VARIOUS

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Содержание

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SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS: BEING A SEQUEL TO THE CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

Introductory Notice

In 1821, as a contribution to a periodical work – in 1822, as a separate volume – appeared the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater." The object of that work was to reveal something of the grandeur which belongs *potentially* to human dreams. Whatever may be the number of those in whom this faculty of dreaming splendidly can be supposed to lurk, there are not perhaps very many in whom it is developed. He whose talk is of oxen, will probably dream of oxen: and the condition of human life, which yokes so vast a majority to a

daily experience incompatible with much elevation of thought, oftentimes neutralizes the tone of grandeur in the reproductive faculty of dreaming, even for those whose minds are populous with solemn imagery. Habitually to dream magnificently, a man must have a constitutional determination to reverie. This in the first place; and even this, where it exists strongly, is too much liable to disturbance from the gathering agitation of our present English life. Already, in this year 1845, what by the procession through fifty years of mighty revolutions amongst the kingdoms of the earth, what by the continual development of vast physical agencies – steam in all its applications, light getting under harness as a slave for man,[1] powers from heaven descending upon education and accelerations of the press, powers from hell (as it might seem, but these also celestial) coming round upon artillery and the forces of destruction – the eye of the calmest observer is troubled; the brain is haunted as if by some jealousy of ghostly beings moving amongst us; and it becomes too evident that, unless this colossal pace of advance can be retarded, (a thing not to be expected,) or, which is happily more probable, can be met by counter-forces of corresponding magnitude, forces in the direction of religion or profound philosophy, that shall radiate centrifugally against this storm of life so perilously centripetal towards the vortex of the merely human, left to itself the natural tendency of so chaotic a tumult must be to evil; for some minds to lunacy, for others to a reagency of fleshly torpor. How much this

[1] Daguerreotype, &c.

fierce condition of eternal hurry, upon an arena too exclusively human in its interests, is likely to defeat the grandeur which is latent in all men, may be seen in the ordinary effect from living too constantly in varied company. The word *dissipation*, in one of its uses, expresses that effect; the action of thought and feeling is too much dissipated and squandered. To reconcentrate them into meditative habits, a necessity is felt by all observing persons for sometimes retiring from crowds. No man ever will unfold the capacities of his own intellect who does not at least chequer his life with solitude. How much solitude, so much power. Or, if not true in that rigour of expression, to this formula undoubtedly it is that the wise rule of life must approximate.

Among the powers in man which suffer by this too intense life of the *social* instincts, none suffers more than the power of dreaming. Let no man think this a trifle. The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy. And the dreaming organ, in connexion with the heart, the eye, and the ear, compose the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind.

But if this faculty suffers from the decay of solitude, which is becoming a visionary idea in England, on the other hand, it is certain that some merely physical agencies can and do assist

the faculty of dreaming almost preternaturally. Amongst these is intense exercise; to some extent at least, and for some persons: but beyond all others is opium, which indeed seems to possess a *specific* power in that direction; not merely for exalting the colours of dream-scenery, but for deepening its shadows; and, above all, for strengthening the sense of its fearful *realities*.

The *Opium Confessions* were written with some slight secondary purpose of exposing this specific power of opium upon the faculty of dreaming, but much more with the purpose of displaying the faculty itself; and the outline of the work travelled in this course. Supposing a reader acquainted with the true object of the Confessions as here stated, viz. the revelation of dreaming, to have put this question: —

"But how came you to dream more splendidly than others?"

The answer would have been: – "Because (*præmissis præmittendis*) I took excessive quantities of opium."

Secondly, suppose him to say, "But how came you to take opium in this excess?"

The answer to *that* would be, "Because some early events in my life had left a weakness in one organ which required (or seemed to require) that stimulant."

Then, because the opium dreams could not always have been understood without a knowledge of these events, it became necessary to relate them. Now, these two questions and answers exhibit the *law* of the work, *i. e.* the principle which determined its form, but precisely in the inverse or regressive order. The

work itself opened with the narration of my early adventures. These, in the natural order of succession, led to the opium as a resource for healing their consequences; and the opium as naturally led to the dreams. But in the synthetic order of presenting the facts, what stood last in the succession of development, stood first in the order of my purposes.

At the close of this little work, the reader was instructed to believe – and *truly* instructed – that I had mastered the tyranny of opium. The fact is, that *twice* I mastered it, and by efforts even more prodigious, in the second of these cases, than in the first. But one error I committed in both. I did not connect with the abstinence from opium – so trying to the fortitude under *any* circumstances – that enormity of exercise which (as I have since learned) is the one sole resource for making it endurable. I overlooked, in those days, the one *sine quâ non* for making the triumph permanent. Twice I sank – twice I rose again. A third time I sank; partly from the cause mentioned, (the oversight as to exercise,) partly from other causes, on which it avails not now to trouble the reader. I could moralize if I chose; and perhaps *he* will moralize whether I choose it or not. But, in the mean time, neither of us is acquainted properly with the circumstances of the case; I, from natural bias of judgment, not altogether acquainted; and he (with his permission) not at all.

During this third prostration before the dark idol, and after some years, new and monstrous phenomena began slowly to arise. For a time, these were neglected as accidents, or palliated

by such remedies as I knew of. But when I could no longer conceal from myself that these dreadful symptoms were moving forward for ever, by a pace steadily, solemnly, and equably increasing, I endeavoured, with some feeling of panic, for a third time to retrace my steps. But I had not reversed my motions for many weeks, before I became profoundly aware that this was impossible. Or, in the imagery of my dreams, which translated every thing into their own language, I saw through vast avenues of gloom those towering gates of ingress which hitherto had always seemed to stand open, now at last barred against my retreat, and hung with funeral crape.

As applicable to this tremendous situation, (the situation of one escaping by some refluent current from the maelstrom roaring for him in the distance, who finds suddenly that this current is but an eddy, wheeling round upon the same maelstrom,) I have since remembered a striking incident in a modern novel. A lady abbess of a convent, herself suspected of Protestant leanings, and in that way already disarmed of all effectual power, finds one of her own nuns (whom she knows to be innocent) accused of an offence leading to the most terrific of punishments. The nun will be immured alive if she is found guilty; and there is no chance that she will not – for the evidence against her is strong – unless something were made known that cannot be made known; and the judges are hostile. All follows in the order of the reader's fears. The witnesses depose; the evidence is without effectual contradiction; the conviction is

declared; the judgment is delivered; nothing remains but to see execution done. At this crisis the abbess, alarmed too late for effectual interposition, considers with herself that, according to the regular forms, there will be one single night open during which the prisoner cannot be withdrawn from her own separate jurisdiction. This one night, therefore, she will use, at any hazard to herself, for the salvation of her friend. At midnight, when all is hushed in the convent, the lady traverses the passages which lead to the cells of prisoners. She bears a master-key under her professional habit. As this will open every door in every corridor, – already, by anticipation, she feels the luxury of holding her emancipated friend within her arms. Suddenly she has reached the door; she descries a dusky object; she raises her lamp; and, ranged within the recess of the entrance, she beholds the funeral banner of the Holy Office, and the black robes of its inexorable officials.

I apprehend that, in a situation such as this, supposing it a real one, the lady abbess would not start, would not show any marks externally of consternation or horror. The case was beyond *that*. The sentiment which attends the sudden revelation that *all is lost*! silently is gathered up into the heart; it is too deep for gestures or for words; and no part of it passes to the outside. Were the ruin conditional, or were it in any point doubtful, it would be natural to utter ejaculations, and to seek sympathy. But where the ruin is understood to be absolute, where sympathy cannot be consolation, and counsel cannot be hope, this is otherwise.

The voice perishes; the gestures are frozen; and the spirit of man flies back upon its own centre. I, at least, upon seeing those awful gates closed and hung with draperies of woe, as for a death already past, spoke not, nor started, nor groaned. One profound sigh ascended from my heart, and I was silent for days.

It is the record of this third, or final stage of opium, as one differing in something more than degree from the others, that I am now undertaking. But a scruple arises as to the true interpretation of these final symptoms. I have elsewhere explained, that it was no particular purpose of mine, and *why* it was no particular purpose, to warn other opium-eaters. Still, as some few persons may use the record in that way, it becomes a matter of interest to ascertain how far it is likely, that, even with the same excesses, other opium-eaters could fall into the same condition. I do not mean to lay a stress upon any supposed idiosyncrasy in myself. Possibly every man has an idiosyncrasy. In some things, undoubtedly, he has. For no man ever yet resembled another man so far, as not to differ from him in features innumerable of his inner nature. But what I point to are not peculiarities of temperament or of organization, so much as peculiar circumstances and incidents through which my own separate experience had revolved. Some of these were of a nature to alter the whole economy of my mind. Great convulsions, from whatever cause, from conscience, from fear, from grief, from struggles of the will, sometimes, in passing away themselves, do not carry off the changes which they have worked. *All* the

agitations of this magnitude which a man may have threaded in his life, he neither ought to report, nor *could* report. But one which affected my childhood is a privileged exception. It is privileged as a proper communication for a stranger's ear; because, though relating to a man's proper self, it is a self so far removed from his present self as to wound no feelings of delicacy or just reserve. It is privileged also as a proper subject for the sympathy of the narrator. An adult sympathizes with himself in childhood because he *is* the same, and because (being the same) yet he is *not* the same. He acknowledges the deep, mysterious identity between himself, as adult and as infant, for the ground of his sympathy; and yet, with this general agreement, and necessity of agreement, he feels the differences between his two selves as the main quickeners of his sympathy. He pities the infirmities, as they arise to light in his young forerunner, which now perhaps he does not share; he looks indulgently upon errors of the understanding, or limitations of view which now he has long survived; and sometimes, also, he honours in the infant that rectitude of will which, under *some* temptations, he may since have felt it so difficult to maintain.

The particular case to which I refer in my own childhood, was one of intolerable grief; a trial, in fact, more severe than many people at *any* age are called upon to stand. The relation in which the case stands to my latter opium experiences, is this: – Those vast clouds of gloomy grandeur which overhung my dreams at all stages of opium, but which grew into the darkest

of miseries in the last, and that haunting of the human face, which latterly towered into a curse – were they not partly derived from this childish experience? It is certain that, from the essential solitude in which my childhood was passed; from the depth of my sensibility; from the exaltation of this by the resistance of an intellect too prematurely developed, it resulted that the terrific grief which I passed through, drove a shaft for me into the worlds of death and darkness which never again closed, and through which it might be said that I ascended and descended at will, according to the temper of my spirits. Some of the phenomena developed in my dream-scenery, undoubtedly, do but repeat the experiences of childhood; and others seem likely to have been growths and fructifications from seeds at that time sown.

The reasons, therefore, for prefixing some account of a "passage" in childhood, to this record of a dreadful visitation from opium excess, are – 1st, That, in colouring, it harmonizes with that record, and, therefore, is related to it at least in point of feeling; 2dly, That possibly it was in part the origin of some features in that record, and so far is related to it in logic; 3dly, That, the final assault of opium being of a nature to challenge the attention of medical men, it is important to clear away all doubts and scruples which can gather about the roots of such a malady. Was it opium, or was it opium in combination with something else, that raised these storms?

Some cynical reader will object – that for this last purpose it would have been sufficient to state the fact, without rehearsing

in extenso the particulars of that case in childhood. But the reader of more kindness (for a surly reader is always a bad critic) will also have more discernment; and he will perceive that it is not for the mere facts that the case is reported, but because these facts move through a wilderness of natural thoughts or feelings; some in the child who suffers; some in the man who reports; but all so far interesting as they relate to solemn objects. Meantime, the objection of the sullen critic reminds me of a scene sometimes beheld at the English lakes. Figure to yourself an energetic tourist, who protests every where that he comes only to see the lakes. He has no business whatever; he is not searching for any recreant indorser of a bill, but simply in search of the picturesque. Yet this man adjures every landlord, "by the virtue of his oath," to tell him, and as he hopes for peace in this world to tell him truly, which is the *nearest* road to Keswick. Next, he applies to the postilions – the Westmoreland postilions always fly down hills at full stretch without locking – but nevertheless, in the full career of their fiery race, our picturesque man lets down the glasses, pulls up four horses and two postilions, at the risk of six necks and twenty legs, adjuring them to reveal whether they are taking the *shortest* road. Finally, he descries my unworthy self upon the road; and, instantly stopping his flying equipage, he demands of me (as one whom he believes to be a scholar and a man of honour) whether there is not, in the possibility of things, a *shorter* cut to Keswick. Now, the answer which rises to the lips of landlord, two postilions, and myself, is

this – "Most excellent stranger, as you come to the lakes simply to see their loveliness, might it not be as well to ask after the most beautiful road, rather than the shortest? Because, if abstract shortness, if τὸ brevity is your object, then the shortest of all possible tours would seem, with submission – never to have left London." On the same principle, I tell my critic that the whole course of this narrative resembles, and was meant to resemble, a *caduceus* wreathed about with meandering ornaments, or the shaft of a tree's stem hung round and surmounted with some vagrant parasitical plant. The mere medical subject of the opium answers to the dry withered pole, which shoots all the rings of the flowering plants, and seems to do so by some dexterity of its own; whereas, in fact, the plant and its tendrils have curled round the sullen cylinder by mere luxuriance of *theirs*. Just as in Cheapside, if you look right and left, the streets so narrow, that lead off at right angles, seem quarried and blasted out of some Babylonian brick kiln; bored, not raised artificially by the builder's hand. But, if you enquire of the worthy men who live in that neighbourhood, you will find it unanimously deposed – that not the streets were quarried out of the bricks, but, on the contrary, (most ridiculous as it seems,) that the bricks have supervened upon the streets.

The streets did not intrude amongst the bricks, but those cursed bricks came to imprison the streets. So, also, the ugly pole – hop pole, vine pole, espalier, no matter what – is there only for support. Not the flowers are for the pole, but the pole is for the flowers. Upon the same analogy view me, as one (in the

words of a true and most impassioned poet[2]) "*viridantem floribus hastas*" – making verdant, and gay with the life of flowers, murderous spears and halberts – things that express death in their origin, (being made from dead substances that once had lived in forests,) things that express ruin in their use. The true object in my "Opium Confessions" is not the naked physiological theme – on the contrary, *that* is the ugly pole, the murderous spear, the halbert – but those wandering musical variations upon the theme – those parasitical thoughts, feelings, digressions, which climb up with bells and blossoms round about the arid stock; ramble away from it at times with perhaps too rank a luxuriance; but at the same time, by the eternal interest attached to the *subjects* of these digressions, no matter what were the execution, spread a glory over incidents that for themselves would be – less than nothing.

SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS. Part I

The Affliction of Childhood

It is so painful to a lover of open-hearted sincerity, that any indirect traits of vanity should even *seem* to creep into records of profound passion; and yet, on the other hand, it is so impossible, without an unnatural restraint upon the freedom of

[2] Valerius Flaccus.

the narrative, to prevent oblique gleams reaching the reader from such circumstances of luxury or elegance as did really surround my childhood, that on all accounts I think it better to tell him from the first, with the simplicity of truth, in what order of society my family moved at the time from which this preliminary narrative is dated. Otherwise it would happen that, merely by moving truly and faithfully through the circumstances of this early experience, I could hardly prevent the reader from receiving an impression as of some higher rank than did really belong to my family. My father was a merchant; not in the sense of Scotland, where it means a man who sells groceries in a cellar, but in the English sense, a sense severely exclusive – viz. he was a man engaged in *foreign* commerce, and no other; therefore, in *wholesale* commerce, and no other – which last circumstance it is important to mention, because it brings him within the benefit of Cicero's condescending distinction[3]– as one to be despised, certainly, but not too intensely to be despised even by a Roman senator. He, this imperfectly despicable man, died at an early age, and very soon after the incidents here recorded, leaving to his family, then consisting of a wife and six children, an unburthened estate producing exactly £1600 a-year. Naturally, therefore, at the date of my narrative, if narrative it can be called, he had an income still larger, from the addition of current commercial

[3] Cicero, in a well-known passage of his *Ethics*, speaks of trade as irredeemably base, if petty; but as not so absolutely felonious if wholesale. He gives a *real* merchant (one who is such in the English sense) leave to think himself a shade above small-beer.

profits. Now, to any man who is acquainted with commercial life, but above all with such life in England, it will readily occur that in an opulent English family of that class – opulent, though not rich in a mercantile estimate – the domestic economy is likely to be upon a scale of liberality altogether unknown amongst the corresponding orders in foreign nations. Whether as to the establishment of servants, or as to the provision made for the comfort of all its members, such a household not uncommonly eclipses the scale of living even amongst the poorer classes of our nobility, though the most splendid in Europe – a fact which, since the period of my infancy, I have had many personal opportunities for verifying both in England and in Ireland. From this peculiar anomaly affecting the domestic economy of merchants, there arises a disturbance upon the general scale of outward signs by which we measure the relations of rank. The equation, so to speak, between one order of society and another, which usually travels in the natural line of their comparative expenditure, is here interrupted and defeated, so that one rank would be collected from the name of the occupation, and another rank, much higher, from the splendour of the domestic *ménage*. I warn the reader, therefore, (or rather, my explanation has already warned him,) that he is not to infer from any casual gleam of luxury or elegance a corresponding elevation of rank.

We, the children of the house, stood in fact upon the very happiest tier in the scaffolding of society for all good influences. The prayer of Agar – "Give me neither poverty nor riches" –

was realized for us. That blessing had we, being neither too high nor too low; high enough we were to see models of good manners; obscure enough to be left in the sweetest of solitudes. Amply furnished with the nobler benefits of wealth, *extra* means of health, of intellectual culture, and of elegant enjoyment, on the other hand, we knew nothing of its social distinctions. Not depressed by the consciousness of privations too sordid, not tempted into restlessness by the consciousness of privileges too aspiring, we had no motives for shame, we had none for pride. Grateful also to this hour I am, that, amidst luxuries in all things else, we were trained to a Spartan simplicity of diet – that we fared, in fact, very much less sumptuously than the servants. And if (after the model of the emperor Marcus Aurelius) I should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of my early situation, these four I would single out as chiefly worthy to be commemorated – that I lived in the country; that I lived in solitude; that my infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters, not by horrid pugilistic brothers; finally, that I and they were dutiful children of a pure, holy, and magnificent church.

The earliest incidents in my life which affected me so deeply as to be rememberable at this day, were two, and both before I could have completed my second year, viz. a remarkable dream of terrific grandeur about a favourite nurse, which is interesting for a reason to be noticed hereafter; and secondly, the fact of having connected a profound sense of pathos with the re-appearance, very early in spring, of some crocuses. This I

mention as inexplicable, for such annual resurrections of plants and flowers affect us only as memorials, or suggestions of a higher change, and therefore in connexion with the idea of death; but of death I could, at that time, have had no experience whatever.

This, however, I was speedily to acquire. My two eldest sisters – eldest of three *then* living, and also elder than myself – were summoned to an early death. The first who died was Jane – about a year older than myself. She was three and a half, I two and a half, *plus* or *minus* some trifle that I do not recollect. But death was then scarcely intelligible to me, and I could not so properly be said to suffer sorrow as a sad perplexity. There was another death in the house about the same time, viz. of a maternal grandmother; but as she had in a manner come to us for the express purpose of dying in her daughter's society, and from illness had lived perfectly secluded, our nursery party knew her but little, and were certainly more affected by the death (which I witnessed) of a favourite bird, viz. a kingfisher who had been injured by an accident. With my sister Jane's death [though otherwise, as I have said, less sorrowful than unintelligible] there was, however, connected an incident which made a most fearful impression upon myself, deepening my tendencies to thoughtfulness and abstraction beyond what would seem credible for my years. If there was one thing in this world from which, more than from any other, nature had forced me to revolt, it was brutality and violence. Now a whisper arose in the family, that a woman-

servant, who by accident was drawn off from her proper duties to attend my sister Jane for a day or two, had on one occasion treated her harshly, if not brutally; and as this ill treatment happened within two days of her death – so that the occasion of it must have been some fretfulness in the poor child caused by her sufferings – naturally there was a sense of awe diffused through the family. I believe the story never reached my mother, and possibly it was exaggerated; but upon me the effect was terrific. I did not often see the person charged with this cruelty; but, when I did, my eyes sought the ground; nor could I have borne to look her in the face – not through anger; and as to vindictive thoughts, how could these lodge in a powerless infant? The feeling which fell upon me was a shuddering awe, as upon a first glimpse of the truth that I was in a world of evil and strife. Though born in a large town, I had passed the whole of my childhood, except for the few earliest weeks, in a rural seclusion. With three innocent little sisters for playmates, sleeping always amongst them, and shut up for ever in a silent garden from all knowledge of poverty, or oppression, or outrage, I had not suspected until this moment the true complexion of the world in which myself and my sisters were living. Henceforward the character of my thoughts must have changed greatly; for so *representative* are some acts, that one single case of the class is sufficient to throw open before you the whole theatre of possibilities in that direction. I never heard that the woman, accused of this cruelty, took it at all to heart, even after the event, which so immediately succeeded,

had reflected upon it a more painful emphasis. On the other hand, I knew of a case, and will pause to mention it, where a mere semblance and shadow of such cruelty, under similar circumstances, inflicted the grief of self-reproach through the remainder of life. A boy, interesting in his appearance, as also from his remarkable docility, was attacked, on a cold day of spring, by a complaint of the trachea – not precisely croup, but like it. He was three years old, and had been ill perhaps for four days; but at intervals had been in high spirits, and capable of playing. This sunshine, gleaming through dark clouds, had continued even on the fourth day; and from nine to eleven o'clock at night, he had showed more animated pleasure than ever. An old servant, hearing of his illness, had called to see him; and her mode of talking with him had excited all the joyousness of his nature. About midnight his mother, fancying that his feet felt cold, was muffling them up in flannels; and, as he seemed to resist her a little, she struck lightly on the sole of one foot as a mode of admonishing him to be quiet. He did not repeat his motion; and in less than a minute his mother had him in her arms with his face looking upwards. "What is the meaning," she exclaimed, in sudden affright, "of this strange repose settling upon his features?" She called loudly to a servant in another room; but before the servant could reach her, the child had drawn two inspirations – deep, yet gentle – and had died in his mother's arms. Upon this the poor afflicted lady made the discovery that those struggles, which she had supposed to be expressions

of resistance to herself, were the struggles of departing life. It followed, or seemed to follow, that with these final struggles had blended an expression, on *her* part, of displeasure. Doubtless the child had not distinctly perceived it; but the mother could never look back to the incident without self-reproach. And seven years after, when her own death happened, no progress had been made in reconciling her thoughts to that which only the depth of love could have viewed as any offence.

So passed away from earth one out of those sisters that made up my nursery playmates; and so did my acquaintance (if such it could be called) commence with mortality. Yet, in fact, I knew little more of mortality than that Jane had disappeared. She had gone away; but, perhaps, she would come back. Happy interval of heaven-born ignorance! Gracious immunity of infancy from sorrow disproportioned to its strength! I was sad for Jane's absence. But still in my heart I trusted that she would come again. Summer and winter came again – crocuses and roses; why not little Jane?

Thus easily was healed, then, the first wound in my infant heart. Not so the second. For thou, dear, noble Elizabeth, around whose ample brow, as often as thy sweet countenance rises upon the darkness, I fancy a tiara of light or a gleaming *aureola* in token of thy premature intellectual grandeur – thou whose head, for its superb developments, was the astonishment of science[4]– thou next, but after an interval of happy years, thou

[4] "*The astonishment of science.*" – Her medical attendants were Dr Percival, a well-

also wert summoned away from our nursery; and the night which, for me, gathered upon that event, ran after my steps far into life; and perhaps at this day I resemble little for good or for ill that which else I should have been. Pillar of fire, that didst go before me to guide and to quicken – pillar of darkness, when thy countenance was turned away to God, that didst too truly shed the shadow of death over my young heart – in what scales should I weigh thee? Was the blessing greater from thy heavenly presence, or the blight which followed thy departure? Can a man weigh off and value the glories of dawn against the darkness of hurricane? Or, if he could, how is it that, when a memorable love has been followed by a memorable bereavement, even suppose that God would replace the sufferer in a point of time anterior to the entire experience, and offer to cancel the

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known literary physician, who had been a correspondent of Condorcet, D'Alembert, &c., and Mr Charles White, a very distinguished surgeon. It was he who pronounced her head to be the finest in its structure and development of any that he had ever seen – an assertion which, to my own knowledge, he repeated in after years, and with enthusiasm. That he had some acquaintance with the subject may be presumed from this, that he wrote and published a work on the human skull, supported by many measurements which he had made of heads selected from all varieties of the human species. Meantime, as I would be loth that any trait of what might seem vanity should creep into this record, I will candidly admit that she died of hydrocephalus; and it has been often supposed that the premature expansion of the intellect in cases of that class, is altogether morbid – forced on, in fact, by the mere stimulation of the disease. I would, however, suggest, as a possibility, the very inverse order of relation between the disease and the intellectual manifestations. Not the disease may always have caused the preternatural growth of the intellect, but, on the contrary, this growth coming on spontaneously, and outrunning the capacities of the physical structure, may have caused the disease.

woe, but so that the sweet face which had caused the woe should also be obliterated – vehemently would every man shrink from the exchange! In the *Paradise Lost*, this strong instinct of man – to prefer the heavenly, mixed and polluted with the earthly, to a level experience offering neither one nor the other – is divinely commemorated. What worlds of pathos are in that speech of Adam's – "If God should make another Eve," &c. – that is, if God should replace him in his primitive state, and should condescend to bring again a second Eve, one that would listen to no temptation – still that original partner of his earliest solitude —

> "Creature in whom excell'd
> Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
> Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet" —

even now, when she appeared in league with an eternity of woe, and ministering to his ruin, could not be displaced for him by any better or happier Eve. "Loss of thee!" he exclaims in this anguish of trial —

> "Loss of thee
> Would never from my heart; no, no, I feel
> The link of nature draw me; flesh of flesh,
> Bone of my bone thou art; and from thy state
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."[5]

[5] Amongst the oversights in the *Paradise Lost*, some of which have not yet been

But what was it that drew my heart, by gravitation so strong, to my sister? Could a child, little above six years of age, place any special value upon her intellectual forwardness? Serene and capacious as her mind appeared to me upon after review, was *that* a charm for stealing away the heart of an infant? Oh, no! I think of it *now* with interest, because it lends, in a stranger's ear, some justification to the excess of my fondness. But then it was lost upon me; or, if not lost, was but dimly perceived. Hadst thou been an idiot, my sister, not the less I must have loved thee – having that capacious heart overflowing, even as mine overflowed, with tenderness, and stung, even as mine was stung, by the necessity of being loved. This it was which crowned thee with beauty —

> "Love, the holy sense,
> Best gift of God, in thee was most intense."

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perceived, it is certainly *one*– that, by placing in such overpowering light of pathos the sublime sacrifice of Adam to his love for his frail companion, he has too much lowered the guilt of his disobedience to God. All that Milton can say afterwards, does not, and cannot, obscure the beauty of that action: reviewing it calmly, we condemn – but taking the impassioned station of Adam at the moment of temptation, we approve in our hearts. This was certainly an oversight; but it was one very difficult to redress. I remember, amongst the many exquisite thoughts of John Paul, (Richter,) one which strikes me as peculiarly touching upon this subject. He suggests – not as any grave theological comment, but as the wandering fancy of a poetic heart – that, had Adam conquered the anguish of separation as a pure sacrifice of obedience to God, his reward would have been the pardon and reconciliation of Eve, together with her restoration to innocence.

That lamp lighted in Paradise was kindled for me which shone so steadily in thee; and never but to thee only, never again since thy departure, *durst* I utter the feelings which possessed me. For I was the shiest of children; and a natural sense of personal dignity held me back at all stages of life, from exposing the least ray of feelings which I was not encouraged *wholly* to reveal.

It would be painful, and it is needless, to pursue the course of that sickness which carried off my leader and companion. She (according to my recollection at this moment) was just as much above eight years as I above six. And perhaps this natural precedency in authority of judgment, and the tender humility with which she declined to assert it, had been amongst the fascinations of her presence. It was upon a Sunday evening, or so people fancied, that the spark of fatal fire fell upon that train of predispositions to a brain-complaint which had hitherto slumbered within her. She had been permitted to drink tea at the house of a labouring man, the father of an old female servant. The sun had set when she returned in the company of this servant through meadows reeking with exhalations after a fervent day. From that time she sickened. Happily a child in such circumstances feels no anxieties. Looking upon medical men as people whose natural commission it is to heal diseases, since it is their natural function to profess it, knowing them only as *ex-officio* privileged to make war upon pain and sickness – I never had a misgiving about the result. I grieved indeed that my sister should lie in bed: I grieved still more sometimes to hear her

moan. But all this appeared to me no more than a night of trouble on which the dawn would soon arise. Oh! moment of darkness and delirium, when a nurse awakened me from that delusion, and launched God's thunderbolt at my heart in the assurance that my sister *must* die. Rightly it is said of utter, utter misery, that it "cannot be *remembered*."[6] Itself, as a remembrable thing, is swallowed up in its own chaos. Mere anarchy and confusion of mind fell upon me. Deaf and blind I was, as I reeled under the revelation. I wish not to recal the circumstances of that time, when *my* agony was at its height, and hers in another sense was approaching. Enough to say – that all was soon over; and the morning of that day had at last arrived which looked down upon her innocent face, sleeping the sleep from which there is no awaking, and upon me sorrowing the sorrow for which there is no consolation.

On the day after my sister's death, whilst the sweet temple of her brain was yet unviolated by human scrutiny, I formed my own scheme for seeing her once more. Not for the world would I have made this known, nor have suffered a witness to accompany me. I had never heard of feelings that take the name of "sentimental," nor dreamed of such a possibility. But grief even in a child hates the light, and shrinks from human eyes. The house was large; there were two staircases; and by one of these I knew that about noon, when all would be quiet, I could steal up into her chamber. I

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[6] "I stood in unimaginable trance And agony, which cannot be remember'd." – Speech of Alhadra in Coleridge's Remorse.

imagine that it was exactly high noon when I reached the chamber door; it was locked; but the key was not taken away. Entering, I closed the door so softly, that, although it opened upon a hall which ascended through all the stories, no echo ran along the silent walls. Then turning round, I sought my sister's face. But the bed had been moved; and the back was now turned. Nothing met my eyes but one large window wide open, through which the sun of midsummer at noonday was showering down torrents of splendour. The weather was dry, the sky was cloudless, the blue depths seemed the express types of infinity; and it was not possible for eye to behold or for heart to conceive any symbols more pathetic of life and the glory of life.

Let me pause for one instant in approaching a remembrance so affecting and revolutionary for my own mind, and one which (if any earthly remembrance) will survive for me in the hour of death, – to remind some readers, and to inform others, that in the original *Opium Confessions* I endeavoured to explain the reason[7] why death, *cæteris paribus*, is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year; so far at least as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season. The reason, as I there suggested, lies in the antagonism between the tropical redundancy of life in summer and the dark sterilities of the grave. The summer we see, the grave we haunt with our thoughts; the glory is around us, the darkness is within

[7] Some readers will question the *fact*, and seek no reason. But did they ever suffer grief at *any* season of the year?

us. And, the two coming into collision, each exalts the other into stronger relief. But in my case there was even a subtler reason why the summer had this intense power of vivifying the spectacle or the thoughts of death. And, recollecting it, often I have been struck with the important truth – that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involutes* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes. It had happened that amongst our nursery collection of books was the Bible illustrated with many pictures. And in long dark evenings, as my three sisters with myself sate by the firelight round the *guard* of our nursery, no book was so much in request amongst us. It ruled us and swayed us as mysteriously as music. One young nurse, whom we all loved, before any candle was lighted, would often strain her eyes to read it for us; and sometimes, according to her simple powers, would endeavour to explain what we found obscure. We, the children, were all constitutionally touched with pensiveness; the fitful gloom and sudden lambencies of the room by fire-light, suited our evening state of feelings; and they suited also the divine revelations of power and mysterious beauty which awed us. Above all, the story of a just man, – man and yet *not* man, real above all things and yet shadowy above all things, who had suffered the passion of death in Palestine, slept upon our minds like early dawn upon the waters. The nurse knew and explained to us the chief differences in Oriental climates; and all

these differences (as it happens) express themselves in the great varieties of summer. The cloudless sunlights of Syria – those seemed to argue everlasting summer; the disciples plucking the ears of corn – that *must* be summer; but, above all, the very name of Palm Sunday, (a festival in the English church,) troubled me like an anthem. "Sunday!" what was *that*? That was the day of peace which masqued another peace deeper than the heart of man can comprehend. "Palms!" – what were they? *That* was an equivocal word: palms, in the sense of trophies, expressed the pomps of life: palms, as a product of nature, expressed the pomps of summer. Yet still even this explanation does not suffice: it was not merely by the peace and by the summer, by the deep sound of rest below all rest, and of ascending glory, – that I had been haunted. It was also because Jerusalem stood near to those deep images both in time and in place. The great event of Jerusalem was at hand when Palm Sunday came; and the scene of that Sunday was near in place to Jerusalem. Yet what then was Jerusalem? Did I fancy it to be the *omphalos* (navel) of the earth? That pretension had once been made for Jerusalem, and once for Delphi; and both pretensions had become ridiculous, as the figure of the planet became known. Yes; but if not of the earth, for earth's tenant Jerusalem was the *omphalos* of mortality. Yet how? there on the contrary it was, as we infants understood, that mortality had been trampled under foot. True; but for that very reason there it was that mortality had opened its very gloomiest crater. There it was indeed that the human had risen on wings

from the grave; but for that reason there also it was that the divine had been swallowed up by the abyss: the lesser star could not rise, before the greater would submit to eclipse. Summer, therefore, had connected itself with death not merely as a mode of antagonism, but also through intricate relations to Scriptural scenery and events.

Out of this digression, which was almost necessary for the purpose of showing how inextricably my feelings and images of death were entangled with those of summer, I return to the bedchamber of my sister. From the gorgeous sunlight I turned round to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure, there the angel face: and, as people usually fancy, it as said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not? The forehead indeed, the serene and noble forehead, *that* might be the same; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the stiffening hands, laid palm to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish, could these be mistaken for life? Had it been so, wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with tears and never-ending kisses? But so it as *not*. I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and, whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow – the most mournful that ear ever heard. Mournful! that is saying nothing. It was a wind that had swept the fields of mortality for a hundred centuries. Many times since, upon a summer day, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian, but

saintly swell: it is in this world the one sole *audible* symbol of eternity. And three times in my life I have happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances, viz. when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day.

Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Æolian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fulness of life, the pomps and glory of the heavens outside, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up for ever. I in spirit rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft for ever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on for ever and ever. Frost, gathering frost, some Sarsar wind of death, seemed to repel me; I slept – for how long I cannot say; slowly I recovered my self-possession, and found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.

Oh[8] flight of the solitary child to the solitary God – flight from the ruined corpse to the throne that could not be ruined! – how rich wert thou in truth for after years. Rapture of grief, that, being too mighty for a child to sustain, foundest a happy oblivion in a heaven-born sleep, and within that sleep didst conceal a dream, whose meanings in after years, when slowly I deciphered, suddenly there flashed upon me a new light; and even by the grief of a child, as I will show you reader hereafter, were confounded

[8] Φυγη μονου προς μονον. – Plotinus.

the falsehoods of philosophers.[9]

In the *Opium Confessions* I touched a little upon the extraordinary power connected with opium (after long use) of amplifying the dimensions of time. Space also it amplifies by degrees that are sometimes terrific. But time it is upon which the exalting and multiplying power of opium chiefly spends its operation. Time becomes infinitely elastic, stretching out to such immeasurable and vanishing termini, that it seems ridiculous to compute the sense of it on waking by expressions commensurate to human life. As in starry fields one computes by diameters of the earth's orbit, or of Jupiter's, so in valuing the *virtual* time lived during some dreams, the measurement by generations is ridiculous – by millennia is ridiculous: by æons, I should say, if æons were more determinate, would be also ridiculous. On this single occasion, however, in my life, the very inverse phenomenon occurred. But why speak of it in connexion with opium? Could a child of six years old have been under that influence? No, but simply because it so exactly reversed the operation of opium. Instead of a short interval expanding into a vast one, upon this occasion a long one had contracted into a minute. I have reason to believe that a *very* long one had elapsed during this wandering or suspension of my perfect mind. When I returned to myself, there was a foot (or I fancied so) on the stairs. I was alarmed. For I believed that, if any body should

[9] The thoughts referred to will be given in final notes; as at this point they seemed too much to interrupt the course of the narrative.

detect me, means would be taken to prevent my coming again. Hastily, therefore, I kissed the lips that I should kiss no more, and slunk like a guilty thing with stealthy steps from the room. Thus perished the vision, loveliest amongst all the shows which earth has revealed to me; thus mutilated was the parting which should have lasted for ever; thus tainted with fear was the farewell sacred to love and grief, to perfect love and perfect grief.

Oh, Ahasuerus, everlasting Jew![10] fable or not a fable, thou when first starting on thy endless pilgrimage of woe, thou when first flying through the gates of Jerusalem, and vainly yearning to leave the pursuing curse behind thee, couldst not more certainly have read thy doom of sorrow in the misgivings of thy troubled brain than I when passing for ever from my sister's room. The worm was at my heart: and, confining myself to that stage of life, I may say – the worm that could not die. For if, when standing upon the threshold of manhood, I had ceased to feel its perpetual gnawings, *that* was because a vast expansion of intellect, it was because new hopes, new necessities, and the frenzy of youthful blood, had translated me into a new creature. Man is doubtless *one* by some subtle *nexus* that we cannot perceive, extending from the newborn infant to the superannuated dotard: but as regards many affections and passions incident to his nature at different stages, he is *not* one; the unity of man in this respect is coextensive only with the particular stage to which the passion

[10] "Everlasting Jew!" —*der ewige Jude*– which is the common German expression for *The Wandering Jew*, and sublimer even than our own.

belongs. Some passions, as that of sexual love, are celestial by one half of their origin, animal and earthy by the other half. These will not survive their own appropriate stage. But love, which is *altogether* holy, like that between two children, will revisit undoubtedly by glimpses the silence and the darkness of old age: and I repeat my belief – that, unless bodily torment should forbid it, that final experience in my sister's bedroom, or some other in which her innocence was concerned, will rise again for me to illuminate the hour of death.

On the day following this which I have recorded, came a body of medical men to examine the brain, and the particular nature of the complaint, for in some of its symptoms it had shown perplexing anomalies. Such is the sanctity of death, and especially of death alighting on an innocent child, that even gossiping people do not gossip on such a subject. Consequently, I knew nothing of the purpose which drew together these surgeons, nor suspected any thing of the cruel changes which might have been wrought in my sister's head. Long after this I saw a similar case; I surveyed the corpse (it was that of a beautiful boy, eighteen years old, who had died of the same complaint) one hour *after* the surgeons had laid the skull in ruins; but the dishonours of this scrutiny were hidden by bandages, and had not disturbed the repose of the countenance. So it might have been here; but, if it were *not* so, then I was happy in being spared the shock, from having that marble image of peace, icy and rigid as it was, unsettled by disfiguring images. Some hours after the strangers

had withdrawn, I crept again to the room, but the door was now locked – the key was taken away – and I was shut out for ever.

Then came the funeral. I, as a point of decorum, was carried thither. I was put into a carriage with some gentlemen whom I did not know. They were kind to me; but naturally they talked of things disconnected with the occasion, and their conversation was a torment. At the church, I was told to hold a white handkerchief to my eyes. Empty hypocrisy! What need had *he* of masques or mockeries, whose heart died within him at every word that was uttered? During that part of the service which passed within the church, I made an effort to attend, but I sank back continually into my own solitary darkness, and I heard little consciously, except some fugitive strains from the sublime chapter of St Paul, which in England is always read at burials. And here I notice a profound error of our present illustrious Laureate. When I heard those dreadful words – for dreadful they were to me – "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory;" such was the recoil of my feelings, that I could even have shrieked out a protesting – "Oh, no, no!" if I had not been restrained by the publicity of the occasion. In after years, reflecting upon this revolt of my feelings, which, being the voice of nature in a child, must be as true as any mere *opinion* of a child might probably be false, I saw at once the unsoundness of a passage in *The Excursion*. The book is not here, but the substance I remember perfectly. Mr Wordsworth argues, that if it were not for the unsteady faith which people

fix upon the beatific condition after death of those whom they deplore, nobody could be found so selfish, as even secretly to wish for the restoration to earth of a beloved object. A mother, for instance, could never dream of yearning for her child, and secretly calling it back by her silent aspirations from the arms of God, if she were but reconciled to the belief that really it *was* in those arms. But this I utterly deny. To take my own case, when I heard those dreadful words of St Paul applied to my sister – viz. that she should be raised a spiritual body – nobody can suppose that selfishness, or any other feeling than that of agonizing love, caused the rebellion of my heart against them. I knew already that she was to come again in beauty and power. I did not now learn this for the first time. And that thought, doubtless, made my sorrow sublimer; but also it made it deeper. For here lay the sting of it, viz. in the fatal words – "We shall be *changed*." How was the unity of my interest in her to be preserved, if she were to be altered, and no longer to reflect in her sweet countenance the traces that were sculptured on my heart? Let a magician ask any woman whether she will permit him to improve her child, to raise it even from deformity to perfect beauty, if that must be done at the cost of its identity, and there is no loving mother but would reject his proposal with horror. Or, to take a case that has actually happened, if a mother were robbed of her child at two years old by gipsies, and the same child were restored to her at twenty, a fine young man, but divided by a sleep as it were of death from all remembrances that could restore the broken

links of their once-tender connexion, would she not feel her grief unhealed, and her heart defrauded? Undoubtedly she would. All of us ask not of God for a better thing than that we have lost; we ask for the same, even with its faults and its frailties. It is true that the sorrowing person will also be changed eventually, but that must be by death. And a prospect so remote as that, and so alien from our present nature, cannot console us in an affliction which is not remote but present – which is not spiritual but human.

Lastly came the magnificent service which the English church performs at the side of the grave. There is exposed once again and for the last time, the coffin. All eyes survey the record of name, of sex, of age, and the day of departure from earth – records how useless! and dropped into darkness as if messages addressed to worms. Almost at the very last comes the symbolic ritual, tearing and shattering the heart with volleying discharges, peal after peal, from the final artillery of woe. The coffin is lowered into its home; it has disappeared from the eye. The sacristan stands ready with his shovel of earth and stones. The priest's voice is heard once more —*earth to earth*, and the dread rattle ascends from the lid of the coffin; *ashes to ashes*, and again the killing sound is heard; *dust to dust*, and the farewell volley announces that the grave – the coffin – the face are sealed up for ever and ever.

Oh, grief! thou art classed amongst the depressing passions. And true it is, that thou humblest to the dust, but also thou exaltest to the clouds. Thou shakest as with ague, but also thou steadiest like frost. Thou sickenest the heart, but also thou

healest its infirmities. Among the very foremost of mine was morbid sensibility to shame. And ten years afterwards, I used to reproach myself with this infirmity, by supposing the case, that, if it were thrown upon me to seek aid for a perishing fellow-creature, and that I could obtain that aid only by facing a vast company of critical or sneering faces, I might perhaps shrink basely from the duty. It is true, that no such case had ever actually occurred, so that it was a mere romance of casuistry to tax myself with cowardice so shocking. But to feel a doubt, was to feel condemnation; and the crime which *might* have been, was in my eyes the crime which *had* been. Now, however, all was changed; and for any thing which regarded my sister's memory, in one hour I received a new heart. Once in Westmoreland I saw a case resembling it. I saw a ewe suddenly put off and abjure her own nature, in a service of love – yes, slough it as completely, as ever serpent sloughed his skin. Her lamb had fallen into a deep trench, from which all escape was hopeless without the aid of man. And to a man she advanced boldly, bleating clamorously, until he followed her and rescued her beloved. Not less was the change in myself. Fifty thousand sneering faces would not have troubled me in any office of tenderness to my sister's memory. Ten legions would not have repelled me from seeking her, if there was chance that she could be found. Mockery! it was lost upon me. Laugh at me, as one or two people did! I valued not their laughter. And when I was told insultingly to cease "my girlish tears", that word "*girlish*" had no sting for me, except as a verbal

echo to the one eternal thought of my heart – that a girl was the sweetest thing I, in my short life, had known – that a girl it was who had crowned the earth with beauty, and had opened to my thirst fountains of pure celestial love, from which, in this world, I was to drink no more.

Interesting it is to observe how certainly all deep feelings agree in this, that they seek for solitude, and are nursed by solitude. Deep grief, deep love, how naturally do these ally themselves with religious feeling; and all three, love, grief, religion, are haunters of solitary places. Love, grief, the passion of reverie, or the mystery of devotion – what were these without solitude? All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house, or in the neighbouring fields. The awful stillness occasionally of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of grey or misty afternoons – these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods or the desert air I gazed as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my inquest of beseeching looks. I tormented the blue depths with obstinate scrutiny, sweeping them with my eyes and searching them for ever after one angelic face that might perhaps have permission to reveal itself for a moment. The faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, aided by a slight defect in my eyes, grew upon me at this time. And I recal at the present moment one instance of that sort, which

may show how merely shadows, or a gleam of brightness, or nothing at all, could furnish a sufficient basis for this creative faculty. On Sunday mornings I was always taken to church: it was a church on the old and natural model of England, having aisles, galleries, organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long Litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of "all sick persons and young children," and that he would "show his pity upon all prisoners and captives" – I wept in secret, and raising my streaming eyes to the windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The sides of the windows were rich with storied glass; through the deep purples and crimsons streamed the golden light; emblazonries of heavenly illumination mingling with the earthly emblazonries of what is grandest in man. There were the apostles that had trampled upon earth, and the glories of earth, out of celestial love to man. There were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce insulting faces. There were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will. And all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as the deep chords from an accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was uncoloured, white fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky; were

it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into a vision of beds with white lawny curtains; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish, and weeping clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air; slowly, also, his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children whom in Judea, once and for ever, he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions were self-sustained. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me, or music mould my feelings. The hint from the Litany, the fragment from the clouds, those and the storied windows were sufficient. But not the less the blare of the tumultuous organ wrought its own separate creations. And oftentimes in anthems, when the mighty instrument threw its vast columns of sound, fierce yet melodious, over the voices of the choir – when it rose high in arches, as might seem, surmounting and overriding the strife of the vocal parts, and gathering by strong coercion the total storm into unity – sometimes I seemed to walk triumphantly upon those clouds which so recently I had looked up to as mementos of prostrate sorrow, and even as ministers of sorrow in its creations; yes, sometimes under the transfigurations

of music I felt[11] of grief itself as a fiery chariot for mounting victoriously above the causes of grief.

I point so often to the feelings, the ideas, or the ceremonies of religion, because there never yet was profound grief nor profound philosophy which did not inosculate at many points with profound religion. But I request the reader to understand, that of all things I was not, and could not have been, a child trained to *talk* of religion, least of all to talk of it controversially or polemically. Dreadful is the picture, which in books we sometimes find, of children discussing the doctrines of Christianity, and even teaching their seniors the boundaries and distinctions between doctrine and doctrine. And it has often struck me with amazement, that the two things which God made most beautiful among his works, viz. infancy and pure religion, should, by the folly of man, (in yoking them together on erroneous principles,) neutralize each other's beauty, or even form a combination positively hateful The religion becomes

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[11] "*I felt.*" – The reader must not forget, in reading this and other passages, that, though a child's feelings are spoken of, it is not the child who speaks. *I* decipher what the child only felt in cipher. And so far is this distinction or this explanation from pointing to any thing metaphysical or doubtful, that a man must be grossly unobservant who is not aware of what I am here noticing, not as a peculiarity of this child or that, but as a necessity of all children. Whatsoever in a man's mind blossoms and expands to his own consciousness in mature life, must have pre-existed in germ during his infancy. I, for instance, did not, as a child, *consciously* read in my own deep feeling these ideas. No, not at all; nor was it possible for a child to do so. I the child had the feelings, I the man decipher them. In the child lay the handwriting mysterious to *him*; in me the interpretation and the comment.

nonsense, and the child becomes a hypocrite. The religion is transfigured into cant, and the innocent child into a dissembling liar.[12]

God, be assured, takes care for the religion of children wheresoever his Christianity exists. Wheresoever there is a national church established, to which a child sees his friends resorting; wheresoever he beholds all whom he honours periodically prostrate before those illimitable heavens which fill to overflowing his young adoring heart; wheresoever he sees the sleep of death falling at intervals upon men and women whom he knows, depth as confounding to the plummet of his mind as those heavens ascend beyond his power to pursue —*there* take you no thought for the religion of a child, any more than for the lilies how they shall be arrayed, or for the ravens how they shall feed their young.

God speaks to children also in dreams, and by the oracles that lurk in darkness. But in solitude, above all things, when made vocal by the truths and services of a national church, God holds "communion undisturbed" with children. Solitude, though silent

[12] I except, however, one case – the case of a child dying of an organic disorder, so therefore as to die slowly, and aware of its own condition. Because such a child is solemnized, and sometimes, in a partial sense, inspired – inspired by the depth of its sufferings, and by the awfulness of its prospect. Such a child having put off the earthly mind in many things, may naturally have put off the childish mind in all things. I therefore, speaking for myself only, acknowledge to have read with emotion a record of a little girl, who, knowing herself for months to be amongst the elect of death, became anxious even to sickness of heart for what she called the *conversion* of her father. Her filial duty and reverence had been swallowed up in filial love.

as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies; for solitude is essential to man. All men come into this world *alone*– all leave it *alone*. Even a little child has a dread, whispering consciousness, that if he should be summoned to travel into God's presence, no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone. The solitude, therefore, which in this world appals or fascinates a child's heart, is but the echo of a far deeper solitude through which already he has passed, and of another solitude deeper still, through which he *has* to pass: reflex of one solitude – prefiguration of another.

Oh, burthen of solitude, that cleavest to man through every stage of his being – in his birth, which *has* been – in his life, which *is*– in his death, which *shall* be – mighty and essential solitude! that wast, and art, and art to be; – thou broodest, like the spirit of God moving upon the surface of the deeps, over every heart that sleeps in the nurseries of Christendom. Like the vast laboratory of the air, which, seeming to be nothing, or less than the shadow of a shade, hides within itself the principles of all things, solitude for a child is the Agrippa's mirror of the unseen universe. Deep is the solitude in life of millions upon millions who, with hearts welling forth love, have none to love them. Deep is the solitude of those who, with secret griefs, have none to pity them. Deep is the solitude of those who, fighting with doubts or darkness, have none to counsel them. But deeper than the

deepest of these solitudes is that which broods over childhood, bringing before it at intervals the final solitude which watches for it, and is waiting for it within the gates of death. Reader, I tell you a truth, and hereafter I will convince you of this truth, that for a Grecian child solitude was nothing, but for a Christian child it has become the power of God and the mystery of God. Oh, mighty and essential solitude, that wast, and art, and art to be – thou, kindling under the torch of Christian revelations, art now transfigured for ever, and hast passed from a blank negation into a secret hieroglyphic from God, shadowing in the hearts of infancy the very dimmest of his truths!

MRS POOLE'S "ENGLISHWOMAN IN EGYPT." [13]

An "Englishwoman in Egypt," thanks to the Mediterranean steamers and the overland route to India, is no longer so unusual or astounding a spectacle as it would appear to have been five-and-twenty years ago, when that dilettante traveller, Monsieur le Comte de Forbin, made a precipitate retreat from Thebes in consequence of the shock sustained by his nerves, from encountering among the ruins "une femme-de-chambre Anglaise, en petit *spencer* couleur de rose," in the person of the Countess of Belmore's lady's-maid; though the Quarterly Reviewers, who in those days had no mercy for a French misstatement, even in the colour of a soubrette's dress, triumphantly declared the offending garment to have been "a pale-blue pelisse;" and proceeded to demolish the hapless Count accordingly – (*Quarterly Review*, Vol. xxiii. p. 92.) Since the period of this rencontre, the *ill-omened* blue eyes,[14] as well

[13] *The Englishwoman in Egypt.*– Letters from Cairo, written during a residence in 1842, 1843, and 1844, with E. W. Lane, Esq., author of the *Modern Egyptians*. By his Sister.

[14] Blue eyes are regarded in the East as so unlucky, that the epithet "blue-eyed" is commonly applied as a term of abuse – (see Lane's *Thousand and One Nights*, chap. XV. note 9.) We find from Miss Pardoe, that a similar prejudice prevails among the Osmanlis.

as blue pelisses, of our countrywomen, have been seen with sufficient frequency on the banks of the Nile to render the one, it is to be hoped, no longer an object of alarm to the natives, nor the latter to errant members of the Institute: but a narrative of the impressions produced on a cultivated female mind by a residence among the modern inhabitants of the land of the pyramids, was still a desideratum. The "Notes" (published in 1840 in the *Asiatic Journal*) of the late lamented Emma Roberts, than whom no one would have been better qualified to fill up the void, though replete with interest and information, are merely those of a traveller hastening through the country on her way to India; and, except the fugitive sketches of Mrs Dawson Damer, we cannot call to mind a single one among all the lady-tourists, with whose tours and voyages the press has lately teemed, who has touched on this hitherto unbroken ground. In such a dearth of information, we may deem ourselves doubly fortunate in finding the task undertaken by a lady possessing such peculiar advantages as must have been enjoyed by the sister of the well-known Orientalist, to whose pen we are indebted for perhaps the most comprehensive and accurate account ever published of the habits and manners of any nation, and under whose immediate superintendence, as we are informed, the work before us was prepared.

The title of the "Englishwoman in *Cairo*," would perhaps have more appropriately designated the character of Mrs Poole's volumes than that which she has adopted; since her opportunities

of personal observation, after her arrival in the capital from Alexandria, were bounded by the environs of the city, her excursions from which do not appear to have extended further than the pyramids. A considerable portion of the first volume is occupied by an abstract of Egyptian history from the time of the Arab conquest, an account of the foundation of Cairo, an agricultural and general calendar for each month of the year, and various matters connected with the physical features, statistics, &c., of the country. These dissertations form a sort of supplement to the work of her brother, from whose MS. notes they are avowedly taken; being introduced (as Mrs Poole, with much *naïveté*, confesses) "in the hope of obtaining a more favourable reception for her letters, for the sake of the more solid matter with which they are interspersed;" but though they certainly convey much valuable additional information to the readers of the "Modern Egyptians," they are scarcely "germane to the matter," as interpolations in the work of a lady. The authoress can very well afford to rest her claim to popularity on her own merits; and we prefer to follow her, in her own peculiar sphere, into those mysterious recesses of an Oriental establishment, whither no male footstep can ever penetrate. Mrs Poole is probably the first English lady who has been admitted, not merely as a passing visitor, but as a privileged friend, into the hareems of those of the highest rank in the Egyptian capital. We find her threading the narrow and crowded thoroughfares

of Cairo, borne aloft on the "high ass,"[15] (the usual mode of conveyance for morning calls;) and are introduced to the wives and daughters of the viceroy, and even (in the hareem of Habeeb Effendi) to ladies of the imperial house of Othman, in the ease and *disinvoltura* of their domestic circles, amid that atmosphere of *dolce far niente* and graceful etiquette, in which the hours of an Oriental princess appear to be habitually passed. With the exception of Lady Mary Wortley Montague's piquant sketches of the Turkish hareems and their inmates, and the singular narrative of her personal experience of life in an Indian zenana, by *Mrs Meer Hassan Ali*,[16] we know no female writer who has enjoyed such opportunities for the delineation of the scenes of domestic privacy of the East, and who has so well availed herself of them, as the sister of *Mansoor Effendi*, in the pages before us.

The narrative opens with the landing of the authoress and her companions at Alexandria in July 1842; but that city, with its double harbour, its quays crowded with a motley assemblage of every nation and language in Europe and the Levant, and the monuments of antiquity in its environs, has been too often described to present too much opportunity for novelty of remark.

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[15] A representation of ladies thus mounted, is found in the *Modern Egyptians*, Vol. i. p. 240, first edit.

[16] *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*, by Mrs Meer Hassan Ali, (Parbury and Allen, 1832.) The authoress of these volumes became, under what circumstances she does not inform us, the wife of a Moslem native of wealth and rank in India, of whose hareem she had been twelve years an inmate, without once having had reason, by her own account, to regret her apparently strange choice of a partner.

Passing over, therefore, the details given of these well-known objects, we find the party, after a rapid passage along the Mahmoodiyeh canal in an iron track-boat, drawn by four horses, and a vexatious delay of two days at the junction of the canal and the river, (during which the want of musquitto-curtains gave them an ample foretaste of the quantity and quality of the insect plagues of Egypt,) fairly embarked on the broad stream of the Nile. The voyage to Cairo was performed in a *kanjeh*, or passage-boat of the kind usual on the river – a long, narrow craft, with two masts, bearing large triangular sails; and Mrs Poole, in common with most travellers arriving for the first time in the East, was greatly impressed by the simple devotion with which the Reyyis (or Arab captain) and his crew commended themselves, on setting sail, to the protection of Providence, by reciting altogether, in a low voice, the short prayer of the *Fathah*, or opening chapter of the Koran. "The sight of the Muslim engaged in his devotions is, I think, most interesting; the attitudes are particularly striking and impressive; and the solemn demeanour of the worshipper, who, even in the busy market-place, appears wholly abstracted from the world, is very remarkable. The practice of praying in a public place is so general in the East, and attracts so little notice from Muslims, that we must not regard it as the result of hypocrisy or ostentation."

As the kanjeh lay to at night to avoid danger from sand-banks, the travellers were three days in reaching Cairo; and found little to interest them in the contemplation of the banks

of the Nile, which at this season are destitute of the brilliant verdure which clothes them for some time after the inundation. On arriving at Boulak, the authoress for the first time shrouded herself in the cumbrous folds of a Turkish riding-dress, "an overwhelming covering of black silk, extending, in my idea, in every direction;" and mounted on a donkey, she followed her janissary guide through the dilapidated suburb, "and at length we fairly entered Cairo… The first impression on entering this celebrated city is, that it has the appearance of having been deserted for perhaps a century, and suddenly re-peopled by persons, unable, from poverty or some other cause, to repair it, and clear away its antiquated cobwebs… I wrote to you that the streets of Alexandria were narrow; they are *wide* compared to those of Cairo. The *meshreebeyehs*, or projecting windows, facing each other above the ground floor, literally touch in *some* instances, and in *many*, the opposite windows are within reach… After passing through several of the streets, into which it appeared as though the dwellings had turned out nearly all their inhabitants, we arrived at an agreeable house in the midst of gardens, in which we are to take up our temporary residence."

The plan of these gardens, however, intersected by parallel walks, with gutters on each side to convey water into the intermediate squares, was so much at variance with Mrs Poole's English notions of horticulture, that she was almost tempted to conclude, "that a garden in Egypt was not worth cultivation – so much for national prejudice!" As it was indispensable for

the health of the children that their residence should be fixed in the outskirts of the city, some delay was experienced in finding a permanent abode; but at the end of a month they considered themselves fortunate in engaging a house "infinitely beyond the usual run," in the most healthy and cheerful quarter, for which the rent demanded by the landlady, (who bore the picturesque name of Lalah-Zar, or *Bed of Tulips*,) was only L.12 per annum. The arrangement of the apartments was nearly as described by Mr Lane in his account of the private houses in Cairo – (*Modern Egyptians*, i. p. 11:) on the ground-floor a court, open to the sky, round which were the rooms appropriated to the male inhabitants, while a gallery, running round the first floor, conducted to the hareem, consisting of two principal apartments, and "three small marble paved rooms, forming *en suite* an antechamber, a reclining chamber, and a bath. Above are four rooms, the principal one opening to a delightful terrace, considerably above most of the surrounding houses, and on this we enjoy our breakfast and supper under the clearest sky in the world." But scarcely had the establishment been removed into this new residence, when it became evident that something was *not right*. The two maid-servants, Amineh and Zeyneb, disappeared one after the other without giving warning – strange noises were heard, which were at first ascribed to the wedding rejoicings of a neighbour, but an explanation was at last elicited from the doorkeeper. The house was haunted by an 'Efreet, (ghost or evil spirit,) in consequence of the murder of a poor

tradesman and two slave girls by the previous owner, who had bequeathed it to Lalah-Zar, with reversion (perhaps in hope of expiating his crimes) to a mosque. One of the victims had perished in the bath, and like Praed's[17] Abbess of St Ursula, who

> "From evensong to matins,
> In gallery and scullery,
> And kitchen and refectory,
> Still tramp'd it in her pattens,"

the angry spirit stalked at night, apparently in heavy clogs like those worn in the bath, knocking at the doors, and uttering unearthly sounds, which allowed no sleep to the inmates. In vain had poor Lalah-Zar endeavoured to appease this unwelcome intruder, which had driven tenant after tenant from the house, by distributing bread to the poor at the tomb of the late owner; the annoyance continued undiminished – pieces of charcoal were left at the doors, equivalent to the imprecation, "May your faces be blackened!" and no female servant would remain in the house, it being universally believed that the touch of an 'Efreet renders a woman a demoniac. The Ramadan (during which it is held that all 'Efreets are chained up,) brought a temporary respite; and they flattered themselves that they had succeeded in barring out the intruder; but with the conclusion of the fast the disturbances were

[17] Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*, ii. 414, a talented but shortlived periodical, chiefly by members of the University of Cambridge, to which Praed was a principal contributor under the assumed signature of Peregrine Courtenay.

resumed with increased violence. At length a new doorkeeper, worn out with want of sleep, obtained permission to fire at the phantom, which he said he saw every night in the gallery, alleging that 'Efreets were always destroyed by the discharge of fire-arms. At midnight the house was startled by the report of a pistol, which it afterwards appeared had been loaded, contrary to orders, with a brace of bullets: the voice of the doorkeeper was heard crying, "There he lies, the accursed;" and sounds and cries were heard, which convinced them all that *somebody* had been shot. "It passed me in the gallery," said the doorkeeper, "when I thus addressed it, 'Shall we quit this house, or will you do so?' 'You shall quit it,' he answered; and he threw dust into my right eye: this proved it was a devil. It stopped in that corner, and I observed it attentively. It was tall, and perfectly white. Before it moved again I discharged the pistol, and the accursed was struck down before me, and here are the remains." So saying, he picked up a small burnt mass, resembling more the sole of a shoe than any thing else, but perforated by fire in several places, and literally burnt to a cinder. This he asserted (agreeably with a popular opinion) was always the relic when a devil was destroyed.

The mystery remained unexplained, though we fear that most sober Franks (in spite of the corroboration afforded to the doorkeeper's theory by the high authority of the *Thousand and One Nights*[18]) will be tempted to share Mrs Poole's scepticism as to the remains of a devil assuming the shape of the calcined

[18] Lane's *Thousand and One Nights*, i. 176, ii. 345.

sole of an old shoe: but after an interval of peace, they were eventually compelled, by a renewal of the attack, to abandon the haunted house – and those who succeeded them fared even worse. Six families were driven out in as many weeks – their windows broken, and their china demolished by invisible hands, not only by night, but in broad day – "and now," says Mrs Poole, "I have done with this subject. I have said much upon it; but I must be held excusable, as "tis passing strange.'"

The annoyance of this spectral warfare, which continued many months, had not prevented Mrs Poole (in spite of the *desagrémens* of flies, "black thick-legged spiders," and handmaidens, "who scarcely ever wash themselves except when they go to the bath, which is once in about ten days or a fortnight") from becoming gradually at home in her Egyptian residence, and tolerably familiarized with the language and manners of the country. She had even adopted the native manner of eating; and had habituated herself to wear the Turkish dress with such ease, as to witness unsuspected the splendid procession of the *Mahmal*,[19] or emblem of royalty, which precedes the march of the pilgrim caravan to Mekka – an occasion on which the boys of Cairo enjoy a kind of saturnalia, and are privileged to maltreat any Christian or Jew who may be detected near the route. Under the guidance of an elderly Muslim friend of her brother, she had also entered the principal mosques of Cairo, including that of the Hasaneyn (the grandsons of the

[19] A representation of the Mahmal is given in the *Modern Egyptians*, ii. 182.

prophet, Hasan and Hoseyn) and the Zamé-el-Azhar, the two most sacred edifices of Cairo. But the Azhar (splendid mosque) is not only the *cathedral* mosque of the Egyptian capital, but the principal, and perhaps in the present day the only Moslem university. In the *riwaks*, or apartments appropriated to students from different countries, chiefly poor scholars supported by the funds of the mosque, "after passing successively among natives of different divisions of Egypt, we find ourselves in the company of people of Mekkeh and El-Medeeneh; then in the midst of Syrians; in another minute among Muslims of Central Africa; next among Magharbeh, (or natives of Northern Africa west of Egypt;) then with European and Asiatic Turks; and quitting these, we are introduced to Persians, and Muslims of India; we may almost fancy ourselves transported through their respective countries. No sight in Cairo interested me more than the interior of the Azhar; and the many and great obstacles which present themselves when a Christian, and more especially a Christian lady, desires to obtain admission into this celebrated mosque, make me proud of having enjoyed the privilege of walking leisurely through its extensive porticoes, and observing its heterogeneous students engaged in listening to the lectures of their professors."

A far different *locale* from the cloisters of the Azhar, into which Mrs Poole was, perhaps, induced to penetrate by the example of Mrs Dawson Damer, was the *maristan*, or madhouse, perhaps the oldest public establishment of the kind in the world,

as it was attached by the Baharite Sultan Kalaoon to the mosque which he founded in 1284. "Our ears were assailed by the most discordant yells as soon as we entered the passage leading to the cells," where the lunatics were chained like wild beasts, the men in one court and the women in another. Each was confined in a separate cell with a small grated window, and with nothing but the bare floor to rest upon – while many, especially of the women, had not an article of clothing – yet they appeared to be sufficiently supplied with food, and mildly treated by their guardians; "and I think this gentleness of manner in the keepers was not assumed for the time, for the lunatics did not appear to fear them." – "I was ill prepared for the sight of such misery, and was leaving the court, when I heard a voice exclaiming in a melancholy tone of supplication, 'Stay, O my mistress; give me five paras for tobacco before you go.' I turned, and the entreaty was repeated by a very nice-looking old woman, who was very grateful when I assured her that she should have what she required; and the woman who was the superintendent gave her the trifle for me." This establishment was then, however, on the point of being broken up, as the patients were to be removed to another hospital, where they would be placed under the care of the pasha's French surgeon-general, Clot Bey.

"The Turkish is the only European language," says Mr Urquhart in his eloquent but fanciful work, the *Spirit of the East*, "which possesses, in the word *harem*, a synonyme for home, but it implies a great deal more… To picture a Turkish woman, I

would beg the reader, if possible, to fancy to himself a women without vanity or affectation, perfectly simple and natural, and preserving the manners and the type of her childhood in the full blossom and fructification of her passions and her charms." This is indeed the language of an enthusiast, in whose eyes all is light which comes from the East; but the winning grace and gentle courtesy of the Turco-Egyptian ladies of rank, as portrayed in Mrs Poole's interesting sketches of the domestic life of the hareems which she visited, go far to justify the character given of them by their eulogist. For her introduction to these, the *exclusive* circles of Cairo, as well as for the more than friendly reception which she there met with, Mrs Poole professes herself indebted "to the kindness of Mrs Sieder, the lady of our excellent resident missionary, who has gained the confidence of the most distinguished hareems," aided in no small degree, we have reason to believe, by the general estimation in which her brother was held among his Muslim acquaintance. In this novel species of social intercourse, Mrs Poole showed much tact, wearing the Turkish dress, which is admirably adapted to the climate, in her visits to ladies of the middle class, as well as at home; "but in visiting those who are considered the noble of the land, I resume, under my Eastern riding-costume, my English dress. In the Turkish dress, the manner of my salutation must have been more submissive than I should have liked; while, as an Englishwoman, I am entertained by the most distinguished, not only as an equal, but, generally, as a superior." Thus, at the

hareem of Habeeb Effendi, the ex-governor of Cairo, she was received at the door of the first apartment, on dismounting from the "high ass" on which all visits of ceremony must be paid, by the eldest daughter of the house, who herself disencumbered her of her riding-dress – an office left to slaves in families of rank, except in the case of a visitor of high distinction – and was then placed by her on the divan at the right hand of her mother, the first cousin of the late Sultan Mahmood. The second daughter appeared soon after, and Mrs Poole proceeds to describe her dress. "She wore on her head a dark handkerchief twisted round a *tarboosh*, (red cap,) with a very splendid sprig of diamonds attached to the right side, and extending partly over her forehead. It was composed of very large brilliants, disposed in the form of three lutes in the centre, from each of which a branch extended, forming an oval shape at least five inches in length. High on the left side of her head, she wore a knot or slide of diamonds, through which was drawn a bunch of ringlets, which, from their position, appeared to be artificial; her tarboosh had the usual blue silk tassel, but divided and hanging on either side. Her long vest and trousers were of a dark-flowered India fabric; she wore round her waist a large and rich Cashmere shawl; and her neck was decorated with many strings of very large pearls, confined at intervals with gold beads. She was in one respect strangely disfigured – her eyebrows being painted with *kohl*, and united by the black pigment in a very broad and unbecoming manner. Many women of all classes here assume this disguise. Some apply

the *kohl* to the eyebrows as well as the eyes, with great delicacy; but this lady had her eyebrows so remarkable, that her other features were deprived of their natural expression and effect."

The same graceful kindness which had marked the reception, was continued throughout the interview. After the usual refreshments of sweetmeats and coffee had been handed round by the slaves, the eldest daughter, throwing her arm round the neck of their guest, (the Oriental equivalent for walking arm-in-arm,) conducted her through the various apartments of the house; and was preparing, on her departure, to re-equip her with her riding-dress, when the younger sister remarked, "You took them off: it is for me to put them on." The friendship thus commenced with the amiable family of Habeeb Effendi continued uninterrupted during Mrs Poole's stay in Egypt; and the honours with which she was received were almost embarrassing – the chief lady, on her second visit, even resigning her own seat, and placing herself below her. The ladies of this hareem were particularly well informed. They had heard of the publication of Mrs Dawson Damer's "Tour," all were very curious to know what had been said of them, expressing much gratification on hearing the terms in which she had described them. Of the eldest daughter,[20] in particular, Mrs Poole speaks in

[20] Mrs Damer describes this lady, to whose amiability and accomplishments she does ample justice, as "a sort of Turkish *chanoinesse*," who had renounced marriage in order to devote herself to her mother – a circumstance which, if correctly stated, would be almost unparalleled in the East. But Mrs Poole's silence would rather lead us to suppose that Mrs Damer was mistaken.

language of the warmest personal regard: – "I have not met with her equal in Eastern female society, in gentleness, sweetness, and good sense; and, withal, she has decidedly a cultivated mind." She made a copy in colours of the portrait of the present Sultan in Mrs Damer's book, "which will doubtless excite great interest in every visiter; and, unless protected by a glass, it will perhaps, in the course of a few weeks, be kissed entirely away, like a miniature portrait of a Turkish grandee of which I was lately told." The political relations of the Porte with England and Russia frequently became the subject of conversation; and on one occasion, when the concession lately exacted from the Porte, of allowing converts to Islam to return unmolested to their original faith – a concession of all others most galling to the Moslem pride – was brought on the tapis, this lady remarked, "with an earnestness of manner which interested me and my friend extremely – 'It is but the fulfilment of prophecy! When I was a little child, I was taught that in this year great things would commence, which would require three years for their completion!' Surely she drew a beautiful conclusion," adds Mrs Poole, "and under circumstances of painful feelings to one strictly attached to the laws of her religion." But the allusion appears to have been a belief long current in the East, that a mysterious combination was involved in the number 1260, (the year of the Hejra which has just closed,) portending "the beginning of the end" of Islam, if not of the world; and of which this infringement of Moslem supremacy appeared to be the first

manifestation.[21]

The advantages of the English costume were strongly evinced on Mrs Poole's presentation, by her friend Mrs Siedler, to the haughty Nezleh Hanum, the widowed daughter of Mohammed Ali, in her apartments at the Kasr-ed-Dubárah, a palace in the midst of Ibrahim Pasha's plantations on the banks of the Nile, which is the usual residence of the ladies of the Pasha's family. Mrs Dawson Damer has drawn a sufficiently unamiable picture of this princess, whose cruelty to her attendants she represents as emulating that displayed in his public character by her late husband, the Defterdar Mohammed Bey.[22] But nothing but the *patte de velours* was seen by the English stranger, who, though Nezleh Hanum was severely indisposed at the time of her visit, was, by her express command, shown into her bedroom, and received "with the sweetest smile imaginable;" while the youngest son of the Pasha, Mohammed Ali Bey, a boy nine years old, sat on a cushion at his sister's feet, conversing with the visitor in French; his mother, and other ladies, sitting on Mrs Poole's left hand. The day happened to be the fourth of the festival of the Great Beiram, when it was customary for those ladies who had the privilege of the *entrée*, to pay their respects to the princess. But to not one of those who presented themselves at this levee,

[21] A belief precisely similar prevailed throughout Christendom, previous to the year 1260 of our own era: the reference being to the two mystic periods in the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse.

[22] An anecdote of this personage is given in Mr Lane's works, i. 153.

did Nezleh Hanum deign to address a word in acknowledgment of their salutation, as they silently advanced, with downcast eyes, to kiss her hand or the hem of her robe, and then as silently withdrew, without once raising their eyes to her face. "This etiquette, I an informed, is not only observed during her illness, but at all times: and here I felt peculiarly the advantage of being an Englishwoman; for she kept up with me a lively conversation, and really treated me as an equal." On taking leave, a second cup of sherbet was presented – "This is always intended as a distinguishing mark of honour. Several ladies accompanied us to the door; and the treasurer followed me with an embroidered handkerchief from her highness. Do not think me egotistical, because I describe thus minutely my reception; I consider it important in a description of manners, especially as the receiving and paying visits is the everyday business of an Eastern lady."

This was not, however, the first occasion on which Mrs Poole had visited the Kasr-ed-Dubárah, as she had some months previously been present, in company with her invaluable chaperon, Mrs Sieder, at an entertainment there given by the Pasha's hareem; when she had formed the acquaintance of the mother[23] of Mohammed Ali Bey, and of another wife of the Pasha, "both young; the one a dignified and handsome person, and the other especially gentle and very lovely." At the time, she supposed that these were the *only* wives of his highness; but, on a subsequent visit to the hareem in the citadel, she was

[23] It is hareem etiquette to address mothers by the names of their children.

introduced to a third, the mother of a son named Haleem Bey – and she shrewdly conjectured that the full number of four was not incomplete. These ladies, with the daughter of Mohammed Ali, the widow of Toosoon, (a deceased son of the Pasha, whose son, Abbas, is the reputed successor to the pashalik,) and Abbas Pasha's fostermother, were the only persons at table, with the exception of the French guests – the widow of Toosoon Pasha, in virtue of her seniority, leading the way to the *salle-à-manger*, and taking the place of honour at "a very large round silver tray, covered with small silver dishes filled with various creams, jellies, &c., and most tastefully garnished with exquisite flowers; in the centre was a forequarter of lamb, on piláv. The lamb was succeeded by stew; the stew by vegetables; the vegetables by savoury cream, &c.; sweet dishes, most delicately prepared, succeeded these in rapid succession; and each was removed, and its place filled, when perhaps only tasted. Ladies attended close to our divan with fly-whisks; behind them about thirty formed a semicircle of gaily dressed, and in many cases beautiful women and girls; those near the door held large silver trays, on which the black slaves, who stood without, placed the dishes." During the repast, Mrs Poole frequently received morsels from the hand of Toosoon Pasha's widow – one of the highest compliments according to Eastern manners – and, before taking leave, she received an invitation to a grand marriage festival, which was shortly to take place in the hareem. The nuptials were not, however, celebrated during her stay in Egypt, the main difficulty

being, as she was informed, *the choice of a bridegroom*!

Though the costume of the Pasha's ladies did not differ materially from that already described in the hareem of Habeeb Effendi, yet, as the Kasr-ed-Dubárah may be considered as the centre of Cairo fashion, it would be unpardonable to omit some notice of Mrs Poole's observations (somewhat abridged) on this all-important subject. "The Turkish ladies wear the *yelek* (long vest) considerably longer than their height, forming a graceful train, which, in walking over a mat or carpet, they hold in front over the arm. The chemise is of silk gauze, fine muslin, or a very beautiful thin crape, with glossy stripes, which is made of raw silk in the hareems, and is cream colour: the sleeves are not confined at the wrist. The *shintiyan* (trousers) are extremely full, and generally of a different material from the *yelek*; the former being of rich brocade, large-patterned muslin or chintz, or sometimes of plain satin or gros-de-Naples. The *yelek*, on the contrary, is made of a material with a delicate pattern, generally a small stripe, whether of satin, India silk, or muslin. Ladies of distinction always wear Cashmere shawls round the waist, generally red; and those in Kasr-ed-Dubárah had a narrow edge of gold, with gold cords and tassels at the corners." The tarboosh and diamond ornaments are worn as before described; "but the front hair is cut short, and combed towards the eyebrows, which is extremely unbecoming even to a beautiful face, except when it curls naturally. The long hair is disposed in numerous small plaits, and looped up on each side over the handkerchief. The hair

of the younger ladies and white slaves, in the Turkish hareems, is often worn hanging loosely on the shoulders; but no coiffure is so pretty as that worn by the Arab ladies, whose long hair, hanging down the back, is arranged in many small plaits, often lengthened by silk braid, and generally adorned with hundreds of small gold ornaments, resembling oval spangles, which harmonize better with the Eastern costume than any other fashion."

The hareems of the grandees are generally surrounded by lofty walls, as high or higher than the neighbouring houses; a vigilant *bowwab* or doorkeeper is stationed at the outer portal; and within this the eunuchs guard the curtains, heavy with golden embroidery, which cover the doorway leading to the interior; and woe to the intruder who should attempt to penetrate beyond the entrance! A closed door is never permitted in the hareem; but etiquette forbids the husband to enter when slippers laid before the doorway denote that his wife is receiving visitors – a method of exclusion which is said to be sometimes kept in operation for many days together. The scale of precedence among the inmates is regulated on a very different system from that of European society. Mr Urquhart has correctly remarked that "the precept, 'Thou shalt leave thy father and mother, and cleave unto thy wife,' has not been transcribed from the Gospel to the Koran: the wife in the East is not the mistress of the household; she is the daughter of her husband's mother," to whom the appellation of *hanum*, or chief lady belongs of right to the end of her life: and even if the mother be not living, the sisters of the husband take precedence

of the wife, who is regarded by them as a *younger* sister. The first wife, however, where there is more than one, can only lose her pre-eminence of rank by the misfortune of being childless, in which case she gives place to one who has become a mother; but, among the higher classes, each wife has her separate apartments and attendants, and in some cases even inhabits separate mansion – all, however, within the bounding walls of the hareem.

"In the great hareems, the hanum generally has four principal attendants, two of whom are elderly, and act simply as companions; the third is the treasurer, and the fourth is the sub-treasurer. The next in rank are those who hand pipes and coffee, sherbet and sweetmeats; and each of these has her own set of subordinates. Lastly rank the cooks and house slaves, who are mostly negresses." The position of these *white slaves*, among whom Mrs. Poole "found the most lovely girls in the hareem, many of them fully justifying my preconceived ideas of the celebrated Georgian and Circassian women," may, perhaps, be best understood by a reference to the familiar pages of the Thousand and One Nights; the hareem scenes in which are probably drawn from those of Syria and Egypt at the period when those tales were written. "Though torn from their parents at an early age, they find and acknowledge fathers and mothers in those to whom they are sold; and, excepting in two cases, cheerfulness has appeared to reign among them" – and the authoress was a witness of the deep sympathy felt by the slaves of the wife of a Turkish grandee, who was confined in the

state prison by order of the Pasha. The principal employment of these fair prisoners, independent of the preparation of sherbets and other household duties, consists in embroidery, "which is extremely beautiful, as superior as it is unlike to any fancy-work practised in England: – taste of a very remarkable kind is displayed in its execution, similar in many respects to that exhibited in the most elaborate decorations of Arabian architecture." Few, even of the ladies of rank, can read or write their own language – but there are some exceptions – the accomplished family of Habeeb Effendi has already been noticed; and Mrs Poole was acquainted with another instance, in which the daughters had learned, under the tuition of a brother who had been educated in Europe, to read and understand not only the literature of their own country, but the poets of Italy. The surveillance exercised over the young white slaves "can only be compared to that which is established in the convent. A deviation from the strictest rules of modesty is followed by severe punishment, and often by the death of the delinquent … but if they conduct themselves well, they are frequently married by their masters to persons of high respectability; and the ceremony of the marriage[24] of a slave in the high hareems is conducted with extreme magnificence. Those, however, who from their personal charms have become the favourites of their master, and particularly those who have borne him a child, are seldom or

[24] Marriages of slaves from the khalif's hareem occur more than once in the Thousand and One Nights.

never thus dismissed, and cannot legally be sold: having in this respect the advantage of the wife, who is always liable to be divorced without cause assigned, and at a moment's notice."

In the hareems of the middle and lower classes, the same system of strict seclusion cannot, of course, be maintained as in the case of the "hidden jewels" (as they are called) of the grandees: – the women frequent the public baths, and are allowed to visit their neighbours without restraint; but shopping is generally prohibited, for reasons which may be gathered from the Thousand and One Nights: – and goods for sale are brought to the hareems by female brokers. The system of blindfold marriages is universal; and except among the lowest class, it is scarcely possible that the bridegroom and bride should get a glimpse of each other before their espousals – and the betrothals are generally made at a ridiculously early age. A lady gravely asked Mrs Poole whether one of her boys, thirteen years of age, was married – and she witnessed a marriage procession in which the almost infant bride, taking the whole affair as a good joke, thought proper to walk backwards before the canopy fanning her friends, instead of submitting to be fanned. The natural consequence of these early marriages is, that "among the lower orders some husbands are sad tyrants; they marry such little young creatures, that they are more like children than wives, and their inexperience unjustly provokes their husbands." An original sort of revenge was threatened in her hearing by a man irritated by the abusive language of a little girl, whose tongue was

the plague of the neighbourhood – "When I have a little more money, I will marry you, and punish you every day." Mrs Poole indeed expresses her conviction, reluctantly forced upon her, that in the middle and lower classes,[25] both wives and female slaves are often treated with the utmost brutality; and she mentions two instances in her own neighbourhood, in which the death of women of the latter class was caused by the cruelty of their masters. In both these cases, however, the men were Copts – a people of whom (in spite of the efforts of the English Missionary Society to make them something more than nominal Christians) she was assured, by one who knew them well, "that their moral state is far worse than that of the Muslims, and that in the *conduct* of the latter there is much more Christianity than is exhibited in that of the former."[26] An anecdote, casually introduced, enables us to judge of the education which children receive on this point. On a visit to the wife of the keeper of the tombs of Mohammed Ali's family, a boy just able to walk was brought in, when "the chief lady called for a stick, that puss, who was quietly crossing the carpet, might be beaten for his amusement. I interceded for the cat, when she replied mysteriously, 'I like her very much – I will not hurt her.' Accordingly she raised her arm with considerable effort, and let it fall gently. She next desired one of

[25] The higher classes are not free from this reproach if we are to believe the story told by Mrs Damer, that Nezleh Hanum punished a female slave who had offended her by the daily amputation of a joint of one of her fingers!

[26] A Spanish proverb of former days, defines "Castilian faith and Moorish works" as the ingredients of a good Christian.

her slaves to kneel, which the girl did most gracefully, and bent her head with an air of mock submission to receive the *kurbáj*, and the same farce was repeated. Though neither slave nor cat was a sufferer, the effect must have been equally bad on the mind of the child. Alas! for the slaves and cats when he is big enough to make them feel!"

The children, however, occasionally fare no better than the slaves; and Mr Lane was not seldom obliged, by the screams of the sufferers, to interfere to stop the cruelty practised in his neighbourhood, when "the answer usually returned was of the most civil kind, assuring us, with many salutations, that *for our sakes* the offender shall be forgiven." On one occasion an old woman, to punish her little grandson for a trifling theft, had employed the services of a professional *beater*, who had tied the child's legs and arms, and was beating him with a ponderous stick, while his grandmother cried, "again!" and only desisted on a peremptory remonstrance from Mr Lane; yet the same woman disturbed the neighbourhood with her lamentations every alternate Monday for the loss of her son, the little boy's father! It is perhaps hardly fair to cite instances of brutality like this, to which our own police-offices afford abundance of parallels, as examples of the national manners of Egypt; and Mrs Poole does full justice to the spirit of mutual aid which prevails among the poor in all Moslem countries, and teaches them "to bear each other's burdens." The women, especially those of the higher class, are admitted to be the "most affectionate of mothers."

They are so possessed, however, by terror of the "evil eye," which they firmly believe may be cast on their children by an admiring word or glance, that the smallest allusion to them is hazardous. Mrs Poole was much amused by the agitation of an Arab lady, in conversation with whom she had congratulated herself that the strength of her eldest boy's constitution had preserved him from the ill effects of the heat. "In an instant she vociferated, 'Bless the Prophet! bless the Prophet!' and coloured deeply." And it was with difficulty that Mrs Poole could calm her, or convince her that the English apprehended no danger from the expression of their satisfaction in the welfare of those they love.

It is not easy for even the most experienced to avoid *contretemps* of this kind in the East, where even the ordinary observances of life seem to have been arranged on a system diametrically opposite to our own; and some amusing anecdotes are given of the *gaucheries* unconsciously committed by raw tourists from Europe. At the house of an Egyptian grandee, an European gentleman, on receiving the sherbet after pipes and coffee, which was handed to him first as a stranger, "looked at it for a moment, and then at the gaily-embroidered napkin hung over the arm of the slave who presented it; and following the impulse given, I conclude, by his preconceptions of Eastern habits of cleanliness, dipped his fingers in the sweet beverage, and wiped them on the napkin!" A less pardonable breach of etiquette, as it proceeded not from ignorance but want of good-breeding, was committed by two Franks, who, arranged in a

motley mixture of European and Oriental costume, made their way into the Pasha's palace at Shubra, and, after rambling from room to room without meeting any one, at length entered the bedroom of the Pasha, who was nearly undressed! "Though taken by surprise, his Turkish coolness did not forsake him; calling for his dragoman, he said, 'Ask those gentlemen where they bought their tarbooshes?' 'At Constantinople.' 'And *there*,' rejoined the Pasha, 'I suppose they learned their manners. Tell them so.' Judging from this retort that their presence was not agreeable, the Franks saluted the viceroy, and withdrew."

As we profess to deal with Mrs Poole solely in her own peculiar province, as a delineator of female manners and female society in Egypt, we shall pass with brief notice her visit to the Pyramids, the account of which contains much valuable information, supplied (as she avows,) from the notes of her brother. The excursion, though at a short distance from Cairo, is not altogether unattended with danger, especially to ladies, from the attacks of the Bedawees; as appears from the remarks of some young men, the sons of a Bedawee sheykh at some distance, who had ridden over, as they admitted, in the hope of seeing the faces of the ladies of the party, and were much disappointed at finding them veiled. They had been much struck by the charms of a beautiful American whom they had seen a few weeks before; and one of then exclaimed, in speaking of her – "But the sword! the sword! if we dared to use it, we would kill that man," alluding to the lady's companion, whether her husband

or brother, "and take her for ourselves." – "'Tis well for pretty women travelling in the East, that these lawless Arabs are kept under a degree of subjection by the present government," says Mrs Poole; and the anecdote affords an indication that, when the reins of administration are released by the death of the present Pasha, the overland route to India may not be quite so secure as it is at present.

But there is another, a modern wonder of Cairo, which, of late years, has almost equally divided with the Pyramids the attention of Frank travellers. We allude to the sheykh Abdel-Kadir el-Maughrabi, in whose enchanted mirror of ink, poured into the palm of an unsophisticated Arab boy, men from all parts of the earth were compelled to appear before the tent of the Sultan, with its seven mystic flags, and submit to a description of their persons and dress, which would have satisfied the vigilance of the Russian police. The oracular sagacity of the *Quarterly Review* was unable to solve the mystery; and even Mr Lane, in his *Modern Egyptians*, hesitates whether to doubt or to believe; but the bubble (as we learn from Mrs Poole) has at last burst; and the two familiar spirits, Turshoon and Turyooshoon, stand revealed in the late Osman Effendi, interpreter to the British consulate. Since the death of this respectable personage, who usually acted as master of the ceremonies at his performances, the good fortune of the sheykh has totally deserted him, as he himself inadvertently admitted to Mr Lane, when he not long since accompanied two English travellers to witness the exhibition, which proved an

entire failure; and since that time his attempts have been even more signally unsuccessful. Whatever may have been the means employed, there is no longer any doubt that Osman Effendi, who sat quiet and demure in a corner, without word or sign, was the prime agent in the deception; and with him the reputation of the last representative of Pharaoh's magicians has vanished for ever, like the visions in his own magic mirror.

The series of Mrs Poole's letters closes abruptly in April 1844, with the relation of one of her visits to the friendly harem of Habeeb Effendi; and no intimation is given either of the cause of the second cessation, or whether a second series may be hereafter expected. We hope that this may be the case; for, independent of the interest attaching to the subject, and the difficulty of finding another equally qualified by opportunity and powers of observation to do it justice, the time must inevitably soon be past when it will be possible to depict the habitudes and manners of the Arab population in their integrity. Cairo is at present, with the single exception perhaps of Damascus, the most purely Arab city in the East; but the ruthless reforms of the Pasha, and the constant passage of the Franks on this new high-road to India, will erelong divest it of its distinguishing characteristics, and give it as hybrid an aspect as that of the Frank intruders into the Pasha's chamber. An English hotel has already started up; and Mrs Poole informs us, that "by a proclamation of the Pasha, the houses are to be whitewashed within and without; those who inhabit ruined houses are to repair or sell them; and

uninhabited dwellings are to be pulled down, for the purpose of forming squares and gardens; *meshreebeyehs* (projecting first-floor windows) are forbidden; and *mastabahs* (the seats in front of shops) are to be removed. Cairo, therefore, will no longer be an Arab city, and will no longer possess those peculiarities which render it so picturesque and attractive. The deep shade in the narrow streets, increased by the projecting windows; the picturesque tradesmen, sitting with one friend or more before his shop, enjoying the space afforded by his mastabah – these will be no more; and while I cannot but acknowledge the great necessity for repairing the city, and removing the ruins which threaten the destruction of passengers, I should have liked these features retained which are essentially characteristic – which help, as it were, to group the people, and which form such admirable accessories to pictures."

PRACTICAL AGRICULTURE – STEPHENS' BOOK OF THE FARM, &c

The growing demand for information among the agricultural classes, makes the appearance of new books of a really trustworthy kind of greater national value at the present time than at any former period. Besides, as our knowledge is rapidly advancing, good books upon practical agriculture are becoming more difficult to write. They require from their authors a larger acquaintance with the newer branches of elementary science than many practical men can be expected as yet to possess. These considerations induce us to advert for the second time to the work now before us. We drew the attention of our readers to the first volume when it made its appearance; two other volumes completing the work having since been published, we feel ourselves under a kind of obligation to follow the author cursorily through the remainder of his book.

The Book of the Farm might be called *The Practical Farmer's Library*, since it contains full information upon almost every practical subject upon which the intelligent young farmer is likely to require assistance or advice. The scientific branch alone is not systematically discussed, though here and there useful scientific points are treated of and explained. But this was not to be

expected in a really practical work; and the author, upon this branch, very properly refers his readers to the published works of Professor Johnston.[27]

The feature that struck us most in the perusal of the first volume, was the remarkably wide range of minutely practical information which the author possesses and embodies in his book. He describes every practical operation as if he had not only assisted at it on some former occasion, but as if he were actually performing it while he is describing it with his pen. This gives a truthfulness and self-evident accuracy to his descriptions, which are rarely to be met with in agricultural works, and which could not be expected from one who was not really familiar with the points of which he treats. He seems even to enjoy every labour he describes, to enter into the spirit of every operation to be performed – into the heart and fun of the thing as it were. He becomes an actual participator in the fact – a *particeps criminis*.

No matter whether it is the currying or the skinning of his horse – the shoeing or the riding – taking him to the field or to the tanner, Mr Stephens is equally ready and willing for all. He tells you with the same glee, how to shelter your sheep on the hill side, and how to cut their throats after the most approved fashion; how to lay on fat on your short-horns – what are the marks of their being ripe for the butcher – and how you can kill them in the *most*

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[27] *Lectures on Agricultural Chemistry and Geology.* 1 vol. 8vo.*Elements of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology.* 4th Edition.*Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology.* 7th Edition.

Christian way. He pets his sheep-dog and praises him, tells you how kindly you should treat him, what constant encouragement you should give to so faithful a servant, at what age he should be hanged, and how you can make most of his skin. He instructs you to tend your young lambs, he helps you to select a pet from the flock; he goes with you afterwards to the barn, helps you to kill and skin it, teaches you to score and cross it in the most approved style, cuts it up for you like an anatomist, selects the best joint for your own cook; sits down with you afterwards at your own table and carves it, and after he has helped you all to your general satisfaction, he is still connoisseur enough to keep the best bit of all for his own plate.

Besides this living spirit, which pervades all the descriptions of methods and operations, another excellence we have remarked in these volumes is the *kind* of opinions given upon practical points, in reference to which a difference of sentiment prevails among practical men. They are in general *safe* opinions – leaning always to the prudent side in cases of doubtful practice. If they appear, therefore, in some cases, not to come up to the notions of those lovers of change, who would improve agriculture as engineers make railroads – without regard to their cost or to the interest of the capital expended – they will appear to all sound men to be so much the better fitted to guide the rising farmers of the present day. These young men *must* possess more knowledge than their fathers, if they are to continue upon the land; but they will also soon disappear from the land, notwithstanding

their knowledge, if a balance of profit at the end of the year be not considered an indispensable element in their system of husbandry.

The book, as we formerly stated, is divided into four parts, embracing in succession the proper operations to be performed in the four seasons, commencing with those of the winter.

To the greater part of the winter operations, as described and explained by Mr Stephens, we adverted in our former notice: there remains one topic, however, to which, from its great national importance, we must still turn for a little.

Among the various improvements which, in the dead season of the year, the farmer may undertake with profit to himself and advantage to his farm, is that of draining. Of this kind of improvement almost every farm in the country is more or less susceptible. But how should it be done, at what depth, and with what material? As to the depth, the young farmer who wishes to do his work well, will neither imitate nor rely too much on the practice of the district he comes from, or in which his own farm may happen to be situated. If so, he will, in Ayrshire – by the advice of the wise-acres in that county – put in his drains only twenty inches, or two feet, in depth; in Berwickshire he will sink them to three feet; and in Sussex he may be carried along with the rising tide to put none in shallower than four feet. He will not trust, we say, wholly to example. He will say to himself rather, what is the object I have in view, and what implements have I to effect it?

In draining he has one leading, one master object, we may call it, to attend to. He has to deepen his soil, that the roots of his crops may descend further – may draw their food from greater depths, and from a larger body of earth. The more completely he can effect this, the better will his work be done.

How deep will his crops send down their roots? In favourable circumstances his wheat and clover, and even his turnips, will descend to a depth of three feet. His operations, then, would be in some degree perfect, if he could so open, and drain, and doctor his land as to enable and induce the roots of his crops to go down so far as this.

But they will never, or rarely at least, descend lower than the level of the water in the bottom of his drains. He cannot, therefore, hope to make his soil available for the growth of his crops to a greater depth than that to which his drains descend. Three feet then, he will say, appears to be a reasonable depth for a *perfect* drain.

Again, drained land must be opened beneath by the subsoil plough, or by the fork, if the rains, and roots, and air, are to descend, and the full benefits are to be derived from the drains. With our existing implements – especially with the fork – the soil may be stirred to a depth of twenty-six inches. The top of the drain, therefore, should be at least this depth under the surface; and this, again, brings the whole depth of a perfect drain to within a few inches of three feet as before.

Then as to the material, it seems advisable to use either stones

or tiles, according as the one or the other is the cheaper, provided always that the stones are properly broken, and carefully put in. The tide seems now to be running in favour of smaller tiles than have hitherto been generally used in Scotland, and even of pipe-tiles of a very small diameter. Our friend Mr Smith of Deanston has taken out a patent for a pipe-tile, with projecting fingers at the ends, which dovetail into each other, so as to unite the tiles together, and at the same time to keep them in their places. Should these pipes be found generally efficient, the cost of draining will be considerably diminished, while the small space they occupy will afford greater facilities for deepening the soil.

But the economical considerations connected with draining, are as important as the practical methods to be adopted, both to the cultivator of the soil and to the country at large. We shall advert only to one of these.

In what light ought the expenditure of money in draining to be regarded by the practical man?

He ought to consider it only as a mercantile speculation, by which he may or may not make a profit, according to the degree of prudence with which it is undertaken. He has the usufruct of his farm for a certain number of years, with liberty to crop it in a certain way. By this he hopes to make a certain sum of money. But it is capable of improvement by draining, and he has liberty to drain if he likes. "Well," he says to himself, "I make a certain sum by farming my land as it is; I have here fifty pounds of ready

money, could I make more profit if I were to lay this money out in draining it? – would it be a good speculation?" He calculates the cost of draining and the probable return of profit, and the result is apparently that he *can* make more profit by this use of his money than by any other way in which he could employ it. This being the result, the prudent man embarks in this safe speculation. He does not bury his money in his land; he does not give it away to the land to the loss of his family; he only lends it for a season, and for the benefit of his family. He has made his calculations badly, and has only his own arithmetic to blame, if he does not get all his capital back from the land, with a handsome profit in addition, some years before his lease has expired.

Many tenants think the interest of the landlord should enter into their calculations, and some cherish or excite in their own minds ill feelings towards their landlords at the idea of leaving their drains in the land when they quit, and the land itself in better condition than when they entered upon their farms. But this feeling arises altogether from a want of familiarity on their part with the ordinary feelings of mercantile men and the transactions of mercantile business. The farmer's sole aim is to promote his own interest. If that interest is to be promoted by draining, let him do it immediately, and with all his heart; his own profit will not be a whit the less that the landlord comes in for a little profit too when the lease has expired. The builder who takes thirty or forty years' lease of a bit of land in the neighbourhood of London, is not deterred from planting houses upon it, by the reflection

that at the end of his lease the houses will become the property of his landlord. Long before that time has expired, he hopes to have his principal and his profit both safe in his pocket. If he does not cherish these hopes, he is either a fool or a rogue.

On one other point connected with draining, we are anxious to quote Mr Stephens' own words. In reply to the question, is your land drained? we have so often received the answer – "Oh, sir, my land is dry, it does not require draining" – that we request the serious attention of such of our readers as are interested in the improvement of land, to the following passage: —

> "Land, however, though it does not contain such a superabundance of water as to obstruct arable culture, may nevertheless, by its inherent wetness, prevent or retard the luxuriant growth of useful plants, as much as decidedly wet land. The truth is, that deficiency of crops on apparently dry land is frequently attributed to unskilful husbandry, when it really arises from the baleful influence of *concealed* stagnant water; and the want of skill is shown, not so much in the management of the arable culture of the land, as in neglecting to remove the true cause of the deficiency of the crop, namely, the concealed stagnant water. Indeed, my opinion is – and its conviction has been forced upon me by dint of long and extensive observation of the state of the agricultural soil over a large portion of the country – that this is the *true cause of most of the bad farming to be seen*, and that *not one farm* is to be found throughout the kingdom that would *not be much the better for draining*. Entertaining this opinion, you will not be surprised at my urging upon

you to practise draining, or at my lingering at some length on the subject, that I may exhibit to you the various modes of doing it, according to the peculiar circumstances in which your farm may be placed." – (Vol. i. p. 483.)

With the substance of these remarks we entirely agree. We would only not put the point so broadly as to imply, that the want of draining was the only cause of the bad farming we see. We have, however, been over large tracts of Scotland, and we are quite sure that whole counties might be made to yield the double of their present produce by an efficient drainage, and proper subsequent management.

We pass over the very succinct and methodical description of the processes of threshing, winnowing, &c., and can note only one point out of the great mass of very interesting matter Mr Stephens has brought together, in regard to the composition, qualities, and uses of the different kinds of grain. The point to which we shall advert is the composition of oatmeal. Every country is naturally prejudiced in favour of its national food. We Britons look with real or affected disgust on the black rye-bread of the northern nations; and yet on this food the people thrive, are strong, healthy, and vigorous. The bread, too, is sweet to the taste. It is only disagreeable associations, therefore – connected in our minds with the darkness of the colour – that make us consider it disagreeable or unwholesome. In like manner, our Irish brethren are strong, vigorous, and merry, on their potato diet. Why should we condemn it as the lowest kind of diet, or pity those who are

content to live almost wholly upon it? It is true that, from its being the main staff of Irish life, great distress ensues when a failure takes place in the potato crop. But such would be the consequence of a general failure in any kind of crop on which they might happen chiefly to rely. The cure for such seasons of suffering, therefore, is not to be sought so much in bringing about change of diet, as in introducing a better system of husbandry – an improved system of drainage especially – by which a general failure of any crop will be rendered a more rare occurrence. The spread of railroads will soon render it comparatively easy to transport even the bulky potato from one county to another, and thus to prevent the recurrence of famine prices.

But in South Britain the oatmeal of the Scottish peasantry – the national food – is looked upon with as much prejudice, and those who live upon it with as much pity, as the black bread-eaters of Germany and Sweden, or the potato-diggers of Ireland. But the health and strength of the Scottish peasantry, who live entirely upon oatmeal, is proverbial. On this subject, in speaking of the Scottish ploughmen, where the bothy system is practised – that is, where the single men all live together in a room or bothy provided for them, which serves them both for sleeping and cooking – Mr Stephens has the following characteristic passage: —

> "The oatmeal is usually cooked in one way, as *brose*, as it is called, which is a different sort of pottage to porridge. A pot of water is put on the fire to boil, a task which the men

take in turns; a handful or two of oatmeal is taken out of the small chest with which each man provides himself, and put into a wooden bowl, which also is the ploughman's property; and on a hollow being made in the meal, and sprinkled with salt, the boiling water is poured over the meal, and the mixture receiving a little stirring with a horn spoon, and the allowance of milk poured over it, the brose is ready to be eaten; and as every man makes his own brose, and knows his own appetite, he makes just as much brose as he can consume. The bowl is scraped clean with the spoon, and the spoon licked clean with the tongue, and the dish is then placed in the meal-chest for a similar purpose on the succeeding occasion. The fare is simple, and is as simply made; but it must be wholesome, and capable of supplying the loss of substance occasioned by hard labour; for *I believe that no class of men can endure more bodily fatigue, for ten hours every day, than those ploughmen of Scotland who subsist on this brose thrice a-day*." – (Vol. ii. p. 384.)

The quantity of oatmeal allowed to the ploughman —*as his sole food*– is two pecks, or 17½ lbs. in a week, exactly 2½ lbs. a-day – or ¾ lb. for each meal – and yet it often happens that a hard-worked ploughman cannot consume the whole of this allowance. Speaking again of oatmeal *porridge*, Mr Stephens says, "there are few more wholesome meals than oatmeal porridge, or upon which a harder day's work can be wrought. Children of all ranks in Scotland are brought up on this diet, verifying the line of Burns,

"'The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food.'"

As southern prejudices have a tendency to make their way northward, and, in the face of old experience at home, are leading many to undervalue the oatmeal, on which we trust our peasantry will long rely as their staple food, it is interesting to find that, on this point, science has at length come to the aid of reason and experience. Chemistry has already told us many remarkable things in regard to the vegetable food we eat – that it contains, for example, a certain per centage of the actual fat and lean we consume in our beef, or mutton, or pork – and, therefore, that he who lives upon vegetable food may be as strong as the man who lives upon animal food, because both in reality feed upon the same things in a somewhat different form. Now it appears, from analysis, that wheaten flour contains on an average not more than ten per cent of actual dry beef – of that which forms the living muscle of the animal that feeds upon it – with three per cent of fat, and fifty of starch. And because of this chemical composition, our southern neighbours think wheaten flour the most nourishing, the most refined, and the most civilized of all food.

But Professor Johnston, in the recent edition of his Elements,[28] tells us, that, from experiments made in the laboratory of the Agricultural Chemistry Association of Scotland, it turns out that oats are far richer in all the three things

[28] *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology*, 4th Edition, p. 239.

above named than the best wheat flour grown in any part of England – that they contain eighteen or twenty per cent of that which forms muscle, five to eight of fat, and sixty-five of starch. The account, therefore, between shelled oats (groats) and fine wheaten flour stands thus. One hundred pounds of each contain —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.