VARIOUS

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Various
The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 04, No. 25, November, 1859 / A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics

E. FELICE FORESTI

Late in the autumn of 1836, an Austrian brig-of-war cast anchor in the harbor of New York; and seldom have voyagers disembarked with such exhilarating emotions as thrilled the hearts of some of the passengers who then and there exchanged ship for shore. Yet their delight was not the joy of reunion with home and friends, nor the cheerful expectancy of the adventurous upon reaching a long-sought land of promise, nor the fresh sensation of the inexperienced when first beholding a new country; it was the relief of enfranchised men, the rapture of devotees of freedom, loosened from a thrall, escaped from *surveillance*, and breathing, after years of captivity, the air where liberty is law, and self-government the basis of civic life. These were exiles; but the bitterness of that lot was forgotten, at the moment, in the proud consciousness of having incurred it through allegiance to freedom, and being destined to endure it in a consecrated asylum. In that air, when first respired, on that soil, when first trod, they were unconscious of the lot of strangers: for there the vigilant eye of despotism ceased to watch their steps; prudence checked no more the expression of honest thought or high aspiration; manhood resumed its erect port, mind its spontaneous vigor; nor did many moments pass ere friendly hands were extended, and kindly voices heard, and domestic retreats thrown open. Their welfare had been commended to generous hearts; and the simple facts of their previous history won them respectful sympathy and cordial greeting.

Prominent amid the excited group was a tall, well-knit figure, whose high, square brow, benign smile, and frank earnestness bespoke a man of moral energy, vigorous intellect, and warm, candid, tender soul. Traces of suffering, of thought, of stern purpose were, indeed, apparent; but with and above them, the ingenuousness and the glow of a brave and ardent man. This was ELEUTARIO FELICE FORESTI,—subsequently, and for years, the favorite professor of his beautiful native language and literature in New York,—the favorite guest and the cherished friend in her most cultivated homes and among her best citizens,—the Italian patriot, which title he vindicated by consistency, self-respect, and the most genial qualities. The vocation he adopted, because of its availability, only served to make apparent comprehensive endowments and an independent spirit; the lady with whom he read Tasso, beside the chivalrous music of the "Jerusalem Delivered," learned to appreciate modern knighthood; and the scholar to whom he expounded Dante, from the political chart of the Middle Ages, turned to an incarnation of existent patriotism. Not only by the arguments of Gioberti, the graphic pictures of Manzoni, and the terse pathos of Leopardi, did he illustrate what Italy boasts of later genius; but through his own eloquent integrity and magnetic love of her achievements and faith in her destiny. The savings of years of patient toil were sacrificed to the subsistence of his poor countrymen who came hither after bravely fighting at Rome, Venice, Milan, and Novara, to have their fruits of victory treacherously gathered by aliens. Infirmity, consequent upon early privation and the unhealed wounds of long-worn chains, laid the stalwart frame of the brave and generous exile on a bed of pain. He uttered no complaint, and whispered not of the fear which no courage can quell in high natures, that of losing "the glorious privilege of being independent": yet his American friends must have surmised the truth; for, one day, he received a letter stating that a sum, fully adequate for two years' support, remained to his credit on the books of a merchant,—one of those mysterious

provisions, such as once redeemed a note of Henry Clay's, and of which no explanation can be given, except that "it is a way they have" among the merchant princes of New York. By a providential coincidence, surgical skill, at this juncture, essentially improved his physical condition; but it became indispensable, at the same time, that he should exchange our rigorous clime for one more congenial; and he sailed five years ago for Italy, taking up his residence in Piedmont, where dwell so many of the eminent adherents of the cause he loved, and where the institutions, polity, and social life include so many elements of progress and of faith. It was now that those who knew him best, including some of the leading citizens of his adopted city, applied to the Executive for his appointment as United States Consul at Genoa. There was a singular propriety in the request. Having passed and honored the ordeal of American citizenship, and being then a popular resident of the city which gave birth to the discoverer of this continent,—familiar with our institutions, and endeared to so many of the wise and brave in America and Italy,—illustrious through suffering, a veteran disciple and martyr of freedom,—he was eminently a representative man, whom freemen should delight to honor; and while it then gratified our sense of the appropriate that this distinction and resource should cheer his declining years, we are impelled, now that death has canonized misfortune and integrity, to avail ourselves of the occasion to rehearse the incidents and revive the lessons of his life.[1]

Underlying the external apathy and apparently frivolous life of the Italian peninsula, there has ever been a resolute, clear, earnest patriotism, fed in the scholar by memories of past glory, in the peasant by intense local attachment, and kindled from time to time in all by the reaction of gross wrongs and moral privations. Sometimes in conversation, oftener in secret musing, now in the eloquent outburst of the composer, and now in the adjuration of the poet or the vow of the revolutionist, this latent spirit has found expression. Again and again, spasmodic and abortive *émeutes*, the calm protest of a D'Azeglio and the fanaticism of an Orsini, sacrifices of property, freedom, and life,—all the more pathetic, because to human vision useless,—have made known to the oppressor the writhings of the oppressed, and to the world the arbitrary rule which conceals injustice by imposing silence. The indirect, but most emphatic utterance of this deep, latent self-respect of the nation we find in Alfieri, whose stern muse revived the terse energy of Dante; and in our own day, this identical inspiration fired the melancholy verse of Leopardi, the letters of Foscolo, the novels of Guerrazzi, and the tender melody of Bellini. Recent literature has exhibited the conditions under which Italian Liberals strive, and the method of expiating their self-devotion. The novels of Ruffini, the letters of the Countess d'Ossoli, the rhetoric of Gavazzi, and the parliamentary reports of Gladstone, the leading reviews, the daily journals, intercourse with political refugees, and the personal observations of travel, have, more or less definitely, caused the problem called the "Italian Question" to come nearer to our sympathies than any other European exigency apart from practical interests. Moreover, the complicated and dubious aspect of the subject, viewed by transatlantic eyes, has, within the last ten years, been in a great measure dispelled by experimental facts. That Italy needs chiefly to be *let alone*, to achieve independence and realize a noble development, civic, economical, and social, every intelligent traveller who crosses the Austrian frontier and enters the Sardinian state, knows.

A greater contrast, as regards productive industry, intellectual enterprise, religious progress, comfort, and happiness, no adjacent countries ever exhibited; constitutional freedom, an unrestricted press, toleration, and public education on the one hand, and foreign bayonets, espionage, and priestcraft on the other, explain the anomaly. In Venice the very trophies of national life are labelled in a foreign tongue, the *caffès* of Milan resound with Teutonic gutturals, and under the arcades of Bologna every other face wears the yellow beard of the North; yet the family portraits in the

[1] It is to be lamented that Foresti had not anticipated our purpose with that consecutive detail possible only in an autobiography. "*Le Scene del Carcere Duro in Austria*," writes the Marquis Pallavicino, "non sono ancora la storia del Ventuno. Un uomo potrebbe scriverla e svelare molte infamie tuttavia occulte del governo Austriaco. Quest' uomo è Felice Foresti. Il quale abbandonò gli agi Americani per combattere un' altra volta, guerriero canuto, le gloriose battaglie dell' Italico risorgimento. Il martire scriva: e la sua penna, come quella d' un altro martire,—Silvio Pellico,—sarà una spada nel cuoro dell' Austria."—Notes to *Spielbergo e Gradisca*.

vast palace-chambers, the eyes and dialect of the people, the monumental inscriptions, announce an indigenous and superseded race; their industry, civil rights, property, and free expression in art, literature, and even speech, being forcibly and systematically repressed: while in the mountains of Savoy, the streets of Turin, and the harbor of Genoa, the stir and zest, the productiveness, and the felicity of national life greet the senses and gladden the soul. Statistics evidence what observation hints; Cavour wins the respect of Europe; D'Azeglio illustrates the inspiration which liberty yields to genius; journalism ventilates political rancor; debate neutralizes aggressive prejudice; physical resources become available; talent finds scope, character self-assertion; Protestantism builds altars, patriotism shrines; and genuine Italian nationality has a vital existence so palpably reproachful of circumjacent stagnation, ruin, and wrong, that no laws or material force can interpose a permanent obstacle to its indefinite extension and salutary reign.

In his first youth, Foresti imbibed the creative spirit breathed into the social and civic life of Italy by Napoleon's victories and administration; it was at that vivid epoch when the military, political, artistic, and literary talent of the land, so long repressed and thwarted by superstition and despotism, broke forth, that his studies were achieved. We have only to compare what was done, thought, and felt in the Peninsula, during the ten years between the coronation of Bonaparte at Milan and his overthrow at Waterloo, with the subsequent dearth of national triumphs in every sphere, and with the inert, apprehensive, baffled existence of the Italians in the grasp of reinstated and reinforced imbecile, yet tyrannic governments, to appreciate the feelings of a young, well-born, gifted citizen, when suddenly checked in a liberal and progressive career, and remanded, as it were, from the bracing atmosphere of modern civilization and enlightened activity, to the passive, silent endurance of obsolete feudalism. It was the inevitable and deliberate protest against this wicked and absurd reaction which gave birth to the political organization of the *Carbonari*; wherein the noblest men and the wisest princes of that day enrolled themselves; and the inefficiency of whose far-reaching, secret, and solemn aims can be accounted for only by the fatal error of trusting in the magnanimity of an order born to hereditary power, and overlooking, in their municipal fraternities, the vast importance of the more scattered, but not less capable and patriotic agricultural class.

Foresti was born at Conselice in the Ferrarese. Few American travellers linger in Ferrara. Fresh from the more imposing attractions of Florence or Venice, this ancient Italian city offers little in comparison to detain the eager pilgrim; and yet to one cognizant of its history and alive to imaginative associations, this neglect might increase the charm of a brief sojourn. It is pleasant to explore the less hackneyed stories of history and tradition, to enjoy an isolated scene fraught with grand or tender sentiment, to turn aside from the trampled highway and the crowded resort, to listen to some plaintive whisper from the Past amid the deserted memorials of its glory and grief. Such a place is Ferrara. The broad and regular streets and the massive palaces emphatically declare its former splendor; and its actual decadence is no less manifest in the grass-grown pavement of the one and the crumbling and dreary aspect of the other. It requires no small effort of fancy, as we walk through some deserted by-way, wherein our footsteps echo audibly at noonday, to realize that this was the splendid arena where the House of Este so long held sway, limited in extent, but in its palmy days the centre of a brilliant court, a famous school of pictorial art, the seat of a university whose fame drew scholars from distant Britain, and whose ducal family gave birth to the Brunswick dynasty, whence descended the royalty of England. The city dates its origin from the fifth century, when its marshy site gave refuge from the pursuing Huns, and the ambition of its rulers gradually concentrated around the unpromising domain those elements of ecclesiastical prestige, knightly valor, artistic and literary resources which enriched and signalized the Italian cities of the Middle Ages. Enlightened, though capricious patronage made this halting-place between Bologna and Venice, Padua and Rome, the nucleus of talent, enterprise, and diplomacy, the fruits whereof are permanent. But there are two hallowed associations which in a remarkable degree consecrated Ferrara and endeared her to the memory of later generations: she gave an asylum to the persecuted Christian Reformers, and was the home and haunt of poets. It is

this recollection which stays the feet and warms the heart of the transatlantic visitor, as he roams at twilight around the venerable castle "flanked with towers," traces the dim fresco in a church Giotto decorated, reads "Parisina" in Byron's paraphrase near the dungeons where she and her lover were slain, or gazes with mingled curiosity and love on the chirography of St. Chrysostom, the original manuscripts of Tasso, Ariosto, and Guarini, or the inscription of Victor Alfieri in the Studio Publico. It is because Calvin was here sheltered, and Olympia Morata found sympathy and respect,—because the author of "Jerusalem Delivered" here loved, triumphed, and despaired, and the author of the "Orlando Furioso" so assiduously labored for his orphaned family, the exacting Cardinal Ippolito, and the cause of learning, and strung a lyre which has for centuries vibrated in the popular heart and fancy,—because, in a word, Ferrara contains the prison of Tasso, and the home of Ariosto, who called her "*città bene avventurosa*," as did Tassoni the "*gran donna del Po*,"—that the desolate old city is revived to the imagination, with its hundred thousand people, its gay courtiers and brave knights, the romance of its feats of minstrelsy and arms whereat noble beauties and immortal bards assisted, and Art, Chivalry, Learning, Church, and State held festival with the Muses to adorn and perpetuate the transient pageant, the loveliness, and the rule,—otherwise since consigned to the monotonous record of vanished pomp and arbitrary sway.

When Napoleon fell, Foresti was a student at the University of Bologna, whence he returned to his native capital, after obtaining the degree of Doctor of Laws. His earliest forensic labors, like those of our young advocates, were in the defence of accused criminals; and, limited as is this sphere, he must have displayed unusual maturity of judgment and natural eloquence, to have received successively the eminent appointments of Provisory Assistant Judge in the Court of Justice of Ferrara, Supplementary Professor of Eloquence and Belles Lettres in the Lyceum, and Judge of the Peace, by virtue of which latter office he crossed the Po to practise at Polesino,—wisely preferring the Austrian to the Papal jurisdiction. In Crespino, in the province of Rovigo, in the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom, Foresti was made Praetor under the Emperor's warrant. Coincident with this recognition of his judicial knowledge and skill, was a kindred appreciation on the part of his liberal and patriotic countrymen; they beheld in the vigorous and disciplined mind and generous heart of Foresti, in his civic wisdom and courage, the representative and ally they sought in this portion of their beautiful and unhappy land. To disseminate the principles and secure the cooperation of Venice became the special office of the Carbonari leaders of Ferrara, and they had only to reveal the high and holy object they cherished, to one who so well knew the wants and woes of his country as Foresti, to enlist his adventurous sympathy. The delicate and difficult mission, fraught with the dearest prospects of Italy, was nearly consummated, when a treacherous colleague revealed to the accredited agents both of Austria and the Pope the system of this mysterious revolutionary combination in and around Ferrara. The latter shrank from extreme measures, and was content with an oath of retraction; but the Austrian government gave instant orders to the chiefs of police, both there and at Venice, to arrest those whom the perjured Count Villa named as adherents of Carbonarism. The decree was executed with military force; and, without warning, preparation, or even a parting interview with their families and friends, the suspected were hurried off to the Piombi, that Venetian prison so graphically described by Pellico. All correspondence and personal intercourse was denied. Meantime, an ingenious and persevering investigation went on, to ascertain the scope of the enterprise thus summarily baffled, the means proposed, and the individuals implicated. To complicate still further the situation of the victims, in other quarters the flame they had secretly fed burst forth conspicuously; Naples and Piedmont were in arms; and Austria conceived an alarming idea of the national spirit she had partially contravened. The rigor of espionage towards the imprisoned and their friends increased; the prosecution was insidiously prolonged; privation and solitude, vigilance and suspense were made instruments for subduing the resolution and invading the confidence of the captives; they pined in desolation, ignorant of their fate, uninformed of the welfare of those most dear to them, without resources of defence or consolation, except what the strength of individual character yields; physically

weakened, morally isolated; sometimes roused from sleep and bewildered with questions; at other times told they were to die, that some companion had confessed, or that some loved one had ceased to exist;—and all these crises of feeling and anxiety, of surprise and despair, induced with a fiendish deliberation, to startle honor into self-betrayal, wring from exhausted Nature what conscious rectitude would not divulge, or agonize human love into inadvertent disloyalty.

At length their fate was decided. Foresti's companion in prison was the son of a judge of Ferrara; and, one November midnight, their conversation was interrupted by the unexpected entrance of the jailer, who bade Foresti follow him. The hour and the manner of the official convinced both him and his comrade that his sacrifice was resolved upon; they embraced, and he left the cell to find himself strictly guarded by six soldiers. This nocturnal procession marched silently through the vast, lonely, and magnificent rooms of the Ducal Palace to the door which leads to the Bridge of Sighs: it was the old road to destruction,—the mysterious process, made familiar by novelists and poets, by which the ancient and sinister republic made more fearful the vengeance of government. As the unfortunate youth passed through a labyrinth of gloomy corridors, he recognized the haunts of the ancient Inquisition; the atmosphere was clogged with damp; moisture dripped from the stones. A dungeon, lighted only by a lamp suspended from the vault, and narrow, humid, and unfurnished, except with a pile of straw and a rude table, proved the dreary goal of their heavy steps. Left to his own reflections, Foresti contemplated his prospects with deliberate anguish; that he had been found guilty was apparent; if the fact of his direct agency in initiating the oath of self-emancipation, the sacred compact of national self-assertion in the Austrian dominions, had transpired, he felt that his prominence as a judicial officer, and the firmness with which he had refused to explain the purposes or betray the associates of this memorable league, made him the most probable victim of extreme measures, should one be chosen from the Carbonari of Ferrara. At that period of his life he entertained the opinion that suicide was justifiable to avoid an ignominious death at the hands of arbitrary power. Believing his fate sealed, he gave a few moments of tender reminiscence to his dead mother and his living father and sisters, to the dreams of his youth, and the patriotic aspirations to which he was about to fall a sacrifice. The jailer returned, bringing a book and a bottle of wine, for which he had asked; a few tears were shed, a prayer for forgiveness breathed, and then he plunged a knife into his breast; the blade broke; he shattered the bottle at his side and swallowed the fragments, and then fell bleeding and exhausted on the straw. If left long alone, life would have ebbed away; but, probably in anticipation of such a catastrophe, the officer ere many hours revisited the cell to put chains upon the prisoner. Discovering his condition, a surgeon was called, remedies were applied, and two Austrian sentinels carried Foresti into the presence of the judge. It was scarcely dawn; the venerable and courteous, but inflexible representative of the Emperor expressed solicitude and sympathy; a secretary and physician, with the guard and their prisoner, confronted each other by the dim light of two candles. Irritated by the conventional politeness of this arbiter of his destiny at such a crisis, having vainly sought death, and bitterly conscious of the long outrages perpetrated under the name of justice, Foresti burst forth into stern invectives, and boldly declared his liberal sentiments, his allegiance to the principles for the sake of which he thus suffered, and his absolute enmity to the usurpers of his country's freedom. The Cavalier Mazzetti treated this overflow of emotion as the ebullition of a youthful mind, romantic and intrepid, but unreasonable; he professed the sincerest pity for so gifted and brave a youth, lamented his delusion, painted in emphatic words his want of gratitude and allegiance, treated his political creed and organization as chimerical, and wound up by informing Foresti that he was condemned to die on the public square of Venice, and that nothing would save him but a complete revelation of the true plan, arrangements, and members of the secret conclave to which he belonged. Threats and blandishments failed to move the prisoner; he was silent, accepted his doom, and was remanded with two allies,—one of whom purchased a remission by treason to his vows. Such was the climax of two dreary years of imprisonment, aggravated by ingenious moral torture.

If the modern history of liberty is written by a comprehensive humanitarian, he will not look exclusively to the battle-field for picturesque and impressive *tableaux*; in that record most signally will it appear that "the angel of martyrdom is brother to the angel of victory"; and among the memorable scenes which an earnest chronicler will delineate with noble pathos, few can exceed in moral interest that which the Piazza of San Marco, at Venice, presented on Christmas Eve, 1821. There is not a spot in Europe, within the limits of a city, more distinctly remembered by the transatlantic traveller, —the only spacious area of solid ground under the open sky, in that marvellous old city of the sea, —the gay centre of a recreative population, where the costumes and physiognomies of the Orient and the West mingle in dramatic contrast,—the nucleus of historical and romantic associations, singularly domesticated in two hemispheres by the household lore of Shakspeare and Otway, Byron and Rogers, Cooper and Ruskin. The ancient temple of St. Mark, the bronze horses of Lysippus, the arched galleries of the Palace, the waters of the Adriatic, the firmament above, and the stones beneath seem instinct with the fame of commercial grandeur, maritime triumphs, and diplomatic prowess; the cheerful arcades that shade the *caffès* remind us of the "harmless comedy of life" which Goldoni recorded; the flush of sunset on dome, balcony, and canal seems warm with the peerless tints which Titian here caught and transmitted; the crowd of pleasure-seekers recall the music, love, and chivalry, of which this was once the splendid centre; while the shadow of a dark *façade* whispers of the mysterious oligarchy, the anonymous accusers, the secret council, and the venerable Doge; —a more remarkable union of gloom and gayety, of romance and reality, of the beautiful and the tragic, directly suggested by inevitable local associations, cannot be found in the whole range of European travel. Imagine this memorable square, on the afternoon of a great Christmas festival; —fair faces at every window,—the adjacent roofs crowded with spectators,—an Austrian regiment drawn up around a scaffold,—the Viceroy, brother of the Emperor, standing in the large balcony of the Palace,—two cannon placed between the columns of San Marco and San Teodoro,—every inch of the vast Piazza, without the circle of soldiery, occupied by eager spectators. Over this vast assemblage, amid the impending thoughts which the incidents of the hour and the memory of the Past inspired, reigned a profound silence; no laugh or jest, such as bespeaks a holiday, no heartless curiosity, such as accompanies a mere public show, no vulgar excitement was evident; on many faces dwelt an expression of awe and pity,—on others an indignant frown,—on all painful and sympathetic expectancy. Every class was represented, from the swarthy fishermen of the lagoons to the dark-eyed countess of the Palazzo,—pale students, venerable citizens, the shopkeeper and the marquis, the priest and the advocate. It was not merely the fate of the few prisoners on the scaffold, deep as was the public sympathy, which occasioned this profound suspense; they represented the national cause, and in every city of the land there were scores of the bravest and the best equally involved in the patriotic sacrifice, and whose destiny had, for long and weary months, agonized their relations, friends, and countrymen. The anomalous tyranny under which the nation had collapsed was demonstrated not so much by the outward aspect as by the moral facts of that fatal day in the Piazza of San Marco. On the scaffold were a group of educated, courageous, honest Italians, guarded by Austrian soldiers and overlooked by the official representative of imperial despotism; their attitude was criminal, their acts sublime; ostensibly condemned, they were in reality glorified. Not a being in that vast multitude, except the official creatures of Austria, but gazed with respect, love, sorrow, pride, tenderness, and admiration upon her noble victims; it was the apparent triumph of physical force, and the actual realization of moral superiority: the silence of that multitude was the eloquent protest of humanity.

And this ominous silence was all at once broken by the clear, well-emphasized voice of a judicial officer, reading the sentence; it was listened to with such breathless attention, that, when the phrase, *condemned to death*, was uttered, a visible shudder vibrated, like an electric shock, through the dense mass of human beings, and upturned faces flushed or grew pallid in an instant; but scarcely were these simultaneous emotions recognized, when another phrase, *life granted*, called forth a cry as of one mighty voice. All were spared: but a sentence, to such as understood its meaning, of living death,

—*carcere duro* in Spielberg and the Castle of Lubiano,—some for ten, others for fifteen, and the remainder for twenty years,—was substituted.

This entire ceremony was characteristic of Austrian despotism, aware of the profound sympathy among the Italians for their patriot martyrs, of the widespread disaffection, of the necessity of exciting vague and terrible apprehension,—and at the same time conscious that policy forbade arousing the fury of despair. The accused were thus kept more than two years alternating from hope to desperation, the people in ignorance of the issue, and then, when led out, as they supposed, to die, they served as a warning to those who dared imperial vengeance, while, by a sudden act of apparent clemency, the government at once rid itself of formidable opponents and assumed the character of merciful executors of law! It was rumored that the consideration of his youth saved the life of Foresti;—he was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment.

From, the scaffold the prisoners were transferred to the Island of St. Michael. Their transit was more like an ovation than a disgrace. The better class of spectators embarked in gondolas and followed the *cortége* with shouts of encouragement and waving of handkerchiefs; "Courage, courage, brave patriots!" was their salutation; and when night fell upon the scene, there rose from the lagoons strains of instrumental and vocal melody, and improvised recitations breathing honor, compassion, and hope; so that in spite of bayonets and police, terrorism and espionage, the voice of their fettered country wafted to every captive the assurance that he had not striven and been faithful unto death in vain.

These scenes in Venice were reenacted, with unimportant modifications, within a few months, at Rome and Turin, at Modena, Parma, and Naples. The rolls of victims embraced the most highly endowed and heroic men of the day. Many of them, after years of incarceration, distinguished themselves in civil and literary life; some perished miserably in durance; and a few yet survive and enjoy social consideration or European fame. Among them were representatives of every rank, vocation, and section of the land,—noblemen, professors, military officers, advocates, physicians, priests, men of wealth, of genius, and of character. Those known in America, either personally or by their writings, are Count Gonfalonieri of Milan, Silvio Pellico, Castilla, Borsieri, Maroncelli, and Foresti. The abortive revolutions of 1831 and 1848 sent other refugees to our shores, and canonized other saintly heroes in the Calendar of Freedom; but these were the original, and, as a body, the remarkable men, who, imbued with the intelligent and progressive Liberalism of the nineteenth century, practically established in Italy by Napoleon, bravely initiated the vital reaction invoked by humanity as well as patriotism, before which European despotism has never ceased to tremble, and which, however baffled, postponed, and misunderstood, by the law of God as well as the development of man, is absolutely destined to an ultimate triumph.

The show of justice and clemency was made at noonday with every circumstance of pomp and authority to give it popular effect; the trial and punishment were enacted in darkness and isolation. On a cold, still night of January came police commissioners to the island, whither the condemned patriots had been conveyed amid tears and benedictions, and chained them in couples like galley-slaves. By the light of torches they were placed in boats which glided noiselessly by sleeping Venice to Mestre, and there they were transferred to carriages, two prisoners and four guards to each vehicle, and in this manner, for four dreary weeks, borne through the winter days farther and farther from country and home,—sleeping at night in town-jails, by-way fortresses, or, when neither were available, in the worst apartments of lonely inns. Who can adequately describe the wretchedness of that journey, the bitterness of soul, the prospective desolation, the tender regrets of those unhappy prisoners,—torn from the embrace of kindred, the dignity and motive of a high career, the most beautiful of countries, and the most sacred of ties and duties, to bury their youth, with all its high dreams and noble fervor and consecrated gifts, in a distant dungeon? Even the strangers through whose domain they passed testified by looks, signs, respectful greetings, and, when possible, kind attentions, their sympathy and esteem; people of rank continued to approach them in disguise merely to indicate their humane

recognition; the very commissioners sent to attest the execution of the sentence parted from their charge with tearful respect. Grief, privation, and fatigue, greatly aggravated by the shackles which bound them in pairs, had exhausted body and mind at the end of the journey. From the city of Brunn, the capital of Moravia, their wan looks sought the mountain prison above, where frowned the bastions of Spielberg, once a mediaeval castle, then a fortress, built by the Emperor Charles, and, just before the battle of Austerlitz, dismantled by Napoleon, and now the place of confinement for the most degraded criminals of Austria, nearly a thousand of whom there expiate their offences. Into this herd of malefactors were thrust gentlemen, scholars, citizens, for the crime of patriotism. To each was assigned a cell, twelve feet in length and eight in breadth, with a small iron-barred window, a plank with, a mattress and blanket, an iron chair secured to the wall, and an earthen jug for water. Arrayed in convict uniform, here the brave youths were immured. Sentinels were continually on guard in the corridors and court and around the bastions; the food was inadequate and often loathsome; an hour's walk in the yard daily, between two soldiers with loaded muskets, was the only respite from solitude and inaction; "Lives of the Saints" were the only books allowed; intercourse with the outward world was entirely cut off; surveillance was incessant; on Sunday they were guarded to the chapel, but kept apart; every quarter appeared a priest, who strove, by rigid examination, to elicit political secrets; the agents and officials maintained an unmitigated reserve; what transpired in the world, how it fared with their country and their loved ones, was unknown; existence so near to death itself, in passivity, "cold obstruction," alienation from all the interests, the hopes, and the very impressions of human life, it is impossible to imagine. Subsequently reforms were introduced, and the rigors of this system somewhat modified; but the era of Foresti's confinement at Spielberg was that which has become accursed in political history as the reign of Francesco Primo. He insisted to the last on chains, the badge of crime, and the severest *régime* possible to life. He had even visited Brunn, and been within hearing of his victims, and sent his physician to ascertain their condition; but refused any mitigation of sufferings, moral and physical, which involved sanity, health, and almost vitality.

The details of this experience are familiar through current European memoirs. Silvio Pellico has made the life of an Austrian prisoner-of-state, in its outward environment and inward struggles, as well known as that of the Arctic explorer or the English factory-operative. A confirmatory supplement to this dark chapter in the history of modern civilization has recently appeared from the pen of another of Foresti's fellow-martyrs, Pallavicino.[2] But while they were undergoing the bitter ordeal, it was all but unknown in Europe and undreamed of in America; literature, that noble vantage-ground for oppressed humanity, has now broken the silence and proclaimed the truth. There was one solace ingeniously obtained by these buried members of the living human family,—occasional indirect intercourse with each other: the telegraphs of eye and ear conveyed their mutual feelings. One after another succumbed, from the vital injuries of the *régime*; in one case the brain grew weak, in another the blood was impoverished or fevered; this one was prostrated by gangrene in wounds caused by chafing fetters, and that attenuated by insufficient nourishment: yet they contrived to make known to each other how it fared with them respectively. Pellico, through an indulgent guard, sent Foresti verses on his birthday; Maronchelli sounded on the wall the intimation of his continued existence after his leg was amputated; and when marshalled for a walk or convened on Sunday in the chapel, the devoted band had the melancholy satisfaction of beholding each other, though the different groups were not permitted to communicate. Andryane, a French officer, included in the original edict, though upon most inadequate evidence, describes, with keen interest, his first impressions when permitted to go to mass at Spielberg. His companion speculated on the identity of each of the captives. "That one, with dejected looks and hollow eyes, who seems so exhausted, and, though a tall man, is bent down into a dwarf, is Villa. Poor fellow! he has but a few months to live. As for the last one, with the stern looks and bushy black hair, he appears to bear his fate in such a manner as ought to make us resigned to our

[2] *Spielbergo e Gradisca: Scene del Carcere Duro di* GIORGIO PALLAVICINO. Torino. 1856.

own." "That," whispered a fellow-prisoner, "is Foresti, who, like Ajax, doubtless mutters between his teeth, 'I will foil them yet, though even the gods oppose me!'"[3]

This observation was sagacious. It was by calm resolution and philosophic self-possession, through faith in the ultimate triumph of justice and freedom, that Foresti kept at bay the corrosive despair which irritated less noble characters into melancholy or wasted spirits of gentler mould to insanity. Yet his physical torture was extreme. Of robust frame and in the plenitude of youthful vigor when arrested, the want of food during the earlier years of his captivity made serious and permanent inroads upon a naturally powerful constitution. We have heard him relate, with a humorous emphasis indicative of brave endurance, yet suggestive of the keenest pangs, how eagerly he one day seized a pudding, thrust under his dress, as he passed the lodge of an official in the court, by a compassionate woman,—how ingeniously he concealed it from the sentinels, at the risk of burning his hands,—with what triumph he unfolded and with what voracity he devoured it in the solitude of his cell. Sometimes an indignity overcame his self-possession, as, on one occasion, when the jailer's attendant rudely awoke him with a kick, as he deposited a basin of hot broth, which Foresti indignantly seized and dashed its scalding contents into the face of the brutal menial, who thenceforward was more respectful in his salutations. But it was the moral suffering against which all his wisdom and courage were invoked to struggle,—the resolute maintenance of healthful mental activity, without an object or motive underived from will,—the repression of hopeless, vague, self-tormenting reverie, which perverts intellect and drains moral energy,—the habitual exercise of memory, reflection, and fancy, to preserve their functions unimpaired. Such expedients were of special necessity at Spielberg; for never were educated men so barbarously deprived of the legitimate resources of mind and heart; thought and love were left uninvited, unappeased. Sir Walter Raleigh had the materials, at the Tower, to write a history; Lafayette, at Olmutz, lived in perpetual expectancy of release; Moore and Byron, children, flowers, birds, and the Muses cheered Leigh Hunt's year of durance: but in this bleak fortress, innocent and magnanimous men beheld the seasons come and go, night succeed day, and year follow year, with no cognizance of kindred or the world's doings,—no works of bard or sage,—no element of life,—but a grim, cold, deadly routine within stone walls,—all tender sympathies, the very breath of the soul, denied,—all influx of knowledge, the food of the mind, prohibited, experience a blank, existence a void!

Had we need of evidence that conscience is a normal attribute of humanity, that the soul is endowed with relations to the Infinite, we should find it in the self-preservation realized under such circumstances as these. Only conscious rectitude could arm humanity against the sense of degradation and deprivation thus surrounding and pressing upon it for years,—only the belief in a Power above and beyond human will and perversity,—only, in a word, the recuperative force of moral individuality and aspiration, could keep intact and uninvaded the integrity of conscious being. Of course, the method thereof depends on character; a cheerful heart In one, a buoyant imagination in another, and the sweet self-oblivion which Faith imparts in a third, sentiment here and will there, work the same miracle. Foresti belonged to that class of Italians who combine perspicacity and force of reasoning with a frank, affectionate, and trustful disposition,—types of the manly intellect, the childlike heart; incarceration, while it failed to enfeeble the former, by seclusion from life's game and the world's encroachments from early youth to middle age, perhaps confirmed the latter into the candid and loving nature which endeared him to so many friends in Europe and America. Sterne says, that, if he were in a desert, he would love some cypress; and Isaac Taylor has observed, that the devout heart can find in a single blade of grass the evidence of a Divine Creator. We have all read of Bruce testing his fate, when a captive, by the gyrations of a spider, of Baron Trenck finding solace in a dungeon in the companionship of a mouse, and the imaginative prisoner of Fenestrelle absorbed in vigilant and even affectionate observation of a little plant,—its germination, slow approach to

[3] "*Mémoires d'un Prisonnier d'Etat.*" Par ALEXANDRE ANDRYANE. Paris.

maturity, and consummate flowering. But there were alleviating circumstances in the situation of these captives,—a definite hope of release or a certainty of life-bondage, either of which alternatives is more favorable to tranquillity of soul than absolute suspense; they enjoyed tidings from without or indulgences within. At Spielberg, the *sistema diabolico*, as it has been justly called, especially at the epoch of Foresti's incarceration, retained the galling chain on the limbs, cut off the supply of moral and intellectual vitality, refused appropriate occupation, baffled hope, eclipsed knowledge, and kept up a vile inquisitorial process to goad the crushed heart, sap the heroic will, and stupefy or alienate the mental faculties; dawn ushered in the twilight of a mausoleum, noon fell dimly on paralyzed manhood, night canopied aggravating dreams.

> "To such sad pitch their gathering griefs were wrought,
> Life seemed not life, save when convulsed by thought."

Casual evasions of this fiendish torture, through ingenuity or the compassion of officials, are among the few animated episodes of their dreary experiences recorded by the victims. At length the Emperor died (an event they had surmised from a change in the form of the public prayer); his son Ferdinand succeeded to the throne, and signalized his accession by a decree liberating the Italian patriots, but condemning them to perpetual exile in America. Those long years of such captivity did not even gain them the privilege of again enjoying civil rights, their country, and kindred! Protests were vain, appeals disregarded. In November, 1835, their chains were removed; the same blacksmith who had welded Foresti's shackles fourteen years before, now severed them, and wept with joy as they fell! One night they were all summoned to the director's room, and he, too, announced their enfranchisement with congratulations; the prison garb was exchanged for citizen's dress, and they were taken in carriages to the police prison of Brunn, where comfortable apartments, good food, free intercourse, books, and newspapers awaited them. Imagine the vividness of their sensations, the hilarity of feeling inspired by the first sight of scenes and objects associated with their youth! It was like a new birth. To grasp the hands and hear the voices of their fellow-creatures,—to behold streets, *caffès*, and shops, the tokens of industry, the insignia of life,—to taste viands unknown for years,—to see the horizon,—to feel the breath of heaven,—to trace once more those charts of living history, the journals, resume acquaintance with favorite authors, converse together, move unchained, think aloud,—this sudden and entire transition awakened a sensation of almost infantile joy. But privation had too long been their lot to be instantly ignored with impunity; a reaction followed; the weakness incident to long confinement, prostrated faculties, and inadequate nourishment brought on illness; they could not, at once, bear the excitement, digest the food, or sustain the keen pleasure; and a rigorous climate quelled their sensitive vitality. But universal sympathy now environed them; their very custodian ministered to their wants; and the Emperor ordered them to be removed to the Castle of Gradisca, on the confines of Italy, where a milder atmosphere prevailed.

How much had occurred while these years of arbitrarily imposed monasticism crept heavily by, to excite the speculative thought and kindle the sympathies of educated men! To what new aspects of civilization and fresh phases of contemporaneous history their liberation suddenly introduced them!

Their journey from Brunn to Gradisca was a perfect contrast to that melancholy transit, so many years before, from Venice to Spielberg. It was near the beginning of April, 1836, when they started in carriages with a commissary and a few guards; in every town and village through which they passed, crowds surrounded them with gratulations; the inns where they stopped were besieged with well-wishers; Nature, too, seemed to hail their release with vernal beauty; and so they journeyed on, to be received as honored guests rather than prisoners-of-state at the Castle of Gradisca. Their sojourn here was as recreative as was consistent with that degree of supervision necessary to prevent escape; they were at liberty to walk about, to make and receive visits, to bathe in the sea, to attend the fairs, and examine the local celebrities of Friuli; a single commissary often accompanied their excursions,

and personally the most delicate consideration was paid them. Here, too, the most affecting reunions of long-severed kindred and friends took place; their relatives hastened hither to embrace them.

Foresti used to relate many anecdotes illustrative of the sympathy and respect felt and manifested by strangers during this interlude between prison and exile. One deserves record here. Two travelling-carriages arrived at a village-inn, one evening, where they were resting. While the gentlemen were inspecting the apartments, a lady of distinguished appearance inquired of a bystander, who the strangers were towards whom so many friendly glances were directed; soon after, the landlord bore to them her request for an interview; they rose at her entrance; she attempted to speak, but her voice faltered, and, with tears, she turned to her little boys and said, "Kneel, my darlings, to these brave Italian patriots; they are illustrious victims in the great cause of Liberty; and you, gentlemen, bless my sons; your blessing will be fruitful to them of good; it will make them love their country and die for it, if need be. I am a Pole. My country is oppressed like yours. I have two brothers compromised in the last insurrection in Cracow. May God preserve them!"—and weeping bitterly, she retired. They afterwards learned that her husband was Counsellor of State to the King of Prussia.

On the 1st of August, 1836, they were transported by night to Trieste, and, by a singular coincidence, placed on board the same brig-of-war whence Kozsta was subsequently taken at Smyrna, —an incident memorable in our subsequent diplomacy, as having occasioned the celebrated letter of Webster to the Austrian envoy. Provided by that government with warm clothing, the money they had taken to Spielberg was restored to them, not, however, in the original gold coin, but in the Vienna bills for which it had been then exchanged by the police, diminished nearly two-thirds in value during the interval of fourteen years. The vessel was uncomfortably crowded; the voyage occupied three months; but they fared alike with the officers. Towards the close of October, they beheld the noble bay of New York; and so intense was the satisfaction with which they first trod American soil, the goal and terminus of such protracted suffering, that, ever after, the Battery, where they landed, was hallowed to their memories as consecrated ground.

Within a few days of their arrival, a banquet was given them by their compatriots; and from that hour, Foresti became the oracle and the consoler, the teacher, almoner, and chief of his fellow-exiles. Subsequent events drove many other Italian patriots to our shores; his purse and his counsel were ever ready for the impoverished and inexperienced, who regarded him with filial admiration; while to the more educated he was the intimate companion or sympathetic friend. Through his personal influence, employment was constantly obtained and kindness enlisted for his countrymen. When the great political crisis of 1848 occurred, Foresti hastened to Europe; Pius IX., at the urgent prayer of his sisters and cousins, offered him free entrance to his dominions, a favor his predecessor might have granted but for the strong opposition of Cardinal Lambruschini. He took counsel with the revolutionary leaders at Paris, and passed through Italy to the frontiers of the Papal States, whence the fatal reaction, supported by French bayonets, at Rome, sent him back once more to the land of his adoption, whither he was soon followed by many of the heroic and unfortunate men who redeemed the martial fame, without being able to retrieve the fate of Italy.

Of the many Italian exiles who have found an asylum in the United States, Foresti was preeminently the representative man. The period of his arrival, the circumstances of his life, and the traits of his character united thus to distinguish him even among the best educated and most unfortunate of the political refugees from Southern Europe. At the time of his arrest, the vilest modern despotism of the Continent had reached its acme; and the patriotic movements it then sought to annihilate by a cruelty unparalleled since the Middle Ages were justified even by conservative reformers, on account of their stringent moral necessity, the intelligent scope of their advocates, and the high and cultivated spirit of their illustrious martyrs. As scholars, citizens, gentlemen, and, in more than one instance, authors of real genius, these Liberals stand alone, and are not to be confounded with the perverse Radicals of a subsequent epoch. Moreover, their aspirations were, as we have seen, more reactionary than experimental; for the rights for which they conspired had been in a great

measure enjoyed under Europe's modern conqueror, then impotent in action, but most efficient in remembrance, although isolated on his prison-rock. Foresti's companion in misfortune has made their mutual wrongs "familiar as household words"; and to be associated in captivity with the author of "Le Mie Prigioni" was of itself a passport to the sympathy of the civilized world.

The interest his previous history inspired was deepened and confirmed by intimate acquaintance with Foresti. He lived for many years domesticated in the family of a fellow-countryman; and an *habitué* of his apartments was transported in a moment from bustling, prosperous, and republican New York, to the land of song, of martyrdom, and of antiquity. The soulful ardor and childlike ingenuousness, the keen perceptions and earnest will of Foresti suggested an obsolete, or at least rare type of character; he belonged essentially to the olden days of loyalty and lore which gave birth to self-reliance on the one hand, and disinterested feeling on the other. His manner and conversation had, as it were, an historical as well as national flavor, by virtue whereof we were borne away from the prosaic and practical spirit of the age, to the days of chivalry, feudal zeal, and genuine humanity,—when faith was an inspiration, friendship a moral fact, and manhood, in its virile simplicity, greater than wealth. Nor were the generous exile's humble surroundings alien to these impressions: the effigies of his country's poets were the favorite ornaments of his sitting-room; a volume of Foscolo on the table, or a fresh letter from Silvio Pellico under his snuffbox,—the grim, old-fashioned type of his *Sentenza*, as it was originally distributed through Austrian Italy, and hanging in its black frame, a memorial of startling import to a freeman's eyes,—a landscape representing the Castle of Ferrara, the far-away scene of his youthful life,—and a primitive engraving from one of the old masters of that city, dedicated to him in one of those euphonious inscriptions peculiar to Italian artists,—these and such as these tokens of his experience and tastes gave interesting significance to his companionship. Nor were indications of present consideration and usefulness wanting: flowers or dainty needle-work, the offerings of his fair pupils, applications to him, as President of the Italian Benevolent Society, diplomas from American colleges, and invitations to the country, to dinner, and to domestic *fêtes*, from the numerous friends he had won in the free land of his adoption, gave evidence of social enjoyment and genial activity.

Whoever enjoyed Foresti's hospitality, in the conversations as well as the viands has found an epitome and reflex of his most genial hours in Italy: brave soldiers, like Avezzana and Garibaldi, scholars, artists, every form of the national character, were gratefully exhibited in reunions, of which he was the presiding genius, and to which his American friends were admitted with fraternal cordiality. It was then that his clear and strong mind often displayed itself with the spontaneity of his race.

Chastened, though unsubdued by misfortune, Foresti cherished a truly Christian spirit of forgiveness, and the liberality which large experience invariably fosters in enlightened minds: it was the system, rather than its agents, which he ever held up to condemnation in discussing the Austrian policy. Familiarity with American and English politics and the modern history of Europe induced a wise modification of his opinions on government; a fervent republican in sentiment, he yet recognized the radical benefits of a constitutional monarchy, like those of England and Sardinia. He was a natural orator, and, on several occasions, memorably addressed the public with rare eloquence and power on subjects of national or beneficent interest. During his long sojourn in New York, he was not merely the acknowledged representative of Italy, but her eloquent advocate, her wise expositor, her illustrious son, whose literature he memorably unfolded, whose history he sagaciously analyzed, whose misfortunes he tenderly portrayed, whose glory he proudly vindicated, and whose nationality he incessantly affirmed. Well did one of the leading Turin journals indicate the prevalent graces of his character:—"A pure and just man, he knew always how to appreciate those who dissented from him about forms of government, because he could discover in them the true love of nationality, to which Italy aspires. Wise without pretension, beneficent without ostentation, chaste in deed and word,

exquisitely tender-hearted, he tempered the harsh lessons of experience by the unchanged serenity of his bearing."

Foresti was the most charming of correspondents; in a chirography almost feminine, he wrote, in the old cavalier style, such quaintly pleasant epistles, with graceful turns of expression, beautiful epithets, and appropriate adjectives, that, to one fond of the writer and cognizant of his native tongue, the most casual note was a prize to be treasured. "Truly," remarks one of his friends, "he was *squisitamente affetuoso di cuore*," and now the sweetest proof thereof is to be found in his correspondence. In his two visits to Italy, he used to walk daily to the shores, when within reach of the Mediterranean, and salute, with tears, the *bandiera stellata*,—as he called our national banner, under which his exile had been protected and honored.

The pleasure expressed at Foresti's consular appointment, as well as the high order of applicants in his behalf, afforded the best evidence of the friendship and interest he had awakened and maintained in a foreign land. On the shores of the Hudson, by the cliffs of Newport, under the elms of New Haven, as well as in the metropolis where he had so long dwelt, faithful hearts rejoiced at the announcement. "Few are aware," said Hillhouse, in his Eulogy on Lafayette, "how hallowed and how deep are their feelings who worship Liberty as a mistress they may never possess." And it was the constancy and intelligence of his devotion to her which won for him such peculiar regard; for he did not belong to the sentimental and spasmodic, but to the resolute and philosophic devotees at her shrine; his native taste was more wedded to the wise satire of Casti and the acute generalities of Vico than satisfied with the soft beauties of Petrarch or the luxurious graces of Boccaccio; the stoical Alfieri, more than the epicurean Metastasio, breathed music to his soul. "You belong," wrote Pellico to him, "you belong to those who to a generous disposition unite an intellect to see things wisely; never can I forget the gifts of genius and of courage developed in you in the days of misfortune." It was an auspicious sign of the times when the land which protected such an exile was represented by him in that of his nativity.

Brief, however, was Foresti's enjoyment of the distinction and resource thus secured for him through the considerate efforts of his American friends. "I write to you," says his last letter to one of them, dated immediately after the reception of his commission, "with my left hand pressed on a heart overflowing with gratitude for the means thus honorably afforded to solace the last years of the old prisoner of Spielberg." Three months after, that noble heart ceased to beat; an effusion on the chest, which ultimately defied the best medical skill and the most assiduous friendly devotion, ended fatally on the morning of the 14th of September, 1858, "By his death," said one of his eulogists, "is broken one of the links that bind the New World to the Old"; and as if to evidence the sympathy of mourners in two hemispheres and attest the varied associations which embalm the example and memory of Foresti, his funeral was typical of his life, and so illustrative of his character, that we can imagine no peculiar honor wanting, grateful to the patriot, the liberal, the martyr, or the man. In that ancient city of Genoa, of old renowned for commercial glory and maritime valor, the birthplace of the discoverer of the land of his adoption, now the refuge of more who had sacrificed all for their country, and the state where that country's best prospects are centred and her highest aspirations cherished, in the home of the moral, civic, and social vanguard of modern Italy, he found a grave. The American flag was his pall; American mariners carried his bier; before it was borne the Cross. His remains were followed from the Piazza della Maddelena, through the principal streets and the Porta Romana to the Campo Santo, by the officers and crew of the United States frigate "Wabash," the captains of the American merchantmen in port, the Society of Operatives, the industrial representative of a progressive state, of which he was an honorary member, a vast multitude of emigrants from the less favored Italian provinces, and a numerous body of literary, official, and private gentlemen who enjoyed his personal friendship.

* * * * *

LARVAE

My little maiden of four years old
(No myth, but a genuine child is she,
With her bronze-brown eyes, and her curls of gold)
Came, quite in disgust, one day, to me.

Rubbing her shoulder with rosy palm,—
As the loathsome touch seemed yet to thrill her,
She cried,—"Oh, mother, I found on my arm
A horrible, crawling caterpillar!"

And with mischievous smile she could scarcely smother,
Yet a glance, in its daring, half-awed and shy,
She added,—"While they were about it, mother,
I wish they'd just finished the butterfly!"

They were words to the thought of the soul that turns
From the coarser form of a partial growth,
Reproaching the Infinite Patience that yearns
With an unknown glory to crown them both.

Ah, look thou largely, with lenient eyes,
On whatso beside thee may creep and cling,
For the possible beauty that underlies
The passing phase of the meanest thing!

What if God's great angels, whose waiting love
Beholdeth our pitiful life below,
From the holy height of their heaven above,
Couldn't bear with the worm till the wings should grow?

THE MINISTER'S WOOING.[4]

[Continued.]

[4] Copyright secured by the Author in Great Britain and France.

CHAPTER XXX

THE QUILTING

By six o'clock in the morning, Miss Prissy came out of the best room to the breakfast-table, with the air of a general who has arranged a campaign,—her face glowing with satisfaction. All sat down together to their morning meal. The outside door was open into the green, turfy yard, and the apple-tree, now nursing stores of fine yellow jeannetons, looked in at the window. Every once in a while, as a breeze shook the leaves, a fully ripe apple might be heard falling to the ground, at which Miss Prissy would bustle up from the table and rush to secure the treasure.

As the meal waned to its close, the rattling of wheels was heard at the gate, and Candace was discerned, seated aloft in the one-horse wagon, with her usual complement of baskets and bags.

"Well, now, dear me! if there isn't Candace!" said Miss Prissy; "I do believe Miss Marvyn has sent her with something for the quilting!" and out she flew as nimble as a humming-bird, while those in the house heard various exclamations of admiration, as Candace, with stately dignity, disinterred from the wagon one basket after another, and exhibited to Miss Prissy's enraptured eyes sly peeps under the white napkins with which they were covered. And then, hanging a large basket on either arm, she rolled majestically towards the house, like a heavy-laden Indiaman, coming in after a fast voyage.

"Good-mornin', Miss Scudder! good-mornin', Doctor!" she said, dropping her curtsy on the door-step; "good-mornin', Miss Mary! Ye see our folks was stirrin' pootty 'arly dis mornin', an' Miss Marvyn sent me down wid two or tree little tings."

Setting down her baskets on the floor, and seating herself between them, she proceeded to develop their contents with ill-concealed triumph. One basket was devoted to cakes of every species, from the great Mont-Blanc loaf-cake, with its snowy glaciers of frosting, to the twisted cruller and puffy doughnut. In the other basket lay pots of golden butter curiously stamped, reposing on a bed of fresh, green leaves,—while currants, red and white, and delicious cherries and raspberries, gave a final finish to the picture. From a basket which Miss Prissy brought in from the rear appeared cold fowl and tongue delicately prepared, and shaded with feathers of parsley. Candace, whose rollicking delight in the good things of this life was conspicuous in every emotion, might have furnished to a painter, as she sat in her brilliant turban, an idea for an African Genius of Plenty.

"Why, really, Candace," said Mrs. Scudder, "you are overwhelming us!"

"Ho! ho! ho!" said Candace, "I's tellin' Miss Marvyn folks don't git married but once in der lives, (gin'ally speakin', dat is,) an' den dey oughter hab plenty to do it wid."

"Well, I must say," said Miss Prissy, taking out the loaf-cake with busy assiduity,—"I must say, Candace, this does beat all!"

"I should rader tink it oughter," said Candace, bridling herself with proud consciousness; "ef it don't, 'ta'n't 'cause ole Candace ha'n't put enough into it. I tell ye, I didn't do nothin' all day yisterday but jes' make dat ar cake. Cato, when he got up, he begun to talk someh'n' 'bout his shirt-buttons, an' I jes' shet him right up. Says I, 'Cato, when I's r'ally got cake to make for a great 'casion, I wants my mind *jest* as quiet an' *jest* as serene as ef I was a-goin' to de sacrament. I don't want no 'arthly cares on't. Now,' says I, 'Cato, de ole Doctor's gwine to be married, an' dis yer's his quiltin'-cake,—an' Miss Mary, she's gwine to be married, an' dis yer's *her* quiltin'-cake. An' dar'll be eberybody to dat ar quiltin'; an' ef de cake a'n't right, why, 'twould be puttin' a candle under a bushel. An' so,' says I, 'Cato, your buttons mus' wait' An' Cato, he sees de 'priety ob it, 'cause, dough he can't make cake like me, he's a 'mazin' good judge on't, an' is dre'ful tickled when I slips out a little loaf for his supper."

"How is Mrs. Marvyn?" said Mrs. Scudder.

"Kinder thin and shimmery; but she's about,—habin' her eyes eberywar, 'n' lookin' into eberyting. She jes' touches tings wid de tips ob her fingers an' dey seem to go like. She'll be down to de quiltin' dis arternoon. But she tole me to take de tings an' come down an' spen' de day here; for Miss Marvyn an' I both knows how many steps mus' be taken sech times, an' we agreed you oughter favor yourselves all you could."

"Well, now," said Miss Prissy, lifting up her hands, "if that a'n't what 'tis to have friends! Why, that was one of the things I was thinking of, as I lay awake last night; because, you know, at times like these, people run their feet off before the time begins, and then they are all limpsey and lop-sided when the time comes. Now, I say, Candace, all Miss Scudder and Mary have to do is to give everything up to us, and we'll put it through straight."

"Dat's what we will!" said Candace. "Jes' show me what's to be done, an' I'll do it."

Candace and Miss Prissy soon disappeared together into the pantry with the baskets, whose contents they began busily to arrange. Candace shut the door, that no sound might escape, and began a confidential outpouring to Miss Prissy.

"Ye see," she said, "I's *feelin's* all de while for Miss Marvyn; 'cause, ye see, she was expectin', ef eber Mary was married,—well—dat 'twould be to somebody else, ye know."

Miss Prissy responded with a sympathetic groan.

"Well," said Candace, "ef't had been anybody but de Doctor, *I* wouldn't 'a' been resigned. But arter all he's done for my color, dar a'n't nothin' I could find it in my heart to grudge him. But den I was tellin' Cato t'oder day, says I, 'Cato, I dunno 'bout de rest o' de world, but I ha'n't neber felt it in my bones dat Mass'r James is r'ally dead, for sartin.' Now I feels tings *gin'ally*, but *some* tings I feels *in my bones*, an' dem allers comes true. An' dat ar's a feelin' I ha'n't had 'bout Mass'r Jim yit, an' dat ar's what I'm waitin' for 'fore I clar make up my mind. Though I know, 'cordin' to all white folks' way o' tinkin', dar a'n't no hope, 'cause Squire Marvyn he had dat ar Jeduth Pettibone up to his house, a-questionin' on him, off an' on, nigh about tree hours. An' r'ally I didn't see no hope no way, 'xcept jes' dis yer, as I was tellin' Cato,—*I can't feel it in my bones*."

Candace was not versed enough in the wisdom of the world to know that she belonged to a large and respectable school of philosophers in this particular mode of testing evidence, which, after all, the reader will perceive has its conveniences.

"Anoder ting," said Candace; "as much as a dozen times, dis yer last year, when I's been a-scourin' knives, a fork has fell an' stuck straight up in de floor; an' de las' time I pinted it out to Miss Marvyn, an' she on'y jes' said, 'Why, what o' dat, Candace?'"

"Well," said Miss Prissy, "I don't believe in *signs*, but then strange things do happen. Now about dogs howling under windows,—why, I don't believe in it a bit, but I never knew it fail that there was a death in the house after."

"Ah, I tell ye what," said Candace, looking mysterious, "dogs knows a heap more'n dey likes to tell!"

"Jes' so," said Miss Prissy. "Now I remember, one night, when. I was watching with Miss Colonel Andrews, after Marthy Ann was born, that we heard the *mournfulest* howling that ever you did hear. It seemed to come from right under the front stoop; and Miss Andrews she just dropped the spoon in her gruel, and says she, 'Miss Prissy, do, for pity's sake, just go down and see what that noise is.' And I went down and lifted up one of the loose boards of the stoop, and what should I see there but their Newfoundland pup?—there that creature had dug a grave, and was a-sitting by it, crying!"

Candace drew near to Miss Prissy, dark with expressive interest, as her voice, in this awful narration, sank to a whisper.

"Well," said Candace, after Miss Prissy had made something of a pause.

"Well, I told Miss Andrews I didn't think there was anything in it," said Miss Prissy; "but," she added, impressively, "she lost a very dear brother, six months after, and I laid him out with my own hands,—yes, laid him out in white flannel."

"Some folks say," said Candace, "dat dreamin' 'bout white horses is a sartin sign. Jinny Styles is bery strong 'bout dat. Now she come down one mornin' cryin', 'cause she'd been dreamin' 'bout white horses, an' she was sure she should hear some friend was dead. An' sure enough, a man come in dat bery day an' tole her her son was drownded out in de harbor. An' Jinny said, 'Dar! she was sure dat sign neber would fail.' But den, ye see, dat night he come home. Jinny wa'n't r'ally disappinted, but she allers insisted he was *as good as drownded*, any way, 'cause he sunk tree times."

"Well, I tell you," said Miss Prissy, "there are a great many more things in this world than folks know about."

"So dey are," said Candace. "Now, I ha'n't neber opened my mind to nobody; but dar's a dream I's had, tree mornin's runnin', lately. I dreamed I see Jim Marvyn a-sinkin' in de water, an' stretchin' up his hands. An' den I dreamed I see de Lord Jesus come a-walkin' on de water, an' take hold ob his hand, an' says he, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' An' den he lifted him right out. An' I ha'n't said nothin' to nobody, 'cause, you know, de Doctor, he says people mus'n't mind nothin' 'bout der dreams, 'cause dreams belongs to de ole 'spensation."

"Well, well, well!" said Miss Prissy, "I am sure I don't know what to think. What time in the morning was it that you dreamed it?"

"Why," said Candace, "it was jest arter bird-peep. I kinder allers wakes myself den, an' turns ober, an' what comes arter dat is apt to run clar."

"Well, well, well!" said Miss Prissy, "I don't know what to think. You see, it may have reference to the state of his soul."

"I know dat," said Candace; "but as nigh as I could judge in my dream," she added, sinking her voice and looking mysterious, "as nigh as I can judge, *dat boy's soul was in his body!*"

"Why, how do you know?" said Miss Prissy, looking astonished at the confidence with which Candace expressed her opinion.

"Well, ye see," said Candace, rather mysteriously, "de Doctor, he don't like to hab us talk much 'bout dese yer tings, 'cause he tinks it's kind o' heathenish. But den, folks as is used to seein' sech tings knows de look ob a sperit *out* o' de body from de look ob a sperit *in* de body, jest as easy as you can tell Mary from de Doctor."

At this moment Mrs. Scudder opened the pantry-door and put an end to this mysterious conversation, which had already so affected Miss Prissy, that, in the eagerness of her interest, she had rubbed up her cap border and ribbon into rather an elfin and goblin style, as if they had been ruffled up by a breeze from the land of spirits; and she flew around for a few moments in a state of great nervous agitation, upsetting dishes, knocking down plates, and huddling up contrary suggestions as to what ought to be done first, in such impossible relations that Mrs. Katy Scudder stood in dignified surprise at this strange freak of conduct in the wise woman of the parish.

A dim consciousness of something not quite canny in herself seemed to strike her, for she made a vigorous effort to appear composed; and facing Mrs. Scudder, with an air of dignified suavity, inquired if it would not be best to put Jim Marvyn in the oven now, while Candace was getting the pies ready,—meaning, of course, a large turkey, which was to be the first in an indefinite series to be baked that morning; and discovering, by Mrs. Scudder's dazed expression and a vigorous pinch from Candace, that somehow she had not improved matters, she rubbed her spectacles into a diagonal position across her eyes, and stood glaring, half through, half over them, with a helpless expression, which in a less judicious person might have suggested the idea of a state of slight intoxication.

But the exigencies of an immediate temporal dispensation put an end to Miss Prissy's unwonted vagaries, and she was soon to be seen flying round like a meteor, dusting, shaking curtains, counting napkins, wiping and sorting china, all with such rapidity as to give rise to the notion that she actually existed in forty places at once.

Candace, whom the limits of her corporeal frame restricted to an altogether different style of locomotion, often rolled the whites of her eyes after her and gave vent to her views of her proceedings in sententious expressions.

"Do you know why *dat ar* neber was married?" she said to Mary, as she stood looking after her. Miss Prissy had made one of those rapid transits through the apartment.

"No," answered Mary, innocently. "Why wasn't she?"

"'Cause neber was a man could run fast enough to cotch her," said Candace; and then her portly person shook with the impulse of her own wit.

By two o'clock a goodly company began to assemble. Mrs. Deacon Twitchel arrived, soft, pillowy, and plaintive as ever, accompanied by Cerinthy Ann, a comely damsel, tall and trim, with a bright black eye, and a most vigorous and determined style of movement. Good Mrs. Jones, broad, expansive, and solid, having vegetated tranquilly on in the cabbage-garden of the virtues since three years ago, when she graced our tea-party, was now as well preserved as ever, and brought some fresh butter, a tin pail of cream, and a loaf of cake made after a new Philadelphia receipt. The tall, spare, angular figure of Mrs. Simeon Brown alone was wanting; but she patronized Mrs. Scudder no more, and tossed her head with a becoming pride when her name was mentioned.

The quilt-pattern was gloriously drawn in oak-leaves, done in indigo; and soon all the company, young and old, were passing busy fingers over it; and conversation went on briskly.

Madame de Frontignac, we must not forget to say, had entered with hearty abandon into the spirit of the day. She had dressed the tall china vases on the mantel-pieces, and, departing from the usual rule of an equal mixture of roses and asparagus-bushes, had constructed two quaint and graceful bouquets, where garden-flowers were mingled with drooping grasses and trailing wild vines, forming a graceful combination which excited the surprise of all who saw it.

"It's the very first time in my life that I ever saw grass put into a flower-pot," said Miss Prissy; "but I must say it looks as handsome as a picture. Mary, I must say," she added, in an aside, "I think that Madame de Frongenac is the sweetest dressing and appearing creature I ever saw; she don't dress up nor put on airs, but she seems to see in a minute how things ought to go; and if it's only a bit of grass, or leaf, or wild vine, that she puts in her hair, why, it seems to come just right. I should like to make her a dress, for I know she would understand my fit; do speak to her, Mary, in case she should want a dress fitted here, to let me try it."

At the quilting, Madame de Frontignac would have her seat, and soon won the respect of the party by the dexterity with which she used her needle; though, when it was whispered that she learned to quilt among the nuns, some of the elderly ladies exhibited a slight uneasiness, as being rather doubtful whether they might not be encouraging Papistical opinions by allowing her an equal share in the work of getting up their minister's bed-quilt; but the younger part of the company were quite captivated by her foreign air, and the pretty manner in which she lisped her English; and Cerinthy Ann even went so far as to horrify her mother by saying that she wished she'd been educated in a convent herself,—a declaration which arose less from native depravity than from a certain vigorous disposition, which often shows itself in young people, to shock the current opinions of their elders and betters. Of course, the conversation took a general turn, somewhat in unison with the spirit of the occasion; and whenever it flagged, some allusion to a forthcoming wedding, or some sly hint at the future young Madame of the parish, was sufficient to awaken the dormant animation of the company.

Cerinthy Ann contrived to produce an agreeable electric shock by declaring, that, for her part, she never could see into it, how any girl could marry a minister,—that she should as soon think of setting up housekeeping in a meeting-house.

"Oh, Cerinthy Ann!" exclaimed her mother, "how can you go on so?"

"It's a fact," said the adventurous damsel; "now other men let you have some peace,—but a minister's always round under your feet."

"So you think, the less you see of a husband, the better?" said one of the ladies.

"Just my views," said Cerinthy, giving a decided snip to her thread with her scissors; "I like the Nantucketers, that go off on four-years' voyages, and leave their wives a clear field. If ever I get married, I'm going up to have one of those fellows."

It is to be remarked, in passing, that Miss Cerinthy Ann was at this very time receiving surreptitious visits from a consumptive-looking, conscientious, young theological candidate, who came occasionally to preach in the vicinity, and put up at the house of the Deacon, her father. This good young man, being violently attacked on the doctrine of Election by Miss Cerinthy, had been drawn on to illustrate it in a most practical manner, to her comprehension; and it was the consciousness of the weak and tottering state of the internal garrison that added vigor to the young lady's tones. As Mary had been the chosen confidante of the progress of this affair, she was quietly amused at the demonstration.

"You'd better take care, Cerinthy Ann," said her mother; "they say that 'those who sing before breakfast will cry before supper.' Girls talk about getting married," she said, relapsing into a gentle didactic melancholy, "without realizing its awful responsibilities."

"Oh, as to that," said Cerinthy, "I've been practising on my pudding now these six years, and I shouldn't be afraid to throw one up chimney with any girl."

This speech was founded on a tradition, current in those times, that no young lady was fit to be married till she could construct a boiled Indian-pudding of such consistency that it could be thrown up chimney and come down on the ground, outside, without breaking; and the consequence of Cerinthy Ann's sally was a general laugh.

"Girls a'n't what they used to be in my day," sententiously remarked an elderly lady. "I remember my mother told me when she was thirteen she could knit a long cotton stocking in a day."

"I haven't much faith in these stories of old times,—have you, girls?" said Cerinthy, appealing to the younger members at the frame.

"At any rate," said Mrs. Twitchel, "our minister's wife will be a pattern; I don't know anybody that goes beyond her either in spinning or fine stitching."

Mary sat as placid and disengaged as the new moon, and listened to the chatter of old and young with the easy quietness of a young heart that has early outlived life, and looks on everything in the world from some gentle, restful eminence far on towards a better home. She smiled at everybody's word, had a quick eye for everybody's wants, and was ready with thimble, scissors, or thread, whenever any one needed them; but once, when there was a pause in the conversation, she and Mrs. Marvyn were both discovered to have stolen away. They were seated on the bed in Mary's little room, with their arms around each other, communing in low and gentle tones.

"Mary, my dear child," said her friend, "this event is very pleasant to me, because it places you permanently near me. I did not know but eventually this sweet face might lead to my losing you, who are in some respects the dearest friend I have."

"You might be sure," said Mary, "I never would have married, except that my mother's happiness and the happiness of so good a friend seemed to depend on it. When we renounce self in anything, we have reason to hope for God's blessing; and so I feel assured of a peaceful life in the course I have taken. You will always be as a mother to me," she added, laying her head on her friend's shoulder.

"Yes," said Mrs. Marvyn; "and I must not let myself think a moment how dear it might have been to have you more my own. If you feel really, truly happy,—if you can enter on this life without any misgivings"—

"I can," said Mary, firmly.

At this instant, very strangely, the string which confined a wreath of sea-shells around her glass, having been long undermined by moths, suddenly broke and fell down, scattering the shells upon the floor.

Both women started, for the string of shells had been placed there by James: and though neither was superstitious, this was one of those odd coincidences that make hearts throb.

"Dear boy!" said Mary, gathering the shells up tenderly; "wherever he is, I shall never cease to love him. It makes me feel sad to see this come down; but it is only an accident; nothing of him will ever fail out of my heart."

Mrs. Marvyn clasped Mary closer to her, with tears in her eyes.

"I'll tell you what, Mary; it must have been the moths did that," said Miss Prissy, who had been standing, unobserved, at the door for a moment back; "moths will eat away strings just so. Last week Miss Vernon's great family-picture fell down because the moths eat through the cord; people ought to use twine or cotton string always. But I came to tell you that the supper is all set, and the Doctor out of his study, and all the people are wondering where you are."

Mary and Mrs. Marvyn gave a hasty glance at themselves in the glass, to be assured of their good keeping, and went into the great kitchen, where a long table stood exhibiting all that plenitude of provision which the immortal description of Washington Irving has saved us the trouble of recapitulating in detail.

The husbands, brothers, and lovers had come in, and the scene was redolent of gayety. When Mary made her appearance, there was a moment's pause, till she was conducted to the side of the Doctor; when, raising his hand, he invoked a grace upon the loaded board.

Unrestrained gayeties followed. Groups of young men and maidens chatted together, and all the gallantries of the times were enacted. Serious matrons commented on the cake, and told each other high and particular secrets in the culinary art, which they drew from remote family-archives. One might have learned in that instructive assembly how best to keep moths out of blankets,—how to make fritters of Indian corn undistinguishable from oysters,—how to bring up babies by hand,—how to mend a cracked teapot,—how to take out grease from a brocade,—how to reconcile absolute decrees with free will,—how to make five yards of cloth answer the purpose of six,—and how to put down the Democratic party. All were busy, earnest, and certain,—just as a swarm of men and women, old and young, are in 1859.

Miss Prissy was in her glory; every bow of her best cap was alive with excitement, and she presented to the eyes of the astonished Newport gentry an animated receipt-book. Some of the information she communicated, indeed, was so valuable and important that she could not trust the air with it, but whispered the most important portions in a confidential tone. Among the crowd, Cerinthy Ann's theological admirer was observed in deeply reflective attitude; and that high-spirited young lady added further to his convictions of the total depravity of the species by vexing and discomposing him in those thousand ways in which a lively, ill-conditioned young woman will put to rout a serious, well-disposed young man,—comforting herself with the reflection, that by-and-by she would repent of all her sins in a lump together.

Vain, transitory splendors! Even this evening, so glorious, so heart-cheering, so fruitful in instruction and amusement, could not last forever. Gradually the company broke up; the matrons mounted soberly on horseback behind their spouses; and Cerinthy consoled her clerical friend by giving him an opportunity to read her a lecture on the way home, if he found the courage to do so.

Mr. and Mrs. Marvyn and Candace wound their way soberly homeward; the Doctor returned to his study for nightly devotions; and before long, sleep settled down on the brown cottage.

"I'll tell you what, Cato," said Candace, before composing herself to sleep, "I can't feel it in my bones dat dis yer weddin's gwine to come off yit."

CHAPTER XXXI

AN ADVENTURE

A day or two after, Madame de Frontignac and Mary went out to gather shells and seaweed on the beach. It was four o'clock; and the afternoon sun was hanging in the sultry sky of July with a hot and vaporous stillness. The whole air was full of blue haze, that softened the outlines of objects without hiding them. The sea lay like so much glass; every ship and boat was double; every line and rope and spar had its counterpart; and it seemed hard to say which was the more real, the under or the upper world.

Madame de Frontignac and Mary had brought a little basket with them, which they were filling with shells and sea-mosses. The former was in high spirits. She ran, and shouted, and exclaimed, and wondered at each new marvel thrown out upon the shore, with the *abandon* of a little child. Mary could not but wonder whether this indeed were she whose strong words had pierced and wrung her sympathies the other night, and whether a deep life-wound could lie bleeding under those brilliant eyes and that infantine exuberance of gayety; yet, surely, all that which seemed so strong, so true, so real could not be gone so soon,—and it could not be so soon consoled. Mary wondered at her, as the Anglo-Saxon constitution, with its strong, firm intensity, its singleness of nature, wonders at the mobile, many-sided existence of warmer races, whose versatility of emotion on the surface is not incompatible with the most intense persistency lower down.

Mary's was one of those indulgent and tolerant natures which seem to form the most favorable base for the play of other minds, rather than to be itself salient,—and something about her tender calmness always seemed to provoke the spirit of frolic in her friend. She would laugh at her, kiss her, gambol round her, dress her hair with fantastic coiffures, and call her all sorts of fanciful and poetic names in French or English,—while Mary surveyed her with a pleased and innocent surprise, as a revelation of character altogether new and different from anything to which she had been hitherto accustomed. She was to her a living pantomime, and brought into her unembellished life the charms of opera and theatre and romance.

After wearying themselves with their researches, they climbed round a point of rock that stretched some way out into the sea, and attained to a little kind of grotto, where the high cliffs shut out the rays of the sun. They sat down to rest upon the rocks. A fresh breeze of declining day was springing up, and bringing the rising tide landward,—each several line of waves with its white crests coming up and breaking gracefully on the hard, sparkling sand-beach at their feet.

Mary's eyes fixed themselves, as they were apt to do, in a mournful reverie, on the infinite expanse of waters, which was now broken and chopped into a thousand incoming waves by the fresh afternoon breeze. Madame de Frontignac noticed the expression, and began to play with her as if she had been a child. She pulled the comb from her hair, and let down its long silky waves upon her shoulders.

"Now," said she, "let us make a Miranda of thee. This is our cave. I will be Prince Ferdinand. Burr told me all about that,—he reads beautifully, and explained it all to me. What a lovely story that is!—you must be so happy, who know how to read Shakspeare without learning! *Tenez!* I will put this shell on your forehead,—it has a hole here, and I will pass this gold chain through,—now! What a pity this seaweed will not be pretty out of water! it has no effect; but there is some green that will do;—let me fasten it so. Now, fair Miranda, look at thyself!"

Where is the girl so angelic as not to feel a slight curiosity to know how she shall look in a new and strange costume? Mary bent over the rock, where a little pool of water lay in a brown hollow above the fluctuations of the tide, dark and still, like a mirror,—and saw a fair face, with a white shell

above the forehead and drooping wreaths of green seaweed in the silken hair; and a faint blush and smile rose on the cheek, giving the last finish to the picture.

"How do you find yourself?" said Madame. "Confess now that I have a true talent in coiffure. Now I will be Ferdinand."

She turned quickly, and her eye was caught by something that Mary did not see; she only saw the smile fade suddenly from Madame de Frontignac's cheek, and her lips grow deadly white, while her heart beat so that Mary could discern its flutterings under her black silk bodice.

"Will the sea-nymphs punish the rash presumption of a mortal who intrudes?" said Colonel Burr, stepping before them with a grace as invincible and assured as if he had never had any past history with either.

Mary started with a guilty blush, like a child detected in an unseemly frolic, and put her hand to her head to take off the unwonted adornments.

"Let me protest, in the name of the Graces," said Burr, who by that time stood with easy calmness at her side; and as he spoke, he stayed her hand with that gentle air of authority which made it the natural impulse of most people to obey him. "It would be treason against the picturesque," he added, "to spoil that toilette, so charmingly uniting the wearer to the scene."

Mary was taken by surprise, and discomposed as every one is who finds himself masquerading in attire foreign to his usual habits and character; and therefore, when she would persist in taking it to pieces, Burr found sufficient to alleviate the embarrassment of Madame de Frontignac's utter silence in a playful run of protestations and compliments.

"I think, Mary," said Madame de Frontignac, "that we had better be returning to the house."

This was said in the haughtiest and coolest tone imaginable, looking at the place where Burr stood, as if there were nothing there but empty air. Mary rose to go; Madame de Frontignac offered her arm.

"Permit me to remark, ladies," said Burr, with the quiet suavity which never forsook him, "that your very agreeable occupations have caused time to pass more rapidly than you are aware. I think you will find that the tide has risen so as to intercept the path by which you came here. You will hardly be able to get around the point of rocks without some assistance."

Mary looked a few paces ahead, and saw, a little before them, a fresh afternoon breeze driving the rising tide high on to the side of the rocks, at whose foot their course had lain. The nook in which they had been sporting formed part of a shelving ledge which inclined over their heads, and which it was just barely possible could be climbed by a strong and agile person, but which would be wholly impracticable to a frail, unaided woman.

"There is no time to be lost," said Burr, coolly, measuring the possibilities with that keen eye that was never discomposed by any exigency. "I am at your service, ladies; I can either carry you in my arms around this point, or assist you up these rocks."

He paused and waited for their answer.

Madame de Frontignac stood pale, cold, and silent, hearing only the wild beating of her heart.

"I think," said Mary, "that we should try the rocks."

"Very well," said Burr; and placing his gloved hand on a fragment of rock somewhat above their heads, he swung himself up to it with an easy agility; from this he stretched himself down as far as possible towards them, and, extending his hand, directed Mary, who stood foremost, to set her foot on a slight projection, and give him both her hands; she did so, and he seemed to draw her up as easily as if she had been a feather. He placed her by him on a shelf of rock, and turned again to Madame de Frontignac; she folded her arms and turned resolutely away towards the sea.

Just at that moment a coming wave broke at her feet.

"There is no time to be lost," said Burr; "there's a tremendous surf coming in, and the next wave may carry you out."

"*Tant mieux*!" she responded, without turning her head.

"Oh, Virginie! Virginie!" exclaimed Mary, kneeling and stretching her arms over the rock; but another voice called Virginie, in a tone which went to her heart. She turned and saw those dark eyes full of tears.

"Oh, come!" he said, with that voice which she never could resist.

She put her cold, trembling hands into his, and he drew her up and placed her safely beside Mary. A few moments of difficult climbing followed, in which his arm was thrown now around one and then around the other, and they felt themselves carried with a force as if the slight and graceful form were strung with steel.

Placed in safety on the top of the bank, there was a natural gush of grateful feeling towards their deliverer. The severest resentment, the coolest moral disapprobation, are necessarily somewhat softened, when the object of them has just laid one under a personal obligation.

Burr did not seem disposed to press his advantage, and treated the incident as the most matter-of-course affair in the world. He offered an arm to each lady, with the air of a well-bred gentleman who offers a necessary support; and each took it, because neither wished, under the circumstances, to refuse.

He walked along leisurely homeward, talking in that easy, quiet, natural way in which he excelled, addressing no very particular remark to either one, and at the door of the cottage took his leave, saying, as he bowed, that he hoped neither of them would feel any inconvenience from their exertions, and that he should do himself the pleasure to call soon and inquire after their health.

Madame de Frontignac made no reply; but curtsied with a stately grace, turned and went into her little, room, whither Mary, after a few minutes, followed her.

She found her thrown upon the bed, her face buried in the pillow, her breast heaving as if she were sobbing; but when, at Mary's entrance, she raised her head, her eyes were bright and dry.

"It is just as I told you, Mary,—that man holds me. I love him yet, in spite of myself. It is in vain to be angry. What is the use of striking your right hand with your left? When we *love* one more than ourselves, we only hurt ourselves with our anger."

"But," said Mary, "love is founded on respect and esteem; and when that is gone"–

"Why, then," said Madame, "we are very sorry,—but we love yet. Do we stop loving ourselves when we have lost our own self-respect? No! it is so disagreeable to see, we shut our eyes and ask to have the bandage put on,—you know *that*, poor little heart! You can think how it would have been with you, if you had found that *he* was not what you thought."

The word struck home to Mary's consciousness,—but she sat down and took her friend in her arms with an air self-controlled, serious, rational.

"I see and feel it all, dear Virginie, but I must stand firm for you. You are in the waves, and I on the shore. If you are so weak at heart, you must not see this man any more."

"But he will call."

"I will see him for you."

"What will you tell him, my heart?—tell him that I am ill, perhaps?"

"No; I will tell him the truth,—that you do not wish to see him."

"That is hard;—he will wonder."

"I think not," said Mary, resolutely; "and furthermore, I shall say to him, that, while Madame de Frontignac is at the cottage, it will not be agreeable for us to receive calls from him."

"Mary, *ma chère*, you astonish me!"

"My dear friend," said Mary, "it is the only way. This man—this cruel, wicked, deceitful man—must not be allowed to trifle with you in this way. I will protect you."

And she rose up with flashing eye and glowing cheek, looking as her father looked when he protested against the slave-trade.

"Thou art my Saint Catharine," said Virginie, rising up, excited by Mary's enthusiasm, "and hast the sword as well as the palm; but, dear saint, don't think so very, very badly of him;—he has a noble nature; he has the angel in him."

"The greater his sin," said Mary; "he sins against light and love."

"But I think his heart is touched,—I think he is sorry. Oh, Mary, if you had only seen how he looked at me when he put out his hands on the rocks!—there were tears in his eyes"

"Well there might be!" said Mary; "I do not think he is quite a fiend; no one could look at those cheeks, dear Virginie, and not feel sad, that saw you a few months ago."

"Am I so changed?" she said, rising and looking at herself in the mirror. "Sure enough,—my neck used to be quite round;—now you can see those two little bones, like rocks at low tide. Poor Virginie! her summer is gone, and the leaves are falling; poor little cat!"—and Virginie stroked her own chestnut head, as if she had been pitying another, and began humming a little Norman air, with a refrain that sounded like the murmur of a brook over the stones.

The more Mary was touched by these little poetic ways, which ran just on an even line between the gay and the pathetic, the more indignant she grew with the man that had brought all this sorrow. She felt a saintly vindictiveness, and a determination to place herself as an adamantine shield between him and her friend. There is no courage and no anger like that of a gentle woman, when once fully roused; if ever you have occasion to meet it, you will certainly remember the hour.

CHAPTER XXXII

PLAIN TALK

Mary revolved the affairs of her friend in her mind, during the night. The intensity of the mental crisis through which she had herself just passed had developed her in many inward respects, so that she looked upon life no longer as a timid girl, but as a strong, experienced woman. She had thought, and suffered, and held converse with eternal realities, until thousands of mere earthly hesitations and timidities, that often restrain a young and untried nature, had entirely lost their hold upon her. Besides, Mary had at heart the true Puritan seed of heroism,—never absent from the souls of true New England women. Her essentially Hebrew education, trained in daily converse with the words of prophets and seers, and with the modes of thought of a people essentially grave and heroic, predisposed her to a kind of exaltation, which, in times of great trial, might rise to the heights of the religious—sublime, in which the impulse of self-devotion took a form essentially commanding. The very intensity of the repression under which her faculties had developed seemed, as it were, to produce a surplus of hidden strength, which came out in exigencies. Her reading, though restricted to a few volumes, had been of the kind that vitalized and stimulated a poetic nature, and laid up in its chambers vigorous words and trenchant phrases, for the use of an excited feeling,—so that eloquence came to her as a native gift. She realized, in short, in her higher hours, the last touch with which Milton finishes his portrait of an ideal woman:—

> "Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
> Build in her loftiest, and create an awe
> About her as a guard angelic placed."

The next, morning, Colonel Burr called at the cottage. Mary was spinning in the garret, and Madame de Frontignac was reeling yarn, when Mrs. Scudder brought this announcement.

"Mother," said Mary, "I wish to see Mr. Burr alone. Madame de Frontignac will not go down."

Mrs. Scudder looked surprised, but asked no questions. When she was gone down, Mary stood a moment reflecting; Madame de Frontignac looked eager and agitated.

"Remember and notice all he says, and just how he looks, Mary, so as to tell me; and be sure and say that I thank him for his kindness yesterday. We must own he appeared very well there; did he not?"

"Certainly," said Mary; "but no man could have done less."

"Ah! but, Mary, not every man could have done it *as* he did. Now don't be too hard on him, Mary;—I have said dreadful things to him; I am afraid I have been too severe. After all, these distinguished men are so tempted! we don't know how much they are tempted; and who can wonder that they are a little spoiled? So, my angel, you must be merciful."

"Merciful!" said Mary, kissing the pale cheek, and feeling the cold little hands that trembled in hers.

"So you will go down in your little spinning-toilette, *mimi*? I fancy you look as Joan of Arc did, when she was keeping her sheep at Domremy. Go, and God bless thee!" and Madame de Frontignac pushed her playfully forward.

Mary entered the room where Burr was seated, and wished him good-morning, in a serious and placid manner, in which there was not the slightest trace of embarrassment or discomposure.

"Shall I have the pleasure of seeing your fair companion this morning?" said Burr, after some moments of indifferent conversation.

"No, Sir; Madame de Frontignac desires me to excuse her to you."

"Is she ill?" said Burr, with a look of concern.

"No, Mr. Burr, she prefers not to see you."

Burr gave a start of well-bred surprise, and Mary added,

"Madame de Frontignac has made me familiar with the history of your acquaintance with her; and you will therefore understand what I mean, Mr. Burr, when I say, that, during the time of her stay with us, we should prefer not to receive calls from you."

"Your language, Miss Scudder, has certainly the merit of explicitness."

"I intend it shall have, Sir," said Mary, tranquilly; "half the misery in the world comes of want of courage to speak and to hear the truth plainly and in a spirit of love."

"I am gratified that you add the last clause, Miss Scudder; I might not otherwise recognize the gentle being whom I have always regarded as the impersonation of all that is softest in woman. I have not the honor of understanding in the least the reason of this apparently capricious sentence, but I bow to it in submission."

"Mr. Burr," said Mary, walking up to him, and looking him full in the eyes, with an energy that for the moment bore down his practised air of easy superiority, "I wish to speak to you for a moment, as one immortal soul should to another, without any of those false glosses and deceits which men call ceremony and good manners. You have done a very great injury to a lovely lady, whose weakness ought to have been sacred in your eyes. Precisely because you are what you are,—strong, keen, penetrating, and able to control and govern all who come near you,—because you have the power to make yourself agreeable, interesting, fascinating, and to win esteem and love,—just for that reason you ought to hold yourself the guardian of every woman, and treat her as you would wish any man to treat your own daughter. I leave it to your conscience, whether this is the manner in which you have treated Madame de Frontignac."

"Upon my word, Miss Scudder," began Burr, "I cannot imagine what representations our mutual friend may have been making. I assure you, our intercourse has been as irreproachable as the most scrupulous could desire."

"Irreproachable!—scrupulous!—Mr. Burr, you know that you have taken the very life out of her. You men can have everything,—ambition, wealth, power; a thousand ways are open to you: women have nothing but their heart; and when that is gone, all is gone. Mr. Burr, you remember the rich man who had flocks and herds, but nothing would do for him but he must have the one little ewe-lamb which was all his poor neighbor had. Thou art the man! You have stolen all the love she had to give,—all that she had to make a happy home; and you can never give her anything in return, without endangering her purity and her soul,—and you knew you could not. I know you men *think* this is a light matter; but it is death to us. What will this woman's life be? one long struggle to forget; and when you have forgotten her, and are going on gay and happy,—when you have thrown her very name away as a faded flower, she will be praying, hoping, fearing for you; though all men deny you, yet will not she. Yes, Mr. Burr, if ever your popularity and prosperity should leave you and those who now flatter should despise and curse you, she will always be interceding with her own heart and with God for you, and making a thousand excuses where she cannot deny; and if you die, as I fear you have lived, unreconciled to the God of your fathers, it will be in her heart to offer up her very soul for you, and to pray that God will impute all your sins to her, and give you heaven. Oh, I know this, because I have felt it in my own heart!" and Mary threw herself passionately down into a chair, and broke into an agony of uncontrolled sobbing.

Burr turned away, and stood looking through the window; tears were dropping silently, unchecked by the cold, hard pride which was the evil demon of his life.

It is due to our human nature to believe that no man could ever have been so passionately and enduringly loved and revered by both men and women as he was, without a beautiful and lovable

nature;—no man ever demonstrated more forcibly the truth, that it is not a man's natural constitution, but the *use* he makes of it, which stamps him as good or vile.

The diviner part of him was weeping, and the cold, proud demon was struggling to regain his lost ascendency. Every sob of the fair, inspired child who had been speaking to him seemed to shake his heart,—he felt as if he could have fallen on his knees to her; and yet that stoical habit which was the boast of his life, which was the sole wisdom he taught to his only and beautiful daughter, was slowly stealing back round his heart,—and he pressed his lips together, resolved that no word should escape till he had fully mastered himself.

In a few moments Mary rose with renewed calmness and dignity, and, approaching him, said,—

"Before I wish you good-morning, Mr. Burr, I must ask pardon for the liberty I have taken in speaking so very plainly."

"There is no pardon needed, my dear child," said Burr, turning and speaking very gently, and with a face expressive of a softened concern; "if you have told me harsh truths, it was with gentle intentions;—I only hope that I may prove, at least by the future, that I am not altogether so bad as you imagine. As to the friend whose name has been passed between us, no man can go beyond me in a sense of her real nobleness; I am sensible how little I can ever deserve the sentiment with which she honors me. I am ready, in my future course, to obey any commands that you and she may think proper to lay upon me."

"The only kindness you can now do her," said Mary, "is to leave her. It is impossible that you should be merely friends;—it is impossible, without violating the holiest bonds, that you should be more. The injury done is irreparable; but you *can* avoid adding another and greater one to it."

Burr looked thoughtful.

"May I say one thing more?" said Mary, the color rising in her cheeks.

Burr looked at her with that smile that always drew out the confidence of every heart.

"Mr. Burr," she said, "you will pardon me, but I cannot help saying this: You have, I am told, wholly renounced the Christian faith of your fathers, and build your whole life on quite another foundation. I cannot help feeling that this is a great and terrible mistake. I cannot help wishing that you would examine and reconsider."

"My dear child, I am extremely grateful to you for your remark, and appreciate fully the purity of the source from which it springs. Unfortunately, our intellectual beliefs are not subject to the control of our will. I have examined, and the examination has, I regret to say, not had the effect you would desire."

Mary looked at him wistfully; he smiled and bowed,—all himself again; and stopping at the door, he said, with a proud humility,—

"Do me the favor to present my devoted regard to your friend; believe me, that hereafter you shall have less reason to complain of me."

He bowed, and was gone.

An eye-witness of the scene has related, that, when Burr resigned his seat as President of his country's Senate, an object of peculiar political bitterness and obloquy, almost all who listened to him had made up their minds that he was an utterly faithless, unprincipled man; and yet, such was his singular and peculiar personal power, that his short farewell-address melted the whole assembly into tears, and his most embittered adversaries were charmed into a momentary enthusiasm of admiration.

It must not be wondered at, therefore, if our simple-hearted, loving Mary strangely found all her indignation against him gone, and herself little disposed to criticize the impassioned tenderness with which Madame de Frontignac still regarded him.

We have one thing more that we cannot avoid saying, of two men so singularly in juxtaposition as Aaron Burr and Dr. Hopkins. Both had a perfect *logic* of life, and guided themselves with an inflexible rigidity by it. Burr assumed individual pleasure to be the great object of human existence; Dr. Hopkins placed it in a life altogether beyond self. Burr rejected all sacrifice; Hopkins considered

sacrifice as the foundation of all existence. To live as far as possible without a disagreeable sensation was an object which Burr proposed to himself as the *summum bonum*, for which he drilled down and subjugated a nature of singular richness. Hopkins, on the other hand, smoothed the asperities of a temperament naturally violent and fiery by a rigid discipline which guided it entirely above the plane of self-indulgence; and, in the pursuance of their great end, the one watched against his better nature as the other did against his worse. It is but fair, then, to take their lives as the practical workings of their respective ethical creeds.

CHAPTER XXXIII

NEW ENGLAND IN FRENCH EYES

We owe our readers a digression at this point, while we return for a few moments to say a little more of the fortunes of Madame de Frontignac, whom we left waiting with impatience for the termination of the conversation between Mary and Burr. "*Enfin, chère Sybille*," said Madame de Frontignac, when Mary came out of the room, with her cheeks glowing and her eye flashing with a still unsubdued light, "*te voilà encore*! What did he say, *mimi*?—did he ask for me?"

"Yes," said Mary, "he asked for you."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him that you wished me to excuse you."

"How did he look then?—did he look surprised?"

"A good deal so, I thought," said Mary.

"*Allons, mimi*,—tell me all you said, and all he said." "Oh," said Mary, "I am the worst person in the world; in fact, I cannot remember anything that I have said; but I told him that he must leave you, and never see you any more."

"Oh, *mimi*, never!"

Madame de Frontignac sat down on the side of the bed with such a look of utter despair as went to Mary's heart.

"You know that it is best, Virginie; do you not?"

"Oh, yes, I know it; *mais pourtant, c'est dur comme la mort*. Ah, well, what shall Virginie do now?"

"You have your husband," said Mary.

"*Je ne l'aime point*," said Madame de Frontignac.

"Yes, but he is a good and honorable man, and you should love him."

"Love is not in our power," said Madame de Frontignac.

"Not every kind of love," said Mary, "but some kinds. If you have a kind, indulgent friend who protects you and cares for you, you can be grateful to him, you can try to make him happy, and in time you may come to love him very much. He is a thousand times nobler man, if what you say is true, than the one who has injured you so."

"Oh, Mary!" said Madame de Frontignac, "there are some cases where we find it too easy to love our enemies."

"More than that," said Mary; "I believe, that, if you go on patiently in the way of duty, and pray daily to God, He will at last take out of your heart this painful love, and give you a true and healthy one. As you say, such feelings are very sweet and noble; but they are not the only ones we have to live by;—we can find happiness in duty, in self-sacrifice, in calm, sincere, honest friendship. That is what you can feel for your husband."

"Your words cool me," said Madame de Frontignac; "thou art a sweet snow-maiden, and my heart is hot and tired. I like to feel thee in my arms," she said, putting her arms around Mary, and resting her head upon her shoulder. "Talk to me so every day, and read me good cool verses out of that beautiful Book, and perhaps by-and-by I shall grow still and quiet like you."

Thus Mary soothed her friend; but every few days this soothing had to be done over, as long as Burr remained in Newport. When he was finally gone, she grew more calm. The simple, homely ways of the cottage, the healthful routine of daily domestic toils, into which she delighted to enter, brought refreshment to her spirit. That fine tact and exquisite social sympathy, which distinguish the French above other nations, caused her at once to enter into the spirit of the life in which she moved; so that

she no longer shocked any one's religious feelings by acts forbidden by the Puritan idea of Sunday, or failed in any of the exterior proprieties of religious life. She also read and studied with avidity the English Bible, which came to her with the novelty of a wholly new book in a new language; nor was she without a certain artistic appreciation of the austere precision and gravity of the religious life by which she was surrounded.

"It is sublime, but a little *glaciale*, like the Alps," she sometimes said to Mary and Mrs. Marvyn, when speaking of it; "but then," she added, playfully, "there are the flowers,—*les roses des Alpes*,—and the air is very strengthening, and it is near to heaven,—*faut avouer*."

We have shown how she appeared to the eye of New England life; it may not be uninteresting to give a letter to one of her friends, which showed how the same appeared to her. It was not a friend with whom she felt on such terms, that her intimacy with Burr would appear at all in the correspondence.

* * * * *

"You behold me, my charming Gabrielle, quite pastoral, recruiting from the dissipations of my Philadelphia life in a quiet cottage, with most worthy, excellent people, whom I have learned to love very much. They are good and true, as pious as the saints themselves, although they do not belong to the Church,—a thing which I am sorry for; but then let us hope, that, if the world is wide, heaven is wider, and that all worthy people will find room at last. This is Virginie's own little, pet, private heresy; and when I tell it to the Abbé, he only smiles; and so I think, somehow, that it is not so very bad as it might be.

"We have had a very gay life in Philadelphia, and now I am growing tired of the world, and think I shall retire to my cheese, like Lafontaine's rat.

"These people in the country here in America have a character quite their own, very different from the life of cities, where one sees, for the most part, only a continuation of the forms of good society which exist in the Old World.

"In the country, these people seem simple, grave, severe, always industrious, and, at first, cold and reserved in their manners towards each other, but with great warmth of heart. They are all obedient to the word of their minister, who lives among them just like any other man, and marries and has children.

"Everything in their worship is plain and austere; their churches are perfectly desolate; they have no chants, no pictures, no carvings,—only a most disconsolate, bare-looking building, where they meet together, and sing one or two hymns, and the minister makes one or two prayers, all out of his own thoughts, and then gives them a long, long discourse about things which I cannot understand enough English to comprehend.

"There is a very beautiful, charming young girl here, the daughter of my hostess, who is as lovely and as saintly as St. Catharine, and has such a genius for religion, that, if she had been in our Church, she would certainly have been made a saint.

"Her mother is a good, worthy matron; and the good priest lives in the family. I think he is a man of very sublime religion, as much above this world as a great mountain; but he has the true sense of liberty and fraternity; for he has dared to oppose with all his might this detestable and cruel trade in poor negroes, which makes us, who are so proud of the example of America in asserting the rights of men, so ashamed for her inconsistencies.

"Well, now, there is a little romance getting up in the cottage; for the good priest has fixed his eyes on the pretty saint, and discovered, what he must be blind not to see, that she is very lovely,—and so, as he can marry, he wants to make her his wife; and her mamma, who adores him as if he were God, is quite set upon it. The sweet Marie, however, has had a lover of her own in her little heart, a beautiful young man, who went to sea, as heroes always do, to seek his fortune. And the cruel sea has drowned him; and the poor little saint has wept and prayed, till she is so thin and sweet and

mournful that it makes one's heart ache to see her smile. In our Church, Gabrielle, she would have gone into a convent; but she makes a vocation of her daily life, and goes round the house so sweetly, doing all the little work that is to be done, as sacredly as the nuns pray at the altar. For you must know, here in New England, the people, for the most part, keep no servants, but perform all the household work themselves, with no end of spinning and sewing besides. It is the true Arcadia, where you find cultivated and refined people busying themselves with the simplest toils. For these people are well-read and well-bred, and truly ladies in all things. And so my little Marie and I, we feed the hens and chickens together, and we search for eggs in the hay in the barn. And they have taught me to spin at their great wheel, and at a little one too, which makes a noise like the humming of a bee.

"But where am I? Oh, I was telling about the romance. Well, so the good priest has proposed for my Marie, and the dear little soul has accepted him as the nun accepts the veil; for she only loves him filially and religiously. And now they are going on, in their way, with preparations for the wedding. They had what they call 'a quilting' here the other night, to prepare the bride's quilt,—and all the friends in the neighborhood came;—it was very amusing to see.

"The morals of this people are so austere, that young men and girls are allowed the greatest freedom. They associate and talk freely together, and the young men walk home alone with the girls after evening parties. And most generally, the young people, I am told, arrange their marriages among themselves before the consent of the parents is asked. This is very strange to us. I must not weary you, however, with the details. I watch my little romance daily, and will let you hear further as it progresses.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.