VARIOUS

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The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 12, No. 74, December, 1863 / A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics:

Содержание

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THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

I suppose that very few casual readers of the "New York Herald" of August 13th observed, in an obscure corner, among the "Deaths," the announcement,

> "NOLAN. DIED, on board U.S. Corvette Levant, Lat. 2° 11' S., Long. 131° W., on the 11th of May: Philip Nolan."

I happened to observe it, because I was stranded at the old Mission-House in Mackinac, waiting for a Lake-Superior steamer which did not choose to come, and I was devouring, to the very stubble, all the current literature I could get hold of, even down to the deaths and marriages in the "Herald." My memory for names and people is good, and the reader will see, as he goes on, that I had reason enough to remember Philip

Nolan. There are hundreds of readers who would have paused at that announcement, if the officer of the Levant who reported it had chosen to make it thus:—"Died, May 11th, THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY." For it was as "The Man without a Country" that poor Philip Nolan had generally been known by the officers who had him in charge during some fifty years, as, indeed, by all the men who sailed under them. I dare say there is many a man who has taken wine with him once a fortnight, in a three years' cruise, who never knew that his name was "Nolan," or whether the poor wretch had any name at all.

There can now be no possible harm in telling this poor creature's story. Reason enough there has been till now, ever since Madison's Administration went out in 1817, for very strict secrecy, the secrecy of honor itself, among the gentlemen of the navy who have had Nolan in successive charge. And certainly it speaks well for the *esprit de corps* of the profession and the personal honor of its members, that to the press this man's story has been wholly unknown,—and, I think, to the country at large also. I have reason to think, from some investigations I made in the Naval Archives when I was attached to the Bureau of Construction, that every official report relating to him was burned when Ross burned the public buildings at Washington. One of the Tuckers, or possibly one of the Watsons, had Nolan in charge at the end of the war; and when, on returning from his cruise, he reported at Washington to one of the Crowninshields, —who was in the Navy Department when he came home,—he

found that the Department ignored the whole business. Whether they really knew nothing about it, or whether it was a "*Non mi ricordo*," determined on as a piece of policy, I do not know. But this I do know, that since 1817, and possibly before, no naval officer has mentioned Nolan in his report of a cruise.

But, as I say, there is no need for secrecy any longer. And now the poor creature is dead, it seems to me worth while to tell a little of his story, by way of showing young Americans of to-day what it is to be

A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

Philip Nolan was as fine a young officer as there was in the "Legion of the West," as the Western division of our army was then called. When Aaron Burr made his first dashing expedition down to New Orleans in 1805, at Fort Massac, or somewhere above on the river, he met, as the Devil would have it, this gay, dashing, bright young fellow, at some dinner-party, I think. Burr marked him, talked to him, walked with him, took him a day or two's voyage in his flat-boat, and, in short, fascinated him. For the next year, barrack-life was very tame to poor Nolan. He occasionally availed of the permission the great man had given him to write to him. Long, high-worded, stilted letters the poor boy wrote and rewrote and copied. But never a line did he have in reply from the gay deceiver. The other boys in the garrison sneered at him, because he sacrificed in this unrequited affection

for a politician the time which they devoted to Monongahela, sledge, and high-low-jack. Bourbon, euchre, and poker were still unknown. But one day Nolan had his revenge. This time Burr came down the river, not as an attorney seeking a place for his office, but as a disguised conqueror. He had defeated I know not how many district-attorneys; he had dined at I know not how many public dinners; he had been heralded in I know not how many Weekly Arguses; and it was rumored that he had an army behind him and an empire before him. It was a great day—his arrival—to poor Nolan. Burr had not been at the fort an hour before he sent for him. That evening he asked Nolan to take him out in his skiff, to show him a canebrake or a cotton-wood tree, as he said,—really to seduce him; and by the time the sail was over, Nolan was enlisted body and soul. From that time, though he did not yet know it, he lived as A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

What Burr meant to do I know no more than you, dear reader. It is none of our business just now. Only, when the grand catastrophe came, and Jefferson and the House of Virginia of that day undertook to break on the wheel all the possible Clarences of the then House of York, by the great treason-trial at Richmond, some of the lesser fry in that distant Mississippi Valley, which was farther from us than Puget's Sound is to-day, introduced the like novelty on their provincial stage, and, to while away the monotony of the summer at Fort Adams, got up, for *spectacles*, a string of court-martials on the officers there. One and another of the colonels and majors were tried, and, to fill

out the list, little Nolan, against whom, Heaven knows, there was evidence enough,—that he was sick of the service, had been willing to be false to it, and would have obeyed any order to march any-whither with any one who would follow him, had the order only been signed, "By command of His Exc. A. Burr." The courts dragged on. The big flies escaped,—rightly for all I know. Nolan was proved guilty enough, as I say; yet you and I would never have heard of him, reader, but that, when the president of the court asked him at the close, whether he wished to say anything to show that he had always been faithful to the United States, he cried out, in a fit of frenzy,—

"D–n the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!"

I suppose he did not know how the words shocked old Colonel Morgan, who was holding the court. Half the officers who sat in it had served through the Revolution, and their lives, not to say their necks, had been risked for the very idea which he so cavalierly cursed in his madness. He, on his part, had grown up in the West of those days, in the midst of "Spanish plot," "Orleans plot," and all the rest. He had been educated on a plantation, where the finest company was a Spanish officer or a French merchant from Orleans. His education, such as it was, had been perfected in commercial expeditions to Vera Cruz, and I think he told me his father once hired an Englishman to be a private tutor for a winter on the plantation. He had spent half his youth with an older brother, hunting horses in Texas; and, in a word, to him

"United States" was scarcely a reality. Yet he had been fed by "United States" for all the years since he had been in the army. He had sworn on his faith as a Christian to be true to "United States." It was "United States" which gave him the uniform he wore, and the sword by his side. Nay, my poor Nolan, it was only because "United States" had picked you out first as one of her own confidential men of honor, that "A. Burr" cared for you a straw more than for the flat-boat men who sailed his ark for him. I do not excuse Nolan; I only explain to the reader why he damned his country, and wished he might never hear her name again.

He never did hear her name but once again. From that moment, September 23, 1807, till the day he died, May 11, 1863, he never heard her name again. For that half century and more he was a man without a country.

Old Morgan, as I said, was terribly shocked. If Nolan had compared George Washington to Benedict Arnold, or had cried, "God save King George," Morgan would not have felt worse. He called the court into his private room, and returned in fifteen minutes, with a face like a sheet, to say,—

"Prisoner, hear the sentence of the Court. The Court decides, subject to the approval of the President, that you never hear the name of the United States again."

Nolan laughed. But nobody else laughed. Old Morgan was too solemn, and the whole room was hushed dead as night for a minute. Even Nolan lost his swagger in a moment. Then Morgan

added,—

"Mr. Marshal, take the prisoner to Orleans in an armed boat, and deliver him to the naval commander there."

The marshal gave his orders, and the prisoner was taken out of court.

"Mr. Marshal," continued old Morgan, "see that no one mentions the United States to the prisoner. Mr. Marshal, make my respects to Lieutenant Mitchell at Orleans, and request him to order that no one shall mention the United States to the prisoner while he is on board ship. You will receive your written orders from the officer on duty here this evening. The court is adjourned without day."

I have always supposed that Colonel Morgan himself took the proceedings of the court to Washington City, and explained them to Mr. Jefferson. Certain it is that the President approved them, —certain, that is, if I may believe the men who say they have seen his signature. Before the Nautilus got round from New Orleans to the Northern Atlantic coast with the prisoner on board, the sentence had been approved, and he was a man without a country.

The plan then adopted was substantially the same which was necessarily followed ever after. Perhaps it was suggested by the necessity of sending him by water from Fort Adams and Orleans. The Secretary of the Navy—it must have been the first Crowninshield, though he is a man I do not remember—was requested to put Nolan on board a Government vessel bound on a long cruise, and to direct that he should be only so far confined

there as to make it certain that he never saw or heard of the country. We had few long cruises then, and the navy was very much out of favor; and as almost all of this story is traditional, as I have explained, I do not know certainly what his first cruise was. But the commander to whom he was intrusted—perhaps it was Tingey or Shaw, though I think it was one of the younger men,—we are all old enough now—regulated the etiquette and the precautions of the affair, and according to his scheme they were carried out, I suppose, till Nolan died.

When I was second officer of the Intrepid, some thirty years after, I saw the original paper of instructions. I have been sorry ever since that I did not copy the whole of it. It ran, however, much in this way:—

"*Washington*," (with the date, which must have been late in 1807.)

"Sir,—You will receive from Lt. Neale the person of Philip Nolan, late a Lieutenant in the United States Army.

"This person on his trial by court-martial expressed with an oath the wish that he might 'never hear of the United States again.'

"The Court sentenced him to have his wish fulfilled.

"For the present, the execution of the order is intrusted by the President to this department.

"You will take the prisoner on board your ship, and keep him there with such precautions as shall prevent his escape.

"You will provide him with such quarters, rations, and

clothing as would be proper for an officer of his late rank, if he were a passenger on your vessel on the business of his Government.

"The gentlemen on board will make any arrangements agreeable to themselves regarding his society. He is to be exposed to no indignity of any kind, nor is he ever unnecessarily to be reminded that he is a prisoner.

"But under no circumstances is he ever to hear of his country or to see any information regarding it; and you will specially caution all the officers under your command to take care, that, in the various indulgences which may be granted, this rule, in which his punishment is involved, shall not be broken.

"It is the intention of the Government that he shall never again see the country which he has disowned. Before the end of your cruise you will receive orders which will give effect to this intention.

"Resp'y yours,
"W. SOUTHARD, for the
Sec'y of the Navy."

If I had only preserved the whole of this paper, there would be no break in the beginning of my sketch of this story. For Captain Shaw, if it was he, handed it to his successor in the charge, and he to his, and I suppose the commander of the Levant has it to-day as his authority for keeping this man in this mild custody.

The rule adopted on board the ships on which I have met "the man without a country" was, I think, transmitted from the

beginning. No mess liked to have him permanently, because his presence cut off all talk of home or of the prospect of return, of politics or letters, of peace or of war,—cut off more than half the talk men like to have at sea. But it was always thought too hard that he should never meet the rest of us, except to touch hats, and we finally sank into one system. He was not permitted to talk with the men, unless an officer was by. With officers he had unrestrained intercourse, as far as they and he chose. But he grew shy, though he had favorites: I was one. Then the captain always asked him to dinner on Monday. Every mess in succession took up the invitation in its turn. According to the size of the ship, you had him at your mess more or less often at dinner. His breakfast he ate in his own state-room,—he always had a state-room,—which was where a sentinel, or somebody on the watch, could see the door. And whatever else he ate or drank he ate or drank alone. Sometimes, when the marines or sailors had any special jollification, they were permitted to invite "Plain-Buttons," as they called him. Then Nolan was sent with some officer, and the men were forbidden to speak of home while he was there. I believe the theory was, that the sight of his punishment did them good. They called him "Plain-Buttons," because, while he always chose to wear a regulation army-uniform, he was not permitted to wear the army-button, for the reason that it bore either the initials or the insignia of the country he had disowned.

I remember, soon after I joined the navy, I was on shore with some of the older officers from our ship and from the

Brandywine, which we had met at Alexandria. We had leave to make a party and go up to Cairo and the Pyramids. As we jogged along, (you went on donkeys then,) some of the gentlemen (we boys called them "Dons," but the phrase was long since changed) fell to talking about Nolan, and some one told the system which was adopted from the first about his books and other reading. As he was almost never permitted to go on shore, even though the vessel lay in port for months, his time, at the best, hung heavy; and everybody was permitted to lend him books, if they were not published in America and made no allusion to it. These were common enough in the old days, when people in the other hemisphere talked of the United States as little as we do of Paraguay. He had almost all the foreign papers that came into the ship, sooner or later; only somebody must go over them first, and cut out any advertisement or stray paragraph that alluded to America. This was a little cruel sometimes, when the back of what was cut out might be as innocent as Hesiod. Right in the midst of one of Napoleon's battles, or one of Canning's speeches, poor Nolan would find a great hole, because on the back of the page of that paper there had been an advertisement of a packet for New York, or a scrap from the President's message. I say this was the first time I ever heard of this plan, which afterwards I had enough, and more than enough, to do with. I remember it, because poor Phillips, who was of the party, as soon as the allusion to reading was made, told a story of something which happened at the Cape of Good Hope on Nolan's first voyage;

and it is the only thing I ever knew of that voyage. They had touched at the Cape, and had done the civil thing with the English Admiral and the fleet, and then, leaving for a long cruise up the Indian Ocean, Phillips had borrowed a lot of English books from an officer, which, in those days, as indeed in these, was quite a windfall. Among them, as the Devil would order, was the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which they had all of them heard of, but which most of them had never seen. I think it could not have been published long. Well, nobody thought there could be any risk of anything national in that, though Phillips swore old Shaw had cut out the "Tempest" from Shakspeare before he let Nolan have it, because he, said "the Bermudas ought to be ours, and, by Jove, should be one day." So Nolan was permitted to join the circle one afternoon when a lot of them sat on deck smoking and reading aloud. People do not do such things so often now; but when I was young we got rid of a great deal of time so. Well, so it happened that in his turn Nolan took the book and read to the others; and he read very well, as I know. Nobody in the circle knew a line of the poem, only it was all magic and Border chivalry, and was ten thousand years ago. Poor Nolan read steadily through the fifth canto, stopped a minute and drank something, and then began, without a thought of what was coming,—

> "Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,"—

It seems impossible to us that anybody ever heard this for the first time; but all these fellows did then, and poor Nolan himself went on, still unconsciously or mechanically,—

"This is my own, my native land!"

Then they all saw something was to pay; but he expected to get through, I suppose, turned a little pale, but plunged on,—

"Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?—
If such there breathe, go, mark him well."

By this time the men were all beside themselves, wishing there was any way to make him turn over two pages; but he had not quite presence of mind for that; he gagged a little, colored crimson, and staggered on,—

"For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,"—

and here the poor fellow choked, could not go on, but started up, swung the book into the sea, vanished into his state-room, "and by Jove," said Phillips, "we did not see him for two months

again. And I had to make up some beggarly story to that English surgeon why I did not return his Walter Scott to him."

That story shows about the time when Nolan's braggadocio must have broken down. At first, they said, he took a very high tone, considered his imprisonment a mere farce, affected to enjoy the voyage, and all that; but Phillips said that after he came out of his state-room he never was the same man again. He never read aloud again, unless it was the Bible or Shakespeare, or something else he was sure of. But it was not that merely. He never entered in with the other young men exactly as a companion again. He was always shy afterwards, when I knew him,—very seldom spoke, unless he was spoken to, except to a very few friends. He lighted up occasionally,—I remember late in his life hearing him fairly eloquent on something which had been suggested to him by one of Fléchier's sermons,—but generally he had the nervous, tired look of a heart-wounded man.

When Captain Shaw was coming home,—if, as I say, it was Shaw,—rather to the surprise of everybody they made one of the Windward Islands, and lay off and on for nearly a week. The boys said the officers were sick of salt-junk, and meant to have turtle-soup before they came home. But after several days the Warren came to the same rendezvous; they exchanged signals; she sent to Phillips and these homeward-bound men letters and papers, and told them she was outward-bound, perhaps to the Mediterranean, and took poor Nolan and his traps on the boat back to try his second cruise. He looked very blank when he was told to get

ready to join her. He had known enough of the signs of the sky to know that till that moment he was going "home." But this was a distinct evidence of something he had not thought of, perhaps, —that there was no going home for him, even to a prison. And this was the first of some twenty such transfers, which brought him sooner or later into half our best vessels, but which kept him all his life at least some hundred miles from the country he had hoped he might never hear of again.

It may have been on that second cruise,—it was once when he was up the Mediterranean,—that Mrs. Graff, the celebrated Southern beauty of those days, danced with him. They had been lying a long time in the Bay of Naples, and the officers were very intimate in the English fleet, and there had been great festivities, and our men thought they must give a great ball on board the ship. How they ever did it on board the Warren I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was not the Warren, or perhaps ladies did not take up so much room as they do now. They wanted to use Nolan's state-room for something, and they hated to do it without asking him to the ball; so the captain said they might ask him, if they would be responsible that he did not talk with the wrong people, "who would give him intelligence." So the dance went on, the finest party that had ever been known, I dare say; for I never heard of a man-of-war ball that was not. For ladies they had the family of the American consul, one or two travellers who had adventured so far, and a nice bevy of English girls and matrons, perhaps Lady Hamilton herself.

Well, different officers relieved each other in standing and talking with Nolan in a friendly way, so as to be sure that nobody else spoke to him. The dancing went on with spirit, and after a while even the fellows who took this honorary guard of Nolan ceased to fear any *contre-temps*. Only when some English lady—Lady Hamilton, as I said, perhaps—called for a set of "American dances," an odd thing happened. Everybody then danced contra-dances. The black band, nothing loath, conferred as to what "American dances" were, and started off with "Virginia Reel," which they followed with "Money-Musk," which, in its turn in those days, should have been followed by "The Old Thirteen." But just as Dick, the leader, tapped for his fiddles to begin, and bent forward, about to say, in true negro state, "'The Old Thirteen,' gentlemen and ladies!" as he had said, "'Virginny Reel,' if you please!" and "'Money-Musk,' if you please!" the captain's boy tapped him on the shoulder, whispered to him, and he did not announce the name of the dance; he merely bowed, began on the air, and they all fell to,—the officers teaching the English girls the figure, but not telling them why it had no name.

But that is not the story I started to tell.—As the dancing went on, Nolan and our fellows all got at ease, as I said,—so much so, that it seemed quite natural for him to bow to that splendid Mrs. Graff, and say,—

"I hope you have not forgotten me, Miss Rutledge. Shall I have the honor of dancing?"

He did it so quickly, that Shubrick, who was by him, could not

hinder him. She laughed, and said,—

"I am not Miss Rutledge any longer, Mr. Nolan; but I will dance all the same," just nodded to Shubrick, as if to say he must leave Mr. Nolan to her, and led him off to the place where the dance was forming.

Nolan thought he had got his chance. He had known her at Philadelphia, and at other places had met her, and this was a Godsend. You could not talk in contra-dances, as you do in cotillons, or even in the pauses of waltzing; but there were chances for tongues and sounds, as well as for eyes and blushes. He began with her travels, and Europe, and Vesuvius, and the French; and then, when they had worked down, and had that long talking-time at the bottom of the set, he said, boldly,—a little pale, she said, as she told me the story, years after,—

"And what do you hear from home, Mrs. Graff?"

And that splendid creature looked through him. Jove! how she must have looked through him!

"Home!! Mr. Nolan!!! I thought you were the man who never wanted to hear of home again!"—and she walked directly up the deck to her husband, and left poor Nolan alone, as he always was. —He did not dance again.

I cannot give any history of him in order: nobody can now: and, indeed, I am not trying to. These are the traditions, which I sort out, as I believe them, from the myths which have been told about this man for forty years. The lies that have been told about him are legion. The fellows used to say he was the "Iron

Mask"; and poor George Pons went to his grave in the belief that this was the author of "Junius," who was being punished for his celebrated libel on Thomas Jefferson. Pons was not very strong in the historical line. A happier story than either of these I have told is of the War. That came along soon after. I have heard this affair told in three or four ways,—and, indeed, it may have happened more than once. But which ship it was on I cannot tell. However, in one, at least, of the great frigate-duels with the English, in which the navy was really baptized, it happened that a round shot from the enemy entered one of our ports square, and took right down the officer of the gun himself, and almost every man of the gun's crew. Now you may say what you choose about courage, but that is not a nice thing to see. But, as the men who were not killed picked themselves up, and as they and the surgeon's people were carrying off the bodies, there appeared Nolan, in his shirt-sleeves, with the rammer in his hand, and, just as if he had been the officer, told them off with authority,—who should go to the cockpit with the wounded men, who should stay with him,—perfectly cheery, and with that way which makes men feel sure all is right and is going to be right. And he finished loading the gun with his own hands, aimed it, and bade the men fire. And there he stayed, captain of that gun, keeping those fellows in spirits, till the enemy struck,—sitting on the carriage while the gun was cooling, though he was exposed all the time,—showing them easier ways to handle heavy shot,—making the raw hands laugh at their own blunders,—and when the gun cooled again,

getting it loaded and fired twice as often as any other gun on the ship. The captain walked forward, by way of encouraging the men, and Nolan touched his hat and said,—

"I am showing them how we do this in the artillery, Sir."

And this is the part of the story where all the legends agree: that the Commodore said,—

"I see you do, and I thank you, Sir; and I shall never forget this day, Sir, and you never shall, Sir."

And after the whole thing was over, and he had the Englishman's sword, in the midst of the state and ceremony of the quarter-deck, he said,—

"Where is Mr. Nolan? Ask Mr. Nolan to come here."

And when Nolan came, the captain, said,—

"Mr. Nolan, we are all very grateful to you to-day; you are one of us to-day; you will be named in the despatches."

And then the old man took off his own sword of ceremony, and gave it to Nolan, and made him put it on. The man told me this who saw it. Nolan cried like a baby, and well he might. He had not worn a sword since that infernal day at Fort Adams. But always afterwards, on occasions of ceremony, he wore that quaint old French sword of the Commodore's.

The captain did mention him in the despatches. It was always said he asked that he might be pardoned. He wrote a special letter to the Secretary of War. But nothing ever came of it. As I said, that was about the time when they began to ignore the whole transaction at Washington, and when Nolan's imprisonment

began to carry itself on because there was nobody to stop it without any new orders from home.

I have heard it said that he was with Porter when he took possession of the Nukahiwa Islands. Not this Porter, you know, but old Porter, his father, Essex Porter,—that is, the old Essex Porter, not this Essex. As an artillery officer, who had seen service in the West, Nolan knew more about fortifications, embrasures, ravelins, stockades, and all that, than any of them did; and he worked with a right good will in fixing that battery all right. I have always thought it was a pity Porter did not leave him in command there with Gamble. That would have settled all the question about his punishment. We should have kept the islands, and at this moment we should have one station in the Pacific Ocean. Our French friends, too, when they wanted this little watering-place, would have found it was preoccupied. But Madison and the Virginians, of course, flung all that away.

All that was near fifty years ago. If Nolan was thirty then, he must have been near eighty when he died. He looked sixty when he was forty. But he never seemed to me to change a hair afterwards. As I imagine his life, from what I have seen and heard of it, he must have been in every sea, and yet almost never on land. He must have known, in a formal way, more officers in our service than any man living knows. He told me once, with a grave smile, that no man in the world lived so methodical a life as he. "You know the boys say I am the Iron Mask, and you know how busy he was." He said it did not do for any one to

try to read all the time, more than to do any thing else all the time; but that he read just five hours a day. "Then," he said, "I keep up my note-books, writing in them at such and such hours from what I have been reading; and I include in these my scrap-books." These were very curious indeed. He had six or eight, of different subjects. There was one of History, one of Natural Science, one which he, called "Odds and Ends." But they were not merely books of extract from newspapers. They had bits of plants and ribbons, shells tied on, and carved scraps of bone and wood, which he had taught the men to cut for him, and they were beautifully illustrated. He drew admirably. He had some of the funniest drawings there, and some of the most pathetic, that I have ever seen in my life. I wonder who will have Nolan's scrap-books.

Well, he said his reading and his notes were his profession, and that they took five hours and two hours respectively of each day. "Then," said he, "every man should have a diversion as well as a profession. My Natural History is my diversion." That took two hours a day more. The men used to bring him birds and fish, but on a long cruise he had to satisfy himself with centipedes and cockroaches and such small game. He was the only naturalist I ever met who knew anything about the habits of the house-fly and the mosquito. All those people can tell you whether they are *Lepidoptera Steptopotera*; but as for telling how you can get rid of them, or how they get away from you when you strike them, —why, Linnæus knew as little of that as John Foy the idiot did.

These nine hours made Nolan's regular daily "occupation." The rest of the time he talked or walked. Till he grew very old, he went aloft a great deal. He always kept up with his exercise; and I never heard that he was ill. If any other man was ill, he was the kindest nurse in the world; and he knew more than half the surgeons do. Then if anybody was sick or died, or if the captain wanted him to on any other occasion, he was always ready to read prayers. I have remarked that he read beautifully.

My own acquaintance with Philip Nolan began six or eight years after the War, on my first voyage after I was appointed a midshipman. It was in the first days after our Slave-Trade treaty, while the Reigning House, which was still the House of Virginia, had still a sort of sentimentalism about the suppression of the horrors of the Middle Passage, and something was sometimes done that way. We were in the South Atlantic on that business. From the time I joined, I believe I thought Nolan was a sort of lay chaplain—a chaplain with a blue coat. I never asked about him. Everything in the ship was strange to me. I knew it was green to ask questions, and I suppose I thought there was a "Plain-Buttons" on every ship. We had him to dine in our mess once a week, and the caution was given that on that day nothing was to be said about home. But if they had told us not to say anything about the planet Mars or the Book of Deuteronomy, I should not have asked why; there were, a great many things which seemed to me to have as little reason. I first came to understand anything about "the man without a country" one day when we overhauled

a dirty little schooner which had slaves on board. An officer was sent to take charge of her, and, after a few minutes, he sent back his boat to ask that some one might be sent him who could speak Portuguese. We were all looking over the rail when the message came, and we all wished we could interpret, when the captain asked who spoke Portuguese. But none of the officers did; and just as the captain was sending forward to ask if any of the people could, Nolan stepped out and said he should be glad to interpret, if the captain wished, as he understood the language. The captain thanked him, fitted out another boat with him, and in this boat it was my luck to go.

When we got there, it was such a scene as you seldom see, and never want to. Nastiness beyond account, and chaos run loose in the midst of the nastiness. There were not a great many of the negroes; but by way of making what there were understand that they were free, Vaughan had had their hand-cuffs and ankle-cuffs knocked off, and, for convenience' sake, was putting them upon the rascals of the schooner's crew. The negroes were, most of them, out of the hold, and swarming all round the dirty deck, with a central throng surrounding Vaughan and addressing him in every dialect and *patois* of a dialect, from the Zulu click up to the Parisian of Beledeljereed.

As we came on deck, Vaughan looked down from a hogshead, on which he had mounted in desperation, and said,—

"For God's love, is there anybody who can make these wretches understand something? The men gave them rum, and

that did not quiet them. I knocked that big fellow down twice, and that did not soothe him. And then I talked Choctaw to all of them together; and I'll be hanged if they understood that as well as they understood the English."

Nolan said he could speak Portuguese, and one or two fine-looking Kroomen were dragged out, who, as it had been found already, had worked for the Portuguese on the coast at Fernando Po.

"Tell them they are free," said Vaughan; "and tell them that these rascals are to be hanged as soon as we can get rope enough."

Nolan "put that into Spanish,"[1]—that is, he explained it in such Portuguese as the Kroomen could understand, and they in turn to such of the negroes as could understand them. Then there was such a yell of delight, clinching of fists, leaping and dancing, kissing of Nolan's feet, and a general rush made to the hogshead by way of spontaneous worship of Vaughan, as the *deus ex machina* of the occasion.

"Tell them," said Vaughan, well pleased, "that I will take them all to Cape Palmas."

This did not answer so well. Cape Palmas was practically as far from the homes of most of them as New Orleans or Rio Janeiro

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[1] The phrase is General Taylor's. When Santa Aña brought up his immense army at Buena Vista, he sent a flag of truce to invite Taylor to surrender. "Tell him to go to hell," said old Rough-and-Ready. "Bliss, put that into Spanish." "Perfect Bliss," as this accomplished officer, too early lost, was called, interpreted liberally, replying to the flag, in exquisite Castilian, "Say to General Santa Aña, that, if he wants us, he must come and take us." And this is the answer which has gone into history.

was; that is, they would be eternally separated from home there. And their interpreters, as we could understand, instantly said, "*Ah, non Palmas*," and began to propose infinite other expedients in most voluble language. Vaughan was rather disappointed at this result of his liberality, and asked Nolan eagerly what they said. The drops stood on poor Nolan's white forehead, as he hushed the men down, and said,—

"He says, 'Not Palmas.' He says, 'Take us home, take us to our own country, take us to our own house, take us to our own pickaninnies and our own women.' He says he has an old father and mother, who will die, if they do not see him. And this one says he left his people all sick, and paddled down to Fernando to beg the white doctor to come and help them, and that these devils caught him in the bay just in sight of home, and that he has never seen anybody from home since then. And this one says," choked out Nolan, "that he has not heard a word from his home in six months, while he has been locked up in an infernal barracoon."

Vaughan always said he grew gray himself while Nolan struggled through this interpretation. I, who did not understand anything of the passion involved in it, saw that the very elements were melting with fervent heat, and that something was to pay somewhere. Even the negroes themselves stopped howling, as they saw Nolan's agony, and Vaughan's almost equal agony of sympathy. As quick as he could get words, he said,—

"Tell them yes, yes, yes; tell them they shall go to the Mountains of the Moon, if they will. If I sail the schooner

through the Great White Desert, they shall go home!"

And after some fashion Nolan said so. And then they all fell to kissing him again, and wanted to rub his nose with theirs.

But he could not stand it long; and getting Vaughan to say he might go back, he beckoned me down into our boat. As we lay back in the stern-sheets and the men gave way, he said to me,—"Youngster, let that show you what it is to be without a family, without a home, and without a country. And if you are ever tempted to say a word or to do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your family, your home, and your country, pray God in His mercy to take you that instant home to His own heaven. Stick by your family, boy; forget you have a self, while you do everything for them. Think of your home, boy; write and send, and talk about it. Let it be nearer and nearer to your thought, the farther you have to travel from it; and rush back to it, when you are free, as that poor black slave is doing now. And for your country, boy," and the words rattled in his throat, "and for that flag," and he pointed to the ship, "never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look at another flag, never let a night pass but you pray God to bless that flag. Remember, boy, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers, and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother. Stand by Her, boy, as you would

stand by your mother, if those devils there had got hold of her to-day!"

I was frightened to death by his calm, hard passion; but I blundered out, that I would, by all that was holy, and that I had never thought of doing anything else. He hardly seemed to hear me; but he did, almost in a whisper, say,—"Oh, if anybody had said so to me when I was of your age!"

I think it was this half-confidence of his, which I never abused, for I never told this story till now, which afterward made us great friends. He was very kind to me. Often he sat up, or even got up, at night to walk the deck with me, when it was my watch. He explained to me a great deal of my mathematics, and I owe to him my taste for mathematics. He lent me books, and helped me about my reading. He never alluded so directly to his story again; but from one and another officer I have learned, in thirty years, what I am telling. When we parted from him in St. Thomas harbor, at the end of our cruise, I was more sorry than I can tell. I was very glad to meet him again in 1830; and later in life, when I thought I had some influence in Washington, I moved heaven and earth to have him discharged. But it was like getting a ghost out of prison. They pretended there was no such man, and never was such a man. They will say so at the Department now! Perhaps they do not know. It will not be the first thing in the service of which the Department appears to know nothing!

There is a story that Nolan met Burr once on one of our vessels, when a party of Americans came on board in the

Mediterranean. But this I believe to be a lie; or rather, it is a myth, *ben trovato*, involving a tremendous blowing-up with which he sunk Burr,—asking him how he liked to be "without a country." But it is clear, from Burr's life, that nothing of the sort could have happened; and I mention this only as an illustration of the stories which get a-going where there is the least mystery at bottom.

So poor Philip Nolan had his wish fulfilled. I know but one fate more dreadful: it is the fate reserved for those men who shall have one day to exile themselves from their country because they have attempted her ruin, and shall have at the same time to see the prosperity and honor to which she rises when she has rid herself of them and their iniquities. The wish of poor Nolan, as we all learned to call him, not because his punishment was too great, but because his repentance was so clear, was precisely the wish of every Bragg and Beauregard who broke a soldier's oath two years ago, and of every Maury and Barron who broke a sailor's. I do not know how often they have repented. I do know that they have done all that in them lay that they might have no country,—that all the honors, associations, memories, and hopes which belong to "country" might be broken up into little shreds and distributed to the winds. I know, too, that their punishment, as they vegetate through what is left of life to them in wretched Boulognes and Leicester Squares, where they are destined to upbraid each other till they die, will have all the agony of Nolan's, with the added pang that every one who sees them will see them to despise and to execrate them. They will have their wish, like him.

For him, poor fellow, he repented of his folly, and then, like a man, submitted to the fate he had asked for. He never intentionally added to the difficulty or delicacy of the charge of those who had him in hold. Accidents would happen; but they never happened from his fault. Lieutenant Truxton told me, that, when Texas was annexed, there was a careful discussion among the officers, whether they should get hold of Nolan's handsome set of maps, and cut Texas out of it,—from the map of the world and the map of Mexico. The United States had been cut out when the atlas was bought for him. But it was voted, rightly enough, that to do this would be virtually to reveal to him what had happened, or, as Harry Cole said, to make him think Old Burr had succeeded. So it was from no fault of Nolan's that a great botch happened at my own table, when, for a short time, I was in command of the George Washington corvette, on the South-American station. We were lying in the La Plata, and some of the officers, who had been on shore, and had just joined again, were entertaining us with accounts of their misadventures in riding the half-wild horses of Buenos Ayres. Nolan was at table, and was in an unusually bright and talkative mood. Some story of a tumble reminded him of an adventure of his own, when he was catching wild horses in Texas with his brother Stephen, at a time when he must have been quite a boy. He told the story with a good deal of spirit,—so much so, that the silence which often follows a good story hung over the table for an instant, to be broken by Nolan himself. For he asked, perfectly unconsciously,—

"Pray, what has become of Texas? After the Mexicans got their independence, I thought that province of Texas would come forward very fast. It is really one of the finest regions on earth; it is the Italy of this continent. But I have not seen or heard a word of Texas for near twenty years."

There were two Texan officers at the table. The reason he had never heard of Texas was that Texas and her affairs had been painfully cut out of his newspapers since Austin began his settlements; so that, while he read of Honduras and Tamaulipas, and, till quite lately, of California, this virgin province, in which his brother had travelled so far, and, I believe, had died, had ceased to be to him. Waters and Williams, the two Texas men, looked grimly at each other, and tried not to laugh. Edward Morris had his attention attracted by the third link in the chain of the captain's chandelier. Watrous was seized with a convulsion of sneezing. Nolan himself saw that something was to pay, he did not know what. And I, as master of the feast, had to say,—

"Texas is out of the map, Mr. Nolan. Have you seen Captain Back's curious account of Sir Thomas Hoe's Welcome?"

After that cruise I never saw Nolan again. I wrote to him at least twice a year, for in that voyage we became even confidentially intimate; but he never wrote to me. The other men tell me that in those fifteen years he *aged* very fast, as well he might indeed, but that he was still the same gentle, uncomplaining, silent sufferer that he ever was, bearing as best he could his self-appointed punishment,—rather less social,

perhaps, with new men whom he did not know, but more anxious, apparently, than ever to serve and befriend and teach the boys, some of whom fairly seemed to worship him. And now it seems the dear old fellow is dead. He has found a home at last, and a country.

Since writing this, and while considering whether or no I would print it, as a warning to the young Nolans and Vallandighams and Tatnalls of to-day of what it is to throw away a country, I have received from Danforth, who is on board the Levant, a letter which gives an account of Nolan's last hours. It removes all my doubts about telling this story.

To understand the first words of the letter, the non-professional reader should remember that after 1817 the position of every officer who had Nolan in charge was one of the greatest delicacy. The Government had failed to renew the order of 1807 regarding him. What was a man to do? Should he let him go? What, then, if he were called to account by the Department for violating the order of 1807? Should he keep him? What, then, if Nolan should be liberated some day, and should bring an action for false imprisonment or kidnapping against every man who had had him in charge? I urged and pressed this upon Southard, and I have reason to think that other officers did the same thing. But the Secretary always said, as they so often do at Washington, that there were no special orders to give, and that we must act on our own judgment. That means, "If you succeed, you will be sustained; if you fail, you will be disavowed." Well, as Danforth

says, all that is over now, though I do not know but I expose myself to a criminal prosecution on the evidence of the very revelation I am making.

Here is the letter:—

"*Levant*, 2° 2' S. @ 131° W.

"DEAR FRED,—I try to find heart and life to tell you that it is all over with dear old Nolan. I have been with him on this voyage more than I ever was, and I can understand wholly now the way in which you used to speak of the dear old fellow. I could see that he was not strong, but I had no idea the end was so near. The doctor had been watching him very carefully, and yesterday morning came to me and told me that Nolan was not so well, and had not left his state-room,—a thing I never remember before. He had let the doctor come and see him as he lay there,—the first time the doctor had been in the state-room,—and he said he should like to see me. Oh, dear! do you remember the mysteries we boys used to invent about his room, in the old Intrepid days? Well, I went in, and there, to be sure, the poor fellow lay in his berth, smiling pleasantly as he gave me his hand, but looking very frail. I could not help a glance round, which showed me what a little shrine he had made of the box he was lying in. The stars and stripes were triced up above and around a picture of Washington, and he had painted a majestic eagle, with lightnings blazing from his beak and his foot just clasping the whole globe, which his wings overshadowed. The dear old boy saw my glance, and said, with a sad smile, 'Here, you see, I have a country!'

And then he pointed to the foot of his bed, where I had not seen before a great map of the United Stales, as he had drawn it from memory, and which he had there to look upon as he lay. Quaint, queer old names were on it, in large letters: 'Indiana Territory,' 'Mississippi Territory,' and 'Louisiana Territory,' as I suppose our fathers learned such things: but the old fellow had patched in Texas, too; he had carried his western boundary all the way to the Pacific, but on that shore he had defined nothing.

"'Oh, Danforth,' he said, 'I know I am dying. I cannot get home. Surely you will tell me something now?—Stop! stop! Do not speak till I say what I am sure you know, that there is not in this ship, that there is not in America,—God bless her!—a more loyal man than I. There cannot be a man who loves the old flag as I do, or prays for it as I do, or hopes for it as I do. There are thirty-four stars in it now, Danforth. I thank God for that, though I do not know what their names are. There has never been one taken away: I thank God for that. I know by that, that there has never been any successful Burr. Oh, Danforth, Danforth,' he sighed out, 'how like a wretched night's dream a boy's idea of personal fame or of separate sovereignty seems, when one looks back on it after such a life as mine! But tell me,—tell me something,—tell me everything, Danforth, before I die!'"

"Ingham, I swear to you that I felt like a monster that I had not told him everything before. Danger or no danger, delicacy or no delicacy, who was I, that I should have been acting the tyrant all this time over this dear, sainted old man, who had years ago

expiated, in his whole manhood's life, the madness of a boy's treason? 'Mr. Nolan,' said I, 'I will tell you everything you ask about. Only, where shall I begin?'

"Oh, the blessed smile that crept over his white face! and he pressed my hand and said, 'God bless you!' 'Tell me their names,' he said, and he pointed to the stars on the flag. 'The last I know is Ohio. My father lived in Kentucky. But I have guessed Michigan and Indiana and Mississippi,—that was where Fort Adams is,—they make twenty. But where are your other fourteen? You have not cut up any of the old ones, I hope?'

"Well, that was not a bad text, and I told him the names, in as good order as I could, and he bade me take down his beautiful map and draw them in as I best could with my pencil. He was wild with delight about Texas, told me how his brother died there; he had marked a gold cross where he supposed his brother's grave was; and he had guessed at Texas. Then he was delighted as he saw California and Oregon;—that, he said, he had suspected partly, because he had never been permitted to land on that shore, though the ships were there so much. 'And the men,' said he, laughing, 'brought off a good deal besides furs.' Then he went back—heavens, how far!—to ask about the Chesapeake, and what was done to Barron for surrendering her to the Leopard, and whether Burr ever tried again,—and he ground his teeth with the only passion he showed. But in a moment that was over, and he said, 'God forgive me, for I am sure I forgive him.' Then he asked about the old war,—told me the true story of his serving

the gun the day we took the Java,—asked about dear old David Porter, as he called him. Then he settled down more quietly, and very happily, to hear me tell in an hour the history of fifty years.

"How I wished it had been somebody who knew something! But I did as well as I could. I told him of the English war. I told him about Fulton and the steamboat beginning. I told him about old Scott, and Jackson; told him all I could think about the Mississippi, and New Orleans, and Texas, and his own old Kentucky. And do you think he asked who was in command of the "Legion of the West." I told him it was a very gallant officer, named Grant, and that, by our last news, he was about to establish his head-quarters at Vicksburg. Then, 'Where was Vicksburg?' I worked that out on the map; it was about a hundred miles, more or less, above his old Fort Adams; and I thought Fort Adams must be a ruin now. 'It must be at old Vicks's plantation,' said he; 'well, that is a change!'

"I tell you, Ingham, it was a hard thing to condense the history of half a century into that talk with a sick man. And I do not now know what I told him,—of emigration, and the means of it,—of steamboats and railroads and telegraphs,—of inventions and books and literature,—of the colleges and West Point and the Naval School,—but with the queerest interruptions that ever you heard. You see it was Robinson Crusoe asking all the accumulated questions of fifty-six years:

"I remember he asked, all of a sudden, who was President now; and when I told him, he asked if Old Abe was General

Benjamin Lincoln's son. He said he met old General Lincoln, when he was quite a boy himself, at some Indian treaty. I said no, that Old Abe was a Kentuckian like himself, but I could not tell him of what family; he had worked up from the ranks. 'Good for him!' cried Nolan; 'I am glad of that. As I have brooded and wondered, I have thought our danger was in keeping up those regular successions in the first families.' Then I got talking about my visit to Washington. I told him of meeting the Oregon Congressman, Harding; I told him about the Smithsonian and the Exploring Expedition; I told him about the Capitol,—and the statues for the pediment,—and Crawford's Liberty,—and Greenough's Washington: Ingham, I told him everything I could think of that would show the grandeur of his country and its prosperity; but I could not make up my mouth to tell him a word about this infernal Rebellion!

"And he drank it in, and enjoyed it as I cannot tell you. He grew more and more silent, yet I never thought he was tired or faint. I gave him a glass of water, but he just wet his lips, and told me not to go away. Then he asked me to bring the Presbyterian 'Book of Public Prayer,' which lay there, and said, with a smile, that it would open at the right, place,—and so it did. There was his double red mark down the page; and I knelt down and read, and he repeated with me,—'For ourselves and our country, O gracious God, we thank Thee, that, notwithstanding our manifold transgressions of Thy holy laws, Thou hast continued to us Thy marvellous kindness,'—and so to the end of that thanksgiving.

Then he turned to the end of the same book, and I read the words more familiar to me,—'Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favor to behold and bless Thy servant, the President of the United States, and all others in authority,'—and the rest of the Episcopal collect. 'Danforth,' said he, 'I have repeated those prayers night and morning, it is now fifty-five years.' And then he said he would go to sleep. He bent me down over him and kissed me; and he said, 'Look in my Bible, Danforth, when I am gone.' And I went away.

"But I had no thought it was the end. I thought he was tired and would sleep. I knew he was happy, and I wanted him to be alone.

"But in an hour, when the doctor went in gently, he found Nolan had breathed his life away with a smile. He had something pressed close to his lips. It was his father's badge of the Order of Cincinnati.

"We looked in his Bible, and there was a slip of paper, at the place where he had marked the text,—

"'They desire a country, even a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.'

"On this slip of paper he had written,—

"'Bury me in the sea; it has been my home, and I love it. But will not some one set up a stone for my memory at Fort Adams or at Orleans, that my disgrace may not be more than I ought to bear? Say on it,—

"'*In Memory of*

"'PHILIP NOLAN,

"'*Lieutenant in the Army of the United States.*

"'He loved his country as no other man has loved her; but no man deserved less at her hands.'"

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

It was the season when through all the land
The merle and mavis build, and building sing
Those lovely lyrics written by His hand
Whom Saxon Cædmon calls the Blithe-Heart King,—
When on the boughs the purple buds expand,
The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,
And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,
And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the bluebird, piping loud,
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee;
The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;
And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd,
Clamored their piteous prayer incessantly,
Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said,
"Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,
Speaking some unknown language strange and sweet
Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed
The village with the cheers of all their fleet,—
Or, quarrelling together, laughed and railed
Like foreign sailors landed in the street

Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise
Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth,
In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;
And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the earth,
Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,
That mingled with the universal mirth,
Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe:
They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful words
To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway
To set a price upon the guilty heads
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,
Levied black-mail upon the garden-beds
And cornfields, and beheld without dismay
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds,—
The skeleton that waited at their feast,
Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased.

Then from his house, a temple painted white,
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,

The Squire came forth,—august and splendid sight!—
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,
Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right;
Down the long street he walked, as one who said,
"A town that boasts inhabitants like me

Can have no lack of good society!"

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,
The instinct of whose nature was to kill;
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,
And read with fervor Edwards on the Will;
His favorite pastime was to slay the deer
In Summer on some Adirondack hill;
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,
He lopped the way-side lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass,
And all absorbed in reveries profound
Of fair Almira in the upper class,
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door,
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as snow;
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;
There never was so wise a man before;
He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!"
And to perpetuate his great renown,
There was a street named after him in town.

These came together in the new town-hall,
With sundry farmers from the region round;
The Squire presided, dignified and tall,
His air impressive and his reasoning sound.
Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small;
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,
But enemies enough, who every one
Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun.

When they had ended, from his place apart,
Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,
And, trembling like a steed before the start,
Looked round bewildered on the expectant throng;
Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart
To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,
Alike regardless of their smile or frown,
And quite determined not to be laughed down.

"Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,
From his Republic banished without pity
The Poets; in this little town of yours,
You put to death, by means of a Committee,
The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,
The street-musicians of the heavenly city,
The birds, who make sweet music for us all
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

"The thrush, that carols at the dawn of day
From the green steeples of the piny wood;

The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,
Jargoning like a foreigner at his food;
The bluebird balanced on some topmost spray,
Flooding with melody the neighborhood;
Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng
That dwell in nests, and have the gift of song.

"You slay them all! and wherefore? For the gain
Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,
Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,
Scratched up at random by industrious feet
Searching for worm or weevil after rain,
Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet
As are the songs these uninvited guests
Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.

"Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings these?
Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught
The dialect they speak, where melodies
Alone are the interpreters of thought?
Whose household words are songs in many keys,
Sweeter than instrument of man e'er caught!
Whose habitations in the tree-tops even
Are half-way houses on the road to heaven!

"Think, every morning when the sun peeps through
The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,
How jubilant the happy birds renew
Their old melodious madrigals of love!

And when you think of this, remember, too,
'Tis always morning somewhere, and above
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

"Think of your woods and orchards without birds!
Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams,
As in an idiot's brain remembered words
Hang empty 'mid the cobwebs of his dreams!
Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds
Make up for the lost music, when your teams
Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more
The feathered gleaners follow to your door?

"What! would you rather see the incessant stir
Of insects in the windrows of the hay,
And hear the locust and the grasshopper
Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play?
Is this more pleasant to you than the whirr
Of meadow-lark, and its sweet roundelay,
Or twitter of little fieldfares, as you take
Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake?

"You call them thieves and pillagers; but know
They are the winged wardens of your farms,
Who from the cornfields drive the insidious foe,
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms;
Even the blackest of them all, the crow,
Renders good service as your man-at-arms,

Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

"How can I teach your children gentleness,
And mercy to the weak, and reverence
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,
Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,
Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less
The self-same light, although averted hence,
When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,
You contradict the very things I teach?"

With this he closed; and through the audience went
A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves;
The farmers laughed and nodded, and some bent
Their yellow heads together like their sheaves:
Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment
Who put their trust in bullocks and in beeves.
The birds were doomed; and, as the record shows,
A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,
Who had no voice nor vote in making laws,
But in the papers read his little speech,
And crowned his modest temples with applause;
They made him conscious, each one more than each,
He still was victor, vanquished in their cause:
Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee,
O fair Almira at the Academy!

And so the dreadful massacre began;
O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,
The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.
Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their breasts,

Or wounded crept away from sight of man,
While the young died of famine in their nests:
A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,
The very St. Bartholomew of Birds!

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead;
The days were like hot coals; the very ground
Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed
Myriads of caterpillars, and around
The cultivated fields and garden-beds
Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found
No foe to check their march, till they had made
The land a desert without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,
Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun down
The canker-worms upon the passers-by,—
Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,
Who shook them off with just a little cry;
They were the terror of each favorite walk,
The endless theme of all the village-talk.

The farmers grew impatient, but a few
Confessed their error, and would not complain;
For, after all, the best thing one can do,
When it is raining, is to let it rain.
Then they repealed the law, although they knew
It would not call the dead to life again;
As school-boys, finding their mistake too late,
Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came
Without the light of his majestic look,
The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,
The illumined pages of his Doom's-Day Book.
A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,
And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,
While the wild wind went moaning everywhere,
Lamenting the dead children of the air.

But the next Spring a stranger sight was seen,
A sight that never yet by bard was sung,—
As great a wonder as it would have been,
If some dumb animal had found a tongue:
A wagon, overarched with evergreen,
Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,
All full of singing-birds, came down the street,
Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were brought,
By order of the town, with anxious quest,

And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought
In woods and fields the places they loved best,
Singing loud canticles, which many thought
Were satires to the authorities addressed,
While others, listening in green lanes, averred
Such lovely music never had been heard.

But blither still and louder carolled they
Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know
It was the fair Almira's wedding-day,
And everywhere, around, above, below,
When the Preceptor bore his bride away,
Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,
And a new heaven bent over a new earth
Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth.

LITERARY LIFE IN PARIS

THE GARRET.

Would you know something of the way in which men live in Paris? Would you penetrate a little beneath the brilliant, glossy epidermis of the French capital? Would you know other shadows and other sights than those you find in "Galignani's Messenger" under the rubric, "Stranger's Diary"? Listen to us. We hope to be brief. We hope to succeed in tangling your interest. We don't hope to make you merry,—oh, no, no, no! we don't hope that! Life isn't a merry thing anywhere,—least of all in Paris; for, look you, in modern Babylon there are so many calls for money, (which Southey called "a huge evil" everywhere,) there are so many temptations to expense, one has to keep a most cool head and a most silent heart to live in Paris and to avoid debt. Few are able successfully to achieve this charmed life. The Duke of Wellington, who was in debt but twice in his life,—first, when he became of age, and, like all young men, *felt* his name by indorsing it on negotiable paper, and placing it in a tradesman's book; secondly, when he lived in Paris, master of all France by consent of Europe,—the Duke of Wellington involved himself in debt in Paris to the amount of a million of dollars. Blücher actually ruined himself in the city he conquered. The last heir to the glorious name and princely estates of Von Kaunitz lost everything he possessed, even his dignity, in a few years of

life in Paris. Judge of the resistless force and fury of the great maelström!

And I hope, after you have measured some degree of its force and of its fury by these illustrious examples, that you may be softened into something like pity and terror, when I tell you how a poor fellow, who had no name but that he made with his pen, who commanded no money save only that he obtained by transmuting ink and paper into gold, strove against it with various success, and often was vanquished. You will not judge him too harshly, will you? You will not be the first to throw a stone at him, neither will you add your stone, to those that may be thrown at him: hands enough are raised against him! We do not altogether absolve him for many a shortcoming; but we crave permission to keep our censure and our sighs for our study. Permit us to forbear arraigning him at the public bar. He is dead,—and everybody respects the dead, except profligate editors, prostitutes, and political clergymen. Besides, his life was such a hard one,—so full of clouds, with so few gleams of sunshine,—so agitated by storm,—so bereaved of halcyon days,—'twould be most cruel to deny him the grave's dearest privilege, peace and quiet. Amen! Amen! with all my heart to thy benediction and prayer, O priest! as, aspersing his lifeless remains with holy-water, thou sayest, *Requiescat!* So mote it be! *Requiescat! Requiescat! Requiescat in pace!*

Approach, then, reader, with softest step, and we will, in lowest whispers, pour into your ear the story of the battle of

life as 'tis fought in Paris. We will show you the fever and the heartache, the corroding care and the panting labor which oppress life in Paris. Then will you say, No wonder they all die of a shattered heart or consumed brain at Paris! No wonder De Balzac died of heart-disease! No wonder Frederic Souliè's heart burst! No wonder Bruffault went crazy, and Eugene Sue's heart collapsed, and Malitourne lives at the mad-house! It is killing!

We will show you this life, not by didactic description, but by example, by telling you the story of one who lived this life. He was born in the lowest social station, he battled against every disadvantage, the hospital was his sick-chamber, his funeral was at the Government's expense, and everybody eminent in literature and art followed his remains to the grave, over which, after a proper interval of time, a monument was erected by public subscription to his memory. His father was a porter at the door of one of the houses in the Rue des Trois Frères. He added the tailor's trade to his poorly paid occupation. A native of Savoy, he possessed the mountaineer's taciturnity and love of home. War carried him to Paris. The rigors of conscription threw him into the ranks of the army; and when the first Empire fell, the child of Savoy made Paris his home, married a young seamstress, and obtained the lodge of house No. 5 Rue des Trois Frères. This marriage gave to French letters Henry Murger. It had no other issue.

Henry Murger was born March 24th, 1822. His earlier years seemed likely to be his last; he was never well; his mother gave

many a tear and many a vigil to the sickly child she thought every week she must lose. To guard his days, she placed him, to gratify a Romish superstition, under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, and in accordance with custom clad him in the Madonna's livery of blue. His costume of a blue smock, blue pantaloons, and a blue cap procured for him the name of *Bleuet*, or, as we should perhaps say, Blueling, if indeed we may coin for the occasion one of those familiar, affectionate diminutives, so common in the Italian, rarer in the French, and almost unknown in our masculine tongue. An only child, and an invalid, poor Bleuet was of course a spoiled child, his mother's darling and pet. His wishes, his sick-child's caprices were her law, and she gratified them at the cost of many a secret privation. She seemed to know—maternal love hath often the faculty of second-sight—that her poor boy, though only the child of the humblest parentage, was destined to rise one day far above the station in which he was born. She attired him better than children of his class commonly dressed. She polished his manners as much as she could,—and 'twas much, for women, even of the lowest classes, have gentle tastes and delicacy. She could not bear to think that her darling should one day sit cross-legged on the paternal bench, and ply needle and scissors. She breathed her own aspirations into the boy's ears, and filled his mind with them. O mothers, ye do make us what ye please! Your tears and caresses are the rain and the sun that mature the seed which time and the accidents of life sow in our tender minds! She filled him

with pride,—which is a cardinal virtue, let theologians say what they will,—and kept him aloof from the little blackguards who toss and tumble over the curb-stones, losing that dignity which is man's chastity, and removing one barrier between them and crime.

He was, even in his earlier years, exquisitely sensitive. La Blache, the famous singer, occupied a suite of rooms in the house of which his father was porter. One day La Blache's daughter, (now Madame Thalberg,) who was confined to her rooms by a fall which had dislocated her ankle, sent for the sprightly lad. He was in love with her, just as boys will adore a pretty face without counting years or differences of position (at that happy age a statesman and a stage-driver seem equal,—if, indeed, the latter does not appear to occupy the more enviable position in life). He dressed himself with all the elegance he could command, and obeyed Mademoiselle La Blache's summons, building all sorts of castles in the air as he arranged his toilet and while he was climbing the staircase. His affected airs were so laughable, she told him in a mock-heroic manner what she wished of him, and probably with something of that paternal talent which had shaken so many opera-houses with applause:—"I have sent for you to teach me the song I hear you sing every day." This downfall from his castles in the air, and her manner, brought blushes to his cheek and flames to his eyes, which amused her all the more; so she went on,—"Oh, don't be afraid! I will pay—two ginger-cakes a lesson." So sensitive was the child's nature, this

innocent pleasantry wounded him with such pain, that he fell on the carpet sobbing and with nerves all jangled. How the pangs poverty attracts must have wrung him!—But let us not anticipate the course of events.

As he advanced in life he outgrew his disease, and became a chubby-cheeked boy, health's own picture. He was the favorite of the neighborhood, his mother's pride, and the source of many a heartache to her; for, as he grew towards manhood, his father insisted every day more strenuously that he should learn some trade. His poor mother obstinately opposed this scheme. Many were the boisterous quarrels on this subject the boy witnessed, sobbing between his parents; for his father was a rough, ill-bred mountaineer, who had reached Paris through the barrack and the battle-field, neither of which tends to smooth the asperities of character. The woman was tenacious; for what will not a mother's heart brave? what will it not endure? Those natures which are gentle as water are yet deep and changeless as the ocean. Of course the wife carried her point. Who can resist a mother struggling for her son? The boy was placed as copying-clerk in an attorney's office. All the world over, the law is the highway to literature. The lad, however, was uneducated; he wrote well, and this was enough to enable him to copy the law-papers of the office, but he was ignorant of the first elements of grammar, and his language, although far better than that of the lads of his class in life, was shocking to polite ears. It could not well be otherwise, as his only school was a petty public primary school, and he was

but fourteen years old when his father ordered him to begin to earn his daily bread. But he was not only endowed with a literary instinct, he had, too, that obstinate perseverance which would, as one of his friends said of him, "have enabled him to learn to read by looking at the signs in the streets, and to cipher by glancing at the numbers on the houses."

Murger always attributed a great deal of influence upon his life to the accident which had given his father artists for tenants. Not only La Blache, but Garcia and his incomparable daughters, Marie Malibran and Pauline Viardot, and, after they left, Baroilhet, the opera-singer, had rooms in the house. The handsome boy was constantly with them, and this early and long and intimate association with Art gave him elegance and grace and vivacity. The seeds sown during such intercourse may for years lie buried beneath the cares and thoughts of a laborious life, and yet grow and bring forth fruit as soon as a more propitious atmosphere environs them. Comrades in the office where he wrote likewise had influence upon his career. He found among the clerks two brothers, Pierre and Emile Bisson, gentlemen who have now attained reputation by their admirable photographic landscapes, especially of Alpine scenery. They were then as poor and as uneducated as Henry Murger. They lived in a house inhabited by several painters, from whom they caught a love and some knowledge of Art. They communicated the contagion to their new comrade, and the moment office-hours were over all three hastened, as fast as they could go, to the nearest public

drawing-school. All three aspired to the fame of Rubens and of Paul Veronese. Murger had no talent for painting. One day, after he had been guilty of some pictures which are said to be —for they are still in existence—enough to make the hair of a connoisseur of painting stand on end, Pierre Bisson said to him, "Throw away the pencil, Murger; you will never make a painter." Murger accepted the decree without appeal. He felt that painting was not *in him*.[2] He took up the pen and wrote poetry. There is nothing equal to the foolhardiness of youth. It grapples with the most difficult subjects, and *knows* it can master them. As all of Murger's friends were painters, except his father and mother, and they were illiterate, his insane prose seemed as fine poetry as was ever written, because it turned somersets on feet. Nobody noticed whether it was on five or six or fifteen feet. His father, however, had heard what a dangerous disease of the purse poetry was, and forbade his son from trying to catch it,—vowing, that, if he heard again of its continued pursuit, he would immediately make a tailor of him. Of course, the threat did not deter Murger from the chase; but instead of pursuing it openly, he pursued it by stealth. The sportsman became a poacher. Pierre and Émile Bisson quitted the attorney's office and opened a studio: they were painters now. Henry Murger managed to filch an hour every day from the time allotted to the errands of the office about Paris

[2] After Sheridan had made his maiden speech in the House, of Commons, he went to the gallery where Whitbread was sitting and asked the latter's opinion of his effort."It will never do, Sheridan; you had better give it up.""Never, by G–d!" replied Sheridan; "it is in me, and it shall come out."

to spend in the studio of his friends, where he would write his poetry and hide his manuscripts. Here he made the acquaintance of artists and literary young men as unfledged as himself, but who possessed the advantages of a regular scholastic education. They taught him the rules of prosody and the exercises proper to overcome the mere mechanical difficulties of versification. This society made Murger more than ever ambitious; a secret instinct told him that the pen was the arm with which he would win fame and fortune. He determined to abandon the law-office.

His father was furious enough at this resolution, and more than one painful scene took place between them. The boy was within an ace of bring kicked out of doors, when his troubles reached the ears of a literary tenant of the house: this was no other than Monsieur de Jouy, a member of the French Academy, and quite famous in his day for "L'Ermite de la Chaussée d'Antin," and a tragedy, "Sylla," which Talma's genius threw such beams upon as made it radiant, and for an imprisonment for political offences, a condiment without which French reputations seem to lack savor. Heaven knows what would have become of the poor boy but for this intervention, as his mother was dead and he was all friendless. Monsieur de Jouy procured him the place of private secretary to Count Tolstoy, a Russian nobleman established by the Czar in Paris as his political correspondent. The salary given was meagre enough, but in this world all things have a relative as well as an intrinsic value, and eight dollars a month seemed to the poor lad, who had never yet earned a cent, a

fragment of El Dorado or of Peru. It gave him independence. His contemporaries have described him as gay, free, easy, and happy at this period. He had ceased to be dependent upon anybody; he lived upon his own earnings; he was in the full bloom of health and youth; and the horizon before him, even though clouded, wore all the colors of the rainbow. His father gave him a garret in the house, and continued to allow him a seat at the table, but he made young Murger give him six of the eight dollars earned. The rest of his salary was spent among the boxes of books which line the parapet of the Paris quays,—a sort of literary Morgue or dead-house, where the still-born and deceased children of the press are exhibited, to challenge the pity of passers-by, and so escape the corner grocer and the neighboring trunk-maker. Here Murger purchased all the volumes of new poems he could discover. When his friends jested him upon his wasteful extravagance in buying verse good for nothing but to cheapen the value of the paper on which it was printed, he replied, that a poet should keep himself informed of the progress of Art. He has since confessed that his object in buying this trash was simply to compare his efforts with those which had been deemed worthy to see print. His ambition then was to be pale, consumptive, to drink the dregs of poverty's poisoned chalice, and to toss on a hospital-bed. He found it hard work to gratify these desires. His plethoric person, his rubicund cheeks and high health, gave him much more the appearance of a jovial monk of Bolton Abbey than of a Werther or a Chatterton or a Lara.

But as he was determined to look the poet of the Byron school, for a fortnight he followed a regimen "which would have given phthisis to Mount Atlas"; he studied in some medical treatise the symptoms of the consumption, and, after wading through thirty miles of the mud and mire to be found in the environs of Paris, drenched to the skin by an autumnal rain, he went to the hospital and was admitted. He was delighted. He instantly wrote an ode to "Hallowed Misery," dated from the "House of Woe," sent it off to the Atlantic Monthly of Paris, and lay in bed dreaming he should find himself famous next morning, and receive the visits of all Paris, from Monsieur Guizot, then Prime-Minister, to the most callous poetaster of the Latin Quarter, and be besieged by every publisher, armed with bags full of money. He woke the next morning to find himself in perfect health, and to hear the physician order him to clear out of the hospital. He had no news from the magazine nor from Monsieur Guizot.

'Tis ill playing with edge-tools! The hospital is not to be coquetted with. There is no such thing as romping with misery. One might as well amuse himself toying with the rattlesnake or playing with fluoric acid. Wait a moment, and the hospital will reappear in the story of his life, sombre, pitiless, fatal, as it is in reality. A little patience, and misery will come, in its gaunt, wolf-like shape, to harry and to harass. Play not with fire!

Distress soon came. The young poet fell into bad company. He came home late one night. His father scolded: 'tis a porter's infirmity to fret at late-comers. Another night he came home

later. The scolding became a philippic. Again he did not come home at all. His father ordered him never more to darken his doors. Murger took him at his word, and went to share a friend's bed in another garret. The friend was little better off in worldly goods; he lived in a chamber for which he paid twenty dollars a year, and which was furnished "with one of those lots of furniture which are the terror of landlords, especially when quarter-day comes." Murger now began to know what it was to be poor, to go to bed without having tasted a morsel of food the whole day, to be dressed ludicrously shabby. He had never before known these horrors of poverty; for under his father's roof the meals, though humble, were always regularly served, and quarter-day never came. As eight dollars,—less by a great deal than an ordinary servant earns by sweeping rooms and washing dishes, besides being fed and lodged,—which Count Tolstoy gave his secretary, was not enough to enable Murger to live, he tried to add something to his income by his pen. He wrote petty tales for children's magazines, and exerted himself to gain admission into other and more profitable periodicals, but for a long time without success. Many and many a sheet must be blotted before the apprentice-writer can merit even the lowest honors of print: can it be called an honor to see printed lines forgotten before the book is closed? Yet even this dubious honor cannot be won until after days and nights have been given to literary composition.

Murger was for some time uncertain what course to adopt. His father sent him word that the best thing he could do would

be to get the place of body-servant to some gentleman or of waiter in some *café*! He himself half determined, in his hours of depression, when despair was his only hope, to ship as a sailor on board some man-of-war. He would at other times return to his first love, and vow he would be a painter; then music would solicit him; medicine next, and then surgery would tangle his eyes. These excursions, which commonly lasted three months each, were not fruitless; they increased his stock of information, and supplied him with some of his most striking images. He became joyous about this period, and his hilarity *broke out* all at once. One night Count Tolstoy had ordered Murger to color several thousand strategic maps, and, after he had postponed the labor repeatedly, he asked several of his friends to aid him. They sat up all night. He suddenly became very gay, and told story after story in a most vivid and humorous manner. His friends roared with laughter, and one of them begged him to abandon poetry and become a prose-writer, predicting for him a most brilliant career. But poetry has its peculiar fascinations, and is not relinquished without painful throes. Murger refused to cease versifying.

He had pernicious habits of labor. He never rose until three o'clock in the afternoon, and never began to write until after the lamp was lighted. He wrote until daybreak. If sleep came, if inspiration lagged, he would resort to coffee, and drink it in enormous quantities. One may turn night into day without great danger, upon condition of leading a temperate and regular

life; for Nature has wonderful power of adapting herself to all circumstances, upon condition that irregularity itself he regular in its irregularity. He fell into this habit from poverty. He was too poor to buy fuel and comfortable clothes, so he lay in bed to keep warm; he worked in bed,—reading, writing, correcting, buried under the comfortable bedclothes. He would sometimes drink "as many as six ounces of coffee." "I am literally killing myself," he said. "You must care me of drinking coffee; I reckon upon you." His room-mate suggested to him that they should close the windows, draw the curtains, and light the lamp in the daytime, to deceive habit by counterfeiting night. They made the attempt in vain. The roar of a great city penetrates through wall and curtain. They could not work. Inspiration ceased to flow. Murger returned to his protracted vigils, and to the stimulus of coffee, and never more attempted to break away from them. This sort of life, his frequent privations, his innumerable disappointments, drove him in good earnest to the hospital. He announces it in this way to a friend:—

"*Hospital Saint Louis, 23 May, 1842*.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Here I am again at the hospital. Two days after I sent you my last letter I woke up feeling as if my whole body were on fire. I felt as if I were enveloped in flames. I was literally burning. I lighted my candle, and was alarmed by the spectacle my poor self presented. I was red from my feet to my head,—as red as a boiled lobster, neither more nor less. So I went to the hospital this morning, as early as I could go, and here I am,—Henry

IV.'s ward, bed No. 10. The doctors were astonished at my case; they say it is *purpura*. I should say it was! The purple of the Roman emperors was not, I am very sure, as purple as my envelope.... My disease is now in a stage of reaction, and the doctors do not know what to do, I cannot walk thirty paces without stumbling. I have thousands of trumpets blowing flourishes in my ears. I have been bled, re-bled, mustard-plastered, all in vain. I have swallowed down my poor throat more arsenic than any three melodramatists of the Boulevards. I do not know how all this is going to end. The physician tells me that he will cure me, but that it will take time. To-day they are going to put all sorts of things on my body, and among them leeches to remove my giddiness.... I am greatly fatigued by my life here, and I pass some; very gloomy days,—and they are the gloomier, because there is not a single day but I see in the ward next to mine men die thick as flies. A hospital may be very poetical, but it is, too, a sad, sad place."

Many and many a time afterwards did he return to the hospital, all sad as it was. His garret was sadder in *purpura's* hour. Want had taken up its abode with him. He wanted bread often. His clothes went and came with painful regularity from his back to the pawnbroker's. His father refused to do anything for him. "He saw me without bread to put in my mouth, and offered me not a crumb, although he had money belonging to me in his hands. He saw me in boots full of holes, and gave me to understand that I was not to come to see him in such plight." Such was the poor fellow's distress, that he was almost glad when the *purpura*,

with its intolerable pains, returned, that he might crawl to the hospital, where he could say, that, "bad as the hospital-fare is, it is at least certain, and is, after all, ten times better than that I am able to earn. I can eat as many as two or three plates of soup, but then I am obliged to change my costume to do so, for it is only by cheating that one can get it." But all the time he was in the hospital he was tormented by the fear that he would lose during his absence his wretched place as Count Tolstoy's secretary, and which, wretched as it was, nevertheless was something,—was as a plank in the great ocean to one who, it gone, saw nothing but water around him, and he no swimmer. He did lose the situation, because one day he stayed at home to finish a poem, instead of appearing at his desk. The misfortune came at the worst possible time. It came when he owed two quarters' rent, fifteen dollars, to his landlord, and ten dollars to other people. "I am half dead of hunger. I am at the end of the rope. I must get a place somewhere, or blow my brains out." The mental anguish and physical privation brought back the *purpura*. He went to the hospital,—for the fifth time in eleven months and seven days,—all his furniture was sold for rent, and he knew not where he was to go when he quitted the hospital. Yet he did not give up in despair. "Notwithstanding all this, I declare to you, my dear friend," he wrote, "that, when I feel somewhat satisfied with what I have written, I am ready to clap my hands at life.... Everything is against me, and yet I shall none the less remain in the arena. The wild beasts may devour me: so be it!"

After leaving the hospital, he formed the acquaintance of Monsieur Jules Fleury, or, as he is better known to the world of letters, Monsieur Champfleury,—for, with that license the French take with their names, so this rising novelist styles himself. This acquaintance was of great advantage to Henry Murger. Monsieur Champfleury was a young man of energy and will, who took a practical view of life, and believed that a pen could in good hands earn bread as well as a yardstick, and command, what the latter cannot hope, fame. He believed that independence was the first duty of a literary man, and that true dignity consists in diligent labor rather than in indolent railing at fate and the scoffings of "uncomprehended" genius. Monsieur Champfleury was no poet. He detested poetry, and his accurate perception of the world showed him that poetry is a good deal like paper money, which depends for its current value rather upon the credit possessed by the issuer than upon its own intrinsic value. He pressed Murger to abandon poetry and take to prose. He was successful, and Murger labored to acquire bread and reputation by his prose-compositions. He practised his hand in writing vaudevilles, dramas, tales, and novels, and abandoned poetry until better days, when his life should have a little more silk and a little more gold woven into its woof. But the hours of literary apprenticeship even of prose-writers are long and arduous, especially to those whose only patrimony is their shadow in the sun. Monsieur Champfleury has given in one of his works an interesting picture of their life in common. We translate

the painful narration:—

"T'other evening I was sitting in my chimney-corner looking over a mountain of papers, notes, unfinished articles, and fine novels begun, but which will never have an end. I discovered amid my landlords' receipts for house-rent (all of which I keep with great care, just to prove to myself that they are really and truly paid) a little copy-book, which was narrow and long, like some mediæval piece of sculpture. I opened this little blue-backed copy-book; it bore the title, ACCOUNT-BOOK. How many memories were contained in this little copy-book! What a happy life is literary life, seen after a lapse of five or six years! I could not sleep for thinking of that little copy-book, so I rose and sat down at my table to discharge on these sheets all the delightful blue-backed copy-book memories which haunted my head. Were any stranger to pick up this little copy-book in the street, he would think it belonged to some poor, honest family. I dare say you have forgotten the little copy-book, although three-fourths of its manuscript is in your hand-writing. I am going to recall its origin to you.

"Nine years ago we lived together, and we possessed between us fourteen dollars a month. Full of confidence in the future, we rented two rooms in the Rue de Vaugirard for sixty dollars a year. Youth reckons not. You spoke to the porter's wife of such a sumptuous set of furniture that she let the rooms to you on your honest face without asking references. Poor woman, what thrills of horror ran through her when she saw our furniture set down before her door! You had six plates, three of which were of porcelain, a

Shakspeare, the works of Victor Hugo, a chest of drawers in its dotage, and a Phrygian cap. By some extraordinary chance, I had two mattresses, a hundred and fifty volumes, an arm-chair, two plain chairs, a table, and a skull. The idea of making a grand sofa belongs to you, I confess; but it was a deplorable idea. We sawed off the four feet of a cot-bedstead and made it rest on the floor; the consequence of which was, that the cot-bedstead proved to be utterly worthless. The porter's wife took pity upon us, and lent us a second cot-bedstead, which 'furnished' your chamber, which was likewise adorned with several dusty souvenirs you hung on the wall, such as a woman's glove, a velvet mask, and various other objects which love had hallowed.

"The first week passed away in the most delightful manner. We stayed at home, we worked hard, we smoked a great deal. I have found among this mountain of papers a blank sheet on which is written,—

Beatrix,

A Drama in Five Acts,

By Henry Murger,

Played at the – Theatre on the – day of 18—

This sheet was torn out of an enormous blank copy-book; for you were guilty of the execrable habit of using all our paper to write nothing else but titles of dramas; you wrote 'Played' as seriously as could be, just to see what effect the title-page would produce. Our paper disappeared too fast in this way. Luckily, when all of it had disappeared, you discovered, Heaven knows where or how, some old atlas of geography whose alternate leaves were blank,—a discovery which enabled us to do without the stationer.

"Hard times began to press after the first week flew away. We had a long discussion, in which each hurled at the other reproaches on the spendthrift prodigality with which we threw away our money. The discussion ended in our agreeing, that, the moment the next instalment of our

income should be received, I should keep a severe account of our expenses, in order that no more quarrels should disturb the harmony of our household, each of us taking care every day to examine the accounts. This is the little book I have found. How simple, how touching, how laconic, how full of souvenirs it is!

"We were wonderfully honest on the first of every month. I read at the date of November 1st, 1843, 'Paid Madame Bastien forty cents for tobacco due.' We paid, too, the grocer, the restaurant, (I declare there is 'restaurant' on the book!) the coal-dealer, etc. The first day of this month was a merry day, I see: 'Spent at the *café* seven cents'; a piece of extravagance for which I am sure you must have scolded me that evening. The same day you bought (the sight still makes me tremble!) thirteen cents' worth of pipes. The second of November we bought twenty-two cents' worth of ribbon: this enormous quantity of ribbon was purchased to give the last touches to our famous sofa. Our sofa's history would fill volumes. It did us yeoman's service. My pallet on the floor, formed of one single mattress and sheets without counterpane, made a poor show in our 'drawing-room,' especially as a restaurant-keeper lived in our house, and you pretended, that, if we made him bring our meals up to our 'drawing-room,' he would be so dazzled by our splendor he could not refuse us credit. I demurred, that the odd appearance of my pallet had nothing capable of fascinating a tradesman's eye; whereupon we agreed that we would spread over it a piece of violet silk which came, Heaven knows where from; but, unfortunately, the silk

was not large enough by one-third. After long reflection we thought the library might be turned to some account: the quarto volumes of Shakspeare, thrown with cunning negligence on the pallet, hid the narrowness of the silk, and concealed the sheets from every eye. We managed in this way to contrive a sofa. I may add, that the keeper of the restaurant dedicated to the 'Guardian Angel,' who had no customers except hack-drivers and bricklayers, was caught by our innocent intrigues. On this same second of November we paid an immense sum of money to the laundress,—one whole dollar. I crossed the Pont des Arts, proud as a member of the Institute, and entered with a stiff upper-lip the Café Momus. You remember this beneficent establishment, which we discovered, gave half a cup of coffee for five cents, until bread rose, when the price went up to six cents, a measure which so discontented many of the frequenters that they carried their custom elsewhere. I passed the evening at Laurent's room. I must have been seized with vertigo,—for I actually lost ten cents at *écarté*, ten cents which we had appropriated to the purchase of roasted chestnuts. Poor Laurent, who was such a democrat, who used to go 'at the head of the schools' to see Béranger, is dead and gone now! His poems were too revolutionary for this world.

"You resolved on the third of November that we would cook our own victuals as long as the fourteen dollars lasted; so you bought a soup-pot which cost fifteen cents, some thyme and some laurel: being a poet, you had such a marked weakness for laurel, you used to poison all the soup with

it. We laid in a supply of potatoes, and constantly bought tobacco, coffee, and sugar. There was gnashing of teeth and curses when the expenses of the fourth of November were written. Why did you let me go out with my pockets so full of money? And you went to Dagneaux's and spent five cents. What in the name of Heaven could you have gotten at Dagneaux's for five cents?[3] Good me! how expensive are the least pleasures! Upon pretext of going with a free-ticket to see a drama by an inhabitant of Belleville, I bought two omnibus-tickets, one to go and the other to return. Two omnibus-tickets! I was severely punished for this prodigality. Seventy-four cents ran away from me, making their escape through a hole in my pocket. How could I dare to return home and confront your wrath? Two omnibus-tickets alone would have brought a severe admonition on my head; but seventy-four cents with them—! If I had not begun to disarm you by telling you the Belleville drama, I should have been a doomed man. Nevertheless, the next day, without thinking of these terrible losses, we lent G– money; he really seemed to look upon us as Messrs. Murger and Co., his bankers. I wonder by what insidious means this G– contrived to captivate our confidence, and the only solution I can discover is the inexperience of giddy youth; for two days afterwards G– was audacious enough to reappear and to ask for another loan. Nothing new appears on the pages of the book, except fifteen cents for wine: this must have been one of your ideas: I do not mean to say that you were ever a wine-bibber, but we were so accustomed to

[3] Dagneaux's is the most expensive restaurant of the Latin Quarter.

water, we drank so much water without getting tired of it, that this item, 'wine,' seems very extraordinary to me. We added up every page until the eighth of November, when the sum total reached eight dollars and twelve cents; here the additions ceased. We doubtless were averse to trembling at the sight of the total. The tenth of November, you purchased a thimble: some men have skill enough to mend their clothes at their leisure moments. A few days ago I paid a visit to a charming literary man, who writes articles full of life and wit for the newspapers. I opened the door so suddenly, he blushed as he threw a pair of pantaloons into the corner. He had a thimble on his finger. Ah! wretched cits, who refuse to give your daughters in marriage to literary men, you would be full of admiration for them, could you see them mending their clothes! Smoking-tobacco absorbed more than one-third of our money; we received too many friends, and then there was a celebrated artisan-poet who used to be brought to our rooms, and who used to bawl so many stanzas I would go to bed.

"Monsieur Credit made his reappearance on the fourteenth of November. He went to the grocer, to the tobacco-shop, to the fuel-dealer, and was received tolerably well; he was especially successful with the grocer's daughter when he appeared in your likeness. Did Monsieur Credit die on the seventeenth of November? I ask, because I see on the 'credit' side of our account-book, 'Frock-coat, sixty cents.' These sixty cents came from the pawnbroker's. How his clerks humiliated us! I could make a long and terrible history of our dealings with the pawnbroker; I shall

make a short and simple story of it. When money failed us, you pointed out to me an old cashmere shawl which we used as a table-cover. I told you, 'They will give us nothing on that.' You replied, 'Oh, yes, they will, if we add pantaloons and waistcoats to it.' I added pantaloons and waistcoats to it, and you took the bundle and started for the den in Place de la Croix Rouge. You soon came back with the huge package, and you were sad enough as you said, 'They are disagreeable *yonder*; try in the Rue de Condé; the clerks, who are accustomed to deal with students, are not so hard-hearted as they are in the Place de la Croix Rouge.' I went to the Rue de Condé. The two pair of pantaloons, the famous shawl, and the waistcoats were closely examined; even their pockets were searched. 'We cannot lend anything on that,' said the pawnbroker's clerk, disdainfully pushing the things away from him. You had the excellent habit of never despairing. You said, 'We must wait until this evening; at night all clothes are new; and to take every precaution, I shall go to the pawnbroker's shop in the Rue du Fouare, where all the poor go; as they are accustomed there to see nothing pledged but rags and tatters, our clothes will glitter like barbaric pearl and gold.' Alas! the pawnbroker in the Rue du Fouare was as cruel as his brethren. So the next morning in sheer despair I went to pledge my only frock-coat, and I did this to lend half the sum to that incessant borrower, G–. Lastly, on the nineteenth of November, we sold some books. Fortune smiled on us; we had a chicken-soup with a superabundance of laurel. Do you remember an excellent shopkeeper of the

Rue du Faubourg Saint Jacques, near the city-gate, who, we were told, not only sold thread, but kept a circulating library? What a circulating library it was! Plays, three odd volumes of Anne Radcliffe's novels,—and if the old lady had never made our acquaintance, the inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint Jacques would never have known of the existence of 'Letters upon Mythology' and 'De Profundis,' two books I was heartless enough to sell, notwithstanding all their titles to my respect. The authors were born in the same neighborhood which gave me birth: one is Desmoustiers, the other Alfred Mousse. Maybe Arsène Houssaye would not be pleased, were I to remind him of one of the *crimes* of his youth, where one sees for a frontispiece skeletons—'twas the heyday of the Romantic School—playing tenpins with skulls for balls! The sale of 'De Profundis' enabled us to visit Café Tabourey that evening. You sold soon afterwards eighty cents' worth of books. Allow me to record that they came from your library; my library remained constantly upon the shelves; notwithstanding all your appeals, I never sold any books, except the lamentable history of Alfred Mousse. Monsieur Credit contrived to go to the tradesmen's with imperturbable coolness; he went everywhere until the first of December, when he paid every cent of debt. I have but one regret, and this is, that the little account-book suddenly ceases after a month; it contains only the month of November. This is not enough! Had I continued it, Its pages would have been so many mementos to recall my past life to me."

Monsieur Champfleury introduced Henry Murger to

Monsieur Arsène Houssaye, who was then chief editor of "L'Artiste," and it happened oddly enough that Murger wrote nothing but poetry for this journal. Monsieur Houssaye took a great fancy to Murger, and persuaded him, for the sake of "effect" on the title-pages of books and on the backs of magazines, to change Henri to Henry, and give Murger a German physiognomy by writing it Mürger. As Frenchmen treat their names with as much freedom as we use towards old gloves, Murger instantly adopted Monsieur Houssaye's suggestion, and clung as long as he lived to the new orthography of his name. He began to find it less difficult to procure each day his daily bread, but still the gaunt wolf, Poverty, continued to glare on him. "Our existence," he said, "is like a ballad which has several couplets; sometimes all goes well, at other times all goes badly, then worse, next worst, and so on; but the burden never changes; 'tis always the same,—Misery! Misery! Misery!" One day he became so absolutely and hopelessly poor, that he was undecided whether to enlist as a sailor or take a clerk's place in the Messrs. de Rothschilds' banking-house. He actually did make application to Madame de Rothschild. Here is the letter in which he records this application:—

"*15th August, 1844.*

"I am delighted to be at last able to write you without being obliged to describe wretchedness. Ill-fortune seems to begin to tire of pursuing me, and good-fortune appears about to make advances to me. Madame Rothschild, to whom I wrote begging

her to get her husband to give me a situation, informed her correspondent of it, and told him to send for and talk with me. I could not obtain a place, but I was offered ten dollars rather delicately, and I took it. As soon as I received it, I went as fast as I could to put myself in condition to be able to go out in broad daylight."

We scarcely know which is the saddest to see: Henry Murger accepting ten dollars from Madame de Rothschild's generous privy purse,—for it is alms, soften it as you may,—or to observe the happiness this paltry sum gives him. How deeply he must have been steeped in poverty!

But now the very worst was over. In 1848 he sent a contribution to "Le Corsaire," a petty newspaper of odds and ends, of literature and of gossip. The contribution was published. He became attached to the paper. In 1849 he began the publication in "Le Corsaire" of the story which was to make him famous, "La Vie de Bohême," which was, like all his works, something in the nature of an autobiographical sketch. Its wit, its sprightly style, its odd images, its odd scenes, its strange mixture of gayety and sadness, attracted attention immediately. But who pays attention to newspaper-articles? However brilliant and profound they may be, they are forgotten quite as soon as read. The best newspaper-writer on his most successful day can only hope to be remembered from one morning to another; if he commands attention for so long a period, his utmost ambition should consider itself satisfied.

It was not until Murger had rescued his book from the columns of the newspaper that he obtained reputation. He was indebted to Monsieur Jules Janin, the eminent theatrical reporter of the "Journal des Débats," for great assistance at this critical hour of his life. One morning Henry Murger entered Monsieur Jules Janin's study, carrying under his arm an immense bundle of old newspapers, secured by a piece of old twine. He asked Monsieur Jules Janin to read the story contained in the old newspapers, and to advise him if it was worth republication, and what form of publication was best suited to it. As soon as Murger retired, Monsieur Jules Janin took up the newspapers. Few bibliopoles in Paris are more delicate than Monsieur Janin; it is positive pain to him to peruse any volume, unless the margin be broad, the type excellent, the printing executed by a famous printer, and the binding redolent of the rich perfume of Russian leather. These newspapers were torn and tattered, stained with wine and coffee and tobacco. They were not so much as in consecutive order. Conceive the irritation they must have produced on Monsieur Janin! But when he once got fairly into the story he forgot all his delicacy, and when Henry Murger returned, two days afterwards, he said to him,—"Sir, go home and write us a comedy with Rodolphe and Schaunard and Nini and Musette.[4] It shall be played as soon as you have written it; in four-and-twenty hours it will be celebrated, and the dramatic reporters will see to the rest."

[4] These are characters in the novel, portraits from real life. Murger drew himself, and told his own history, when he sketched Rodolphe.

The magnificent promises to the poverty-racked man fevered him almost to madness; he took up the packet, (which Monsieur Janin had elegantly bound with a rose-colored ribbon,) and off he went, without even thinking to thank Monsieur Janin for his kindness, or to close the door. Murger carried his story to a friend, Theodore Barrière, (since famous as a play-writer,) and in three months' time the piece was ready for the stage, was soon brought out at the "Variétés," and the names of Murger and Barrière were on every lip in Paris.

We have nothing like the French stage in the suddenness and extensiveness of the popularity it gives men. We have no means by which a gifted man can suddenly acquire universal fame,—can "go to bed unknown and wake famous." The most brilliant speech at the bar is heard within a narrow horizon. The most brilliant novel is slow in making its way; and before its author is famous beyond the shadow of the publisher's house, a later new novel pales the lustre of the rising star. The French stage occupies the position our Congress once held, when its halls were adorned by the great men, the Clays, Calhouns, Websters, of our fathers' days, or the Supreme Court occupied, when Marshall sat in the chief seat on its bench, and William Pinckney brought to its bar his elaborate eloquence, and William Wirt his ornate and touching oratory. The stage is to France what Parliament is to England. It is more: it is the mirror and the fool; it glasses society's form and pressure; it criticizes folly. Murger's success on the stage opened every door of publicity to him. His name was

current, it had a known market-value. The success of the piece assured the success of the book. The "Revue des Deux Mondes" begged Murger to write for its pages. Murger's fortune seemed assured.

There was but one croak heard in all the applause. It came from Murger's father. He could not believe his eyes and his ears, when they avouched to him that his son's name and praises filled every paper and every mouth. It utterly confounded him. The day of the second performance of the piece Murger went to see his father.

"If you would like to see my piece again to-day, you may take these tickets."

His father replied,—

"Your piece? What! you don't mean to say that they are still playing it?"

He could not conceive it possible that his "vagabond" son should interest anybody's attention.

The very first use Murger made of his increased income was to fly Paris and to seek the country,—that rural life which Frenchmen abhor. Marlotte, a little village in the Forest of Fontainebleau, became his home; there he spent eight months of every year. Too poor, at first, to rent a cottage for himself, he lodged at the miserable village-inn, which, with its eccentric drunken landlord, he has sketched in one of his novels; and when fortune proved less unkind to him, he took a cottage which lay between the highway and the forest, and there the first happy

years of his life were spent. They were few, and they were checkered. His chief petty annoyance was his want of skill as a sportsman. He could never bring down game with his gun, and he was passionately fond of shooting. On taking up his abode in the country, the first thing he had made was a full hunting-suit in the most approved fashion, and this costume he would wear upon all occasions, even when he came up to Paris. He never attained any nearer approximation to a sportsman's character. One day he went out shooting with a friend. A flock of partridges rose at their feet.

"Fire, Murger! fire!" exclaimed his friend.

"Why, great heavens, man, I can't shoot so! Wait until they *light* on yon fence, and then I'll take a crack at them."

He could no better shoot at stationary objects, however, than at game on the wing. Hard by his cottage a hare had burrowed in a potato-field. Every morning and every evening Murger fired at the hare, but with such little effect, that the hare soon took no notice either of Murger or his gun, and gambolled before them both as if they were simply a scarecrow. Murger bagged but one piece of game in the whole course of his life, and the way this was done happened in this wise. One day he was asleep at the foot of a tree in the Forest of Fontainebleau,—his gun by his side. He was suddenly awakened by the barking of a dog which he knew belonged to the most adroit poacher that levied illicit tribute on the imperial domain. The dog continued to bark and to look steadily up into the tree. Murger followed the dog's eyes, but

could discover nothing. The poacher ran up, saying,—"Quick, Monsieur Murger! quick! Give me your gun. Don't you see it?"

Murger replied,—"See it? See what?"

"Why, a pheasant! a splendid cock! There he is on the top limb!"

The poacher aimed and fired; the pheasant fell at Murger's feet. "Take the bird and put it in your game-bag, Monsieur Murger, and tell everybody you killed it."

Murger gratefully accepted the present; and this was the first and only time that Murger ever bagged a bird.

But the cloud which darkened his sky now was the cloud which had lowered on all his life,—poverty. He was always fevered by the care and anxiety of procuring money. Life is expensive to a man occupying such a position as Murger filled, and French authors are ill paid. A French publisher thinks he has done wonders, if he sells all the copies of an edition of three thousand volumes; and if any work reaches a sale of sixteen or seventeen thousand volumes, the publisher is ready to cry, "Miracle!" Further, men who lead intellectual lives are almost necessarily extravagant of money. They know not its value. They know, indeed, that ten mills make one cent, and that ten cents make one dime, and that ten dimes make one dollar; but they are ignorant of the practical value of these denominations of the great medium of exchange. They cannot "jew," and know not that the slight percentage they would take off the price asked is a prize worth contending for. Again, the physical exhaustion or

reaction which almost invariably follows mental exertion requires stimulants of some kind or other to remove the pain—it is an acute pain—which reaction brings upon the whole system. These stimulants, whether they be good dinners, or brilliant company, or generous wines, or parties of pleasure, are always costly. Besides, life in Paris is such an expensive mode of existence, the simplest pleasures there are so very costly, and there are so many microscopic issues through which money pours away in that undomestic life, in that career passed almost continually in public, that one must have a considerable fortune, or lead an extremely retired life. A fashionable author, whose books are in every book-shop window, and whose plays are posted for performance on every wall, cannot lead a secluded life; and all the circumstances we have hinted at conspire to make his life expensive. In vain Murger fled the great city. It pursued him even in the country. Admirers and parasites sought him out even in his retreat, and forced their way to his table. There is another reason for Murger's life-long poverty: he worked slowly, and this natural difficulty of intellectual travail was increased by his exquisite taste and desire of perfection. The novel was written and re-written time and again. The plot was changed; the characters were altered; each phrase was polished and repolished. Where ordinary writers threw off half a dozen volumes, Murger found it hard to fit a single volume for the press. Ordinary writers grew rich in writing speedily forgotten novels; he continued poor in writing novels which will live for many years. Then, Murger's

vein of talent made him work for theatres which gave more reputation than ready money. He was too delicate a writer to construct those profitable dramas which run a hundred or a hundred and fifty nights and place ten or twenty thousand dollars in the writer's purse. His original poverty kept him poor. He could not afford to wait until the seed he had sown had grown and ripened for the sickle; so he fell into the hands of usurers, who purchased the crop while it was yet green, and made the harvest yield them profits of fifty or seventy-five per centum.

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