VARIOUS

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Содержание

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THE CARNIVAL OF THE ROMANTIC

Whither went the nine old Muses, daughters of Jupiter and the Goddess of Memory, after their seats on Helicon, Parnassus, and Olympus were barbarized? Not far away. They hovered like witches around the seething caldron of early Christian Europe, in which, "with bubble, bubble, toil and trouble," a new civilization was forming, mindful of the brilliant lineage of their worshippers, from Homer to Boethius, looking upon the vexed and beclouded Nature, and expecting the time when Humanity should gird itself anew with the beauty of ideas and institutions. They were sorrowful, but not in despair; for they knew that the children of men were strong with recuperative power.

The ear of Fancy, not long since, heard the hoofs of

winged Pegasus striking the clouds. The long-idle Muses, it seemed, had become again interested in human efforts, and were paying a flying visit to the haunts of modern genius from the Hellespont to the Mississippi. They lingered in sunny Provence, and in the dark forest-land of the Minnesingers. In the great capitals, as Rome, Berlin, Paris, London,—in smaller capitals, as Florence, Weimar, and Boston,—in many a village which had a charm for them, as Stratford-on-Avon, Ferney, and Concord in Massachusetts,—in the homes of wonderful suffering, as Ferrara and Haworth.—on many enchanted waters, as the Guadalquivir, the Rhine, the Tweed, the Hudson, Windermere, and Leman, —in many a monastic nook whence had issued a chronicle or history, in many a wild birthplace of a poem or romance, around many an old castle and stately ruin, in many a decayed seat of revelry and joyous repartee,—through the long list of the nurseries of genius and the laboratories of art, they wandered pensive and strangely affected. At length they rested from their journey to hold a council on modern literature. The long results of Christian time were unrolled before them as in a chart. They beheld the dawn of a new historic day, marked by songs of fantastic tenderness, and unwieldy, long, and jointless romances and poems, like the monsters which played in the unfinished universe before the creation of man. The Muses smiled with a look more of complaisance than approval, as they reviewed the army of Troubadours and Minnesingers and the crowd of romancers who followed in their train. They decided

that the joyous array of early mediæval literature was full of promise, though something of its tone and temper was past the comprehension of pagan goddesses. The legends of saints and pictures of martyrdoms were especially mysterious to them, and they regarded them raptly, not smilingly, and bowed their heads. Anon their eyes rested on an Italian city, where uprose, as if in interstellar space, an erect figure, with a piercing eye, pleasant as Plato's voice. His countenance was fixed upon the empyrean, and a more than Minerva-like form hovered above him, interpreting the Christian universe; and as he wrote what she dictated, the verses of his poem were musical even to the Muses. Dante, Beatrice, and the "Divine Comedy," with a Gothic church as a make-weight, were balanced in Muses' minds in comparison with the "Iliad" and the age of Pericles; and again they put on the rapt look of mystery, but a smile also, and their admiration and applause were more and more. To England they soon turned, and contemplated the round, many-colored globe of Shakspeare's works. As playful swallows sometimes dart round and round a lithe and wondering wingless animal, so they, admiringly and timidly, attracted, yet hesitating, delighting in his alertness, but not quite understanding it, flitted like a troubled and beautiful flock around the great magician of modern civilization. Their glance became lighter and less intent, as if they were nearer to knowledge, the pain of perplexity disappeared like a shadow from their countenances, their plaudits were more unreserved, and it seemed likely that the high desert of Shakspeare would

win for our new literature a favorable recognition from the aristocratic goddesses of antiquity. Knowing that Jove had made perfection unattainable by mortals, they yet found in the chart before them epics, dramas, lyrics, histories, and philosophies that were no unworthy companions to the creations of classical genius, and they were jubilant in the triumphs of a period in which they had been rather ignorantly and ironically worshipped. Their sitting was long, and their review thorough, yet they found but one department of modern literature which was regarded with a distrust that grew to an aversion. The romances, the tales, the stories, the novels were contemned more and more, from the first of them to the last. Nothing like them had been known among the glories of Hellenic literary art, and no Muse now stood forth to be their defender and patron. Calliope declared that they were not epical, Euterpe and Erato that they were not lyrical, Melpomene and Thalia that they were neither tragical nor comical, Clio that they were not historical, Urania that they were not sublime in conception, Polymnia that they had no stately or simple charm in execution, and Terpsichore, who had joined with Melpomene in admiring the opera, found nothing in the novel which she could own and bless. Fleeting passages, remote and slight fragments, were pleasing to them all, like the oases of a Sahara, or the sites of high civilization on the earth; but the whole world of novels seemed to them a chaos undisciplined by art and unformed to beauty. The gates of the halls where the classics live in immortal youth were beginning to close against

the voluminous prose romances that have sprung from modern thought, when the deliberations of the Muses were suddenly interrupted. They had disturbed the divine elements of modern society. Forth from all the recesses of the air came troops of Gothic elves, trolls, fairies, sprites, and all the other romantic beings which had inspired the modern mind to novel-writing, —marching or gambolling, pride in their port, defiance in their eye, mischief in their purpose,—and began so vigorous an attack upon their classic visitors and critics, that the latter were glad to betake themselves to the mighty-winged Pegasus, who rapidly bore them in retreat to the present home of the *Dii Majores*, that point of the empyrean directly above Olympus.

And well, indeed, might the Muses wonder at the rise of the novel and its vast developments, for the classic literature presents no similar works. One of Plato's dialogues or Aesop's fables is as near an approach to a prose romance as antiquity in its golden eras can offer. The few productions of the kind which appeared during the decline of literature in the early Christian centuries, as the "Golden Ass" of Apuleius and the "Æthiopica" of Heliodorus, were freaks of Nature, an odd growth rather than a distinct species, and are also to be contrasted rather than compared with the later novel. Such as they are, moreover, they were produced under Christian as much as classic influences. The æsthetic Hellenes admitted into their literature nothing so composite, so likely to be crude, as the romance. Their styles of art were all pure, their taste delighted in simplicity and unity, and

they strictly forbade a medley, alike in architecture, sculpture, and letters. The history of their development opens with an epic yet unsurpassed, and their literary creations have been adopted to be the humanities of Christian universities. A writer has recently proposed to account for their success in the arts from the circumstance that the features of Nature around them were small,—that their hornet-shaped peninsula was cut by mountains and inlets of the sea into minute portions, which the mind could easily compass, the foot measure, and the hand improve,—that therefore every hillock and fountain, every forest and by-way was peopled with mythological characters and made significant with traditions, and the cities were adorned with architectural and sculptured masterpieces. Greece thus, like England in our own time, presented the character of a highly wrought piece of ground,—England being the more completely developed for material uses, and Greece being the more heavily freighted with legends of ideal meaning. Small-featured and large-minded Greece is thus set in contrast with Asia, where the mind and body were equally palsied in the effort to overcome immense plains and interminable mountain-chains. But whatever the reason, whether geographical or ethnological, it is certain that the people of Greece were endowed with a transcendent genius for art, which embraced all departments of life as by an instinct. Every divinity was made a plain figure to the mind, every mystery was symbolized in some positive beautiful myth, and every conception of whatever object became statuesque and clear. This

artistic character was possible to them from the comparatively limited range of pagan imagination; their thought rarely dwelt in those regions where reason loves to ask the aid of mysticism, and all remote ideas, like all remote nations, were indiscriminately regarded by them as barbarous. But guarded by the bounds of their civilization, as by the circumfluent ocean-stream of their olden tradition, they were prompted in all their movements by the spirit of beauty, and philosophers have accounted them the very people whose ideas were adequately and harmoniously represented in sensible forms,—unlike the nations of the Orient, where mind is overawed by preponderating matter, and unlike the nations of Christendom, where the current spiritual meanings reach far into the shadowy realm of mystery and transcend the power of material expression.

Thus art was the main category of the Greeks, the absolute form which embraced all their finite forms. It moulded their literature, as it did their sculpture, architecture, and the action of their gymnasts and orators. They therefore delighted only in the highest orders and purest specimens of literature, refused to retain in remembrance any of the unsuccessful attempts at poetry which may be supposed to have preceded Homer, and gave their homage only to masterpieces in the dignified styles of the epic, the drama, the lyric, the history, or the philosophical discussion. Equal to the highest creations, they refused to tolerate anything lower; and they knew not the novel, because their poetical notions were never left in a nebulous, prosaic state, but were always

developed into poetry.

Another reason, doubtless, was the wonderful activity of the Greek mind, finding its amusement and relaxation in the forum, theatre, gymnasium, or even the barber's shop, in constant mutual contact, in learning wisdom and news by word of mouth. The long stories which they may have told to each other, as an outlet for their natural vitality, as extemporaneous exercises of curiosity and wit and fancy, did not creep into their literature, which included only more mature and elaborate attempts.

The modern novel was born of Christianity and feudalism. It is the child of contemplation,—of that sort of luxurious intellectual mood which has always distinguished the Oriental character, and was first Europeanized in the twilight of the mediæval period. The fallen Roman Empire was broken into countless fragments, which became feudal baronies. The heads of the newly organized society were lordly occupants of castles, who in time of peace had little to do. They were isolated from their neighbors by acres, forests, and a stately etiquette, if not actual hostility. There was no open-air theatre in the vicinity, no forum alive with gossip and harangues, no public games, not even a loquacious barber's shop. During the intervals between public or private wars,—when the Turks were unmolested, the crescent and the dragon left in harmless composure, and no Christians were in mortal turmoil with each other,—it is little wonder that restless knights went forth from their loneliness errant in quest of adventures. What was there to occupy life in those barricaded stone-towers?

It was then that the domestic passion, love, rose into dignity. Homage to woman assumed the potency of an idea, chivalry arose, and its truth, honor, and obeisance were the first social responses from mankind to Christianity. The castle was the emblem and central figure of the time: it was the seat of power, the arena of manners, the nursery of love, and the goal of gallantry; and around it hovered the shadows of religion, loyalty, heroism. Domestic events, the private castellar life, were thus exalted; but they could hardly suffice to engross and satisfy the spirit of a warrior and crusader. A new diversion and excitement were demanded, and soon, in response to the call, minstrels began to roam from castle to castle, from court to court, telling long stories of heroism and singing light songs of love. A spark from the Saracenic schools and poets of Spain may have flitted into Provence to kindle the elements of modern literature into its first development, the songs of the Troubadours. Almost contemporary were the lays of the Minnesingers in Germany and the romances of the Trouvères in Northern France. Beneath the brooding spirit of a new civilization signs of life had at length appeared, and Europe became vocal in every part with fantastic poems, lyrical in the South, epical in the North. They were wildly exuberant products, because severe art was unknown, but simple, *naïve*, and gay, and suited to the taste of a time when the classics were regarded as superstitiously as the heavens. Love and heroism, which somehow are the leading themes of literature in all ages, now assumed the chivalric type in the light hands of the

earliest modern poets.

Yet these songs and metrical romances were most inadequate representatives of the undeveloped principles which lay at the root of Christian civilization. Even Hellenic genius might here have been at fault, for it was a far harder task to give harmonious and complete expression to the tendencies of a new religion and the germs of new systems, than to frame into beauty the pagan clear-cut conceptions. The Christian mind awoke under a fascination, and, for a time, could only ejaculate its meanings in fragments, or hint them in vast disproportions, could only sing snatches of new tunes. Its first signs were gasps, rather than clear-toned notes, after the long perturbations and preparations of history. The North and the South, the East and the West had been mingled together; the heated and heaving mass had been tempered by the leaven of Christianity:—and had all this been done only to produce an octo-syllabic metre in praise of fantastic and semi- barbaric sentiments and exploits? Had there been such commotions of the universe only for a song? Surely these first creations of art, these first attempts at literature, these first carvings of a rude spiritual intensity, were only such as the Greeks may have forgotten any quantity of before Homer came, their first glory and their oldest reminiscence.

One reason, perhaps, why mediæval literature assumed so light and unartistic a form was, that by necessity it could not be full-orbed. Religion could not enter into it as a plastic element, but was fixed, a veiled, external figure, radiating indeed color

and fragrance, but not making one of the struggling, independent vitals of the heart. Literature could play about this figure, but could not grasp it, and take it in among the materials to be fashioned. The Church, through its clergy, held jealous command of divine knowledge, beneath divine guidance, and left no developments of it possible to the lay mind, which culminated in minstrels and romancers. The Greeks, on the contrary, whose religion was an apotheosis of the earth, framed upwards and only by fiction of fancy handed downwards, derived all their theology from the poets. Prophecy and taste were combined in Homer,—Isaiah and the king's jester in Pindar. The care of the highest, not less than the lowest departments of thought, fell upon the creative author, and a happy suggestion became a new article in the Hellenic creed. His composition thus bore the burden and was hallowed by the sanctity of piety, the key to every human perfect thing. But the Provençal celebrators of love and chivalry had no such dignity in their task. The solemnities of thought and life were cared for and hedged about by the Church as its own peculiar treasure, and to them there remained only the lighter office of amusing. The age was eminently religious, but the poet could not aid in erecting and adorning its temples. Every fair work of art must have a central idea; but the proper principle of unity for all grand artistic efforts not being within the reach of authors, it followed that their productions were not symmetrical, did not have an even outline nor cosmical meaning, did not consist of balanced parts, were poorly framed

and articulated, and were charming only by their flavor, and not by their form. The cultured intellect will not seriously work short of a final principle; and if a materialized religion, an ecclesiastical structure, be firmly planted on the earth by the same hand that established the universe and tapestried it with morning and evening, and if its gates and archways, its altar, columns, and courts be given in trust to chosen stewards as a divine priesthood, then the highest problem of being is not a human problem, and the mind of the laity has nothing more important to do than to play with the flowers of gallant love and heroism. Such was the feeling, perhaps the unconscious reasoning, of the founders of modern literature, as they began their labors in the alcoves of that church architecture which covered Christendom, embracing and symbolically expressing all its ideas and institutes. Therefore some vice of imperfection, a character of frivolity, or an artificially serious treatment of lightsome subjects marked all the literature of the time, which resembled that grotesque and unaccountable mathematical figure that has its centre outside of itself.

Modern literature thus had its origin in romantic metrical pieces, which, in the next stage, were transformed into prose novels. Two circumstances contributed to this change,—a change which could not have been anticipated; for the Trouvère *fabliaux* and *romans* promised only epics, and the Troubadour *chansons* and *tensons* promised only lyrics and dramas. But the mind was now obliged to traverse the unbeaten paths

of the Christian universe; it was overwhelmed by the extent of its range, the richness and delicacy of its materials; it could with difficulty poise itself amid the indefinite heights and depths which encompassed it, and with greater difficulty could wield the magician's rod which should sway the driving elements into artistic reconstruction. This mental inadequacy alone would not have created the novel, but would only have made lyrics and epics rare, the works of superior minds. The second and cooperating circumstance was the prevalence of the Christian and feudal habit of contemplation, which made constant literature a necessity. Nothing less than eternal new romances could save the lords, the ladies, and the dependents from *ennui*. But to supply these in a style of proper and antique dignity was beyond the power of the poets. In the wild forests of the mind they could rarely capture a mature idea, and they were as yet unpractised artists. Yet contemplative leisure called eagerly for constant titbits of romance to tickle the palate and furnish a diversion, while the genius of Christian poetry was yet in infantile weakness. The dilemma lasted but a moment, and was solved by an heroic effort of the poets to do, not what they would, but what they could. Yielding to practical necessities, they renounced the traditions of the classical past, which now seemed to belong to another hemisphere, abandoned the attempt to realize pure forms, postponed high art; melody gave way to prose, the romance degenerated into the novel, and prose fiction, which erst had flitted only between the tongue and ear, entered,

a straggling and reeling constellation, into the firmament of literature. Hence the novel is the child of human impotency and despair. The race thereby, with merriment and jubilee, confessed its inability to fulfil at once its Christian destiny as completely as the Greeks had fulfilled their pagan possibilities. Purity of art was left to the future, to Providence, or to great geniuses, but the novel became popular.

Thus the modern novel had its genesis not merely in a contemplative mood, but in contemplation which was forced by the impetuous temper of the times to fail of ever reaching the dignity of thoughtfulness. It was the immature product of an immature mental state; and richly as sometimes it was endowed by every human faculty, by imagination, wit, taste, or even profound thought, it yet never reached the goal of thought, never solved a problem, and, in its highest examples, professed only to reveal, but not to guide, the reigning manners and customs. Rarely did its materials pass through the fiery furnace whence art issues; it was a work of unfaithful intellect, prompted by ideas which never culminated and were never realized; and it did not rise much above the "stuffs" of life, as distinguished from the organic creations of the mind. A many-limbed and shambling creature, which was not made a spirit by the power of an idea, it fluttered amid all the culture of a people,—amid the ideas and modes of the state, the church, the family, the world of society, —like a bungler among paint-pots; but the paints still remained paints on the canvas, instead of being blended and transfigured

into a thing of beauty. It was the organ of society, but not of the essential truths which vitalize society, and its incidents did not rise much above the significance of accidents.

What the novel was in knightly days, that it has continued to be. There is a mysterious practical potency in precedent. All ideas and institutes seem to grow in the direction of their first steps, as if from germs. Thus, the doctrines of the Church fathers are still peculiarly authoritative in theology, and the immemorial traditions of the common law are still binding in civil life. Man seems to be an experimental far more than a freely rational animal; for a fact in the past exerts a greater influence in determining future action than any new idea. A revolution must strike deep to eradicate the presumption in favor of ages. Learned men are now trying to read the hieroglyphics of the East, the records of an unknown history. Perhaps the result of their labors will temper the next period in the course of the world more than all our thinkers. Destiny seems to travel in the harness of precedents.

Thus, in obedience to the law of precedent, the mild gambols, the *naïve* superficiality, the child-like irresponsibility for thinking, which were the characteristics of the first European novels, have generally distinguished the unnumbered and unclassified broods of them which have abounded in subsequent literature. Designed chiefly to amuse, to divert for a moment rather than to present an admirable work of art, to interest rather than to instruct and elevate, the modern romance has in general

excused itself from thorough elaboration. Instead of being a chastened and symmetrical product of the whole organic mind, it has mainly been inspired by the imagination, which has been called the fool in the family of the faculties, and wrought out by the assistance of memory, which mechanically links the mad suggestions of its partner with temporal events. It is in literature something like what a feast presided over by the king's jester and steward would have been in mediaeval social life. Let any novel be finished, let all the resources of the mind be conscientiously expended on it, let it become a thorough intellectual creation, and, instead of remaining a novel, it would assume the dignity of an epic, lyric, drama, philosophy, or history. Its nebulae would be resolved into stars.

Has, then, the mild and favorite blossom, the *fabula romanensis*, which was so abundant in the Middle Ages, which has grown so luxuriantly and given so general delight in modern times,—has it no place in the natural history of literature? Shall it be mentioned only as an uncompleted something else,—as an abortive effort of thought,—as a crude *mélange* of elements that have not been purified and fused together in the focus of the mind? And were the Muses right in refusing to admit it into their sacred realm of art?

An affirmative answer can hardly be true; for an absurdity appears in the reduction that it would cause in the quantity of our veritable literature, and in the condemnation that it would pass on the tastes of many most intelligent writers and readers. Yet

a comparison of the novel with the classical and pure forms of literature will show its unlikeness to them in design, dignity, and essential quality.

It was a favorite thesis of Fielding, often repeated by his successors, that the novel is a sort of comic epopee. Yet the romantic and the epic styles have nothing in common, except that both are narrative. The epic, the rare and lofty cypress of literature, is the story of a nation and a civilization; the novel, of a neighborhood and a generation. A thousand years culminate in the former; it sums up the burden and purpose of a long historical period; and its characters are prominent types in universal history and in highest thought. But the novel is the child of a day; it is the organ of manners and phases, not of principles and passions; it does not see the phenomena of earth in heavenly or logical relations, does not transform life into art, and is a panorama, but not a picture. So long as man and heroism and strife endure, shall Achilles, Godfrey, Satan, and Mephistopheles be types; for they are artistic expressions of essential and historical realities. But though the beck of curiosity lead us through the labyrinthine plot of a novel, long as Gibbon's way through the Dark Ages, yet, when we have finished it, the bubble collapses, the little heavens which had been framed about us roll away, and most rarely does a character remain poetically significant in the mind.

A contrast of any page of an epic with one of a romance will show their essential unlikeness. Note, for instance, the beginning of the "Gerusalemme Liberata." The first stanza

presents "the illustrious captain who warred for Heaven and saved the sepulchre of Christ,—the many deeds which he wrought by arms and by wisdom,—his great toil, and his glorious achievement. Hell opposed him, the mingled populations of Asia and Africa leagued against him,—but all in vain, for Heaven smiled, and guided the wandering bands beneath his sacred ensigns." Such are the splendid elements of the poem, outlining in a stanza the finest type, objects, and scenery of mediaeval heroism. The second stanza invokes the Muse,—"Not thou whose brow was wreathed with the unenduring bays of Helicon, but thou who in angelic choirs hast a golden crown set with immortal stars,—do thou breathe celestial ardor into the poet's heart!" Then follows an allusion to a profound matter of temper and experience. He prays that "the Muse will pardon, if sometimes he adorn his page with other charms than her own; for thus, perhaps, he may win the world to his higher meanings, shrouding severe truths in soft verses. As the rim of the bitter cup is sweetened which is extended to the sick child, so may he, by beauties not quite Christian, attract mankind to read his whole poem to their health." Such is the stately soaring of the epical Muse, the Muse of ideal history. Scholars find Greece completely prefigured in Homer, and the time may come when Dante and Tasso shall be the leading authorities for the history of the Middle Ages, and Milton for that of the ages of Protestantism.

In such comparison novels are insignificant and imbecile.

Though, like "Contarini Fleming," they may begin with a magnificent paragraph, and fine passages be scattered through the volumes, they are yet rarely stories of ideas as well as persons, rarely succeed in involving events of more than temporary interest, and rarely, perhaps, should be called great mental products.

Not less strikingly does the difference between the epic and the novel appear in their different uses. The one is the inspiration of great historical action, the other of listless repose. The statesman, in the moment of debate, and in the dignity of conscious power, finds sympathy and encouragement in a passage of his favorite epic. Its grand types are ever in fellowship with high thoughts. The novel is for the lighter moment after the deed is done, when he is no longer brunting Fate, but reclining idly, and reflecting humorously or malignly on this life. The epic is closely and strongly framed, like the gladiator about to strike a blow: the novel is relaxed and at careless ease, like the club-man after lighting his pipe. The latter does not bear the burden of severe responsibility, but is a thing of holidays and reactions. Still, as of old, it answers to the contemplative castellar cry, —"Hail, romancer! come and divert me,—make me merry! I wish to be occupied, but not employed,—to muse passively, not actively. Therefore, hail! tell me a story,—sing me a song! If I were now in the van of an army and civilization, higher thoughts would engross me. But I am unstrung, and wish to be fanned, not helmeted."

It has sometimes been claimed that the romantic style is essentially lyrical. But though the idea from which many novels start was perhaps the proper germ for one or more lyrics, it never attains in romance a pure and unincumbered development. We may illustrate the different intellectual creations founded on a common conception by imagining how one of Wordsworth's lyrical fancies might have been developed in three volumes of romance instead of three stanzas of poetry.

> "She dwelt among the untrodden ways,
> Beside the springs of Dove,
> A maid whom there were none to praise,
> And very few to love."

The first line, romantically treated, would include description, soliloquy, and narrative, to show that in solitude the maiden had habits, duties, something to think about and be interested in. The accidental approach of some cosmopolitan visitor would give occasion to illustrate dramatically the contrast between life in retirement and in society. Some novelists also would inflict, either by direct lecture or by conversation of the actors, very admirable reflections on the comparative advantages of the two conditions. The second line would perhaps suggest only geographical lore and descriptions of scenery, though historical episodes might be added. The third line would involve a minute description of dress, complexion, stature, and wild gracefulness. In a psychological investigation it would come out what strange

and simple notions she entertained of the great world, and what charming qualities of unsophisticated character belonged to her as she merrily or pensively went through her accustomed tasks. The fourth line, in which love is the text, would swell into mammoth proportions. New characters would be especially necessary in this culminating part of the story; and though they should be "very few," they would long occupy the novelist with their diverse excellencies or villanies, their rivalries and strategies. It is probable that the complete development of the stanza *à la romance* would give a circumstantial history of the maiden from her birth, with glimpses more or less clear of all the remarkable people who dwelt near or occasionally visited the springs of Dove. Thus the same conception would become a stanza or a volume, according as its treatment were lyrical or romantic.

It need hardly be shown that the novel is not a drama, not a history, nor fable, nor any sort of philosophical treatise. It may have sentences, paragraphs, or perhaps chapters, in every style and of the highest excellence, as a shapeless architectural pile may rejoice in some exquisite features or ornaments; but combined passages, though they were the collected charms of literature, do not make a work of art. The styles are mixed, —a certain sign, according to Lessing, of corruption of taste. Novels present the anomaly of being fiction, but not poetry,— of being fruits of imagination, but of imagination improvising its creations from local and temporal things, instead of speaking

from a sublime stand-point and linking series of facts with processions of ideas. Sources of history, guides of philosophical retrospection, they may come some time to be; yet one cannot check a feeling of pity for the future historian who, in searching the "Pickwick Papers" for antiquities, finds himself bothered and confused by all the undisciplined witches of Mr. Dickens's imagination.

If the novel be thus excluded from all the classical orders of literature, a trembling question is suggested, whether it may not be nevertheless a legitimate work of art. Though it be a *mélange* of styles, a story told, in literature what the story-teller is in society, yet why should it not have the honor among readers which the story-teller in all ages has had among listeners? Though by its escutcheon it assume a place among the amusing rather than the instructive class of books, why should not its nobility be recognized?

The answer is found in the essential nature of art, in the almost eternal distinction between life and thought, between actual and ideal realities. Unity amid diversity is the type of intellectual beauty and the law of the universe; to comprehend it is the goal of science, and to reproduce it in human works is the aim of art. Yet how hard it is to find the central and essential idea in a world of apparent accidents and delusions! to chase the real and divine thing as it plays among cheats and semblances! Hence the difficulty of thorough thought, of faithful intellectual performance, of artistic creation. To the thoughtless man life is

merely the rough and monotonous exterior of the cameo-stone; but the artist sees through its strata, discerns its layers of many colors, and from its surface to its vital centre works them all together into varied beauty. To live is common; but art belongs only to the finest minds and the best moments. Life is a burden of present multitudinous phenomena; but art has the simple unity of perfect science, and is a goal and aspiration. Life comes by birth, art by thought, and the travail that produces art is ofttimes the severer. The fashions of life are bubbles on the surface, and pass away with the season; but the creations of art belong to the depths of the spiritual world, where they shine like stars and systems in the physical universe.

Story-telling is the most charming of occupations, and, whatever its relation to literary art, it is one of the graces of the art of life. Old as the race, it has always been in fashion on the earth, the delight of every clime from the Orient to the Occident, and of every age from childhood to second childhood. We live in such a concatenation of things,—our hopes, fears, loves, hates, struggles, sympathies, defeats, and triumphs make such a medley, with a sort of divine fascination about it,—that we are always interested to hear how anybody has borne himself through whatever varieties of fortune. At the basis of every other character which can be assumed by man lie the conceiver and the teller of stories; story-telling is the *primá facie* quality of an intelligent and sociable being leading a life full of events in a universe full of phenomena. The child believes the wonders

of romance by a right instinct; narratives of love and peril and achievement come home to the spirit of the youth; and the mystical, wonder-expecting eye of childhood returns to old age. The humor, wit, piety, and pathos of every age abound in the written stories of its people and children.

Yet between the vocal story and the story in literature there is an immense difference, like that between talking and writing, between life and art. The qualities which in the story-teller make even frivolity weighty and dulness significant—the play of the eye, the lips, the countenance, the voice, the whole sympathetic expression of the person—are wanting to the novel; it has passed from the realm of life to that of art; it loses the charm which personal relations give even to trifles; it must have the charm which the mind can lend only to its cherished offspring.

Considered as a thing of literature, no other sort of book admits of such variety of topics, style, and treatment as the novel. As diverse in talent and quality as the story-teller himself,—now harlequin, now gossip, now threnodist,—with weird ghostliness, moping melancholy, uncouth laughter, or gentle serious smile, —now relating the story, with childlike interest in it, now with a good heart and now with a bad heart ridiculing mankind, now allegorical with rich meanings, now freighting the little story-cricket that creeps along from page to page with immense loads of science, history, politics, ethics, religion, criticism, and prophecy,—always regarded with kindness, always welcomed in idleness, always presenting in a simple way some spectacle of

merriment or grief, as changeful as the seasons or the fashions,—with all its odd characteristics, the novel is remarkably popular, and not lightly to be esteemed as an element in our social and mental culture.

There is probably no other class of books, with literary pretensions, that contain so little thinking, in proportion to their quantity of matter, as novels. They can scarcely be called organic productions, for they may be written and published in sections, like one of the lowest classes of animals, which have no organization, but live equally well in parts, and run off in opposite directions when cut in halves. Thoughts and books, like living creatures, have their grades, and it is only those which stand lowest in respect of intellectuality that admit of fractional existence. A finished work of the mind is so delicately adjusted and closely related, part to part, that a fracture would be fatal. Conceive of Phidias sending off from his studio at Athens his statue of Jupiter Olympius in monthly numbers,—despatching now the feet, now the legs, now the trunk, in successive pieces, now the shoulders, and at last crowning the whole with a head!

The composition of novels must be reckoned, in design at least, one of the fine arts, but in fact they belong rather to periodical than to immortal literature. They do not submit to severity of treatment, abide by no critical laws, but are the gypsies and Bohemians of literature, bringing all the savagery of wild genius into the *salons* of taste. Though tolerated, admired, and found to be interesting, they do not belong to the system

of things, play no substantial part in the serious business of life, but, as the world moves on, give place to their successors, not having developed any principle, presented any picture, or stated any fact, in a way to suggest ideas more than social phenomena. They are not permanent, therefore, because finally only ideas, and not facts, are generally remembered; the past is known to us more, and exclusively as it becomes remote, by the conceptions of poets and philosophic historians, the myriads of events which occupied a generation being forgotten, and all the pith and meaning of them being transmitted in a stanza or a chapter. Poetry never grows old, and whatsoever masterpieces of thought always win the admiration of the enlightened; but many a novel that has been the lion of a season passes at once away, never more to be heard of here. With few exceptions, the splendid popularity that greets the best novels fades away in time slowly or rapidly. A half-century is a fatal trial for the majority; few are revived, and almost none are read, after a century; will anybody but the most curious antiquary be interested in them after one or two thousand years? Without delaying to give the full rationale of exceptions which vex this like every other general remark, it may be added briefly that fairy stories are in their nature fantastic mythological poems, most proper to the heroic age of childhood, that historical romances may be in essence and dignity fantastic histories or epics, and that, from whatever point of view, Cervantes remains hardly less admirable than Ariosto, or the "Bride of Lammermoor" than the "Lay of the

Last Minstrel."

In the mental as in the physical world, art, diamonds and gems come by long elaboration. A thoughtless man may write perennially, while the result of silent meditation and a long tortured soul may be expressed in a minute. The work of the former is akin to conversation, one of the fugitive pleasures of a day; that of the latter will, perchance, be a star in the firmament of the mind. Eugène Sue and Béranger both wished to communicate their reflections on society. The former dissipated his energies in the *salons*, was wise and amusing over wine, exchanged learning and jests, studied the drawing-room as if it were the macrocosm, returned to his chamber, put on kid gloves, and from the odds and ends of his dishevelled wits wrote at a gallop, without ever looking back, his "Mystères de Paris." The latter lived in an attic year after year, contemplated with cheerful anxiety the volatile world of France and the perplexed life of man, and elaborated word by word, with innumerable revisions, his short songs, which are gems of poetry, charming at once the ear and the heart. Novels are perhaps too easily written to be of lasting value. An unpremeditated word, in which the thoughts of years are exploded, may be one of the most admirable of intellectual phenomena, but an unpremeditated volume can only be a demonstration of human weakness.

The argument thus far has been in favor of the Muses. Hellenic taste and the principles of high art ratify the condemnation passed on the novel by the aesthetic goddesses. A wider view,

however, will annul the sentence, giving in its stead a warning and a lesson. If the prose romance be not Hellenic, it is nevertheless humane, and has been in honor almost universally throughout the Orient and the Occident. Its absence from the classical literature was a marvel and exception, a phenomenon of the clearest-minded and most active of races, who thought, but did not contemplate,—whose ideal world consisted only of simple, but stately legends of bright-limbed gods and heroes. A felicitous production of high art, also, is among the rarest of exceptions, and will be till the Millennium. Myriads of comparative failures follow in the suite of a masterpiece. We have, therefore, judged the novel by an impracticable standard, by a comparison with the highest aims rather than the usual attainments of other branches of literary art. Human weakness makes poetry, philosophy, and history imperfect in execution, though they aspire to absolute beauty and truth; human weakness suggested the novel, which is imperfect in design, written as an amusement and relief, in despair of sounding the universe. A novel is in its nature and as a matter of necessity an artistic failure; it pretends to nothing higher; but under the slack laws which govern its composition, multitudes of fine and suggestive characters, incidents, and sayings may be smuggled into it, contrary to all the usages and rules of civilized literature. Hence the secret of its popularity, that it is the organ of average as distinguished from highest thought. Science and art are the goals of destiny, but rarely is there a thinker or writer who has an eye single to them. It

is an heroic, self-sacrificing, and small platoon which in every age brunts Fate, and, fighting on the shadowy frontier, makes conquests from the realm of darkness. Their ideas are passed back from hand to hand, and become known in fragments and potent as tendencies among the mass of the race, who live in the circle of the attained and travel in the routine of ages. The novelist is one of the number who half comprehend them, and borrows them from all quarters to introduce into the rich *mélange* of his work. To solve a social problem, to reproduce an historical age or character, or to develop the truth and poetry latent in any event, is difficult, and not many will either lead or follow a severe attempt; but the novelist will merrily chronicle his story and link with it in a thousand ways some salient reminiscences of life and thought.

What, then, is the highest excellence that the novel can attain? It is the carnival of literary art. It deals sympathetically and humorously, not philosophically and strictly, with the panorama and the principles of life. A transcript, but not a transfiguration of Nature, it assumes a thousand forms, surpassing all other books in the immense latitude left to the writer, in the wild variety of things which it may touch, but need not grasp. Its elements are the forests, the cities, and the seven ages of man,—characters and fortunes how diversified! All species of thinkers and actors, of ideas and passions, all the labyrinthine complications and scenery of existence, may be illustrated in persons or introduced by-the-by; into whatever colors make up the phantasmagoria of

collective humanity the novelist may dip his brush, in painting his moving picture. Yet problems need not be fully appreciated, nor characters or actions profoundly understood. It must be an engrossing story, but the theme and treatment are as lawless as the conversation of an evening party. The mind plays through all the realm of its knowledge and experience, and sheds sparks from all the torches of thought, as scenes and topics succeed each other. The pure forms of literature may be reminiscences present to the imagination, the germs of new truths and social arrangements may occupy the reason; but the novelist is neither practical, nor philosophical, nor artistic; he is simply in a dream; and pictures of the world and fragments of old ideas pass before him, as the sacred meanings of religion flitted about the populace in a grotesque mediæval festival of the Church. Conceive the stars dropped from their place in the apparent heavens, and playing at shuttlecock with each other and with boys, and having a heyday of careless joyousness here below, instead of remaining in sublime dignity to guide and inspire men who look up to them by night! Even such are the epic, the lyric, the drama, the history, and the philosophy, as collected together in the revelries of the novel. To state the degree of excellence possible to a style as perverse as it is entertaining, to measure the wisdom of essential folly, is difficult; and yet it may be said that the strength of the novel is in its lawlessness, which leaves the author of genius free to introduce his creations just as they occur to him, and the author of talent free to range through all books and

all time and reproduce brilliant sayings and odd characters,—which, with no other connecting thread than a story, freaks like a spirit through every shade of feeling and region of thought, from the domestic hearth to the ultimate bounds of speculative inquiry,—and which, by its daring and careless combinations of incongruous elements, exhibits a free embodiment in prose of the peculiar genius of the romantic.

And some philosophers have styled romance the special glory of Christianity. It is certainly the characteristic of critical as distinguished from organic periods,—of the mind acting mystically in a savage and unknown universe, rather than of the mind that has reduced the heavens and earth to its arts and sciences. The novel, therefore, as the wildest organ of romance, is most appropriate to a time of great intellectual agitation, when intellectual men are but half-conscious of the tendencies that are setting about them, and consequently cease to propose to themselves final goals, do not attempt scrupulous art, but play jubilantly with current facts. Hence, perhaps, its popularity since the first conflicts of the Protestant Reformation, and especially since the great French Revolution, when amid new inventions and new ideas mankind has contemplatively looked for the coming events, the new historical eras, which were casting their shadows before.

When, some time, Christian art shall become classical, and Christian ideas be developed by superior men as fairly as the Hellenic conceptions were, the novel may either assume to itself

some peculiar excellency, or may cease to hold the comparative rank in literature which it enjoys at present. Then the numberless prose romances which occupy the present generation of readers will, perhaps, be collected in some immense *corpus*, like the Byzantine historians, will be reckoned among the curiosities of literature, and will at least have the merit of making the study of antiquities easy and interesting. There is an old couplet,—

> Of all those arts in which the wise excel,
> Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well.

At a time when extemporaneous composition and thoughtless reading are much in fashion, it will not be amiss to invoke profounder studies, and slower, but more useful and permanent results. Let it be remembered that even the Divine Mind first called into being the chaos of creation, and then in seven days reviewed and elaborated it into a beautiful order.

* * * * *

A LEGEND OF MARYLAND

"AN OWRE TRUE TALE."

[Concluded.]

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD CITY

Let me now once more shift the scene. In the summer of 1684, the peaceful little port of St. Mary's was visited by a phenomenon of rare occurrence in those days. A ship of war of the smaller class, with the Cross of St. George sparkling on her broad flag, came gliding to an anchorage abreast the town. The fort of St. Inigoes gave the customary salute, which I have reason to believe was not returned. Not long after this, a bluff, swaggering, vulgar captain came on shore. He made no visit of respect or business to any member of the Council. He gave no report of his character or the purpose of his visit, but strolled to the tavern,—I suppose to that kept by Mr. Cordea, who, in addition to his calling of keeper of the ordinary, was the most

approved shoemaker of the city,—and here regaled himself with a potation of strong waters. It is likely that he then repaired to Mr. Blakiston's, the King's Collector,—a bitter and relentless enemy of the Lord Proprietary,—and there may have met Kenelm Chiseldine, John Coode, Colonel Jowles, and others noted for their hatred of the Calvert family, and in such company as this indulged himself in deriding Lord Baltimore and his government, During his stay in the port, his men came on shore, and, imitating their captain's unamiable temper, roamed in squads about the town and its neighborhood, conducting themselves in a noisy, hectoring manner towards the inhabitants, disturbing the repose of the quiet burghers, and shocking their ears with ribald abuse of the authorities. These roystering sailors—I mention it as a point of historical interest—had even the audacity to break into Alderman Garret Van Swearingen's garden, and to pluck up and carry away his cabbages and other vegetables, and—according to the testimony of Mr. Cordea, whose indignation was the more intense from his veneration for the Alderman, and from the fact that he made his Worship's shoes—they would have killed one of his Worship's sheep, if his (Cordea's) man had not prevented them; and after this, as if on purpose more keenly to lacerate his feelings, they brought these cabbages to Cordea's house, and there boiled them before his eyes,—he being sick and not able to drive them away.

After a few days spent in this manner, the swaggering captain —whose name, it was soon bruited about, was Thomas Allen,

of his Majesty's Navy—went on board of his ketch,—or brig, as we should call it,—the Quaker, weighed anchor, and set sail towards the Potomac, and thence stood down the Bay upon the coast of Virginia. Every now and then, after his departure, there came reports to the Council of insults offered by Captain Allen to the skippers of sundry Bay craft and other peaceful traders on the Chesapeake; these insults consisting generally in wantonly compelling them to heave to and submit to his search, in vexatiously detaining them, overhauling their papers, and offending them with coarse vituperation of themselves, as well as of the Lord Proprietary and his Council.

About a month later the Quaker was observed to enter the Patuxent River, and cast anchor just inside of the entrance, near the Calvert County shore, and opposite Christopher Rousby's house at Drum Point. This was—says my chronicle—on Thursday, the 30th of October, in this year 1684. As yet Captain Allen had not condescended to make any report of his arrival in the Province to any officer of the Proprietary.

On Sunday morning, the 2d of November, the city was thrown into a state of violent ebullition—like a little red-hot tea-kettle—by the circulation of a rumor that got wind about the hour the burghers were preparing to go to church. It was brought from Patuxent late in the previous night, and was now whispered from one neighbor to another, and soon came to boil with an extraordinary volume of steam. Stripping it of the exaggeration natural to such an excitement, the rumor was substantially this:

That Colonel Talbot, hearing of the arrival of Captain Allen in the Patuxent on Thursday, and getting no message or report from him, set off on Friday morning, in an angry state of mind, and rode over to Patuxent, determined to give the unmannerly captain a lesson upon his duty. That as soon as he reached Mattapony House, he took his boat and went on board the ketch. That there he found Christopher Rousby, the King's Collector, cronying with Captain Allen, and upholding him in his disrespect to the government. That Colonel Talbot was very sharp upon Rousby, not liking him for old grudges, and more moved against him now; and that he spoke his mind both to Captain Allen and Christopher Rousby, and so got into a high quarrel with them. That when he had said all he desired to say to them, he made a move to leave the ketch in his boat, intending to return to Mattapony House; but they who were in the cabin prevented him, and would not let him go. That thereupon the quarrel broke out afresh, and became more bitter; and it being now in the night, and all in a great heat of passion, the parties having already come from words to blows, Talbot drew his skean, or dagger, and stabbed Rousby to the heart. That nothing was known on shore of the affray till Saturday evening, when the body was brought to Rousby's house; after which it became known to the neighborhood; and one of the men of Major Sewall's plantation, which adjoined Rousby's, having thus heard of it, set out and rode that night over to St. Mary's with the news, which he gave to the Major before midnight. It was added, that Colonel Talbot was now detained on board of

the ketch, as a prisoner, by Captain Allen.

This was the amount of the dreadful story over which the gossips of St. Mary's were shaking their wise heads and discoursing on "crowner's quest law" that Sunday morning.

As soon as Major Sewall received these unhappy midnight tidings, he went instantly to his colleague, Colonel Darnall, and communicated them to him; and they, being warm friends of Talbot's, were very anxious to get him out of the custody of this Captain Allen. They therefore, on Sunday morning, issued a writ directed to Roger Brooke, the sheriff of Calvert County, commanding him to arrest the prisoner and bring him before the Council. Their next move was to ride over—the same morning—to Patuxent, taking with them Mr. Robert Carvil, and John Llewellin, their secretary. Upon reaching the river, all four went on board the ketch to learn the particulars of the quarrel. These particulars are not preserved in the record; and we have nothing better than our conjectures as to what they disclosed. We know nothing specific of the cause or character of the quarrel. The visitors found Talbot loaded with irons, and Captain Allen in a brutal state of exasperation, swearing that he would not surrender his prisoner to the authorities of the Province, but would carry him to Virginia and deliver him to the government there, to be dealt with as Lord Effingham should direct. He was grossly insulting to the two members of the Council who had come on this inquiry; and after they had left his vessel, in the pinnace, to return to the shore, he affected to believe that they had some

concealed force lying in wait to seize the pinnace and its crew, and so ordered them back on board, but after a short detention thought better of it, and suffered them again to depart.

The contumacy of the captain, and the declaration of his purpose to carry away Talbot out of the jurisdiction of the Province within which the crime was committed, and to deliver him to the Governor of Virginia, was a grave assault upon the dignity of the government and a gross contempt of the public authorities, which required the notice of the Council. A meeting of this body was therefore held on the Patuxent, at Rich Neck, on the morning of the 4th of November. I find that five members were present on that occasion. Besides Colonel Darnall and Major Sewall, there were Counsellor Tailler and Colonels Digges and Burgess. Here the matter was debated and ended in a feeble resolve,—that, if this Captain Allen should persist in his contumacy and take Talbot to Virginia, the Council should immediately demand of Lord Effingham his redelivery into this Province. Alas, they could only scold! This resolution was all they could oppose to the bullying captain and the guns of the troublesome little Quaker.

Allen, after hectoring awhile in this fashion, and raising the wrath of the Colonels of the Council until they were red in the cheeks, defiantly took his departure, carrying with him his prisoner, in spite of the vehement indignation of the liegemen of the Province.

We may imagine the valorous anger of our little metropolis at

this act or crime of lese-majesty. I can see the group of angry burghers, collected on the porch of Cordea's tavern, in a fume as they listen to Master John Llewellin's account of what had taken place,—Llewellin himself as peppery as his namesake when he made Ancient Pistol eat his leek; and I fancy I can hear Alderman Van Swearingen's choleric explosion against Lord Effingham, supposing his Lordship should presume to slight the order of the Council in respect to Talbot's return.

But these fervors were too violent to last. Christopher Rousby was duly deposited under the greensward upon the margin of Harper's Creek, where I found him safe, if not sound, more than a hundred and fifty years afterwards. The metropolis gradually ceased to boil, and slowly fell to its usual temperature of repose, and no more disturbed itself with thoughts of the terrible captain. Talbot, upon being transferred to the dominion of Virginia, was confined in the jail of Gloucester County, in the old town of Gloucester, on the northern bank of York River.

The Council now opened their correspondence with Lord Effingham, demanding the surrender of their late colleague. On their part, it was marked by a deferential respect, which, it is evident, they did not feel, and which seems to denote a timid conviction of the favor of Virginia and the disgrace of Maryland in the personal feelings of the King. It is manifest they were afraid of giving offence to the lordly governor of the neighboring Province. On the part of Lord Effingham, the correspondence is cavalier, arrogant, and peremptory.

The Council write deploringly to his Lordship. They "pray"—as they phrase it—"in humble, civil, and obliging terms, to have the prisoner safely returned to this government." They add,—"Your Excellency's great wisdom, prudence, and integrity, as well as neighborly affection and kindness for this Province, manifested and expressed, will, we doubt not, spare us the labor of straining for arguments to move your Excellency's consideration to this our so just and reasonable demand." Poor Colonel Darnall, Poor Colonel Digges, and the rest of you Colonels and Majors,—to write such whining hypocrisy as this! George Talbot would not have written to Lord Effingham in such phrase, if one of you had been unlawfully transported to his prison and Talbot were your pleader!

The nobleman to whom this servile language was addressed was a hateful despot, who stands marked in the history of Virginia for his oppressive administration, his arrogance, and his faithlessness.

To give this beseeching letter more significance and the flattery it contained more point, it was committed to the charge of two gentlemen who were commissioned to deliver it in person to his Lordship. These were Mr. Clement Hill and Mr. Anthony Underwood.

Effingham's answer was cool, short, and admonitory. The essence of it is in these words:—"We do not think it warrantable to comply with your desires, but shall detain Talbot prisoner until his Majesty's particular commands be known therein."

A postscript is added of this import:—"I recommend to your consideration, that you take care, as far as in you lies, that, in the matter of the Customs, his Majesty receive no further detriment by this unfortunate accident."

One almost rejoices to read such an answer to the fulsome language which drew it out. This correspondence runs through several such epistles. The Council complain of the rudeness and coarse behavior of Captain Allen, and particularly of his traducing Lord Baltimore's government and attempting to excite the people against it. Lord Effingham professes to disbelieve such charges against "an officer who has so long served his King with fidelity, and who could not but know what was due to his superiors."

Occasionally this same faithful officer, Captain Allen himself, reappears upon the stage. We catch him at a gentleman's house in Virginia, boasting over his cups—for he seems to have paid habitual tribute to a bowl of punch—that he will break up the government of Maryland, and annex this poor little Province of ours to Virginia: a fact worth notice just now, as it makes it clear that annexation is not the new idea of the Nineteenth Century, but lived in very muddy brains a long time ago. I now quit this correspondence to look after a bit of romance in a secret adventure.

CHAPTER VIII

A PLOT

We must return to the Manor of New Connaught upon the Elk River.

There we shall find a sorrowful household. The Lord of the Manor is in captivity; his people are dejected with a presentiment that they are to see him no more; his wife is lamenting with her children, and counting the weary days of his imprisonment.

> "His hounds they all run masterless,
> His hawks they flee from tree to tree."

Everything in the hospitable woodland home is changed. November, December, January had passed by since Talbot was lodged in the Gloucester prison, and still no hope dawned upon the afflicted lady. The forest around her bowled with the rush of the winter wind, but neither the wilderness nor the winter was so desolate as her own heart. The fate of her husband was in the hands of his enemies. She trembled at the thought of his being forced to a trial for his life in Virginia, where he would be deprived of that friendly sympathy so necessary even to the vindication of innocence, and where he ran the risk of being

condemned without defence, upon the testimony of exasperated opponents.

But she was a strong-hearted and resolute woman, and would not despair. She had many friends around her,—friends devoted to her husband and herself. Amongst these was Phelim Murray, a cornet of cavalry under the command of Talbot,—a brave, reckless, true-hearted comrade, who had often shared the hospitality, the adventurous service, and the sports of his commander.

To Murray I attribute the planning of the enterprise I am now about to relate. He had determined to rescue his chief from his prison in Virginia. His scheme required the coöperation of Mrs. Talbot and one of her youngest children,—the pet boy, perhaps, of the family, some two or three years old,—I imagine, the special favorite of the father. The adventure was a bold one, involving many hardships and perils. Towards the end of January, the lady, accompanied by her boy with his nurse, and attended by two Irish men-servants, repaired to St. Mary's, where she was doubtless received as a guest in the mansion of the Proprietary, now the residence of young Benedict Leonard and those of the family who had not accompanied Lord Baltimore to England.

Whilst Mrs. Talbot tarried here, the Cornet was busy in his preparations. He had brought the Colonel's shallop from Elk River to the Patuxent, and was here concerting a plan to put the little vessel under the command of some ostensible owner who might appear in the character of its master to any over-curious

or inopportune questioner. He had found a man exactly to his hand in a certain Roger Skreene, whose name might almost be thought to be adopted for the occasion and to express the part he had to act. He was what we may call the sloop's husband, but was bound to do whatever Murray commanded, to ask no questions, and to be profoundly ignorant of the real objects of the expedition. This pliant auxiliary had, like many thrifty—or more probably thriftless—persons of that time, a double occupation. He was amphibious in his habits, and lived equally on land and water. At home he was a tailor, and abroad a seaman, frequently plying his craft as a skipper on the Bay, and sufficiently known in the latter vocation to render his present employment a matter to excite no suspicious remark. It will be perceived in the course of his present adventure that he was quite innocent of any avowed complicity in the design which he was assisting.

Murray had a stout companion with him, a good friend to Talbot, probably one of the familiar frequenters of the Manor House of New Connaught,—a bold fellow, with a hand and a heart both ready for any perilous service. He may have been a comrade of the Cornet's in his troop. His name was Hugh Riley,—a name that has been traditionally connected with dare-devil exploits ever since the days of Dermot McMorrogh. There have been, I believe, but few hard fights in the world, to which Irishmen have had anything to say, without a Hugh Riley somewhere in the thickest part of them.

The preparations being now complete, Murray anchored

his shallop near a convenient landing,—perhaps within the Mattapony Creek.

In the dead of winter, about the 30th of January, 1685, Mrs. Talbot, with her servants, her child, and nurse, set forth from the Proprietary residence in St. Mary's, to journey over to the Patuxent,—a cold, bleak ride of fifteen miles. The party were all on horseback: the young boy, perhaps, wrapped in thick coverings, nestling in the arms of one of the men: Mrs. Talbot braving the sharp wind in hood and cloak, and warmed by her own warm heart, which beat with a courageous pulse against the fierce blasts that swept and roared across her path. Such a cavalcade, of course, could not depart from St. Mary's without observation at any season; but at this time of the year so unusual a sight drew every inhabitant to the windows, and set in motion a current of gossip that bore away all other topics from every fireside. The gentlemen of the Council, too, doubtless had frequent conference with the unhappy wife of their colleague, during her sojourn in the Government House, and perhaps secretly counselled with her on her adventure. Whatever outward or seeming pretext may have been adopted for this movement, we can hardly suppose that many friends of the Proprietary were ignorant of its object. We have, indeed, evidence that the enemies of the Proprietary charged the Council with a direct connivance in the scheme of Talbot's escape, and made it a subject of complaint against Lord Baltimore that he afterwards approved of it.

Upon her arrival at the Patuxent, Mrs. Talbot went immediately on board of the sloop, with her attendants. There she found the friendly cornet and his comrade, Hugh Riley, on the alert to distinguish their loyalty in her cause. The amphibious Master Skreene was now at the head of a picked crew,—the whole party consisting of five stout men, with the lady, her child, and nurse. All the men but Skreene were sons of the Emerald Isle,—of a race whose historical boast is the faithfulness of their devotion to a friend in need and their chivalrous courtesy to woman, but still more their generous and gallant championship of woman in distress. On this occasion this national sentiment was enhanced when it was called into exercise in behalf of the sorrowful lady of the chief of their border settlements.

They set sail from the Patuxent on Saturday, the 31st of January. On Wednesday, the fifth day afterwards, they landed on the southern bank of the Rappahannock, at the house of Mr. Ralph Wormeley, near the mouth of the river. This long voyage of five days over so short a distance would seem to indicate that they departed from the common track of navigation to avoid notice.

The next morning Mr. Wormeley furnished them horses and a servant, and Mrs. Talbot, with the nurse and child, under the conduct of Cornet Murray, set out for Gloucester,—a distance of some twenty miles. The day following,—that is, on Friday,—the servant returned with the horses, having left the party behind. Saturday passed and part of Sunday, when, in the evening, Mrs.

Talbot and the Cornet reappeared at Mr. Wormeley's. The child and nurse had been left behind; and this was accounted for by Mrs. Talbot's saying she had left the child with his father, to remain with him until she should return to Virginia. I infer that the child was introduced into this adventure to give some seeming to the visit which might lull suspicion and procure easier access to the prisoner; and the leaving of him in Gloucester proves that Mrs. Talbot had friends, and probably confederates there, to whose care he was committed.

As soon as the party had left the shallop, upon their first arrival at Mr. Wormeley's, the wily Master Skreene discovered that he had business at a landing farther up the river; and thither he straightway took his vessel,—Wormeley's being altogether too suspicious a place for him to frequent. And now, when Mrs. Talbot had returned to Wormeley's, Roger's business above, of course, was finished, and he dropped down again opposite the house on Monday evening; and the next morning took the Cornet and the lady on board. Having done this, he drew out into the river. This brings us to Tuesday, the 10th of February.

As soon as Mrs. Talbot was once more embarked in the shallop, Murray and Riley (I give Master Skreene's own account of the facts, as I find it in his testimony subsequently taken before the Council) made a pretext to go on shore, taking one of the men with them. They were going to look for a cousin of this man,—so they told Skreene,—and besides that, intended to go to a tavern to buy a bottle of rum: all of which Skreene gives the Council to

understand he verily believed to be the real object of their visit.

The truth was, that, as soon as Murray and Riley and their companion had reached the shore, they mounted on horseback and galloped away in the direction of Gloucester prison. From the moment they disappeared on this gallop until their return, we have no account of what they did. Roger Skreene's testimony before the Council is virtuously silent on this point.

After this party was gone, Mrs. Talbot herself took command, and, with a view to more privacy, ordered Roger to anchor near the opposite shore of the river, taking advantage of the concealment afforded by a small inlet on the northern side. Skreene says he did this at her request, because she expressed a wish to taste some of the oysters from that side of the river, which he, with his usual facility, believed to be the only reason for getting into this unobserved harbor; and, merely to gratify this wish, he did as she desired.

The day went by slowly to the lady on the water. Cold February, a little sloop, and the bleak roadstead at the mouth of the Rappahannock brought but few comforts to the anxious wife, who sat muffled upon that unstable deck, watching the opposite shore, whilst the ceaseless plash of the waves breaking upon her ear numbered the minutes that marked the weary hours, and the hours that marked the still more weary day. She watched for the party who had galloped into the sombre pine-forest that sheltered the road leading to Gloucester, and for the arrival of that cousin of whom Murray spoke to Master Skreene.

But if the time dragged heavily with her, it flew with the Cornet and his companions. We cannot tell when the twenty miles to Gloucester were thrown behind them, but we know that the whole forty miles of going and coming were accomplished by sunrise the next morning. For the deposition tells us that Roger Skreene had become very impatient at the absence of his passengers,—at least, so he swears to the Council; and he began to think, just after the sun was up, that, as they had not returned, they must have got into a revel at the tavern, and forgotten themselves; which careless demeanor of theirs made him think of recrossing the river and of going ashore to beat them up; when, lo! all of a sudden, he spied a boat coming round the point within which he lay. And here arises a pleasant little dramatic scene, of some interest to our story.

Mrs. Talbot had been up at the dawn, and watched upon the deck, straining her sight, until she could see no more for tears; and at length, unable to endure her emotion longer, had withdrawn to the cabin. Presently Skreene came hurrying down to tell her that the boat was coming,—and, what surprised him, there were *four* persons in it. "Who is this fourth man?" he asked her,—with his habitual simplicity, "and how are we to get him back to the shore again?"—a very natural question for Roger to ask, after all that had passed in his presence! Mrs. Talbot sprang to her feet,—her eyes sparkling, as she exclaimed, with a cheery voice, "Oh, his cousin has come!"—and immediately ran upon the deck to await the approaching party. There were pleasant

smiling faces all around, as the four men came over the sloop's side; and although the testimony is silent as to the fact, there might have been some little kissing on the occasion. The new-comer was in a rough dress, and had the exterior of a servant; and our skipper says in his testimony, that "Mrs. Talbot spoke to him in the Irish language": very volubly, I have no doubt, and that much was said that was never translated. When they came to a pause in this conversation, she told Skreene, by way of interpretation, "he need not be uneasy about the stranger's going on shore, nor delay any longer, as this person had made up his mind to go with them to Maryland."

So the boat was made fast, the anchor was weighed, the sails were set, and the little sloop bent to the breeze and kissed the wave, as she rounded the headland and stood up the Bay, with Colonel George Talbot encircling with his arm his faithful wife, and with the gallant Cornet Murray sitting at his side.

They had now an additional reason for caution against search. So Murray ordered the skipper to shape his course over to the eastern shore, and to keep in between the islands and the main. This is a broad circuit outside of their course; but Roger is promised a reward by Mrs. Talbot, to compensate him for his loss of time; and the skipper is very willing. They had fetched a compass, as the Scripture phrase is, to the shore of Dorset County, and steered inside of Hooper's Island, into the month of Hungary River. Here it was part of the scheme to dismiss the faithful Roger from further service. With this view they

landed on the island and went to Mr. Hooper's house, where they procured a supply of provisions, and immediately afterwards reembarked,—having clean forgotten Roger, until they were once more under full sail up the Bay, and too far advanced to turn back!

The deserted skipper bore his disappointment like a Christian; and being asked, on Hungary River, by a friend who met him there, and who gave his testimony before the Council, "What brought him there?" he replied, "He had been left on the island by Madam Talbot." And to another, "Where Madam Talbot was?" he answered, "She had gone up the Bay to her own house." Then, to a third question, "How he expected his pay?" he said, "He was to have it of Colonel Darnall and Major Sewall; and that Madam Talbot had promised him a hogshead of tobacco extra, for putting ashore at Hooper's Island." The last question was, "What news of Talbot?" and Roger's answer, "He had not been within twenty miles of him; neither did he know anything about the Colonel" !! But, on further discourse, he let fall, that "he knew the Colonel never would come to a trial,"—"that *he* knew this; but neither man, woman, nor child should know it, but those who knew it already."

So Colonel George Talbot is out of the hands of the proud Lord Effingham, and up the Bay with his wife and friends; and is buffeting the wintry head-winds in a long voyage to the Elk River, which, in due time, he reaches in safety.

CHAPTER IX

TROUBLES IN COUNCIL

Let us now turn back to see what is doing at St. Mary's.

On the 17th of February comes to the Council a letter from Lord Effingham. It has the superscription, "These, with the greatest care and speed." It is dated on the 11th of February from Poropotanck, an Indian point on the York River above Gloucester, and memorable as being in the neighborhood of the spot where, some sixty years before these events, Pocahontas saved the life of that mirror of chivalry, Captain John Smith.

The letter brings information "that last night [the 10th of February] Colonel Talbot escaped out of prison,"—a subsequent letter says, "by the corruption of his guard,"—and it is full of admonition, which has very much the tone of command, urging all strenuous efforts to recapture him, and particularly recommending a proclamation of "hue and cry."

And now, for a month, there is a great parade in Maryland of proclamation, and hue and cry, and orders to sheriffs and county colonels to keep a sharp look-out everywhere for Talbot. But no person in the Province seems to be anxious to catch him, except Mr. Nehemiah Blakiston, the Collector, and a few others, who seem to have been ministering to Lord Effingham's spleen

against the Council for not capturing him. His Lordship writes several letters of complaint at the delay and ill success of this pursuit, and some of them in no measured terms of courtesy. "I admire," he says in one of these, "at any slow proceedings in service wherein his Majesty is so concerned, and hope you will take off all occasions of future trouble, both unto me and you, of this nature, by manifesting yourselves zealous for his Majesty's service." They answer, that all imaginable care for the apprehending of Talbot has been taken by issuing proclamations, etc.,—but all have proved ineffectual, because Talbot upon all occasions flies and takes refuge "in the remotest parts of the woods and deserts of this Province."

At this point we get some traces of Talbot. There is a deposition of Robert Kemble of Cecil County, and some other papers, that give us a few particulars by which I am enabled to construct my narrative.

Colonel Talbot got to his own house about the middle of February,—nearly at the same time at which the news of his escape reached St. Mary's. He there lay warily watching the coming hue and cry for his apprehension. He collected his friends, armed them, and set them at watch and ward, at all his outposts. He had a disguise provided, in which he occasionally ventured abroad. Kemble met him, on the 19th of February, at George Oldfield's, on Elk River; and although the Colonel was disguised in a flaxen wig, and in other ways, Kemble says he knew him by hearing him cough in the night, in a room

adjoining that in which Kemble slept. Whilst this witness was at Oldfield's, "Talbot's shallop," he says, "was busking and turning before Oldfield's landing for several hours." The roads leading towards Talbot's house were all guarded by his friends, and he had a report made to him of every vessel that arrived in the river. By way of more permanent concealment, until the storm should blow over, he had made preparations to build himself a cabin, somewhere in the woods out of the range of the thoroughfares of the district. When driven by a pressing emergency which required more than ordinary care to prevent his apprehension, he betook himself to the cave on the Susquehanna, where, most probably, with a friend or two,—Cornet Murray I hope was one of them,—he lay perdu for a few days at a time, and then ventured back to speak a word of comfort and encouragement to the faithful wife who kept guard at home.

In this disturbed and anxious alternation of concealment and flight Talbot passed the winter, until about the 25th of April, when, probably upon advice of friends, he voluntarily surrendered himself to the Council at St. Mary's, and was committed for trial in the provincial Court. The fact of the surrender was communicated to Lord Effingham by the Council, with a request that he would send the witnesses to Maryland to appear at his trial. Hereupon arose another correspondence with his Lordship, which is worthy of a moment's notice. Lord Effingham has lost nothing of his arrogance. He says, on the 12th of May, 1685, "I am so far from answering your desires,

that I do hereby demand Colonel Talbot as my prisoner, in the King of England's name, and that you do forthwith convey him into Virginia. And to this my demand I expect your ready performance and compliance, upon your allegiance to his Majesty."

I am happy to read the answer to this insolent letter, in which it will be seen that the spirit of Maryland was waked up on the occasion to its proper voice.—It is necessary to say, by way of explanation to one point in this answer, that the Governor of Virginia had received the news of the accession and proclamation of James the Second, and had not communicated it to the Council in Maryland. The Council give an answer at their leisure, having waited till the 1st of June, when they write to his Lordship, protesting against Virginia's exercising any superintendence over Maryland, and peremptorily refusing to deliver Talbot. They tell him "that we are desirous and conclude to await his Majesty's resolution, [in regard to the prisoner,] which we question not will be agreeable to his Lordship's Charter, and, consequently, contrary to your expectations. In the mean time we cannot but resent in some measure, for we are willing to let you see that we observe, the small notice you seem to take of this Government, (contrary to that amicable correspondence so often promised, and expected by us,) in not holding us worthy to be advised of his Majesty's being proclaimed, without which, certainly, we have not been enabled to do our duty in that particular. Such advice would have been gratefully received by your Excellency's

humble servants." Thanks, Colonels Darnall and Digges and you other Colonels and Majors, for this plain outspeaking of the old Maryland heart against the arrogance of the "Right Honorable Lord Howard, Baron of Effingham, Captain General and Chief Governor of his Majesty's Colony of Virginia," as he styles himself! I am glad to see this change of tone, since that first letter of obsequious submission.

Perhaps this change of tone may have had some connection with the recent change on the throne, in which the accession of a Catholic monarch may have given new courage to Maryland, and abated somewhat the confidence of Virginia. If so, it was but a transitory hope, born to a sad disappointment.

The documents afford but little more information.

Lord Baltimore, being in London, appears to have interceded with the King for some favor to Talbot, and writes to the Council on the third of July, "that it formerly was and still is the King's pleasure, that Talbot shall be brought over, in the Quaker Ketch, to England, to receive his trial there; and that, in order thereto, his Majesty had sent his commands to the Governor of Virginia to deliver him to Captain Allen, commander of said ketch, who is to bring him over." The Proprietary therefore directs his Council to send the prisoner to the Governor of Virginia, "to the end that his Majesty's pleasure may be fulfilled."

This letter was received on the 7th of October, 1685, and Talbot was accordingly sent, under the charge of Gilbert Clarke and a proper guard, to Lord Effingham, who gives Clarke a

regular business receipt, as if he had brought him a hogshead of tobacco, and appends to it a short apologetic explanation of his previous rudeness, which we may receive as another proof of his distrust of the favor of the new monarch. "I had not been so urgent," he says, "had I not had advices from England, last April, of the measures that were taken there concerning him."

After this my chronicle is silent. We have no further tidings of Talbot. The only hint for a conjecture is the marginal note of "The Landholder's Assistant," got from Chalmers: "He was, I believe," says the note, "tried and convicted, and finally pardoned by James the Second." This is probably enough. For I suppose him to have been of the same family with that Earl of Tyrconnel equally distinguished for his influence with James the Second as for his infamous life and character, who held at this period unbounded sway at the English Court. I hope, for the honor of our hero, that he preserved no family-likeness to that false-hearted, brutal, and violent favorite, who is made immortal in Macaulay's pages as Lying Dick Talbot. Through his intercession his kinsman may have been pardoned, or even never brought to trial.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

This is the end of my story. But, like all stories, it requires that some satisfaction should be given to the reader in regard to the dramatic proprieties. We have our several heroes to dispose of. Phelim Murray and Hugh Riley, who had both been arrested by the Council to satisfy public opinion as to their complicity in the plot for the escape, were both honorably discharged,—I suppose being found entirely innocent! Roger Skreene swore himself black and blue, as the phrase is, that he had not the least suspicion of the business in which he was engaged; and so he was acquitted! I am also glad to be able to say that our gallant Cornet Murray, in the winding-up of this business, was promoted by the Council to a captaincy of cavalry, and put in command of Christiana Fort and its neighborhood, to keep that formidable Quaker, William Penn, at a respectful distance. It would gratify me still more, if I could find warrant to add, that the Cornet enjoyed himself, and married the lady of his choice, with whom he has, unknown to us, been violently in love during these adventures, and that they lived happily together for many years. I hope this was so,—although the chronicle does not allow one to affirm it,—it being but a proper conclusion to such a romance

as I have plucked out of our history.

And so I have traced the tradition of the Cave to the end. What I have been able to certify furnishes the means of a shrewd estimate of the average amount of truth which popular traditions generally contain. There is always a fact at the bottom, lying under a superstructure of fiction,—truth enough to make the pursuit worth following. Talbot did not live in the Cave, but fled there occasionally for concealment. He had no hawks with him, but bred them in his own mews on the Elk River. The birds seen in after times were some of this stock, and not the solitary pair they were supposed to be. I dare say an expert naturalist would find many specimens of the same breed now in that region. But let us not be too critical on the tradition, which has led us into a quest through which I have been able to supply what I hope will be found to be a pleasant insight into that little world of action and passion,—with its people, its pursuits, and its gossips, —that, more than one hundred and seventy years ago, inhabited the beautiful banks of St. Mary's River, and wove the web of our early Maryland history.

POSTSCRIPT

I have another link in the chain of Talbot's history, furnished me by a friend in Virginia. It comes since I have completed my narrative, and very accurately confirms the conjecture of Chalmers, quoted in the note of "The Landholder's Assistant."

"As for Colonel Talbot, he was conveyed for trial to Virginia, from whence he made his escape, and, after being retaken, and, *I believe*, tried and convicted, was finally pardoned by King James II." This is an extract from the note. It is now ascertained that Talbot was not taken to England for trial, as Lord Baltimore, in his letter of the 6th of July, 1685, affirmed it was the King's pleasure he should be; but that he was tried and convicted in Virginia on the 22d of April, 1686, and, on the 26th of the same month, reprieved by order of the King; after which we may presume he received a full pardon, and perhaps was taken to England in obedience to the royal command, to await it there. The conviction and reprieve are recorded in a folio of the State Records of Virginia at Richmond, on a mutilated and scarcely legible sheet,—a copy of which I present to my reader with all its obliterations and broken syllables and sad gashes in the text, for his own deciphering. The MS. is in keeping with the whole story, and may be looked upon as its appropriate emblem. The story has been brought to light by chance, and has been rendered intelligible by close study and interpretation of fragmentary and widely separated facts, capable of being read only by one conversant with the text of human affairs, and who has the patience to grope through the trackless intervals of time, and the skill to supply the lost words and syllables of history by careful collation with those which are spared. How faithfully this accidentally found MS. typifies such a labor, the reader may judge from the literal copy of it I now offer to his perusal.

[Transcriber's note: Gaps in the text below are signified with an asterisk.]

By his Excellency Whereas his most Sacred Majesty has been Graciously pleased by his Royall Com'ands to Direct and Com'and Me ffrancis Lord Howard of Effingham his Maj'ties Lieut and Gov'r. Gen'll.

of Virginia that if George Talbott Esq'r. upon his Tryall should be found Guilty of Killing M'r Christopher Rowsby, that Execution should be suspended untill his Majesties pleasure should be further signified unto Me; And forasmuch as the sd George Talbott was Indicted upon the Statute of Stabbing and hath Received a full and Legall Tryall in open Court on y'e Twentieth and One and Twentieth dayes of this Instant Aprill, before his Majesties Justices of Oyer and Terminer, and found Guilty of y'e aforesaid fact and condemned for the Same, I, therefore, *ffrancis Lord Howard, Baron of *ffingham, his Majesties Lieu't and Gov'r.

Gen'll. Of Virginia, by Virtue of *aj'ties Royall Com'ands to Me given there * doe hereby Suspend *tion of the Sentence of death * his Maj'ties Justices

* Terminer on the * till his Majesties

*erein be * nor any

* fail as yo* uttmost

* and for y'r soe doing this sh*

Given under my and * Seale the 26th dayof Apri*

EFFINGHAM

To his Majesties Justices of Oyer and Terminer.

Recordatur E Chillon Gen'l Car*
[Endorsed]

Talbott's Repreif from L'd Howard 1686 for Killing Ch'r. Rousby Examined Sept. 24th 26th Aprill 1686 Sentence of ag'* Col Ta Suspended Aprill 26* 1*86

PRINCE ADEB

In Sana, oh, in Sana, God, the Lord,
Was very kind and merciful to me!
Forth from the Desert in my rags I came,
Weary and sore of foot. I saw the spires
And swelling bubbles of the golden domes
Rise through the trees of Sana, and my heart
Grew great within me with the strength of God;
And I cried out, "Now shall I right myself,—
I, Adeb the Despised,—for God is just!"
There he who wronged my father dwelt in peace,—
My warlike father, who, when gray hairs crept
Around his forehead, as on Lebanon
The whitening snows of winter, was betrayed
To the sly Imam, and his tented wealth
Swept from him, 'twixt the roosting of the cock
And his first crowing,—in a single night:
And I, poor Adeb, sole of all my race,
Smeared with my father's and my kinsmen's blood,
Fled through the Desert, till one day a tribe
Of hungry Bedouins found me in the sand,
Half mad with famine, and they took me up,
And made a slave of me,—of me, a prince!
All was fulfilled at last. I fled from them,
In rags and sorrow. Nothing but my heart,
Like a strong swimmer, bore me up against

The howling sea of my adversity.
At length o'er Sana, in the act to swoop,
I stood like a young eagle on a crag.
The traveller passed me with suspicious fear:
I asked for nothing; I was not a thief.
The lean dogs snuffed around me: my lank bones,
Fed on the berries and the crusted pools,
Were a scant morsel. Once, a brown-skinned girl
Called me a little from the common path,
And gave me figs and barley in a bag.
I paid her with a kiss, with nothing more,
And she looked glad; for I was beautiful,
And virgin as a fountain, and as cold.
I stretched her bounty, pecking, like a bird,
Her figs and barley, till my strength returned.
So when rich Sana lay beneath my eyes,
My foot was as the leopard's, and my hand
As heavy as the lion's brandished paw;
And underneath my burnished skin the veins
And stretching muscles played, at every step,
In wondrous motion. I was very strong.
I looked upon my body, as a bird
That bills his feathers ere he takes to flight,—
I, watching over Sana. Then I prayed;
And on a soft stone, wetted in the brook,
Ground my long knife; and then I prayed again.
God heard my voice, preparing all for me,
As, softly stepping down the hills,
I saw the Imam's summer-palace all ablaze

In the last flash of sunset. Every fount
Was spouting fire, and all the orange-trees
Bore blazing coals, and from the marble walls
And gilded spires and columns, strangely wrought,
Glared the red light, until my eyes were pained
With the fierce splendor. Till the night grew thick,
I lay within the bushes, next the door,
Still as a serpent, as invisible.
The guard hung round the portal. Man by man
They dropped away, save one lone sentinel,
And on his eyes God's finger lightly fell;
He slept half standing. Like a summer wind
That threads the grove, yet never turns a leaf,
I stole from shadow unto shadow forth;
Crossed all the marble court-yard, swung the door,
Like a soft gust, a little way ajar,—
My body's narrow width, no more,—and stood
Beneath the cresset in the painted hall.
I marvelled at the riches of my foe;
I marvelled at God's ways with wicked men.
Then I reached forth, and took God's waiting hand:
And so He led me over mossy floors,
Flowered with the silken summer of Shirar,
Straight to the Imam's chamber. At the door
Stretched a brawn eunuch, blacker than my eyes:
His woolly head lay like the Kaba-stone
In Mecca's mosque, as silent and as huge.
I stepped across it, with my pointed knife
Just missing a full vein along his neck,

And, pushing by the curtains, there I was,—
I, Adeb the Despised,—upon the spot
That, next to heaven, I longed for most of all.
I could have shouted for the joy in me.
Fierce pangs and flashes of bewildering light
Leaped through my brain and danced before my eyes.
So loud my heart beat that I feared its sound
Would wake the sleeper; and the bubbling blood
Choked in my throat, till, weaker than a child,
I reeled against a column, and there hung
In a blind stupor. Then I prayed again;
And, sense by sense, I was made whole once more.
I touched myself; I was the same; I knew
Myself to be lone Adeb, young and strong,
With nothing but a stride of empty air
Between me and God's justice. In a sleep,
Thick with the fumes of the accursed grape,
Sprawled the false Imam. On his shaggy breast,
Like a white lily heaving on the tide
Of some foul stream, the fairest woman slept
These roving eyes have ever looked upon.
Almost a child, her bosom barely showed
The change beyond her girlhood. All her charms
Were budding, but half opened; for I saw
Not only beauty wondrous in itself,
But possibility of more to be
In the full process of her blooming days.
I gazed upon her, and my heart grew soft,
As a parched pasture with the dew of heaven.

While thus I gazed, she smiled, and slowly raised
The long curve of her lashes; and we looked
Each upon each in wonder, not alarm,—
Not eye to eye, but soul to soul, we held
Each other for a moment. All her life
Seemed centred in the circle of her eyes.
She stirred no limb; her long-drawn, equal breath
Swelled out and ebbed away beneath her breast,
In calm unbroken. Not a sign of fear
Touched the faint color on her oval cheek,
Or pinched the arches of her tender mouth.
She took me for a vision, and she lay
With her sleep's smile unaltered, as in doubt
Whether real life had stolen into her dreams,
Or dreaming stretched into her outer life.
I was not graceless to a woman's eyes.
The girls of Damar paused to see me pass,
I walking in my rags, yet beautiful.
One maiden said, "He has a prince's air!"
I am a prince; the air was all my own.
So thought the lily on the Imam's breast;
And lightly as a summer mist, that lifts
Before the morning, so she floated up,
Without a sound or rustle of a robe,
From her coarse pillow, and before me stood
With asking eyes. The Imam never moved.
A stride and blow were all my need, and they
Were wholly in my power. I took her hand,
I held a warning finger to my lips,

And whispered in her small expectant ear,
"Adeb, the son of Akem!" She replied
In a low murmur, whose bewildering sound
Almost lulled wakeful me to sleep, and sealed
The sleeper's lids in tenfold slumber, "Prince,
Lord of the Imam's life and of my heart,
Take all thou seest,—it is thy right, I know,—
But spare the Imam for thy own soul's sake!"
Then I arrayed me in a robe of state,
Shining with gold and jewels; and I bound
In my long turban gems that might have bought
The lands 'twixt Babelmandeb and Sahan.
I girt about me, with a blazing belt,
A scimitar o'er which the sweating smiths
In far Damascus hammered for long years,
Whose hilt and scabbard shot a trembling light
From diamonds and rubies. And she smiled,
As piece by piece I put the treasures on,
To see me look so fair,—in pride she smiled.
I hung long purses at my side. I scooped,
From off a table, figs and dates and rice,
And bound them to my girdle in a sack.
Then over all I flung a snowy cloak,
And beckoned to the maiden. So she stole
Forth like my shadow, past the sleeping wolf
Who wronged my father, o'er the woolly head
Of the swart eunuch, down the painted court,
And by the sentinel who standing slept.
Strongly against the portal, through my rags,—

My old, base rags,—and through the maiden's veil,
I pressed my knife,—upon the wooden hilt
Was "Adeb, son of Akem," carved by me
In my long slavehood,—as a passing sign
To wait the Imam's waking. Shadows cast
From two high-sailing clouds upon the sand
Passed not more noiseless than we two, as one,
Glided beneath the moonlight, till I smelt
The fragrance of the stables. As I slid
The wide doors open, with a sudden bound
Uprose the startled horses; but they stood
Still as the man who in a foreign land
Hears his strange language, when my Desert call,
As low and plaintive as the nested dove's,
Fell on their listening ears. From stall to stall,
Feeling the horses with my groping hands,
I crept in darkness; and at length I came
Upon two sister mares, whose rounded sides,
Fine muzzles, and small heads, and pointed ears,
And foreheads spreading 'twixt their eyelids wide,
Long slender tails, thin manes, and coats of silk,
Told me, that, of the hundred steeds there stalled,
My hand was on the treasures. O'er and o'er
I felt their long joints, and down their legs
To the cool hoofs;—no blemish anywhere:
These I led forth and saddled. Upon one
I set the lily, gathered now for me,—
My own, henceforth, forever. So we rode
Across the grass, beside the stony path,

Until we gained the highway that is lost,
Leading from Sana, in the eastern sands:
When, with a cry that both the Desert-born
Knew without hint from whip or goading spur,
We dashed into a gallop. Far behind
In sparks and smoke the dusty highway rose;
And ever on the maiden's face I saw,
When the moon flashed upon it, the strange smile
It wore on waking. Once I kissed her mouth,
When she grew weary, and her strength returned.
All through the night we scoured between the hills:
The moon went down behind us, and the stars
Dropped after her; but long before I saw
A planet blazing straight against our eyes,
The road had softened, and the shadowy hills
Had flattened out, and I could hear the hiss
Of sand spurned backward by the flying mares.—
Glory to God! I was at home again!
The sun rose on us; far and near I saw
The level Desert; sky met sand all round.
We paused at midday by a palm-crowned well,
And ate and slumbered. Somewhat, too, was said:
The words have slipped my memory. That same eve
We rode sedately through a Hamoum camp,—
I, Adeb, prince amongst them, and my bride.
And ever since amongst them I have ridden,
A head and shoulders taller than the best;
And ever since my days have been of gold,
My nights have been of silver.—God is just!

* * * * *

ELEUSINIA.[1]

THE SAVIOURS OF GREECE

Life, in its central idea, is an entire and eternal solitude. Yet each individual nature so repeats—and is itself repeated in—every other, that there is insured the possibility both of a world-revelation in the soul, and of a self-incarnation in the world; so that every man's life, like Agrippa's mirror, reflects the universe, and the universe is made the embodiment of his life,—is made to beat with a human pulse.

We do all, therefore,—Hindu, Egyptian, Greek, or Saxon,—claim kinship both with the earth and the heavens: with the sense of sorrow we kneel upon the earth, with the sense of hope we look into the heavens.

The two Presences of the Eleusinia,—the earthly Demeter,[2] the embodiment of human sorrow, and the heavenly Dionysus,[3] the incarnation of human hope,—these are the two Great Presences of the Universe; about whom, as separate centres,—

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[1] See Number XXIII., September, 1859.

[2] Demeter is [Greek Gae-mhaetaer], Mother Earth.

[3] The same as Iacchus and the Latin Bacchus.

the one of measureless wanderings, the other of triumphant rest,—we marshal, both in the interpretations of Reason and in the constructions of our Imagination, all that is visible or that is invisible,—whatsoever is palpable in sense or possible in idea, in the world which is or the world to come. Incarnations of the life within us, in its two developments of Sorrow and Hope,—they are also the centres through which this life develops itself in the world: it is through them that all things have their genesis from the human heart, and through them, therefore, that all things are unveiled to us.

But these Two Presences have their highest interest and significance as *foci* of the religious development of the race: and inasmuch as all growth is ultimately a religious one, it is in this phase that their organic connections with life are widest and most profound. As such they appear in the Eleusinia; and in all mythology they furnish the only possible key for the interpretation of its mystic symbolism, its hieroglyphic records, and its ill-defined traditions.

Accordingly we find that all mythology naturally and inevitably flows about these centres into two distinct developments, which are indicated,—

1. In Nature; inasmuch as they are first made manifest through symbols which point to the two great forces, the *active* and the *passive*, which are concerned in all natural processes (*sol et terra subjacens soli*); and,

2. In the primitive belief among all nations, that men are

the offspring of the earth and the heavens,—and in the worship equally prevalent of the sun, the personal Presence of the heavens, as Saviour Lord, and of the earth as sorrowing Lady and Mother.

Why the earth, in this primitive symbolism and worship, was represented as the Sorrowing One, and the sun as Saviour, is evident at a glance. It was the bosom of the earth which was shaken with storm and rent with earthquake. She was the Mother, and hers was the travail of all birth; in sorrow she forever gathered to herself her Fate-conquered children; her sorrowful countenance she veiled in thick mists, and, year after year, shrouded herself in wintry desolation: while he was the Eternal Father, the Revealer of all things, he drove away the darkness, and in his presence the mist became an invisible exhalation; and, as out of darkness and death, he called into birth the flowers and the numberless forests,—even as he himself was every morning born anew out of darkness,—so he called the children of the earth to a glorious rising in his light. Everything of the earth was inert, weighing heavily upon the sense and the heart, only waiting its transfiguration and exaltation through his power, until it should rise into the heavens; which was the type of his translation to himself of his grief-oppressed children.

Under these symbols our Lord and Lady have been worshipped by an overwhelming majority of the human race. They swayed the ancient world, from the Indians by the Ganges, and the Tartar tribes, to the Britons and Laplanders

of Northwestern Europe,—having their representatives in every system of faith,—in the Hindu *Isi and Isana*, the Egyptian *Isis and Osiris*, the Assyrian *Venus and Adonis*, the *Demeter and Dionysus* of Greece, the Roman *Ceres and Bacchus*, and the *Disa and Frey* of Scandinavia,—in connection with most, if not all, of whom there existed festivals corresponding, in respect of their meaning and use, with the Grecian Eleusinia.

Moreover, the various divinities of any one mythology—for example, the Greek—were at first only representatives of partial attributes or incidental functions of these Two Presences. Thus, Jove was the power of the heavens, which, of course, centred in the sun; Apollo is admitted to have been only another name for the sun; Æsculapius represents his healing virtues; Hercules his saving strength; and Prometheus, who gave fire to men, as Vulcan, the god of fire, was probably connected with Eastern fire-worship, and so in the end with the worship of the sun. Some of the goddesses come under the same category,—such as Juno, sister and wife of Jove, who shared with him his aerial dynasty; as also Diana, who was only the reflection of Apollo,[4] as the moon of the sun, carrying his power on into the night, and exercising among women the functions which he exercised among men. The representatives of our Lady, on the other hand, are such as the ancient Rhea,—Latona, with her dark and starry

[4] This connection of Diana with Apollo has led some to the hasty inference, that the sun and moon—not the sun and earth—were the primitive centres of mythological symbolism. But it is plain that the sun and moon, as _active _forces referable to a single centre, stood over against the earth as *passive.*

veil,—Tethys, the world-nurse,—and the Artemis of the East, or Syrian Mother; to say nothing of Oreads, Dryads, and Nereids, that without number peopled the mountains, the forests, and the sea.

The confusion of ancient mythology did not so much regard its subjective elements as its external development, and even here is easily accounted for by the mingling of tribes and nations, hitherto isolated in their growth,—but who, as they came together, in their mutual recognition of a common faith under different names and rites, must inevitably have introduced disorder into the external symbolism. But even out of this confusion we shall find the whole Pantheon organized about two central shrines,—those of the *Mater Dolorosa* and the *Dominus Salvator*,—which are represented also in Christendom, though detached from natural symbols, in the connection of Christianity with the worship of the Virgin.

The Eleusinia, collecting together, as it did, all the prominent elements of mythology, furnishes, in its dramatic evolution through Demeter and Dionysus, the highest and most complete representation of ancient faith in both of its developments. In a former paper, we have endeavored to give this drama its deepest interpretation by pointing to the human heart as the central source of all its movements. We shall now ask our readers to follow us out into these movements themselves,—that, as before we saw how the world is centred in each human soul, we may now see how each soul develops itself in the world; for thither it is that

the ever-widening cycles of the Eleusinian epos will inevitably lead us.

And first as an epos of sorrow: though centring in the earthly Demeter, yet its movement does not limit itself by the remembrance of *her* nine days' search; but, in the torch-light procession of the fifth night, widens indefinitely and mysteriously in the darkness, until it has inclosed all hearts within the circuit of its tumultuous flight. Thus, by some secret sympathy with her movements, are gathered together about the central Achtheia all the *Matres Dolorosoe,*—our Ladies of Sorrow;—for, like her, they were all wanderers.

They were so by necessity. All unrest involves loss, and thus leads to search. It matters not if the search be unsuccessful; though the gadfly sting as sharply the next moment as it did the last, still so must continue her wanderings. Therefore that Jew, whose mythic fate it is to wait forever upon the earth, the victim of an everlasting sorrow, is also an everlasting wanderer. All suffering necessitates movement,—and when the suffering is intense, the movement passes over into flight.

Therefore it is that the epos of suffering requires not merely time for its accomplishment, but also space. Ulysses, the "much-suffering," is also the "much-wandering."

Thus our Lady in the Eleusinian procession of search represents the restless search of all her children.

Migrations and colonizations, ancient or modern,—what were they but flights from some phase of suffering,—name it as we

may,—poverty, oppression, or slavery? It was the same suffering Io who brought civilization to the banks of the Nile.

Thus, from the very beginnings of history or human tradition, out of the severities of Scythian deserts there has been an endless series of flights,—nomadic invasions of tribes impelled by no merely barbarian impulse, but by some deep sense of suffering, flying from their Northern wastes to the happy gardens of the South. In no other way can you account for these movements. If you attribute them to ferocity, what was it that engendered and nourished *that*? Call them the results of a Divine Providence, seeking by a fresher current of life to revive systems of civilization which through long ages of luxury have come to frailty,—still it was through this severity of discipline alone that Providence accomplished its end. Besides, these nomads were fully conscious of their bitter lot; and those who fled not in space fled at least in their dreams,—waiting for death at last to introduce them to inexhaustible hunting-grounds in their happy Elysium.

The very mention of Rome suggests the same continually repeated series of antecedent tragedy and consequent wandering, —pointing backward to the fabled siege of Troy and the flight of Aeneas,—"*profugus*" from Asia to Italy,—and forward to the quick-coming footsteps of the Northern *profugi*, who were eager, even this side the grave, to enter the Valhalla of their dreams.

It is said that the Phoenician cities sent out colonies from a desire of gain, and because they were crowded at home. It is said,

too, that, in search of gold, thousands upon thousands went to El Dorado, to California, and Australia; but who does not know that the greater part of these thousands left their homes for reasons which, if fully exposed, would reveal a tragedy in view of which gold appears a glittering mockery?

The great movement of the race westward is but an extension of this epic flight. Thus, the Pilgrim Fathers of New England,—the grandest *profugi* of all time,—or even the bold adventurers of Spain, would have been moved only by intense suffering, in some form, to exchange their homes for a wilderness.

The world is full of these wanderings, under various pretences of gain, adventure, or curiosity, hiding the real impulse of flight. So with the strong-flowing current in the streets of a great city; for how else shall we interpret this intricate net-work of human feature and movement,—this flux of life toward some troubled centre, and then its reflux toward some uncertain and undefined circumference?

And as Nature is the mirror of human life, so at the source of those vast movements by which she buries in oblivion her own works and the works of man there is hidden the type of human suffering, both for the race and the individual. And hence it is, that, over against the eternal solitude within us, there ever waits without us a second solitude, into which, sooner or later, we pass with restless flight,—a solitude vast, shadowy, and unfamiliar in its outline, but inevitable in its reality,—haunting, bewildering, overshadowing us!

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"Who is it that shall interpret this intricate evolution of human footsteps, in its meaning of sorrow?—who is it that shall give us rest?" Such is the half-conscious prayer of all these fugitives,—of our Lady and all her children. This it is which gives meaning to the torch-light procession on the fifth night of the Festival; but to-morrow it shall find an answer in the Saviour Dionysus, who shall change the flight of search into the pomp of triumph.

* * * * *

But let us pause a moment. It is Palm Sunday! We are not, indeed, in Syria, the land of palms. Yet, even here,—lost in some far-reaching avenue of pines, where one could hardly walk upon a summer Sunday without such sense of joy as would move him to tears,—even here all the movements of the earth and the heavens hint of most jubilant triumph. Thus, the green grass rises above the dead grass at our feet; the leaf-buds new-born upon the tree, like lotos-buds springing up from Ethiopian marble, give token of resurrection; the trees themselves tower heavenward; and in victorious ascension the clouds unite in the vast procession, dissolving in exhalation at the "gates of the sun"; while from unnumbered choirs arise songs of exultant victory

from the hearts of men to the throne of God!

But whither, in divine remembrance,—whither is it that upon this Sunday of all Sundays the thoughts of Christendom point? Back through eighteen hundred years to the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, followed by the children crying, "Hosanna in the highest heavens!" Of this it is that the processions of Nature, in the resurrections of birth and the aërial ascension of clouds,—of this that the upward processions of our thoughts are commemorative!

Thus was the sixth day of the Eleusinia,—when the ivy-crowned Dionysus was borne in triumph through the mystic entrance of Eleusis, and from the Eleusinian plains, as from our choirs to-day, ascended the jubilant Hosannas of the countless multitude;—this was the Palm Sunday of Greece.

Close upon the chariot-wheels of the Saviour Dionysus followed, in the faith of Greece, Aesculapius and Hercules: the former the Divine Physician, whose very name was healing, and who had power over death, as the child of the Sun; and the latter, who by his saving strength delivered the earth from its Augean impurities, and, arrayed in celestial panoply, subdued the monsters of the earth, and at last, descending to Hades, slew the three-headed Cerberus and took away from men much of the fear of death. Such was the train of the Eleusinian Dionysus. If Demeter was the wanderer, he was the conqueror and centre of all triumph.

And this reminds us of his Indian conquest. What did it

mean? Admit that it may have been only the fabulous march in triumph of some forgotten king of mortal birth to the farthest limits of the East. Still the fact of its association with Dionysus stands as evidence of the connection of human faith with human victory. Let it be that Dionysus himself was only the apotheosis of victorious humanity. In strict logic this is more than probable. Yet why apotheosize conquerors at all? Why exalt all heroes to the rank of gods?

The reason is, that men are unwilling to draw a limited meaning from any human act. How could they, then, connecting, as they did, all victory with hope,—how could they fall short of the most exalted hope, of the most excellent victory; especially in instances like the one now under our notice, where the material circumstances of the conquest as well as of the conqueror's life have passed out of remembrance; when for generations men have dwelt upon the dim tradition in their thoughts, and it has had time to grow into its fullest significance,—even finding an elaborate expression in sacred writings, in symbolic ritual, and monumental entablature? Osiris, who subjected men to his reign of peace, was also held to be the Preserver of their souls. Even Caesar, had he lived two thousand years before, might have been worshipped as Saviour. All extended power, measured by duration in time or vast areas of space, becomes an incarnate Presence in the world, which awes to the dust all who resist it, and exalts with its own glory all who trust in it. Achtheia mourns all failures; and here it is that the human touches the earth. But

they who conquer, these are our Saviours; they shall follow in the train of Dionysus; they shall lift us to the heavens, and sanctify in our remembrance the Sunday of Palms!

But Dionysus not only looks back with triumphant remembrance to ancient conquest, but has his victories in the present, also, and in the great Hereafter. For triumph was connected with all Dionysiac symbols, hints of which are preserved to us in representations found upon ancient vases: such, for instance, as the figure of Victory surmounting the heads of the ivy-crowned Bacchantes in their mystic orgies; or the winged serpents which bear the chariot of the victor-god,—as if in this connection even the reptiles, whose very name (*serpentes*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.