Various

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A PILGRIMAGE TO PENSHURST

BY C. A. ALEXANDER

One of the admirers of Goëthe, commenting on his characteristic excellencies, has remarked that he is the most *suggestive* of writers. Were we to seek an epithet by which to describe the architectural remains and historical monuments of England, with reference to their impression on the mind of an observer, perhaps no better could offer itself than that which has been thus applied to the works of the great German. In the property of awakening reflection by bringing before the mind that series of events whose connection with the progress of modern civilization has been most direct and influential, and of recalling names which, to the American at least, sound like household words, they stand unrivalled. Our manners, our

customs, our national constitution itself, may be said to have grown up beneath the shelter of these venerable structures, whose associations ally them in a manner scarcely less striking with those wider developments of social and political reason in which we believe the welfare of our species to be involved. Who is there, that, standing within 'the great hall of William Rufus,' can forget how often it has been the theatre of those mighty conflicts, in which, however slowly and reluctantly, error and prejudice have been compelled to relax their hold on the human mind? Dr. Johnson has spoken to us, in his usual stately phrase, of patriotism re-invigorated and of piety warmed amid the scenes of Marathon and Iona; but where is the Marathon which appeals to us so forcibly as the field consecrated by the blood of a Hamden or a Falkland? and where the Iona which is so eloquent with recollections as the walls which have echoed to the voices of a Ridley and a Barrow?

It is true indeed, that the recollections of many other lands, as associated with their monuments, lay much stronger hold upon the imagination than those of England. Of the former we might say that there was about them more of the element of poetry; of the latter, that they furnish an ampler share of materials for reflection. One great moral, 'the comprehensive text of the Hebrew preacher,' the invariable 'vanity of vanities,' is alike inscribed upon all the vestiges of human greatness. For the rest, a serene and touching beauty lingers around and hallows every relic which attests the hand of Phidias, or marks the country

of Pericles and Epaminondas. No lapse of time, no process of decay, will ever wholly exorcise that spirit of stateliness and command which sits enthroned amid the ruins of the 'Eternal City,' as her own Marius once sate amid the ruins of a rival capital. But in all that regards a common standard of opinions, institutions and interests, and in the facility of reasoning as respects these, from the experience and practice of one time and people to those of another, we cannot but feel that a vast gulf has interposed between our own age and that which is commemorated by the monuments of Greece and Rome. The venerable genius of antiquity, seated among crumbling arches and broken columns, has but little to say to us respecting those questions which most deeply agitate and unceasingly perplex the busy and the thinking part of mankind at the present day. No response are we to expect from that quarter, concerning our bank-laws and our corn-laws; our systems of credit and of commerce; our endless disquisitions on the balance of power and of parties, on the rights of suffrage and of conscience. While we reserve to the theorist the privilege of adorning his theme by allusions to the polity of Lycurgus and Numa, we are sensible that the practical statesman who trusts himself to such examples will be constantly liable to be deluded by false parallels and imperfect analogies. A voice, like that which is said to have startled the mariner of old on the coasts of Ionia, and to have announced to him the cessation of oracles, comes to us from all the remains of pagan antiquity, warning us that the spirit of that ancient

civilization has departed with its forms: and while it bids us look forward to a new destiny for the human race, it teaches us that the maxims and the oracles by which that destiny must be guided, are to be sought elsewhere than in the Republic of Plato and the grottos of Egeria.

Compared, then, with the monuments of classic antiquity, those of England claim the distinction of being associated with an order of things which is still existing and still in process of development: compared with those of the rest of christian Europe, they recall a progress, which, much more consistently than in other countries, has tended in the direction of popular rights and constitutional liberty. The reader of English history indeed has too often occasion to blush for the vices or mourn for the madness of his species, as the spectator who looks upon the grim fastnesses of the Tower, or into the gloomy purlieus of St. Giles', will need but little else to remind him of the despotism and inequality which have pursued liberty into this her boasted and sea-girt retreat. But the Bastile, certainly, did not look in its day upon scenes of less flagrant atrocity than the 'towers of Julius;' while this advantage has always obtained in favor of the latter, that he who turned with disgust or terror from that image of despotic pride and violence, might behold at no great distance the piles of Westminster, the seats of law and legislation, where the irrepressible spirit of freedom in the bosom of the Commons was still nursing its resentment or muttering its remonstrances at seasons of the deepest gloom and depression. Henry VIII.

might have heard that voice mingling with the groans of his victims; Charles II. could not altogether shut it out from the scenes of his midnight revel and debauchery. But no such hopeful contrast meets us in the features or the history of the neighboring continent. Democracy, it is true, the rough and hardy growth of the German forests, struck an earlier root and flourished at first with better promise *there* than in England. But this different fortune awaited it on the continent and the island; that in the former it was soon rooted out, and required in modern times the most violent and sanguinary efforts to reproduce it; in the latter it has constantly survived and struggled through every disaster toward a hopeful development. Such has been the different political fate of two branches of the great Teutonic family; let us observe whether some corresponding difference does not make itself manifest in the aspect of their respective countries.

It might have been readily anticipated that the maintenance of the popular right as a constitutional principle, operating through a long course of ages, would have produced not only a sturdy independence among the bulk of the English nation, but to some extent also, a local independence of the country as regards the capital and the court. It might have been foreseen, that instead of concentrating every separate ray of genius and renown into one grand *halo* around the throne, this habitual effort of the popular mind would have had a tendency to scatter those rays more equally over the land, making the green valley and the sequestered hamlet rejoice, each in the memory of its bard or

hero. Such might have been our prognostic from the political condition of England as compared with that of the continent, and such will be found upon observation to have been the result. A French poet aptly describes the centralizing influences of his own capital as regards France, when he tells us that 'at Paris people *live*, elsewhere they only *vegetate*.' One great holocaust of talents, reputations and fortunes forever ascends there to the glory of the Grand Nation, absorbing every thing, assimilating every thing to itself, and leaving the country widowed of its interest and shorn of its appropriate graces. The poet, whose footsteps on the sunny plains of Provence would have long brightened in the traditions of its peasantry; the hero, whose name would have sufficed to confer undying interest on some old *château* of the Jura; the orator, whose leisure hours might have made some French Tusculum on the banks of the Loire forever fresh with the memory of associated honors; all these have alike hastened to Paris, identified themselves once for all with its crowds, and added whatever *prestige* might attend their own names through future ages to the already overshadowing *prestige* of that wonderful city. They point you there to the house where the great Corneille breathed his last; it is hard by the metropolitan church of St. Roche, and scarcely more than a bow-shot from the Tuilleries, as if the poet of Cinna and Polyeucte could not render up his breath in peace except in the neighborhood of those high dignitaries, into whose lips he had breathed while living so much of his own grandeur and elevation; but who reminds

you of the hills of his native Normandy, or points you to the humble chamber or the peaceful valley where 'gorgeous Tragedy in sceptred pall' first swept before the eyes of his dawning fancy? No; if you would recall the memory of Corneille through the medium of places familiar with his presence when living, you must repair to the Hotel de Rambouillet, in one of the most noisy and unpoetic quarters of Paris.

Now with respect to England, all this is as nearly as possible reversed. The political influences spoken of before, operating no doubt with others of which it is unnecessary to speak, have acted dispersively on the sum of national reputations, and equitably allotted to almost every part of the fair island some *parcenary* share of fame, some hallowing memory, like a household genius, to preside over and endear its localities. London has not, like Paris, proved itself in this the insatiate Saturn of the national offspring. If you inquire, for instance, for memorials of the life and presence of Shakspeare, it is not probable, as in the case of Corneille, that you will be referred to the crowded streets and squares of the metropolis, though his active life was passed and his unrivalled fame achieved there; but far away to the west, where Nature received him on her flowery lap, beside his own Avon; in the shades where his genius first grew familiar with the shapes of beauty, sublimity, and terror, and whither he retired at last 'to husband out life's taper' amid the common charities of home; to this spot it is that you must repair, if you would drink freshly of that well-spring of associations which hallows

the footsteps of England's immortal dramatist. In like manner, one might say, that it is not in the sumptuous galleries of Holland House, neighbored by the crowds and tumult of the parks, that the admirer of Addison would find it most easy to call up the image of the sage; but in that quiet meadow which he used to frequent on the banks of the Cheswell, when evening is gathering on the tops of the lofty elms and around the gray towers of Magdalen, how pleasing and unforced the effort which recalls him to our imaginations!

And so too of others. Gray has not made the country churchyard immortal in song alone, but has laid himself to rest with all the memories of that imperishable strain around him, beneath as green a sod as wraps the head of the humblest peasant for whom his muse implored 'the passing tribute of a sigh.' The pensive shade of Cowper beckons to the groves of Olney; and the melancholy ghost of Chatterton, (kindred to Cowper only in his woes and his genius,) has fled from the crowded thoroughfares of London, where he sank oppressed in the turmoil of life, to haunt forever, in the eyes of the dreaming enthusiast, those dim aisles of St. Mary Redcliffe in Bristol, whence he drew the spells which immortalized but could not preserve him. And thus will it be when the lights of to-day, the bards of living renown, shall have passed away, but not to be forgotten. No one will then think of tracing Wordsworth, or Moore, or Southey, amid the dusky lanes and glittering saloons of the metropolis, but the lakes of Cumberland and the bowers of Wiltshire will still rejoice in the

ever-brightening honors of associated genius. Even the hardier spirits of the isle, whose destiny has called them to the rougher paths of life, to the battle-field or the senate, away from the haunts of nature and the Muse; even these have seldom failed, in the intervals of busier life, to remember the charms of the rural life of England, and in giving their more familiar hours to its enjoyments, have bequeathed to many a fair spot a heritage of memories more precious than wealth, and which the pilgrims of after ages will not willingly let perish.

It is to one of these provincial retreats, (if such they may be called, when the migratory habits of society are rendering them daily more known and frequented) that the foregoing remarks are designed to lead the attention of the indulgent reader.

'The southern district of Kent,' says Gibbon, 'which borders on Sussex and the sea, was formerly overspread with the great forest Anderida; and even now retains the denomination of the Weald, or Woodland.' On the verge of this region, now diversified with the traces of civilization and culture, and at the distance of some thirty miles from London, stands Penshurst, for many generations the domain and seat of the illustrious family of Sydney. The mansion is of that class termed castellated houses, as retaining some of the features of the feudal castle, but accommodated to the more secure and less circumspect usages of a later age. In itself, it presents perhaps no very striking example of the merits or defects of its class, but it claims a much higher distinction in having been the birth-place and paternal home of Sir Philip

Sydney.

To what name can we point which is more brightly adorned than his with all the accomplishments of the soldier, the courtier and the scholar? Still rises upon the memory through the mists of three centuries that touching legend of Zutphen, where the wounded hero waived from his lips the cup of water because it was more needed by the dying comrade at his side; and the pure morality and lofty chivalry which animate the 'Arcadia,' still bear witness to us of the personal merit of this pride and ornament of the English court. His sagacious but selfish mistress, Elizabeth, once stood, we are told, between him and the proffered crown of Poland, as being loth to part (so she expressed herself,) with him who was 'the jewel of her time.' She is reported too to have denied him on another occasion the permission which he earnestly sought, of connecting his fame and fortunes with those trans-atlantic enterprises which were already beginning to crown with success and distinction the efforts of such men as Drake and Frobisher. This last is a field of adventure upon which we must still regret that Sir Philip was not allowed to enter. The New World was then no less the region for romantic enterprise than profitable exertion, although the explorers of these distant climes had too often sunk the generosity of the soldier in the rapacity of the spoiler. In Sir Philip Sydney the world of Columbus would have had a visitor of a different order. To the courage of Smith and the accomplishments of Raleigh he would have added a spirit of honor and moderation peculiarly his own, and we should still

have delighted to trace the impressions of his genius and virtue in the early annals of our continent. But his fate was destined to a different scene; and his career, though thus limited by a jealous sovereign and an early death, has left little which we can reasonably deplore but its brevity; while that brevity itself throws around his character the last touches of romantic interest, and assigns him the not unenviable lot of having carried off the rewards of age without its infirmities, and borne a maturity of honors into the safe asylum of a premature grave:

> 'Invida quem Lachesis raptum,
> Dum numerat palmas, credidit esse senem.'

In this age of literary and multifarious pilgriming, it cannot be unacceptable to propose an excursion to a mansion dignified by its associations with such a name. Neither is it a slight recreation to him who has been confined for weeks and months within the dusky enclosures of London, to break his bounds and emerge into the breathing fields of Surry and Kent. The father of English poetry, and poet of English pilgrims, Chaucer himself, stands ready to accompany us for at least a small portion of our route: it was along the road on which we enter, that he conducted, ages ago, those pilgrims to the shrine of Canterbury who still live in his verses; and we may glance at the Tabard Inn whence they set forth, and indulge our fancy with the thought of their quaint equipments, while we betake ourselves to the modern

'hostelrie' of the Elephant and Castle, and commit our persons to the modern comforts of an English coach. Alas! for the fickleness of a world which changes its idols almost as often and as easily as its fashions. Time was when we should have found this great highway strewn with devotees hurrying to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket. But now, though we might detect, no doubt, in the throng around us, the counterpart of each individual whom Chaucer committed to his living canvass; of the knight who 'loved chevalrie' and the Frankelein 'who loved wine;' of the young squire 'with his locks in presse,' and the fair lady who

> ——'of her smiling was ful simple and coy,
> Her gretest oathe n'as but by Seint Eloy;'

all as intent as of old upon objects not less fleeting, and changed in little but the fashion of their attire; now there is none so poor as to do reverence to the martyr-prelate for the sake of those merits which were once thought a sufficient covering for the sins of countless followers.

As the great eastern artery of London, the road which we have thus far followed begins to distribute its living mass into the successive provincial avenues which diverge from it, we find ourselves included in that portion of the throng, whom the pursuit of health or pleasure conducts toward Tonbridge.[1] The high

[1] This route leads, among other villages, through that of Sevenoaks, famous as the place where Jack Cade and his rabble overthrew the forces of Stafford, in the very same year, (1450,) when Faust and Gutenberg set up the first press in Germany, and long,

and level country which under the name of 'Downs'[2] forms the northern and western boundary of Kent, sinks by a sudden and steep declivity on its eastern edge; which edge the geologists tell us was once washed by a primeval ocean, and is still seamed by the ineffaceable traces of its currents and storms. For ourselves

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therefore, before Cade could have justly complained, as Shakspeare has made him do, that the Lord Say had 'caused printing to be used' in England, and 'built a paper-mill.' But who taxes the sun for his spots or Shakspeare for anachronisms? He who was born to exhaust and imagine worlds, cannot of course be denied some innocent liberties with chronology. The village in question, however, is more interesting to travellers from being in the vicinity of Knole, the fine old seat of the dukes of Dorset. The stranger is led here through long galleries garnished with furniture of the time of Elizabeth and hung with portraits which at every step recall names of the deepest historical interest. Who can ever forget that which hangs or hung over the door of Lady Betty Germaine's chamber? It is Milton in the bloom of manhood, and the immortal epic seems to be just dawning on those mild and pensive features. One chamber, of sumptuous appointments remains, (so runs the legend,) as it was last tenanted by James I., no head less sapient or august having been since permitted to press the pillow. In another every thing stands as it was arranged for the reception of the second James, who forfeited, it seems, a luxurious lodging at Knole at the same time that he forfeited his crown. The name of Lady Betty Germaine, Swift's friend and correspondent, connects the place with all the celebrities of the reign of Queen Anne. On emerging from the building we view the magnificent groves of the park, fit haunt for nightingales, though Becket is said to have driven them by an anathema from the neighborhood, because their songs interrupted his nocturnal meditations. But the memory of Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, (once proprietor of Knole,) the best poet of his time, and 'the immediate father-in-verse of Spenser,' sufficiently redresses the stigma of so churlish a proscription, and the nightingales may well claim perpetual franchise under sanction of a name to which the ancient inscription would apply:Λί δὲ τεαὶ ζώουσιν ἀηδονες, ἥσιν ὁ παντωνάρπακτὴρ Αἱδης ουκ επὶ χεῖρα βαλεὶ.Yet live thy nightingales of song: on thoseForgetfulness her hand shall ne'er impose.

[2] Dunum or Duna, sigifieth a hill or higher ground, whence *Downs*, which cometh of the old French word *dun*. Coke Lit. 235.

it forms a vantage-ground from which we seem to look at one glance over almost the whole of that fair province which stretches nearly to the continent, and lifts the white cliffs of Albion above the surges of the British channel. We think of the day when the standard bearer of the tenth legion bore the eagle of Cæsar to the shore amid the cries of the opposing Britons; and of the still more signal day when Augustine displayed the cross before the eyes of the softened and repentant Saxons. We think too of the beings with whose memories Shakspeare has peopled this portion of the Isle; of Lear and Cordelia, of Edgar, Gloster, and Kent; of that night of horrors upon the stormy heath, and that scene of unutterable tenderness and heart-break on the sands of Dover. Unbidden, as we gaze over the fair and varied prospect, the words of the same great dramatist rise to our lips, in his appropriation of the sentiments and language of the first conqueror of Britain:

> 'Kent in the commentaries Cæsar writ,
> Is termed the civil'st place of all this isle;
> Sweet is the country because full of riches,
> The people liberal, active, valiant, wealthy.'

But the riches of Kent must be spoken of with due limitations. Those geological changes and formations before alluded to, which have marked the track of wealth across the British islands by deposits of mineral coal, as clearly as if it had been traced in sunbeams, have bequeathed no such sources of sub-terrene affluence to Kent. Nor has nature been more than

parsimonious (to say the least) with respect to the superficial qualities of its soil. We have only, however, to cast our eyes on a topographical chart of Kent, to see how beneficently these disadvantages are balanced by considerations of a different sort. Washed along a vast line of coast by the ocean, and bordered to an equal or greater extent by the Thames; penetrated by the navigable Medway, and watered by such fertilizing streams as the Eden and the Ton; traversed through its whole length by that ancient highway of Dover, which figured in the itineraries of the Romans, and which still conveys much of the ceaseless intercourse between England and the Continent; its coast studded with towers and harbors; its interior sprinkled with hamlets, parks, cities, and baronial residences; claiming, finally, to be the episcopal head and fountain of ecclesiastical dignity for the whole British empire; we can readily see how Kent may vindicate to itself the praise conveyed in the lines of Shakspeare as the abode of a liberal, active, valiant, and even wealthy people.

Nor is this flattering ascription of personal qualities unsupported by the facts of its local history. To the great Roman conqueror the inhabitants of this part of Britain opposed a resistance, which taught him, as he indirectly confesses, to look back with many a wistful glance toward the coast where he had left his transports, but ill-assured against the ocean or the enemy. Against the Norman conqueror, likewise, when all the rest of the island had yielded implicitly to his sway and to the substitution of feudal for native usages, the people of Kent still

made good their old hereditary law of *Gavelkind*. More than once in after times, stung by oppression or inflamed by zeal, they have drawn together in a spirit of tumultuous resistance, and borne their remonstrances to the very gates of the national capital. Connecting this history and character with their maritime position, we are led to apply a remark which our American historian Prescott has generalized from the circumstances of a people not dissimilarly situated. 'The sea-board,' says that admirable writer, 'would seem to be the natural seat of liberty. There is something in the very presence, in the atmosphere of the ocean, which invigorates not only the physical but the moral energies of man.' Or as Wordsworth has expressed the same idea, with an extension of it, no less just than poetical, to another class of natural objects:

> 'Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
> One of the mountains; each a mighty voice:
> In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
> They were thy chosen music, Liberty!'

It has already been said that our route lay toward Tonbridge. True, those celebrated wells lie somewhat beyond Penshurst, yet few pilgrims will fail to visit them; and it may be permitted to glance aside from our immediate object to glean a very few observations from the customs of this fashionable watering-place. But the American visitor must not expect to meet at a watering-place in England precisely that aggregate of

circumstances which goes to form his idea of the pleasures and privileges of one in his own country. There are restraints imposed by the circumstances of these elder lands, their necessity more than their choice, which must still at first sight appear forbidding and superfluous to the inhabitant of a new one. The rigid barriers of ceremony; the appearance of studied isolation and exclusiveness; the monotonous movement of the great social machine, organized to its minutest details, and regulated through all its processes; these at first may lead the visitor from the New World to suppose that he has fallen upon some region of persevering formality, where all is frost and show, perpetual glitter and unmeaning barrenness. But pierce these formal barriers of etiquette, dissolve by the requisite appliances this superficial frost-work of the English circles, and none, it is believed, will have any just reason to complain of coldness and reserve. By the social barriers spoken of, are not meant the distinctions of rank in European society, or the conventional observances by which they are guarded, for these do not constitute in fact the points of repulsion by which a stranger is apt to be encountered. Still less do they mean those mental habits of suspicion, mystery and indirectness, which may infect communities as well as individuals. For these there is neither extenuation nor excuse. Rousseau has finely said: 'Le premier pas vers le vice est de mettre du mystere aux actions innocentes; et quiconque aime à se cacher, a tôt ou tard raison de se cacher. Un seul précepte de morale peut tenir lieu de tous les autres, c'est

celui-ci: Ne fais, ni ne dis jamais rien que tu ne veuilles que tout le monde voie et entende. J'ai toujours regardé comme le plus estimable des hommes ce Romain qui voulait que sa maison fût construite de manière qu'on vît tout ce qui s'y faisait.' Whether the Englishman would be the first or the last to submit himself to this crucial test of *living in a transparent house*, we do not feel called upon to decide. The barriers, of which some justification has been attempted, are merely those formal observances by which society aims to protect itself from the intrusion of the unworthy and designing; which all must perceive to be in some degree necessary, even to personal independence; and which common-sense teaches us must be of greater extent and more rigorous application in a crowded capital than a country village, in an English Almacks than an American drawing-room. No one will deny that these barriers are high and strictly guarded in England; but it would be unreasonable to impute as a fault what is a dictate of prudence, or to infer that coldness and incivility must of course lurk under forms which have been manifestly imposed by the necessity of constant circumspection.

Duly impressed with these considerations, the stranger will be less disposed to complain when arriving at any place of fashionable resort in England; at Tonbridge, for instance, one of the most aristocratic; he finds himself consigned to the solitary comfort of his own apartments, without the prospect of any of those periods of social reünion, which elsewhere tend so strongly to break down the barriers of reserve and facilitate the

process of introduction and acquaintance. Cardinal de Retz has told us, that the dinner-bell never fails to disperse a mob in France, and if English travellers are to be believed, it seldom fails to bring one together in an American hotel; but as a social summons, no such tocsin breaks the uniformity of the English *ménage*. The traveller may dine indeed in the public room, but it is at a separate table, on his separate repast; he is served with what viands, at what hour, he pleases, but no contiguity of position or interchange of friendly offices can remove the impalpable but impassable partition which divides him from his neighbors. He feels something of the air of the *penitentiary* in the very refinements of his luxurious *hostelrie*. But these are incidents not without their attendant advantages. If the stranger is thus separated from his fellows, he is at least saved, in turn, from the attempts of fraud, and the contact of impertinence. This is, in fact, the meaning of such arrangements, and if not exactly palatable, they are at any rate protective. But there are restrictions with regard to the fairer part of creation, and his correspondence with them, which admit of no such topics of comfort and alleviation. We nowhere find it stated, by what steps it is permitted to the English suitor to proceed from the distant bow to the morning call, always in the presence of the mother, the aunt, or other watchful guardian; and thence by regular gradations to the heart and hand of the object of his wishes. But it is enough for our stranger to know, that whatever may be the laws of strategy, provided for such cases

in other lands, here it is necessary to begin his approaches with the father, and to lay his lines of earliest circumvallation around the watchful mother. These distant out-works must be mastered before there is the slightest chance of communicating even a summons to the citadel. English travellers, therefore, express surprise at the artless confidence with which unmarried ladies in America commit themselves to the solitary chat with a comparative stranger, take his hand or his arm after a few hours' acquaintance, and expose themselves to the surprise of a *declaration* before the extent of his means or the respectability of his connexion have been discussed and settled. Between the merits of these different modes of procedure, the present writer has neither the wish nor the ability to arbitrate. They have their growth in such widely different states of society, that the reformer must be bold who should attempt to transpose or change them. It is sufficient for our present purpose to remark, that if the visitor at Tonbridge should have failed to make those preliminary advances just spoken of, his pleasures here, as an admirer of female loveliness, will most probably be limited to seeing the fair creatures ride on diminutive donkeys (such is the custom of Tonbridge) to the wells, there to drink the chalybeate and promenade the *pantiles*. But what then? If he have not the *entrée* of society, the charms of nature and the attractions of English scenery are spread before him. His guide-book will tell him of grotesque rocks upon lonely heaths where Druids may have worshipped; and of Bayham Abbey, with its mouldering

walls and ‘antiquary ivy,’ which still attests amidst its ruins the luxury and wealth of its ancient masters. He may look in one direction over the broad lands and towering spires of Eridge Castle, or turning in another, soon lose amidst the recollections of Penshurst and in the homage which the heart renders to departed virtue, all sense of the vexatious forms and frivolous though perhaps inseparable distinctions of modern society.

Approaching Penshurst from Tonbridge, we alight at the ancient church which stands in close contiguity with the family mansion. A ramble amidst its graves, a walk through its solemn aisles, a moment’s pause among its darkened monuments, seems to be but a suitable preparation for our farther researches. It is scarcely possible to enter one of these venerable religious edifices of the old world, which form so striking a feature in its scenery, without feeling in some degree an impression as if the dim and solemn fane were peopled with shadows; as if indistinct forms were beckoning along its lonely aisles, or waiting the stranger’s approach in its deep and vaulted recesses. The building is not always of great extent, (this of Penshurst is not so,) but the impression seems to be the result not more of the solemn style of the building and its accessories, than of the admirable harmony which they preserve with the recollections and associations of all around them. Hence it may well be doubted whether, if we could transport one of these time-honored structures to our own land, with all its architectural peculiarities, it would have for us exactly the meaning or the charms which it possesses at home.

Our career is as yet too brief, our land too full of the sounds of enterprise and excitement; our interest lies too largely and exclusively in the present and the future. The dawning light and the keen air of morning (sœvus equis oriens anhelis) are not, as represented by the poets, more uncongenial to the spectral shapes of night, than the recent origin and energetic action of our rising country to the dim traditions and mouldering memories which have grown incorporate with the weather-stains and damps of these hoary sanctuaries. At Penshurst in particular, so complete is this harmony between the ideal and the actual, and so strongly does it bring before us the image of the past, that it might seem no unnatural incident of our reverie, were the grave and reverend knight, the ancient head of the Sydneys and patron of the church, once more to enter with his retinue from the neighboring mansion and take his seat in the family chancel. But of that honored name nothing remains to Penshurst except the memory, and those fading inscriptions which inform us that they who slumber here bore it irreproachably in life, and have long since ceased from their earthly labors. Among these, however, we look in vain for the name of Sir Philip Sydney. He fell in a foreign land, and his country, we are told, mourned for him with a loud and poignant lamentation. His remains were afterward transferred to Saint Paul's, where the ruin which fell at a later period upon the great national temple involved also the memorial of Sir Philip Sydney. But it matters less, since the achievements of his pen and sword have made all places where the name of England comes, his

monument, and every heart which is alive to honor, a sanctuary for his memory.

Let us then pass on to that venerable mansion which having witnessed many of the incidents of his life may still be considered the lasting memorial of his virtues. Before us rises a building irregular in its design, but presenting an extensive line of front, in which square towers and pointed gables, connected by walls of unequal height, succeed each other with that sort of caprice which is common in mansions of the same age. Entering through a spacious gate-way, we cross a quadrangular court, and gain access by an unfurnished passage to the great hall, which formed the distinguishing feature of the feudal homestead. In the vast extent of this apartment we perceive an image of the pride which gloried more in the number of its retainers than in the luxury or refinement of its accommodations. Oaken tables, and benches of the same homely material, stretched from side to side, show that our ancestors required but rude accessories to recommend to them the substantial enjoyments of their mighty repasts. Through lofty windows strengthened by mullions and decorated with intricate carvings, the light streams softened by neither blind nor curtain. The middle of the hall is occupied by a spacious hearth, around which gathered the friends and followers of the noble house; and the fire-utensils which still remain, and which seem destined for the consumption of entire forests, intimate that the household gods which presided here dealt in no stinted or penurious economy. There was scarcely need of flue or chimney,

for the smoke curling up among the interlacing rafters of the roof, might long gather in its ample cavity without threatening those below with serious inconvenience. It is curious to observe that when at length so obvious a contrivance as the chimney grew into more general use, its introduction was opposed by much the same sort of arguments as have in other ages resisted the encroachments of change and novelty. A moralist of the times has left us his recorded opinion, that nothing but agues and catarrhs had followed the abandonment of that old and genial practice which planted the fire in the middle of the room and left the smoke to spread its sable canopy aloft. Another peculiarity in this picture of ancient manners was the slightly-raised platform called the daïs, at the farther extremity of the hall, which reminds us of the distinction that was preserved even in the hours of convivial relaxation, between the family of the lord and its dependents. Nor was this distinction in general one of place alone: in most of the wealthy and noble houses of the period, it portended a corresponding distinction in the quality of the food. Hence in the homely times in which Ben Jonson has apostrophized Penshurst, it is mentioned as an honorable instance of the hospitality of its owner, that

> ——'there each guest might eat,
> Without his fear, and of the lord's own meat;
> Where the same beer, board, and self-same wine,
> That is his lordship's, shall be also mine.'

'A strange topic of praise,' remarks Gifford, 'to those who are unacquainted with the practice of those times; but in fact the liberal mode of hospitality here recorded was almost peculiar to this noble person. The great dined at long tables, (they had no other in their vast halls,) and permitted many guests to sit down with them; but the gradations of rank and fortune were rigidly maintained, and the dishes grew visibly coarser as they receded from the head of the table.' To sit below the salt, is a phrase with which the romances of Scott have made us familiar, and which originated, it seems, in the custom of placing a large salt-cellar near the middle of the table, not more for convenience than with reference to the distribution of the guests.

The same spirit which presided over the appointments of this stately hall extended itself to the other apartments and remoter details of the household. Every where there is the same reference to the power and even the supervision of the lord, manifested in the long suites of rooms which open upon each other, (the hall just mentioned is commanded by a small window opening from a superior and adjacent apartment,) as if to give the master at one glance a view of the number and a knowledge of the pursuits of the inmates. The ideas of the architects of that age seem to have been limited in their object, to realizing an image of the great feudal principle of preëminence and protection on the one side, submissiveness and reliance on the other. Hence designs and arrangements so little consistent with the privacy and personal independence which we regard at present as indispensable to

every scheme of domestic accommodation. But these artists were not limited alone by a defective conception of the objects of their art; they were also embarrassed in its execution by the unequal manner in which the different branches of it had been cultivated and improved. It is doubtless a remark which will admit of very general application, that the arts which may be made subservient to embellishment and magnificence, have always far outstripped those which only conduce to comfort and convenience. The savage paints his body with gorgeous colors, who wants a blanket to protect him from the cold; and nations have heaped up pyramids to enhance their sense of importance, who have dwelt contentedly in dens and caves of the earth. Something of the same incongruity may be remarked at Penshurst, and other English mansions of the same age and order; where we sometimes ascend to galleries of inestimable paintings over steps roughly hewn with the axe, and look upon ceilings of the most exquisite and elaborate carving suspended over floors which have never had the benefit of the joiner's plane.

In the tastes, too, and personal habits of that elder period, contrasts of a not less striking nature might be easily pointed out. We may doubt, for instance, whether beauty will ever array itself in apparel of more cost and profusion than that in which the high-born dames of Wresill and Penshurst swept through their stately apartments. Grandeur will never make its presence felt by a greater weight of ceremony, nor ever extend a more watchful and provident care to all the equipage of rank and

ostentation. Flattery, we may safely assert, will never offer its incense in a more seductive form, than when it borrowed the pencil of Holbein and the lyre of Spenser. Yet these persons were the same who trode upon floors strewn with rushes, and deemed it a point of nicety and refinement if these were changed sufficiently often to prevent the soiling of their clothes. They are the same who dined without forks, and thought pewter dishes too great a luxury to be used in common by the highest nobility; who transported their ladies on pillions for want of coaches, and themselves struggled through mire for want of pavements; who, with a knowledge of the manufacture of glass, and possessed beyond ourselves of an exquisite skill in coloring it, were yet too frugal or careless to use it freely in lighting their houses. It was an age when the sick were plied with such delicate restoratives as 'mummy and the flesh of hedge-hogs,' and tables loaded with such dainties as cranes, lapwings, sea-gulls, bitterns and curlews. Such is the unequal progress which is often maintained in habits of undistinguishing luxury and habits of genuine refinement; so great the difference between a state of society which aims at the gratification of pride, and one which contents itself with diffusing comfort and promoting security.

It would be easy, no doubt, to draw from this sketch of ancient manners many reflections consoling to our own sense of superior comfort and discernment. But the subject is susceptible of being viewed under aspects not so flattering yet more instructive. Who is there gross enough to pride himself on superior wisdom

because Kepler believed that the earth was a vast animal which breathed and reasoned, or to claim the palm of comparative merit because Sir Thomas More listened to the babbling of a pretended prophetess, and Luther waged what he considered no visionary but actual combats with the powers of darkness. If then we have dwelt on the defects of an age when civilization was still struggling with the remains of barbarism, it is to foster no spirit of vain exultation: it is rather to turn with increased pleasure from those stains which disfigure the picture, to the contemplation of the more prominent and brilliant figures which occupy the foreground. We remember that upon times thus backward in many of the refinements of life, and scarcely yet freed from the dregs of medi-œval darkness, genius and virtue have thrown a lustre by their presence, not merely sufficient to retrieve them from our scorn, but to make them in some respects the object of our admiration and even envy. Perhaps, if it were submitted to our choice to take our places at will in any circle which genius and merit have ever dignified and adorned, none could justly claim our preference over that of Penshurst, at the time when Sir Philip Sydney sate there in the same group with his lovely sister, the Countess of Pembroke, and with Edmund Spenser, the poet of 'the Faërie Queen.' Of the first of these eminent persons, it is enough to say, that his own age conceded to him the style of 'the Incomparable,' and that posterity has amply ratified the title. The second is known to us by that affectionate tribute of her brother's love, which has identified the name of the Countess

of Pembroke with his principal work; nor will the latest readers of English literature be forgetful of one whose memory Jonson has embalmed in the sweetest inscription that ever flowed from a poet’s pen. Of Spenser, the last but not least illustrious of the honored group, it is only necessary to say, that as he shared the hospitality, so he has not left unsung the praises of Penshurst. Where is the circle which shall again combine so many claims to our admiration and respect? What age shall presume to vaunt itself for genius or for virtue above the age of Sydney and of Spenser?

Later times have added to the social and literary lustre of Penshurst. It has been still farther illustrated by the talents and fame of Algernon Sydney, whose name never fails to awaken the sympathies of every friend of liberty for his honorable labors and unhappy fate. It has numbered among its guests and its eulogists such men as Jonson, Waller, and Southey; finally, even in our own time it has seen its horizon momently illuminated by the brief but dazzling splendors of the poet Shelly. This last was of the lineage of Sydney, and shared the talents and proud integrity, but not the wisdom and milder virtues of his house. It only remains to say, that the dwelling and estate of the Sydneys has passed into other hands, but finds, it would seem, in Lord De Lisle a proprietor not insensible to the worth nor regardless of the memory of his far-famed predecessors.

Thus the remarks intended, draw to an end. We leave the halls of Penshurst, and the gates of that venerated mansion close

behind us forever. Even thus did they close ages ago upon him, the light and honor of that ancient house, who, leaving it in the glow of health, in the pride of manly beauty, in the aspirations of a high but not a haughty spirit, was destined never to cross that paternal threshold more. The blessings that went with him have mouldered on the lips that pronounced them; the tears that mourned his fall have dried upon the lids from which they streamed; all who knew and loved, all who watched and wept for Sir Philip Sydney are silent in the dust to which he himself has long been gathered. Yet does not his spirit commune with ours as we tread the halls once familiar with his presence, or gaze upon those all but animated portraits which Penshurst still numbers among the richest of its treasures? Does nothing survive here of so much honor, so much courtesy, so much courage, to elevate us by its example and to inspire us with new hope, ere we turn again to tread the toilsome mazes of the world? Let the acknowledgments of all those who with no unworthy or unreflecting spirit have traced these paths, reply; or rather let the answer embody itself in the words of a poet, who, while expressing his own sense of the merits of Sydney, has but given a suitable expression to sentiments which find an echo in every bosom:

> ‘Are days of old familiar to thy mind,
> Oh reader? Hast thou let the midnight hour
> Pass unperceiv’d, whilst thou in fancy lived
> With high-born beauties and enamor’d chiefs,

Sharing their hopes, and with a breathless joy,
Whose expectation touched the verge of pain,
Following their dangerous fortunes? If such lore
Has ever thrill'd thy bosom, thou wilt tread
As with a pilgrim's reverential thoughts
The groves of Penshurst. Sydney here was born,
Sydney, than whom no gentler, braver man
His own delightful genius ever feign'd,
Illustrating the vales of Arcady,
With courteous courage and with loyal loves.
Upon his natal day an acorn here
Was planted; it grew up a stately oak,
And in the beauty of its strength it stood
And flourished, when his perishable part
Had mouldered dust to dust. That stately oak
Itself hath perished now, but Sydney's fame
Endureth in his own immortal works.'

ILLUSTRATIONS

Before the extension of commerce and manufactories in Europe, the hospitality of the rich and the great, from the sovereign down to the smallest baron, exceeded every thing which in the present times we can easily form a notion of. Westminster Hall was the dining-room of William Rufus, and might frequently perhaps not be too large for his company. It was reckoned a piece of magnificence in Thomas à Becket that he strewed the floor of his hall with clear hay or rushes in the season, in order that the knights and squires who could not get seats might not spoil their fine clothes when they sat down on the floor to eat their dinner. The great Earl of Warwick is said to have entertained every day, at his different manors, thirty thousand people; and though the number may have been exaggerated, it must however have been very great to admit of such exaggeration. The personal expenses of the great proprietors having gradually increased with the extension of commerce and manufactures, it was impossible that the number of their retainers should not as gradually diminish. Having sold their birth-right, not like Esau, for a mess of pottage in time of hunger and necessity, but in the wantonness of plenty for trinkets and baubles, fitter to be the play-things of children than the serious pursuits of men, they became as insignificant as any substantial burgher or tradesmen in a city.

Wealth of Nations: Book iii., Chap. iv.

The *planta-genista* or broom having been ordinarily used for strewing floors, became an emblem of humility, and was borne as such by Fulke, Earl of Anjou, grandfather of Henry II., King of England, in his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The name of the royal house of Plantagenet is said to be derived from this circumstance.

Hunt's Exemplars of Tudor Architecture.

Eleven continued to be the dining hour of the nobility, down to the middle of the seventeenth century, though it was still kept up to ten o'clock in the Universities, where the established system is not so easily altered as in private families. ••• The lord and his principal guests sate at the upper end of the first table, which was therefore called the lord's board-end. The officers of his household and inferior guests at long tables below in the hall. In the middle of each table stood a great salt-cellar, and as particular care was taken to place the guests according to their rank, it became a mark of distinction whether a person sate above or below the salt. ••• Pewter plates in the reign of Henry VIII. were too costly to be used in common by the highest nobility. In Rymer's Fœdera is a license granted in 1430 for a ship to carry certain commodities for the express use of the King of Scotland, among which are particularly mentioned a supply of pewter dishes and wooden trenchers. '*Octo duodenis vasorum de pewter, mille et ducentis ciphis ligneis.*'

Archæologia.

The use of forks did not prevail in England till the reign of James I.

Coryat.

In the list of birds served up to table were many fowls which are now discarded as little better than rank carrion, such as cranes, lapwings, sea-gulls, bitterns, ruffs, kerlews, etc.

Grose's Antiq. Repertory.

The use of coaches is said to have been first introduced into England by Fitz-Allan, earl of Arundel, A. D. 1580. Before that time ladies chiefly rode on horseback, either single on their palfreys, or double, behind some person on a pillion. In cases of sickness or bad weather, they had horse-litters and vehicles called chairs, or carrs, or charres. Glazed windows were introduced into England, A. D. 1180.

Anderson's History of Commerce.

The ceilings of that part of Wresill Castle left standing by the Commonwealth's soldiers still appear richly carved, and the sides of the rooms are ornamented with a great profusion of ancient sculpture finely executed in wood, exhibiting the ancient bearings, crests, badges and devices of the Percy family, in a great variety of forms, set off with all the advantages of painting, gilding and imagery. ••• Noblemen in Henry the Eighth's time were obliged to carry all the beds, hangings and furniture with

them when they removed. The usual manner of hanging the rooms in the old castles was only to cover the naked walls with tapestry or arras hung upon tenter hooks, from which they were easily taken down upon every removal. On such an occasion the number of carts employed in a considerable family must have formed a caravan nearly as large as those which traverse the deserts of the East. ••• At the time of the Northumberland House-hold book, glass, though it had perhaps been long applied to the decorating churches, was not very commonly used in dwelling-houses or castles.

Archæologia.

Rooms provided with chimnies are noticed as a luxury by the author of Pierce Ploughman. 'Now,' says an author still more recent, 'have we many chimnies, and yet our tenderlings complain of rheums, catarrhs and poses, (colds in the head.) Then had we none but *rere dosses*, (plates of iron or a coating of brick to enable the wall to resist the flame,) and our heads did never ache. For as the smoke in those days was supposed to be a sufficient hardening for the timber of the house, so it was reputed a far better medicine to keep the good man and his family from the quacke, (ague,) or pose, wherewith, as then, very few were oft acquainted.'

Harrison's Description of England prefixed to Holinshed.

IDYLL

IN IMITATION OF THEOCRITUS, BY WILLIAM CHIDDON

Thou wanderer where the wild wood ceaseless breathes
The sweetly-murmuring strain, from falling rills
Or soft autumnal gales; O! seek thou there
Some fountain gurgling from the rifted rock,
Of pure translucent wave, whose margent green
Is loved by gentlest nymphs, and all the train
Of that chaste goddess of the silver bow;
For silent, shady groves, by purling springs,
Delight the train, and through the gliding hours
Their nimble feet in mazy trances wind;
And oft at eve, the wondering swain hath heard
The Arcadian pipe and breathing minstrelsy,
From joyous troops of those rude deities
Whose homes are on the steep and rocky mount,
Or by the silver wave in woody dell,
And know the shrine, with flowery myrtles veiled,
All lonely placed by that wild mountain stream,
That from the sacred hills, like Hippocrene,
With warbling numbers, softly glides along.

Kneel humbly there, and at the auspicious time,
Invoke the listening spirit to my aid,
That I may fly the nymph of shapely form,
Whose fragrant brow inwoven wreaths adorn,
Of blushing rose and ivy tendrils green.
Then swear for me to deck the favoring shrine
With flowrets, blooming from the lap of Spring,
And on the sculptured pile, with solemn vow,
The tender kid devote in sacrifice.
So may my heaving bosom rest serene,
Nor winged spells incite the soul again
To love the soft eyed maid Zenophyle.

THE LEGEND OF DON RODERICK

NUMBER TWO

The course of our legendary narration now returns to notice the fortunes of Count Julian, after his departure from Toledo, to resume his government on the coast of Barbary. He left the Countess Frandina at Algeziras, his paternal domain, for the province under his command was threatened with invasion. In fact, when he arrived at Ceuta he found his post in imminent danger from the all-conquering Moslems. The Arabs of the East, the followers of Mahomet, having subjugated several of the most potent oriental kingdoms, had established their seat of empire at Damascus, where, at this time, it was filled by Waled Almanzor, surnamed 'the Sword of God.' From thence the tide of Moslem conquest had rolled on to the shores of the Atlantic; so that all Almagreb, or Western Africa, had submitted to the standard of the prophet, with the exception of a portion of Tingitania, lying along the straits; being the province held by the Goths of Spain, and commanded by Count Julian. The Arab invaders were a hundred thousand strong, most of them veteran troops, seasoned in warfare and accustomed to victory. They were led by an old Arab general, Muza ben Nosier, to whom was confided the government of Almagreb; most of which he had himself

conquered. The ambition of this veteran was to make the Moslem conquest complete, by expelling the Christians from the African shores; with this view his troops menaced the few remaining Gothic fortresses of Tingitania, while he himself sat down in person before the walls of Ceuta. The Arab chieftain had been rendered confident by continual success, and thought nothing could resist his arms and the sacred standard of the prophet. Impatient of the tedious delays of a siege, he led his troops boldly against the rock-built towers of Ceuta, and attempted to take the place by storm. The onset was fierce, and the struggle desperate: the swarthy sons of the desert were light and vigorous, and of fiery spirits; but the Goths, inured to danger on this frontier, retained the stubborn valor of their race, so impaired among their brethren in Spain. They were commanded, too, by one skilled in warfare and ambitious of renown. After a vehement conflict, the Moslem assailants were repulsed from all points, and driven from the walls. Don Julian sallied forth, and harassed them in their retreat; and so severe was the carnage, that the veteran Musa was fain to break up his camp, and retire confounded from the siege.

The victory at Ceuta resounded throughout Tingitania, and spread universal joy. On every side were heard shouts of exultation mingled with praises of Count Julian. He was hailed by the people, wherever he went, as their deliverer, and blessings were invoked upon his head. The heart of Count Julian was lifted up, and his spirit swelled within him; but it was with noble and virtuous pride, for he was conscious of having merited the

blessings of his country.

In the midst of his exultation, and while the rejoicings of the people were yet sounding in his ears, the page arrived who bore the letter from his unfortunate daughter.

‘What tidings from the king?’ said the count, as the page knelt before him: ‘None, my lord,’ replied the youth, ‘but I bear a letter sent in all haste by the Lady Florinda.’

He took the letter from his bosom and presented it to his lord. As Count Julian read it, his countenance darkened and fell. ‘This,’ said he, bitterly, ‘is my reward for serving a tyrant; and these are the honors heaped on me by my country, while fighting its battles in a foreign land. May evil overtake me, and infamy rest upon my name, if I cease until I have full measure of revenge.’

Count Julian was vehement in his passions, and took no counsel in his wrath. His spirit was haughty in the extreme, but destitute of true magnanimity, and when once wounded turned to gall and venom. A dark and malignant hatred entered into his soul, not only against Don Roderick, but against all Spain: he looked upon it as the scene of his disgrace, a land in which his family was dishonored: and, in seeking to avenge the wrongs he had suffered from his sovereign, he meditated against his native country one of the blackest schemes of treason that ever entered into the human heart.

The plan of Count Julian was to hurl King Roderick from his throne, and to deliver all Spain into the hands of the infidels. In concerting and executing this treacherous plot, it seemed as if his

whole nature was changed; every lofty and generous sentiment was stifled, and he stooped to the meanest dissimulation. His first object was to extricate his family from the power of the king, and to remove it from Spain before his treason should be known; his next, to deprive the country of its remaining means of defence against an invader.

With these dark purposes at heart, but with an open and serene countenance, he crossed to Spain, and repaired to the court at Toledo. Wherever he came he was hailed with acclamations as a victorious general, and appeared in the presence of his sovereign radiant with the victory at Ceuta. Concealing from King Roderick his knowledge of the outrage upon his house, he professed nothing but the most devoted loyalty and affection.

The king loaded him with favors; seeking to appease his own conscience by heaping honors upon the father in atonement of the deadly wrong inflicted upon his child. He regarded Count Julian, also, as a man able and experienced in warfare, and took his advice in all matters relating to the military affairs of the kingdom. The count magnified the dangers that threatened the frontier under his command, and prevailed upon the king to send thither the best horses and arms remaining from the time of Witiza, there being no need of them in the centre of Spain in its present tranquil state. The residue, at his suggestion, was stationed on the frontiers of Gallia; so that the kingdom was left almost wholly without defence against any sudden irruption from the south.

Having thus artfully arranged his plans, and all things being prepared for his return to Africa, he obtained permission to withdraw his daughter from the court, and leave her with her mother, the Countess Frandina, who, he pretended, lay dangerously ill at Algeziras. Count Julian issued out of the gate of the city, followed by a shining band of chosen followers, while beside him, on a palfrey, rode the pale and weeping Florinda. The populace hailed and blessed him as he passed, but his heart turned from them with loathing. As he crossed the bridge of the Tagus, he looked back with a dark brow upon Toledo, and raised his mailed hand and shook it at the royal palace of King Roderick, which crested the rocky height. 'A father's curse,' said he, 'be upon thee and thine! May desolation fall upon thy dwelling, and confusion and defeat upon thy realm!'

In his journeyings through the country, he looked round him with a malignant eye; the pipe of the shepherd, and the song of the husbandman, were as discord to his soul; every sight and sound of human happiness sickened him at heart, and, in the bitterness of his spirit, he prayed that he might see the whole scene of prosperity laid waste with fire and sword by the invader.

The story of domestic outrage and disgrace had already been made known to the Countess Frandina. When the hapless Florinda came in presence of her mother, she fell on her neck, and hid her face in her bosom, and wept; but the countess shed never a tear, for she was a woman haughty of spirit and strong of heart. She looked her husband sternly in the face. 'Perdition light

upon thy head,' said she, 'if thou submit to this dishonor. For my own part, woman as I am, I will assemble the followers of my house, nor rest until rivers of blood have washed away this stain.'

'Be satisfied,' replied the count; 'vengeance is on foot, and will be sure and ample.'

Being now in his own domains, surrounded by his relatives and friends, Count Julian went on to complete his web of treason. In this he was aided by his brother-in-law, Oppas, the Bishop of Seville: a man dark and perfidious as the night, but devout in demeanor, and smoothly plausible in council. This artful prelate had contrived to work himself into the entire confidence of the king, and had even prevailed upon him to permit his nephews, Evan and Siseburto, the exiled sons of Witiza, to return into Spain. They resided in Andalusia, and were now looked to as fit instruments in the present traitorous conspiracy.

By the advice of the bishop, Count Julian called a secret meeting of his relatives and adherents on a wild rocky mountain, not far from Consuegra, and which still bears the Moorish appellation of 'La Sierra de Calderin,' or the mountain of treason. When all were assembled, Count Julian appeared among them, accompanied by the bishop and by the Countess Frandina. Then gathering around him those who were of his blood and kindred, he revealed the outrage that had been offered to their house. He represented to them that Roderick was their legitimate enemy; that he had dethroned Witiza, their relation, and had now stained the honor of one of the most illustrious daughters of their line.

The Countess Frandina seconded his words. She was a woman majestic in person and eloquent of tongue; and being inspired by a mother's feelings, her speech aroused the assembled cavaliers to fury.

The count took advantage of the excitement of the moment to unfold his plan. The main object was to dethrone Don Roderick, and give the crown to the sons of the late King Witiza. By this means they would visit the sins of the tyrant upon his head, and, at the same time, restore the regal honors to their line. For this purpose their own force would be sufficient; but they might procure the aid of Muza ben Nosier, the Arabian general in Mauritania, who would no doubt gladly send a part of his troops into Spain to assist in the enterprise.

The plot thus suggested by Count Julian received the unholy sanction of Bishop Oppas, who engaged to aid it secretly with all his influence and means: for he had great wealth and possessions, and many retainers. The example of the reverend prelate determined all who might otherwise have wavered, and they bound themselves by dreadful oaths to be true to the conspiracy. Count Julian undertook to proceed to Africa and seek the camp of Muza, to negotiate for his aid, while the bishop was to keep about the person of King Roderick, and lead him into the net prepared for him.

All things being thus arranged, Count Julian gathered together his treasure, and taking his wife and daughter and all his household, abandoned the country he meant to betray;

embarking at Malaga for Ceuta. The gate in the wall of that city, through which they went forth, continued for ages to bear the name of *Puerta de la Cava*, or the gate of the harlot; for such was the opprobrious and unmerited appellation bestowed by the Moors on the unhappy Florinda.

When Count Julian had placed his family in security in Ceuta, surrounded by soldiery devoted to his fortunes, he took with him a few confidential followers, and departed in secret for the camp of the Arabian Emir, Muza ben Nozier. The camp was spread out in one of those pastoral vallies which lie at the feet of the Barbary hills, with the great range of the Atlas mountains towering in the distance. In the motley army here assembled were warriors of every tribe and nation, that had been united by pact or conquest in the cause of Islem. There were those who had followed Muza from the fertile regions of Egypt, across the deserts of Barca, and those who had joined his standard from among the sun-burnt tribes of Mauritania. There were Saracen and Tartar, Syrian and Copt, and swarthy Moor; sumptuous warriors from the civilized cities of the east, and the gaunt and predatory rovers of the desert. The greater part of the army, however, was composed of Arabs; but differing greatly from the first rude hordes that enlisted under the banner of Mahomet. Almost a century of continual wars with the cultivated nations of the east had rendered them accomplished warriors; and the occasional sojourn in luxurious countries and populous cities, had acquainted them with the arts and habits of civilized life. Still the roving, restless, and predatory

habits of the genuine son of Ishmael prevailed, in defiance of every change of clime or situation.

Count Julian found the Arab conqueror Muza surrounded by somewhat of oriental state and splendor. He was advanced in life, but of a noble presence, and concealed his age by tinging his hair and beard with henna. The count assumed an air of soldier-like frankness and decision when he came into his presence. 'Hitherto,' said he, 'we have been enemies; but I come to thee in peace, and it rests with thee to make me the most devoted of thy friends. I have no longer country or king. Roderick the Goth is an usurper, and my deadly foe; he has wounded my honor in the tenderest point, and my country affords me no redress. Aid me in my vengeance, and I will deliver all Spain into thy hands: a land far exceeding in fertility and wealth all the vaunted regions thou hast conquered in Tingitania.'

The heart of Muza leaped with joy at these words, for he was a bold and ambitious conqueror, and having overrun all western Africa, had often cast a wistful eye to the mountains of Spain, as he beheld them brightening beyond the waters of the strait. Still he possessed the caution of a veteran, and feared to engage in an enterprise of such moment, and to carry his arms into another division of the globe, without the approbation of his sovereign. Having drawn from Count Julian the particulars of his plan, and of the means he possessed to carry it into effect, he laid them before his confidential counsellors and officers, and demanded their opinion. 'These words of Count Julian,' said he, 'may be

false and deceitful; or he may not possess the power to fulfil his promises. The whole may be a pretended treason to draw us on to our destruction. It is more natural that he should be treacherous to us than to his country.'

Among the generals of Muza was a gaunt swarthy veteran, scarred with wounds; a very Arab, whose great delight was roving and desperate enterprise; and who cared for nothing beyond his steed, his lance, and his scimitar. He was a native of Damascus; his name was Taric ben Zeyad; but, from having lost an eye, he was known among the Spaniards by the appellation of Taric el Tuerto, or Taric the one-eyed.

The hot blood of this veteran Ishmaelite was in a ferment when he heard of a new country to invade, and vast regions to subdue; and he dreaded lest the cautious hesitation of Muza would permit the glorious prize to escape them. 'You speak doubtingly,' said he, 'of the words of this Christian cavalier, but their truth is easily to be ascertained. Give me four galleys and a handful of men, and I will depart with this Count Julian, skirt the Christian coast, and bring thee back tidings of the land, and of his means to put it in our power.'

The words of the veteran pleased Muza ben Nosier, and he gave his consent; and Taric departed with four galleys and five hundred men, guided by the traitor Julian. This first expedition of the Arabs against Spain took place, according to certain historians, in the year of our Lord seven hundred and twelve; though others differ on this point, as indeed they do upon

almost every point in this early period of Spanish history. The date to which the judicious chroniclers incline is that of seven hundred and ten, in the month of July. It would appear from some authorities, also, that the galleys of Taric cruised along the coasts of Andalusia and Lusitania, under the feigned character of merchant barks; nor is this at all improbable, while they were seeking merely to observe the land, and get a knowledge of the harbors. Wherever they touched, Count Julian despatched emissaries, to assemble his friends and adherents at an appointed place. They gathered together secretly at Gezira Alhadra, that is to say, the Green Island; where they held a conference with Count Julian in presence of Taric ben Zeyad. Here they again avowed their readiness to flock to his standard whenever it should be openly raised, and made known their various preparations for a rebellion. Taric was convinced, by all that he had seen and heard, that Count Julian had not deceived them; either as to his disposition or his means to betray his country. Indulging his Arab inclinations, he made an inroad into the land, collected great spoil and many captives, and bore off his plunder in triumph to Muza, as a specimen of the riches to be gained by the conquest of the Christian land.

On hearing the tidings brought by Taric el Tuerto, and beholding the spoil he had collected, Muza wrote a letter to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, setting forth the traitorous proffer of Count Julian, and the probability, through his means, of making a successful invasion of Spain. 'A new land,' said he, 'spreads itself

out before our delighted eyes, and invites our conquest: a land, too, that equals Syria in the fertility of its soil, and the serenity of its sky; Yemen, or Arabia the happy, in its delightful temperature; India, in its flowers and spices; Hegias, in its fruits and flowers; Cathay, in its precious minerals; and Aden, in the excellence of its ports and harbors! It is populous also, and wealthy; having many splendid cities, and majestic monuments of ancient art. What is to prevent this glorious land from becoming the inheritance of the faithful? Already we have overcome the tribes of Berbery, of Zab, of Derar, of Zaara, Mazamuda, and Sus; and the victorious standard of Islem floats on the towers of Tangier. But four leagues of sea separate us from the opposite coast. One word from my sovereign, and the conquerors of Africa will pour their legions into Andalusia, rescue it from the domination of the unbeliever, and subdue it to the law of the Koran.'

The Caliph was overjoyed with the contents of the letter. 'God is great!' exclaimed he, 'and Mahomet is his prophet! It has been foretold by the ambassador of God, that his law should extend to the ultimate parts of the west, and be carried by the sword into new and unknown regions. Behold, another land is opened for the triumphs of the faithful! It is the will of Allah, and be his sovereign will obeyed!' So the Caliph sent missives to Muza, authorizing him to undertake the conquest.

Upon this there was a great stir of preparation; and numerous vessels were assembled and equipped at Tangier, to convey the invading army across the Straits. Twelve thousand men were

chosen for this expedition: most of them light Arabian troops, seasoned in warfare, and fitted for hardy and rapid enterprise. Among them were many horsemen, mounted on fleet Arabian steeds. The whole was put under the command of the veteran, Taric el Tuerto, or the one-eyed, in whom Muza reposed implicit confidence, as in a second self. Taric accepted the command with joy: his martial fire was roused at the idea of having such an army under his sole command, and such a country to overrun; and he secretly determined never to return unless victorious.

He chose a dark night to convey his troops across the Straits of Hercules; and, by break of day they began to disembark at Tarifa, before the country had time to take the alarm. A few Christians hastily assembled from the neighborhood and opposed their landing, but were easily put to flight. Taric stood on the sea-side, and watched until the last squadron had landed; and all the horses, armour, and munitions of war were brought on shore: he then gave orders to set fire to the ships. The Moslems were struck with terror when they beheld their fleet wrapped in flames and smoke, and sinking beneath the waves. 'How shall we escape,' exclaimed they, 'if the fortune of war should be against us?' 'There is no escape for the coward!' cried Taric: 'the brave man thinks of none: your only chance is victory.' 'But how, without ships, shall we ever return to our homes?' 'Your home,' replied Taric, 'is before you; but you must win it with your swords.'

While Taric was yet talking with his followers, says one of the ancient chroniclers, a Christian female was described, waving a

white pennon on a reed, in signal of peace. On being brought into the presence of Taric she prostrated herself before him. 'Senior,' said she, 'I am an ancient woman; and it is now full sixty years, past and gone, since, as I was keeping vigils one winter's night by the fireside, I heard my father, who was an exceeding old man, read a prophecy, said to have been written by a holy friar; and this was the purport of the prophecy: that a time would arrive when our country would be invaded and conquered by a people from Africa, of a strange garb, a strange tongue, and a strange religion. They were to be led by a strong and valiant captain, who would be known by these signs: on his right shoulder he would have a hairy mole, and his right arm would be much longer than the left; and of such length as to enable him to cover his knee with his hand without bending his body.'

Taric listened to the old beldame with grave attention; and, when she had concluded, he laid bare his shoulder, and lo! there was the mole as it had been described; his right arm, also, was, in verity, found to exceed the other in length, though not to the degree that had been mentioned. Upon this the Arab host shouted for joy, and felt assured of conquest.

The discreet Antonio Agapida, though he records this circumstance as it is set down in ancient chronicle, yet withholds his belief from the pretended prophecy, considering the whole a cunning device of Taric to increase the courage of his troops. 'Doubtless,' says he, 'there was a collusion between this ancient sybil and the crafty son of Ishmael; for these infidel leaders

were full of damnable inventions, to work upon the superstitious fancies of their followers, and to inspire them with a blind confidence in the success of their arms.'

Be this as it may, the veteran Taric took advantage of the excitement of his soldiery, and led them forward to gain possession of a stronghold, which was, in a manner, the key to all the adjacent country. This was a lofty mountain, or promontory, almost surrounded by the sea; and connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus. It was called the rock of Calpe, and, like the opposite rock of Ceuta, commanded the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Here, in old times, Hercules had set up one of his pillars, and the city of Heraclea had been built.

As Taric advanced against this promontory, he was opposed by a hasty levy of the Christians, who had assembled under the banner of a Gothic noble of great power and importance, whose domains lay along the mountainous coast of the Mediterranean. The name of this Christian cavalier was Theodomir, but he has universally been called Tadmir by the Arabian historians; and is renowned as being the first commander that made any stand against the inroad of the Moslems. He was about forty years of age; hardy, prompt, and sagacious; and had all the Gothic nobles been equally vigilant and shrewd in their defence, the banner of Islam would never have triumphed over the land.

Theodomir had but seventeen hundred men under his command, and these but rudely armed; yet he made a resolute stand against the army of Taric, and defended the pass to the

promontory with great valor. He was, at length, obliged to retreat; and Taric advanced, and planted his standard on the rock of Calpe, and fortified it as his stronghold, and as the means of securing an entrance into the land. To commemorate his first victory, he changed the name of the promontory, and called it Gibel Taric, or the mountain of Taric; but, in process of time, the name has gradually been altered to Gibraltar.

In the mean time, the patriotic chieftain, Theodomir, having collected his routed forces, encamped with them on the skirts of the mountains, and summoned the country round to join his standard. He sent off missives, in all speed, to the king; imparting, in brief and blunt terms, the news of the invasion, and craving assistance with equal frankness. 'Senior,' said he, in his letter, 'the legions of Africa are upon us, but whether they come from heaven or earth I know not. They seem to have fallen from the clouds, for they have no ships. We have been taken by surprise, overpowered by numbers, and obliged to retreat; and they have fortified themselves in our territory. Send us aid, senior, with instant speed; or, rather, come yourself to our assistance.'

When Don Roderick heard that legions of turbaned troops had poured into the land from Africa, he called to mind the visions and predictions of the necromantic tower, and great fear came upon him. But, though sunk from his former hardihood and virtue, though enervated by indulgence, and degraded in spirit by a consciousness of crime, he was resolute of soul, and

roused himself to meet the coming danger. He summoned a hasty levy of horse and foot, amounting to forty thousand; but now were felt the effects of the crafty council of Count Julian, for the best of the horses and armour intended for the public service had been sent into Africa, and were really in possession of the traitors. Many nobles, it is true, took the field with the sumptuous array with which they had been accustomed to appear at tournaments and jousts; but most of their vassals were destitute of weapons, and cased in cuirasses of leather, or suits of armor almost consumed by rust. They were without discipline or animation; and their horses, like themselves pampered by slothful peace, were little fitted to bear the heat, the dust, and toil, of long campaigns.

This army Don Roderick put under the command of his kinsman Ataulpho, a prince of the royal blood of the Goths, and of a noble and generous nature; and he ordered him to march with all speed to meet the foe, and to recruit his forces on the way with the troops of Theodomir.

In the mean time, Taric el Tuerto had received large reinforcements from Africa, and the adherents of Count Julian, and all those discontented with the sway of Don Roderick, had flocked to his standard; for many were deceived by the representations of Count Julian, and thought that the Arabs had come to aid him in placing the sons of Witiza upon the throne. Guided by the count, the troops of Taric penetrated into various parts of the country, and laid waste the land; bringing back loads

of spoil to their stronghold at the rock of Calpe.

The prince Ataulpho marched with his army through Andalusia, and was joined by Theodomir with his troops; he met with various detachments of the enemy foraging the country, and had several bloody skirmishes; but he succeeded in driving them before him, and they retreated to the rock of Calpe, where Taric lay gathered up with the main body of his army.

The prince encamped not far from the bay which spreads itself out before the promontory. In the evening he despatched the veteran Theodomir, with a trumpet, to demand a parley of the Arab chieftain, who received the envoy in his tent, surrounded by his captains. Theodomir was frank and abrupt in speech, for the most of his life had been passed far from courts. He delivered, in round terms, the message of the Prince Ataulpho; upbraiding the Arab general with his wanton invasion of the land, and summoning him to surrender his army, or to expect no mercy.

The single eye of Taric el Tuerto glowed like a coal of fire at this message. 'Tell your commander,' replied he, 'that I have crossed the strait to conquer Spain, nor will I return until I have accomplished my purpose. Tell him I have men skilled in war, and armed in proof, with whose aid I trust soon to give a good account of his rabble host.'

A murmur of applause passed through the assemblage of Moslem captains. Theodomir glanced on them a look of defiance, but his eye rested on a renegado Christian, one of his

own ancient comrades, and a relation of Count Julian. 'As to you, Don Greybeard,' said he, 'you who turn apostate in your declining age, I here pronounce you a traitor to your God, your king, and country; and stand ready to prove it this instant upon your body, if field be granted me.'

The traitor knight was stung with rage at these words, for truth rendered them piercing to the heart. He would have immediately answered to the challenge, but Taric forbade it, and ordered that the Christian envoy should be conducted from the camp. ''Tis well,' replied Theodomir; 'God will give me the field which you deny. Let yon hoary apostate look to himself to-morrow in the battle, for I pledge myself to use my lance upon no other foe until it has shed his blood upon the native soil he has betrayed.' So saying, he left the camp; nor could the Moslem chieftains help admiring the honest indignation of this patriot knight, while they secretly despised his renegado adversary.

The ancient Moorish chroniclers relate many awful portents, and strange and mysterious visions, which appeared to the commanders of either army during this anxious night. Certainly it was a night of fearful suspense, and Moslem and Christian looked forward with doubt to the fortune of the coming day. The Spanish sentinel walked his pensive round, listening occasionally to the vague sounds from the distant rock of Calpe, and eyeing it as the mariner eyes the thunder cloud, pregnant with terror and destruction. The Arabs, too, from their lofty cliffs beheld the numerous camp-fires of the Christians gradually lighted up,

and saw that they were a powerful host; at the same time the night breeze brought to their ears the sullen roar of the sea which separated them from Africa. When they considered their perilous situation, an army on one side, with a whole nation aroused to re-enforce it, and on the other an impassable sea, the spirits of many of the warriors were cast down, and they repented the day when they had ventured into this hostile land.

Taric marked their despondency, but said nothing. Scarce had the first streak of morning light trembled along the sea, however, when he summoned his principal warriors to his tent. 'Be of good cheer,' said he: 'Allah is with us, and has sent his prophet to give assurance of his aid. Scarce had I retired to my tent last night, when a man of a majestic and venerable presence stood before me. He was taller by a palm than the ordinary race of men; his flowing beard was of a golden hue, and his eyes were so bright that they seemed to send forth flashes of fire. I have heard the Emir Bahamet, and other ancient men, describe the prophet, whom they had seen many times while on earth, and such was his form and lineament. 'Fear nothing, O Taric, from the morrow,' said he, 'I will be with thee in the fight. Strike boldly, then, and conquer. Those of thy followers who survive the battle will have this land for an inheritance; for those who fall, a mansion in paradise is prepared, and immortal houris await their coming.' He spake and vanished; I heard a strain of celestial melody, and my tent was filled with the odors of Arabia the Happy.' 'Such,' says the Spanish chroniclers, 'was another of the arts by which

this arch son of Ishmael sought to animate the hearts of his followers;' and the pretended vision had been recorded by the Arabian writers as a veritable occurrence. Marvellous, indeed, was the effect produced by it upon the infidel soldiery, who now cried out with eagerness to be led against the foe.

The gray summits of the rock of Calpe brightened with the first rays of morning, as the Christian army issued forth from its encampment. The Prince Ataulpho rode from squadron to squadron, animating his soldiers for the battle. 'Never should we sheath our swords,' said he, 'while these infidels have a footing in the land. They are pent up within yon rocky mountain, we must assail them in their rugged hole. We have a long day before us: let not the setting sun shine upon one of their host, who is not a fugitive, a captive, or a corpse.'

The words of the prince were received with shouts, and the army moved toward the promontory. As they advanced, they heard the clash of cymbals and the bray of trumpets, and the rocky bosom of the mountain glittered with helms and spears and scimetars; for the Arabs, inspired with fresh confidence by the words of Taric, were sallying forth, with flaunting banners, to the combat.

The gaunt Arab chieftain stood upon a rock as his troops marched by; his buckler was at his back, and he brandished in his hand a double-pointed spear. Calling upon the several leaders by their names, he exhorted them to direct their attacks against the Christian captains, and especially against Ataulpho;

‘for the chiefs being slain,’ said he, ‘their followers will vanish from before us like the morning mist.’

The Gothic nobles were easily to be distinguished by the splendor of their arms; but the Prince Ataulpho was conspicuous above all the rest for the youthful grace and majesty of his appearance, and the bravery of his array. He was mounted on a superb Andalusian charger, richly caparisoned with crimson velvet, embroidered with gold. His surcoat was of like color and adornment, and the plumes that waved above his burnished helmet were of the purest white. Ten mounted pages, magnificently attired, followed him to the field, but their duty was not so much to fight as to attend upon their lord, and to furnish him with steed or weapon.

The Christian troops, though irregular and undisciplined, were full of native courage; for the old warrior spirit of their Gothic sires still glowed in their bosoms. There were two battalions of infantry, but Ataulpho stationed them in the rear; ‘for God forbid,’ said he, ‘that foot soldiers should have the place of honor in the battle, when I have so many valiant cavaliers.’ As the armies drew nigh to each other, however, it was discovered that the advance of the Arabs was composed of infantry. Upon this the cavaliers checked their steeds, and requested that the foot soldiery might advance and disperse this losel crew, holding it beneath their dignity to contend with pedestrian foes. The prince, however, commanded them to charge; upon which, putting spurs to their steeds, they rushed upon the foe.

The Arabs stood the shock manfully, receiving the horses upon the points of their lances; many of the riders were shot down with bolts from cross-bows, or stabbed with the poniards of the Moslems. The cavaliers succeeded, however, in breaking into the midst of the battalion and throwing it into confusion, cutting down some with their swords, transpiercing others with their spears, and trampling many under the hoofs of their horses. At this moment, they were attacked by a band of Spanish horsemen, the recreant partisans of Count Julian. Their assault bore hard upon their countrymen, who were disordered by the contest with the foot soldiers, and many a loyal Christian knight fell beneath the sword of an unnatural foe.

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