down and a gentle smile on his face, he bade Bonus and Ben be seated. Then seating himself opposite to them, and putting a hand on the knee of each with a familiarity that touched them, he said—

“Ben! Bonus! neither you nor the coach will be ruined as long as I have a sixpence. I’ll keep up the concern at my own risk. Silence! I have made up my mind to it. Don’t think I’m making any sacrifice,—it’s all for my own sake—silence!—and the sake of the country. No one who has ever travelled with you will travel in any other way—that I’m sure of. There is my hand to you. Silence! not a word; be off and attend to your business.”

“God bless you, sir,” spluttered old Bonus, and as Ben threatened to follow lead, the Squire assumed his commanding tone, and again said, “Silence! not a word of thanks or that sort of gammon.”

Many more months passed.

One day the coach came up to the Red Lion without a passenger. The guard and coachman again once more followed Sam to the old parlor. They all seemed rather out of sorts. The door was again shut, and what passed at the conference I know not. One of the grooms asserted in confidence to another that he saw Mr. Joliffe drying his eyes as they came out, and heard him say something to Ben and Bonus about a visit which he hoped they would pay him at the new Red Lion at Craven. The coach drove off. Every groom and waiter and stable-boy, for some reason or other, gathered round it as it left. The chambermaids looked out at the window, and Mrs. Joliffe, with arms akimbo, filled the front door. What had produced such excitement? Why those ringing cheers among the youngsters, and those sad looks among the servants of the Red Lion? Ask not, but look at the old coach as it ascends the hill, soon to be out of sight, and bid it a kindly farewell; for you will see it no more. It is the last

which will ever run from London to York. With it an era in British history is departing, and Ben as the old guard brings up its rear. Peace be with it!

Months again passed. One day, when a train was momentarily expected, the Squire was seen standing on the platform at Morley station accompanied by a servant, who seemed seriously concerned about him, as if judging from his face he was threatened with a fit of apoplexy. The railway servants, though they whispered and smiled to each other, were particularly respectful to him.

“Got your ticket, Mr. Randolph?” asked one of them, as he touched his cap.

“Know nothing about it, and want to know nothing about it!” said the Squire, angrily. “Ask Thomas.”

Thomas quietly informed the porter that he had got his master's ticket.

“Here, sir!” cried the Squire to his civil friend,

"I wish you to stop for a moment at Coxwold Castle for a parcel I expect to get there."

"There is no station there, sir," replied the porter.

"No what, sir?" asked the Squire, testily. "Why, I'm told you pass the very door; very much to the disgust and annoyance of Sir John."

"Don't know, sir," replied the porter. "I only know there's no station, and the train can't stop."

"Does it ever stop?" asked the Squire, in a tone meant to be a sneering one—"at London, for example? Unless a friend was dying, I'd never put my foot in it. But I *must* go by it; and I hope it will do us the honor and kindness of stopping at London."

"Oh yes, sir!" said the porter, smiling; "and at many other places before it reaches that."

The conversation was here interrupted by the roar of the train, which approached the station with such noise and rapidity that the Squire, with a look of horror, shrunk back to the remotest corner

of the platform, from whence he had to be almost dragged by his servant into the compartment. He had hardly composed himself in the train when a loud scream was heard, and springing up, he gasped, "What's that?"

"Only the tunnel," said a fellow-passenger, when, with a cry of, "Have mercy upon us!" he sunk into his seat, and all was lost in darkness.

THE WATER-HORSE.

(A TALK WITH THE BOYS.)

IF you have travelled in the Highlands of Scotland I am sure you must be grateful for all you saw and enjoyed in that splendid country. Did you ever see grander hills? more beautiful lochs? denser mist? heavier rain? or hear more splendid music than the bagpipe—the *real* bagpipe, which the pipers say can be heard any distance off, say a hundred miles or so? And did you ever hear a more melodious language than the Gaelic? and were you ever so sick in your life as when going to Staffa or Skye, although you professed to feel “so jolly?” If, on the other hand, you have not been in the Highlands, be thankful that there is yet much enjoyment before you.

I have been there almost every year since I was a boy. For several summers I have lived there with my boys and girls during *their* holidays, and during my own, for we all need a little play. Last summer was the most delightful we ever had, for the weather was magnificent, and we were among such glorious scenery of mountains, and seas, and old castles! Our chief amusement was sea-fishing, of which we had abundance—chiefly cod, caught with hand-line, and lythe and grey-fish, or cuddies, caught with rods. The lythe sometimes weighed six pounds. When they are this size they are fished for by a strong line dragged after the boat, with red cloth or sand-eels as bait. If a large lythe is caught by a rod, and is too heavy for it, it is sometimes necessary to throw the rod overboard, and let the fish play himself until he gives in. The rod will for some time disappear, but soon, as the fish gets wearied of his amusement, it will be seen bobbing up and down

in the water, and in due time will be got hold of with ease, and the fish safely secured.

The cuddy-fishing is seldom good until evening comes on. Our ground was among a few islands, through which a strong tide ran at the rate of four miles an hour, boiling and whirling like a mill-race; and if there was any wind against it, rising into a short breaking sea, which soon forced us to make for land with more salt water on our coats than was comfortable. Cuddy-fishing is famous fun when there is a good take, but this depends solely on the weather. The fish are strong and lively, and two persons with four or five rods are kept hard at work hauling them in. One boat may thus catch thirty or forty dozen, or in some cases six hundred fish.

For a time, perhaps, if the tide does not suit, there may be no appearance of fish. We pull about, go round the islands, pass through this narrow channel or over those rocks with waving brown tangle. Not a fish! "We may go home," some

one says. "Toots!" said Donald, the keeper, who pulls an oar. "No tide yet; too much light; wait a bit, and we'll have a gran' fishing, or I'm far wrang." Very soon one of the rods bends its top to the sea. "I have a whapper on!" cries Jack. "And here goes another!" cries Willy. "Noo for it!" cries Donald; "canny, lads, canny!" as all the rods begin to tremble and bend, and the sea begins to break round with shoals of fish. The boys can hardly speak with excitement, and one only hears exclamations of—"Did you ever see the like of this?" "Isn't this fun?" "I have them on three rods!" "Oh, do take this fish off!" "I cannot, for I have two on myself!"—"Hurrah, mackerel!" may also be heard as we come among a shoal of these beautiful fish. But the cuddies never fail. In they come, spluttering over the water, and thump on the breast of the fisher, who has them off the hook, and into the boat as speedily as possibly, his line and fly out once more, and then up again. Another rod, and another, until

we feel bewildered with the rapidity of the take. All the while the birds in thousands are wheeling around, screaming and plunging, enjoying their own fishing of the small fry, which the larger fish are pursuing.

Speaking of cuddies reminds me of a most amusing misunderstanding which once occurred between an English traveller and a Highlander. It was during a famine from which the people suffered terribly about thirty years ago.

“Pray what *do* the poor people live on, then?” asked the traveller, after hearing a long account of their sufferings.

“The best food they get,” replied the Highlander, “are cuddies.”

Now you must know that cuddie is the Scotch name for a donkey. So the traveller, who had heard the term used in this sense only, exclaimed, “Cuddies! how very sad! How shocking to be reduced to such a state! Such food must surely produce disease?”

“Far from it, the food is most wholesome,” was the reply.

“Really? How very odd! The creatures are generally so thin, so poor, so ill fed. But in any case they must be terribly tough. Eh?”

“Tough! By no means. No more tender food exists! In fact, when the cuddies are young, they are eaten bones and all. A child could eat half-a-dozen of them, and—”

But the Englishman here fiercely interrupted his informant by exclaiming, “Don’t think me a fool, sir, to believe such nonsense! Don’t force me to apply the terms to your statement which it deserves.”

This so roused the Highlander that had not an immediate explanation been given of the cross purposes, serious results might have followed, instead of the hearty laugh in which both joined on discovering that the one was speaking of fish and the other of donkeys!

Returning to the shore a few miles off, how glo-

rious it is to watch the hills going to sleep, and the fading away of the splendor in the western sky which follows sunset, and the beautiful tints on the sea, and the white sails of vessels—many of them fine yachts—become dim and indistinct, until the moon rises among golden clouds, and lights up the old castle on the steep above the waves? It is very probable that many of the boats will remain till midnight, such as the shoemakers', the shopkeepers', and the minister's, moving noiselessly like dark specks. In many a family the addition of a haul of fish is a great gift, although in remote places sale cannot be got for them. The fish are not only delicious when boiled or fried, but, with a little stock and a little good milk, make one of the richest and best white soups. They are also spread out with some salt, and dried in the sun, as "speldens," which, when rizzared and served up dry and hot, make a capital breakfast dish. But we cannot and need not remain out so late as some others, so we leave them with a wish that

“ Weel may the boatie row
That wins the bairnies’ bread.”

As we slowly pull in we get a story from Donald. He is a great story-teller, and the boys like to trot him out about the Headless Horseman, whom he says he has often seen, or the Water Kelpie, of which he is much afraid. I ask him about the kelpie, which he called the Water-Horse, in whose existence he so firmly believed that it was an object of real terror to him—so much so that I found I could not without offence joke about it, although exceedingly amused by the earnest way in which Donald, after much coaxing, told me what he knew of the animal.

“ I have never met any man who has himself seen the brute, Donald,” I remarked.

“ Did you not, sir? Weel, it was perhaps fortunate, for if any one *had* seen him, he might never perhaps be left alive to tell what he saw. Och! he’s a dangerous, a *very* dangerous beast the horse—that he is, depend upon it ”

“And you really believe, Donald, that there is such a creature?” I asked.

Donald was silent for a moment, and then said, “Excuse me, sir, but I wunner hoo a gentleman like you, that can speak Gaelic, and kens the country, can doot what every one believes; except, maybe, these Englishmen and shooters—ignorant people, that have nothing in their heads, although they have plenty o’ money—ay! ay! plenty o’ money—in their pockets.”

“But did *you* ever see the water-horse yourself, Donald?” I asked.

“Perhaps I did, and perhaps I did not,” said Donald; “but if I did, what then? And if I did not, thousands did. But I hope never to see him; and if I never seed him, nor will ever see him, I would be thankful. But what would be the use o’ being thankful if he is not there? And if I’m feared, why should I be feared if he is never seen? No, no! he *is* in the lochs, and I’m thankful, therefore, *very* thankful, that I never chanced to

see him, and I'm afeared ever to see him. But I *almost* saw him—yes! yes! almost, if not altogether,” and Donald shook his head as if brooding over some terrible memory.

“Come, come, Donald,” I said, “out with it like a man. Tell me what you know about this brute, for I am as willing to believe in him as you are, if there is such a creature.”

“We tried to catch him once,” said Donald.

“That was going at it in a business-like way,” said I. “But *did* you catch him?”

“Not quite at *that* time,” replied Donald.

“How did you set about it?” I asked.

“You see, sir,” Donald went on to say, “one of the largest water-horses—for they are, of coorse, of all sizes and ages, just like horses on lan', and of all colors, though generally white, but sometimes black in winter—one of the biggest, as I was saying, is in the Black Loch in Glencoe. Weel, we got a huik (hook) that could carry a horse, made by the smith of Ballachulish; and as it is weel

known that the water-horses prefer salted meat even to fresh—which is very strange to me, especially as they eat people; but it's all strange together!—we got a mutton ham from Peter Macdonald, the smith's half-brother, which was very good of Peter to give. We then got a large barrel to anchor in the middle of the loch with, the huik and ham chained to it as line and bait, and if that would not catch the horse nothing would. Weel—”

“But, Donald, what harm had the poor horse ever done?”

“Harm! It eat many, many a person. Noo mind that there's no doot whatsoever of *that*.”

“But who saw them destroyed?”

“That's what I canna tell! But many a one has been kilt, and no one knowed who did it. And so many a one went that Glencoe road that never was heard of more—never more. Now who would do away with them except the horse?”

“Go on, Donald.”

“Weel, as I was telling you, sir, we got the

huik and cask ready, and were going with them and the ham next day to the loch. But the laird came down the nicht before from London, and we didna like to try to fish the horse while he was there. He had, besides that, brought doon with him a wee curious boat made o' guts and perches."

"Gutta-percha, Donald."

"Yes, it was something like that, and he asked me and John Cameron to pull this punt! Was not that maist shameful?"

"Why so?"

"It was a shame to ask us to pull into the loch where the horse was, and most awful too, faith! John fled and wad not go; I wad have fled too; but as the new laird—for of coorse the old laird wad never have done it; no, no, as he had a knowledge of the horse and of the country—but the new laird was an Englishman, and was always making game of the Hielandmen, and he would have lauched at me. And sooner than that I would rather die. Me to be made a fool of by an Eng-

lishman!" and Donald chewed his tobacco and pulled his oar with a vehemence which expressed his horror at such a dishonorable position. "No," he continued, "I would *not* be made a fool of by him. I'm too prood, I'm thankful to say, for *that*; and so I went into the boat. It was like going into a plate—a dirty naisty cogly thing—and if she capsized! Well," said Donald with a grim smile, "I thocht to myself that maybe, maybe, for he was very fat and lusty, the horse might take the laird, he! he! and leave me alone. At all events off we went; of coorse I kept close to the shore, to jump if the horse rose. The laird did not know why I did *that*; but I knowed it fine! 'What for,' says he, 'are you keepin' so close to the shore?' 'For fish,' says I. 'It's shallow water,' says he. 'That's the best for *this* loch,' says I; of coorse *my* meaning was that it was best to keep clear of the horse. 'Pull oot,' says he. 'The loch is deep,' says I. 'The better,' says he, 'go across at once!' Noo

when he said that, oh! I felt as sure of death as I ever will do until it comes!"

"Why," I asked, "were you so sure of death?"

"Because," said Donald, "the horse was always in the middle of the loch. It had its bed there, where they say there is a large cave, with a hole at the top, where the horse goes in and out. It takes the breath from me, even now, to think of it."

"Go on, Donald," I remarked, anxious to hear the rest of the story.

"Weel, sir, we crossed over; yes, we did that, I rowed to the other side. Och, och! that day and hour I'll never forget, never, never, as long as I live"—and Donald wiped his forehead, as if still bedewed with the clammy moisture produced by his first sight of the water-horse. Recovering himself, he said—"It was a dark evening—I mind 't weel—and the mist was over the hills, and squalls went ower the water; and although I kenned Glencoe as weel as my bonnet noo on my head, I never

saw the glen as I did that night. It was most awfu'! I trembled all ower."

"Why?"

"You may ask; for I never was feared for mortal thing, nor for mortal man, nor for a bull; and if I was feared that day, tell me hoo was that possible, if the horse was not there? I could *not* be feared, except for that. So, you see, he *was* there. Yes, he was there."

"Indeed?" I asked. "But did you see him there?"

"Oo, no," said Donald, slowly and meditatively. "I did—not—see him—that is, altogether—actually; but—"

"But what?"

"But as he was there, and as there's not a doubt about *that*, I am thankfu' that I did *not* see him, you may be sure."

There is much superstition among the Highlanders, but is there not much in every country?

England and the Lowlands of Scotland are no exceptions to the rule, while popish Ireland is full of superstition, as its holy wells and holy fish painfully testify. Nor is it confined always to the ignorant, but is found among all classes. There are, no doubt, what are called "vulgar" superstitions about "charms" and "the power of the evil eye," and such like, but there are others about ghosts and spirits, dreams and omens, which are considered more "genteel," but are equally absurd and unworthy of belief.

All forms of superstition are forms of unbelief, for they proceed from a want of faith in a living, ever-present God, our Father, in whom alone we are to trust, and to trust always; and to whom we are in "everything" to let our requests be made known with "thanksgiving," and to be at peace. Ignorance of God, as our constant and only sure guide, protector, and preserver, creates a sense of insecurity, danger, and fear, and fear is the parent of superstition. Hence children in age or in knowl-

edge become afraid, when in danger or when alone at night, and they see strange sights and hear strange sounds, until their fears, working on their fancy, create, as in a dream, the very things which terrify them. Did you ever think how strange it is that the persons you see, and the voices you hear in a dream, and all that terrifies you then or makes you laugh, are simply creations of your own thoughts, and nothing more? There are waking dreams as well as those in sleep, and both proceed from the same source.

The Highlanders have more excuse for being superstitious than most people, for they live in a wild country, have to travel through lonely glens and woods, over dark moors, along solitary mountain lakes, and across foaming streams. Any one who has done this knows what fantastic forms the rocks and trees often assume to the eye at night, especially when there are white sheep or cattle moving or resting among them ; and how strangely the mists and clouds arrange themselves, and come

and go among the peaks and scaurs; and what unnatural and mysterious sounds suddenly strike the ear, perhaps from a rock bounding down the mountain side, and plunging into the tarn; or from the wind piping through the stiff weeds on its margin; or whistling, or screaming, if the storm be high, among the rifted peaks and hollow caves. I fancy you quite understand how, if travelling alone in the twilight or in darkness in such places, you might feel *queer*, and perhaps fancy that you saw or heard what did not belong to this world, and be as superstitious as Donald, and suppose the great splash in the loch to be the water-horse, disporting himself, or dragging man or beast into his cave. Yet the glen would be just the same in every respect at night, as on a bright summer's day when you might be enjoying a pic-nic in it.

I was once telling stories of ghosts to boys and girls round the fireside on a dark and rather windy night, proving at the same time how absurd and false they were, although they sometimes appeared

to be true. In a pause of the conversation we heard an odd sort of sound, as if the gravel outside was being repeatedly struck with violence, groans following groans. "What *is* that?" one of the party inquired. I could not explain, but asked the oldest boy to open the door, and look out. He did so, but came suddenly back, exclaiming, "Ghost or no ghost, there *is* something there I don't like, and you may go, I won't." He was evidently afraid; and as he had left the front door open, and the wind came howling through the house, and the doors were banging, and no answer could be got, except "It was a white thing moving up and down, groaning and beating the ground," the children caught the alarm, and all my teaching was forgotten. "Now, boys, come along with me, and let us patiently examine this cause of alarm," I said, moving to the door, followed by two or three, who kept behind and close to me. As we looked out in the darkness toward a large tree, whose branches were swinging in the blast, no

doubt there was a form visible, moving up and down, accompanied by very distinct groans and strokes on the gravel. No boy would venture to examine it, although I soon guessed what it was. It was the old pony, who had escaped from his paddock, his long white face moving up and down as he scratched his shoulder against the tree, whinnying and pawing the ground. I need not say that this solution of the mystery proved an excellent confirmation of my lesson against belief in ghosts.

But to return to the Highlander. Sometimes, like too many farther south, he may see marvels when, wet and hungry, he has been tempted to take too much "mountain dew" as he pursues his journey. One night a friend of mine came upon a man lying on his face among the heather in the glen. My friend was himself at first startled by the sight and by hearing the sounds of woe. On discovering who the man was, and easily perceiving his confused condition, he addressed him by name. "Archy!" he cried, "can this be you? What's

wrong? What are you moaning there for? Are you ill?" Archy, expressing his thanks that so intelligent an acquaintance was so near, rose with some difficulty to a sitting posture, and clasping his hands, exclaimed with drooping head, "I am—I am—in a terrible fright! and no—no wonder. Look at the moon!" And with a deep groan he fell back among the heather. My friend looked at the moon gleaming quietly in the sky, and then asked Archy what he meant. "Och! och!" said Archy, "do you not see twa moons?—twa—twa! and what's that but the end o' the worl—and me—no jist mysel—for—for, I got a glass, and——" "Get up, you tipsy fool!" said my friend, "and come along with me, and be thankful it is not the end of the world, or it would be a bad end for you." Although Archy still insisted there were two moons, he accompanied my friend home, and vowed to cultivate sober habits all his life after. We must hope that he has never seen two moons since.

A TRUE GHOST STORY.

(DEDICATED TO THE SPIRITUALISTS.)

A WELL-KNOWN Scotch artist, whose delineations of character delight his many friends, and who is almost as remarkable for his anecdotes as for his pictures, commences one of his stories by narrating how an old Scotch game-keeper once remarked to him in a slow solemn voice, "Do you knaw, sir, that I myself have actilly knawn men, ay, and respectable men too, who—did—not—believe—in ghaists?" And he describes how the old keeper, on being questioned as to his own belief in ghosts, replied with face averted, half in pity, half in sorrow for the questioner, but with, if possible, deeper solemnity, "I howp I do!"

I am not sure if the game-keeper stands alone

in his belief; and I question whether, if the great majority of the "upper ten thousand" were asked regarding their faith as to apparitions, they would not agree with the lower ten thousand who are assumed to be the only honest believers in occasional visits from the inhabitants of the mysterious ghost-land. Very possibly in broad daylight, when driving in the park—or shopping—or visiting the exhibition—or even when the candles are lighted, and when seated round the dinner-table—or in the midst of the buzz and flutter of an evening party, the realities of the palpable and prosaic world may act as such opiates to the ideal faculty, and so close the eyes and stop the ears of the inner eye which can alone discern the spirit-world, that all faith in its existence may be denied or ridiculed. But take any one of those persons singly, let him or her remain in the large drawing-room when it is emptied of its guests, with the lights extinguished, except one or two sufficiently bright to project "shadows on the wall," but not to illumine the

darker recesses of the room—when the fire burns low, and the cinders fall, and begin to crumble audibly among the ashes—when the midnight winds are creeping round the house, sighing at the windows, or breaking out into angry gusts which boom over the chimney-head, and shake the huge trees on the lawn, forcing one to think of ships fighting with storms on misty coasts, or drenched wretches creeping over splashing moors—and then let the thoughts gradually slide into sad stories of human suffering, mingled with anecdotes about presentiments, dreams, odd coincidences, unaccountable appearances, and the like ; and ever and anon let some strange sounds of wind and rain and chafing foliage be heard, with creaks in old timber, no one knows where—I ask with confidence whether in such circumstances, at two in the morning, the sceptic will not profess more faith in ghosts than he or she would at two in the afternoon?

The fact cannot be denied by any one moderately acquainted with human opinions, that there

is an almost universal belief in ghosts. Or if that be a too broad and vulgar way of expressing the belief, let us rather say, a universal feeling verging on belief, if not reaching it, that there are certainly "more things in heaven and earth" than our daylight philosophy accepts of or can account for; that there are revelations from a world unseen by the carnal eye, unheard by the carnal ear, which come to the seeing and hearing faculties of the spirit in certain states of mind and body which are alone susceptible of this intercourse; that these revelations assume divers forms, it may be of strange sights and sounds, vivid dreams, sudden and overpowering impressions, apparitions, ghosts, spirit-knockings, call them what you please—which compel the belief that the ghost world with which we are unquestionably surrounded, impinges occasionally on the familiar, or on what we call the actual, just as strange and rare birds from another far-off clime are sometimes driven by storm on our coasts.

This is a subject to which I have paid some attention. Without, as far as I can discover, any prejudice to warp my judgment, or any want of, such a careful and cautious induction as a detective might bestow in tracing out the facts of a crime, and weighing the evidence in the nicest balance, I have collected several unquestionable *facts*, in which I have no hesitation whatever in publicly acknowledging my belief. I am also firmly persuaded that their truth rests upon incomparably more satisfactory proofs than those stories of spirit-rappings which are so firmly believed in by so many. I have listened patiently to the details of most remarkable phenomena connected with spirit-rapping and table-turning, related to me by ladies and gentlemen "moving in the best circles of society," and by evangelical clergymen whose word no one would think of doubting, and whose judgment no one, I presume, would ever dare to call in question. A clergyman, for example, whose literary abilities, sound sense, piety, broadminded-

ness, and truthfulness are sufficiently guaranteed by the fact of his being a frequent contributor to the pages of a leading "Religious" newspaper, while assuming that any doubt as to the reality of spirit-rapping apparitions, witches, etc., indicated an infidel tendency, affirmed his belief that the devil was the real person who pulled all those strings. I took the bold step of questioning this, which I fear has shaken his faith in my Christianity; and I confessed to him frankly that I had such an opinion of Satan's intellect, and of the immense amount of work he evidently had to do in France, Italy, and America, not to speak of our own country, including presbyters and the bishops of all "true churches," as made me doubt how far he had himself the time, or could spare even the weakest and most imbecile of his spirits to amuse respectable, well-to-do, idle ladies, to furnish arguments in favor of a ghost-world to sceptics, to paralyze weak curates, or even to present to the best

and most popular clergy convenient illustrations for their sermons when "hard up."

I also took the liberty of directing his attention to the following verse in the prophecies of Isaiah, which seemed new to him:—"When they shall say unto you, Seek with them that have familiar spirits, and with wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?" (That is, as I understand it, should the living in reference to their affairs consult the dead?) "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Strange to say, this passage made my clerical friend only hold more firmly to the alleged facts and his devil-theory regarding them; for he maintained that many men whom he knew to be a little more than sceptical regarding "the law and the testimony" of Scripture, and who "staggered through unbelief" in the miracles there recorded, nevertheless sought information "from the dead," and had perfect faith in

the truth of the revelations so obtained, thus proving the devil to be the real deceiver of those who were such silly blockheads as to be deceived.

Granting for the present the truth of the alleged *facts* of spirit-rapping and of table-turning; yet after hearing them, and comparing them with some of the mysteries I have myself collected, chiefly in the Highlands, connected with second sight and ghostly apparitions, and with other similar phenomena noticed by me in some of the remoter valleys of the Harz and Black Forest, I cannot possibly admit the one without admitting the other. Both seem to me to rest on such evidence as must compel them to stand or fall together. Perhaps some day I may enlighten the world by recording some of these.

I have no wish whatever to bring any reader who has "made up his mind" on those mysterious topics, to my own way of thinking. I shall acknowledge it as a sign of progress in free thought if I am permitted to hold my own views without

being condemned as a person devoid of all judgment or common sense.

But one fact is better than a thousand mere arguments in discussing such a question, and I shall therefore devote the rest of this paper to a narrative, which the reader may rest assured is *strictly true*, and then I shall leave him to judge for himself as to how far such mysterious phenomena as it records can be accounted for. To myself they are profoundly mysterious!

A friend of mine, a medical man, went on a fishing expedition with an old college acquaintance, an army surgeon, whom he had not met for many years, from his having been in India with his regiment. M'Donald, the army surgeon, was a thorough Highlander, and slightly tinged with what is called the superstition of his countrymen, and at the time I speak of was liable to rather depressed spirits from an unsound liver. His native air was, however, rapidly renewing his youth; and when he and his old friend paced along the banks of the

fishing stream in a lonely part of Argyleshire, and sent their lines like airy gossamers over the pools, and touched the water over a salmon's nose, so temptingly that the best principled and wisest fish could not resist the bite, M'Donald had apparently regained all his buoyancy of spirit. They had been fishing together for about a week with great success, when M'Donald proposed to pay a visit to a family with which he was acquainted, that would separate him from his friend for some days. But whenever he spoke of their intended separation, he sank down into his old gloomy state, at one time declaring that he felt as if they were never to meet again. My friend tried to rally him, but in vain. They parted at the trouting stream, M'Donald's route being across a mountain pass, with which, however, he had been well acquainted in his youth, though the road was lonely and wild in the extreme. The Doctor returned early in the evening to his resting-place, which was a shepherd's house lying on the very outskirts of the "settlements," and

beside a foaming mountain stream. The shepherd's only attendants at the time were two herd lads, and three dogs. Attached to the hut, and communicating with it by a short passage, was rather a comfortable room which "the Laird" had fitted up to serve as a sort of lodge for himself in the midst of his shooting-ground, and which he had put for a fortnight at the disposal of my friend.

Shortly after sunset on the day I mention, the wind began to rise suddenly to a gale, the rain descended in torrents, and the night became extremely dark. The shepherd seemed uneasy, and several times went to the door to inspect the weather. At last he roused the fears of the Doctor for M'Donald's safety, by expressing the *hope* that by this time he was "owre that awfu' black moss, and across the red burn." Every traveller in the Highlands knows how rapidly these mountain streams rise, and how confusing the moor becomes in a dark night. The confusion of memory once a doubt is suggested, the utter mys-

tery of places, becomes, as I know from experience, quite indescribable. "The black moss and red burn" were words that were never after forgot by the Doctor, from the strange feelings they produced when first heard that night: for there came into his mind terrible thoughts and forebodings about poor M'Donald, and reproaches for never having considered his possible danger in attempting such a journey alone. In vain the shepherd assured him that he must have reached a place of safety before the darkness and the storm came on. A presentiment which he could not cast off made him so miserable that he could hardly refrain from tears. But nothing could be done to relieve the anxiety now become so painful.

The Doctor at last retired to bed about midnight. For a long time he could not sleep. The raging of the stream below the small window, and the *thuds* of the storm, made him feverish and restless. But at last he fell into a sound and dreamless sleep. Out of this, however, he was suddenly

roused by a peculiar noise in his room, not very loud, but utterly indescribable. He heard tap, tap, tap, at the window; and he knew, from the relation which the wall of the room bore to the rock, that the glass could not be touched by human hand. After listening for a moment, and forcing himself to smile at his nervousness, he turned round, and began again to seek repose. But now a noise began, too near and loud to make sleep possible. Starting and sitting up in bed, he heard repeated in rapid succession, as if some one was spitting in anger, and close to his bed,—“Fit! fit! fit!” and then a prolonged “whir-r-r-r” from another part of the room, while every chair began to move, and the table to jerk! The Doctor remained in breathless silence, with every faculty intensely acute. He frankly confessed that he heard his heart beating, for the sound was so unearthly, so horrible, and something seemed to come so near him, that he began seriously to consider whether or not he had some attack of fever which affected his brain—for,

remember, he had not tasted a drop of the shepherd's small store of whiskey! He felt his pulse, composed his spirits, and compelled himself to exercise calm judgment. Straining his eyes to discover anything, he plainly saw at last a white object moving, but without sound, before him. He knew that the door was shut and the window also. An overpowering conviction then seized him, which he could not resist, that his friend M'Donald was dead! By an effort he seized a lucifer-box on a chair beside him, and struck a light. No white object could be seen. The room appeared to be as when he went to bed. The door was shut. He looked at his watch, and particularly marked that the hour was twenty-two minutes past three. But the match was hardly extinguished when, louder than ever, the same unearthly cry of "Fit! fit! fit!" was heard, followed by the same horrible whir-r-r-r, which made his teeth chatter. Then the movement of the table and every chair in the room was resumed with increased violence,

while the tapping on the window was heard above the storm. There was no bell in the room, but the Doctor, on hearing all this frightful confusion of sounds again repeated, and beholding the white object moving toward him in terrible silence, began to thump the wooden partition and to shout at the top of his voice for the shepherd, and having done so, he dived his head under the blankets!

The shepherd soon made his appearance, in his night-shirt, with a small oil-lamp, or "crusey," over his head, anxiously inquiring as he entered the room—

"What is't, Doctor? What's wrang? Pity me, are ye ill?"

"Very!" cried the Doctor. But before he could give any explanation a loud whir-r-r was heard, with the old cry of "Fit!" close to the shepherd, while two chairs fell at his feet! The shepherd sprang back, with a half scream of terror; the lamp was dashed to the ground, and the door violently shut.

“Come back!” shouted the Doctor. “Come back, Duncan, instantly, I command you!”

The shepherd opened the door very partially, and said, in terrified accents—

“Gude be about us, that was awfu’! What under heaven is’t?”

“Heaven knows, Duncan,” ejaculated the Doctor with agitated voice, “but do pick up the lamp, and I shall strike a light.”

Duncan did so in no small fear; but as he made his way to the bed in the darkness, to get a match from the Doctor, something caught his foot; he fell; and then, amidst the same noises and tumults of chairs, which immediately filled the apartment, the “Fit! fit! fit! fit!” was prolonged with more vehemence than ever! The Doctor sprang up, and made his way out of the room, but his feet were several times tripped by some unknown power, so that he had the greatest difficulty in reaching the door without a fall. He was followed by Duncan, and both rushed out of the room, shut-

ing the door after them. A new light having been obtained, they both returned with extreme caution, and, it must be added, real fear, in the hope of finding some cause or other for all those terrifying signs. Would it surprise our readers to hear that they searched the room in vain?—that, after minutely examining under the table, chairs, bed, everywhere, and with the door shut, not a trace could be found of anything? Would they believe that they heard during the day how poor M'Donald had staggered, half dead from fatigue, into his friend's house, and falling into a fit, had died at *twenty-two minutes past three* that morning? We do not ask any one to accept of all this as true. But we pledge our honor to the following facts:—

The Doctor, after the day's fishing was over, had packed his rod so as to take it into his bedroom; but he had left a minnow attached to the hook. A white cat left in the room swallowed the minnow, and was hooked. The unfortunate gourmand had vehemently protested against this

intrusion into its upper lip by the violent "Fit! fit! fit!" with which she tried to spit the hook out; the reel added the mysterious whir-r-r-r; and the disengaged line, getting entangled in the legs of the chairs and table, as the hooked cat attempted to fly from her tormentor, set the furniture in motion, and tripped up both the shepherd and the Doctor; while an ivy-branch kept tapping at the window! Will any one doubt the existence of ghosts and spirit-world after this?

I have only to add that the Doctor's skill was employed during the night in cutting the hook out of the cat's lip, while his poor patient, yet most impatient, was held by the shepherd in a bag, the head alone of puss, with hook and minnow, being visible. M'Donald made his appearance in a day or two, rejoicing once more to see his friend, and greatly enjoying the ghost story. As the Doctor finished the history of his night's horrors, he could not help laying down a proposition very dogmatically to his half-superstitious friends, and as some

amends for his own terror. "Depend upon it," said he, "if we could thoroughly examine into all the stories of ghosts and apparitions, spirit-rapping, *et hoc genus omne*, they would turn out to be every bit as true as my own visit from the world of spirits; that all that sort of thing is—*great humbug and nonsense*."

We leave this sentiment with confidence in the hands of the illustrious dead, who spend so much time in disturbing furniture without even the apology of a hook and minnow. We have no doubt that Milton, Dante, Shakespeare, or Newton or Bacon, if properly invited, will cheerfully come as guests to any tea-party of true believers in London or Boston, to contradict in the most authoritative manner the Doctor's profane scepticism. We shall be glad to hear the views of those distinguished men, who, it is alleged, though dead yet speak. We despair of the cat. She has been silent ever since her great *début* into spirit-land. Her lips though healed are sealed.

JOB JACOBS AND HIS BOXES.

(DEDICATED TO THE WORKING CLASSES.)

ON a cold and frosty December night, when a thick fog, saturated with smoke, covered the city, filling every house, choking every throat, and blinding every eye—when the streets were slippery, and the lamps no longer lighted them, but each had faded away into the dulness of the thick, muddy atmosphere—when nothing seemed cheerful except the whiskey-shops, whose more brilliant illuminations and gaudy ornaments attracted the attention of the thin-clad wretch who peered into them with envious look—on such a night Walter Miller, the mason, entered the house of Peter Simpson, the carpenter. Peter was sitting beside a clean and comfortable fire, reading his penny

paper; opposite to him was his wife, sewing and mending a fustian jacket; between them a small table was set for tea; on the hob the kettle was singing; on the hearth the cat was basking; while two children were busy at their lessons. The whole room wore an aspect of neatness, cleanliness, and comfort. No sooner was Walter's knock responded to by permission to enter, than Peter, rising from his chair, welcomed his old acquaintance, and gave him his seat beside the fire.

After some ordinary chit-chat about the weather and work, Walter remarked, "Well, I must say you *have* a comfortable house. It does a man's heart good to see it.

"Haven't I always told you, Walter, that there are no men in the world who may be happier than we working men, if we have only the sense to know our mercies, and the principle to use them well?"

"It's all very easy talking, Peter, but it can't be denied that things are very queerly divided in

this world, and that we working men, who are the props of society—”

“I wonder to hear a sensible man like you swallowing all that nonsense.”

“I maintain we *are* the props of society, and that it couldn't go on a week without us. I should like to know, if there were no working men, who would build the houses for those money-lords, or who would furnish them?—who would build their steamers, or their steam-engines?—or who—”

“Would pay for the houses, were you going to say, Walter? or pay for their furniture, or employ working men at all, if there were no money-lords? I see it plainer the more I think of it, that no class can be wanted in society, neither high nor low, rich nor poor, learned nor unlearned. As St. Paul says of the body of the Church, so we may say of the body of society, that the eye or tongue cannot say to the head or hand, ‘We have no need of thee.’ If the head did not invent, there would be nothing for the hand to perform, and both

would be comparatively idle if no one had a pocket to pay."

"But tell me, Peter, seriously," asked Walter, "do you not think we are sore oppressed?"

"There are, no doubt, evils from which all classes suffer, and which are being remedied just as society gets wiser and better; but depend upon it, my lad, that by far the worst evils, and the most difficult to remedy, are those which men bring upon themselves; for, as I said before, it is wonderful how much happiness may be in every man's house when there is common sense in his head, and manly principles in his heart."

"Peter, you would make a grand lecturer!"

"I make no such pretence, Walter; but I tell you my heart is sore, when I see how comfort and happiness are every day lost by working men, and all men, from self-indulgence and a total despising of the simplest laws of God—putting their fingers in the fire, and then complaining of the heat, and abusing the coals."

“Well, now, Peter, take my own case, for example. I am sure I work early and late; I have not a large family, nor a dear house, but it defies me to keep out of difficulties. I don’t drink—”

“Excuse me, Walter, but I’m not so sure of that.”

“Oh, I may take a glass at a time on pay-night, when I have loose shillings in my pocket, but I am always fit for my work.”

“Loose shillings, loose sixpences, loose pence—did you ever calculate how much coin went in that way?”

“No, Peter, I never did; but what can a man do with it, when he finds an odd sixpence or shilling in his pocket, after clearing with the grocer or baker, and meets with an acquaintance at the close-mouth, and begins to crack, and the night is maybe drizzly and cold, and he clinks a few coppers in his pocket, and asks, ‘Have you onything on you?’ what can a body do better than sit for half an hour in the house round the corner—”

“ And be hard up for the rent at the end of the year? ”

“ Ye have guessed well in my case, Peter; but it defies me to save all these odds and ends. But, to be sure, what hurt me most this year, was the number of weeks I was confined to the house from sickness; and then I lost a child, and there was the funeral expenses; and I had to spend every half-penny of my wages, and to borrow some besides.”

“ No doubt, Walter, many cases of severe trial from poverty do occur among our class, in which the noblest, truest men and women suffer terribly. On the other hand, I declare it makes a man ashamed to think of the selfishness of many well-paid artisans, in regard to providing for their families, when well able to do it. I don't wish to speak harshly of the dead, but from my heart I pity the living. There, for example, is old Betty Thomson, at the other end of the passage—a more industrious, sober, hard-working creature never lived. She has been a widow twenty years, and

has never had a farthing except what she makes by washing and cleaning out some writer's office in the town ; yet she has brought up and educated a son and two daughters without asking aid from kirk-session or parish-board. Well, her daughter Mary married our old acquaintance William Somers, the carver and gilder. He had first-rate wages, lived in good style, had his good dinner every day, and spared himself nothing which could add to his comfort. But not one halfpenny did he save—no friendly society did he join. It was always 'time enough,' or 'he must live,' or "sufficient for the day was the evil thereof,' or ' Providence was kind,' or some such babble of selfishness, until at last he was seized with his death-illness. All his clothes and furniture went to the pawnshop ; and then he called old Betty to his side, and told her that he saw nothing for it but that she must give shelter to his wife and children, and get support from the parish ! There was the deathbed of a man and a Christian ! Well, he is gone, and I don't like, as I

said, to speak against him, but against a too common evil; for when I see his pale-faced wife and weak children, and watch all the struggles of them and the old woman, and think how all this might have been saved by a little foresight and manly self-denial, I see in such conduct nothing but selfishness; from which, good Lord, deliver us!"

Walter said nothing, but stroked his chin and stirred the fire. He was *thinking*, or I am much mistaken. "Surely we ought not," at last he said, "to be too careful about the morrow, but to trust Providence, Peter?"

"Which means, I suppose, by the way you quote the words, to put your finger in the fire, and trust Providence that it won't be burned; to be idle, or lazy, or drunken, and trust Providence you won't suffer from poverty or sickness; to neglect the education and upbringing of your family, and trust Providence that they will be neither ignorant nor ill-behaved? To hear men speak, you would suppose that God governs His universe in favor of

those who despise or break His laws! But depend upon it, Walter, no man, after all, can break God's laws; but if any man does not obey them, they will break him with a vengeance. Therefore, I say, that if we working men won't exercise prudence and common sense—which are one with Christian principle—in managing our affairs, we are doomed to suffer, and righteously so, for our wilful ignorance, our folly, or our wickedness.”

“You think, in short, Peter, that Providence will help those who help themselves?” said Walter.

“Well, if you like that way of putting it, have it so. I would rather say that God helps those who do His will. If they obey His will with regard to the body, they will be rewarded in the body with temporal things; if they obey His will in regard to the soul, in the soul they will be rewarded with spiritual things. We should and must obey, and be blessed in both. Each man, however, has his reward according to his faith and obedience. Accordingly, there is no man who has less care about

his wife and children for the morrow, than the man who, according to God's will, endeavors as a Christian, each day, by industry and self-denial, to provide for them as far as he can do, should he be laid down in sickness or removed by death."

"I don't believe, Peter, any of our working men can save a sixpence," said Walter.

"There are cases, I believe," replied Peter, "in which many a fine fellow, with a large family and small wages, cannot save sixpence. From my heart, I feel for such a man. But you know, as well as I do, that many better off can and do save for the dark day; and these, too, not your single men, who live chiefly in lodgings, and squander half their wages in dissipation, but your married men, who are sober and industrious. Working men can and do save, yet thousands could save who will not. Oh, if you only saw in a heap before you all the sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns which will be exchanged for liquor—not in moderation, or such as a family on a festive occasion might

indulge in in God's presence, but for drink to ruin soul and body—during the first week of the year! O Walter, my boy, if you only could count the contents of that small silver mountain, you would believe by seeing, what I believe already without, that thousands and tens of thousands of pounds will be spent by the working classes in a few days, as much as would educate thousands of the young, and provide for hundreds of families for life. Only just count the number of whiskey-shops in any town or village, and multiply them by the number of pounds you think each will draw at the New Year, and look at the result!"

"Well, well," said Walter, "that's a time when, of course, we must be happy, and thankful for our mercies."

"No mistake there, Walter. But some of our chaps take a queer way of being happy. Sandy Struthers, for example, gets happy by lying one half of the night in the gutter, and the other half in the police office; Jamie Gourlie, the shoemaker,

gets happy by thrashing his wife and raging like a demon ; and many more would seem to have no other way of thanking God for the mercies of one year, and imploring His blessing for the next, than by ending the one and beginning the other more like brutes than rational men, as if drunkenness and blasphemy were thanksgivings and prayers. And Sandy and Jamie, and a lot more, think that they will make up for all their mournful selfishness by some revolution—the idiots!—by which they will be able to rob the well-to-do, divide their property, and have more themselves to squander.”

“You really frighten me, Peter!—and yet I believe you are right.”

“A good New Year, forsooth!” continued Peter. “Just think of a man staggering from one year into another! Think of a man leaving a year of mercies, of sorrows, and of sins, by getting drunk! Think of a man entering a year which will bring new temptations, new responsibilities, new trials, new duties, to himself and others bound up

with him, by getting drunk! Think of a man entering a year in which he may enter eternity and meet his God, and his everlasting condition be fixed, by getting drunk! Think of this, and say what can Parliaments, or laws made by God or man, do for men who have so little self-respect, so little sense of common decency, who want even a spark of Christian principle. I have always been what is called a political reformer; but the longer I live, the more strongly I feel that the grand reform has to be begun by our working men in their own hearts, and at their own firesides; that this they may do, and must do; and not comfort themselves by an everlasting spate of conceited bletherin' talk which costs nothing but wind. And when this reform is done, it is wonderful how much more they can increase their own comfort and happiness than any else on earth can do. Machines may be mended by power from without, but men must be mended by principle from within. We wish to make up for our want of self-respect by

want of respect for others. I wish we believed Robbie Burns's song, 'A man's a man for a' that!'"

"But what I wanted to consult you upon this evening, Peter, was about my money. I will speak freely, although your wife is present, for I know her to be able to hold her tongue—a rare virtue among wives! Now, for the life of me, I know not how you are able, with wages not larger than mine, to live as you do. You have always good clothes, pay for your seat in church, educate your children, are never behindhand with your rent, and run no long accounts in the shops, and buy in the cheapest market. And yet I know you were some weeks off work from bad trade and bad health, like myself."

"Did you never hear of my uncle Job Jacobs's boxes?" asked Peter, laughing.

"Never that I mind of," replied Walter. "I have heard you speak of old Job, your mother's brother, but never of his boxes. Was he not a far-travelled chap?"

“ Ay, that he was—a sort of Robinson Crusoe in his way, and one of the most entertaining old fellows you ever met with. He is dead thirty years ago, but I remember him as well as if I saw him before me, and can never forget his stories.”

“ About the boxes did you say, Peter? ”

“ Yes, that was one he was very fond of telling, and it was the making of me, Walter. But for Job’s boxes, neither I nor my family would be in this comfort. They would greatly help you too, if you would fellow my example.”

“ Let us hear it, Peter.”

“ Well, Walter, while my wife pours out a cup I will tell you

THE STORY OF JOB JACOBS AND HIS WONDERFUL
BOXES.

“ My uncle, Job Jacobs,” continued Peter, as he drew his chair toward the fire beside Walter Miller, “ was what is called a Jack-of-all-trades—active, bustling, intelligent, planning, scheming—

always making money, but never keeping it. It ran through his fingers like sand, never sticking together; so that his hand might be said to be always filling and always emptying. One evening, when he was sitting at the fireside smoking his pipe, it was evident he was thinking much about something or other; for he would blow a number of rapid whiffs, then pause until he puffed without a kindly response of curling smoke. He never lighted his pipe so often in one evening in his life. At last he put it down and said to his brother Richard, 'Dick, I'm going to push my fortune.' (I may tell you, in passing, that his old father, Abraham Jacobs, was a foreigner, and some said his family were Jews, though I don't believe it; at all events, my uncle Job was a good Presbyterian.) 'Your fortune!' replied Dick, 'where, and how? You have been pushing it all your life, Job, but always from you. I wish you would only let it remain quietly where it is.' 'Well, well, Dick, be it so; but I'm serious, and so here goes for the

East Indies, where they tell me gold is as plenty as dust to any man who can see it, and knows how to pick it up.' 'Gold,' replied Dick, 'is in the idle man's dreams, but only in the prudent man's pocket.' To make a long story short, Job went on board ship as a carpenter, for he had been brought up to that business. He never was heard of for nearly twenty years. I don't believe he knew himself all the places he had been at during that time; but he had stories that would keep you awake all night about queer people he had met with, and the strange birds, beasts, fishes, trees, houses, and, for aught I know, mermaids he had seen. But it happened that at last he was shipwrecked on a large island in the Chinese seas, and no one got safe to land but him and Willy Kennedy, a brother of old Kennedy's the gauger, whom you knew. He was ship's steward, and lived afterwards many years in the island, and died there, leaving a lot of money that Job brought home honestly to his relations, and which has kept them comfortable till this day

—that nice cottage they live in was built with Willy's money. Well, Job soon made himself very handy to the natives, and became a prime favorite with the king, old 'Fantom,' as he used to call him. He helped to build his vessels and palaces, and to put him and his people up to a wonderful number of *dodges* about making this and that which astonished them. At last, I believe, they made Job a sort of lord among them—a mandarin, or something of that kind—anyhow, he lived in a first-rate house near the king's, and had servants and all conveniences, with more money than he knew what to make use of; and yet the old spirit followed him! for he often told me that he was as hard up as ever when called on to pay anything extra. For example, it was a law in the island that every man paid rent to the king—even the king's own sons and brothers did so—but Job was always behindhand with his! It was another law, that if a man got sick he was never supported by charity, but only by what he had himself laid by for sick-

ness in time of health. But Job nearly died once, for all his income was stopped the moment he got ill, and he had nothing saved, and no one was allowed by law to assist him. I suppose these laws were made to encourage industry. At all events, Job never learned how to save a farthing. But one day—it was the first of their holy year—the king invited Job to visit him in private, which was considered a very great honor. Job dressed himself in his best, and was carried in a large cane-chair to the door of the palace, accompanied by some of his servants dressed in white. After passing through a number of splendid rooms, with gilded walls, and beautiful floors inlaid with ivory and pearl, and between rows of servants, he was ushered at last into an inner apartment, where no one was permitted to enter but himself.

“King Fantom was seated on a chair of state at the end of it, and behind it stood a tall black man, almost a giant in stature, waving a large fan of peacocks’ feathers, sparkling with pearls over the

head of the king. Job, according to the custom of the country, prostrated himself before the king three times, but rose on being touched by the king on the forehead. 'Job, my friend,' said the king, 'you have been one of my most faithful and useful subjects.' Job bowed to the ground at the compliment. 'And I wish to reward you,' continued the king. Job again bowed. 'I have but one fault to find with you, and that is, your being so much at a loss for money when your rent-day comes, or when you are laid up with sickness; for you know well the laws of my kingdom on those matters. Now, Job, why is it so? tell me frankly.' 'Please, your majesty,' said Job, looking very sheepish and awkward, "I can hardly tell you. But doubtless your majesty in your wisdom may enlighten me.' 'I think I can,' said the king, smiling, 'for I myself am greatly to blame. I never gave you the box of health or the box of sickness.' 'I never heard of them, please your majesty!' said Job. The king made a sign to the black giant, who

lifted up a curtain and produced two small boxes, each a few inches square, and made apparently of some very simple material, and these were placed on a table before him. 'These boxes,' said the king, 'were the contrivance of one of my wisest counsellors, who possessed a wonderful magic power of handicraft. They have certain properties in common. Both are constructed to hold money. But one wonderful thing about them is, that when I put a particular government mark upon them *no human being can break them.*' Job stared. 'You doubt it, Jacobs?' 'I cannot doubt your majesty's word,' said Jacobs. 'Ah, but you do,' said the king, laughing, 'and I wish to prove to you I am right.' So again signing to the black giant, who brought a huge sledge-hammer, he said, 'Now, Job, take this hammer, and try to break the box. It is full of money, which will all be yours if you force it open. Don't spare it, Job. I command you!'

"Accordingly, Jacobs laid the box on the floor

—touched it with a hammer—swung the hammer over his head, and brought it down on the lid of the box with a thud which might have ground iron. But the box had not a mark on it! Again and again did Job repeat the stroke, as if determined to succeed, until the sweat was dropping from his brow, and the king shook with laughter. At last Job laid the hammer at the king's feet, and confessed his faith and wonder. 'Now, Job,' said his majesty, drying his eyes, moist with excessive merriment, 'there is another curious thing about those boxes: you may move them about if they belong to you, for use; but *you cannot steal them, or run away with them.* There they are on the floor; make off with them if you can. I command you!' Job seized the boxes; but they were so firmly fixed to the floor that he could not stir them an inch. 'Satisfied again, your majesty,' said Job, with a bow. 'Now, Jacobs, let me explain to you a little more about these boxes. This one is called *the health box.* It is to keep your money when

well. See this round hole. If you put your money in there it is safe. But its wonders are not over. *You may put in as much as you like, and it never becomes too full.* Nay, all your neighbors may do the same, without so filling it but there is room for more. But, besides this remarkable property, it has this one also, that *the box will open to no one but the person who puts in the money*, and when he opens it, he can neither see, nor touch, nor take away any money but his own! There's magic for you! But there's nothing like trying,' said the king. So he put into health box some pieces of gold, and bade Jacobs put in by the same hole some pieces of silver. 'Now, Jacobs, touch this spring.' So Job touched the spring, and the box opened, and there, indeed, was his own money, but not another farthing could he see or get out of it. 'Nay,' said the king, 'it is the same with myself. I could not take out your money; for see'—and he touched the spring—'how my money is here also—but yours is hid, and how to get hold

of it is beyond even my power! But now, Jacobs, I have one more wonderful thing to relate to you about this box, which is, that *not only is the money safe, but it increases.* 'Increases!' exclaimed Job, with astonishment. 'Yes,' said the king, 'increases. Whatever you put in at this end comes out at the other, and increased in value, if you only give it time, and increased, too, in proportion to the time you leave it in. Bring me my own box,' said the king to the black giant.

"When the box was laid on the table, the king explained that on that day last year, he had put in one hundred gold pieces at the end of the box. 'I give you my honor, Jacobs, I have never opened the box since. Let us open it now, and see if my hopes are realized.' So he touched the spring, and the box opened. 'Count the money, Jacobs, and give me one hundred pieces.' Job did so. 'Any more in the box?' 'Yes,' said Job, 'there are three and a half gold pieces more?' 'That then has been the increase, Job, during the year; and if

I allow this to go on, the half will grow very soon into a whole, and so on and on, till the original sum has doubled itself.' 'I never all my life, please your majesty, saw anything like this!' said Jacobs; 'this is a poor man's box if ever there was one!—It keeps his money safe, and makes it increase without any trouble, or looking after—just let it alone. It beats all!' 'Do you promise me, Job, to begin to save, if I give you this box?' 'With all my heart,' replied Job; 'and had I had such a box as this for the last twenty years, I would have been a rich man by this time; for loose money, and not knowing what to do with it, has been my ruin.' 'Welcome, then, to the box, Jacobs, and I shall put a little in, on this the first day of the year, to encourage you. I have put up those boxes in almost all my towns, and I believe to this cause, more than almost any other, is to be attributed the sobriety, industry, and prosperity of my people. But I had almost forgot my sick box,' continued his majesty, 'and it is somewhat

different from the other. It is so constructed that the money put in never increases, unless when sickness attacks the depositor. But by putting in so much in this hole here at the end, every week and month, *the moment you are laid aside by sickness, and open this drawer, you will find a sum sufficient to support you all the time you are ill.* The moment you are well, the money ceases to drop into the drawer.' 'All fair and right,' said Jacobs; 'but is it not a curiosity?—who would have thought it possible! If ever there were magical boxes on earth, these are them!' And so Job, after prostrating himself before King Fantom, and pouring out his thanks, retired as he had entered, with his wonderful boxes, one under each arm.

“From that day Job became a richer man. He paid his rent to the day, with something over, and in sickness had abundance. But he longed to visit his native country, and after a great deal of difficulty, got leave from the king to do so; but, hoping to return again, he took nothing home with

him but his boxes, and what was in them. He found his brother Richard just where he had left him twenty years before. He was absent at the hour Job entered the old house, and Job sat down on the arm-chair, and began to smoke his brother's pipe. Soon the door opened, and Richard, now grown grey, saw a swarthy-looking man sitting at his ease, smoking. 'Hallo, friend!' said Richard, 'you take it easy.' 'Yes, Dick,' said Job, 'I have been pushing my fortune.' 'And made it, I hope, my dear Job,' cried Dick, as he sprang forward to meet his brother, whom he recognized the moment he turned round and spoke to him. 'Fortune!' said Job, after a few hearty greetings, and mutual inquiries, drying of eyes, blowing of noses, and shaking of hands, and the like—'yes, I believe I have learned to make it by industry, and the help of my wonderful boxes. Here they are,' said he, 'and I shall tell you all about them and my adventures when we sit together to-night once more round the old fireside. I believe I have

become a wiser man, Dick.' Job's story was soon told, and the wonderful boxes became the talk of the whole little town in which he lived, until every man began begging Job for a box. Job was delighted to serve his neighbors, as it cost him hardly anything to make one, and the consequence was, that every family which got one became singularly improved in their worldly circumstances. Things began to look more respectable with them, the houses were cleaner, the children better clothed and schooled, the rent was regularly paid, while ready-money prices got cheaper articles and better. In short, families made the best possible use of their means, and found what a blessing from God money is, when it is the fruit of industry, foresight, and care. Some people thought that it was a sin to have anything to do with magic boxes. But the minister, who examined them, and got a health box for himself, found out the secret, and showed how the power that constructed them was from God, as all good is. Now, Walter, that is the

story of my uncle Job Jacobs and his boxes; and the reason why I am so comfortable is, that he gave a couple to me, which I have used ever since, and I advise you to get a couple also, my friend."

Walter Miller had listened to the story without taking his eyes off Peter. But now that it was done he said, "You don't mean to tell me you are serious, Peter? or that any such boxes exist? or that I could get them?"

"I do," said Peter, "mean all that, and I never was more serious in my life."

"Well, then, I declare to you," said Walter, "that if I could by hook or crook get any contrivances like these to help me, I would be obliged to you all the days of my life: but yet I cannot but think you are joking!"

"If I give you those boxes, do you promise me on your word that you will begin on the first week of the year to use them?"

"There is my hand and my promise as an honorable man," replied Walter.

So Peter went to his room and opened a press, and took down two small books and put them into Walter's hands. "These are my boxes, and I shall send yours to-night, Walter, for nothing."

Walter looked at the small books, and found written on one, "*Savings' Bank Book*," and on the other, "*Friendly Society Book*."

"You have fairly done me, Peter!"

"Yes, I hope I have done you out of wasting your money into saving it, as a man to whom God has given common sense, and who is responsible for the use he makes of what he has received. And believe me, Walter, that there is nothing true of the wonderful boxes that is not equally true of those institutions, which are the greatest blessing to the working classes. The savings' bank cannot be broken or robbed so long as the British Government exists, and has credit. Friendly societies, *properly constituted*, are also sufficiently secure. Any man who desires it, can easily obtain sufficient information about both; and any man of principle,

who has fair wages, and who wishes to pay his way like an honest man, in health, and not to be a selfish burden on his family or others, in sickness, can by industry, wise saving, and a wise application of his money, have money for his time of need. The Apostle Paul laid down two principles that contain in them the 'Wealth of Nations: ' these are—' But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' 'For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.' "

"Thank you, Peter," said Walter; "and if spared till this time next year, I will prove to you that I have not forgotten the story of *Job Jacobs and his Wonderful Boxes.*'





WEE DAVIE.

(A TRACT FOR SORROWING PARENTS.)

I.

WEE DAVIE was the only child of William Thorburn, blacksmith. He had reached the age at which he could venture, with prudence and reflection, on a journey from one chair to another; his wits kept alive by maternal warnings of "Tak care, Davie; mind the fire, Davie." When the journey was ended in safety, and he looked over his shoulders with a crow of joy to his mother, he was rewarded, in addition to the rewards of his own brave and adventurous spirit, by such a smile as equalled only his own, and by the well-merited approval of "Well done, Davie!"

Davie was the most powerful and influential member of the household. Neither the British fleet, nor the French army, nor the Armstrong gun, had the power of doing what Davie did. They might as well have tried to make a primrose grow or a lark sing!

He was, for example, a wonderful stimulus to labor. The smith had been rather disposed to idleness before his son's arrival. He did not take to his work on cold mornings as he might have done, and was apt to neglect many opportunities, which offered themselves, of bettering his condition; and Jeanie was easily put off by some plausible objection when she urged her husband to make an additional honest penny to keep the house. But "the bairn" became a new motive to exertion; and the thought of leaving him and Jeanie more comfortable, in case sickness laid the smith aside, or death took him away; became like a new sinew to his powerful arm, as he wielded the hammer, and made it ring the music of hearty work

on the sounding anvil. The meaning of benefit-clubs, sick-societies, and penny banks, was fully explained by "wee Davie."

Davie also exercised a remarkable influence on his father's political views and social habits. The smith had been fond of debates on political questions; and no more sonorous growl of discontent than his could be heard against "the powers that be," the injustice done to the masses, or the misery which was occasioned by class legislation. He had also made up his mind not to be happy or contented, but only to endure life as a necessity laid upon him, until the required reforms in church and state, at home and abroad, has been attained. But his wife, without uttering a syllable on matters which she did not even pretend to understand; by a series of acts *out* of Parliament; by reforms in household arrangements; by introducing good *bills* into her own House of Commons; and by a charter, whose points were chiefly very commonplace ones—such as a comfortable meal, a tidy home, a

clean fireside, a polished grate, above all, a cheerful countenance and womanly love—by these *radical* changes she had made her husband wonderfully fond of his home. He was, under this teaching, getting every day too contented for a patriot, and too happy for a man in an ill-governed world. His old companions at last could not coax him out at night. He was lost as a member of one of the most philosophical clubs in the neighborhood. "His old pluck," they said, "was gone." The wife, it was alleged by the patriotic bachelors, had "cowed" him, and driven all the spirit out of him. But "wee Davie" completed this revolution. I shall tell you how.

One failing of William's had hitherto resisted Jeanie's silent influence. The smith had formed the habit, before he was married, of meeting a few companions, "just in a friendly way," on pay-nights at a public-house. It was true that he was never "what might be called a drunkard"—"never lost a day's work"—"never was the worse for liquor,"

etc. But, nevertheless, when he entered the snugger in Peter Wilson's whiskey-shop, with the blazing fire and comfortable atmosphere; and when, with half-a-dozen talkative, and, to him, pleasant fellows and old companions, he sat round the fire, and the glass circulated; and the gossip of the week was discussed; and racy stories were told; and one or two songs sung, linked together by memories of old merry-meetings; and current jokes were repeated, with humor, of the tyrannical influence which some would presume to exercise on "innocent social enjoyment"—then would the smith's brawny chest expand, and his face beam, and his feelings become malleable, and his six-pences begin to melt, and flow out in generous sympathy into Peter Wilson's fozy hand, to be counted greedily beneath his sodden eyes. And so it was that the smith's wages were always lessened by Peter's gains. His wife had her fears—her horrid anticipations—but did not like to "even to" her husband anything so dreadful as what she

in her heart dreaded. She took her own way, however, to win him to the house and to good, and gently insinuated wishes rather than expressed them. The smith, no doubt, she comforted herself by thinking, was only "merry," and never ill-tempered or unkind—"yet at times—" "and then, what if—!" Yes, Jeanie, you are right! The demon sneaks into the house by degrees, and at first may be kept out, and the door shut upon him; but let him only once take possession, then he will keep it, and shut the door against everything pure, lovely, and of good report—barring it against thee and "wee Davie," aye, and against One who is best of all, and will fill the house with sin and shame, with misery and despair! But "wee Davie," with his arm of might, drove the demon out. It happened thus:—

One evening when the smith returned home so that "you could *know it* on him," Davie toddled forward; and his father, lifting him up, made him stand on his knee. The child began to play with

the locks of the Samson, to pat him on the cheek, and to repeat with glee the name of "dad-a." The smith gazed on him intently, and with a peculiar look of love, mingled with sadness. "Isn't he a bonnie bairn?" asked Jeanie, as she looked over her husband's shoulder at the child, nodding and smiling to him. The smith spoke not a word, but gazed intently upon his boy, while some sudden emotion was strongly working in his countenance.

"It's done!" he at last said, as he put his child down.

"What's wrang! what's wrang!" exclaimed his wife as she stood before him, and put her hands round his shoulders, bending down until her face was close to his.

"Everything is wrang, Jeanie."

"Willy, what is't? are ye no weel?—tell me what's wrang wi' you?—oh, tell me!" she exclaimed, in evident alarm.

"It's a' richt noo," he said, rising up and seizing the child. He lifted him to his breast, and

kissed him. Then looking up in silence, he said, "Davie has done it, along wi' you, Jeanie. Thank God, I am a free man!"

His wife felt awed, she knew not how.

"Sit doon," he said, as he took out his handkerchief, and wiped away a tear from his eye, "and I'll tell you a' about it."

Jeanie sat on a stool at his feet, with Davie on her knee. The smith seized the child's little hand in one of his own, and with the other took his wife's.

"I havena been what ye may ca' a drunkard," he said, slowly, and like a man abashed, "but I hae been often as I shouldna hae been, and as, wi' God's help, I never, never will be again!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Jeanie.

"Let me speak," said William; "to think, Jeanie"—here he struggled as if something was choking him—"to think that for whiskey I might beggar you and wee Davie; tak the claes aff your back; drive you to the workhouse; break your heart; and ruin my bonnie bairn, that loves me sae

weel ; aye, ruin him in saul and body, for time and for eternity ! God forgie me ! I canna stand the thocht o't, let alane the reality !” The strong man rose, and little accustomed as he was to show his feelings, he kissed his wife and child.

“ It's done, it's done !” he said ; “ as I'm a leevin' man, it's done ! But dinna greet, Jeanie. Thank God for you and Davie, my best blessings.”

“ Except Himsel' !” said Jeanie, as she hung on her husband's neck.”

“ And noo, woman,” replied the smith, “ nae mair about it ; it's done. Gie wee Davie a piece, and get the supper ready.”

“ Wee Davie ” was also a great promoter of social intercourse ; an unconscious link between man and man ; and a great practical “ unionist.” He healed breaches, reconciled differences, and was a peacemaker between kinsfolk and neighbors. For example : Jeanie's parents were rather opposed to her marriage with the smith. Some said it was because they belonged to the rural aristocracy of

country farmers. They regretted, therefore, it was alleged—though their regret was expressed only to old friends—the day when the lame condition of one of their horses had brought Thorburn to visit their stable, and ultimately their house. Thorburn, no doubt, was admitted to be a sensible, well-to-do man; but then he was, at best, but a common smith; and Jeanie was good-looking, and “by ordinary,” with expectations, too, of some ‘tocher.” Her mother, with the introduction, “Tho’ I say it, that shouldna say it,” was fond of enlarging on Jeanie’s excellences, and commenting on the poor smith, with pauses of silence, and expressions of hope “that she might be mistaken,” and “that it was ill to ken a body’s ways”—all of which remarks, from their very mystery, were more depreciatory than any direct charges. But when “wee Davie” was born, the old couple deemed it proper and due to themselves—not to speak of the respect due to their daughter, whom they sincerely loved—to come and visit her. Her mother had

been with Jeanie at an earlier period ; and the house was so clean, and Thorburn so intelligent, and the child pronounced to be so like old David Armstrong, Jeanie's father, especially about the forehead, that the two families, as the smith remarked, were evidently being welded, so that a few more gentle hammerings would make them one.

“ Wee Davie,” as he grew up, became the fire of love which heated the hearts of good metal so as to enable favorable circumstances to give the necessary finishing stroke which would permanently unite them. These circumstances were constantly occurring ; until, at last, Armstrong called every market-day to see his daughter and little grandson. The old man played with the boy (who was his only grandson), and took him on his knee, and put a “ sweetie ” into his mouth, and evidently felt as if he himself was reproduced and lived again in the child. This led to closer intercourse, until David Armstrong admitted that William Thorburn was one of the most sensible men he knew ; and

that he would not only back him against any of his acquaintance for a knowledge of a good horse, but for wonderful information as to the state of the country generally, especially of the landed interest ; and for sound views on the high rent of land. Mrs. Armstrong finally admitted that Jeanie was not so far mistaken in her choice of a husband. The good woman always assumed that the sagacity of the family was derived from her own side of the house.

But whatever doubts still lingered in their minds as to the wisdom of their daughter's marriage, were all dispelled by one look of "wee Davie."

"I'm just real proud about that braw bairn o' Jeanie's," she used to say to her husband ; remarking one day, with a chuckling laugh and smile, "D'ye no think yersel, gudeman, that wee Davie has a look o' auld Davie ?"

"Maybe, maybe," replied old David ; "but I aye think he's our ain bairn we lost thirty years syne."

“That has been in my ain mind,” said his wife, with a sigh; “but I never liked to say it.” Then, after a moment’s silence, she added, with a smile, “But he’s no the waur o’ being like baith.”

Again: There lived in the same common passage, and opposite to William Thorburn’s door, an old soldier, a pensioner. He was a bachelor, and by no means disposed to hold intercourse with his neighbors. He greatly disliked the noise of children, and maintained that “an hour’s drill every day would alone make them tolerable.” “Obedience to authority, that’s the rule; right about, march! That’s the only exercise for them,” the Corporal would say to some father of a numerous family in the “close,” as he flourished his stick with a smile rather than a growl. Jeanie pronounced him to be “a selfish body.” Thorburn had more than once tried to cultivate acquaintance with him, as they were constantly brought into outward contact; but the Corporal was a Tory, and more than suspected the smith of holding “Radical” sentiments.

To defend things as they were was a point of honor with the pensioner—a religion. Besides, any opposition to the Government seemed a slight upon the army, and therefore upon himself. Thorburn at last avoided him, and pronounced him to be proud and ignorant. But one day “wee Davie” found his way into the Corporal’s house, and putting his hands on his knees as he was reading the newspaper near the window, looked up to his face. The old soldier was arrested by the beauty of the child, and took him on his knee. To his surprise, Davie did not scream; and when his mother soon followed in search of her boy, and made many apologies for his “impudence,” as she called it, the Corporal maintained that he was a jewel, a perfect gentleman, and dubbed him “the Captain.” Next day, tapping at Thorburn’s door, the Corporal gracefully presented toys in the shape of a small sword and drum for his young hero. That same night he smoked his pipe at the smith’s fireside, and told such stories of his battles as fired the smith’s

enthusiasm, called forth his praises, and, what was more substantial, procured a most comfortable tea, which clinched their friendly intercourse. He and "the Captain" became constant associates, and many a loud laugh might be heard from the Corporal's room as he played with the boy, and educated his genius. "He makes me young again, does the Captain!" the Corporal often remarked to the mother.

Mrs. Fergusson, another neighbor, was also drawn into the same friendly net by wee Davie. She was a fussy, gossiping woman, noisy and disagreeable. Jeanie avoided her, and boasted indeed that it was her rule to "keep hersel' to hersel'," instead of giving away some of her good self to her neighbor, and thus taking some of her neighbor's bad self out of her. But her youngest child became seriously ill, and Jeanie thought, "If Davie were ill I would like a neighbor to speer for him." So she went up-stairs to visit Mrs. Fergusson, "begged pardon," but "wished to know how

Mary was." Mrs. Fergusson, bowed down with sorrow, thanked her, and bade her "come, ben." Jeanie did so, and spoke kindly to the child—told her mother, moreover, what pleasure it would give her to nurse her baby occasionally, and invited the younger children to come down to her house and play with wee Davie, so as to keep the sick one quiet. She helped also to cook some nourishing drinks, and got nice milk from her father for Mary, often excusing herself for apparent "meddling" by saying, "When ane has a bairn of their ain, they canna but feel for other folk's bairns." Mrs. Fergusson's heart became subdued, softened, and friendly. "We took it as extraordinar' kind," she more than once remarked, "in Mrs. Thorburn to do as she has done. It is a blessing to have sic a neighbor." But it was wee Davie who was the peacemaker!

The street in which the smith lived was as uninteresting as any could be. A description of its outs and ins would have made a "social science"

meeting shudder. Beauty or even neatness it had not. Every "close" or entry in it looked like a sepulchre. The back courts were a huddled confusion of outhouses; strings of linens drying; stray dogs searching for food; hens and pigeons similarly employed with more apparent success and satisfaction; lean cats creeping about; crowds of children, laughing, shouting, and muddy to the eyes, acting with intense glee the great dramas of life, marriages, battles, deaths, and burials, with castle-building, extensive farming, and various commercial operations: but everywhere smoke, mud, moisture, and an utterly uncomfortable look. And so long as we, in Scotland, have a western ocean to afford an unlimited supply of water; and western mountains to condense it as it passes in the blue air over their summits; and western winds to waft it to our cities; and so long as it will pour down, and be welcomed by smoke above, and earth below, we shall find it difficult to be "neat and tidy about the doors," or to transport the cleanliness of Eng-

land into our streets and lanes. But, in spite of all this, how many cheerful homes, with bright fires and nice furniture, inhabited by intelligent, sober, happy men and women, with healthy, lively children, are everywhere to be found in those very streets, which seem to the eyes of those who have never penetrated further than their outside, to be "dreadful places!"

A happier home could hardly be found than that of William Thorburn, as he sat at the fireside, after returning from his work, reading his newspaper, or some book of weightier literature, selected by Jeanie from the well-filled shelves in the little back parlor, while Jeanie herself was sewing opposite to him. As it often happened, both were absorbed in the rays of that bright light "wee Davie," which filled their dwelling, and the whole world, to their eyes; or both listened to the grand concert of his happy voice, which mingled with their busy work and silent thoughts, giving harmony to all. How much was done for his sake! He was the most

sensible, efficient, and thoroughly philosophical teacher of household economy and of social science in all its departments who could enter a working man's dwelling!

II.

My heart is sore as I write it, but wee Davie got ill.

He began to refuse his food, and nothing would please him. He became peevish and cross, so that he would hardly go to his father, except to kiss him with tearful cheeks, and then to stretch out his hands with a cry for his mother. His mother nursed him on her knee, rocked him, walked with him, sang to him her own household lullabies; put him to bed, lifted him up, laid him down, and "fought" with him day and night, caring for neither food nor sleep, but only for her child's ease and comfort.

What lessons of self-sacrificing love was she thus unconsciously taught by her little sufferer! Such

lessons, indeed, as earth alone can afford—and so far it is a glorious school; for there are no sickbeds to watch, no sufferers to soothe, nor mourners to comfort, among the many mansions of our Father's house.

The physician, who was at last called in, pronounced it "a bad case—a *very* serious case." I forget the specific nature of the illness. The idea of danger to Davie had never entered the minds of his parents. The day on which William realized it, he was, as his fellow-workmen expressed it, "clean stupid." They saw him make mistakes he had never made before, and knew it could not be from "drink," yet could not guess the cause. "I maun gang hame!" was his only explanation, when, at three o'clock, he put on his coat and stalked out of the smithy, like one utterly indifferent as to what the consequences might be to ploughs or harrows, wheels or horse-shoes. Taking an old fellow-workman aside, he whispered to him, "For auld friendship's sake, Tam, take charge this day o' my wark."

He said no more. "What ails Willy?" asked his fellow-workmen in vain, as they all paused for a moment at their work and looked perplexed.

It was on the afternoon of the next day that "the minister" called. It must here be confessed that William was a rare attender of any church. The fact was, he had been hitherto rather sceptical in his tendencies: not that his doubts had ever assumed a systematic form, or were ever expressed in any determined or dogmatic manner; but he had read Tom Paine, associated the political rights of man with rebellion against old authorities, all of whom he thought had tyrannically denied them; and he had imbibed the idea at the old "philosophical" club, that ministers, especially those of the Established Church, were the enemies of all progress, had no sympathy with the working classes, were slaves to the aristocracy, preached as a mere profession and only for their pay, and had, moreover, a large share of hypocrisy and humbug

in them. The visit of Dr. M'Gavin was, therefore, unexpected.

When the doctor entered the house, after a courteous request to be allowed to do so—as it was always his principle that the poorest man was entitled to the same respect as the man of rank or riches—he said, “ I have just heard from some of your neighbors, whom I have been visiting, that your child is seriously unwell, and I thought you would excuse my calling upon you to inquire for him.”

William made him welcome, and begged him to be seated. The call was specially acceptable to Jeanie. Old David, I should have mentioned, was “ an elder ” in a most worthy dissenting congregation, and his strong religious convictions and church views formed in his mind a chief objection to the marriage of his daughter with a man “ who was not,” as he said, “ even a member of any kirk.” Jeanie had often wished her husband to be more decided in what she herself cordially acknowledged

to be a duty, and felt to be a comfort and a privilege. The visit of the Doctor, whose character was well known and much esteemed, was therefore peculiarly welcome to her.

In a little while the Doctor was standing beside the cot of wee Davie, who was asleep, and gently touching the little sufferer's hand, he said, in a quiet voice, to the smith, "My friend, I sincerely feel for you! I am myself a father, and have suffered losses in my family." At the word *losses*, William winced, and moved from his place as if he felt uneasy. The Doctor quickly perceived it, and said, "I do not, of course, mean to express so rash and unkind an opinion as that you are to lose this very beautiful and interesting boy, but only to assure you how I am enabled from experience to understand your anxiety, and to sympathize with you and your wife." And noiselessly walking to the arm-chair near the fire, he there sat down, while William and Jeanie sat near him.

After hearing with patience and attention

the account from Jeanie of the beginning and progress of the child's disease, he said, "Whatever happens, it is a comfort to know that our Father is acquainted with all you suffer, all you fear, and all you wish; and that Jesus Christ, our Brother, has a fellow-feeling with us in all our infirmities and trials."

"The Deity must know all," said William, with a softened voice; "He is infinitely great and incomprehensible."

"Yes," replied the minister; "God is so great, that He can attend to our smallest concerns; yet not so incomprehensible but that a father's heart can truly feel after Him, so as at least to find Him through His Son. Oh! what a comfort and strength the thought is to all men," continued the Doctor, "and ought to be to working men, and to you parents, especially with your dear child in sickness, that He who marks a sparrow fall, smitten by winter's cold, and who feeds the wild beast, is acquainted with us, with our most secret

affairs, so that even the hairs of our heads are numbered ; that He who is the Father, almighty Maker of the heavens and the earth, knows the things which we need ; that He has in us, individually, an interest which is incomprehensible, only because His love to us is so in its depth, for He *so* loved us, that He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to death for us all ! It is this God who considers each of us, and weighs all His dealings toward us with a carefulness as great as if we alone existed in His universe, so that, as a father pitieth his children, He pitieth us, knowing our frames, and *remembering* that we are dust."

William bent his head, and was silent, while Jeanie listened with her whole soul. "It is not easy, minister," he at last said, "for hard-wrought and tired men to believe that."

"Nor for any man," replied the Doctor. "I find it very difficult to believe it myself as a real thing, yet I know it to be true ; and," he continued, in a low and affectionate voice, "perhaps

we never could have known it or believed it at all, unless God had taught it to us by the life of His own Son, who came to reveal a Father. But as I see *Him* taking up little children into His loving arms, when others would keep them away who did not understand what perfect love is, and as I see in such doings how love cannot but come down and meet the wants of its smallest and weakest object—when I see all this love at last expressed in the giving up of His life for *sinner*s, oh! it is then I learn in what consists the real greatness of God, ‘whose name is Love.’”

“I believe wi’ my heart,” remarked the smith, “that no man ever loved as Jesus Christ did.”

“But,” said the Doctor, “I see in this love of Christ more than the love of a good man merely; I see revealed in it the loving tenderness toward us and ours of that God whom no eye hath seen or can see, but whom the eye of the spirit, when taught of God, can perceive; for, as Jesus said, ‘He who seeth *me*, seeth the Father!’”

“I believe a' ye say, Doctor,” said Jeanie, meekly. “*I* wadna like to keep my bairn frae Him, nor to rebel against His will, for it's aye richt; but, O sir, I hope, I hope, He will lift him up, and help us now as He did many distressed ones while on earth, by sparing ane that's just like a pairt o' our ain hearts!”

“I hope,” said the minister, “God will spare your boy. But you must trust Him, sincerely ask Him so to do, and commit your child into His hands without fear, and acquiesce in His doing toward you and your boy as He pleases.”

“That is hard!” remarked William.

“Hard!” mildly replied the Doctor. “What would you choose else, had you the power of doing so, rather than acquiesce in the will of God? Would you trust your own heart, for instance, more than the heart of God? or, tell me, would you rather have your child's fate decided by any other on earth than by yourself?”

“No, for I know how I love the boy,” was Jeanie’s reply.

“But God loves him much more than you do; for he belongs to God, and was made by Him and for Him.”

“I ken I am a waik woman, Doctor, but I frankly say that I canna, no, I canna thole the thocht o’ parting wi’ him!” said Jeanie, clasping her hands tightly.

“May God spare him to you, my friends!” replied the minister, “if it be for your good and his. But,” he added, “there are worse things than death.”

This remark, made in almost an under-voice, was followed by silence for a few moments. The minister’s eyes were cast down as if in meditation or prayer.

“Death is hard enough,” said the smith.

“But hard chiefly as a sign of something worse,” continued the Doctor. “Pardon me for asking you such questions as these:—What if your child

grew up an enemy to you? What if he never returned your love? What if he never would trust you? What if he never would speak to you? What if he always disobeyed you? Would this not bring down your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave?"

"Eh! sir," said Jeanie, "that *would* be waur than death!"

"But excuse me, Doctor, for just remarking," interrupted William, "that I never knew any child with a good parent, who would so act. I really don't think it possible that our ain wee Davie, even with our poor bringing up, would ever come to *that*. It would be so unnatural."

"God alone knows how that might be, Thorburn," said the Doctor. "But there are many things more unnatural and dreadful even than that in this world. Listen to me kindly; for I sincerely thank you for having allowed one who is a stranger to speak so frankly to you, and for having heard me with such considerate patience."

“Oh, gang on, gang on, sir, I like to hear you,” said Jeanie.

“Certainly,” added the smith.

“Well, then,” said the minister, “I have no wish even to appear to find any fault with you at such a time. I am more disposed, believe me, to weep with you in your sorrow than to search your heart or life for sin. But I feel at such solemn times as these, most solemn to you and to your wife, that the voice of a Father is speaking to you in the rod, and it ought to be heard; that His hand is ministering discipline to you, and that you ought to give Him reverence, and be in subjection to the Father of our spirits that you may live. In order, therefore, that you may receive more strength and comfort in the end, let us beseech of you to consider candidly, after I leave you, whether you have perhaps not been acting toward *your* Father in heaven in that very way which, did your child grow up and act toward *you*, would be reckoned by you both as a sorrow worse than death?”

“How could that be?” asked Jeanie, with a timid and inquiring look.

“You may discover *how*, my friends, if you honestly ask yourselves, Whether you have loved God your Father who has so loved you? Has there been cordial friendship, or the reverse, toward Him? Confidence, or distrust? Disobedience, or rebellion? Communion in frank believing and affectionate prayer, or distant silence? I do not wish any reply to such questions now; but I desire you, and myself, as loving fathers of our children, to ask whether we have felt and acted toward the best and most loving of Fathers, as we wish our children to feel and act toward ourselves?”

The Doctor paused for a moment. Jeanie shook her head slowly, and the smith stared with her at the fire.

“By the grace of God,” said Jeanie, in a whisper, “I hope I have.”

“I hope so too,” replied the minister, “but it does not come natural to us.”

“It’s a fact,” ejaculated the smith, thrusting his hands vehemently into his pockets; “it does *not* come naturally, in whatever way it comes, and yet it’s desperate unnatural the want o’t.”

“Yes, Thorburn,” replied the Doctor, “it is very dreadful, but yet we have all sinned, and this is our sin of sins, that we have *not known nor loved our Father*, but have been forgetful of Him, strange, shy to Him; we have every one of us been cold, heartless, prodigal, disobedient children!”

Another short pause, and he then spoke on in the same quiet and loving voice: “But whatever we are or have been, let us hope in God through Jesus Christ, or we perish! Every sinner is righteously doomed, but no man is doomed to be a sinner. God is our Father still, for He is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses; and just as you both have nourished and cherished your dear boy, and have been loving him when he knew it not, nor could understand that great love in your hearts,

which, sure am I, will never grow cold but in the grave, so has it been with God toward us. Open your hearts to his love, as you would open your eyes to the light which has been ever been shining. Believe it as the grand reality, as you would have your boy open his heart to and believe in your own love, when he wakens from his sleep. Your love, as I have said, is deep, real to your boy, irrespective of his knowledge or return of it. But what is this to the love of God! ‘*Herein* is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.’ Let us, my friends, never rest till we are enabled in some degree to see and to appreciate such marvellous goodness, and to say, ‘We have known and believed the love which God has to us.’”

“Dr. M’Gavin,” said William, “you have spoken to me as no man ever did before, and you will believe me, I am sure, when I say, that I respect you and myself too much to flatter you. But there is surely a meaning in my love to that

boy which I never saw before! It begins to glimmer on me."

"Thank God if it does! But I do not speak to you, and this you must give me credit for, as if it were my own profession only; I speak to you as a man, a father, and a brother, wishing you to share the good which God has given to me, and wishes you and all men to share. So I repeat it, that if we would only cherish toward God that simple confidence and hearty love—and seek to enjoy with Him that frank, cheerful communion which we wish our children to possess in relation to ourselves, we would experience a true regeneration, the important change from an estranged heart to a child's love."

"That would, indeed, be a Christianity worth having," said William.

"It would be," continued the Doctor, "to share Christ's life; for what was the whole life of Jesus Christ, but a life of this blessed, confiding, obedient, childlike sonship? O that we would learn of

Him, and grow up in likeness of Him! But this ignorance of God is itself death. For if knowledge be life, spiritual ignorance is death. My good friends, I have been led to give you a regular sermon!" said the Doctor, smiling; "but I really cannot help it. To use common, everyday language, I think our treatment of God has been shameful, unjust, and disgraceful on the part of men with reason, conscience, and heart! I do not express myself half so strongly as I feel. I am ashamed and disgusted with myself, and all the members of the human family, for what we feel, and feel *not*, to such a Father. If it were not for what the one elder Brother was and did, the whole family would have been disgraced and ruined most righteously. But His is the name, and there is no other whereby we can be saved!"

"Doctor!" said William, with a trembling voice, "the mind is dark, and the heart is hard!"

"The Spirit of God who is given with Christ can enlighten and soften both, my brother."

“Thank ye, thank ye, from my heart,” replied the smith; “I confess I have been very careless in going to the church, but—”

“We will talk of that again, if you allow me to return to-morrow. Yet,” said the Doctor, pointing to the child, “God in His mercy never leaves Himself without a witness. Look at your child, and listen to your own heart, and remember all I have said, and you will perhaps discover that though you tried it, you could not fly from the word of the Lord, should you even have fled from the Bible. A Father’s voice by a child has been preaching to you. Yes, Thorburn! when in love God gave you that child, He sent an eloquent missionary to your house to preach the gospel of what our Father is to us, and what we as children ought to be to Him. Only listen to that sermon, and you will soon be prepared to listen to others.”

The Doctor rose to depart. Before doing so, he asked permission to pray, which was cheerfully granted. Wishing to strengthen the faith, in

prayer, of those sufferers, he said, "If God *cannot* hear and answer prayer, He is not all-perfect and supreme; if He *will* not, He is not our Father. But, blessed be His name, His own Son, who knew Him perfectly, prayed Himself, and was heard in that He prayed. He heard, too, every true prayer addressed to Himself; while He has in His kindness furnished us with an argument for prayer, the truth and beauty of which we parents can of all men most appreciate: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!'"

The Doctor then poured forth a simple, loving, and most sympathizing prayer, in which he made himself one with his fellow-worshippers, and expressed to a common Father the anguish and the hopes of the hearts around him. When it ended, he went to the cot, and looked at the sleeping child, touched his white hand, and said, "God bless your little one! May this sleep be for health."

"It's the first sleep," said Jeanie, "he has had for a lang time. It may be a turn in his complaint."

The minister then shook them both warmly by the hand, and gazed on them with a world of interest in his eyes, asking them only to consider kindly what he had said.

The silence which ensued for a few minutes after his absence, as William and Jeanie returned from the door and stood beside the bed, was broken by the smith observing, "I am glad that man came to our house, Jeanie. Yon was indeed preaching that—a man can understand and canna forget. It was wee Davie did it."

“That’s true,” said Jeanie, “thank God for’t!” And after gazing on the sleeping child, she added, “Is he no bonnie? I dinna wonner that sic a bairn should bring guid to the house.”

That night William had thoughts in his heart which burned with a redder glow than the coals upon the smithy fire!

III.

It was a beautiful morning in spring, with blue sky, living air, springing grass, and singing birds; but William Thorburn had not left his house, and the door was shut.

Mrs. Fergusson trod the wooden stair that led to the floor above with slow and cautious step; and as she met her boy running down whistling, she said, “What d’ye mean, Jamie, wi’ that noise? Do ye no ken wee Davie is dead? Ye should hae mair feeling, laddie!”

The Corporal, whose door was half open, crept out, and in an under-breath beckoned Mrs. Fergus-

son to speak to him. "Do you know how they are?" he asked in a low voice.

"No," she replied, shaking her head. "I sat up wi' Mrs. Thorburn half the night, and left Davie sleeping, and never thocht it would come to this. My heart is sair for them. But since it happened the door has been barred and no one has been in. I somehow dinna like to intrude, for nae doot they will be in an awfu' way about that bairn."

"I don't wonder—I don't wonder," remarked the Corporal meditatively; "I did not believe I could feel as I do. I don't understand it. Here am I, who have seen men killed by my side; who have seen a few shots cut down almost half our company; and—"

"Is it possible!" interposed Mrs. Fergusson.

"It is certain," said the Corporal; "and I have charged at Pampeluna—it was there I was wounded—over dead and dying comrades, yet, will you believe me? I never shed a tear—never; but there was something in that Captain—I mean the boy—"

and the Corporal took out his snuff-box, and snuffed vehemently. "And what a brave fellow his father is! I never thought I could love a Radical; but he is not what you call a Radical; he is—I don't know what else, but he is a man—an out-and-out man, every inch of him; I'll say that for him—a man is William Thorburn! Have you not seen his wife?"

"No, poor body! It was six o'clock when she ran up to me, no distracted either, but awfu' quiet like, and wakened me up, and just said, 'He's awa!'" and then afore I could speak she ran doon the stair, and steekit her door; and she has such a keen spirit, I dinna like to gang to bother her. I'm unco wae for them."

They were both silent, as if listening to some sound in William Thorburn's house, but all was still as the grave.

The first who entered that morning were old David Armstrong and his wife. They found Jeanie busy about her house, and William sitting on a

chair, dressed better than usual, staring into the fire. The curtains of the bed were up. It was covered with a pure white sheet, and something lay upon it which they recognized.

Jeanie came forward, and took the hand of father and mother, without a tear on her face, and said quietly, "Come ben," as she gave her father a chair beside her husband, and led her mother into an inner room, closing the door. What was spoken there between them, I know not.

William rose to receive old David, and remarked, in a careless manner, that "it was a fine spring day."

David gave a warm squeeze to his hand, and sat down. He soon rose and went to the bed. William followed him, and took the cloth off the boy's face in silence. The face was unchanged, as in sleep. The flaxen curls seemed to have been carefully arranged, for they escaped from under the white cap, and clustered like golden wreaths around the marble forehead and cheeks. William

covered up the face, and both returned to their seats by the fireside.

“ I never lost ane since my ain wee Davie dee'd, and yours, Willie, was dear to me as my ain,” exclaimed the old man, and then broke down, and sobbed like a child.

William never moved, though his great chest seemed to heave; but he seized the poker, and began to arrange the fire, and then was still as before.

By-and-by the door of the inner room opened, and Jeanie and her mother appeared, both of them composed and calm. The same scene was repeated as they passed the bed. Mrs. Armstrong then seated herself beside her husband.

Jeanie placing a large Bible on the table, pointed to it, and said, “ Father.” She then drew her chair near the smith's.

David Armstrong put on his spectacles, opened the Bible, and selecting a portion of Scripture, reverently said, “ Let us read the word of God.”

The house was quiet. No business on that day intruded itself upon their minds. It was difficult for any of them to speak, but they were willing to hear. The passages which old David selected for reading were 2 Samuel xii. 15-23, on the sorrow of King David when he lost his child; Matthew ix. 18-26, containing the history of the raising up of the daughter of Jairus; and John xi. 1-44, with its memorable narrative of the darkness of mysterious sorrow, and the light of unexpected deliverance experienced by Martha and Mary of Bethany.

Having closed the book, he said, with a trembling but solemn voice, "God, who doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will, has been pleased to send us a heavy affliction. 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away!' May He enable us to say at all times, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' For whether He gives or takes away, He is always the same in love and mercy toward us, and therefore ought to have the same confidence from us. In truth, if He takes away,

it is but to give something better, for He afflicts us in order to make us *partakers* of His holiness. Our little one is not dead, but only sleepeth!"

Here David paused, but recovering himself, said, "Yes, his body sleepeth in Jesus till the resurrection morning. He himself is with Christ. He is alive in his Father's bosom. Oh, it is strange to think o't, and hard to believe! but, blessed be God! it's true, that—that—Jesus Christ, who sees us, sees him, and sees us thegither, aye, at this verra moment!—" continued David, thoughtfully, like one pondering on a new truth; "this very moment we are all in His sight! Oh, it's grand and comforting; our wee Davie is in the arms of Jesus Christ!"

A solemn silence ensued. "The bonnie bairn will never return to us," continued the elder, "but we shall go to him, and some o' us ere lang, I hope. Let us pray." And they all knelt down, and a true prayer was spoken from suffering parents, to

Him "of whom *the whole family* in heaven and earth is named."

To David's surprise and great satisfaction, he heard William utter Amen to his prayer, which included honest confession of sin; expressions of thankfulness for mercies, among others, for the great gift of their child, thus taken away, for all he had been, and for all he then was; with trustful petitions for the forgiveness of sin, and grace to help in this their time of need.

That afternoon Dr. M'Gavin called, and manifested quiet, unobtrusive, but most touching sympathy. His very silence was eloquent affection.

"I'm proud to meet wi' you, sir," said old Armstrong, after the Doctor had been seated for awhile. "Altho' I'm no o' your kirk, yet we're baith o' ae kirk for a' that."

"With one Father, one Brother, one Spirit, one life, one love, one hope," replied the Doctor.

"True, sir, true, our differences are nothing to our agreements."

“Our non-essential differences arise out of our essential union, Mr. Armstrong. For if we differ honestly and conscientiously as brethren, I hope it is because we differ only in judgment as to *how* to please our Father and our elder Brother. Our hearts are one in our wish to do their will. For none of us liveth or even dieth to himself.”

“Ay, ay, sir. So it is, so it is! But as the auld saying has’t, ‘The best o’ men are but men at the best.’ We maun carry ane another’s burdens; and ignorance, or even bigotry, is the heaviest ony man can carry for his neebor. Thank God, however, that brighter and better times are coming! We here see thro’ a glass darkly; but then face to face. We know only in pairt, then shall we know even as we are known. In the meantime, we must be faithful to our given light, and, according to the best o’ our fallible judgment, serve Him, and not man.”

“There are differences among living men,” replied the minister, “but none among the dead.

We shall agree perfectly only when we know and love as saints, without error and without sin."

"I mind," said David, warming with the conversation, and the pleasure of getting his better heart out—"I mind twa neighbors o' ours, and ye'll mind them too, gudewife? that was Johnnie Morton and auld Andrew Gebbie. The tane was a ken Burgher, and the t'ither an Antiburgher. Baith lived in the same house, tho' at different ends, and it was the bargain that each should keep his ain side of the house aye weel thatched. But they happened to dispute so keenly about the principles o' their kirks, that at last they quarrelled, and didna speak at a'! So ae day after this, as they were on the roof thatching, each on his ain side, they reached the tap, and looking ower, face met face. What could they do? They couldna flee. So at last, Andrew took off his Kilmarnock cap, and stratching his head, said, 'Johnnie, you and me, I think, hae been very foolish to dispute as we hae done concerning Christ's will about our

kirks, until we hae clean forgot His will about ourselves: and so we hae fought sae bitterly for what we ca' the truth, that it has ended in spite. Whatever 's wrang, it's perfectly certain that it never can be richt to be uncivil, unneighborly, unkind, in fac, tae hate ane anither. Na, na, that's the deevil's wark, and no God's! Noo, it strikes me that maybe it's wi' the kirk as wi' this house: ye're working on ae side and me on the t'ither, but if we only do our work weel, we will meet at the tap at last. Gie's your han', auld neighbor!' And so they shook han's, and were the best o' freens ever after."

"Thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for the story," said Dr. M'Gavin. Then, looking to the bed, he remarked, "Oh, if we were only simple, true, and loving, like little children, would we not, like that dear one, enter into the kingdom of heaven, and know and love all that were in it, or on their way to it?"

"I'm glad I have met you," resumed the old

Elder. "It does ane's heart good to meet a brother who has been a stranger. But if it hadna been for *his* death, we might never have met! Isna that queer? God's ways are no' our ways!"

"God brings life to our hearts out of death," replied the Doctor, "and in many ways does He ordain praise from babes and sucklings, whether living or dead."

And thus a quiet chat, full of genial Christian cheerfulness, was kept up for a time round the fireside. There was light in that dwelling on many a question; for there was love—love intensified by sorrow, as the last rays of evening become more glorious from the very clouds that gather round the setting sun.

"With your permission, good friends," said Dr. M'Gavin, "I will read a psalm and offer up a short prayer before I go." He selected the 23d. His only remark, as he closed the Bible, was, "The good Shepherd has been pleased to take this dear lamb into His fold, never more to leave it."

“And may the lamb be the means of making the auld sheep to follow!” added the Elder.

When the prayer was over, Jeanie, who had hardly spoken a word, said, without looking at the Doctor, “Oh, sir! God didna hear our prayer for my bairn!”

“Dinna speak that way, Jeanie, woman!” said her mother, softly, yet firmly.

“I canna help it, mither; I maun get oot my thochts that are burning at my heart. The minister maun forgie me,” replied Jeanie.

“Surely, Mrs. Thorburn,” said the Doctor; “and it would be a great satisfaction to me, were I able from what God has taught myself in His Word, and from my own experience of sorrow, to solve any difficulty, or help you to acquiesce in God’s dealings with you; not because you *must*, but because you *ought* to submit; and that again, not because God has *power*, and therefore does what He pleases, but because He is love, and therefore pleases always to do what is right.”

“But, oh, He didna hear our prayer: that’s my burden! but we were maybe wrang in asking what was against His will.”

“He did not answer you in the way, perhaps, in which you expected, Mrs. Thorburn; yet, depend upon it, every true prayer is heard and answered by Him. But He is too good, too wise, too loving, to give us always literally what we ask; if so, He would often be very cruel, and *that* He can never be! You would not give your child a serpent, if in his ignorance he asked one, mistaking it for a fish? nor would you give him a stone for bread?”

Jeanie was silent.

“When Nathan, the Lord’s prophet, telt King David that his child must die,” said the Elder, “yet nevertheless David even then, when it seemed almost rebellion, prayed to the Lord to spare his life, and I dinna doot that his Father in heaven was pleased wi’ his freedom and faith. He couldna but tak kindly such confidence frae His distressed servant.”

“I am sure,” said the Doctor, “we cannot trust Him too much, or open our human hearts too freely. But let us always remember, that when God refuses what we ask, He gives us something else far better, yea, and does far more than we can ask or think. So it may be thus with your dear child. If He had taken him away, can you, for example, tell the good He has bestowed thereby on himself or others, or the evil and misery which he has thereby prevented? Oh, how many parents would give worlds that their children had died in infancy!”

“We are ignorant creatures!” exclaimed William.

“And consider further, Mrs. Thorburn,” said the Doctor, “how the Apostle Paul prayed the Lord thrice to have a thorn in the flesh—a very messenger from Satan—removed. But the Lord did not hear even *his* prayer in his way, but answered it, nevertheless, in another and better way when He said, ‘My grace is sufficient

for thee, for my strength is perfected in weakness.' ”

“True, minister,” said the Elder, “nor did He ever say, ‘Seek ye my face in vain.’ ”

And as regards your dear child, Mrs. Thornburn,” continued the Doctor, touching her arm, and speaking with great earnestness, “I believe sorrow’s crown of sorrow to a Christian parent, and the heaviest he or she can endure on earth, is that of seeing a child, dearer than their own life, living and dying in wickedness! What was David’s sorrow for his dead babe, when compared with that wail of bitter agony for his wicked son, ‘Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!’ God has saved *you* from that agony. He has done so by taking your child to Himself. Your precious jewel is not lost, but is in God’s treasury, where no thief can break through and steal: *that* is surely something!”

“Something!” exclaimed the smith; “it is surely, after all, everything. And yet—”

“And yet,” said Jeanie, as if interpreting the feeling of her husband, “wi’ all these blessed thochts about our wee bairn, he’s an awfu’ blank! Ilka thing in the world seems different.”

“I’m just thinking, Jeanie,” said her mother, “that it’s a comfort ye ever pat yer een on Davie; for there’s puir Mrs. Blair (John Blair’s blin’ wife, ye ken) when she lost her callant, May was a year, she cam to me in an awfu’ way about it, and said that what vexed her sœ muckle was, that she never had seen his wee face, and could only touch and han’le him, and hear him greet, but never get a look o’ him.”

“Puir body,” remarked Jeanie, “it was a sair misfortun’ for ony mither that! Ilka ane has their ain burden to carry. But, minister, let me speer at you, sir: Will I never see my bairn again? and if I see him, will I no ken him?”

“You might as well ask me whether you could see and know your child if he had gone to a foreign country instead of to heaven,” replied the

Doctor. "Alas for Christian love, if we did not know our beloved friends in heaven! But such ignorance is not possible in that home of light and love."

"It wadna be rational to think so," remarked William. "And yet, Doctor," he continued, "excuse me for just saying, though I would rather listen than speak, that the knowledge of the lost, if such knowledge there can be, must be terrible!"

"I know not how that will be," replied the Doctor, "though I have my own views on it. Yet surely our ignorance of any person being lost would be dearly purchased by our ignorance of any person being saved?"

"I did not think of that," said the smith.

"But," continued Jeanie, with quiet earnestness, "will our bairn aye be a bairn, Doctor? Oh, I hope so!"

"Dinna try, Jeanie dear," said David, "to be wise aboon what is written."

The Doctor smiled, and asked—"If your child had lived, think you, would you have rejoiced had he always continued to be a child, and never grown or advanced? and are you a loss or a gain to your father and mother, because you have grown in mind and knowledge since you were an infant?"

"I never thocht o' that either," said Jeanie, thoughtfully.

"Be assured," continued the minister, "there will be no such imperfect and incomplete beings there as infants in intellect and in sense for ever. All will be perfect and complete, according to the plan of God, who made us for fellowship with Himself and with all His blissful family. Your darling has gone to a noble school, and will be taught and trained there for immortality, by Him who was Himself a child, who spoke as a child, reasoned as a child, and as a child 'grew in wisdom and in stature;' and who also sympathized with a mother's love and a mother's sorrow. You too, parents, if

you believe in Christ, and hold fast your confidence in Him, and become to Him as little children, will be made fit to enter the same society; and thus you and your boy, though never, perhaps, forgetting your old relationship on earth, will be fit companions for one another, for ever and for ever. Depend upon it, you will both know and love each other there better than you ever could possibly have done here!"

"My wee pet!" murmured Jeanie, as the tears began to flow from a softened, because happier heart.

William hid his face in his hands. After a while, he broke silence, and said, "These thoughts of heaven are new to me. But common sense tells me they maun be true. Heaven does not seem to me noo to be the same strange place it used to be. My loss is not so complete as I once thought it was. Neither we nor our bairn have lived in vain."

"Surely not," said the Doctor;

"'Better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all!'

You have contributed one citizen to the heavenly Jerusalem; one member to the family above; one happy spirit to add his voice to the anthem before the throne of God!"

"Lord, help our unbelief!" said Mr. Armstrong; "for the mair I think o' the things which I believe, the mair they seem to me owre gude news to be true!"

"The disciples, when they first saw Christ after His resurrection," said the minister, "did not believe from very joy."

"We think owre muckle o' our ain folk, Doctor, and owre little o' Him," remarked the Elder. "But it's a comfort that He's kent and loved as He ought to be by them in heaven. I thank Him, along wi' them that's awa', for all He is and gies to them noo in His presence."

"And for all He is and does, and will ever be and do to every man who trusts Him," added the Doctor; "our friends would be grieved, if grief were possible to them now, did they think our

memory of them made us forget Him, or that our love to them made us love Him less. Surely, if they know what we are doing, they would rejoice if they also knew that, along with themselves, we too rejoiced in their God and our God. What child in heaven but would be glad to know that its parents joined with it every day in offering up, through the same Spirit, the same prayer of '*Our Father!*'"

"If wee Davie could preach to us, I daresay, sir, that might be his text," said the Elder.

"Though dead, he yet speaketh," replied the minister.

The Doctor rose to depart. "By-the-bye," he said, "let me repeat a verse or two to you, Thorburn, which I am sure you will like. They express the thoughts of a parent about his dead girl, which have already in part been poorly expressed by me when your wife asked me if she would know her boy:—

'She is not dead, the child of our affection,
But gone into that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

'Not as a child shall we again behold her ;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child ;

'But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace,
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.'

"Thank ye, sir, thank ye," said Thorburn ;
"and ye'll no be offended if I ax ye to gie me a
grip o' yer han'." And the smith laid hold of the
Doctor's proffered hand, so small and white, with
his own hand, so large and powerful,—“God reward
ye, sir, for we canna ! And noo, minister,” the
smith continued, “I maun oot wi't ! Since ye hae
been so kind as gie us that fine bit o' English poe-
try, I canna help gieing you a bit o' Scotch, for
Scotch poetry has been a favorite reading o' mine,

and there's a verse that has been dirling a' day in my heart. This is it :—

It's dowie at the hint o' hairst,
At the wa'-gang o' the swallow,
When the winds blaw cauld,
And the burns run bauld,
And the wuds are hanging yellow ;
But oh ! its dowier far to see
The wa'-gang o' ane the heart gangs wi',
The dead set o' a shining e'e,
That closes the weary warld on thee !'

Farewell, sir! I'll expect ye the morn at two, if convenient," the smith whispered to the Doctor, as he opened the door to him.

"I'll be sure to come," he replied. "Thank you for those verses ; and think for your good about all I have said."

That evening, after Dr. M'Gavin's visit, there is a comfortable tea prepared by Jeanie for her friends, and the Corporal was one of the party.

There is a merciful reaction to strong feeling. The highest waves, when they dash against the

rock, flow furthest back, and scatter themselves in their rebound into sparkling foam and air bubbles.

The Corporal told some of his old stories of weariness and famine, of wounds and sufferings, of marches and retreats, of battles and victories, over the fields of Spain. Old Armstrong could match these only by Covenanter tales, of fights long ago, from "The Scots Worthies," but was astonished to find the Corporal a stanch Episcopalian, who had no sympathy with "rebels." Yet so kind and courteous was the pensioner, that the Elder confessed that he was "a real fine boddie, without a grain o' bigotry." Jeanie and her mother spoke of the farm, of the cows, and of old friends among the servants, with many bygone reminiscences. And thus the weight of their spirits was lightened, although ever and anon there came one little presence before them, causing a sinking of the heart!

No sooner had their friends left the house for the night than the smith did what he never did

before. He opened the Bible, and said to Jeanie, "I will read a chapter aloud before we retire to rest." Jeanie clapped her husband fondly on the shoulder, and in silence sat down beside him while he read again some of the same passages which they had already heard. Few houses had that night more quiet and peaceful sleepers.

The little black coffin was brought to the smith's the night before the funeral. When the house was quiet, Davie was laid in it gently by his father. Jeanie assumed the duty of arranging with care the white garments in which her boy was dressed, wrapping them round him, and adjusting the head as if to sleep in her own bosom. She brushed once more the golden ringlets, and put the little hands across the breast, and opened out the frills in the cap, and removed every particle of sawdust which soiled the shroud. When all was finished, though she seemed anxious to prolong the work, the lid was put on the coffin, yet so as to leave the face uncovered. Both were as silent as their child. But

ere they retired to rest for the night, they instinctively went to take another look.

As they thus gazed in silence, side by side, the smith felt his hand gently seized by his wife. She played at first nervously with the fingers, until finding her own hand held by her husband, she looked into his face with an unutterable expression, and meeting his eyes so full of unobtrusive sorrow, leant her head on his shoulder and said, "Willie, this is my last look o' him on this side o' the grave. But, Willie dear, you and me maun see him again, and, mind ye, no to part ;—na, I canna thole that ! We ken whaur *he* is, and we maun gang till him. Noo, promise me ! vow along wi' me here, as we love him and ane another, that we'll attend mair to what's gude than we hae dune, that—O Willie, forgive me, for it's no my pairt to speak, but I canna help it noo, and just, my bonnie man, just agree wi' me—that we'll gie our hearts for ever to our ain Saviour, and the Saviour o' our wee Davie !"

These words, as she rested her throbbing head

on her husband's shoulder, were uttered in low, broken accents, half-choked with an inward struggle, but without a tear. She was encouraged to say all this—for she had a timid awe of her husband—by the pressure ever and anon returned to her hand from his. The smith spoke not, but bent his head over his wife, who felt his tears falling on her neck, as he whispered “Amen, Jeanie! so help me God!”

A silence ensued, during which Jeanie got, as she said, “a gude greet,” for the first time, which took a weight off her heart. She then quietly kissed her child and turned away. Thorburn took the hand of his boy and said, “Farewell, my wee Davie, and when you and me meet again, we'll baith, I tak it, be a bit different frae what we are this nicht!” He then put the lid mechanically on the coffin, turned one or two of the screws, and sat down at the fireside to speak about the arrangements of the funeral.

After that, and for the first time in his life,

William asked his wife to kneel down, and join with him in prayer before they retired to rest. Poor fellow! he was sincere as ever man was, and never after till the day of his death did he omit this "exercise," which was once almost universal in every family in Scotland whose "head" was a member of the church; and was even continued by the widow when the "head" was taken away by death. But on this the first time when the smith tried to utter aloud the thoughts of his heart, he could only say, "Our Father—!" There he stopped. Something seemed to seize him, and to repress his utterance. Had he only more fully known how much was in these words, he possibly might have gone on. As it was, the thoughts of the father on earth so mingled, he knew not how, with those of the Father in heaven, that he could not speak. But he continued on his knees, and spoke there to God in his heart as he had never spoken before. Jeanie did the same. After a while they both rose, and Jeanie said, "Thank ye,

Willie. It's a beautiful beginning, and it will, I'm sure, hae a braw ending."

'It's cauld iron, Jeanie, woman," said the smith, "but it wull heat and come a' richt yet."

The day of the funeral was a day of beauty and sunshine. A few fellow-tradesmen and neighbors assembled in the house, dressed in their Sunday's best, though it was visible in the case of one or two, at least, that their best was the worse of the wear. The last of his possessions a Scotch workman will part with, even to keep his family in food, are his Sunday clothes; and the last duty he will fail to perform is that of following the body of a neighbor to the grave.

All those who attended the funeral, and about twenty assembled, had crape on their hats and weepers on their coats. The Corporal had, also, a war-medal on his breast. The smith, according to custom, sat near the door, and shook each man by the hand as he entered. Not a word was spoken.

When all who were expected had assembled,

the Doctor, who occupied a chair near the table on which the Bible lay, opened the book, and read a portion of the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, without any comment. He then prayed with a fervor and suitableness which touched every heart.

The little coffin was brought out. It was easily carried. The Corporal was the first to step forward. He saluted the smith by putting his hand to his hat, soldier fashion, and begged to have the honor of assisting.

Slowly the small procession advanced toward the churchyard, about half-a-mile off; and angels beheld the wondrous sight, a child's funeral—wondrous as a symbol of sin, and of redemption too. It at once speaks of the insignificance of a human being as a mere creature, and of his dignity as belonging to Christ Jesus.

As they reached the grave, the birds were singing, and building their nests in the budding trees. A flood of light steeped in glory a neighboring

range of hills. Overhead, the sky had only one small, snow-white cloud reposing in peace on its azure blue.

When the sexton had finished the grave, and smoothed it down, William quietly seized the spade, and went carefully over the green turf again with gentle beats, removing with his hand the small stones and gravel which roughened its surface. Those who stood very near, had they narrowly watched him, which they had too much feeling to do, might have observed the smith give a peculiar, tender pressure and clap on the grave with his hand, as if on a child's breast, ere he returned the spade, and with a careless air, said, "Here, John, thank ye; it's a' richt noo." Then lifting up his hat, and looking round, he added, "I'm obleeged to you, freens, for your trouble in coming."

And so they left "wee Davie," more precious and more enduring than the everlasting hills!

Several years after this, Dr. M'Gavin, when an

old man, as he sat at his study fire, was conversing with a young clergyman who seemed to think that nothing could be accomplished of much value for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, unless by some great "effort," or "movement," or "large committee," which would carry everything before it. The Doctor quietly remarked, "My young friend, when you have lived as long in the ministry as I have done, you will learn how true it is, that 'God fulfils Himself in many ways.' He is in the still, small voice, and that often when he is neither in the earthquake nor in the hurricane. 'A little child may lead us' on to God, and we must be as a little child to be led! One of the best men I ever knew—and whose widow and daughters, and well-doing prosperous sons, live still and partake of the same character, and are among my most valued and attached friends—told me on his dying bed, that, under God, he owed his chief good to the death of his first child, the circumstance which accidentally made me ac-

quainted with him. On the last evening of his life, when enumerating the many things which had been blessed for his good, he said to me, 'But, under God, it was our wee Davie that first brought me to my Father in heaven!''

THE END.