VARIOUS

BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, VOLUME 70, NO. 433, NOVEMBER 1851

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Содержание

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THE DRAMAS OF HENRY TAYLOR

There is no living writer whose rank in literature appears to be more accurately determined, or more permanently secured to him, than the author of *Philip Van Artevelde*.[1] Not gifted with the ardent temperament, the very vivid imagination, or the warmth of passion which are supposed necessary to carry a poet to the highest eminences of his art, he has, nevertheless, that intense reflection, that large insight into human life, that severe taste, binding him always to a most select, accurate, and admirable style, which must secure him a lofty and impregnable position amongst the class of writers who come next in order to the very highest.

There have been greater poems, but in modern times we do

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[1] *Philip Van Artevelde*: *A Dramatic Romance.—Edwin the Fair: An Historical Drama; and Isaac Comnenus: A Play—The Eve of the Conquest, and other Poems.* By Henry Taylor.

not think there has appeared any dramatic composition which can be pronounced superior to the masterpiece of Henry Taylor. Neither of the *Sardanapalus* of Lord Byron, nor the *Remorse* of Coleridge, nor the *Cenci* of Shelley, could this be said. We are far from asserting that Taylor is a greater poet than Byron, or Coleridge, or Shelley; but we say that no dramatic composition of these poets surpasses, as a whole, *Philip Van Artevelde*. These writers have displayed, on various occasions, more passion and more pathos, and a command of more beautiful imagery, but they have none of them produced a more complete dramatic work; nor do any of them manifest a profounder insight, or a wider view of human nature, or more frequently enunciate that *pathetic wisdom*, that mixture of feeling and sagacity, which we look upon as holding the highest place in eloquence of every description, whether prose or verse. The last act of Shelley's drama of the *Cenci* has left a more vivid impression upon our mind than any single portion of the modern drama; but one act does not constitute a play, and this drama of the *Cenci* is so odious from its plot, and the chief character portrayed in it is, in every sense of the word, so utterly monstrous, (for Shelley has combined, for purposes of his own, a spirit of piety with the other ingredients of that diabolical character, which could not have co-existed with them,) that, notwithstanding all its beauty, we would willingly efface this poem from English literature. If one of those creatures, half beautiful woman and half scaly fish, which artists seem, with a traditional depravity of taste, to delight

in, were really to be alive, and to present itself before us, it would hardly excite greater disgust than this beautifully foul drama of the *Cenci*.

The very fact of our author having won so distinct and undisputed a place in public estimation, must be accepted as an excuse for our prolonged delay in noticing his writings. The public very rapidly passed its verdict upon them: it was a sound one. The voice of encouragement was not needed to the author; nor did the reading world require to be informed of the fresh accession made to its stores. If we now propose to ourselves some critical observations on the dramas of Mr Taylor, we enter upon the task in exactly the same spirit that we should bring to the examination of any old writer, any veritable ancient, of established celebrity. We are too late to assist in creating a reputation for these dramas, but we may possibly throw out some critical suggestions which may contribute to their more accurate appreciation.

In *Philip Van Artevelde*, the great object of the author appears to have been to exhibit, in perfect union, the man of thought and the man of action. The hero is meditative as Hamlet, and as swift to act as Coriolanus. He is pensive as the Dane, and with something of the like cause for his melancholy; but so far from wasting all his energies in moody reflection, he has an equal share for a most enterprising career of real life. He throws his glance as freely and as widely over all this perplexing world, but every footstep of his own is planted with a sure and certain knowledge,

and with a firm will. His thoughts may seem to play as loose as the air above him, but his standing-place is always stable as the rock. Such a character, we need not say, could hardly have been selected, and certainly could not have been portrayed with success, by any but a deeply meditative mind.

It is often remarked that the hero is the reflection of the writer. This could not be very correctly said in instances like the present. A writer still lives only in his writings, lives only in his thoughts, whatever martial feats or bold enterprises he may depict. We could not prophesy how the poet himself would act if he had been the citizen of Ghent. It is more accurate to content ourselves with saying that the delineation of his hero has given full scope to the intellectual character of the author, and to his own peculiar habits of thought. For if the great citizen of Ghent combines in an extraordinary degree the reflective and the energetic character, our author unites, in a manner almost as peculiar, two modes of thinking which at first appear to be opposed: he unites that practical sagacity which gives grave, and serious, and useful counsels upon human conduct, with that sad and profound irony – that reasoned despondency – which so generally besets the speculative mind. All life is – vanity. Yet it will not do to resign ourselves to this general conclusion, from which so little, it is plain, can be extracted. From nothing, nothing comes. We must go back, and estimate by comparison each form and department of this human life – which, as a whole, is so nugatory. Thus, practical sagacity is reinstated in full vigour, and has its fair scope

of action, though ever and anon a philosophic despondency will throw its shadow over the scene.

As it is a complete man, so it is a whole life, that we have portrayed in the drama of *Philip Van Artevelde*. The second part is not what is understood by a "continuation" of the first, but an essential portion of the work. In the one we watch the hero rise to his culminating point; in the other we see him sink – not in crime, and not in glory, but in a sort of dim and disastrous twilight. We take up the hero from his student days; we take him from his philosophy and his fishing-line, and that obstinate pondering on unsolvable problems, which is as much a characteristic of youth as the ardent passions with which it is more generally accredited; we take him from the quiet stream which he torments, far more by the thoughts he throws upon it, than by his rod and line.

> "He is a man of singular address
> In catching river-fish,"

says a sarcastic enemy, who knew nothing of the trains of thought for which that angling was often a convenient disguise. A hint given in the drama will go far to explain what their hue and complexion must have been. The father of Philip had headed the patriotic cause of the citizens of Ghent; it had triumphed in his person; the same citizens of Ghent had murdered him on the threshold of his door. When he was a boy, the stains of his father's blood were still visible on that threshold: the widowed

mother would not suffer them to be removed, and, nursing her revenge, loved to show them to the child. There was something here to colour the thoughts of the young fisherman.

But passion and the world are now knocking at the heart of the meditative student. Love and ambition are there, and, moreover, the turbulent condition of the city of Ghent seems to forbid the continuance of this life of quietude. The passions of the world crave admittance. Shall he admit them? The great theatre of life claims its new actor. Shall he go? Shall he commit himself once and for ever to the turmoil and delusions of that scene – delusions that will not delude, but which will exercise as great a tyranny over him as if they did? Yes; he will go. As well do battle with the world without, as eternally with his own thoughts; for this is the only alternative youth presents to us. Yes, he will go; but deliberately: he will not be borne along, he will govern his own footsteps, and, come what may, will be always master of himself.

Launoy, one of Ghent's bravest patriots, has been killed. The first reflection we hear from the lips of Artevelde is called forth by this intelligence. It does not surprise him.

> "I never looked that he should live so long.
> He was a man of that unsleeping spirit,
> He seemed to live by miracle: his food
> Was glory, which was poison to his mind
> And peril to his body. He was one
> Of many thousand such that die betimes,
> Whose story is a fragment, known to few.

Then comes the man who has the luck to live,
And he's a prodigy. Compute the chances,
And deem there's ne'er a one in dangerous times
Who wins the race of glory, but than him
A thousand men more gloriously endowed
Have fallen upon the course; a thousand others
Have had their fortunes foundered by a chance,
Whilst lighter barks pushed past them; to whom add
A smaller tally, of the singular few
Who, gifted with predominating powers,
Bear yet a temperate will, and keep the peace.
The world knows nothing of its greatest men."

If ambition wears this ambiguous aspect to his mind, it is not because he is disposed to regard the love of woman too enthusiastically.

"It may be I have deemed or dreamed of such.
But what know I? We figure to ourselves
The thing we like, and then we build it up
As chance will have it, on the rock or sand:
For thought is tired of wandering o'er the world,
And home-bound fancy runs her bark ashore."

Yet Artevelde is at this time on his way to Adriana to make that declaration which the Lady Adriana is so solicitous to hear. This a lover! Yes; only one of that order who hang over and count the beatings of their own heart.

Launoy being destroyed, and the people of Ghent having lost others of their leaders, and growing discontented with the stern rule of Van Den Bosch, some new captain or ruler of the town is looked for. The eyes of men are turned to Philip Van Artevelde. He shall be captain of the Whitehoods, and come to the rescue of the falling cause; for, of late, the Earl of Flanders has been everywhere victorious. Van Den Bosch himself makes the proposal. It is evident, from hints that follow, that Artevelde had already made his choice; he saw that the time was come when, even if he desired it, there was no maintaining a peaceful neutrality. But Van Den Bosch meets with no eager spirit ready to snatch at the perilous prize held out to him. He is no dupe to the nature of the offer, nor very willing that others should fancy him to be one —

> "Not so fast.
> Your vessel, Van Den Bosch, hath felt the storm:
> She rolls dismasted in an ugly swell,
> And you would make a jury-mast of me,
> Whereon to spread the tatters of your canvass."

It is worth noticing how the passion of revenge, like the others, is admitted to its post; admitted, yet coldly looked upon. He will revenge his father. Two knights, Sir Guisebert Grutt and Simon Bette, (we wish they had better names,) were mainly instrumental in his murder. These men have been playing false, by making treacherous overtures to the Earl of Flanders; they will be in his

power. But they cannot, he reflects, render back the life they have destroyed —

> – "Life for life, vile bankrupts as they are,
> Their worthless lives for his of countless price,
> Is their whole wherewithal to pay the debt.
> *Yet retribution is a goodly thing*,
> And it were well to wring the payment from them,
> Even to the utmost drop of their heart's blood."

Still less does the patriotic harangue of Van Den Bosch find an enthusiastic response. He was already too much a statesman to be a demagogue; not to mention that his father's career had taught him a bitter estimate of popularity, and of all tumultuary enthusiasm: —

> *"Van Den Bosch.* Times are sore changed, I see. There's none in Ghent
> That answers to the name of Artevelde.
> Thy father did not carp or question thus
> When Ghent invoked his aid. The days have been
> When not a citizen drew breath in Ghent
> But freely would have died in Freedom's cause.
> *Artevelde.* With a good name thou christenest the cause.
> True, to make choice of despots is some freedom,
> The only freedom for this turbulent town,
> Rule her who may. And in my father's time
> We still were independent, if not free;

And wealth from independence, and from wealth
Enfranchisement will partially proceed.
The cause, I grant thee, Van Den Bosch, is good;
And were I linked to earth no otherwise
But that my whole heart centred in myself,
I could have tossed you this poor life to play with,
Taking no second thought. But as things are,
I will resolve the matter warily,
And send thee word betimes of my conclusion.
Van Den Bosch. Betimes it must be; for some two hours hence
I meet the Deans, and ere we separate
Our course must be determined.
Artevelde. In two hours,
If I be for you, I will send this ring
In token I have so resolved."

He had already resolved. Such a man would not have suffered himself to be hemmed in within the space of two hours to make so great a decision; but he would not rush precipitately forward; he would feel his own *will* at each step. He had already resolved; but his love to Adriana troubles him at heart: he must first make all plain and intelligible there, before he becomes captain of the Whitehoods. From this interview he goes to Adriana; and then follows a dialogue, every sentence of which, if we were looking out for admirable passages for quotation, would offer itself as a candidate. We quote only, from a drama so well known, for the purpose of illustrating the analytic view we would present of its chief hero; but the passages selected for this purpose can hardly

fail of being also amongst the most beautiful in themselves. Artevelde is alone, waiting for the appearance of Adriana —

> "There is but one thing that still harks me back.
> To bring a cloud upon the summer day
> Of one so happy and so beautiful, —
> It is a hard condition. For myself,
> I know not that the circumstance of life
> In all its changes can so far afflict me
> As makes anticipation much worth while.
> … Oh she is fair!
> As fair as Heaven to look upon! as fair
> As ever vision of the Virgin blest
> That weary pilgrim, resting by the fount
> Beneath the palm, and dreaming to the tune
> Of flowing waters, duped his soul withal.
> It was permitted in my pilgrimage
> To rest beside the fount, beneath the tree,
> Beholding there no vision, but a maid
> Whose form was light and graceful as the palm,
> Whose heart was pure and jocund as the fount,
> And spread a freshness and a verdure round."

Adriana appears, and in the course of the dialogue he addresses her thus: —

> "Be calm;
> And let me warn thee, ere thy choice be fixed,
> What fate thou may'st be wedded to with me.

Thou hast beheld me living heretofore
As one retired in staid tranquillity:
The dweller in the mountains, on whose ear
The accustomed cataract thunders unobserved;
The seaman, who sleeps sound upon the deck,
Nor hears the loud lamenting of the blast,
Nor heeds the weltering of the plangent wave, —
These have not lived more undisturbed than I:
But build not upon this; the swollen stream
May shake the cottage of the mountaineer,
And drive him forth; the seaman, roused at length,
Leaps from his slumber on the wave-washed deck:
And now the time comes fast when here, in Ghent,
He who would live exempt from injuries
Of armed men, must be himself in arms.
This time is near for all, – nearer for me:
I will not wait upon necessity,
And leave myself no choice of vantage-ground,
But rather meet the times where best I may,
And mould and fashion them as best I can.
Reflect then that I soon may be embarked
In all the hazards of these troublesome times,
And in your own free choice take or resign me.

Adri. Oh, Artevelde, my choice is free no more."

And now he is open to hear Van Den Bosch. That veteran in war and insurrection brings him news that the people are ready to elect him for their captain or ruler.

"*Artev.* Good! when they come I'll speak to them.
Van Den B.'Twere well.

Canst learn to bear thee high amongst the commons?
Canst thou be cruel? To be esteemed of them,
Thou must not set more store by lives of men
Than lives of larks in season.
Artev. Be it so.
I can do what is needful."

The time of action is at hand. We now see Van Artevelde in a suit of armour; he is reclining on a window-seat in his own house, looking out upon the street. There is treason in the town; of those who flock to the market-place, some have already deserted his cause.

"*Artev.* Not to be feared – Give me my sword! Go forth,
And see what folk be these that throng the street. [*Exit the page.*
Not to be feared is to be nothing here.
And wherefore have I taken up this office,
If I be nothing in it? There they go.
(*Shouts are heard.*)
Of them that pass my house some shout my name,
But the most part pass silently; and once
I heard the cry of 'Flanders and the Lion!'

That cry again!

Sir knights, ye drive me close upon the rocks,
And of my cargo you're the vilest bales,
So overboard with you! What, men of blood!
Can the son better auspicate his arms
Than by the slaying of who slew the father?
Some blood may flow because that it needs must,
But yours by choice – I'll slay you, and thank God.
(*Enter Van Den Bosch.*)
Van Den B. The common bell has rung! the knights are there;
Thou must come instantly.
Artev. I come, I come.
Van Den B. Now, Master Philip, if thou miss thy way
Through this affair we're lost. For Jesus' sake
Be counselled now by me; have thou in mind —
Artev. Go to, I need not counsel; I'm resolved.
Take thou thy stand beside Sir Simon Bette,
As I by Grutt; take note of all I do,
And do thyself accordingly. Come on."

They join the assembly; they take their stand each by one of the traitor knights; the debate on the proposal of the Earl proceeds; three hundred citizens are to be given up to him, and on this, and other conditions, peace is to be granted. Artevelde addresses the assembly, and then turning to these knights, he continues: —

"Your pardon, sirs, again!
(*To Grutt and Bette.*)

You are the pickers and the choosers here,
And doubtless you're all safe, ye think – ha! ha!
But we have picked and chosen, too, sir knights —
What was the law for I made yesterday —
What! is it you that would deliver up
Three hundred citizens to certain death?
Ho! Van Den Bosch! have at these traitors – ha! —
(*Stabs Grutt, who falls.*)
Van Den B. Die, treasonable dog! —
(*Stabs Bette.*)"

He can do "what is needful." It is admirable; everything that is said and done is admirable; but an involuntary suspicion at times creeps into the mind, that such a man as Philip Van Artevelde never lived, or could live. No man could move along such a line of enterprise with such a weight of reflection on all the springs of action. We see the calm statesman at the head of a tumultuary movement; and the meditative man, to whom revenge is the poorest of our passions, striking a blow from which an old warrior might shrink. Could a man be really impelled along a path of life like this by passions that are admitted, indeed, into the bosom, but watched like prisoners? The suspicion, we say, creeps involuntarily into the mind; but we will not entertain it – we will not yield to it. That the reflective and energetic characters are, in certain degrees, combined together, we all know; and who shall say within what degrees only this is possible? And why may not an ideal perfection of this kind be portrayed as well as an

ideal patriot, or an ideal monk, or an ideal warrior? We throw the suspicion aside, and continue our analysis.

There is a passage which is often quoted for its great beauty: we quote it also for its great appropriateness. Philip Van Artevelde is master of the city; he is contemplating it at night-time from the tower of St Nicholas. The reflection here put into the mouth of the anxious captain brings back to us, in the midst of war and the cares of government, the meditative man: —

> "There lies a sleeping city. God of dreams!
> What an unreal and fantastic world
> Is going on below!
> Within the sweep of yon encircling wall
> How many a large creation of the night,
> Wide wilderness and mountain, rock and sea,
> Peopled with busy transitory groups,
> Finds room to rise, and never feels the crowd!"

The famous scene, which has for its place the summit of this tower, between Artevelde and Van Den Bosch, is fresh in the recollection of every reader: we must pass it by, and the admirable and pathetic description of the famine that is raging in Ghent, and proceed to the last act of this part of the drama. Artevelde has stimulated the citizens to make one brave effort more – to sally from the walls, and meet the Earl in battle before Bruges. He has arranged in order of battle his lean and famine-stricken, but desperate little army. He knows the extreme peril

in which they stand: no food in the camp; fearful odds to be encountered; yet the only hope lying in immediate battle. He does not delude himself for a moment; he sees the danger clear, and entertains it with a certain sarcastic levity. He does not hope, but he acts as if he did. He is not a man given to hope, but he has a tempered despondency, which sits with him at the council-board, and rides with him to the field, and which he compels to do the services of hope.

"*Artev.* I would to God
The sun might not go down upon us here
Without a battle fought!
Van Den B. If so it should,
We pass a perilous night,
And wake a wasted few the morrow morn.
Van Muck. We have a supper left.
Artev. My lady's page,
If he got ne'er a better, would be wroth,
And burn in effigy my lady's steward.

Van Den B. We'll hope the best;
But if there be a knave in power unhanged,
And in his head a grain of sense undrowned,
He'll be their caution not to —
Artev. Van Den Bosch,
Talk we of battle and survey the field,
For I *will* fight."

We like this last expression. What in another man would have been a mere petulance, is in Artevelde an assumed confidence – consciously assumed, as the only tone of mind in which to pass through the present crisis. Nor can we omit to notice the following passage, which, to our apprehension, is very characteristic of our contemplative politician and warrior; it shows the sardonic vein running through his grave and serious thoughts: —

> *Art.* (*to Van Ryk.*) I tell thee, eat,
> Eat and be fresh. *I'll send a priest to shrive thee.*
> *Van Muck, thou tak'st small comfort in thy prayers,*
> *Put thou thy muzzle to yon tub of wine.*"

The battle is fought and a victory won. Justice is executed with stern and considerate resolve on the villains of the piece, and we leave Van Artevelde triumphant in his great contest, and happy in the love of Adriana.

The subordinate characters who are introduced into this first part of the drama, we have no space to examine minutely. The canvass is well filled, though the chief figure stands forward with due prominence. Adriana is all that an amiable and loving woman should be. The lighter-hearted Clara is intended as a sort of contrast and relief. Her levity and wit are not always graceful; they are not so in the early scene where she jests with the page: afterwards, when in presence of her lover, she has a fitter and more genial subject for her playful wit, and succeeds much better.

In the course of the drama, when the famine is raging in Ghent, she appears as the true sister of Philip Van Artevelde. At her first introduction she is somewhat too hoydenish for the mistress of the noble D'Arlon. D'Arlon is all that a knight should be, and Gilbert Matthew is a consummate villain.

Between the first and second parts is a poem in rhyme, called "The Lay of Elena." This introduces us to the lady who is to be the heroine of the second part of the drama. All the information it gives, might, we think, have been better conveyed in a few lines of blank verse, added to that vindication of herself which Elena pours forth in the first act, when Sir Fleureant of Heurlée comes to reclaim her on the part of the Duke of Bourbon. This poem is no favourite of ours; but the worst compliment we would pay it implies, in one point of view, a certain fitness and propriety – we were glad to return to the blank verse of our author, in which we find both more music and more pathos than in these rhymes.

If we are tempted to suspect, whilst reading the first part of this drama, that the character of Philip Van Artevelde combines in a quite ideal perfection the man of thought with the man of action, we, at all events, cannot accuse the author, in this second part, of representing an ideal or superhuman happiness as the result of this perfect combination. It is a very truthful sad-coloured destiny that he portrays. The gloomy passionate sunset of life has been a favourite subject with poets; but what other author has chosen the clouded afternoon of life, the cheerless twilight, and the sun setting behind cold and dark clouds? It was

a bold attempt. It has been successfully achieved. But no amount of talent legitimately expended on it could make this second part as attractive as the first. When the heroic man has accomplished his heroic action, life assumes to him, more than to any other, a most ordinary aspect: his later years bring dwarfish hopes and projects, or none at all; they bring desires no longer "gay," and welcomed only for such poor life as they may have in them. Philip Van Artevelde is now the Regent of Flanders, and, like other regents, has to hold his own: Adriana he has lost; her place is supplied by one still fair but faded, and who, though she deserved a better fate, must still be described as lately the mistress of the Duke of Bourbon. It is the hero still, but he has descended into the commonplace of courts and politics.

That it is the same Philip Van Artevelde we are in company with, the manner in which he enters into this new love will abundantly testify. He has been describing to Elena his former wife, Adriana. The description is very beautiful and touching. He then proceeds with his wooing thus: —

> "*Artev.* … Well, well – she's gone,
> And I have tamed my sorrow. Pain and grief
> Are transitory things no less than joy,
> And though they leave us not the men we were,
> Yet they do leave us. You behold me here
> A man bereaved, with something of a blight
> Upon the early blossoms of his life
> And its first verdure, having not the less

A living root, drawing from the earth
Its vital juices, from the air its powers:
And surely as man's health and strength are whole,
His appetites regerminate, his heart
Reopens, and his objects and desires
Shoot up renewed. What blank I found before me,
From what is said you partly may surmise;
How I have hoped to fill it, may I tell?
Elena. I fear, my lord, that cannot be.
Artev. Indeed!
Then am I doubly hopeless…
Elena. I said I feared another could not fill
The place of her you lost, being so fair
And perfect as you give her out."

In fine, Elena is conquered, or rather led to confess a conquest already achieved.

"*Elena.* I cannot – no —
I cannot give you what you've had so long;
Nor need I tell you what you know so well.
I must be gone.
Artev. Nay, sweetest, why these tears?
Elena. No, let me go – I cannot tell – no – no —
I want to be alone —
Oh! Artevelde, for God's love let me go! [*Exit.*
Artev. (*after a pause.*) The night is far advanced upon the morrow,
– *Yes, I have wasted half a summer's night.*

Was it well spent? Successfully it was.
How little flattering is a woman's love!
Worth to the heart, come how it may, a world;
Worth to men's measures of their own deserts,
If weighed in wisdom's balance, merely nothing.
The few hours left are precious – who is there?
Ho! Nieuverkerchen! – when we think upon it,
How little flattering is a woman's love!
Given commonly to whosoe'er is nearest
And propped with most advantage; outward grace
Nor inward light is needful; day by day
Men wanting both are mated with the best
And loftiest of God's feminine creation.
Ho! Nieuverkerchen! – what, then, do we sleep?
Are none of you awake? – and as for me,
The world says Philip is a famous man —
What is there woman will not love, so taught?
Ho! Ellert! by your leave though, you must wake.
(*Enter an officer.*)
Have me a gallows built upon the mount,
And let Van Kortz be hung at break of day."

It is worth noticing, as a characteristic trait, that Philip Van Artevelde speaks more like the patriot, harangues more on the cause of freedom, now that he is Regent of Flanders, opposed to the feudal nobility, and to the monarchy of France, and soliciting aid from England, than when he headed the people of Ghent, strong only in their own love of independence. "Bear in mind,"

he says, answering the herald who brings a hostile message from France and Burgundy —

"Bear in mind
Against what rule my father and myself
Have been insurgent: whom did we supplant?
There was a time, so ancient records tell,
There were communities, scarce known by name
In these degenerate days, but once far famed,
Where liberty and justice, hand in hand,
Ordered the common weal; where great men grew
Up to their natural eminence, and none,
Saving the wise, just, eloquent, were great.
… But now, I ask,
Where is there on God's earth that polity
Which it is not, by consequence converse,
A treason against nature to uphold?
Whom may we now call free? whom great? whom wise?
Whom innocent? – the free are only they
Whom power makes free to execute all ills
Their hearts imagine; they alone are great
Whose passions nurse them from their cradles up
In luxury and lewdness, – whom to see
Is to despise, whose aspects put to scorn
Their station's eminence…
… What then remains
But in the cause of nature to stand forth,
And turn this frame of things the right side up?
For this the hour is come, the sword is drawn,

And tell your masters vainly they resist."

We regret to be compelled to garble in our extract so fine a passage of writing. Meanwhile our patriot Regent sends Father John to England to solicit aid – most assuredly not to overthrow feudalism, but to support the Regent against France. His ambition is dragging, willingly or unwillingly, in the old rut of politics. When Father John returns from this embassy, he is scandalised at the union formed between Artevelde and Elena. Here, too, is another sad descent. Our hero has to hear rebuke, and, with a half-confession, submit to be told by the good friar of his "sins." He answers bravely, yet with a consciousness that he stands not where he did, and cannot challenge the same respect from the friar that he could formerly have done.

"*Artev.* You, Father John,
I blame not, nor myself will justify;
But call my weakness what you will, the time
Is past for reparation. Now to cast off
The partner of my sin were further sin;
'Twere with her first to sin, and then against her.
And for the army, if their trust in me
Be sliding, let it go: I know my course;
And be it armies, cities, people, priests,
That quarrel with my love – wise men or fools,
Friends, foes, or factions – they may swear their oaths,
And make their murmur – rave and fret and fear,
Suspect, admonish – they but waste their rage,

Their wits, their words, their counsel: here I stand,
Upon the deep foundations of my faith
To this fair outcast plighted; and the storm
That princes from their palaces shake out,
Though it should turn and head me, should not strain
The seeming silken texture of this tie."

And now disaster follows disaster; town after town manifests symptoms of treachery to his cause. His temper no longer retains its wonted calmness, and the quick glance and rapid government of affairs seems about to desert him. Note this little trait: —

"*Artev.* Whither away, Vauclaire?
Vauclaire. You'll wish, my lord, to have the scouts, and others
That are informed, before you.
Artev. 'Twere well."

It is something new that another should anticipate the necessary orders to be given. The decisive battle approaches, and is fought. This time it is lost. Our hero does not even fall in the field; an assassin stabs him in the back. The career of Artevelde ends thus; and that public cause with which his life was connected has at the same time an inglorious termination: "the wheel has come full circle."

The catastrophe is brought about by Sir Fleureant of Heurlée. This man's character undergoes, in the course of the drama, a complete transformation. We do not say that the change is

unnatural, or that it is not accounted for; but the circumstances which bring it about are only vaguely and incidentally narrated, so that the reader is not prepared for this change. A gay, thoughtless, reckless young, knight, who rather gains upon us at his first introduction, is converted into a dark, revengeful assassin. It would, we think, have improved the effect of the *plot*, if we had been able to trace out more distinctly the workings of the mind of one who was destined to take so prominent a part in the drama.

The character of *Lestovet* is admirably sustained, and is manifestly a favourite with the author. But we must now break away from *Philip Van Artevelde*, to notice the other dramas of Mr Taylor. *Edwin the Fair* next claims our attention. Here also we shall make no quotations merely for the sake of their beauty; and we shall limit ourselves to an analysis of the principal character, Dunstan, on which, perhaps, a word or two of explanation may not be superfluous.

Let us suppose a dramatic writer sitting down before such a character as this of Dunstan, and contemplating the various aspects it assumes, with the view of selecting one for the subject of his portraiture. In the first place, he is aware that, although, as a historical student, he may, and perhaps must, continue to doubt as to the real character of this man – how much is to be given to pride, to folly, to fanaticism, to genuine piety, or to the love of power – yet that, the moment he assumes the office of dramatic poet, he must throw all doubt entirely aside. The student of

history may hesitate to the last; the poet is presumed to have from the beginning the clearest insight into the recesses of the mind, and the most unquestionable authority for all that he asserts. A sort of mimic omniscience is ascribed to the poet. Has he not been gifted, from of old, with an *inspiration*, by means of which he sees the whole character and every thought of his hero, and depicts and reveals them to the world? To him doubt would be fatal. If he carries into his drama the spirit of historical criticism, he will raise the same spirit in his reader, and all faith in the imaginary creation he offers them is gone for ever. Manifest an error as this may be, we think we could mention some instances, both in the drama and the novel, in which it has been committed.

But such a character as Dunstan's is left uncertain in the light of history, and our dramatist has to choose between uncertainties. He will be guided in his selection partly by what he esteems the preponderating weight of evidence, and partly, and perhaps still more, by the superior fitness of any one phase of the character for the purpose he has in view, or the development of his own peculiar powers. In this case, three interpretations present themselves. The first, which has little historical or moral probability, and offers little attraction to the artist, is, that Dunstan was a hypocrite, seeking by show of piety to compass some ambitious end, or win the applause of the vulgar. Undoubted hypocrites history assuredly presents us with – as where the ecclesiastical magnate degenerates into the merely secular prince. There have been luxurious and criminal

popes and cardinals, intriguing bishops and lordly abbots, whom the most charitable of men, and the most pious of Catholics, must pronounce to have been utterly insincere in their professions of piety. But a hypocrite who starves and scourges himself – who digs a damp hole in the earth, and lives in it – seems to us a mere creature of the imagination. Such men, at all events, either begin or end with fanaticism. The second and more usual interpretation is, that Dunstan was a veritable enthusiast, and a genuine churchman after the order of Hildebrand, capable, perhaps, of practising deceit or cruelty for his great purpose, but entirely devoted to that purpose – one of those men who sincerely believe that the salvation of the world and the predominance of their order are inseparably combined. There would be no error in supposing a certain mixture of pride and ambition. Nor, in following this interpretation, would there be any great violation of probability in attributing to Dunstan, though he lived in so rude an age, all those arguments by which the philosopher-priest is accustomed to uphold the domination of his order. The thinking men of every age more nearly resemble each other in these great lines of thought and argument, than is generally supposed. The third interpretation is that which the historical student would probably favour. It is that Dunstan was, in truth, *partially insane*– a man of fervent zeal, and of great natural powers, but of diseased mind. The very ability and knowledge which he possessed, combined with the strange forms which his asceticism took, lead to this supposition. Such men, we

know, exist, and sometimes pass through a long career before they are accurately understood. Exhibiting itself in the form of fanaticism, and in a most ignorant and superstitious age, a partial insanity might easily escape detection, or even add to the reputation of the saint.

This last is the rendering of the character which Mr Taylor has selected. It is evidently the most difficult to treat. Perhaps the difficulty and novelty of the task it presented, as well as its greater fidelity to history, induced him to accept this interpretation. That second and more popular one which we have mentioned would appear, to a mind like Mr Taylor's, too facile and too trite. Any high-churchman of almost any age – any bishop, if you inflate the lawn sleeves, or even any young curate, whose mind dwells too intensely on the *power of the keys*– would present the rudiments of the character. However that may be, Mr Taylor undertook the bold and difficult task of depicting the strong, shrewd, fervent mind, saint and politician both, but acting with the wild and irregular force of insanity. How, we may ask ourselves, would such a mind display itself? Not, we way be sure, in a tissue of weakness or of wildness. We should often see the ingenious reasoner, more cunning than wise, the subtle politician, or even the deep moraliser upon human life; but whenever the fatal chords were touched – the priestly power, the priestly mission, the intercourse with the world of spirits – there we should see symptoms of insanity and delusion. Such is the character which Mr Taylor has portrayed.

Earl Leolf, calm and intelligent, and the perfect *gentleman* (those who remember the play will feel the truth of this last expression,) gives us at the very commencement the necessary explanation —

> "*Leolf.* How found you the mid-counties?
> *Athulf.* Oh! monk-ridden;
> Raving of Dunstan.
> *Leolf.* 'Tis a raving time:
> Mad monks, mad peasants; *Dunstan is not sane,*
> *And madness that doth least declare itself*
> *Endangers most, and ever most infects*
> *The unsound many.* See where stands the man,
> And where this people: thus compute the peril
> To one and all. *When force and cunning meet*
> *Upon the confines of one cloudy mind*,
> When ignorance and knowledge halve the mass,
> When night and day stand at an equinox,
> Then storms are rife."

No justice, it is plain, can be done to Mr Taylor's drama, unless the intimation here given us be kept in view. Yet we suspect, from the remarks sometimes made upon this play, that it has been overlooked, or not sufficiently attended to. Passages have been censured as crude or extravagant which, in themselves, could be no otherwise, since they were intended to portray this half-latent and half-revealed insanity. The arrogance of Dunstan, and his communings with the spiritual world, not often have the

air of sublimity, for they arise from the disorder and hallucination of his mind. When he tells the Queen Mother not to sit in his presence, as well as when he boasts of his intercourse with angels and demons, we see the workings of a perturbed spirit: —

"*Queen Mother.* Father, I am faint,
For a strange terror seized me by the way.
I pray you let me sit.
Dunstan. I say, forbear!
Thou art in a Presence that thou wot'st not of,
Wherein no mortal may presume to sit.
If stand thou canst not, kneel.
(*She falls on her knees.*)
Queen Mother. Oh, merciful Heaven'
Oh, sinner that I am!
Dunstan. Dismiss thy fears;
Thine errand is acceptable to Him
Who rules the hour, and thou art safer here
Than in thy palace. Quake not, but be calm,
And tell me of the wretched king, thy son.
This black, incestuous, unnatural love
Of his blood-relative – yea, worse, a seed
That ever was at enmity with God —
His cousin of the house of Antichrist!
It is as I surmised?
Queen Mother. Alas! lost boy!
Dunstan. Yes, lost for time and for eternity,
If he should wed her. But that shall not be.
Something more lofty than a boy's wild love

Governs the course of kingdoms. From beneath
This arching umbrage step aside; look up;
The alphabet of Heaven is o'er thy head,
The starry literal multitude. *To few,*
And not in mercy, is it given to read
The mixed celestial cipher."

How skilfully the last passage awakes in the reader a feeling of sympathy with Dunstan! When he has given his instructions to the Queen Mother, the scene closes thus: —

"*Queen Mother.* Oh, man of God!
Command me always.
Dunstan. Hist! I hear a spirit!
Another – and a third. They're trooping up.
Queen Mother. St Magnus shield us!
Dunstan. Thou art safe; but go;
The wood will soon be populous with spirits.
The path thou cam'st retread. Who laughs in the air?"

Dunstan believes all along that he is marked out from the ordinary roll of men – that he has a peculiar intercourse with, and a peculiar mission from, Heaven; but he nevertheless practises on the credulity of others. This mixture of superstition and cunning does not need insanity to explain, but it is seen here in very appropriate company. He says to Grumo —

"Go, get thee to the hollow of yon tree,

And bellow there as is thy wont.
Grumo. How long?
Dunstan. Till thy lungs crack. Get hence.
[*Exit Grumo.*
And if thou bellowest otherwise than Satan,
It is not for the lack of Satan's sway
'Stablished within thee.
(*Strange howls are heard from the tree.*")

With the same crafty spirit, and by a trick as gross, he imposes on the Synod, contriving that a voice shall appear to issue from the crucifix. These frauds, however, would have availed nothing of themselves; it is the spirit of fanaticism bearing down all opposition by which he works his way. This spirit sustains him in his solitude —

"I hear your call!
A radiance and a resonance from Heaven
Surrounds me, and my soul is breaking forth
In strength, as did the new-created Sun
When Earth beheld it first on the fourth day.
God spake not then more plainly to that orb
Than to my spirit now."

It sustains him in his solitude, and mark how triumphantly it carries him through in the hour of action. Odo the archbishop, Ricola the king's chaplain, as well as king and courtiers, all give way before this inexorable, unreasoning fanaticism, a fanaticism

which is as complete a stranger to fear as it is to reason —

"*Dunstan* (*to Elgiva.*) Fly hence,
Pale prostitute! Avaunt, rebellious fiend,
Which speakest through her.
Elgiva. I am thy sovereign mistress and thy queen.
Dunstan. … Who art thou?
I see thee, and I know thee – yea, I smell thee!
Again, 'tis Satan meets me front to front;
Again I triumph! Where, and by what rite,
And by what miscreant minister of God,
And rotten member, was this mockery,
That was no marriage, made to seem a marriage?
Ricola. Lord Abbot, by no —
Dunstan. What then, was it thou?
The Church doth cut thee off and pluck thee out!
A Synod shall be summoned! *Chains for both!*
Chains for that harlot, and for this dog-priest!
Oh wall of Jezreel!"

And forthwith Elgiva, in spite of the king's resistance, is carried out a captive. The king, too, is imprisoned in the Tower, and here ensues a scene which brings out another aspect of the mind of Dunstan. It was the object of the crafty priest to induce Edwin to resign the crown; he had, therefore, made his imprisonment as painful as possible. He now visits him in the Tower, and in this interview we see, underneath the mad zealot and the subtle politician, something of the genuine *man*. Dunstan

had not been always, and only, the priest; he understood the human life he trampled on —

"*Dunstan.* What makes you weak? Do you not like your food?
Or have you not enough?
Edwin. Enough is brought;
But he that brings it drops what seems to say
That it is mixed with poison – some slow drug;
So that I scarce dare eat, and hunger always.
Dunstan. Your food is poisoned by your own suspicions.
'Tis your own fault. —
But thus it is with kings; suspicions haunt,
And dangers press around them all their days;
Ambition galls them, luxury corrupts,
And wars and treasons are their talk at table.
Edwin. This homily you should read to prosperous kings;
It is not needed for a king like me.
Dunstan. Who shall read homilies to a prosperous king!
… To thy credulous ears
The world, or what is to a king the world,
The triflers of thy court, have imaged me
As cruel, and insensible to joy,
Austere, and ignorant of all delights
That arts can minister. Far from the truth
They wander who say thus. I but denounce
Loves on a throne, and pleasures out of place.
I am not old; not twenty years have fled
Since I was young as thou; and in my youth
I was not by those pleasures unapproached

Which youth converses with.
Edwin. No! wast thou not?
How came they in thy sight?
Dunstan. When Satan first
Attempted me, 'twas in a woman's shape;
Such shape as may have erst misled mankind,
When Greece or Rome upreared with Pagan rites
Temples to Venus…
… 'Twas Satan sang,
Because 'twas sung to me, whom God had called
To other pastime and severer joys.
But were it not for this, God's strict behest
Enjoined upon me – had I not been vowed
To holiest service rigorously required,
I should have owned it for an angel's voice,
Nor ever could an earthly crown, or toys
And childishness of vain ambition, gauds
And tinsels of the world, have lured my heart
Into the tangle of those mortal cares
That gather round a throne. What call is thine
From God or man, what voice within bids thee
Such pleasures to forego, such cares confront?

… Unless thou by an instant act
Renounce the crown, Elgiva shall not live.
The deed is ready, to which thy name affixed
Discharges from restraint both her and thee.
Say wilt thou sign?
Edwin. I will not.

Dunstan. Be advised.
What hast thou to surrender? I look round;
This chamber is thy palace court, and realm.
I do not see the crown – where is it hidden?
Is that thy throne? – why, 'tis a base joint-stool;
Or this thy sceptre? – 'tis an ashen stick
Notched with the days of thy captivity.
Such royalties to abdicate, methinks,
Should hardly hold thee long. Nay, I myself,
That love not ladies greatly, would give these
To ransom whom I loved."

These feelings of humanity, in part indeed simulated, do not long keep at bay the cruelty and insane rage or the priest. Edwin persists in his refusal; Dunstan leaves him for a moment, but shortly after returns holding the deed in his hand, and followed by his tool Grumo.

"*Dunstan.* Thy signature to this.
Edwin. I will not sign.
Dunstan. Thou wilt not! wilt thou that thy mistress die?
Edwin. Insulting abbot! she is not my mistress;
She is my wife, my queen.
Dunstan. Predestinate pair!
He knoweth who is the Searcher of our hearts,
That I was ever backward to take life,
Albeit at His command. Still have I striven
To put aside that service, seeking still

All ways and shifts that wit of man could scheme,
To spare the cutting off your wretched souls
In unrepented sin. But tendering here
Terms of redemption, it is thou, not I,
The sentence that deliverest.
Edwin. Our lives
Are in God's hands.
Dunstan. Sot, liar, miscreant, No!
God puts them into mine! and may my soul
In tortures howl away eternity,
If ever again it yield to that false fear
That turned me from the shedding of thy blood!
Thy blood, rash traitor to thy God, thy blood!
Thou delicate Agag, I will spill thy blood!"

We believe we have done justice to all the aspects in which the character of Dunstan is here represented to us, but it would require a much larger space than we have at command to do justice to the whole drama of *Edwin the Fair*. The canvass is crowded with figures, almost every one of which has been a careful study, and will repay the study of a critical reader; and if the passages of eloquent writing are not so numerous as in his previous work, there is no deficiency of them, and many are the pungent, if not witty sayings, that might be extracted. The chief fault which seems to us to pervade this drama, is, indeed, that there is too much apparent study – that too much is seen of the artist. Speaking generally of Mr Taylor, and regarding him as a dramatic poet, we could desire more life and passion, more

abandonment of himself to the characters he is portraying. But we feel this more particularly in *Edwin the Fair*. We seem to see the artist sorting and putting together again the elements of human nature. His Wulfstan, the ever absent sage, his tricksy Emma, and her very silly lover, Ernway, are dramatic creations which may probably be defended point by point; but, for all that, they do not look like real men and women. As to his monks, the satellites of Dunstan, it may be said that they could not have been correctly drawn if they had borne the appearance of being real men. We do not like them notwithstanding.

In the edition which lies before us, bound up with *Edwin the Fair* is the republication of an early drama, *Isaac Comnenus*. It excited, we are told in the preface, little attention in its first appearance. We ourselves never saw it till very lately. Though inferior to his subsequent productions, it is not without considerable merit, but it will probably gather its chief interest as the forerunner of *Philip Van Artevelde*, and from the place it will occupy in the history of the author's mind. A first performance, which was allowed to pass unnoticed by the public, might be expected to be altogether different in kind from its fortunate successors. The author, in his advance out of obscurity into the full light of success, might be supposed to have thrown aside his first habits of thought and expression. It is not so here. We have much the same style, and there is the same combination of shrewd observation with a philosophic melancholy, the same gravity, and the same sarcasm. It is curious to notice how plainly

there is the germ of *Philip Van Artevelde* in *Isaac Comnenus*. The hero of Ghent is far more sagacious, more serious, and more tender; but he looks on life with a lingering irony, and a calm cynicism: to him it is a sad and disenchanted vision. In *Isaac Comnenus* the same elements are combined in a somewhat different proportion: there is more of the irony and a more bitter cynicism; less of the grave tenderness and the practical sagacity. Artevelde is Isaac Comnenus living over life again – the same man, but with the advantage of a life's experience. Indeed Artevelde, if we may venture to jest with so grave a personage, has something of the air of one who had been in the world before, who was not walking along its paths for the first time: he treads with so sure a footstep, and seems to have no questions to ask, and nothing to learn of experience.

Happily it has not been necessary hitherto to say a word about the *plot* of Mr Taylor's dramas. This of *Isaac Comnenus*, being less known, may require a word of preliminary introduction. The scene is laid at Constantinople, at the close of the eleventh century; Nicephorus is the reigning emperor. We may call to mind that the government of the Byzantine monarchy, for a long time, maintained this honourable peculiarity, that, though in form a despotism, the emperor was expected to administer the law as it had descended to it from the genius of Rome. Dynasties changed, but the government remained substantially the same. It was an Oriental despotism with a European administration. Whilst, therefore, we have in the play before us a prince

dethroned, and a revolution accomplished, we hear nothing of liberty and oppression, the cause of freedom, and the usual topics of patriotic conspiracy. The brothers Isaac and Alexius Comnenus are simply too powerful to be trusted as subjects; an attempt has been already made to poison the elder brother Isaac, the hero of the drama. He finds himself in a manner constrained to push forward to the throne, as his only place of safety. This ambitious course is thrust upon him. Meanwhile he enters on it with no soft-heartedness. He takes up his part, and goes bravely through with it; bravely, but coldly – with a sneer ever on his lip. With the church, too, he has contrived to make himself extremely unpopular, and the Patriarch is still more rancorously opposed to him than the Emperor.

Before we become acquainted with him, he has loved and lost by death his gentle *Irene*. This renders the game of ambition still more contemptible in his eyes. It renders him cold also to the love of a certain fair cousin, Anna Comnena. Love, or ambition, approaches him also in the person of Theodora, the daughter of the emperor. She is willing to desert her father's cause, and ally herself and all her hopes to Isaac Comnenus. Comnenus declines her love. The rejected Theodora brings about the catastrophe of the piece. The Emperor Nicephorus is deposed; Isaac is conqueror in the strife, but he gives over the crown he has won to his brother Alexius. Then does Theodora present herself disguised as some humble petitioner to Isaac Comnenus. Armed with a dagger, she forces her way into an inner chamber where

he is; a groan is heard, and the following stage direction closes the play —

> "All rush into the inner chamber, whilst Theodora, passing out from it, crosses the stage, holding in her hand a dagger covered with blood. The curtain falls."

This scanty outline will be sufficient to make the following characteristic quotations intelligible to those who may not have read the play. Eudocia, his sister, thus describes Comnenus: —

> – "He
> Is nothing new to dangers nor to life —
> His thirty years on him have nigh told double,
> Being doubly loaden with the unlightsome stuff
> That life is made of. I have often thought
> How nature cheats this world in keeping count:
> There's some men pass for old men who ne'er lived —
> These monks, to wit: they count the time, not spend it;
> They reckon moments by the tick of beads,
> And ring the hours with psalmody: clocks, clocks;
> If one of these had gone a century,
> I would not say he'd lived. My brother's age
> Has spanned the matter of too many lives;
> He's full of years though young."

Comnenus, we have said, is on ill terms with the church. Speaking of the sanctuary he says: —

> "I have a safer refuge. Mother church

Hath no such holy precinct that my blood
Would not redeem all sin and sacrilege
Of slaughter therewithin. But there's a spot
Within the circle my good sword describes,
Which by God's grace is sanctified for me."

On quitting his cousin Anna, she says: —

"Go, and good angels guard thee is my prayer.
Comnenus.– Good soldiers, Anna. In the arm of flesh
Are we to trust. The Mother of the Gods,
Prolific Mother, holiest Mother church,
Hath banded heaven upon the side opposed.
No matter, when such supplicants as thou
Pray for us, other angels need we none."

It is plain that we have no dutiful son of the Church here; and that her hostility, in this instance, is not altogether without cause. We find that his scepticism has gone farther than to dispute the miraculous virtues of the holy image of St Basil, the eye of which he is reputed to have knocked out with his lance: —

"Just as you came
I moralised the matter of that change
Which theologians call – how aptly, say —
The quitting of a tenement."

And his moralising is overcast with the shadow of doubt. The

addresses, for such they are, of Theodora, the daughter of the emperor, he receives and declines with the greatest calmness, though they are of that order which it is manifestly as dangerous to reject as to accept.

> "*Germanus.* My noble lord, the Cæsarissa waits
> With infinite impatience to behold you:
> She bids me say so. Ah! most noble count!
> A fortunate man – the sunshine is upon you —
> *Comnenus.* Ay, sir, and wonderfully warm it makes me.
> Tell her I'm coming, sir, with speed."

With speed, however, he does not go, nor makes a better excuse for his delay than that he was "sleeping out the noontide." In the first interview he escapes from her confidence, and when subsequently she will not be misunderstood, he says —

> "Nor now, nor ever,
> Will I make bargains for a lady's love."

In a dialogue with his brother Alexius, his temper and way of thinking, and the circumstance which has mainly produced them, are more fully developed. We make a few extracts without attempting very closely to connect them. Alexius has been remarking the change in Comnenus since they last met.

> "*Comnenus.* Change is youth's wonder:
> Such transmutations have I seen on man

That fortune seemed a slow and stedfast power
Compared with nature.
Alexius. There is nought thou'st seen
More altered than art thou.
I speak not of thy change in outward favour,
But thou art changed in heart.
Comnenus. Ay, hearts change too:
Mine has grown sprightly, has it not, and hard?
I ride it now with spurs; else, else, Alexius —
Well is it said the best of life is childhood.
Life is a banquet where the best's first served,
And when the guest is cloyed comes oil and garlick.
Alexius. Hast thou forgotten how it was thy wont
To muse the hours away along this shore —
These very rippled sands?
Comnenus. The sands are here,
But not the foot-prints. Wouldst thou trace them now?
A thousand tides and storms have dashed them out.

… I have no care for beauty.
Seest thou yon rainbow based and glassed on ocean?
I look on that as on a lovely thing,
But not a thing of promise."

Comnenus has wandered with his brother unawares to a spot which of all others on earth was the most dear or the most painful to him – the spot where his Irene had been buried. He recognises it whilst he is in the full tide of his cynicism: —

"*Alexius.* What is this carved upon the rock?
Comnenus. I know not:
But Time has ta'en it for a lover's scrawl;
He's razed it, razed it.
Alexius. No, not quite; look here.
I take it for a lover's.
Comnenus. What! there's some talk
Of balmy breath, and hearts pierced through and through
With eyes' miraculous brightness – vows ne'er broken,
Until the church had sealed them – charms loved madly,
Until it be a sin to love them not —
And kisses ever sweet, till they be innocent —
But that your lover's not put down?
Alexius. No, none of it.
There are but two words.
Comnenus. That's succinct; what are they?
Alexius. 'Alas, Irene!' Why thy looks are now —

Comnenus parries the question of his brother, contrives to dismiss him, and remains alone upon the spot.

"This is the very earth that covers her,
And lo! we trample it like common clay!
… When I last stood here
Disguised, to see a lowly girl laid down
Into her early grave, there was such light
As now doth show it, but a bleaker air,
Seeing it was December. 'Tis most strange;
I can remember now each circumstance

Which then I scarce was conscious of; *like words*
That leave upon the still susceptive sense
A message undelivered till the mind
Awakes to apprehensiveness and takes it.
'Twas o'er – the muttered unattended rite,
And the few friends she had beside myself
Had risen and gone; I had not knelt, but stood
With a dull gaze of stupor as the mould
Was shovelled over, and the broken sods
Fitted together. Then some idle boys,
Who had assisted at the covering in,
Ran off in sport, trailing the shovels with them,
Rattling upon the gravel; and the sexton
Flattened the last sods down, and knocked his spade
Against a neighbouring tombstone to shake off
The clinging soil, – with a contented air,
Even as a ditcher who has done his work.
… Oh Christ!
How that which was the life's life of our being
Can pass away, and we recall it thus!"

Whilst reading this play of *Isaac Comnenus* we seemed to perceive a certain *Byronian* vein, which came upon us rather unexpectedly. Not that there is any very close resemblance between Comnenus and the heroes of Lord Byron; but there is a desperate wilfulness, a tone of scepticism, and a caustic view of human life, which occasionally recall them to mind. We turned to the preface to *Philip Van Artevelde*, where there is a criticism

upon the poetry of Byron, not unjust in the faults it detects, but cold and severe, as it seems to us, in the praise that it awards; and we found there an intimation which confirmed our suspicion that *Isaac Comnenus* had been written whilst still partially under the influence of that poetry – written in what we may describe as a transition state. He says there of Lord Byron's poetry, "It will always produce a powerful impression upon very young readers, and I scarcely think that it can have been more admired by any than myself, when I was included in that category." And have we not here some explanation of the severity and coldness of that criticism itself? Did not the maturer intellect a little resent in that critical judgment the hallucinations of the youth?

Perhaps we are hardly correct in calling the temper and spirit we have here alluded to *Byronian*; they are common to all ages and to many minds, though signally developed by that poet, and in our own epoch. Probably the future historian of this period of our literature will attribute much of this peculiar exhibition of bitterness and despondency to the sanguine hopes first excited and then disappointed by the French Revolution. He will probably say of certain regions of our literature, that the whole bears manifest traces of volcanic origin. Pointing to some noble eminence, which seems to have been eternally calm, he will conjecture that it owed its elevation to the same force which raised the neighbouring Ætna. Applying the not very happy language of geology, he may describe it as "a crater of elevation;" which, being interpreted, means no crater at all, but an elevation

produced by the like volcanic agency: the crater itself is higher up in the same mountain range.

There still remains one other small volume of Mr Taylor's poetry, which we must not pass over entirely without mentioning. *The Eve of the Conquest, and other Poems*. The chief piece here is of the nature of a dramatic scene. Harold, the night before the battle of Hastings, converses with his daughter, unfolds some passages of his past life, and vindicates himself in his quarrel with that William the Norman who, on the morrow, was to add the title of Conqueror to his name. But as it will be more agreeable to vary the nature of our quotations, we shall make the few extracts we have space for from the lyric poems which follow.

The "Lago Varese" will be, we suspect, the favourite with most readers. The image of the Italian girl is almost as distinctly reflected in the verse as it would have been in her own native lake.

> "And sauntering up a circling cove,
> I found upon the strand
> A shallop, and a girl who strove
> To drag it to dry land.
> I stood to see – the girl looked round – her face
> Had all her country's clear and definite grace.
>
> She rested with the air of rest
> So seldom seen, of those
> Whose toil remitted gives a zest,

Not languor, to repose.
Her form was poised, yet buoyant, firm, though free,
And liberal of her bright black eyes was she.

The sunshine of the Southern face,
At home we have it not;
And if they be a reckless race,
These Southerns, yet a lot
More favoured, on the chequered earth is theirs;
They have life's sorrows, but escape its cares.

There is a smile which wit extorts
From grave and learned men,
In whose austere and servile sports
The plaything is a pen;
And there are smiles by shallow worldlings worn,
To grace a lie or laugh a truth to scorn:

And there are smiles with less alloy
Of those who, for the sake
Of some they loved, would kindle joy
Which they cannot partake;
But hers was of the kind which simply say,
They came from hearts ungovernably gay."

The "Lago Lugano" is a companion picture, written "sixteen summers" after, and on a second visit to Italy. One thing we notice, that in this second poem almost all that is beautiful is brought from the social or political reflections of the writer: it

is not the outward scene that lies reflected in the verse. He is thinking more of England than of Italy.

> "Sore pains
> They take to set Ambition free, and bind
> The heart of man in chains."

And the best stanza in the poem is that which is directly devoted to his own country: —

> "Oh, England! 'Merry England,' styled of yore!
> Where is thy mirth? Thy jocund laughter, where?
> The sweat of labour on the brow of care
> Make a mute answer – driven from every door!
> The May-pole cheers the village green no more,
> Nor harvest-home, nor Christmas mummers rare.
> The tired mechanic at his lecture sighs;
> And of the learned, which, with all his lore,
> Has leisure to be wise?"

With some verses from a poem called "St Helen's-Auckland" we close our extracts. The author revisits the home of his boyhood: —

> "How much is changed of what I see,
> How much more changed am I,
> And yet how much is left – to me
> *How is the distant nigh!*

The walks are overgrown and wild,
The terrace flags are green —
But I am once again a child,
I am what I have been.

The sounds that round about me rise
Are what none other hears;
I see what meets no other eyes,
Though mine are dim with tears.

In every change of man's estate
Are lights and guides allowed;
The fiery pillar will not wait,
But, parting, sends the cloud.

Nor mourn I the less manly part
Of life to leave behind;
My loss is but the lighter heart,
My gain the graver mind."

Poetry is no longer the most popular form of literature amongst us, and the drama is understood to be the least popular form of poetry. If this be the case, Mr Taylor has the additional merit of having won his way to celebrity under singular disadvantages. But, in truth, such poetry as Mr Taylor's could never appeal to the multitude. Literature of any kind which requires of the reader himself *to think in order to enjoy*, can never

be popular. It is impossible to deny that the dramas we have been reviewing demand an effort, in the first instance, on the part of the reader: he must sit down to them with something of the spirit of the student. But, having done this, he will find himself amply repaid. As he advances in the work, he will read with increased pleasure; he will read it the second time with greater delight than the first; and if he were to live twenty years, and were to read such a drama as *Philip Van Artevelde* every year of his life, he would find in it some fresh source of interest to the last.

As we have not contented ourselves with selecting beautiful passages of writing from Mr Taylor's dramas, but have attempted such an analysis of the three principal characters they portray as may send the reader to their reperusal with additional zest, so neither have we paused to dispute the propriety of particular parts, or to notice blemishes and defects. We would not have it understood that we admire all that Mr Taylor has written. Of whom could we say this? We think, for instance, that, throughout his dramas, from the first to the last, he treats the monks too coarsely. His portraiture borders upon farce. His Father John shows that he can do justice to the character of the intelligent and pious monk. Admitting that this character is rare, we believe that the extremely gross portraiture which we have elsewhere is almost equally rare. This last, however, is so frequently introduced, that it will pass with the reader as Mr Taylor's type of the monkish order. The monks could never have been more ignorant than the surrounding laity, and they

were always something better in morals and in true piety. We are quite at a loss, too, to understand Mr Taylor's fondness for the introduction into his dramas of certain songs or ballads, which are not even intended to be poetical. To have made them so, he would probably contend, would have been a dramatic impropriety. Very well; but let us have as few of such things as may be, and as short as possible. In *Edwin the Fair* they are very numerous; and those which are introduced in *Philip Van Artevelde* we could gladly dispense with. We could also very willingly have dispensed with the conversation of those burgesses of Bruges who entertained the Earl of Flanders with some of these ballads. We agree with the Earl, that their hospitalities are a sore affliction. Tediousness may be very dramatic, but it is tediousness still – a truth which our writer, intent on the delineations of his character, sometimes forgets. But defects like these it is sufficient merely to have hinted at. That criticism must be very long and ample indeed, of the dramas of Mr Taylor, in which they ought to occupy any considerable space.

A LEGEND OF GIBRALTAR

CHAPTER I

The Governor's residence at Gibraltar was, in days of Spanish domination, a religious house, and still retains the name of the Convent. Two sides of a long quadrangular gallery, traversing the interior of the building, are hung with portraits of officers present at the great siege in 1779-83, executed in a style which proves that Pre-Raphaelite painters existed in those days. One of these portraits represents my grandfather. To judge from a painting of him by Sir Joshua, and a small miniature likeness, both still in possession of the family, he must have been rather a good-looking old gentleman, with an affable, soldierlike air, and very respectable features. The portrait at the Convent is doubtless a strong likeness, but by no means so flattering; it represents him much as he might have appeared in life, if looked at through a cheap opera-glass. A full inch has been abstracted from his forehead, and added to his chin; the bold nose has become a great promontory in the midst of the level countenance; the eyes have gained in ferocity what they have lost in speculation, and would, indeed, go far to convey a disagreeable impression of my ancestor's character, but for the inflexible smile of the mouth. Altogether, the grimness of the air, the buckram rigidity

of figure, and the uncompromising hardness of his shirt-frill and the curls of his wig, are such as are to be met with in few works of art, besides the figure-heads of vessels, the signboards of country inns, and the happiest efforts of Messrs Millais and Hunt.

However, my grandfather is no worse off than his compeers. Not far from this one is another larger painting, representing a council of officers held during the siege, where, notwithstanding the gravity of the occasion and the imminence of the danger, not a single face in the intrepid assembly wears the slightest expression of anxiety or fear, or, indeed, of anything else; and though my progenitor, in addition to the graces of the other portrait, is here depicted with a squint, yet he is by no means the most ill-looking individual present. But the illustrious governor, Eliott, has suffered more than anybody at the hands of the artist. Besides figuring in the production aforesaid, a statue of him stands in the Alameda, carved in some sort of wood, unluckily for him, of a durable nature. The features are of a very elevated cast, especially the nose; the little legs seem by no means equal to the task of sustaining the enormous cocked-hat; and the bearing is so excessively military, that it has been found necessary to prop the great commander from behind to prevent him from falling backwards.

My grandfather, John Flinders, joined the garrison of Gibraltar as a major of infantry a few years before the siege. He was then forty-seven years of age, and up to that time had remained one of the most determined old bachelors that ever

existed. Not that he ever declaimed against matrimony in the style of some of our young moderns, who fancy themselves too strong-minded to marry; the truth being that they remain single either because they have not been gifted by nature with tastes sufficiently strong to like one woman better than another, or else, because no woman ever took the trouble to lay siege to them. My grandfather had never married, simply, I believe, because matrimony had never entered his head. He seldom ventured, of his own choice, into ladies' society, but, when he did, no man was more emphatically gallant to the sex. One after one, he saw his old friends abandoning the irresponsible ease of bachelorhood for the cares of wedded life; but while he duly congratulated them on their felicity, and officiated as godfather to their progeny, he never seemed to anticipate a similar destiny for himself. All his habits showed that he had been too long accustomed to single harness to go cleverly as one of a pair. He had particular hours of rising, and going to bed; of riding out and returning; of settling himself down for the evening to a book and pipe, which the presence of a helpmate would have materially deranged. And therefore, without holding any Malthusian tenets, without pitying his Benedick acquaintances, or entertaining a thought of the sex which would have been in the least decree derogatory to the character of a De Coverley, his castles in the air were never tenanted by any of his own posterity.

It was fortunate for my grandfather that in his time people did not suffer so much as now from that chronic inflammation of

the conscience, which renders them perfectly miserable unless they are engaged in some tangible pursuit – "improving their minds," or "adding to the general stock of information." A more useless, contented person never existed. He never made even a show of employing himself profitably, and never complained of weariness in maintaining the monotonous jog-trot of his simple daily life. He read a good deal, certainly, but it was not to improve his mind, only to amuse himself. Strong-minded books, to stimulate his thinking faculties, would have had no charms for him; he would as soon have thought of getting galvanised for the pleasure of looking at his muscles. And I don't know whether it was not just as well. In systematically cultivating his mind, he would merely have been laying a top-dressing on a thin soil – manuring where there would never have been a crop – and some pleasant old weeds would have been pulled up in the process. A green thistly common, even though a goose could hardly find sustenance there, is nature still, which can hardly be said of a patch of earth covered with guano.

So my grandfather went on enjoying himself without remorse after his own fashion, and never troubled himself to think – an operation that would have been inconvenient to himself, and productive of no great results to the world. He transplanted his English habits to Gibraltar; and, after being two years there, knew nothing more of Spain or Spaniards than the view of the Andaluçian hills from the Rock, and a short constitutional daily ride along the beach beyond the Spanish lines, to promote

appetite and digestion, afforded him. And so he might have continued to vegetate during the remainder of his service there, but for a new acquaintance that he made about this time.

Frank Owen, commonly called Garry Owen by his familiars, was one of those joyous spirits whose pleasant faces and engaging manners serve as a perpetual act of indemnity for all breaches of decorum, and trespasses over social and conventional fences, committed by them in the gaiety of their hearts. In reproving his many derelictions of military duty, the grim colonel of the regiment would insensibly exchange his habitual tone of severe displeasure for one of mild remonstrance – influenced, probably, quite as much, in secret, by the popularity of the unrepentant offender, as by any personal regard for him. Captain Hedgehog, who had shot a man through the heart for corking his face one night when he was drunk, and all contact with whose detonating points of honour was as carefully avoided by his acquaintance as if they had been the wires of a spring-gun, sustained Garry's reckless personalities with a sort of warning growl utterly thrown away upon the imperturbable wag, who would still persist, in the innocence of his heart, in playing round the den of this military cockatrice. And three months after his arrival in Gibraltar, being one day detected by a fierce old Spanish lady in the very act of kissing her daughter behind the little señorita's great painted fan, his good-humoured impudence converted the impending storm into a mild drizzle of reproof, ending in his complete restoration to favour.

This youth had brought with him from England a letter from his mother, a widow lady, an old friend of my grandfather, who had some thirty years before held with her a juvenile flirtation. It recommended to his protection her son Frank, about to join the regiment as an ensign, pathetically enlarging on the various excellencies, domestic and religious, which shone forth conspicuously in the youth's character, and of the comfort of contemplating and superintending which she was about to be deprived. In fact, it had led my grandfather to expect a youth of extreme docility and modesty, requiring a protector rather to embolden than to restrain him. After in vain attempting to espy in his young acquaintance any of the characteristics ascribed to him in his mother's letter, the Major, naturally good-natured and accessible to his youthful comrades, very soon suffered himself to be influenced by the good-humour, vigorous vitality, and careless cleverness of the Ensign, to an extent that caused him sometimes to wonder secretly at his own transformation. His retired habits were broken in upon, one after the other, till he had scarcely a secluded hour in his sixteen waking ones to enjoy alone his book and his pipe. His peaceful quarters, silent, in general, as a monk's cell, would now be invaded at all sorts of hours by the jovial Garry, followed by the admiring satellites who usually revolved around him; and the Major, with a sound between a groan and a chuckle, would close his well-beloved volume to listen to the facetious details of, and sometimes to participate in, the uncongenial freaks of the

humorous subaltern. Once he had actually consented, at about the hour he usually went to bed, to accompany the youth to a Carnival ball – one of a series of entertainments at which the Catholic youth of the city are wont to idemnify themselves for the mortifications of Lent, and where masks, dominoes, and fancy dresses lend their aid to defeat the vigilance of the lynx-eyed duennas and mammas who look anxiously on, perfectly aware, in general, that their own watchfulness is more to be relied on for nipping in the bud an indiscreet amour, than any innate iciness of temperament or austere propriety in the objects of their care. Not only did the Major mingle in the scene, but he actually, about midnight, found himself figuring in a cotillon with a well-developed señorita of thirteen years, whose glances and deportment showed a precocious proficiency in the arts of flirtation. At this ball Garry had become enamoured beyond all former passions (and they were numerous and inconstant, in general, as if he had been a Grand Turk) of one of his partners, a young Spanish lady. Her graceful figure and motions in the dance had at first captivated him – and when, after dancing with her himself, his eloquent entreaties, delivered in indifferent Spanish, had prevailed on her to lift her mask for one coy moment, the vision of eyes and eyebrows, the common beauties of a Spanish countenance, and the clear rosy complexion, a much more rare perfection, then revealed, had accomplished the utter subjugation of his errant fancy. She had vanished from the ball silently and irremediably, as a houri of Paradise from the awakening eyes

of an opium-eating Pacha; and all his attempts to trace her, continued unceasingly for a couple of months afterwards, had proved in vain.

One morning my grandfather was seated at breakfast in the verandah of his quarters, situated high up the rock above the town. Below him lay the roofs, terraced and balconied, and populous with cats, for whose convenience the little flat stone squares at the top of most of the houses appeared to have been devised. Tall towers called mirandas shot up at intervals, from whose summits the half-baked inhabitants, pent within close walls and streets, might catch refreshing glimpses of the blue sea and the hills of Spain – conveniences destined soon afterwards to be ruined by the enemy's fire, or pulled down to avoid attracting it, and never rebuilt. Beyond the white sunny ridge of the line wall came the sharp edge of the bay, rising in high perspective to the purple coast of Spain opposite, which was sprinkled with buildings white as the sails that dotted the water. My grandfather was in a state of great sensual enjoyment, sniffing up the odour of the large geranium bushes that grew in clumps in the little garden in front, and the roses that twined thickly round the trellis of the vine-roofed verandah; sipping thick creamy Spanish chocolate between the mouthfuls of red mullet, broiled in white paper, the flavour of which he was diligently comparing with that of some specimens of the same fish which he remembered to have eaten in his youth in Devonshire; and glancing sideways over the cup at an open volume of Shakspeare, leaned slopingly on

the edge of a plate of black figs bursting with ripeness, like trunk hose slashed with crimson. The Major was none of your skimming readers, who glance through a work of art as if it were a newspaper – measure, weigh it, and deliver a critical opinion on it, before the more reverential student has extricated himself from the toils of the first act or opening chapter: not he; he read every word, and affixed a meaning, right or wrong, to all the hard, obsolete ones. The dramatic fitness of the characters was not to be questioned by him, any more than that of the authentic personages of history. He would reason on their acts and proceedings as on those of his own intimate acquaintances. He never could account for Hamlet's madness otherwise than by supposing the Prince must have, some time or other, got an ugly rap on the head – let fall, perhaps, when a baby, by a gin-drinking nurse – producing, as in some persons he had himself from time to time been acquainted with, a temporary aberration of the wits; a piece of original criticism that has not occurred to any of the other commentators on this much-discussed point. Of Iago he has recorded an opinion in an old note-book still extant, where his observations appear in indifferent orthography, and ink yellow with age, that he was a cursed scoundrel – an opinion delivered with all the emphasis of an original detector of crime, anxious that full though tardy justice should be done to the delinquent's memory. But his great favourite was Falstaff: "A wonderful clever fellow, sir," he would say, "and no more a coward than you or I, sir."

My grandfather proceeded slowly with his meal, holding the cup to his lips with one hand and turning a leaf with the other – an operation which he was delaying till a great mosquito-hawk, (a beautiful brown moth mottled like a pheasant,) that had settled on the page, should think proper to take flight. He had lately come from a parade, as was evidenced by his regimental leather breeches and laced red waistcoat; but a chintz dressing-gown and a pair of yellow Moorish slippers softened down the warlike tone of these garments to one more congenial with his peaceable and festive pursuits. Presently the garden door opened, and a well-known step ascended to the verandah. Frank Owen, dressed in a cool Spanish costume, advanced, and stopping three paces from the Major, took off his tufted sombrero and made a low bow.

"You are the picture, my dear sir," he said, "of serene enjoyment slightly tinged with sensuality. But how long, may I ask, have you taken to breakfasting on spiders?" – pointing, as he took a chair opposite the Major, at an immense red-spotted one that had dropt from the ceiling on the morsel my grandfather was in the act of conveying to his mouth.

The Major tenderly removed the insect by a leg.

"'Tis the worst of these al-fresco meals, Frank," said he. "Yesterday I cut a green lizard in two that had got on my plate, mistaking him for a bit of salad – being, as usual, more intent on my book than my food – and had very near swallowed the tail-half of the unfortunate animal."

"There are worse things than lizards in the world," quoth

Garry. "Ants, I should say, were certainly less wholesome" – and he directed the Major's attention to a long black line of those interesting creatures issuing from a hole in the pavement, passing in an unbroken series up my ancestor's left leg, the foot of which rested on the ground, then traversing the cloth, and terminating at the loaf, the object of their expedition.

"Bless me," said the Major, as he rose and shook his breeches gently free from the marauders, "I must be more careful, or I shall chance to do myself a mischief. But they're worst at night. I've been obliged to leave off reading here in the evenings, for it went to my heart to see the moths scorching their pretty gauzy wings in the candle till the wicks were half-choked with them."

"Do you know, Major," said Owen, gravely, "that either this insect diet, or the sedentary life you lead, is making you quite fat, and utterly destroying the symmetry of your figure? In another week there will be one unbroken line of rotundity from your chin to your knees."

My grandfather glanced downward at his waistcoat. "No, my boy, no," said he; "if there had been any difference, I should have known it by my clothes. I don't think I've gained a pound this twelvemonth."

"More than a stone," quoth Garry. "We all remarked it on parade to-day – and remarked it with sorrow. Now, look you, a sea voyage is the very thing to restore your true proportions, and I propose that we shall take a short one together."

"A sea voyage!" quoth my grandfather; "the boy is mad! Not

if all the wonders seen by Sinbad the Sailor lay within a day's sail. Did I not suffer enough coming here from England? I don't think," said my grandfather with considerable pathos, "that my digestion has ever been quite right to this day."

"'Sick of a calm,' eh? – Like your friend Mistress Tearsheet," said the youngster. "But I've settled it all, and count on you. Look here," he continued, drawing from his pocket a large printed bill, and unfolding it before my ancestor. At the top appeared in large capitals the words, "Plaza de Toros;" and underneath was a woodcut representing a bull, of whose sex there could be no doubt, gazing, with his tail in the air, and an approving smile on his countenance, on the matadore about to transfix him. Then followed a glowing account in Spanish of the delights of a great bull-fight shortly to take place at Cadiz, setting forth the ferocity of the bulls, the number of horses that might be expected to die in the arena, and the fame of the picadores and espadas who were then and there to exhibit.

The Major shook his head – the captivating prospectus had no charms for him: he had not, as I have before said, an inquiring mind, and habit was so strong in him that a change was like the dislocation of a joint. The Ensign proceeded to paint the delights of the excursion in the brightest colours he could command. They were to go to Cadiz in a boat which he had lately bought – she was a capital sailer – there was a half-deck forward, under which the Major might sleep as comfortably as in his own bed – a cooking apparatus, (and here, as he expatiated on the grills

and stews and devils that were to be cooked and eaten, with the additional stimulus to appetite afforded by sea air, there was a spark of relenting in my grandfather's eye.) "You shall return," said the tempter, "with a digestion so completely renovated, that my name shall rise to your tongue at each meal as a grace before meat, and a thanksgiving after it; and as to sea-sickness, why, this Levanter will take us there in twelve hours, so smoothly that you may balance a straw upon your nose the whole way." Finally, the cunning Ensign laid before him an application for leave already made out, and only awaiting his signature.

My grandfather made some feeble, objections, which Owen pooh-poohed in his usual off-hand fashion. There was no standing against the youngster's strong will, that, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all opposition, and at five o'clock that same evening the Major found himself proceeding through the town towards the Waterport for embarkation, by no means fully reconciled to the abandonment of his beloved Lares. My luckless grandfather! did no presentiment warn you of a consequence then hanging in the clouds, that was to change utterly for you the untroubled aspect of those household gods?

Owen had attired himself for the trip in a half-nautical costume – a shirt of light-blue flannel, fastened at the collar with a smart bandana, a bluejacket, loose duck trousers, and a montero cap, which costume became the puppy well enough. He seemed of this opinion himself, as he walked gaily along beside the Major: so did the black-eyed occupants of many houses on

each side, who peeped forth smilingly from behind their green lattices, sometimes nodding and kissing their hands – for the Ensign had an incredible acquaintance with the budding and full-blown portion of the population of Gibraltar. The Major had stuck to his buckskins, (which stuck to him in return,) over which he had drawn a pair of jack-boots, and wore his red-laced coat and regimental hat – for in those days that passion for mufti, now so prevalent in the army, did not exist. Whenever he caught sight of any of the greetings bestowed from the windows, he would take off his laced hat, and, fixing his eyes on the tittering señorita, who generally let fall the lattice with a slam, would make her a low bow – and, after each of these acts of courtesy, my grandfather walked on more elated than before.

They passed the drawbridge at Waterport, and, struggling through the crowd of Turks, Jews, infidels, and heretics, who usually throng the quay, entered a shore-boat that was to row them out to where Owen's vessel – the *Fair Unknown*, as he had christened her, in memory of his unforgotten partner at the Carnival ball – lay moored. In her they found a sailor who was to accompany them on their voyage – a noted contrabandista, called Francisco, whose friendship Owen had lately acquired, and who acted as his lieutenant on his marine excursions. The boat was a neat affair – a small cutter, smartly painted, well found, and capable of holding several persons comfortably; and Francisco was a ruddy, portly, dark-skinned, large-whiskered son of the sea, the picture of good-humour. My grandfather stept in, in his

jack-boots. There was much settling of carpet-bags and stowing of provisions in the lockers, and then they hoisted sail, and glided smoothly out from among the shipping into the bay.

The breeze was light and fair, and they went on, as Frank had promised, pleasantly enough. My grandfather for the first time surveyed the scene of his two years' residence from the sea. The grey old rock looked mellow in the evening light, as an elderly gentleman over his wine – the window-panes glanced ruddily, the walls gleamed whitely, and the trees were tinted with a yellower green; behind, in the eastern sky, floated one single purple cloud. As the objects became confused in the distance, the sharp rugged outline of the rock assumed the appearance that has caused the Spaniards to call it El Cuerpo – the appearance of a vast human body laid out on its back, and covered with a winding-sheet, like a dead Titan on his funeral pile – the head towards Spain, the chest arched at Middle Hill, the legs rising gently upward to the knees at O'Hara's Tower, and then sloping down till the feet rest on Europa. The sun went down as they rounded Cabrita Point, and the breeze, freshening, took them swiftly along under the huge hills that rise abruptly upward from the Spanish coast. Then Francisco, lighting a charcoal fire, placed thereon, in a frying-pan, tender steaks thickly strewn with sliced tomatas and onions, from whence arose a steam that brought tears of gratitude and delight into my grandfather's eyes. He anxiously watched the cooking – even threw out slight suggestions, such as another pinch of pepper, an additional onion, a slight dash of cayenne,

and the like; and then, settling a plate firmly on the knees of his jack-boots, with a piece of bread and a cup by his side, and a knife and fork pointing upwards in his hands like lightning conductors, gazed cheerfully around him. And when Francisco, rising from his knees, where he had been blowing the charcoal fire, removed the hissing pan towards my grandfather's plate, transferring to it a liberal portion of the contents, the good man, gazing on the white and red streaks of vegetable relieved by the brown background of steak, and the whole picture swimming in a juicy atmosphere of gravy, felt sentiments of positive friendship towards that lawless individual, and, filling a bumper of Xerez, drank success to the voyage.

Three times was my grandfather's plate replenished from the thrice-filled pan. Afterwards he dallied a little with a cold pie, followed by a bit of cheese for digestion. Then, folding his hands across his stomach, he expressed his sincere opinion, that he had never tasted anything so good as that steak; and when Owen placed in his hand a smoking can of grog, he looked on the young man with a truly paternal eye. He talked complacently and benevolently, as men do who have dined well – praised the weather, the boat, the scene – and wondered where a man was going who rode slowly along a mountain-path above them, within hail, following him, in imagination, to his home, in a sort of dreamy contentment. After a second can he began to grow drowsy, and, just aware that Owen said the breeze was still freshening, retired to the soft mattress spread for him under the

half-deck, and replacing his cocked hat by a red nightcap, slept till morning.

It was broad daylight when he woke, conscious that for an hour or two past he had been sleeping most uneasily. There was a violent swinging motion, a rushing of wind and of water, that confused him extremely; and, forgetting where he was, he nearly fractured his skull by rising suddenly into a sitting posture. Steadying himself on his hands, in the posture of the Dying Gladiator, he slewed himself round on the pivot of his stern, and protruded his powdered head, like an old beaver, out of his hole. Owen and Francisco were sitting in a pool of water, trying to shelter themselves under the weather-side of the boat – dripping wet, and breakfasting on cold potatoes and fragments of meat left from last night's meal. My grandfather did not like the appearance of things at all. Rent in twain by horrible qualms, he inquired feebly of Owen if they were near Cadiz? Frank, in reply, shook his head, and said they were at anchor. Then my grandfather, making a vigorous effort, emerged completely from his place of repose, and, rising to his feet, looked over the gunwale. The scene he beheld was in dreary contrast to that of the evening before. Ridges of white foam were all around – ahead was a long low line of sandy coast, terminating in a point of rock whereon stood a lighthouse; and to leeward the bay was enclosed by steep hills. Over the low coast-line the wind blew with steady violence. A bright sun rather increased the dreariness of the prospect, which was suddenly closed to my grandfather

by a shower of spray, that blinded him, and drenched him to the skin, converting his jack-boots into buckets. The wind had increased to a gale during the night, and they had been forced to take precarious shelter in the harbour of Tarifa. The Major did not venture on a second peep, but sat, dismally wet and sea-sick, the whole morning, trying to shelter himself as he best could. Once, a man came down to the beach, and gesticulated like a scaramouch, screaming also at the same time; but what his gestures and screams signified nobody on board could tell. At length, as the gale did not moderate, while their position increased in discomfort, and was also becoming precarious, (for one of their anchors was gone, and great fears were entertained for the other,) Owen and Francisco decided to weigh, and stand in for the shore, trusting to the smuggler's seamanship for a safe run. The Major, in spite of his sickness, stood up and pulled gallantly at the cable, the wind blowing his pigtail and skirts perpendicularly out from his person. At last, after tremendous tugging, the anchor came up. The jib was hoisted with a reef in it, Owen holding the sheet, while the smuggler ran aft and took the helm. They bent over to the gale, till the Major stood almost perpendicularly on the lee gunwale, with his back against the weather-side, and ran in till he thought they were going to bump ashore; then tacking, they stood up along the coast, close to the wind, till Francisco gave the word. Owen let go the sheet, and the jib fluttered loosely out as they ran through a narrow passage into smooth water behind the sea-wall, and made fast to

a flight of steps.

Presently some functionary appertaining to the harbour appeared, and with him an emissary from the Governor of the place, who, aware of their plight, had civilly sent to offer assistance. The messenger was the same man who had made signals to them from the beach in the morning; and he seemed to think it advisable that they should wait on the Governor in person, saying that he was always disposed to be civil to British officers. This advice they resolved to act upon at once, before it should grow dark, foreseeing that, in case of their detention from bad weather in Tarifa, the Governor might prove a potent auxiliary. The Major would have wished to make some little alterations in his toilette, after his late disasters; but, after trying in vain to pull off his jack-boots, which clung to him like his skin, he was obliged to abandon the idea, and contented himself with standing on his head to let the water run out of them. As they advanced along the causeway leading to the town, (the point where they landed is connected with the town by a long narrow sandy isthmus,) the gale swept over them volumes of sand, which, sticking to my grandfather's wet uniform, gave him somewhat the appearance of a brick-wall partially roughcast. His beard was of two days' growth – his hair-powder was converted into green paste by the sea-water – and his whole appearance travel-stained and deplorable. Nevertheless his dignity by no means forsook him, as they traversed the narrow alleys of the ancient town of Tarifa, on their way to the approaching interview.

His excellency Don Pablo Dotto, a wonderfully fat little man, received them very courteously. He was a Spaniard of the old school, and returned the stately greeting of my grandfather, and the easy one of the Ensign, with such a profusion of bows, that for the space of a minute they saw little more of his person than the shining baldness on the top of his head. Then they were presented to his wife, a good-natured, motherly sort of old lady, who seemed to compassionate them much. But, while Owen was explaining to her the object of their trip, and its disastrous interruption, he suddenly stopped, open-mouthed, and blushing violently, with his gaze directed towards the open door of a neighbouring apartment. There he beheld, advancing towards him, the Beauty of the Carnival ball.

The Governor's lady named her as "her daughter, the Señorita Juana." Spite of the different dress and circumstances, she, too, recognised Frank, and coloured slightly as she came forward to receive his greeting. The Ensign, an impudent scamp enough in general, was, however, the more confused of the two; and his embarrassed salutation was entirely thrown into the shade by the magnificence of my grandfather's bow. However, he presently recovered his assurance, and explained to the elder lady how he had previously enjoyed the pleasure (with a great stress upon the word) of making her daughter's acquaintance. Then he recounted to Juana the manner in which they had been driven in here, when on their way to Cadiz to see the bull-fight.

"We also are going to ride thither to-morrow," said the

Señorita, softly.

"Ah, then, we shall meet there," said Frank, who presently after was seized with a fit of absence, and made incoherent replies. He was considering how they might travel together, and had almost resolved to offer to take the whole family to Cadiz in his boat – a proposal that would probably have somewhat astonished the little Governor, especially if he had seen the dimensions of the craft thus destined to accommodate himself and retinue. But Garry was an adept in manœuvring, and marched skilfully upon the point he had in view. He drew such a pathetic picture of the hardships they had endured on the voyage – their probable detention here for most of their short leave – their friendless condition, and their desire to see something of the country – that the little Governor was in a manner impelled (fancying all the time that the impulse sprung altogether from his own native benevolence,) to desire that the two forlorn Englishmen would travel to Cadiz under his escort. So it being settled entirely to Garry's satisfaction that they were to start next morning at break of day on horseback – an arrangement which my grandfather's total ignorance of Spanish prevented him from knowing anything about – they retired to the principal fonda, where the Major speedily forgot, over a tolerable dinner, the toils and perils of the voyage.

CHAPTER II

Daybreak the next morning found them issuing forth from the ancient city of Tarifa on a couple of respectable-looking hacks, hired from the innkeeper. Frank had, with his accustomed generalship, managed to secure a position at the off-rein of the Señorita Juana, who was mounted on a beautiful little white barb. Under her side-saddle, of green velvet studded with gilt nails, was a Moorish saddle-cloth, striped with vivid red and white, and fringed deeply. From the throat-lash of the bridle hung a long tassel, as an artificial auxiliary to the barb's tail in the task of keeping the flies off, further assisted by a tuft of white horse-hair attached to the butt of her whip. She wore a looped hat and white plume, a riding-skirt, and an embroidered jacket of blue cloth, fastened, as was the wrought bosom of her chemise, with small gold buttons. Frank could not keep his eyes off her, now riding off to the further side of the road to take in at once the whole of the beauteous vision, now coming close up to study it in its delightful details.

In front of the pair rode the little Governor, side by side with a Spaniard of about thirty, the long-betrothed lover of Juana – so long, in fact, that he did not trouble himself to secure his authority in a territory so undeniably his own, but smoked his cigar as coolly as if there were no good-looking Englishman within fifty miles of his mistress. He wore garments

of the Spanish cut, made of nankeen – the jacket frogged with silver cords, tagged with little silver fishes – the latter appended, perhaps, as suitable companions to the frogs. A hundred yards ahead was an escort of four horse-soldiers with carbines on their thighs, their steel accoutrements flashing ruddily in the level sunlight. Behind Frank came Major Flinders, clean shaved, and with jack-boots and regimental coat restored to something like their pristine splendour; by his side rode another lady, the Señorita Carlota, Juana's aunt, somewhere about thirty years old, plump and merry, her upper lip fringed at the corners with a line of dark down, quite decided enough for a cornet of eighteen to be proud of – a feminine embellishment too common for remark in these southern regions, and, in the opinion of some connoisseurs, rather enhancing the beauty of the fair wearers. She talked incessantly, at first, to my grandfather, who did not understand a word she said, but whose native politeness prompted him to say, "Si, Señorita," to everything – sometimes laying at the same moment his hand on his heart, and bowing with considerable grace. Behind this pair came another interesting couple – viz., two servants on mules, with great saddle-bags stuffed to extreme corpulence with provisions.

It was a glorious morning – a gentle breeze sweeping on their faces as they mounted the hills, but dying into silence in the deep valleys, fresh, and glistening with dew. Sometimes they rode along a rocky common, yellowed with a flowering shrub like furze – sometimes through unfenced fields – sometimes

along broad plains, where patches of blossoming beans made the air rich with scent, and along which they galloped full speed, the Governor standing high in the stirrups of his demi-pique, the Señorita's white barb arching his neck till his muzzle touched his chest under the pressure of the long bit, and my grandfather prancing somewhat uneasily on his hard-mouthed Spanish entero, whose nose was, for the most part, projected horizontally in the air. The Major was not a first-rate seat – he rode with a long stirrup, his heel well down, his leg straight, and slanting a little forward, body upright, and elbows back, as may be seen in the plates to ancient works on equitation – a posture imposing enough, but not safe across country: galloping deranged it materially, for the steed was hard-mouthed, and required a long, strong pull, with the body back, and a good purchase on the stirrups. The animal had a most voracious appetite, quite overcoming his sense of what was due to his rider; and, on seeing a tuft of juicy grass, down went his nose, drawing my grandfather, by means of the tight reins, well over the pummel. On these occasions, the Major, feeling resistance to be in vain, would sit looking easily about him, feigning to be absorbed in admiration of the prospect – which was all very well, where there was a prospect to look at, but wore a less plausible appearance when the animal paused in a hollow between two hedges, or ran his nose into a barn-door. But whenever this happened, Carlota, instead of half-smothering a laugh, as a mischievous English girl would, ten to one, have done, sat most

patiently till the Major and his steed came to an understanding, and would greet him, as they moved on again, with a good-natured smile, that won her, each time, a higher place in his estimation.

Thus they proceeded till the sun rose high in the heavens, when, on reaching a grove on the edge of one of the plains, they halted under a huge cork-tree, near which ran a rivulet. The cavalcade dismounted – the horses were tethered, the mules disburthened of the saddle-bags, and the contents displayed under the tree; horse-cloths and cloaks were spread around on the ground and a fire of dry sticks was lit on the edge of the stream with such marvellous celerity that, before my grandfather had time to take more than a hasty survey of the eatables, after seating himself on the root of a tree, a cup of steaming chocolate was placed in his hand.

"Confess, Major," said Garry, speaking with his mouth full of sausage, "that a man may lose some of the pleasures of existence by leading the life of a hermit. Don't you feel grateful to me for dragging you out of your cobweb to such a pleasant place as this?"

"'Tis an excellent breakfast," said my grandfather, who had just assisted the Señorita Carlota to a slice of turkey's breast, and himself to an entire leg and thigh – dividing with her, at the same time, a crisp white loaf, having a handle like a teapot or smoothing-iron – "and my appetite is really very good. I should be perfectly easy if I could only understand the remarks of this

very agreeable lady, and make suitable replies."

"Let me interpret your sentiments," said Garry; "and though I may not succeed in conveying them in their original force and poetry, yet they shall lose as little as possible in transmission. Just try me – what would you wish to say?"

"Why, really," said my grandfather, pondering, "I had a great many things to say as we came along, but they've gone out of my head. Do you think she ever read Shakspeare?"

"Not a chance of it," said Owen.

Here the Señorita laughingly appealed to Frank to know what my grandfather was saying about her.

"Ah," quoth my grandfather, quoting his friend Shakspeare —

> "'I understand thy *looks*– the pretty Spanish
> Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens
> I am *not* perfect in – '

She's an extremely agreeable woman, Frank, I'll be sworn, if one only understood her," quoth my grandfather, casting on her a glance full of gallantry.

The Ensign was not so entirely occupied in prosecuting his own love affair as to be insensible to the facilities afforded him for amusing himself at the Major's expense. Accordingly, he made a speech in Spanish to Carlota, purporting to be a faithful translation of my grandfather's, but teeming, in fact, with the most romantic expressions of chivalrous admiration, as was apparent from the frequent recurrence of the words

"ojos," (eyes,) "corazon," (heart,) and the like amatory currency.

"There, Major," said the interpreter, as he finished; "I've told her what you said of her."

The Major endorsed the compliments by laying his hand upon his heart, and bowing with a tender air. Whereupon Carlota, laughing, and blushing a deeper red, made her acknowledgments.

"She says," quoth Frank, "that she knew the English before to be a gallant nation; but that if all the caballéros (that's gentlemen) of that favoured race are equal to the present specimen, her own countrymen must be thrown entirely into the shade."

"Delightful!" cried my grandfather; but it is doubtful whether this expression of pleasure was called forth by the sentiments attributed to the Señorita, or by the crisp succulent tenderness of a mouthful of sucking-pig which was at that moment spreading itself over his palate.

Following up his idea, the mischievous Ensign continued to diversify the graver pursuit of prosecuting his own suit with Juana, by impressing Carlota and the Major with the idea that each was favourably impressed with the other. In this he was tolerably successful – the speeches he made to Carlota, supposed to originate with my grandfather, had a very genuine warmth about them, being, in fact, very often identical with those he had just been making, under immediate inspiration, to his own divinity; while as for the Major, it would have been an insult to the simplicity of that worthy man's nature to exert any great ingenuity in deceiving him; it would have been like setting a trap

for a snail. So they journeyed on, highly pleased with each other, and occasionally, in the absence of their faithful interpreter, conversed by means of smiles and courteous gesticulations, till my grandfather felt entirely at his ease, and was almost sorry when on the evening of the second day they got to Cadiz.

CHAPTER III

A whole city full of people condensed into one broad amphitheatre, all bearing a national resemblance to each other in countenance and costume, all apparently animated by the same spirit – for nothing could be more unanimous than the applause which greeted a favourite smilingly crossing the arena, the abuse which overwhelmed an object offensive to the eye of the many-headed, or the ridicule which descended in a joyous uproarious flood on the hapless individual in whose appearance, dress, or manner, anything was detected calculated to appeal to the highly-sensitive risible faculty of a Spanish assembly; – a gay and picturesque mixture of colours, waving and tossing like a garden in a breeze, as the masses of white mantillas, heads black as coal, decorated with flowers and green leaves, red sashes, tufted sombreros, and yellow gaiters, with here and there a blue-and-white soldier standing stiffly up, were agitated by each new emotion – such was the scene that met the eyes of our travellers on entering the bull-ring at Cadiz before the sport commenced.

My grandfather had made his entry in spectacles – appendages highly provocative of the public mirth – and had looked wonderingly for a minute or two through the obnoxious glasses on a sea of faces upturned, sideturned, and downturned, all looking at him, and all shouting some indistinguishable chorus; while the men beat time, each with the long, forked,

painted stick, without which no Spaniard possessing sentiments of propriety ever comes to a bull-fight, in a manner most embarrassing to a somewhat bashful stranger, till their attention was luckily diverted to an unhappy man in a white hat, in derision of whom they immediately sang a song, the burden of which was "El de sombrero blanco," (he of the white hat,) the multitude conducting itself throughout like one man.

My grandfather and his friends occupied a distinguished position in a box high above the multitude, and near that of the alcalde. The Señorita Juana looked more lovely than ever in a white dress, over which flowed a white gauzy mantilla, giving a kind of misty indistinctness to the wavy outlines of her figure, and the warm tint of her neck and arms. From her masses of black hair peeped one spot of vivid white, a rosebud; and a green plumy leaf, a favourite ornament with Spanish girls, drooped, bending, and soft as a feather, on one side of her gold-and-tortoiseshell comb. The Major sat beside Carlota, who, naturally frank, and looking upon him now as an old acquaintance, would tap his arm most bewitchingly with her fan, when she wanted to direct his attention to any object of interest. So the Major sat by her, all gallantry and smiles, gazing about him with wonder through the double gold eyeglass, which still, in spite of the late expression of popular feeling, bestrid his nose. He looked with the interest of a child at everything – at the faces and dresses around him, distinct in their proximity, and at those, confused in their details by distance, on the opposite side of the arena.

He shared in the distress of an unfortunate person (a contractor for bulls, who had palmed some bad ones on the public) who tried, as he walked conspicuously across the ring, to smile off a torrent of popular execration about as successfully as a lady might attempt to ward off Niagara with her parasol, and who was, as it were, washed out at an opposite door, drenched and sodden with jeers. And when the folding-gates were opened, and the gay procession entered, my grandfather gazed on it with delight, and shouted "Bravo!" as enthusiastically as if he had been a habitual frequenter of bull-rings from his earliest youth. First came the espadas or matadores, their hair clubbed behind like a woman's, dressed in bright-coloured jackets, and breeches seamed with broad silver lace, white stockings, shoes fastened with immense rosettes, and having their waists girt with silk sashes, bearing on their arms the blood-coloured cloaks that were to lure the bull upon the sword-point. Next followed the chulos, similarly attired; then the picadores, riding stiffly, with padded legs, on their doomed steeds; and mules, whose office it was to drag off the dead bulls and horses, harnessed three abreast as in classic chariots, and almost hidden under a mass of gay housings, closed the procession. Marching across the middle of the ring to the alcalde's box, they requested permission to begin, and, it being granted, the picadores stationed themselves at equal distances from each other round the circumference of the arena. Then, at a signal from the alcalde, two trumpeters in scarlet, behind him, stood up and sounded – a man, standing with his hand ready

on a bolt in a door underneath, drew it, and pulled the door swiftly back, shutting himself into a niche, as the dark space thus opened was filled by the formidable figure of a bull, who, with glancing horns and tail erect, bounded out, and, looking around during one fierce brief pause, made straight at the first picador. The cavalier, standing straight in his stirrups, his lance tucked firmly under his arm, fixed the point fairly in the shoulder of the brute, who, never pausing for that, straightway upset man and horse. Then my grandfather might be seen stretching far over the front of his box, his eyes staring on the prostrate picador, and his hands clenched above his head, while he shouted, "By the Lord, sir, he'll be killed!" And when a chulo, darting alongside, waved his cloak before the bull's eyes and lured him away, the Major, drawing a long breath, turned to a calm Spaniard beside him, and said, "By heaven, sir, 'twas the mercy of Providence!" – but the Spaniard, taking his cigar from his mouth, and expelling the smoke through his nostrils, merely said, "Bien está," ('tis very well.) Meanwhile, the bull (who, like his predecessor in the china-shop, seemed to have it all his own way) had run his horn into the heart of a second horse, and the picador, perceiving from the shivering of the wounded creature that the hurt was mortal, dismounted in all haste, while the horse, giving one long, blundering stagger, fell over and died, and was immediately stript of his accoutrements. This my grandfather didn't like at all; but, seeing no kindred disgust in the faces round him, he nerved himself, considering that it was a soldier's business to look on

wounds and death. He even beheld, with tolerable firmness, the spectacle of a horse dashing blindfold and riderless, and mad with fear and pain, against the barrier – rebounding whence to the earth with a broken shoulder, it was forced again on its three legs, and led stumbling from the ring. But when he saw another horse raised to its feet, and, all ript open as it was, spurred to a second assault, the Major, who hadn't the heart himself to hurt a fly, could stand it no longer, but, feeling unwell, retired precipitately from the scene. On reaching the door, he wrote over the same, with a bit of chalk, part of the speech of Henry V., "the royal imp of fame," to his soldiers at Agincourt: —

> "He that hath not stomach for the fight,
> Let him depart – "

to the great astonishment of the two Spanish sentries, who gazed on the words as if they contained a magical spell.

Frank sat till it was over – "played out the play." Not that he saw much of the fight, however; he had eyes and speech for nothing but Juana, and was able to indulge his *penchant* without interruption, as the little Governor took great interest in the fight, and the lover with the silver fishes was a connoisseur in the sport, and laid bets on the number of horses that each particular bull would kill with great accuracy. So the Ensign had it all his own way, and, being by no means the sort of person to throw away this or any other opportunity with which fortune might favour

him, got on quite as well, probably, as you or I might have done in his place.

Leaving Cadiz next morning, they resumed the order of march they had adopted in coming – Don Pablo riding, as before, in front with the knight of the silver fishes, discussing with him the incidents of the bull-ring. The old gentleman, though very courteous when addressing the two Englishmen, had but little to say to them – neither did he trouble himself to talk much to the ladies; and when he did, a sharp expression would sometimes slip out, convincing Owen that he was something of a domestic tyrant in private – a character by no means inconsistent with the blandest demeanour in public. The Ensign was at great pains to encourage the Major to be gracious to Carlota. "Get a little more tropical in your looks, Major," he would say; "these Spanish ladies are not accustomed to frigid glances. She's desperately in love with you – pity she can't express what she feels; and she mightn't like to trust an interpreter with her sentiments."

"Pooh, nonsense, boy," said the Major, colouring with pleasure, "she doesn't care for an old fellow like me."

"Doesn't she? – see what her eyes say – that's what I call ocular demonstration," quoth the Ensign. "If you don't return it, you're a stock, a stone." Then he would say something to Carlota, causing her eyes to sparkle, and canter on to rejoin Juana.

It was genial summer-time with Carlota – she had passed the age of maiden diffidence, without having attained that of soured and faded spinsterhood. She had a sort of jovial confidence in

herself, and an easy demeanour towards the male sex, such as is seen in widows. These supposed advances of the Major were accordingly met by her rather more than half-way. None but the Major was permitted to assist her into the saddle, or to receive her plump form descending from it. None but the Major was beckoned to her rein when the path was broken and perilous, or caught on his protecting arm the pressure of her outstretched hand, when her steed stumbled over the loose pebbles. None was repaid for a slight courtesy by so many warm, confiding smiles as he. These, following fast one on another, began to penetrate the rusty casing of the Major's heart. On his own ground – that is, in his own quarters – he could have given battle, successfully, to a score of such insidious enemies: his books, his flowers, his pipe, his slippers, and a hundred other Penates would have encircled him; but here, with all his strong palisading of habit torn up and scattered, all his wonted trains of ideas upset and routed by the novelty of situation and scenery, he lay totally defenceless, and open to attack. The circumstance of himself and Carlota being ignorant of each other's language, far from being an obstacle to their mutual good-will, rather favoured its progress. In company with an Englishwoman, in similar circumstances, my grandfather would have considered himself bound to entertain her with his conversation, and, perhaps, have spoiled all by trying to make himself agreeable – it would have been a tax on the patience of both: but being absolved from any such duty in the present instance, he could without awkwardness ride onward in full and

silent communion with his own thoughts, and enjoy the pleasure of being smiled upon without being at any pains to earn it.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.