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THE DESERTED VILLAGE

BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd —
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please —
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene;
How often have I paus'd on every charm —
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topp'd the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade
For talking age and whispering lovers made;
How often have I bless'd the coming day
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree —
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd,
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round:
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd —
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down,
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face
While secret laughter titter'd round the place,
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed;
These were thy charms – but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;

Amid thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But chok'd with sedges works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amid thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade —
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man:
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain:
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose:
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look and brighten'd all the green —
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amid thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew —
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs – and God has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,

Amid these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amid the swains to show my book-learn'd skill —
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And as an hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,
Here to return – and die at home at last.
O bless'd retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine!
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try —
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly.
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep,
No surly porter stands, in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves, to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend —
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way —
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be pass'd.
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There as I pass'd, with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below:
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled —
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring,
She, wretched matron – forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn —

She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain!
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild —
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear;
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change, his place;
Unpractic'd he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour.
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize —
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain:
The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd.
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away —
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch and show'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side —
But in his duty, prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all:
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood: at his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.
At church with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remain'd to pray.
The service pass'd, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children follow'd, with endearing wile,

And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile:
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress'd.
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven:
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay —
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd —
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too,
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage —
And even the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For even though vanquish'd he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around —
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But pass'd is all his fame: the very spot,
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd.
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound.
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place:
The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door —
The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day —
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose —

The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen bows, and flowers, and fennel gay —
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Rang'd o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.
Vain, transitory splendors! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks; nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart:
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.
Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train —
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway —
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd;
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain —
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.
Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay —
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and an happy land
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around;
Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful product still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied —
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat where solitary sports are seen,

Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure – all
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.
As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes —
But when those charms are pass'd, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail —
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd:
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd —
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourg'd by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band —
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms – a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped – what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know,
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe:
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train —
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy:
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? – ah! turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd —
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;

Now lost to all – her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head —
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn! thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread.
Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day —
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling —
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around —
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake —
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they —
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene;
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.
Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks away,
When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,
Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main —
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire, the first, prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe —
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave;
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms;
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,

And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear —
While her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
O luxury! thou curs'd by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee;
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own;
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe —
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land;
Down, where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move – a melancholy band —
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand,
Contented Toil and hospitable Care,
And kind connubial Tenderness, are there —
And Piety with wishes plac'd above,
And steady Loyalty, and faithful Love.
And thou, sweet Poetry! thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame —
Dear, charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride —
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so —
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue – fare thee well.
Farewell! and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Tornea's cliffs or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime.
Aid slighted Truth: with thy persuasive strain
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,
Though very poor, may still be very bless'd;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labor'd mole away —

While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

THE FUGITIVE KING AT BOSCOBEL; ADVENTURES OF THE MERRY MONARCH

BY AGNES STRICKLAND

Boscobel House, which has obtained so much historical celebrity, in connection with the romantic adventures of Charles II., after his defeat at Worcester, is situated in Shropshire, on the borders of Staffordshire, lying between Tong Castle and Brewood. It was built in the reign of James I., by John Giffard, Esq., a Roman Catholic gentleman, who, when it was completed, having invited his neighbors to a house-warming feast, requested his friend, Sir Basil Brook, to give his new-built mansion a name. Sir Basil called it "Boscobel," from the Italian word, *boscobella*, because it was seated in the midst of many fair woods. The founder of the house had caused various places of concealment to be constructed, for the purpose of affording shelter to proscribed persons of his own religion, whom the severity of the penal laws often compelled to play at hide and seek, in queer corners.

The first fugitive of note who sought refuge, in his distress, at Boscobel House, was the unfortunate Earl of Derby, whose defeat at Bolton-le-Moors, near Wigan, was the precursor to that of the young king at Worcester, eight days later. The Earl of Derby, having escaped from his lost battle, with Colonel Roscarrock and two servants, got into the confines of Shropshire and Staffordshire, where he had the good luck to encounter an old friend, Mr. Richard Snead, an honest gentleman of that country, to whom he told the news of his own overthrow, and inquired if he knew of any private house, near at hand, where he might repose himself and his company in safety, till he could find an opportunity of joining the king. Mr. Snead, like a good Samaritan, conducted his noble friend to Boscobel House, where they arrived on Friday, August 29th, but found no one at home, except William Penderel, the housekeeper, and his wife, who, on their own responsibility, ventured to receive the noble cavalier, his companion, and servants, and kindly entertained them till the Sunday; and then, according to the earl's desire, conveyed them safely to Gataker Park, nine miles on their way to Worcester, where he arrived in time to take his part in that engagement which was emphatically styled by Stapylton, the roundhead, "the setting of the young king's glory."

The Earl of Derby and Colonel Roscarrock were in close attendance on Charles's person during the retreat from Worcester. They all made a stand on Kinner Heath, on the road to Kidderminster, as the night set in, to hold a consultation, when his majesty, being very tired, inquired of them and Lord Wilmot, "If they thought there was any place where he might venture to take a few hours' rest?" The Earl of Derby told him, "how, in his flight from Wigan to Worcester, he had met with that *rara avis*, a perfectly honest man, and a great convenience of concealment at Boscobel House; which, nevertheless, he thought it his duty to inform his majesty, was the abode of a recusant." At another time, some of the party might have objected to the young sovereign going to such quarters, but the danger being so imminent, now it was suggested, "that these people being accustomed to persecutions and searches, were most likely to possess the most ingenious contrivances to conceal him." At all events, the king made up his mind to proceed thither. When this decision was made known to Lord Talbot, he called for a young kinsman of the recusant master of Boscobel, Mr. Charles Giffard, who was fortunately among the sixty cavaliers who still shared the fortunes of their fugitive king. Lord Talbot inquired of this gentleman, if he could conduct his majesty to Boscobel. Charles Giffard cheerfully undertook to do so, having with him a servant of the name of Yates, who understood the country perfectly.

At a house about a mile beyond Stourbridge, the king drank a little water, and ate a crust of bread, the house affording no better provision. After this scanty refection, his majesty rode on, discoursing apart with Colonel Roscarrock about Boscobel House, and the security which he and the Earl of Derby had enjoyed at that place. Another privy-council was held, in the course of the journey, between the king and his most trusty friends, at which it was agreed, that the secret of his destination was too important to be confided to more than a select few of his followers; and Charles Giffard was asked if it were not possible to conduct him, in the first instance, to some other house in the neighborhood, the better to mask his design of concealing himself at Boscobel. The young cavalier replied, "Yes, there was another seat of the Giffards, about half a mile from Boscobel – Whiteladies; so called from its having been formerly a monastery of Cistercian nuns, whose habit was white." On which the king, and about forty of the party, separating themselves from the others, proceeded thither, under his faithful guidance. They arrived at break of day; and Giffard, alighting from his horse, told the king "that he trusted they were now out of immediate danger of pursuit." George Penderel, who had the charge of the house, opened the doors, and admitted the king and his noble attendants; after which, the king's horse was brought into the hall, and they all entered into an earnest consultation how to escape the fury of their foes; but their greatest solicitude was for the preservation of the king, who was, for his part, both tired and hungry with his forced march. Col. Roscarrock immediately dispatched a boy, of the name of Bartholomew Martin, to Boscobel, for William Penderel: Mr. Charles Giffard sent for another of these trusty brethren, Richard Penderel, who lived at Hobbal Grange, hard by. Both speedily obeyed the summons, and were brought into the parlor, where they found their old acquaintance, the Earl of Derby, who introduced them into the inner parlor, which formed then the presence chamber of their throneless sovereign: the earl, reversing the order of courtly etiquette on this occasion, instead of presenting these two noble men, of low degree, to their royal master, he presented him to them; addressing himself in particular to William Penderel, and pointing at his majesty, he said, "This is the king; thou must have a care of him, and preserve him, as thou didst me."

William, in the sincerity of an honest heart, promised that he would do so, while Charles Giffard was at the same time exhorting Richard Penderel to have an especial care of his charge.

The loyal associates next endeavored to effect a transformation in the personal appearance of their royal master, by subjecting him to a process very similar to that technically styled by gipsies, "cutting a horse out of his feathers." In the first place, Richard Penderel trimmed off his majesty's flowing black ringlets in a very blunt and irreverent fashion, using his woodman's bill, which he happened to have in his girdle, instead of scissors, none being at hand, and time being too precious to stand on ceremony. His majesty was then advised to rub his hands on the back of the chimney, and with them to besmear his face, to darken his peculiar Italian-like complexion with a more swarthy tint. This done, he divested himself of his blue ribbon and jeweled badge of the Garter, and other princely decorations, his laced ruff and buff coat, and put on a *noggen* coarse shirt belonging to Edward Martin, a domestic living in the house, and Richard Penderel's green suit and leathern doublet, but had not time to be so exactly disguised as he was afterward, for both William and Richard Penderel warned the company to use dispatch, because there was a troop of rebels, commanded by Col. Ashenhurst, quartered at Cotsal, but three miles distant, some of which troop arrived within half an hour after the noble company was dispersed.

Richard Penderel conducted the king out through a back door, unknown to any of his followers, except a trusted few of the lords, who followed him into the back premises, and as far as an adjacent wood, belonging to the domain of Boscobel, called Spring Coppice, about half a mile from Whiteladies, where they took a sorrowful farewell of him, leaving him under the watchful care of three of the trusty Penderel brethren – William, Humphrey, and George. The Earl of Derby and the other gentlemen then returned to their comrades at Whiteladies, where, mounting in hot haste, with the intrepid Charles Giffard for their conductor, they scoured off on the north road; but a little beyond

Newport they were surrounded by the rebels, and after some resistance, were made prisoners. Charles Giffard contrived to effect his escape from the inn at Banbury, where they halted, but the loyal Earl of Derby, who had sacrificed his own personal safety by resigning to his sovereign the little city of refuge at Boscobel, instead of occupying it himself, was subjected to the mockery of a pretended trial by the rebels, and beheaded, although he had only surrendered on a solemn promise of receiving quarter – promises which were never regarded by Cromwell and his associates. The cool-blooded malignity with which, in his dispatch, announcing his triumph at Worcester, Cromwell points out the noble captives, whom the fortunes of war had placed in his magnanimous hands, to his merciless tools as "*objects of their justice*," what was it but signing their death-warrants by anticipation, before the mock trials took place of the fore-doomed victims? and how revolting, after that death-whoop, appears the Pharisaical cant of his concluding sentences:

"The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts – it is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy. I am bold humbly to beg that the fatness of these continued mercies may not occasion pride and wantonness, as formerly the like hath done to a chosen people."

If Cromwell had understood the true meaning of the Saviour's words, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," he would probably have acted more like a Christian and written less like a Jew.

"But to return," saith the quaint chronicler of Boscobel, "to the duty of my attendance on his majesty in Spring Coppice. By that time Richard Penderel had conveyed him to the obscurest part of it, it was about sun-rising on Thursday morning, and the heavens wept bitterly at these calamities, insomuch that the thickest tree in the wood was not able to keep his majesty dry, nor was there any thing for him to sit on; wherefore Richard went to Francis Yates's house, a trusty neighbor, who had married his wife's sister, where he borrowed a blanket, which he folded and laid on the ground for his majesty to sit on." A three-legged stool would have been a luxury, at that comfortless period, to the throneless monarch, who claimed three realms as his rightful inheritance.

Richard Penderel, when he borrowed the blanket of his sister-in-law, the good-wife Yates, considerately begged her to provide a comfortable breakfast and bring it to him, at a place which he appointed in the wood. She presently made ready a mess of milk, and brought it, with bread, butter, and eggs, to the cold, wet, and half-famished king. Charles was, at first, a little startled at her appearance, but, perceiving she came on a kindly errand, he frankly appealed to her feminine compassion in these words:

"Good woman, can you be faithful to a distressed cavalier?"

"Yes, sir," she replied; "I will die rather than discover you!"

The king, well satisfied with the honest plainness of her answer, was able to eat with a hearty relish the simple fare she had brought him. In the course of that day, he made up his mind to leave his woodland retreat, and endeavor to get into Wales. Richard Penderel, having consented to attend him in the capacity of a guide, conducted him first to his own house, Hobbal Grange, "where the old good-wife Penderel had not only the honor to see his majesty," pursues our authority, "but to see him attended by her son." A greater honor far, it was for her to feel that she was the mother of five sons, whom all the wealth of England would not have bribed, nor all the terrors of a death of torture intimidated, to betray their fugitive sovereign to those who thirsted for his blood. Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, had less reason to feel proud of her filial jewels, than this rustic English matron of her brave Shropshire lads. She had lost a sixth son, who had been slain fighting in the cause of King Charles I. Hobbal Grange was the paternal farm where these six brethren, William, John, Richard, Humphrey, Thomas, and George, were born. Thomas, George, and John, had all enlisted in the service of the late king, and fought for him as long as he had an army in the field; William was the house steward at Boscobel; Humphrey was the miller at Whiteladies; and Richard rented a part of his mother's farm and house, Hobbal Grange; he also pursued the business of a woodman. At Hobbal Grange, the king's disguise was completed, and he was furnished with a woodman's bill, to enable him the better to act the part of Richard Penderel's man, and it was agreed that he should

assume the name of Will Jones. When all these arrangements had been made, and his homely supper ended, his majesty set out at nine o'clock, with intent to walk that night to Madely, in Shropshire, about five miles from Whiteladies, within a mile of the river Severn, which he would have to cross, in order to get into Wales.

Charles found his clouted shoes so uneasy to his feet on this pedestrian journey, that more than once he was fain to walk without, as less painful. About two miles from Madely, in passing Evelin Mill, the king and his trusty guide got an alarm; for Richard unwittingly permitting the gate to clap, the miller came out and challenged them, by asking, gruffly, "Who was there?" Richard, to avoid him, hastily drew the king out of the usual track, and led him through a brook, which they were compelled to ford, and the king's shoes getting full of water increased the uneasiness of his galled and blistered feet. His majesty was afterward wont, in recounting this adventure, to say, that "here he was in great danger of losing his guide, but the rustling of Richard's calf-skin breeches was the best direction he had to follow him in that dark night."

Charles was unconscious at the time how near he was to a party of his own friends, who had just taken refuge in Evelin Mill, and that the honest miller who had caused him so much alarm and distress by his challenge, was only doing his duty by the fugitive cavaliers in keeping guard to prevent a surprise from skulking foes or spies.

His majesty arrived at Madely about midnight, in weary plight; Richard conducted his royal master to the house of a loyal gentleman there, of the name of Woolf, on whose integrity he knew he could rely. The family had retired to rest, but Richard took the liberty of knocking till Mr. Woolf's daughter came to the door and inquired, "Who that late comer was?" he replied, "The king." An announcement that would, doubtless, have put any young lady into a flutter at a period less disastrous to royalty but such was the tragic romance of the epoch, that persons of all classes were familiarized to the most startling events and changes; the only source of surprise to honest gentlefolks was, the circumstance of finding their heads safe on their own shoulders in the midst of the horrors of military executions, which nearly decimated that neighborhood. Miss Woolf neither questioned the fact, nor hesitated to imperil herself and family by receiving the proscribed fugitive within her doors. She knew the integrity of Richard Penderel, and appreciated the tribute he paid to her courage and her truth, by confiding such a trust to her. The king refreshed and reposed himself beneath this hospitable roof for awhile, but as the rebels kept guard upon the passage of the Severn, and it was apprehended that a party of them, who were expected to pass through the town, might quarter themselves, which frequently happened, in that house, it was judged safer for the royal stranger to sleep in the adjacent barn. His majesty accordingly retired thither, attended by his trusty guide and life-guardsman, Richard Penderel, and remained concealed in that humble shelter the whole of the next day.

The intelligence which Mr. Woolf procured, meantime, was such as to convince him that it would be too hazardous for the king to attempt to prosecute his journey into Wales, and that the best thing he could do would be to return to Boscobel House, as affording facilities for his concealment till a safer opening for his retreat could be found. The king being of the same opinion, it was resolved that he should retrace his steps the next night, and meantime, his hands not being considered sufficiently embrowned for the character he personated, Mrs. Woolf brought some walnut-leaves and stained them. At eleven o'clock, he and the faithful Richard Penderel resumed their march, but midway between Madely and Boscobel, Charles was so completely overcome with grief, fatigue, and the pain he endured from his blistered feet, in his attempts to walk in the stiff shoes, that at last he flung himself on the ground, "declaring life was not worth the struggle of preserving, and that he would rather die than endure the misery he suffered." Richard gave him such comfort as his kindly nature suggested, and bidding him be of good cheer, and wait God's time for better fortunes, at last persuaded him to make a successful effort to reach Boscobel. They arrived in the immediate vicinity about three o'clock on the Sunday morning; Richard left his majesty in the wood, while he went to reconnoitre, not knowing whether a party of Cromwell's soldiers might not have occupied the house

in their absence. Fortunately, he found no one there but William Penderel, his wife, and the brave cavalier, Colonel Carlis, who had been the last man to retreat from Worcester, and, having succeeded in making his escape, had been for some time concealed in Boscobel Wood, and had come to ask relief of William Penderel, his old acquaintance. Richard informed him and William Penderel that the king was in the wood, and they all three went to pay their devoir, and found his majesty sitting, like melancholy Jacques, on the root of a tree. He was very glad to see the colonel, and proceeded with him and the Penderels to Boscobel House, and there did eat bread and cheese heartily, and, as an extraordinary treat, William's wife, whom his majesty was pleased to address merrily by the title of "My dame Joan," made a posset for him of thin milk and small beer – no "very dainty dish," one would think, "to set before a king;" but doubtless, in his present condition, more acceptable than the most exquisite plate of *dilligrout* that was ever served up by the lord of the Manor of Bardolf, *cum privilegio*, at the coronation banquet of any of his royal predecessors.

"My dame Joan" also performed another charitable service for her luckless liege lord, by bringing some warm water to bathe his galled and travel-soiled feet. Colonel Carlis pulled off his majesty's shoes, which were full of gravel, and his wet stockings, and there being no other shoes that would fit the royal fugitive, the good wife rendered these still more stiff and uncomfortable, in her zeal to dry them, by putting hot embers in them while the colonel was washing his master's feet.

When his majesty was thus refreshed, they all united in persuading him to go back into the wood, having great reason to apprehend that the roundhead troopers, who were then hunting the country round with blood-hounds, on a keen scent for their prey, would come and search Boscobel House. Humphrey Penderel, the miller, had been to Shefnal the day before, to pay some military imposts to the roundhead Captain Broadwaye, at whose house he encountered one of Cromwell's colonels, who had just been dispatched from Worcester in quest of the king. This man, having learned that the king had been at Whiteladies, and that Humphrey dwelt in that immediate neighborhood, examined him strictly, and laid before him both the penalty of concealing the royal fugitive "which," he said, "was death without mercy, and the reward for discovering him, which should be a thousand pounds ready money."

Neither threats nor bribes could overcome the loyal integrity of the stout-hearted miller, who pleaded ignorance so successfully that he was dismissed, and hastening, to Boscobel, brought the alarming tidings of the vicinity of the soldiers, and the price that had been set on his majesty's head.

The danger of his remaining in Boscobel House being considered imminent, it was determined by the faithful brothers to conceal the king and Colonel Carlis, whose life was in no less danger than that of his master, in a thick spreading oak. Having made choice of one which appeared to afford the greatest facility for concealment, they assisted the king and Colonel Carlis to ascend it, brought them such provisions as they could get, and a cushion for the king to sit on. In this unsuspected retreat they passed the day. The king having gone through much fatigue, and taken little or no rest for several nights, was so completely worn out, that having placed himself in a reclining position, with his head resting on Colonel Carlis's knee, he fell asleep, and slumbered away some hours – the colonel being careful to preserve him from falling.

Pope's popular, but long suppressed line, always makes me think that he must have been familiar with the following incident which my father's mother, Elizabeth Cotterel, who was the grand-daughter of a cadet of the old loyal family of that name, in Staffordshire, and maternally descended from one of the honest Penderel brothers, was accustomed to relate as a fact, derived from family tradition, connected with the perils and hair-breadth escapes of Charles II., at Boscobel.

"Angels who watched the royal oak so well,"

"The roundhead troopers," she said, "having tracked the king, first to Whiteladies, and then to Boscobel Forest, were led, by the keen scent of their bloodhounds, just at the twilight hour, to the very tree in which he and Colonel Carlis were hidden. The traitors, a sergeant and five others of

the same company, made a halt under the Royal Oak, and began to reconnoiter it, while their dogs came baying and barking round about the trunk. Suddenly the leaves began to rustle, and one of the villains cried out,

"'Hallo! some one is surely hidden here! – look how the branches shake.'

"'It will be worth a thousand pounds to us if it be the young king,' said another.

"Then the sergeant asked 'who would volunteer to ascend the tree, and earn a larger share of the reward by taking the supposed prize alive;' but, as no one appeared willing to risk the chance of encountering a clapperclawing from the royal lion, dealt from a vantage height, he was just giving the word for them to fire a volley into the tree, 'when, by the grace of God,'" the old lady would add, with impressive solemnity, "a white owl flew out from the thickest covert of the branches and screeched 'fie upon them!' as well she might; whereupon the false traitors hooted out a curse as bitter as that of Meroz on the poor bird, and growled to each other 'that it was she that had misled their dogs, and had stirred the leaves withal, to mock themselves; howsomever, they would have a shot at her, to teach her better manners than to screech at the soldiers of the Lord.' But though five of the sorry knaves banged off their musketoons at the harmless bird, not one of them was marksman enough to hit a feather of her. Lastly, the sergeant took out a printed copy of the proclamation, promising 'the reward of a thousand pounds for the apprehension of the young man, Charles Stuart, eldest son of the late King Charles,' and fastened it on the trunk of the royal oak where his majesty was sitting in the branches above them, hearing all they said, and an eye-witness of their treason."

The breathless interest which this oral chronicle was wont to excite among juvenile loyalists of the third generation may be imagined, but the old lady had another tradition, of yet more thrilling import, engraven on the tablets of her memory, "derived, like the first," as she declared, "from those who could well vouch for its authenticity." As it forms a curious sequel to the other, and is really too good to be lost, I take leave to relate it, without expecting my readers to put the same degree of faith in my grandmother's traditionary lore as I have always been dutifully accustomed to do.

"The roundhead sergeant and his comrades, after they had retired from the vicinity of the royal oak, proceeded to Hobbal Grange, to refresh themselves at the expense of Richard Penderel, where, finding his wife alone, rocking the cradle of her infant boy, who was not well and very fractious, they, after she had brought out the best perry and mead the house afforded began to cross-question her about the king's previous appearance at Whiteladies, and, as they had done by her brother-in-law, Humphrey Penderel, to ply her with alternate threats and temptations, in order to induce her to discover any thing she might have learned on the subject. The amount of the reward for the apprehension of the royal fugitive had hitherto been concealed by Richard from his wife, probably from the painful consciousness of her weak point. At any rate, she heard it now with astonished ears, and the sergeant, in confirmation of his statement, displayed one of the printed copies of the proclamation to that effect. 'A thousand pounds! – a sum beyond her powers of calculation! The price of blood! – what then? Some one would earn it, why should not she?' She held parley with her besetting sin, and her desire of 'the accursed thing' grew stronger. At that moment her husband appeared, followed by the disguised king, who, cramped and exhausted with sitting so many hours in the tree, was coming to her hearth to warm and refresh himself, unconscious what unwelcome guests were already in possession of the Grange. The young wife hastened to Richard Penderel, showed him the paper, and whispered —

"'What is the king to us? A thousand pounds would make our fortunes.'

"'I'll cleave thy skull next moment, woman, an' thou dost,' was Richard Penderel's stern rejoinder, grasping his wood-ax with a significant gesture.

"He spoke in a tone which, though so low as to be audible to no other ear than hers, thrilled every vein in her body with terror. She knew he was a man who never broke his word, and she trembled lest the suspicions of the sergeant and his gang should have been excited by the emotions betrayed by her husband and herself during their brief passionate conference. She glanced at them,

and saw they were watching her husband and scrutinizing the disguised king, who, yielding to the force of habit, had forgot his assumed character of Richard's serving-man so far as to seat himself uninvited on the only unoccupied stool in the room. Luckily, the cross baby, offended at the presence of so many strangers, set up his pipes, and began to scream and cry most lustily; at which Mistress Richard Penderel, affecting to be in a violent passion, snatched him out of the cradle, and thrusting him into the arms of the astonished king, on whom she bestowed a sound box on the ear at the same time, exclaimed, 'Thou lazy, good-for-naught fellow, wilt thou not so much as put out thy hand to rock the cradle? Take the boy to thee, and quiet him; he makes such a brawling, thy betters can't hear themselves speak.'

"The baby, finding himself in the hands of an unpracticed male nurse, continued to scream, and the mother to scold, till the sergeant rose up, with a peevish execration, implying that he would rather hear the roar of all the cannon that were fired at Worcester, than a chorus like that; and giving the word to his company, marched off in the full persuasion that Charles was the awkwardest lout in Shropshire, and his mistress the bitterest shrew he had seen for many a day."

After this alarm, it was judged better for the king to return to Boscobel House, and betake himself to the secret place of concealment, where the Earl of Derby had been safely hidden before the battle of Worcester. Dame Joan had provided some chickens that night, and cooked them in her best style for supper, for her royal guest – a dainty to which he had been unaccustomed for some time. She also put a little pallet in the secret recess for his majesty's use, who was persuaded to let William Penderel shave him, and cut his hair close with a pair of scissors, according to the country fashion. Colonel Carlis told the king, "Will was but a mean barber;" his majesty replied, "That he had never been shaved by any barber before," and bade William burn the hair he cut off. William, however, carefully preserved the royal locks, as precious memorials of this adventure, which were afterward in great request among the noble families of the neighborhood, who were eager to obtain the smallest portion of those relics.

After supper, Colonel Carlis asked the king, "What meat he would like for his Sunday's dinner?" his majesty said, "Mutton, if it might be had." Now, there was none in the house, and it was considered dangerous for William to go to any place to purchase it; so Colonel Carlis repaired to Mr. William Staunton's fold, chose the fattest sheep there, stuck it with his dagger, and sent Will Penderel to bring it home.[1]

On Sunday morning, Charles, finding his dormitory none of the best, rose early, and entering the gallery near it, was observed to spend some time in prayer. After the fulfillment of this duty, which was doubtless performed with unwonted fervency, "his majesty, coming down into the parlor, his nose fell a bleeding, which put his poor faithful servants in a fright," till he reassured them, by saying it was a circumstance of frequent occurrence. He was very cheerful that day, and merrily assisted in cooking some mutton-collops from the stolen sheep provided by Colonel Carlis, on which subject he was afterward fond of joking with that devoted companion of his perils. The Penderel brothers, keeping watch and ward, in readiness to give the alarm, if any soldiers approached the mansion, the king felt himself in a state of security, "and spent some part of this Lord's-day in a pretty arbor in Boscobel Garden, situated on a mount, with a stone table and seats within. In this place, he passed some time in reading, and commended it for its retiredness."

John Penderel having, meantime, brought the welcome intelligence that Lord Wilmot, to whom he had acted as guide when he left Whiteladies, had found a safe asylum at the house of Mr. Whitgreave, of Mosely, the king sent him back to inform those gentlemen "that he would join them

[1] When honest William Penderel subsequently waited on Mr. Staunton, and acknowledged the abstraction of the sheep, offering, at the same time, to pay for it, that loyal gentleman laughed heartily at the incident, and said, "He was glad to hear that his majesty had tasted his mutton, and much good might it do him."

there at twelve that night." The distance being about five miles, John returned to tell his majesty they would be in readiness to meet him there.

The king not being yet recovered from the effect of his walk to Madely and back, it was agreed that he should ride on Humphrey's mill-horse, which was forthwith fetched home from grass, and accoutred with a pitiful old saddle and worse bridle. Before mounting, the king bade farewell to Colonel Carlis, who could not safely attend him, being too well known in that neighborhood.

The night was dark and rainy, dismal as the fortunes of the fugitive king, who, mounting Humphrey's mare, rode toward Mosely, attended by an especial body-guard of the five Penderels and their brother-in-law, Francis Yates; each of these was armed with a bill and pikestaff, having pistols in their pockets. Two marched before, one on each side their royal charge, and two came behind, a little in the rear – all resolutely determined, in case of danger, to have shown their valor in defending as well as they had done their fidelity in concealing their distressed sovereign. After some experience of the horse's paces, the king declared, "It was the heaviest, dull jade he ever bestrode." Humphrey, who was the owner of the beast, wittily replied —

"My liege, can you blame the mare for going heavily when she bears the weight of three kingdoms on her back?"

When they arrived at Penford Mill, within two miles of Mr. Whitgreave's house, his majesty was recommended by his guides to dismount, and proceed the rest of the way on foot, being a more private path, and nearer withal. At last, they arrived at the place appointed, which was a little grove of trees, in a close near Mr. Whitgreave's house, called Lea Soughes. There, Mr. Whitgreave and Mr. John Huddleston, the priest, met his majesty, in order to conduct him, by a private way, to the mansion, Richard and John Penderel, and Francis Yates continuing their attendance, but William, Humphrey, and George returned to Boscobel with the horse. Charles, not quite aware of this arrangement, was going on without bidding them farewell, but turning back, he apologized to them in these words:

"My troubles make me forget myself: I thank you all."

And so, giving them his hand to kiss, took a gracious leave of those true liegemen.

Mr. Whitgreave conducted the king into the secret chamber occupied by Lord Wilmot, who was expecting his return with great impatience, fearing lest the king should have missed his way, or been taken. As soon as Wilmot saw his royal master, he knelt and embraced his knees, and Charles, deeply moved, kissed him on the cheek, and asked, with much solicitude:

"What has become of Buckingham, Cleveland, and the others?"

Wilmot could only answer, doubtfully, "I hope they are safe." Then turning to Mr. Whitgreave and Huddleston, to whom he had not then confided the quality of the fugitive cavalier for whom he had requested this asylum, he said:

"Though I have concealed my friend's name all this while, I must now tell you this is my master, your master, and the master of us all."

Charles gave his hand to Whitgreave and Huddleston for them to kiss, and after commending their loyalty, and thanking them for their fidelity to his friend, which, he assured them, he never should forget, desired to see the place of concealment he was to occupy. Having seen it, and expressed his satisfaction, he returned to Lord Wilmot's chamber, where, his nose beginning to bleed again, he seated himself on the bedside, and drew forth such a pocket-handkerchief as was never seen in royal hands before, but it accorded with the rest of his array. Charles was dressed, at that time, in an old leathern doublet, a pair of green breeches, and a peasant's upper garment, known in this country by the name of a "jump coat," of the same color; a pair of his own stockings, with the tops cut off, because they were embroidered, a pair of stirrup stockings over them, which had been lent him at Madely; a pair of clouted shoes, cut and slashed, to give ease to the royal feet, an old gray, greasy hat, without a lining, and a *noggen* shirt, of the coarsest manufacture. Mr. Huddleston, observing that the roughness of this shirt irritated the king's skin so much as to deprive him of rest, brought one of his own, made of smooth flaxen linen, to Lord Wilmot, and asked, "If his majesty would condescend

to make use of it?" which Charles gladly did. Mr. Huddleston then pulled off his majesty's wet, uncomfortable shoes and stockings, and dried his feet, when he found that some white paper, which had been injudiciously put between his stockings and his skin, having got rucked and rolled up, had served to increase, instead of alleviating the inflammation.

Mr. Whitgreave brought up some biscuits and a bottle of sack, for the refreshment of his royal guest, who, after he had partaken of them, exclaimed, with some vivacity,

"I am now ready for another march; and if it shall please God to place me once more at the head of eight or ten thousand good men, of one mind, and resolved to fight, I should not despair of driving the rogues out of my kingdom."

Day broke, and the king, feeling in need of repose, was conducted to the artfully concealed hiding-place, where a pallet was placed for his accommodation, for his host durst not put him into a bed in one of the chambers.

After some rest taken in the hole, which was unfortunately too close and hot to allow of comfortable repose, Charles rose, and seeing Mr. Whitgreave's mother, was pleased to greet her with great courtesy, and to honor her with a salute. His place, during the day, was a closet over the porch, where he could see, unseen, every one who came up to the house.

That afternoon, a party of the roundhead soldiers arrived, with intent to arrest Mr. Whitgreave, having had information that he had been at Worcester fight.

"If," said Lord Wilmot to him, "they carry you off, and put you to the torture, to force you to confession, I charge you to give me up without hesitation, which may, perhaps, satisfy them, and save the king."

Charles was then lying on Mr. Huddleston's bed, but his generous host, instead of caring for his own danger, hurried him away into the secret hiding place; then, setting all the chamber doors open, went boldly down to the soldiers, and assured them that the report of his having been in the battle of Worcester was untrue, for he had not been from his own home for upward of a fortnight; to which all his neighbors bearing witness, the soldiers not only left him at liberty, but departed without searching the house.

The same day, only a few hours after his majesty had left Boscobel, two parties of the rebels came thither in quest of him. The first, being a company of the county militia, searched the house with some civility, but the others, who were Captain Broadwaye's men, behaved in a very ruffianly manner, searched the house with jealous scrutiny, plundered it of every thing portable, and after devouring all the little stock of provisions, presented a pistol at William Penderel, to intimidate him into giving them some information, and much frightened "my dame Joan," but failed to extort any confessions touching the royal guest who had so recently departed. They also paid a second visit to Whiteladies, and not only searched every corner in it, but broke down much of the wainscot, and finished by beating a prisoner severely who had been frightened into informing them that he came in company with the king from Worcester to that place, and had left him concealed there.

On the Tuesday, old Mrs. Whitgreave, who did her best to amuse her royal guest, by telling him all the news she could collect, informed him that a countryman, who had been up to the house that morning, had said "that he heard that the king, on his retreat, had rallied and beaten his enemies at Warrington Bridge, and that three kings had come in to his assistance."

"Surely," rejoined Charles, with a smile, "they must be the three kings of Cologne come down from heaven, for I can imagine none else."

Looking out of his closet window, that day, Charles saw two soldiers pass the gate, and told Mr. Huddleston, "he knew one of them to be a Highlander of his own regiment, who little thought his king and colonel were so near."

Mr. Huddleston had three young gentlemen under his care for education, staying in the same house – young Sir John Preston, Mr. Thomas Patyn, and Mr. Francis Reynolds. These he stationed at several garret windows that commanded the road, to watch and give notice if they saw any soldiers

approaching, pretending to be himself in danger of arrest. The youths performed this service with diligent care all day, and when they sat down to supper, Sir John said merrily to his two companions, "Come, lads, let us eat heartily, for we have been upon the life-guard to-day."

Lord Wilmot's friend, Colonel Lane, of Bentley, had, previously to the king's arrival, offered to pass him on to Bristol, as the escort of his sister, Mrs. Jane Lane, who had fortunately obtained from one of the commanders, a passport for herself and her groom to go to Bristol, to see her sister, who was near her confinement. This offer Lord Wilmot had actually accepted, when John Penderel, bringing him word that the king was coming to Mosely, he generously transferred that chance for escape to his royal master. Lord Wilmot, having apprised the colonel and fair mistress Jane of the king's intention to personate her groom, Colonel Lane came, by appointment, on Tuesday night, between twelve and one, to the corner of Mr. Whitgreave's orchard, to meet and convey his majesty to Bentley. The night was dark, and cold enough to render the loan of a cloak, which Mr. Huddleston humbly offered for his sovereign's use, extremely acceptable. Charles took his leave courteously of old Mrs. Whitgreave, whom he kissed, and gave many thanks for his entertainment, and used warm expressions of gratitude to her son and Mr. Huddleston, telling them, "that he was very sensible of the danger with which their concealing him might be attended to themselves," and considerately gave them the address of a merchant in London, who should have orders to supply them with money, and the means of crossing the sea, if they desired to do so, and promised, "if ever God were pleased to restore him to his dominions, not to be unmindful of their services to him." They knelt and kissed his hand, and prayed Almighty God to bless and preserve him, then reverentially attended him to the orchard, where Mr. Whitgreave told Colonel Lane "he delivered his great charge into his hands, and besought him to take care of his majesty."

Charles proceeded safely to Bentley with Colonel Lane, where, as he was to perform the part of a menial, he was under the necessity of taking a seat by the kitchen fire, next morning, to prevent suspicion.

The cook, observing that he appeared an idle hand, ordered him to "have a care that the roast meat did not burn" – a command that must have reminded the incognito majesty of England of the adventure of his illustrious ancestor, Alfred, in the herdsman's cottage, when he got into disgrace with the good wife by not paying a proper degree of attention to the baking of the cakes.

The same morning, we are told, a person suspected of being a spy and informer, coming into Colonel Lane's kitchen, and casting a scrutinizing eye on the king, observed that he was a stranger, and began to ask a leading question or two, when one of the servants, who knew his royal master, and feared he would commit himself, gave him two or three blows with the basting ladle, and bade him "mind his own business, which was to keep the spit going, and not turn round to prate, or he would get basted by the cook."

Charles only staid at Bentley, till some articles of Colonel Lane's livery could be prepared for his use, before he escorted Mrs. Jane Lane to Bristol, she riding on a pillion behind him, and Lord Wilmot following at a little distance. Mistress Jane conducted herself with great prudence and discretion to the royal bachelor during the journey, treating him as her master when alone, and as her servant before strangers. When they arrived at the house of her sister, Mrs. Norton, in Bristol, the first person the king saw was one of his own chaplains sitting at the door, amusing himself with looking at some people playing at bowls. His majesty, after performing his duty as Colonel Lane's servant, by taking proper care of the horse which had carried him and his fair charge from Bentley, left the stable, and came into the house, feigning himself sick of the ague, Mrs. Jane having suggested that device as an excuse for keeping his room, which she had caused to be prepared for him. The butler, who had been a royalist soldier in the service of Charles I., entering the room to bring the sick stranger some refreshment, as soon as he looked in his pale woe-worn face, recognized the features of his young king, and falling on his knees, while the tears overflowed his cheeks, exclaimed,

"I am rejoiced to see your majesty."

"Keep the secret from every one, even from your master," was the reply, and the faithful creature rendered implicit obedience. He, and Mrs. Jane Lane, constituted Charles's Privy Council at Bristol. No ship being likely to sail from that port for a month to come, the king considered it dangerous to remain there so long. He therefore repaired to the residence of Colonel Wyndham, in Dorsetshire, where he was affectionately welcomed by that loyal cavalier and his lady, who had been his nurse. The venerable mother of the colonel, though she had lost three sons and one grandchild in his service, considered herself only too happy to have the honor of receiving him as her guest.

Finally, after adventures too numerous to be recorded here, the fugitive king succeeded in securing a passage toward the end of October, in a little bark from Shoreham to Dieppe, where he landed in safety, more than forty persons, some of them in very humble circumstances, having been instrumental to his escape, not one of whom could be induced by the large reward offered by the Parliament for his apprehension, to betray him.

A certain eloquent Scotch essayist, who endeavors to apologize for the conduct of Algernon Sidney, and other worthies of his party, in accepting the bribes of France by impugning the integrity of the English character, and goes so far as to express a doubt whether there were an honest man to be met with at that epoch, save Andrew Marvel, appears to have forgotten the glorious instances of stainless honesty and virtue afforded by the Penderel brothers, and other noble men of all degrees, who proved themselves superior to all temptations that could be offered.

When England had, by general acclamation, called home her banished king, the five Shropshire brothers were summoned to attend him at Whitehall, on Wednesday, the 13th of June, 1661, when his majesty was pleased to acknowledge their faithful services, and signified his intention of notifying his gratitude by a suitable reward, inquiring if they had any particular favor to ask. They only asked an exemption from the penal laws, with liberty for themselves and their descendants to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, being members of the Romish church. This request was granted, and their names, together with those of their kinswoman Mrs. Yates, Mr. Huddleston, and Mr. Whitgreave, were especially exempted in the statute from the pains and penalties of recusancy.

King Charles granted a moderate pension to them and their descendants for ever.

"The Oak," says a contemporary, whose pleasant little chronicle of Boscobel was published in 1660, the year of the restoration, "is now properly called 'The Royal Oake of Boscobel,' nor will it lose that name while it continues a tree: and since his majesty's happy restoration that those mysteries have been revealed, hundreds of people for many miles round, have flocked to see the famous Boscobel, which, as you have heard, had once the honor to be the palace of his sacred majesty, but chiefly to behold the Royal Oake, which has been deprived of all its young boughs by the visitors of it, who keep them in memory of his majesty's happy preservation."

Charles himself subsequently made a pilgrimage to the scene of his past troubles: when he visited the Royal Oak, he was observed to gather a handful of the acorns. Some of these he planted with his own hand in Saint James's Park. A promising young tree, which sprang from one of these acorns, which Charles had planted in the queen's pleasure garden, within sight of his bed-chamber, in Saint James's Palace, and was accustomed to water and tend with great pleasure, was called the King's Royal Oak, and had become an object of interest to the people as a relic of that popular sovereign; but was destroyed by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, as soon as her husband obtained the grant of the ground on which it stood, for the site of Marlborough House. This was regarded as an outrage on popular feeling.

Of all our national commemorations, that of the restoration of monarchy, on the 29th of May, held the strongest hold on the affections of the people; the firmness with which they continued to observe that anniversary for a century after the expulsion of the royal line of Stuart, affords a remarkable proof of the constitutional attachment of this country to the cause of legitimacy. As long as that feeling lasted, the grave of William Penderel, in St. Giles's church-yard, was duly decked with

oaken garlands by nameless loyalists of low degree, as often as the 29th of May came round; and men, women, and children wore oak leaves and acorns in memory of the fact,

"That Penderel the miller, at risk of his blood,
Hid the king of the isle in the king of the wood."

[From Dickens's Household Words]

GUNPOWDER AND CHALK

Sir Valentine Saltear was a worthy gentleman, who had made a large fortune by constantly exporting Irish linens and lawns to France (from whence they came over to England as fine French goods), for which service to the trade of the three countries a discerning minister had obtained him the honor of knighthood. This fortune he had in part expended in building for himself a great mansion on the sea-coast of Kent, commanding a fine view of the country from the back windows, and the great ocean from the front. Every room on the first and second floors was furnished with a brass telescope, that could be screwed on to the window-sash, or by means of a pedestal, into the window-sill.

In the front of his house was a great field, in which he and his visitors used to play at cricket. It was bounded by the high, white chalk cliffs, which descended precipitously to the sea.

The cliffs, however, were unfortunately much undermined by natural caverns; so that every year, and, in fact, every time there was a storm at sea, a large portion of the chalk-rock fell down, and in the course of six or seven years he was obliged to rail off as "dangerous" a part of the already reduced field in front of his house. He could now only play at trap-ball, or battle-dore and shuttle-cock.

Still the sea continued its encroachments, and in a few years more the trap-ball was all over – it was too perilous, even if they had not continually lost the ball – and he and his sons were reduced to a game at long-taw, and hop-scotch.

Clearly perceiving that in the course of a few years more his field-sports would be limited to spinning a tee-totum before his front-door, he engaged the services of an eminent architect and civil engineer to build him a sea-wall to prevent the further encroachments of the enemy. The estimate of expense was five thousand pounds, and, as a matter of course, the work, by the time it was finished, cost ten thousand. This was nearly as much as Sir Valentine Saltear had paid for the building of his house.

But the worst part of the business was, that the very next storm which occurred at sea, and only a few weeks after, the waves dashed down, and fairly carried away the whole of this protective wall. In the morning it was clean gone, as though no such structure had been there, and a great additional gap was made in the cliff, plainly showing that the watery monster was quite bent on swallowing up Sir Valentine's house. He brought an action for the recovery of the money he had paid for his wall; but while this was pending, he saw his house being undermined from day to day, and in sheer despair felt himself obliged to apply to a still more eminent civil engineer. The estimate this gentleman made for the construction of a sea-wall – one that would stand – was ten thousand pounds. It might be a few pounds more or less – probably less. But the recent experience of Sir Valentine making him fear that it would probably be double that amount, he hesitated as to engaging the services of this gentleman. He even thought of sending over to Ireland for fifty bricklayers, carpenters, and masons, and superintending the work himself. He was sure he could do it for six thousand pounds. It never once occurred to him to pull down his house, and rebuild it on high ground a quarter of a mile farther off.

In this dangerous yet undecided state of affairs, Sir Valentine one morning, breakfasting at his club in Waterloo Place, read in a newspaper a notice of the grand mining operation and explosion that was to take place at Seaford, the object of which was to throw down an immense mass of chalk cliff, the broken fragments whereof would, at a comparatively small cost, form a sea-wall, at an elevation of about one-fifth the height of the parent rock. Why, here was Sir Valentine's own case! His house was upon a very high chalk rock, and a sea-wall of one-fifth the height would answer every purpose. The only difficulty was his present proximity to the edge of the cliff. Still, he thought he could spare thirty feet or so, without losing his door-steps, and this width being exploded down to the base of the cliff, would constitute, by its fall, a very capital mound of protection which might last for a century or

more. He therefore determined to see the explosion at Seaford, and if it proved successful, to adopt the very same plan.

Sir Valentine, accordingly, on the nineteenth of September, swallowed an early cup of chocolate, and hurried off to the Brighton railway terminus, and took his place in the Express train for Newhaven. It was a return-ticket, first class, for which he paid the sum of one pound four shillings. An Excursion train had started at nine o'clock, the return-ticket first class, being only eleven shillings; but Sir Valentine fearing that it would stop at every station on the way, and might not be in time for the great event, had prudently chosen the Express at Express price; namely, one pound four per ticket. There was some confusion in the arrangements of the terminus, apparently attributable to extensive additions and alterations in the buildings; but there was no difficulty in receiving the money.

The train started; its speed, though an Express, being nothing particular. When it arrived at Lewes, the passengers all had to alight, and wait for another train which was to take them on. At last a train arrived. It was declared to be full!

"Full!" cried Sir Valentine, "why, I have paid for the Express! – first-class – one pound four."

Full, however, this long train was. Presently a guard shouted that there was room for three in a second-class carriage.

"I secure one!" shouted Sir Valentine, holding up his fore-finger in a threatening manner to the guard, and jumped in. In due time, and by no means in a hurry, the "Express" train arrived.

Out leaped Sir Valentine, and demanded of the first person he met how far it was to Seaford? The man said he didn't know! to the utter astonishment and contempt of the excited knight. He asked the next person; who replied that he hadn't the very least idea, but they could tell him at the "tap." Sir Valentine looked on all sides to see if there were any cabs, flies, or vehicles of any kind, and descrying several in a group at some little distance, made toward them at long running strides – a boy who had overheard his question as to the distance, following at his heels, and bawling – "Two miles as a crow flies! – four miles by the road! – two miles as a cro-o-o-o! – four by the ro-o-o-o!"

Arrived amidst the vehicles, the knight found nearly all of them either engaged, or full, and it was only as a matter of favor that he was admitted as "one over the number," to the inside of a small van without springs; where, beside the heat and crushing, he had to endure a thorough draught and three short pipes, all the way.

The road wound round the base of a series of hills and other rising ground, and a line of vehicles might be seen all along this serpentine road, for two or three miles' distance; while a long unbroken line of pedestrians were descried winding along the pathway across the fields. After a very jolting and rumbling drive, Sir Valentine found himself "shot out" with the rest of the company, in front of a small "public" knocked up for the occasion, with a load or two of bricks and some boards, and crowded to excess. Private carriages, flies, cabs, carts, wagons, vans, were standing around, together with booths and wheelbarrows, set out with apples, nuts, bread and cheese, and ginger-beer of a peculiarly thin stream. Sir Valentine having breakfasted early, hastily, and lightly, was by this time – a quarter to two – extremely sharp set; he endeavored, therefore, to make his way into the house to get a bottle of stout and some ham or cold beef for luncheon. But after ten minutes' continuous efforts, he found he was still between the door-posts, and the noisy, choked-up window of the "bar," as far from his hopes as ever. He abandoned the attempt in disgust – but not without addressing himself to a seafaring man who was standing with his hands in his pockets, looking on:

"Is this sense?" said the knight. "Do you call this common sense? Do you think you are acting with any more reason than a dog possesses, to treat the public in this way? Then, your own interest – look at it!" (pointing to the crowd struggling in the door-way). "If you had any foresight, or a head for the commonest arrangements, would you not have a barrel of ale on wheels outside here?"

The seafaring man swung round on his heel with a smile, and Sir Valentine, having made his way into the field, obtained six pennyworth of gingerbread and a dozen of small apples, with which provender he in some sort revived his exhausted frame. He now bustled on toward the foot of a broken

embankment leading up to a lofty rising ground, the summit being the cliffs, a large portion of which was shortly to be detached, and thrown down by the explosion of a mine. The part to be blown off was marked out by broad belts of white, where the chalk had been thrown up, which made an imposing appearance even on the distant heights.

The sun shone brightly. All over the fields and fallow ground that lay between the halting-place just described, and the foot of the steep mount, the visitors were scattered – pedestrians, with here and there a horseman; sight-seers – the old and the young – men of science from various parts of the world – infantry soldiers, sappers and miners, ladies and gentlemen, sailors, marines, country people, railway laborers, policemen, boys and girls, and – far in the rear of all, with disapproving looks – two or three old women in spectacles. Renovated by his gingerbread and apples, Sir Valentine made his way manfully up the steep grassy ascent of the hill, chalk mountain it might be more properly termed, and, in the course of a quarter of an hour, he found himself at the spot where the explosion was to take place.

It was a tolerably level surface, of some hundred yards in diameter. Transverse belts of excavated chalk, with several trenches and pits half filled up, marked out the huge fragment of the solid mass which was to be separated. The boundary was further indicated by small flagstaffs, and also by sentinels, who prevented any of the visitors from trespassing on the dangerous ground, whereon, of course, they all had a half-delightful tingling wish to perambulate, and to feel themselves liable to be blown to atoms by a premature explosion.

Beneath the part marked off by the flagstaffs and sentinels, at a great depth in the chalk rock, were buried many thousand (the Brighton Herald said twenty-seven thousand!) pounds of gunpowder, distributed in different chambers and galleries, one communicating with another by means of a platina wire. This wire was carried up through the rock into a little wooden house, in which certain chemical mysteries were being secretly carried on by engineer officers. There was a little window in front, out of which the mysterious officer now and then half thrust his head, looked out, with profound gravity, upon the belts of chalk on the space before him, and, without appearing to see any of the crowding visitors, withdrew from the window. Presently another officer came, and did the same. "Come like shadows," muttered Sir Valentine, "so depart!"

But wishing that they might "show his eyes" the mysterious operations in the little wooden house, however grievous it might be to his feelings, our anxious knight hurried round to the back, where, he took it for granted, there was some means of entrance, as he had seen no officer get in at the window. He was right. There was a small narrow door of planks, with a sentry standing before it, who wore a forbidding face of much importance. And now a gentleman in blue spectacles approached, and nodded to the sentinel, who tapped at the door. The door was unlocked, and the favored man of science entered. Through the closing door, Sir Valentine caught sight of a sort of long, shapeless table, covered with chemical instruments and utensils, in short, an apparatus exciting great curiosity. The door closed, just as Sir Valentine handed up his card to the sentinel. The door was opened again – his card given in; somebody took it, and it seemed to fly over a row of small white porcelain painters' pallets, standing mid-deep in water, and then disappeared, as the door was suddenly closed again. A voice within was heard to say, impatiently, "I really am afraid we can't be disturbed!"

"Can't you!" exclaimed Sir Valentine, addressing himself to a servant girl, with a child in her arms, who was trying to get a peep in at the door: "can't you, indeed! What treatment do you call this? Do you think gentlemen would take the trouble to come *down* here, such a distance, and *up* here such a height, if they did not expect to see all that could possibly be seen? Is this your duty to the public who pays you? Why should you conceal any thing from me? Am I not a person of sufficient wealth and respectability to be allowed to know of all your doings up here! What brings you here but the public service? Who is your master? tell me that!"

"Edward Smith, of Seaford," answered the girl, with an angry face; "but I don't know as it's any business of yours!"

Sir Valentine brushed past the girl with a "Pooh, pshaw!" Observing it was announced, by a placard on one side of the little wooden house, that the explosion would take place at three o'clock, he took out his watch and found that it was already half-past two. It became important to decide on the most advantageous place to take up a position, in order to have the best view of the grand explosion. Some of the visitors – in fact, a considerable number – had ascended to the very highest part of the rock, which swept upward, with its green coating of grass to a distance of a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards beyond the dangerous spot. Another crowd took their posts at about the same distance below the fatal spot, each crowd being widely scattered, the boldest in each being nearest, the most timid the furthest off. Another crowd – and this was the largest by far – had descended to the beach, to see, from below, the fall of the great mass of lofty rock. Many had taken boats, and rowed, or sailed out, to behold it from a more directly opposite, yet safer position.

Now, Sir Valentine Saltear, being an enthusiast in sight-seeing, had not the least doubt but the way really to *enjoy* the thing, would be to stand upon the portion of the cliff that was to be thrown down; and, leaping from crack to crack, and from mass to mass, as it majestically descended, reach by this means the sea, into which a good dive forward would render your escape from danger comparatively safe and easy. On second thoughts, however, he saw that it was precarious, because if the charge of powder were in excess of the weight to be separated, a great mass of fragments might fly upward into the air, and who could say but one of these might be the very place on which he himself was standing? He, therefore, contented himself with advancing to the extreme edge of the cliff, and peering over upon the beach below. The height was prodigious; the crowds walking about below were of pigmy size. The boats that were hovering about on the sea looked no bigger than mussel shells. Sir Valentine once thought of going out in a boat, but immediately recollecting that by doing so he should lose the fine effect of the trembling of the earth, he at once abandoned the idea. If he mounted above the scene of action he should lose the grandeur of the descent of the mass; if he stood on the mount at some distance below it, he could not see the surface crack and gape, though he might be exposed to flying fragments. He, therefore, decided forthwith on going down to the beach, and accordingly he hurried along the grassy slope, and then made his way down a precipitous zig-zag fissure in the sand hill below, till he found his feet rattling and limping over the stones of the beach.

Here he was amid six or seven thousand people – many more than he had seen from above – some walking about, some sitting in long rows or in groups, on the damp shingles, some standing in knots – all speculating as to how soon it would now be before the great explosion. A few flagstaffs were planted, with several sentinels, to mark the line which no one was allowed to pass; and this line was very strongly marked besides by a dark crowd of the most fearless of the visitors. According to their several degrees of apprehension, the crowds were scattered over the beach at various distances, some of them being at least a mile and a half off.

Sir Valentine, after an examination of all the bearings of the case, elected to have a place in the front row, close to the flagstaff; but, taking into consideration the possibility that the explosion might send up a great mass of fragments, which might come flying over that way, and crush numbers by their fall, he looked round to try and secure a retreat the instant he should see a black cloud of fragments in the air. The front line would not be able to retreat in time, because, being crowded, they would, in the panic of the moment, stumble over each other, and falling pell-mell, become an easy prey to the descending chalk. Sir Valentine, therefore, being not only an enthusiast, but also a man of foresight, took his post to the extreme right of the line, so that he could, if he saw need, retreat into the sea; to make sure of which, and, at the same time, to have an unimpeded view, he now stood half up to his knees in water.

It was three o'clock – the hour of doom for the chalk in its contest with gunpowder. A bugle sounded, and a movement of the sentries on the top of the rock was discerned by the thousands of eyes looking up from the beach. Many, also, who were above, suddenly thought they could better their positions by moving further off. Below, on the beach, there was a hush of voices; not a murmur

was heard. Every body stood in his favorite attitude of expectation. All eyes were bent upon the lofty projecting cliff; and nearly every mouth was open, as if in momentary anticipation of being filled with an avalanche of chalk. Again a bugle sounded – and all was silence. Not a shingle moved.

Presently there was a low, subterranean murmur, accompanied by a trembling of the whole sea-beach – sea and all; no burst of explosion; but the stupendous cliff was seen to crack, heave outward, and separate in many places half way down; the upper part then bowed itself forward, and almost at the same instant, the cliff seemed to bend out and break at one-third of the way from the base, till, like an old giant falling upon his knees, down it sank, pitching at the same time head foremost upon the beach with a tremendous, dull, echoless roar. A dense cloud of white dust and smoke instantly rose, and obscured the whole from sight.

Every body kept his place a moment in silence – the front line then made a rush onward – then abruptly stopped, bringing up all those behind them with a jerk. Who knows but more cliff may be coming down? In the course of half a minute the cloud of dust had sufficiently dispersed itself to render the fallen mass visible. It formed a sort of double hill, about one-fifth of the height of the rocks above, the outer hill nearest the sea (which had been the head and shoulders of the fallen giant) being by far the largest. It was made up of fragments of all sizes, from small morsels, and lumps, up to huge blocks of chalk, many of which were two or three feet in thickness, intermixed with masses of the upper crust, having grass upon the upper surface.

Toward this larger hill of broken masses of chalk, the front rank of the cloud below, on the beach, now rushed. But after a few yards, they again stopped abruptly, bringing every body behind them bump up against their backs. Again, they moved on waveringly, when suddenly a small piece of cracked rock detached itself from above, and came rolling down. Back rushed the front line – a panic took place, and thousands retreated, till they found the cliff was not coming after them, when they gradually drew up, faced about, and returned to the onset. At length it became a complete charge: the front rank made directly for the large broken mound, in the face of clouds of drifting chalk-dust, and fairly carried it by assault – mounting over blocks, or picking their way round about blocks, or between several blocks, and through soft masses of chalk, and so upward to the top – two soldiers, three sailors, a boy, and Sir Valentine, being the first who reached it. Thereupon, they set up a shout of victory, which was echoed by thousands from below. Fifty or sixty more were soon up after them; and one enthusiast, who had a very clever little brown horse, actually contrived to lead him up to the top, and then mounted him, amid the plaudits of the delighted heroes who surrounded him. Every body, horse and all, was covered with the continual rain of chalk-dust. The heroes were all as white as millers.

It was almost as difficult to descend as it had been to get up. However, Sir Valentine managed to effect this with considerable alacrity, and made his way hastily across the field to the little "public," with intent to secure a fly, or other conveyance, before they were all occupied by the numbers he had left behind him on the beach. Nothing could be had: all were engaged. He walked onward hastily, and was fortunate enough to overtake a large pleasure-cart, into which he got, and, after suffering the vexation of seeing every vehicle pass them, he at length arrived at the Newhaven railway station.

THE ESCAPE OF QUEEN MARY FROM LOCHLEVEN CASTLE

BY AGNES STRICKLAND

The escape of Mary Queen of Scots, from Lochleven Castle, is one of the most striking passages in the history of female royalty. The time, the place, the beauty and exalted rank of the illustrious heroine, her wrongs, and her distress, the chivalry and courage of the gallant spirits who had undertaken to effect her deliverance, the peril of the enterprise, and its success, combine all the elements of a romance. Yet the adventure creates a more powerful impression related in the graphic simplicity of truth, as it really befell, than when worked up with imaginary circumstances into a tale of fiction, even by the magic pen of Scott in the pages of "The Abbot."

The fatal concatenation of events, which had the effect of entangling the royal victim in the toils of her guileful foes, can not be developed here. The broad outline of the outward and visible facts is familiar to almost every reader, but to expose the undercurrent to view by documentary evidences, and to make manifest the hidden workings of iniquity, requires a wider field than these brief pages can afford. I must, therefore, refer the public to my long-promised "Life of Mary Stuart," which will shortly appear in my new series of royal female biographies,[2] based on documentary sources, for particulars which can scarcely fail of removing the obloquy with which mercenary writers, the ready tools of self-interested calumniators, have endeavored to blacken the name of this hapless lady.

The confederate lords into whose hands Mary, confiding in their solemn promises to treat her with all honor and reverence as their sovereign, rashly surrendered herself, at Carberry-hill, not only shamelessly violated their pact, but after exposing her to the most cruel insults from the very abjects of the people, incarcerated her in the gloomy fortress of Lochleven, under the jailorship of the mother of her illegitimate brother, the Earl of Murray, and the wardership of the sons that person had had by her late husband Sir Robert Douglas, of Lochleven, for the Lady of Lochleven was a married woman when the Earl of Murray was born.[3]

It is scarcely possible to imagine a more doleful abiding place for the fallen queen, in her affliction, than that which had been thus injuriously and by a refinement of malice, selected for her by her perfidious foes. The castle, which is of extreme antiquity, said indeed to have been founded by Congal, a Pictish king, is of rude architecture, consisting of a square donjon keep, flanked with turrets, and encompassed with a rampart; it is built on a small island, almost in the centre of the wild expanse of the deep, and oft-times stormy, waters of the loch, which is fifteen miles in circumference. The castle island consists of five acres, now overgrown with trees and brushwood. In the midst of this desolation tradition points out one ancient stem, of fantastic growth, said to have been planted by the royal captive as a memorial of her compulsory residence in the castle. The boughs of this tree, which is called "Queen Mary's Thorn," are constantly broken and carried away as relics by the visitors, whom the interest attached to the memory of that unhappy princess attracts to the spot, which her sufferings have rendered an historic site of melancholy celebrity.

The events of the long dreary months which Mary wore away in this wave-encircled prison-house, bereft of regal state, deprived of exercise and recreation, and secluded from every friend save her two faithful ladies, and a little maiden of ten years old, the voluntary companions of her durance,

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[2] "Lives of the Queens of Scotland, and English Princesses connected with the regal succession of Great Britain."

[3] See many dispatches from the English envoys resident in Scotland. State Paper Office, from 1534 to 1536.

as well as the occupations wherewith she endeavored to beguile her sorrowful hours, will be found very fully detailed in my biography of that unfortunate queen, with many recently-discovered facts.

Toward the end of March, George Douglas, the youngest son of the Lady of Lochleven, whose manly heart had been touched with generous sympathy, or, as some assert, with a deep and enduring passion for his fair ill-fated sovereign, made a bold and almost successful attempt to convey her out of the castle, in the disguise of a laundress. The queen, however, being identified by the whiteness and delicacy of her hands, which she had raised to repel one of the rude boatmen, who endeavored to remove her hood and muffler to get a sight of her face, she was brought back, and George Douglas was expelled from the Castle with disgrace. But though banished from his house, he lurked concealed in the adjacent village, where he had friends and confederates, and, doubtless inspired many an honest burgher and peasant with sympathy for the wrongs of their captive sovereign, by his description of the harsh restraint to which she was subjected within the grim fortress of Lochleven. At Kinross he was joined by the faithful John Beton, and other devoted servants of the queen, who were associated for the emancipation of their royal mistress, and had long been lurking, in various disguises, among the western Lomonds, to watch for a favorable opportunity of effecting their object.

Douglas had left, withal, an able coadjutor within the castle, a boy of tender years, of mysterious parentage, and humble vocation, who was destined to act the part of the mouse in Æsop's beautiful fable. This unsuspected confederate was a youth of fifteen, who waited on the Lady of Lochleven in the capacity of page. He is known in history by the names of Willie Douglas, and the Little Douglas; in the castle he was called the Lad Willie, the Orphan Willie, and the Foundling Willie,[4] for he was found, when a babe, at the castle gates. Home, of Godscroft, says, "He was the natural brother of George Douglas,"[5] a statement perfectly reconcileable with the story of his first introduction into the family of the late Laird of Lochleven. Such incidents are not of unfrequent occurrence in the daily romance of life, and often has it happened that the appeal made to the parental feelings of a profligate seducer, in behalf of a guiltless child of sin and sorrow, has awakened feelings of feminine compassion in the bosom of the injured wife, and the forlorn stranger has received a home and nurture through her charity. This appears to have been the case with regard to Little Willie and the Lady of Lochleven; for, whether she suspected his connection with the laird her husband or not, he was taken in, and brought up under her auspices, and as attendant on her person. Frail as she had been in her youth, and cruel and vindictive in her treatment of the lawful daughter of her royal seducer, whom it irked her pride to consider as her sovereign, it is nevertheless pleasant to trace out the evidence of some good in the harsh Lady of Lochleven.

The Foundling Willie remained in the castle, after the death of the old laird, an orphan dependent in the family, but his subsequent actions prove that he had received the education of a gentleman; for not only could he read and write, but he understood enough of French and other languages to be sent on secret missions to foreign princes. To these acquirements Willie added courage, firmness, and address, seldom paralleled in one of his tender years.

There is not any circumstance in the course of Mary Stuart's career more striking than the fact that, in this dark epoch of her life, when deprived of all the attributes of royalty, oppressed, calumniated, and imprisoned, two friends like George and Willie Douglas should have been raised up for her in the family of her deadliest foes. The regent and his confederates, men whose hands had been soiled with English gold, had not calculated on the existence of the chivalric feelings which animated those young warm hearts with the determination of effecting the liberation of their captive queen.

"Mary being deprived of pen and ink at this time," says her French biographer, Caussin, "wrote her instructions with a piece of charcoal, on her handkerchief, which she employed the boy Willie Douglas to dispatch to the Lord Seton." John Beton, who still lay, perdue, among the hills, was the

[4] "Life of Lord Herries," edited by Pitcairne, Abbotsford Club, p. 101.

[5] "Life of James Earl of Morton," in the "Lives of the Douglases," p. 302.

ready bearer of this missive, and arranged every thing for the reception and safe conduct of his royal mistress, in case she should be fortunate enough to reach the shore in safety. For many nights he, with Lord Seton, George Douglas, and others, kept watch and ward on the promontory which commanded a view of the castle and the lake, in expectation of being apprised, by signal, that the project was about to be carried into effect.

On Sunday, the second evening in May, all things being in readiness, and the family at supper, Willie Douglas, who was waiting on the Lady of Lochleven, contrived, while changing her plate, to drop a napkin over the keys of the castle (which were always placed beside her during meals), and having thus enveloped them, succeeded in carrying them off unobserved. Hastening with them to the queen, he conducted her, by a private stair, to the postern, and so to the water-gate of the castle, which he took care to lock after him; and when the boat had gained convenient distance from the shore, flung the keys into the water. These mute memorials of the adventure were found covered with rust when the loch was drained, early in the present century. They are now in the possession of the Earl of Morton, at Dalmahoy House, where I saw them and the rude iron chain which formerly linked them together, but which, being rusted through, fell to pieces when taken out of the water. The Lochleven keys are five in number, large and small, of antique workmanship, and are all carefully enshrined in a casket lined with velvet, and preserved as precious relics by the noble representatives of the chivalric George Douglas.

The boat which Willie the Orphan had adroitly secured for the service of his captive sovereign, was that belonging to the castle, and the only medium of communication for the castellan and his meiné with the shore. Immediate pursuit was, therefore, almost impossible. The companions of Queen Mary's flight were, her faithful attendant, Mary Seton, ever near her in the hour of peril, and a little girl of ten years old, of whose safety her majesty appeared tenderly careful, as she led her by the hand. The other damsel, a French lady of the name of Quenede, gave a remarkable proof of her personal courage and devotion to her royal mistress; for, not being quick enough to reach the castle gate till it was locked behind the retreating party, she fearlessly leaped out of the window of the queen's apartment into the loch, and swam after the boat till she was received within that little ark in her dripping garments.

Meantime, Lord Seton and his gallant associates, who were anxiously reconnoitring from their eyrie the progress of the little bark and its precious freight across the lake, remained in a state of the greatest excitement, not daring to believe that so feeble an instrument as the orphan Willie had succeeded in achieving an exploit which the bravest peers in Scotland might have been proud of having performed, and her own royal kinsmen, the allied princes of France and Spain, had not ventured to attempt. But all doubts and fears were dispelled when they recognized the stately figure of their queen, distinguished from the other females by her superior height, rising in the boat and giving the telegraphic signal of her safety, as previously agreed, by waving her vail, which was white with a crimson border, the royal colors of Scotland. The moment that auspicious ensign was displayed, fifty horsemen, who had lain concealed behind the hill, sprang to their saddles, and, with Lord Seton at their head, galloped down to the shore, where George Douglas and Beton, with another party of devoted friends, were already waiting to receive and welcome their enfranchised sovereign, as she sprang to the land. The fleetest palfreys that Scotland could supply had long been provided, and concealed by George Douglas's trusty confederates in the village, in anticipation of the success of this enterprise, and were now ready caparisoned for the queen and her ladies. Mary mounted without delay, and, attended by the faithful companions of her perils and escape, scoured across the country at fiery speed, without halting, till she reached North Queen's Ferry, about twenty miles from Lochleven. Embarking in the common ferry-boat at that port, she and her company crossed the rough waters of the Firth, and landed, tradition says, at the ancient wooden pier, which formerly jutted out into the sea, just above the town of South Queen's Ferry. There she was met and welcomed by Lord Claud

Hamilton, and fifty cavaliers and other loyal gentlemen, eager to renew their homage, and burning to avenge her wrongs.

Lord Seton conducted his royal mistress to his own castle at West Niddry, distant seven miles from South Queen's Ferry, where she partook of his hospitality, and enjoyed the repose of a few hours, after her moonlight flitting. West Niddry now forms part of the fair domain of the Earl of Hopeton. The roofless shell of the stately castle, which afforded the first safe resting-place to the fugitive sovereign is still in existence. The changes of the last few years have conducted the railroad line between Edinburgh and Glasgow in close proximity to the ruins of the feudal fortress, which gave rest and shelter to the royal fugitive, after her escape from Lochleven. The gray mouldering pile, in its lonely desolation, arrests for a moment the attention of the musing moralist or antiquarian among the passengers in the trains that thunder onward to their appointed goal through solitudes that recall high and chivalric visions of the past. But Niddry Castle should be visited in a quiet hour by the historical pilgrim, who would retrace in fancy the last bright scene of Mary Stuart's life, when, notwithstanding the forced abdication which had transferred the regal diadem of Scotland to the unconscious brow of her baby-boy, she stood a queen once more among the only true nobles of her realm, those whom English gold had not corrupted, nor successful traitors daunted.

One window in Niddry Castle was, within the memory of many persons in the neighborhood, surmounted with the royal arms of Scotland, together with a stone entablature, which, though broken, is still in existence, in the orchard of the adjacent grange, inscribed in ancient letters with the day of the month and the date of the year, and even the age of George Lord of Seton, at the memorable epoch of his life when the beauteous majesty of Scotland, whom he had so honorable a share in emancipating from her cruel bondage, slept beneath his roof in safety.

Lord Seton had been an old and faithful servant of his queen. He was the master of the royal household, and had been present at her nuptials with the beloved husband of her youth, King Francis II., of France. On her return to Scotland, after the death of that sovereign, Mary offered to advance Seton to the dignity of an earldom, but being the premier baron in parliament, he refused to be the puisne earl, giving humble thanks to her majesty for her proffered grace at the same time. Mary then wrote the following extempore distich in Latin and also in French:

"Sunt comites ducesques denique reges;
Setoni dominum sit satis mihi;"

which, in plain English, may be rendered thus:

"Though earls and dukes, and even kings there be,
Yet Seton's noble lord sufficeth me."

"After that unfortunate battle of Langside, the said Lord George Seton was forced to fly to Flanders, and was there in exile two years, and drove a wagon with four horses for his subsistence. His picture in that condition," adds the quaint, kindred biographer of the noble family of Seton, "I have seen drawn, and lively painted, at the north end of the long gallery in Seton, now overlaid with timber. From Flanders, the said Lord George went to Holland, and there endeavored to seduce the two Scots regiments to the Spanish service, upon a design thereby to serve his sovereign the queen, the king of Spain being very much her friend. Which plot of his being revealed, the states of Holland did imprison and condemn him to ride the cannon; but by the friendship and respect the Scotch officers had to him, he was by them set at liberty, notwithstanding this decision of the States."[6]

[6] Continuation of the "History of the Houses of Seytoun, by Alexander, Viscount Kingston. Printed for the Maitland Club."

Lord Seton outlived these troubles, he was preserved to enjoy the reward of his integrity after those who pursued his life had been successively summoned to render up an account of the manner in which they had acquired and acquitted themselves of their usurped authority, till all were clean swept away. It is a remarkable fact that the most relentless of the persecutors of their hapless sovereign, Mary Stuart, especially those who for a brief period were the most successful in their ambitious projects, Murray, Lennox, Marr, Lethington, and Morton, all by violent or untimely deaths preceded their royal victim to the tomb.

James VI. testified a grateful sense of the services Lord Seton had rendered to queen Mary, by preferring him and his sons to the most honorable offices in his gift.

Mary herself rewarded George Douglas to the utmost of her power, in various ways, but above all by facilitating his marriage with a young and beautiful French heiress of high rank, to whom he had formed an attachment, and as his poverty was the only obstacle to this alliance, she generously enabled him to make a suitable settlement on his bride out of a portion of her French estates, which she assigned to him for this purpose by deed of gift. "Services like his," as she wrote to her uncle, "ought never to be forgotten."

A simple black marble tablet in the chancel of Edensor Church, to the left of the altar, marks the grave of John Beton, on which a Latin inscription records the fact, "that he died at Chatsworth, in his thirty-fourth year, worn out with the fatigues and hardships he had encountered in the service of his royal mistress," adding as his best and proudest epitaph, "that he had assisted in delivering that illustrious princess from her doleful prison in the Laga Laguina." (Lochleven.)

Poetry is the handmaid as well as the inspiration of chivalry, and if ever the deeds of brave and loyal gentlemen deserved to live in song, surely the achievement of the loyal associates who rescued their oppressed queen from her cruel captivity in Lochleven Castle, ought to be thus commemorated, and their names had in remembrance long after "the marble that enshrines their mortal remains has perished, and its imagery mouldered away."

[From Dickens's Household Words.]

A GERMAN PICTURE OF THE SCOTCH

A new play was recently produced at the principal theatre of Vienna, which illustrates the notions of Scotchmen which obtain currency and credence among the Germans. The scene is laid in St. Petersburgh; the real hero is a little animal, known to dog-fanciers as a Scotch terrier; but the nominal chief character is a banker from Glasgow, named Sutherland. He had failed in his native place, but in Russia he became a great man, for he was the favorite money-dealer of the Empress Catherine.

We all know the strength of a Scotch constitution, but we also know the severity of a St. Petersburgh winter: yet Mr. Sutherland presents himself to his audience, amidst the frozen scenery of that ice-bound city, in what is believed abroad to be the regular everyday costume of a citizen of Glasgow; namely, a kilt, jack-boots, and a cocked hat, with a small grove of fine real feathers. Mr. Sutherland, despite his scanty nether costume, appears to be in excellent health and spirits. He has thriven so well in the world that, in accordance with a tolerably correct estimate of the Caledonian national character, his relations at home begin to pay court to him, and to send him presents. One indulges him with the hero of the piece: the small, ugly, irate, snuffy quadruped before mentioned. The banker takes it with a good-humored "Pish!" little dreaming of the important part the little wretch is destined to play. He had scarcely received the gift when the Empress passes by, sees the dog, and desires to possess it, while the grateful Sutherland is too glad to be able to gratify a royal caprice at so light a cost.

She, in the fervency of her gratitude, named the dog after the donor – a great compliment.

Alas! one day, the dog, who had eaten too plentifully of *zoobrême* (chicken stewed with truffles), was seized with apoplexy and died; though not without suspicion of having been poisoned by the prime minister, a piece of whose leg he had digested the day before. The Empress sighed far more over the loss of her dog, than she would have done for that of the minister. The one might have been easily replaced: she knew at least twenty waiting open-mouthed for the vacancy. But who could replace her four-footed friend! – she mourns him as a loss utterly irreparable. She orders the greatest mark of affectionate respect it is possible to show to be performed on the dead terrier.

The scene changes; it is night. The fortunate banker is seated at dessert, after an excellent dinner of "mutton rosbif," and "hot-a-meale pour-ridges, and patatas," indispensable to a North Briton; his legs are crossed, his feet rest upon a monstrous fender, which he takes care to inform us he has received from England, as he sits sipping his "sherri port bier," and soliloquizing pleasantly over the various chances of his life. He is just about to finish his evening with some "croc," the English name for the pleasant invention of Admiral Grogram; his servant enters, to announce that the chief executioner with a file of soldiers have just dropped in, to say a word on a matter of business from the Empress.

The awful functionary, on stalking into the room, exclaimed, "I am come – "

"Well, I see you are," replied the banker, trying to be facetious, but feeling like a man with a sudden attack of ague.

"By command of the Empress!"

"Long may she live!" ejaculates Sutherland, heartily.

"It is really a very delicate affair," says the executioner; who, like the French Samson, is a humane man; "and I do not know how to break it to you."

"Oh, pray, don't hesitate. What would you like to take?" asked the banker, spilling the grog he tried to hand to the horrid functionary, from sheer fright.

The Envoy shakes his head grimly. "It is what we must all come to some day," he adds, after a short pause.

"What is? In Heaven's name do not keep me longer in suspense!" cries the banker, his very visible knees knocking together with agonizing rapidity.

"I have been sent," answers the awful messenger; again he stops – looks compassionately at his destined victim.

"Well!"

"By the Empress – "

"I know!"

"To have you – "

"What?"

"Stuffed!" said the Executioner mournfully.

The banker shrieked.

"Stuffed!" repeats the man, laconically, pointing to a bird in a glass case, to prevent there being any mistake in Sutherland's mind as to the nature of the operation he is to be called upon to undergo.

The Executioner now lays his hand significantly on poor Sutherland's collar, and looks into his face, as if to inquire if he had any particular or peculiar fancy as to the mode in which he would like to go through the preparatory operation of being killed.

"I have brought the straw," he says, "and two assistants are without. The Empress can not wait; and we have not got your measure for the glass case yet."

The banker looks the very picture of abject misery; but Britons, in foreign comedies, are always ready to buy every thing, and the banker had lived long enough in Russia to know the value of a bribe. He therefore offers one so considerable, that his grim visitor is touched, and endeavors to lull his sense of duty to sleep by a sophistry.

"I was told, indeed, to have you stuffed," he reasons, "and got ready for the Empress; but nothing was said about time; so I don't mind giving you half an hour if you can satisfy these gentlemen" – and he turns to his associates.

It is briefly done. The banker pays like a man whose life depends on his liberality – we suppose several millions – for the Executioner remarks that he can not forget that a groom in England frequently receives several thousands sterling a year; this is a very prevalent idea among the Frankish and Teutonic nations of the Continent. We once heard a Spanish general assert, in a large assembly, that the usual pay of an English ensign was five hundred pounds a month, an idea doubtless derived from some Iberian dramatist; and therefore a public functionary like the Executioner must be remunerated proportionably higher. The enormous pecuniary sacrifice gets for Sutherland some half-hour's respite; which he wisely uses by flying to the British embassador, Sir Bifstik, and awaits the result with great anguish.

Sir Bifstik goes to the Empress. He is admitted. He asks if Her Majesty be aware of the position of a British subject named Sutherland?

"Excellent man," says Her Majesty, "No! What is it?"

Sir Bifstik bows low at the tones of the Imperial voice, and now begins to explain himself with something more than diplomatic haste; thinking, perhaps, that already the fatal straw may be filling the banker's members.

Imperial Catherine does not, of course, consider the putting to death of a mere Scotch banker, and making him in reality what some of his brethren are sometimes called figuratively – a man of straw – worth this fuss; and sets the embassador down in her mind as a person of wild republican ideas, who ought to be recalled as soon as possible by his government, and placed under proper surveillance; but, nevertheless, she causes some inquiries to be made, and learns that it is in consequence of her having ordered "Sutherland" to be stuffed that he is probably then undergoing that operation.

Sir Bifstik expresses such horror and consternation at this intelligence, that the Empress believes his mind to be disordered.

"What possible consequence can the accidental stuffing of a Scotch banker be to you, milor?" she saith.

"The ac-ci-den-t-al stuff-ings of a Scotcher Bankers!" in a German idiom not generally used by our nobility, gasps Sir Bifstik, mechanically, with pale lips and bristling hair.

"Take him away! He is mad!" screams the Empress, thinking that no sane person could be concerned about such a trifling affair, and in another moment the most sacred of international laws would have been violated (on the stage), and Great Britain insulted by profane hands being laid on the person of her embassador, when all at once a light breaks over the mind of Her Majesty – the recalling of something forgotten. She exclaims, with a Russian *nonchalance* quite cheering to behold, "Oh, I remember; now it is easily explained. My poor little dog (I had forgotten him too) died yesterday, and I wished his body to be preserved. *Cher chien!* His name was the same as that of the banker, I think. Alas that cruel Death should take *my* dog!"

"But Mr. Sutherland has, perhaps, already been murdered!" gasps the embassador. "I pray that your Majesty will lose no time in having him released, should he be still alive!"

"Ah, true! I never thought of that," returns the Empress.

The order is finally issued, and Sutherland rescued, just as the Executioner, grown angry at his unreasonable remonstrances, resolves to delay no longer in executing the Imperial commands. To put the *coup-de-grace* on the comic agony of the poor banker, his immense red crop of hair has, in that half hour of frightful uncertainty, turned white as snow!

[From Hogg's Instructor.]

THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONISTS, MARAT, ROBESPIERRE, AND DANTON

BY GEORGE GILFILLAN

One obvious effect of the upheavings of a revolution is to develop latent power, and to deliver into light and influence cast down and crushed giants, such as Danton. But another result is the undue prominence given by convulsion and anarchy to essentially small and meagre spirits, who, like little men lifted up from their feet, in the pressure of a crowd, are surprised into sudden exaltation, to be trodden down whenever their precarious propping gives way. Revolution is a genuine leveler: "small and great" meet on equal terms in its wide grave; and persons, whose names would otherwise have never met in any other document than a directory, are coupled together continually, divide influence, have their respective partisans, and require the stern alembic of death to separate them, and to settle their true positions in the general history of the nation and the world.

Nothing, indeed, has tended to deceive and mystify the public mind more than the arbitrary conjunction of names. The yoking together of men in this manner has produced often a lamentable confusion as to their respective intellects and characteristics. Sometimes a mediocrist and a man of genius are thus coupled together; and what is lost by the one is gained by the other, while the credit of the whole firm is essentially impaired. Sometimes men of equal, though most dissimilar intellect, are, in defiance of criticism, clashed into as awkward a pair as ever stood up together on the floor of a country dancing-school. Sometimes, for purposes of moral or critical condemnation, two of quite different degrees of criminality are tied neck and heels together, as in the dread undistinguishing "marriages of the Loire." Sometimes the conjunction of unequal names is owing to the artifice of friends, who, by perpetually naming one favorite author along with another of established fame, hope to convince the unwary public that they are on a level. Sometimes they are produced by the pride or ambition, or by the carelessness or caprice, of the men or authors themselves. Sometimes they are the deliberate result of a shallow, though pretentious criticism, which sees and specifies resemblances, where, in reality, there are none. Sometimes they spring from the purest accidents of common circumstances, common cause, or common abode, as if a crow and a thrush must be kindred because seated on one hedge. From these, and similar causes, have arisen such combinations as Dryden and Pope, Voltaire and Rousseau, Cromwell and Napoleon, Southey and Coleridge, Rogers and Campbell, Hunt and Hazlitt, Hall and Foster, Paine and Cobbett, Byron and Shelley, or Robespierre and Danton.

In the first histories of the French Revolution, the names of Marat, Robespierre, and Danton occur continually together as a triumvirate of terror, and the impression is left that the three were of one order, each a curious compound of the maniac and the monster. They walk on, linked in chains, to common execution, although it were as fair to tie up John Ings, Judge Jeffreys, and Hercules Furens. A somewhat severer discrimination has of late unloosed Marat from the other two, and permitted Robespierre and Danton to walk in couples, simply for the purpose of pointing more strongly the contrast between the strait-laced demonism of the one, and the fierce and infuriated manhood of the other. At least, it is for this purpose that we have ranked their names together.

Of Marat, too, however, we are tempted to say a single word – "Marah," might he better have been called, for he was a water of bitterness. He reminds us of one of those small, narrow, inky pools we have seen in the wilderness, which seem fitted to the size of a suicide, and waiting in gloomy expectation of his advent. John Foster remarked, of some small "malignant" or other, that he had never seen so much of the "*essence* of devil in so little a compass." Marat was a still more compact concentration of that essence. He was the prussic acid among the family of poisons. His

unclean face, his tiny figure, his gibbering form, his acute but narrow soul, were all possessed by an infernal unity and clearness of purpose. On the great clock of the Revolution – while Danton struck the reverberating hours – while Robespierre crept cautiously but surely, like the minute-hand, to his object – Marat was the everlasting "tick-tick" of the smaller hand, counting, like a death-watch, the quick seconds of murder. *He* never rested; he never slumbered, or walked through his part; he fed but to refresh himself for revolutionary action; he slept but to breathe himself for fresh displays of revolutionary fury. Milder mood, or lucid interval, there was none in him. The wild beast, when full, sleeps; but Marat was never full – the cry from the "worm that dieth not," within him being still, "Give, give," and the flame in his bosom coming from that fire which is "never to be quenched."

If, as Carlyle seems sometimes to insinuate, earnestness be in itself a divine quality, then should Marat have a high place in the gallery of heroes; for if an earnest angel be admirable, chiefly for his earnestness, should not an earnest imp be admirable, too? If a tiger be respectable from his unflinching oneness of object, should not a toad, whose sole purpose is to spit sincere venom, crawl amid general consideration, too? If a conflagration of infernal fire be on the whole a useful and splendid spectacle, why not honor one of its bluest and most lurid flames, licking, with peculiar pertinacity, at some proud city "sham?" But we suspect, that over Carlyle's imagination the quality of greatness exerts more power than that of earnestness. A great regal-seeming ruffian fascinates him, while the petty scoundrel is trampled on. His soul rises to mate with the tiger in his power, but his foot kicks the toad before it, as it is lazily dragging its loathsomeness through the wet garden-beds. The devils, much admired as they stood on the burning marl, lose caste with him when, entering the palace of Pandemonium, they shrink into miniatures of their former selves. Mirabeau, with Carlyle, is a cracked angel; Marat, a lame and limping fiend.

Some one has remarked how singular it is that all the heroes of the French Revolution were *ugly*. It seems as curious to us that they were either very large or very little persons. Danton was a Titan; Mirabeau, though not so tall, was large, and carried a huge head on his shoulders; whereas Marat and Napoleon were both small men. But the French found their characteristic love of extremes gratified in all of them. Even vice and cruelty they will not admire, unless sauced by some piquant oddity, and served up in some extraordinary dish. A little, lean corporal, like Napoleon, conquering the Brobdingnagian marshals and emperors of Europe, and issuing from his nut-like fist the laws of nations; a grinning death's head, like Voltaire, frightening Christendom from its propriety, were stimulating to intoxication. But their talent was gigantic, though their persons were not; whereas, Marat's mind was as mean, and his habits as low, as his stature was small, and his looks disgustful. Here, then, was the requisite French ragout in all its putrid perfection. A scarecrow, suddenly fleshed, but with the heart omitted – his rags fluttering, and his arms vibrating, in a furious wind, with inflamed noddle, and small, keen, bloodshot eyes – became, for a season, the idol of the most refined and enlightened capital in Europe.

Had we traced, as with a lover's eye, the path of some beautiful flash of lightning, passing, in its terrible loveliness, over the still landscape, and seen it omitting the church spire, which seemed proudly pointing to it as it passed – sparing the old oak, which was bending his sacrificial head before its coming – touching not the tall pine into a column of torch-like flame, but darting its arrow of wrath upon the scarecrow, in the midst of a bean-field, and, by the one glare of grandeur, revealing its "looped and ragged" similitude to a man, its aspiring beggary, and contorted weakness – it would have presented us with a fit though faint image of the beautiful avenger, the holy homicide, the daughter of Nemesis by Apollo – Charlotte Corday – smiting the miserable Marat. Shaft from heaven's inmost quiver, why wert thou spent upon such a work? Beautiful, broad-winged bird of Jove, why didst thou light on such a quarry? Why not have ranged over Europe, in search of more potent and pernicious tyrants, or, at least, have run thy beak into the dark heart of Robespierre? Why did a steel, as sharp and bright as that of Brutus, when he rose "refulgent from the stroke," pierce only a vile insect on the hem of a mantle, and not at once a mantle and a man? Such questions are vain; for not by chance,

but by decree, it came about that a death from a hand by which a demi-god would have desired to die, befell a demi-man, and that now this strange birth of nature shines on us forever, in the light of Charlotte Corday's dagger and last triumphant smile.

Yet, even to Marat, let us be merciful, if we must also be just. A monster he was not, nor even a madman; but a mannikin, of some energy and acuteness, soured and crazed to a preternatural degree, and whose fury was aggravated by pure fright. He was such a man as the apothecary in "Romeo and Juliet" would have become in a revolution; but he, instead of dealing out small doses of death to love-sick tailors and world-wearied seamstresses, rose by the force of desperation to the summit of revolutionary power, cried out for 80,000 heads, and died of the assaults of a lovely patriotic maiden, as of a sun-stroke. And yet Shakspeare has a decided *penchant* for the caitiff wretch he so graphically paints, and has advertised his shop to the ends of the earth. So let us pity the poor vial of prussic acid dashed down so suddenly, and by so noble a hand, whom mortals call Marat. Nature refuses not to appropriate to her bosom her spilt poisons, any more than her shed blooms – appropriates, however, only to mix them with kindlier elements, and to turn them to nobler account. So let us, in humble imitation, collect, and use medicinally, the scattered drops of poor acrid Marat.

Marat was essentially of the canaille – a bad and exaggerated specimen of the class, whom his imperfect education only contributed to harden and spoil. Robespierre and Danton belong, by birth and training, by feelings and habits, to the middle rank – Robespierre sinking, in the end, below it, through his fanaticism, and Danton rising above it, through his genius and power. Both were "limbs of the law," though the one might be called a great toe, and the other a huge Briarean arm; and, without specifying other resemblances, while Marat lost his temper and almost his reason in the *mêlée* of the Revolution, both Robespierre and Danton preserved to the last their self-possession, their courage, and the full command of their intellectual faculties, amidst the reelings of the wildest of revolutionary earthquakes, and the thick darkness of the deepest canopy of revolutionary night.

Robespierre reminds us much of one of the old Covenanters. Let not our readers startle at this seemingly strange assertion. We mean the *worst* species of the old Covenanter – a specimen of whom is faithfully drawn by Sir Walter in Burley, and in our illustrious clansman – the "gifted Gilfillan." Such beings there did exist, and probably exist still, who united a firm belief in certain religious dogmas to the most woeful want of moral principle and human feeling, and were ready to fight what they deemed God's cause with the weapons of the devil. Their cruelties were cool and systematic; they asked a blessing on their assassinations, as though savages were to begin and end their cannibal meals with prayer. Such men were hopelessly steeled against every sentiment of humanity. Mercy to their enemies seemed to them treason against God. No adversary could escape from them. A tiger may feed to repletion, or be disarmed by drowsiness; but who could hope to appease the *ghost of a tiger*, did such walk? Ghosts of tigers, never slumbering, never sleeping, cold in their eternal hunger, pursuing relentlessly their devouring way, were the religious fanatics – the Dalziels and Claverhouses, as well as the Burleys and Mucklewraths, of the seventeenth century.

To the same order of men belonged Robespierre, modified, of course, in character and belief, by the influences of his period. The miscalled creed of the philosophers of France in the eighteenth century, which, with many of themselves, was a mere divertisement to their intellects, or a painted screen for their vices, sunk deep into the heart of Robespierre, and became a conviction and a reality with him. So far it was well; but, alas! the creed was heartless and immoral, as well as false. Laying down a wide object, it permitted every license of vice or cruelty in the paths through which it was to be gained. Robespierre became, accordingly, the worst of all sinners – a *sinner upon system*– a political Antinomian, glorying in his shame, to whom blood itself became at last an abstraction and a shadow; the guillotine only a tremendous shuttle, weaving a well-ordered political web; and the tidings of the fall of a thousand heads agreeably indifferent, as to the farmer the news of a cleared hay or harvest field.

That Robespierre had at the first any appetite for blood, is not now asserted by his bitterest foe. That he ever even acquired such a monstrous thirst, seems to us very unlikely. His only thought would be, at the tidings of another death, "Another sacrifice to my *idea*; another obstacle lifted out of its way." Nero's wish that his enemies had but "one neck" was, we think, comparatively a humane wish. It showed that he had no delight in the disgusting details, but only in the secure result of their destruction. *He* is the unnatural monster who protracts the fierce luxury – who sips his deep cup of blood lingeringly, that he may know the separate flavor of every separate drop, and who, like the Cyclops in the cave, leaves some select victim to the last, as a *bonne bouche* to his sated appetite – "*Noman* shall be the last to be devoured." Robespierre, no more than Nero, was *up* to such delicately infernal cruelty.

Carlyle frequently admits Robespierre's sincerity, and yet rates him as little other than a sham. We account for this as we did in the case of Marat. He is regarded as a small sincerity; and the sincerity of a small man contracts, to Carlyle's eye, something of the ludicrous air in which a Lilliputian warrior, shouldering his straw-sized musket, and firing his lead-drop bullets, seemed to Gulliver. "Bravo, my little hero!" shouts the Titan, with a loud laugh, as he sees him, with "sky-blue breeches," patronizing the houseless idea of a divine being, "prop away at the tottering heavens, with that new nine-pin of thine; but why is there not rather a little nice doll of an image in those showy inexpressibles, to draw out, and complete the conversion of thy people? and why not say, 'These be thy gods, O toy and toad-worshiping France!'" To bring him to respect, while he admits, the sincerity, we would need to disprove the smallness, of our Arras advocate. Now, compared to truly great men, such as Cromwell – or to extraordinary men, such as Napoleon, Mirabeau, and Danton – Robespierre was small enough. But surely it was no pigmy, whose voice – calm, dispassioned, and articulate – ruled lunatic France; who preserved an icy coolness amid a land of lava; who mastered, though it was only for a moment, a steed like the Revolution; and who threw from his pedestal, though it was by assailing in an unguarded hour, a statue so colossal as Danton's. Rigid, Roman-like purpose – keen, if uninspired, vision – the thousand eyes of an Argus, if not the head of a Jove, or the fist of a Hercules – perseverance, honesty, and first-rate business qualities – we must allow to Robespierre, unless we account for his influence by Satanic possession, and say – either *no dunce aut Diabolus*. Carlyle attributes his defeat and downfall to his pertinacious pursuit of a shallow logic to its utmost consequences. Probably he thus expresses, in his own way, the view we have already sought to indicate. Robespierre was the sincere, consistent, unclean apostle of an unclean system – a system of deism in theology – of libertinism in morals – of mobocracy in politics – of a "gospel according to Jean-Jacques" – a gospel of "liberty, equality, fraternity" – a liberty ending in general bondage, an equality terminating in the despotism of unprincipled talent, a fraternity dipping its ties in blood. With faithful, unfaltering footstep, through good report and bad report, he followed the genius of revolution in all her devious, dark, dangerous, or triumphant paths, till she at last turned round in anger, like a dogged fiend, and rent him in pieces.

In dealing with Robespierre, we feel, more than with Marat, that we are in contact with an intelligent human being, not an oddity, and mere splinter of a man. His idea *led*, and at last *dragged* him, but did not devour nor possess him. His cruelty was more a policy, and less a raging passion; and his great moral error lay in *permitting* a theory, opposed to his original nature, to overbear his moral sense, to drain him of humanity, and to precipitate him to his doom. If he had resisted the devil, he would have fled from him.

In rising from Robespierre to Danton, we feel like one coming up from the lower plains of Sicily into its western coast – the country of the Cyclopes, with their one eye and gigantic stature; their courage, toil, ferocity, impiety, and power. Danton *did* tower Titanically above his fellows, and, with little of the divine, was the strongest of the earth-born. He had an "eye," like a shield of sight, broad, piercing, and looking straight forward. His intellect was clear, intuitive, commanding, incapable of the theoretical, and abhorrent of the visionary. He was practical in mind, although passionate in temperament, and figurative in speech. His creed was atheism, not apparently wrought

out by personal investigation, or even sought for as an opiate to conscience, but carelessly accepted, as the one he found fashionable at the time. His conduct, too, was merely the common licentiousness of his country, taking a larger shape from his larger constitution and stronger passions. His political faith was less definite and strict, but more progressive and practical, and more accommodated to circumstances than Robespierre's. His patriotism was as sincere as Robespierre's, but hung about him in more voluminous folds. It was a toga, not a tunic. A sort of lazy greatness, which seemed, at a distance, criminal indifference, characterized him when in repose. His cupidity was as Cyclopean as his capacity. Nothing less than a large bribe could fill such a hand. No common goblet could satisfy such a maw. Greedy of money, for money's sake, he was not. He merely wished to live, and all Paris knew what he meant by living. And with all the royal sops to Cerberus, he remained Cerberus still. Never had he made the pretensions of a Lord Russell, or Algernon Sidney, and we know how they were subsidized. His "poverty, but not his will consented." Had he lived in our days, a public subscription – a "Danton testimonial, all subscriptions to be handed in to the – office of Camille Desmoulins," would have saved this vast needy patriot – this "giant worm of fire," from the disgrace of taking supplies from Louis, and then laughing a wild laughter at his provider, as he gnawed on at the foundations of his throne.

In fact, careless greatness, without principle, was the key to Danton's merits and faults – his power and weakness. Well did Madame Roland call him "Sardanapalus." When he found a clover field, he rolled in it. When he had nothing to do, he did nothing; when he saw the necessity of doing something immediately, he could condense ages of action into a few hours. He was like some terrible tocsin, never rung till danger was imminent, but then arousing cities and nations as one man. And thus it was that he saved his country and lost himself, repulsed Brunswick, and sunk before Robespierre.

It had been otherwise, if his impulses had been under the watchful direction of high religious, or moral, or even political principle. This would have secured unity among his passions and powers, and led to steady and cumulative efforts. From this conscious greatness, and superiority to the men around him, there sprung a fatal security and a fatal contempt. He sat on the Mountain smiling, while his enemies were undermining his roots; and while he said, "He dares not imprison me," Robespierre was calmly muttering "I will."

It seemed as if even revolution were not a sufficient stimulus to, or a sufficient element for Danton's mighty powers. It was only when war had reached the neighborhood of Paris, and added its hoarse voice to the roar of panic from within, that he found a truly Titanic task waiting for him. And he did it manfully. His words became "half battles." His actions corresponded with, and exceeded his words. He was as calm, too, as if he had created the chaos around him. That the city was roused, yet concentrated – furious as Gehenna, but firm as fate, at that awful crisis, was all Danton's doing. Paris seemed at the time but a projectile in his massive hand, ready to be hurled at the invading foe. His alleged cruelty was the result, in a great measure, of this habitual carelessness. Too lazy to superintend with sufficient watchfulness the administration of justice, it grew into the Reign of Terror. He was, nevertheless, deeply to blame. He ought to have cried out to the mob, "The way to the prisoners in the Abbaye lies over Danton's dead body;" and not one of them had passed on. He repented, afterward, of his conduct, and was, in fact, the first martyr to a milder regime. Not one of his personal enemies perished in that massacre: hence the name "butcher" applied to him is not correct. He did not dabble in blood. He made but one fierce and rapid irruption into the neighborhood of the "*red sea*," and returned sick and shuddering therefrom.

His person and his eloquence were in keeping with his mind and character. We figure him always after the pattern of Bethlehem Gabor, as Godwin describes him: his stature gigantic, his hair a dead black, a face in which sagacity and fury struggle for the mastery – a voice of thunder. His mere figure might have saved the utterance of his watchword, "We must put our enemies in fear." His face was itself a "Reign of Terror." His eloquence was not of the intellectual, nor of the rhetorical cast. It was not labored with care, nor moulded by art. It was the full, gushing utterance

of a mind seeing the real merits of the case in a glare of vision, and announcing them in a tone of absolute assurance. He did not indulge in long arguments or elaborate declamations. His speeches were Cyclopean cries, at the sight of the truth breaking, like the sun, on his mind. Each speech was a peroration. His imagination was fertile, rugged, and grand. Terrible truth was sheathed in terrible figure. Each thought was twin-born with poetry – poetry of a peculiar and most revolutionary stamp. It leaped into light, like Minerva, armed with bristling imagery. Danton was a true poet, and some of his sentences are the strangest and most characteristic utterances amid all the wild eloquence the Revolution produced. His curses are of the streets, not of Paris, but of Pandemonium; his blasphemies were sublime as those heard in the trance of Sicilian seer, belched up from fallen giants through the smoke of Etna, or like those which made the "burning marl" and the "fiery gulf" quake and recoil in fear.

Such an extraordinary being was Danton, resembling rather the Mammoths and Megatheriums of geology than modern productions of nature. There was no beauty about him why he should be desired, but there was the power and the terrible brilliance, the rapid rise and rapid subsidence of an Oriental tempest. Peace – the peace of a pyramid, calm-sitting and colossal, amid long desolations, and kindred forms of vast and coarse sublimity – be to his ashes!

It is lamentable to contemplate the fate of such a man. Newly married, sobered into strength and wisdom, in the prime of life, and with mildness settling down upon his character, like moonlight on the rugged features of the Sphinx, he was snatched away. "One feels," says Scott of him, "as if the eagle had been brought down by a 'mousing owl.'" More melancholy still to find him dying "game," as it is commonly called – that is, without hope and without God in the world – caracolling and exulting, as he plunged into the waters of what he deemed the bottomless and the endless night; as if a spirit so strong as his could die – as if a spirit so stained as his could escape the judgment – the judgment of a God as just as he is merciful; but also – blessed be his name! – as merciful as he is just.

[From Bentley's Miscellany.]

RATTLIN THE REEFER'S DREAM. A TOUGH BUT TRUE YARN

BY ONE OF RATTLIN'S OLD SHIPMATES

It was about the middle of August, 18 – , that the *Old Lucifer* was cruising in the Monar Passage, a strait about forty miles wide, which separates the eastern end of St. Domingo from the island of Porto Rico. I was "middy" of the morning watch: it had been dead calm all night, but the gentle trade-wind was rising with the rising sun, and morning was glorious with the magic gilding of a tropical sky. Some time after eight bells,[7] when Ned Rattlin, who was never very punctual or methodical in any of his movements, came on deck to relieve me, and I was about to hurry down to my breakfast of warm skilligalee, or, as our old French negro, who served as midshipmen's steward and maid-of-all-work, with true French tact for murdering the king's English, called it, "giggeragee," Ralph seized me by the collar of my jacket, crying,

"Avast! Careless, my boy; you really must not make sail for the cockpit till you have heard the horrid dream which I had last night or this morning, for I dreamt it twice over, and can not get it out of my head. I must tell it to some one, and you are the only one that I dare tell it to; I should be so confoundedly laughed at by the *servum pocus* of the cockpit; but you and I know each other, and have some pursuits and feelings in common. We have our day-dreams and our night-dreams, and we know that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of a midshipman's berth."

Now, had not Ralph seized hold of me by the lappel of my jacket, as before said, I should certainly have cut and run; for a reefer of sixteen, who is just relieved from the morning-watch, which he has kept for four hours, from four o'clock in the morning, and who has taken a cold bath in the wash-deck tub, is not likely to be in a humor to let his breakfast of cocoa or skilligalee grow cold. But, with the powerful grip of Ralph's shoulder-of-mutton fist on my collar, there was no chance of escape without tearing my jacket from clue to earring, which I felt that I could not afford to do; for, as I have before remarked, Ralph Rattlin was my senior by two years at least, and overtopped me in height by a foot, or something near it. I therefore made a virtue of necessity, and said,

"Well, Jemmy, if you'll promise not to keep me long, and allow me, first, to run down below and tell old Dom to keep my burgoo[8] warm, I'll return and hear your wonderful dream, though I fancy it's all gammon, and only manufactured to try the capacity of my swallow; because you know that, like yourself, I have a bit of hankering after the marvelous, and, as the negro Methodist said of the prophet Jonah, am 'a tellible fellow for fish,' though I doubt whether, like him, I could quite swallow a whale."

"Well, then, make sail, you little flibbertigibbet, and make haste back, that's a good fellow."

The above elegant soubriquet he generally favored me with, when, in Yankee parlance, I had "riled" him and got his "dander up," as was always the case when he was called Jemmy Caster; he being but too conscious that his long loose figure and shambling gait bore, at that time, no small resemblance to those of a waister of that name, though he afterward became a remarkably fine, handsome man, bearing a striking resemblance, not without sufficient reason, to King George the Fourth.

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[7] Time is regulated on board a king's ship by a half-hour glass, which is placed in the binnacle, in charge of the quarter-master of the watch on deck, and who when he turns the glass, passes the word forward to strike the bell, which, in a man-of-war, is hung to the main-bitts, just over the main-hatchway, and where it is consequently heard with facility all over the ship.

[8] Burgoo, or skilligalee, is the sea-term for what in Scotland is called "parritch," and in Ireland "stirabout," namely, oatmeal boiled in water.

In a few minutes I had made arrangements with old Dominique for the safe custody of my breakfast, and was again pacing the lee side of the quarter-deck, by the side of my gigantic messmate.

"And now, my dear Careless," said he, with unusual gravity, "if you can be serious for a few minutes, I will relate to you this infernal dream, which so preys upon my spirits that I do not feel like myself this morning, and must unburden my mind. I dreamt, then, that I was on the second dog-watch, as you know I shall be this evening; it was between seven and eight bells, the night pitch-dark, with the wind blowing fresh from the northeast, the ship under double-reefed topsails, and foresail close hauled on the starboard tack, running at the rate of five knots as I had found upon heaving the log. Suddenly the sea became like one sheet of flame; its appearance was awfully grand; the head of every wave, as it curled over and broke, diffused itself in broad streaks and flashes of blue and white flame; and I involuntarily repeated to myself the two lines of that singular, soul-freezing rhapsody, the 'Ancient Mariner,' which, though descriptive of a very different state of the ocean from that now presented to my imagination, I felt to be most applicable to what I saw before me —

> The water, like a witch's oils,
> Burnt green, and blue, and white;

and then, referring to the two preceding lines of the stanzas —

> About, about, in reel and rout,
> The death-fires danced at night.

For that strangely wild and beautiful poem had taken a powerful hold on my sleeping fancy. I asked myself, with a shudder, can there be 'death-fires?' And it seemed that the question uttered half aloud, had no sooner passed my lips, than it received its answer in a most strange and fearful manner; for a voice, like no human voice that I ever yet heard, shrieked out, in a tone of horror and distress, that made my blood run cold, 'Ship a-hoy – ship a-hoy!' I turned toward the lee quarter, whence the voice came; and, jumping on a carronade-slide, I saw the body of a man appearing out of the sea, from the waist upward, of gigantic size, and of most forbidding – and at the same time woeful – countenance. His body appeared covered with scales, like that of a fish, which reflected the ghastly phosphoric light of the waters in radiating hues of green and gold, and purple and violet. His ample jaws, which opened from ear to ear, and which were furnished with a triple row of saw-shaped teeth, like those of a shark, were fringed with a thick curled beard and mustache, of pale sea-green, which fell in wavy masses, mingling with long elf-locks of the same sickly hue, over his broad breast and shoulders; his deep sunk eyes flashed out with a strange unearthly light from beneath thick, overhanging eyebrows of that self-same sea-green hue, and his head was surrounded and surmounted with a waving diadem of 'green, and blue and white' flames, flashing upward, and radiating sideways, and curling over their waving tops, so as to ape the exact form of ostrich feathers. Awful as the figure was, and though it made my flesh creep, yet dreaming as I was, I felt conscious that there was something of the ridiculous attached to the *bizarrerie* of its appearance. You know my vein, Careless, and will give me credit for a true exposition of my feelings, when I tell you that, though in a most awful funk, I could not help adopting the words of *Trinculo*, and asking myself, half aloud,

> What have we here – a man or a fish?

I had not, till that moment, noticed the quarter-master of the watch, a fine old weather-beaten seaman, who stood close to my side, and was, like myself, attentively watching the movements of the strange demon-like merman, who continued to follow the ship within a few fathoms of the lee quarter-gallery, with a continual bowing or nodding motion of the head, which caused his plumes of livid flame to flash and corruscate, so that, to my eyes, they appeared to assume various forms of

terror, as of 'fiery flying serpents,' entwining his temples and thence shooting upward, hissing and protruding their forked tongues, and lashing the air with their wings and tails of flame; and then, again, they subsided as before into the form of gracefully-curling ostrich plumes; meanwhile he kept opening his terrific jaws, from which issued a thin blue luminous vapor, as if in act to speak, but uttered no audible sound, except that every now and then he would wring his huge hands, which appeared to be webbed to the second joint of the fingers, like the feet of a water fowl, and furnished with long, crooked nails like an eagle's claws, and utter a wailing shriek so like the cry of a drowning man, that it nearly drove me mad to hear it, and seemed to freeze my very blood in my veins. Whether old Bitts, the quarter-master, had really heard me quote the words of *Trinculo*, or whether, as all things seem to work by supernatural influences in dreams, he had divined my question by intuition, I know not, but he answered me at once.

"'No, sir; believe an old sailor, that 'ere critter is neither man nor fish; it is somebody far more terrible-like, and one that few living sailors have ever set eyes on, though, mayhap, I may have seen him before; mayhap, d'ye see, I can't tell when nor where, nor whether it were sleeping or waking; howsomedever, be that as it will, I knows him well enough, for sure that 'ere's old Davy himself – old Davy Jones – he's come for some poor fellow's soul on board this here ship; and if you wants to get rid of him, you'd better go down at once, and call the captain up, that he may tell him to take what he wants and be off; for, till that's done, he'll keep alongside the ship, and if he's kept too long waiting, there's no saying but he may send a hurricane which may sweep the *Old Lucifer* and all her officers and crew, away down into his locker.'

"This hint was no sooner given, than I thought I went down into the captain's cabin, where I found Captain Dure seated at the cabin-table, just under the swinging lamp, as pale as death, and trembling from head to foot like an aspen-leaf.

"'Please, sir,' I said, touching my hat, as in duty bound, 'Davy Jones has come alongside, and is waiting for somebody's soul; will you please to come on deck, and tell him to take what he wants?'

"'I know it,' said the captain, who seemed utterly unnerved with terror, while the presence of the unearthly visitant seemed to

> – harrow up his soul, freeze his young blood;
> Make his two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
> His knotted and combined locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand on end
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

"'I had a glimpse of him,' continued he, 'out of the quarter-gallery window, and that's enough for me. Let the officer of the watch, or the first lieutenant, tell him to take what he wants, and get rid of him.'

"Now, it seemed to me in my dream that I was dreadfully annoyed at the conduct of the captain in shrinking in such a dastardly manner from his duty; for, from the moment that Bitts had informed me who the stranger was and what he required, I had gone down and reported his advent to the skipper, with as much coolness and unconcern as I should have done the coming alongside of the admiral or any other great personage, and all my terror seemed, for the time, to have vanished as soon as the strange vision became connected with matters of routine or ship's duty. I, therefore, addressed the captain again, as it seemed to me, in a tone more authoritative than respectful: 'But, sir, you must come on deck; for old Bill Bitts says that Davy Jones will hearken to nobody but the captain or commander of the ship for the time being, and he knows Davy of old; and says, that if you don't come up on deck soon and let him go, the old fellow will send a hurricane that will blow the *Old Lucifer* out of the water, and that we shall find ourselves all, men and officers, down in Davy Jones's locker before you can say Jack Robinson. And I can tell you, sir, that the sky looks very ugly to windward.'

"'Well, Ralph, my boy!' said the captain, apparently quite convinced by my eloquent speech, which seemed to go down capitally in my dream, though I guess I should soon be looking out for squalls at the main-top-gallant-mast head, if I were to venture to address such a cavalier harangue to the skipper in waking earnest. 'Well, Ralph, my boy! give me your arm, and we'll go on deck, and give old Davy his due, since it must be so.' And with my assistance the captain mounted the companion-ladder, still trembling in every limb.

"As soon as we came on deck, I led him over to the lee side of the quarter-deck, and begged him to mount the carronade slide, and give his unwelcome visitor the *congé d'élire*, for which he seemed waiting, still bowing his head, waving his fiery plumes, and mopping and mowing, and showing his treble row of teeth, as before. At the sight of the frightful demon, the captain seemed more dead than alive, and ready to fall from the gun-carriage, on which I was obliged to support him; he, however, plucked up courage to shriek out, in a voice that trembled with agitation, 'Whoever, or whatever you are, take what you want, and begone;' and having said so, he sank powerless into my arms; upon which the creature uttered one of its strange, thrilling shrieks as of a drowning man, but which seemed mingled with a sort of shrill, demoniac laughter, and disappeared below the waves – the waving plumes of his singular head-gear flashing up half-mast high as he sank out of sight. At the same moment, my eyes were somehow mysteriously directed from it, and I saw Jacob Fell, the forecastle-man, fall dead into the arms of one of his watch-mates, he, whom we call Cadaverous Jack, and whom you christened the Ancient Mariner, because you said he went about his duty looking so miserable, holding his head down on one side, as if he always felt the weight of the murdered albatross hanging about his neck. Immediately a heavy squall threw the ship on her beam-ends, and I awoke" – which was the singular dream related to me by my quondam friend and shipmate, with a gravity quite unusual with him, except when he wanted to play upon the credulity of some of us youngsters, when he used to assume the gravest possible countenance, though I could always, in these cases, discern the lurking devil in his eyes. In this case, however, I could discover no such appearance of fun and frolic; his looks were, on the contrary, perfectly serious, and even allied to sadness, in spite of the bravado with which he had assumed his usual careless levity of manner in certain parts of his narration. I determined, however, not to let him have the laugh against me, and therefore said, "Come, come, Jemmy, you should tell that dream to the marines; the sailors can't bolt it; it's rather too tough. We all of us know that you are always dreaming, but you can't catch old birds with such chaff. I am too old a sea-dog, and have sailed over too many leagues of blue water to bite at such gammon." I prided myself much on being Ralph's senior in the service by a couple of years or so, and felt indignant that he should think of treating me as a youngster, because he had about the same advantage of me in age. He, however, affirmed, in the most solemn manner, that it was an actual *bonâ-fide* dream, and that it had been reiterated on his falling asleep again, though in broken and disjointed patches, sometimes one part, sometimes another, of the previous vision being presented to his sleepy fancy; but there was always this horrible merman, with his shark's jaws and his flaming tiara, and poor Jacob Fell lying dead in his messmate's arms. But methinks I hear some nautical reader exclaim, "All stuff!" who ever heard of two reefers telling their dreams, and chattering on the sacred precincts of the quarter-deck of one of her Majesty's frigates, like a guinea-pig and an embryo cadet on the quarter-deck of a Bengal trader? Pardon, my noble sea-*hossifer*, but you must remember that the *Old Lucifer* was not the crack frigate – not the *Eos*, six-and-thirty, but only a small frigate; and that, although she was blessed with a real martinet of a first-lieutenant, yet, in point of discipline, she was like most jackass frigates and sloops of war, *et hoc genus omne*, little better than a privateer; besides, our Portuguese supernumerary lieutenant was the officer of the watch, and Ralph had completely got the weather-gage of him, and could do what he liked with the "pavior." However, the dream was told me by Ralph nearly in the very words in which I have given it, though, perhaps, not all on deck, for the subject was renewed over our allowance of grog in the midshipmen's berth after dinner, for nothing could drive it out of Rattlin's head, and he was all that day singularly silent and *distrait* on all other subjects. That

evening I had the first dog-watch; and when Rattlin came on deck at six o'clock to relieve me, the sun was setting in a red and angry-looking sky, and there was every symptom of a squally night.

"Well, Percy," he said, "this sunset reminds me of my dream. I really think old Davy will be among us before my watch is out."

"Very well, Jemmy, I'll come on deck at seven bells and see," I replied, as I ran down the companion for an hour's snooze, for, as my nautical readers will be aware, I had the middle watch. Mindful of my promise, as soon as I heard seven bells struck, I roused myself from the locker on which I had stretched myself, and went on deck, and I was immediately struck with the perfect coincidence of the weather, and all the accessories to those described by Rattlin in his dream. The ship had just been put about, and was now close hauled on the starboard tack; the night pitch dark, the breeze freshening from the northeast, and the sea beginning to assume that luminous appearance so frequently observable under a dark sky and with a fresh breeze, but which, though generally attributed to myriads of luminous animalculæ, has never yet been fully and satisfactorily accounted for. I joined my friend Rattlin, and said to him, in a low tone, "This looks, indeed, like your dream."

"Yes," he answered, looking very pale and nervous; "it does, indeed. I don't know what to make of it. Davy Jones will certainly lay hold of some of us to-night."

At this moment the first-lieutenant came on deck, followed by the captain, whose sallow countenance, as he stood abaft the binnacle, and the light fell on his face, looked rather more ghastly than usual.

"I think, Mr. Silva," said the former, addressing the officer of the watch, "we had better take another reef in the topsails; it looks very squally to windward; it's drawing near to eight bells, so we'll turn the hands up at once."

"Mr. Rattlin," said Silva, "all hands reef topsails."

"Boatswain's-mate," bawled out Rattlin, going forward on to the weather gangway, "turn the hands up to reef topsails."

"Ay, ay, sir;" and immediately his silver call was between his lips, and after blowing a shrill prelude, his hoarse voice was heard proclaiming, "All hands reef topsails, ahoy," which was re-echoed from the main-deck by the call and voice of the boatswain's-mate of the watch below, and, finally, by those of the boatswain himself, as the men came tumbling up the fore and main hatchways, and were soon seen scampering up the rigging, or making the best of their way to their various stations. In less than five minutes the topsails were double-reefed, and the ship again dashing the spray from her bows. It being now so near the time for relieving the watch, the crew, with the exception of the idlers, all remained on deck, and the topmen scattered in groups about the gangways and forecastle.

All at once the sky grew blacker than before, the breeze freshened, and the surface of the sea became like one sheet of pale blue and white flame.

"Now, Careless," whispered Rattlin, actually trembling with excitement, "my dream to the life!"

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when such a shriek as I never heard before or since, seemed to come out of the very depths of the ocean, close under the ship's counter on the lee quarter. Every one rushed to the lee gangway, or jumped on the quarter-deck guns, to look in the direction from whence the sound came; but nothing could be seen. Once more that doleful cry arose, and it seemed now rather more distant from the ship, and then it ceased forever.

"A man overboard!" cried the first lieutenant, who seemed the first to recover his senses, seizing a grating of the companion-hatchway, and flinging it over the lee bulwark, while the lieutenant of the watch did the same with its fellow. "Down with helm, and heave her all aback – let go the lee braces – lay the main-topsail to the mast – square away the after-yards, my boys – lower the jolly-boat – jump into her, some of ye, and cast off her fastenings."

This latter command had, however, been obeyed ere it was issued, for the captain of the mizen-top and myself had jumped into the boat, where we were soon joined by three other mizen-top-men, and had her all clear for lowering. Two other seamen stood with the boat's tackle-falls in their hands.

"Lower away," cried I; and down we went.

During her descent, I had shipped the rudder, and we were soon pulling away to leeward. In vain we pulled about for more than an hour in the short, tumbling sea, which scintillated as it broke around us, and shed a ghastly hue on our anxious countenances, while the from the blades of our oars at every dip as they rose again from the water. At length the stentorian voice of the first-lieutenant hailed us to come on board, and we gave up our hopeless search, bringing with us nothing but one of the gratings and the life-buoy, which had been thrown overboard to support the drowning man, had he been fortunate enough to lay hold on one or the other of them. Upon passing the word forward to inquire whether any of the ship's company were missing, it was found that Jacob Fell, the forecastle-man, had not been seen since he had laid out with one of his watch-mates to stow the jib, which was hauled down when the topsails were reefed; the other man had left him out on the jib-boom, whence he must have fallen overboard; and it was supposed, from his thrilling and unearthly shriek, that he had been seized by a shark, as that part of the Carribean Sea is peculiarly infested by those voracious creatures; and thus was most singularly accomplished my shipmate Rattlin's dream.

Elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes

[From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.]

LETTERS AND LETTER WRITING

Neither history nor tradition tells us aught of the first letter – who was its writer, and on what occasion; how it was transmitted, or in what manner answered. The Chinese, the Hindoo, and the Scandinavian mythologies had each tales regarding the inventors of writing, and the rest of those that by pre-eminence may be called human arts; but concerning the beginner of mankind's epistolary correspondence, neither they nor the classic poets – who by the way, volunteered many an ingenious story on subjects far less important – have given us the least account.

Pope says:

> "Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid —
> Some banished lover, or some captive maid."

The poet evidently refers to the letter-writing art, and it may be so, for aught we can tell; but with all submission to his superior knowledge, banished lovers and captive maids have rarely been the transmitters of such useful inventions. Certainly, whoever first commenced letter-writing, the world has been long his debtor. It is long since the Samaritans wrote a letter against the builders of Jerusalem to Artaxerxes, and it may be observed that the said letter is the earliest epistle mentioned in any history. Older communications appear to have been always verbal, by means of heralds and messengers. Homer, in his account of all the news received and sent between the Greeks and Trojans, never refers to a single letter. The scribe's occupation was not altogether unknown in those days, but it must have been brought to considerable perfection before efforts in the epistolary style were made. That ancient language of picture and symbol, in which Egypt expressed her wisdom, was undoubtedly the earliest mode of writing; but, however, calculated to preserve the memory of great historical events amid the daily life, and toil, and changes of nations, it was but poorly fitted for the purpose of correspondence. How could compliments or insinuations be conveyed by such an autograph? Letters must have been brief and scanty in the hieroglyphic times; yet doubtless not without some representations, for the unalphabeted of mankind have combined to hold mutual intelligence by many a sign and emblem, especially in those affairs designated of the heart, as they above all others contribute to ingenuity. Hence came the Eastern language of flowers, which, with Oriental literature and mythology, is now partially known over the civilized world. In its native clime this natural alphabet is said to be so distinctly understood, that the most minute intimations are expressed by it; but the more frank and practical courtship of Europe has always preferred the pen as its channel of communication, which, besides its greater power of enlargement, prevents those mistakes into which the imperfectly-initiated are apt to fall with flowers. For instance, there is a story of a British officer in Andalusia who, having made a deep impression on the heart of a certain alcaide's daughter, in one of the small old towns of that half-Moorish province, and receiving from her one morning a bouquet, the significance of which was – "My mother is in the way now, but come to visit me in the twilight," supposed in his ignorance, and perhaps presumption, that he was invited to an immediate appointment: whereupon he hurried to the house, just in time to meet the venerable signora, when the lady of his heart boxed his ears with her own fair hands, and vowed she would never again send flowers to a stupid Englishman.

In fine contrast to this sample of misunderstanding stands forth the dexterity with which an Irish serving-maid contrived to signify, by symbols of her own invention, her pleasure, on a still more trying occasion. Poor Kitty, though a belle in her class, could neither read nor write; but her mistress's grown-up daughter undertook, as a labor of love, to carry on a correspondence between her and a certain hedge schoolmaster in the neighborhood, who laid siege to Kitty's heart and hand on account of a small deposit in the savings' bank, and that proverbial attraction which learned men are said to find in rather illiterate ladies. The schoolmaster was, however, providently desirous of fixing on the

mind of his future partner an impression of his own superiority sufficient to outlast the wear and tear of married life, and therefore wooed chiefly by long and learned letters, to which Kitty responded in her best style, leaving to her volunteer secretary what she called "the grammar" of her replies; besides declaring, with many hardly-complimentary observations on the schoolmaster's person and manners, that she had not the slightest interest in the affair, but only, in her own words, "to keep up the craythur's heart." Thus the courtship had proceeded prosperously through all the usual stages, when at length the question, *par excellence*, was popped (of course on paper). Kitty heard that epistle read with wonted disdain; but, alas, for human confidence! there was something in her answer with which she could not trust the writer of so many; for after all her scorn, Kitty intended to say, "Yes," and her mode of doing so merits commemoration. In solitude that evening, beside the kitchen hearth, she sketched on a sheet of white paper, with the help of a burned stick, a rude representation of a human eye, and inclosing a small quantity of wool, dispatched it next morning to the impatient swain by the hand of his head scholar – those primitive tokens expressing to Kitty's mind the important words, "I will," which the teacher, strange to say, understood in the same sense; and their wedding took place, to the unqualified amazement of Kitty's amanuensis. Epistolary forms and fashions have had their mutations like all other human things. The old Eastern mode of securing letters was by folding them in the shape of a roll, and winding round them a thin cord, generally of silk, as the luxury of letters was known only to the rich. In the case of billets-doux – for Eastern lovers did not always speak by flowers when the pen was at their command – enthusiastic ladies sometimes substituted those long silken strings which, from time immemorial, the Oriental women have worn in their hair – a proceeding which was understood to indicate the deepest shade of devotedness.

The mythic importance attached to these hair-strings must, indeed, have been great, as history records that a certain prince, whose dominions were threatened by Mithridates, the great king of Pontus – like other great men, a troublesome neighbor in his day – sent the latter a submissive epistle, offering homage and tribute, and bound with the hair-strings of his nineteen wives, to signify that he and his were entirely at the monarch's service. The custom of securing letters by cords came through the Greek empire into Europe in the middle ages; but the use of the seal seems still earlier, as it is mentioned in Old Testament history. Ancient writers speak of it as an Egyptian Invention, together with the signet-ring, so indispensable throughout the classic world, and regarded as the special appendage of sovereignty in the feudal times.

Of all the letters the Egyptians wrote on their papyrus, no specimens now remain, except perhaps those scrolls in the hands of mummies, referred to by early Christian authors as epistles sent to deceased friends by those unreturning messengers; and they, it may be presumed, were at the best but formal letters, since no reply was ever expected. The classic formula for correspondence, "Augustus to Julius, greeting," is now preserved only in letters-patent, or similar documents. That brief and unvarying style has long been superseded in every language of Europe by a graduated series of endearing terms, rising with the temperature of attachment, from "Dear Sir," or "Madam," to a limit scarcely assignable, but it lies somewhere near "Adored Thomas" or "Margery."

Masters of the fine arts as they were, those ancient nations came far short of the moderns in that of letter-writing. The few specimens of their correspondence that have reached us are either on matters of public business, or dry and dignified epistles from one great man to another, with little life and less gossip in them. It is probable that their practice was somewhat limited, as the facilities of the post-office were unknown to Greece and Rome – the entire agency of modern communication being to the classic world represented only by the post or courier, who formed part of the retinue of every wealthy family. The method of writing in the third person, so suitable for heavy business or ceremony, is evidently a classical bequest. It does not appear to have been practiced in England till about the beginning of the eighteenth century, though it was early in use among the continental nations. Louis XIV. used to say, it was the only style in which a prince should permit himself to write; and in the far East, where it had been in still older repute, the Chinese informed his missionaries

that ever since they had been taught manners by the Emperor Tae Sing, no inferior would presume to address a man of rank in any other form, especially as a law of the said emperor had appointed twenty blows of the bamboo for that infraction of plebeian duty.

Of all human writings, letters have been preserved in the smallest proportion. How few of those which the best-informed actors in great events or revolutions must have written, have been copied by elder historians or biographers! Such documents are, by their nature, at once the least accessible and the most liable to destruction; private interests, feelings, and fears, keep watch against their publication; but even when these were taken out of the way, it is to be feared that the narrow-minded habit of overlooking all their wisdom deemed minute, which has made the chronicles of nations so scanty, and many a life in two volumes such dull reading, also induced learned compilers to neglect, as beneath their search, the old letters bundled up in dusty chest or corner, till they served a succeeding generation for waste paper. Such mistakes have occasioned heavy losses to literature. Time leaves no witnesses in the matters of history and character equal to these. How many a disputed tale, on which party controversy has raged, and laborious volumes have been written, would the preservation of one authentic note have set at rest forever?

The practical learning of our times, in its search after confirmation and detail, amply recognizes the importance of old letters; and good service has been done to both history and moral philosophy by those who have given them to the press from state-paper office and family bureau. In such collections one sees the world's talked-of-and-storied people as they were in private business, in social relations, and in what might be justly designated the status of their souls. In spite of the proverbial truisms, that paper never refuses ink, and falsehood can be written as well as spoken, the correspondence of every man contains an actual portrait of the writer's mind, visible through a thousand disguises, and bearing the same relation to the inward man that a correct picture bears to the living face; without change or motion, indeed, but telling the beholder of both, and indicating what direction they are likely to take.

The sayings of wits and the doing of oddities long survive them in the memory of their generation – the actions of public men live in history, and the genius of authors in their works; but in every case the individual, him or herself, lives in letters. One who carried this idea still farther, once called letter-writing the Daguerreotype of mind – ever leaving on the paper its true likeness, according to the light in which it stands for the time; and he added, like the sun's painting, apt to be most correct in the less pleasant lines and lineaments. Unluckily this mental portraiture, after the fashion of other matters, seems less perceptible to the most interested parties. Many an unconcerned reader can at this day trace in Swift's epistles the self-care and worship which neither Stella nor Vanessa could have seen without a change in their histories.

Cardinal Mazarin, however, used to say that an ordinary gentleman might deceive in a series of interviews, but only a complete tactician in one of letters; "that is," observed his eminence, "if people don't deceive themselves." The cardinal's statement strikingly recalls, if it does not explain, a contemporary remark, that the most successful courtships, in the fullest sense of that word, were carried on with the help of secret proxies in the corresponding department. The Count de Lauson, whose days, even to a good old age, were equally divided between the Bastile and the above-mentioned pursuit, in which he must have been rather at home – for though a poor gentleman, with little pretensions to family, still less to fortune, and no talents that the world gave him credit for, he contrived in his youth to marry a princess of the blood-royal of France, who had refused half the kings of Europe, and been an Amazon in the war of the Frondé; and in his age a wealthy court belle – this Count de Lauson declared that he could never have succeeded in his endeavors after high matches but for a certain professional letter-writer of Versailles, on whose death he is said to have poured forth unfeigned lamentations in the presence of his last lady. Letters always appear to have been peculiarly powerful in the count's country. Madame de Genlis, whose "Tales of the Castle," and "Knights of the Swan" delighted at least the juveniles of a now-departing generation, was believed to have made a complete conquest, even before first sight, of the nobleman whose name she bears, by a single letter,

addressed to a lady at whose house he was an admiring visitor, when she unadvisedly showed him the epistle. An anxiously-sought introduction and a speedy marriage followed; but the scandal-mongers of the period averred that their separation, which took place some years after, was owing, among other circumstances, to an anonymous letter received by the baron himself.

Frederick the Great used to call the French the first letter-writers of Europe, and it is probable that their national turn for clever gossip gives to their epistles a sort of general interest, for in no other country have letters formed so large a portion of published literature. This was particularly true in Frederick's own age. Never did a death or a quarrel take place – and the latter was not rare among the *savants* of that period – but comfort or satisfaction was sought in the immediate publication of every scrap of correspondence, to the manifold increase of disputes and heartburnings. Some of the most amusing volumes extant were thus given to the world; and Madame Dunoyer's, though scarcely of that description, must not be forgotten from the tale of its origin. When Voltaire was a young attaché to the French embassy at the Hague, with no reputation but that of being rather unmanageable by his family and confessor, he was on billet-doux terms, it seems, with madame's daughter; but madame found out that he was poor, or something like it, for in no other respect was the lady scrupulous. Her veto was therefore laid on the correspondence, which nevertheless survived under interdict for some time, till Voltaire left the embassy, and it died of itself; for he wrote the "Oedipe," became talked of by all Paris, and noticed by the Marquis de Vellers. Gradually the man grew great in the eyes of his generation, his fame as a poet and philosopher filled all Europe, not forgetting the Hague; and when it had reached the zenith, Madame Dunoyer collected his letters to her daughter, which remained in her custody, the receiver being by this time married, and published them at her own expense in a handsomely-bound volume. Whether to be revenged on fortune for permitting her to miss so notable a son-in-law, or on him for obeying her commands, it is now impossible to determine, but her book served to show the world that the early billets-doux of a great genius might be just as milk-and-watery as those of common people.

Indeed letter-publishing seems to have been quite the rage in the eighteenth century. The Secretary La Beaumelle stole all Madame de Maintenon's letters to her brother, setting forth her difficulties in humoring Louis XIV., and printed them at Copenhagen. Some copies were obligingly forwarded to Versailles, but madame assured the king they were beneath his royal notice, which, being confirmed by his confessor, was of course believed; but the transaction looks like retributive justice on her well-known practice of keeping sundry post-office clerks in pay to furnish a copy of every letter sent or received by the principal persons at court, not excepting even the royal family. Among these were copied the celebrated letters of the Dauphiness Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, which now, in good plain print, present to all readers of taste in that department a complete chronicle of all the scandal, gossip, and follies of Versailles; and that princess, whose pride stood so high on her family quarterings, was gravely rebuked, and obliged to ask pardon seven years after for certain uncomplimentary passages in her epistles regarding madame when she first came to court as nursery governess to the king's children.

Dangerous approvers have old letters been from throne to cottage. Many a specious statement, many a fair profession, ay, and many a promising friendship, have they shaken down. Readers, have a care of your deposits in the post-office; they are pledges given to time. It is strange, though true, how few historical characters are benefited by the publication of their letters, surviving, as such things do, contemporary interests and prejudices, as well as personal influence.

There must be something of the salt that will not lose its savor there to make them serve the writers in the eyes of posterity. What strange confidence the age of hoop and periwig put in letter-writing! Divines published their volumes of controversy or pious exhortation, made up of epistles to imaginary friends. Mrs. Chapone's letters to her niece nourished the wisdom of British belles; while Lord Chesterfield's to his son were the glass of fashion for their brothers; and Madame de Sévigné's to her daughter, written expressly for publication, afforded models for the wit, elegance, and

sentiment of every circle wherein her language was spoken. The epistolary style's inherent power of characterization naturally recommended it in the construction of their novels, and many a tale of fame and fashion in its day, besides "La Nouvelle Heloise," and "Sir Charles Grandison," was ingeniously composed of presumed correspondence.

Chinese literature is said to possess numerous fictions in that form; but it is not to be regretted that modern novelists, whose name is more than legion, pass it by in favor of direct narrative; for, under the best arrangement, a number of letters can give but a series of views, telling the principals' tale in a broken, sketchy fashion, and leaving little room for the fortunes of second-rate people, who are not always the lowest company in the novel. Tours and travels tell pleasantly in letters, supposing of course the letters to be well written; for some minds have such a wondrous affinity for the commonplace, that the most important event or exciting scene sinks to the every-day level under their pen.

Sir Andrew Mitchell, who was British embassador to Prussia during the seven years' war, writes from the camp before Prague concerning that great battle which turned the scale of power in Germany, and served Europe to talk of till the French Revolution, in a style, but for quotations from the bulletin, suitable to the election of some civic alderman; and a less known traveler, writing to a friend of the glare of Moscow's burning, which he saw from a Russian country-house, reddening the northern night, describes it as "a very impressive circumstance, calculated to make one guard against fire."

It has been remarked that, as a general rule, poets write the best, and schoolmasters the worst letters. That the former, in common with literary men of any order, should be at least interesting correspondents, seems probable; but why the instructors of youth should be generally stricken with deficiency in letter-writing is not so easy of explanation.

Some one has also observed that, independent of mental gifts and graces, characters somewhat cold and frivolous generally write the most finished letters, and instanced Horace Walpole, whose published epistles even in our distant day command a degree of attention never to be claimed by those of his superior contemporaries – the highly-gifted Burke, and the profound Johnson. It may be that the court gossip in and upon which Horace lived has done much for the letters from Strawberry Hill, but the vein must have been there; and the abilities that shine in the world of action or of letters, the conversational talents or worthiness of soul, do not make the cleverest correspondent.

Count Stadion, prime minister to the Elector of Mayence, according to Goethe, hit on an easy method of making an impression by letters. He obliged his secretary, Laroche, to practice his handwriting, which, it appears, he did with considerable success; and, says the poet in his own memoirs, being "passionately attached to a lady of rank and talent, if he stopped in her society till late at night, his secretary was, in the mean time, sitting at home, and hammering out the most ardent love-letters; the count chose one of these, and sent it that very night to his beloved, who was thus necessarily convinced of the inextinguishable fire of her passionate adorer."

"Hélas!" as Madame d'Epigny remarked, when turning over the printed epistles of a deceased friend, "one can never guess how little truth the post brings one;" but from the following tradition, it would seem the less the better. Among the old-world stories of Germany are many regarding a fairy chief or king, known from rustic times as Number Nip, or Count-the-Turnips. One of his pranks was played in an ancient inn of Heidelberg, where, on a December night, he mixed the wine with a certain essence distilled from the flowers of Elfland, which had the effect of making all who tasted it tell nothing but truth with either tongue or pen till the morning. The series of quarrels which took place in consequence round the kitchen fire belong not to the present subject; but in the red parlor there sat, all from Vienna, a poet, a student, a merchant, and a priest. After supper, each of these remembered that he had a letter to write – the poet to his mistress, the merchant to his wife, the priest to the bishop of his diocese, and the student to his bachelor uncle, Herr Weisser of Leopoldstadt, who had long declared him his heir. Somehow next morning they were all at the post-office beseeching

their letters back; but the mail had been dispatched, and the tale records how, after that evening's correspondence, the poet's liege lady dismissed him, the merchant and his wife were divorced, the priest never obtained preferment, and none of the letters were answered except the student's, whom Herr Weisser complimented on having turned out such a prudent, sensible young man, but hoped he wouldn't feel disappointed, as himself intended to marry immediately.

The most curiously-characteristic letters now made public property are those of Sir Walter Raleigh to Queen Elizabeth, written from the Tower (to which the historian of the world was committed for wedding without her majesty's permission), and in the highest tone of desperation that a banished lover could assume; the correspondence between Frederick of Prussia and Voltaire, then of France, after what was called their reconciliation, beginning with the grandest compliments, and ending with reminiscences of quite another kind, particularly that from the royal pen, which opens with, "You, who from the heights of philosophy look down on the weakness and follies of mankind," and concludes with the charge of appropriating candle-ends; and the epistles of Rousseau during his residence in England, which alternate between discoveries of black conspiracies against his life and fame, and threats of adjournment to the workhouse, if his friends would not assist him to live in a better style than most country gentlemen of the period.

There are printed samples with whose writers fame has been busy; but who can say what curiosities of letter-writing daily mingle with the mass that pours through the London Post-Office? Can it be this continual custody and superintendence of so large a share of their fellow-creatures' wisdom, fortunes, and folly, that endows post-office functionaries in every quarter with such an amount of proverbial crustiness, if the word be admissible? Do they, from the nature of their business, know too much about the public to think them worth civility, so that nobody has yet discovered a very polite postmaster or man? A strange life the latter leads in our great cities. The truest representative of destiny seems his scarlet coat, seen far through street and lane: at one door he leaves the news of failure and ruin, and at another the intelligence of a legacy. Here his message is the death of a friend, while to the next neighbor he brings tidings of one long absent, or the increase of kindred; but without care or knowledge of their import, he leaves his letters at house after house, and goes his way like a servant of time and fortune, as he is, to return again, it may be, with far different news, as their tireless wheels move on. Are there any that have never watched for his coming? The dwellers in palaces and garrets, large families, and solitary lodgers, alike look out for him with anxious hope or fear. Strange it is for one to read over those letters so watched and waited for, when years have passed over since their date, and the days of the business, the friendship, or perhaps the wooing, to which they belong are numbered and finished!

How has the world without and within been altered to the correspondents since they were written? Has success or ill fortune attended the speculations by which they set such store? What have been their effects on outward circumstances, and through that certain channel, on the men? Has the love been forgotten? Have the friends become strange or enemies? Have some of them passed to the land whose inhabitants send back no letters? And how have their places been filled? Truly, if evidence were ever wanting regarding the uncertainty of all that rests on earth, it might be found in a packet of old letters.

A CHAPTER ON SHAWLS

We scarcely know a truer test of a gentlewoman's taste in dress than her selection of a shawl, and her manner of wearing it: and yet if the truth must be owned, it is the test from which few Englishwomen come with triumph. Generally speaking, the shawl is not their forte, in fact they are rather afraid of it. They acknowledge its comfort and convenience for the open carriage, or the sea-side promenade, but rarely recognize it for what it is, a garment capable of appearing the most feminine and graceful in the world. They are too often oppressed by a heap of false notions on the subject; have somehow an idea that a shawl is "old" or "dowdy;" and yet have a dim comprehension that the costly shawls which they more frequently hear of than see, must have some unimagined merits to prove an excuse for their price.

The Frenchwoman, on the contrary, has traditions about "Cashmeres," and remembers no blank of ignorance on the subject. She played at dressing her doll with one, you may be sure; chronicled as an epoch in her life, her first possession of the real thing; holds it as precious as a diamond, and as something to which appertains the same sort of intrinsic value; and shrugs her shoulders with compassionate contempt at an Englishwoman's ignorant indifference on this subject – just as a lover of olives pities the coarse palate which rejects them. Truly the taste for the shawl is a little inherent, and a great deal acquired and cultivated; as appreciation for the highest attributes of every department of art ever must be, from a relish for Canova's *chefs-d'œuvres*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.