VARIOUS

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Содержание

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THE HARMONISTS

My brother Josiah I call a successful man,—very successful, though only an attorney in a manufacturing town. But he fixed his goal, and reached it. He belongs to the ruling class,—men with slow, measuring eyes and bull-dog jaws,—men who know their own capacity to an atom's weight, and who go through life with moderate, inflexible, unrepenting steps. He looks askance at me when I cross his path; he is in the great market making his way: I learned long ago that there was no place there for me. Yet I like to look in, out of the odd little corner into which I have been shoved,—to look in at the great play, never beginning and never ending, of bargain and sale, for which all the world's but a stage; to see how men like my brother have been busy, since God blessed all things he had made, in dragging them down to the trade level, and stamping price-marks on them. Josiah looks at me grimly, as I said. Jog as methodically as I will from desk to bed and back to desk again, he suspects some outlaw blood under the gray head of the fagged-out old clerk. He indulges in his pictures, his bronzes: I have my high office-stool, and bedroom in the fifth story of a cheap hotel. Yet he suspects me of having forced a way out of the actual common-sense world by sheer force of whims and vagaries, and to have pre-empted a homestead for myself in some dream-land, where neither he nor the tax-gatherer can enter.

"It won't do," he said to-day, when I was there (for I use his books now and then). "Old Père Bonhours, you're poring over? Put it down, and come take some clam soup. Much those fellows knew about life! Zachary! Zachary! you have kept company with shadows these forty years, until you have grown peaked and gaunt yourself. When will you go to work and be a live man?"

I knew we were going to have the daily drill which Josiah gave to his ideas; so I rolled the book up to take with me, while he rubbed his spectacles angrily, and went on.

"I tell you, the world's a great property-exchanging machine, where everything has its weight and value; a great, inexorable machine,—and whoever tries to shirk his work in it will be crushed! Crushed! Think of your old friend Knowles!"

I began to hurry on my old overcoat; I never had but two or three friends, and I could not hear their names from Josiah's mouth. But he was not quick to see when he had hurt people.

"Why, the poet,"—more sententious than before,—"the poet sells his song; he knows that the airiest visions must resolve into trade-laws. You cannot escape from them. I see your wrinkled old face, red as a boy's, over the newspapers sometimes. There was the daring of that Rebel Jackson, Frémont's proclamation, Shaw's death; you claimed those things as heroic, prophetic. They were mere facts tending to solve the great problem of Capital *vs.* Labor. There was one work for which the breath was put into our nostrils,—to grow, and make the world grow by giving and taking. Give and take; and the wisest man gives the least and gains the most."

I left him as soon as I could escape. I respect Josiah: his advice would be invaluable to any man; but I am content that we should live apart,—quite content. I went down to Yorke's for my solitary chop. The old prophet Solomon somewhere talks of the conies or ants as "a feeble folk who prepare their meat in the summer." I joke to myself about that sometimes, thinking I should claim kindred with them; for, looking back over the sixty years of Zack Humphreys's life, they seem to me to have

pretty much gone in preparing the bread and meat from day to day. I see but little result of all the efforts of that time beyond that solitary chop; and a few facts and hopes, may be, gathered outside of the market, which, Josiah says, absorb all of the real world. All day, sitting here at my desk in Wirt's old counting-house, these notions of Josiah's have dogged me. These sums that I jotted down, the solid comforts they typified, the homes, the knowledge, the travel they would buy,—these were, then, the real gist of this thing we called life, were they? The great charities money had given to the world,—Christ's Gospel preached by it.—Did it cover all, then? Did it?

What a wholesome (or unwholesome) scorn of barter Knowles had! The old fellow never collected a debt; and, by the way, as seldom paid one. The "dirty dollar" came between him and very few people. Yet the heart in his great mass of flesh beat fiercely for an honor higher than that known to most men. I have sat here all the afternoon, staring out at the winter sky, scratching down a figure now and then, and idly going back to the time when I was a younger man than now, but even then with neither wife nor child, and no home beyond an eating-house; thinking how I caught old Knowles's zest for things which lay beyond trade-laws; how eager I grew in the search of them; how he inoculated me with Abolitionism, Communism, every other fever that threatened to destroy the commercial status of the world, and substitute a single-eyed regard for human rights. It occurred to me, too, that some of those odd, one-sided facts, which it used to please me to gather then,—queer bits of men's history, not to be judged by Josiah's rules,—it might please others to hear. What if I wrote them down these winter evenings? Nothing in them rare or strange; but they lay outside of the market, and were true.

Not one of them which did not bring back Knowles, with his unwieldy heat and bluster. He found a flavor and meaning in the least of these hints of mine, gloating over the largess given and received in the world, for which money had no value. His bones used to straighten, and his eye glitter under the flabby brow, at the recital of any brave, true deed, as if it had been his own; as if, but for some mischance back yonder in his youth, it might have been given to even this poor old fellow to strike a great, ringing blow on Fate's anvil before he died,—to give his place in the life-boat to a more useful man,—to help buy with his life the slave's freedom.

Let me tell you the story of our acquaintance. Josiah, even, would hold the apology good for claiming so much of your time for this old dreamer of dreams, since I may give you a bit of useful knowledge in the telling about a place and people here in the States utterly different from any other, yet almost unknown, and, so far as I know, undescribed. When I first met Knowles it was in an obscure country town in Pennsylvania, as he was on his way across the mountains with his son. I was ill in the little tavern where he stopped; and, he being a physician, we were thrown together,—I a raw country lad, and he fresh from the outer world, of which I knew nothing,—a man of a muscular, vigorous type even then. But what he did for me, or the relation we bore to each other, is of no import here.

One or two things about him puzzled me. "Why do you not bring your boy to this room?" I asked, one day.

His yellow face colored with angry surprise. "Antony? What do you know of Antony?"

"I have watched you with him," I said, "on the road yonder. He's a sturdy, manly little fellow, of whom any man would be proud. But you are not proud of him. In this indifference of yours to the world, you include him. I've seen you thrust him off into the ditch when he caught at your hand, and let him struggle on by himself."

He laughed. "Right! Talk of love, family affection! I have tried it. Why should my son be more to me than any other man's son, but for an extended selfishness? I have cut loose all nearer ties than those which hold all men as brothers, and Antony comes no closer than any other."

"I've watched you coming home sometimes," I said, coolly. "One night you carried the little chap, as he was sound asleep. It was dark; but I saw you sit by the pond yonder, thinking no one saw you, caressing him, kissing his face, his soiled little hands, his very feet, as fierce and tender as a woman."

Knowles got up, pacing about, disturbed and angry; he was like a woman in other ways, nervous, given to sudden heats of passion,—was leaky with his own secrets. "Don't talk to me of Antony! I know no child, no wife, nor any brother, except my brother-man."

He went trotting up and down the room, then sat down with his back to me. It was night, and the room was dimly lighted by the smoky flame of a lard lamp. The solitary old man told me his story. Let me be more chary with his pain than he was; enough to say that his wife was yet living, but lost, to him. Her boy Antony came into the room just when his father had ceased speaking,—a stout little chap of four years, with Knowles's ungainly build, and square, honest face, but with large, hazel, melancholy eyes. He crept up on my bed, and, lying across the foot, went to sleep.

Knowles glanced at him,—looked away, his face darkening. "Sir," he said, "I have thrust away all arbitrary ties of family. The true life,"—his eye dilating, as if some great thought had come into his brain,—"the true life is one where no marriage exists,—where the soul acknowledges only the pure impersonal love to God and our brother-man, and enters into peace. It can so enter, even here, by dint of long contemplation and a simple pastoral work for the body."

This was new talk in that country tavern: I said nothing.

"I'm not dreaming dreams," raising his voice. "I have a real plan for you and me, lad. I have found the Utopia of the prophets and poets, an actual place, here in Pennsylvania. We will go there together, shut out the trade-world, and devote ourselves with these lofty enthusiasts to a life of purity, celibacy, meditation,—helpful and loving to the great Humanity."

I was but a lad; my way in life had not been smooth. While he talked on in this strain my blood began to glow. "What of Tony?" I interrupted, after a while.

"The boy?" not looking at the little heap at the foot of the bed. "They will take him in, probably. Children are adopted by the society; they receive education free from the personal taints given by father and mother."

"Yes," not very clear as to what he meant.

The moon began to fleck the bare floor with patches of light and shadow, bringing into relief the broad chest of the man beside me, the big, motionless head dropped forward, and the flabby yellow face set with a terrible, lifelong gravity. His scheme was no joke to him. Whatever soul lay inside of this gross animal body had been tortured nigh to death, and this plan was its desperate chance at a fresh life. Watching me askance as I tried to cover the boy with the blankets, he began the history of this new Utopia, making it blunt and practical as words could compass, to convince me that he was no dreamer of dreams. I will try to recall the facts as he stated them that night; they form a curious story at all times.

In 1805, a man named George Rapp, in Würtemberg, became possessed with the idea of founding a new and pure social system,—sowing a mere seed at first, but with the hope, doubtless, of planting a universal truth thereby which should some day affect all humanity. His scheme differed from Comte's or Saint Simon's, in that it professed to go back to the old patriarchal form for its mode of government, establishing under that, however, a complete community of interest. Unlike other communist reformers, too, Rapp did not look through his own class for men of equal intelligence and culture with himself of whom to make converts, but, gathering several hundred of the peasants from the neighborhood, he managed to imbue them with an absolute faith in his divine mission, and emigrated with them to the backwoods of Pennsylvania, in Butler County. After about ten years they removed to the banks of the Wabash, in Indiana; then, in 1825, returned to Pennsylvania, and settled finally in Beaver County, some sixteen miles below Pittsburg, calling their village Economy.

"A great man, as I conceive him, this Rapp," said Knowles. "His own property, which was large, was surrendered to the society at its foundation, and this to the least particular, not reserving for his own use even the library or gallery of paintings pertaining to his family; nor did the articles of association allow any exclusive advantage to accrue to him or his heirs from the profits of the community. He held his office as spiritual and temporal head, not by election of the people, but

assumed it as by Divine commission, as Moses and Aaron held theirs; and not only did the power of the man over his followers enable him to hold this autocratic authority during a long life, unimpaired, but such was the skill with which his decrees were framed that after his death this authority was reaffirmed by the highest legal tribunal of the country.[1] With all his faith in his divine mission, too, he had a clear insight into all the crookedness and weakness of the natures he was trying to elevate. He knew that these dogged, weak Germans needed coercion to make them fit for ultimate freedom; he held the power of an apostle over them, therefore, with as pure purpose, it's my belief, as any apostle that went before him. The superstitious element lay ready in them for him to work upon. I find no fault with him for working it."

"How?" I asked.

Knowles hesitated. "When their stupidity blocked any of his plans for their advancement, he told them that, unless they consented, their names should be blotted out from the Book of Life,—which was but a coarse way of stating a great truth, after all; telling them, too, that God must be an unjust Judge should he mete out happiness or misery to them without consulting him,—that his power over their fate stretched over this life and the next,—which, considering the limitless influence of a strong mind over a weak one, was not so false, either."

Rapp's society, Knowles stated, did not consist altogether of this class, however. A few men of education and enthusiasm had joined him, and carried out his plans with integrity. The articles of association were founded in a strict sense of justice; members entering the society relinquished all claim to any property, much or little, of which they might be possessed, receiving thereafter common maintenance, education, profit, with the others; should they at any time thereafter choose to leave, they received the sum deposited without interest. A suit had just been decided in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania[2] which had elicited this point.

Knowles, more and more eager, went on to describe the settlement as it had been pictured to him; the quaint, quiet village on the shores of "the Beautiful River," the rolling hills of woodland, the quiet valleys over which their flocks wandered, the simple pastoral work in which all joined; the day begun and ended with music;—even the rich, soft tints of the fresh Western sky about them were not forgotten, nor the picturesque dresses of the silent, primitive people.

"A home in which to forget all pain and sore, boy," ended the old man, gulping down a sigh, and then falling into a heavy silence.

It was long before I broke it. "They do not marry?"

"No," anxiously, as if I had reached the core of the truth in this matter at last. "It was their founder's scheme, as I believe, to lift them above all taint of human passion,—to bring them by pure work, solitude, and contact with a beautiful nature into a state of being where neither earthly love, nor hate, nor ambition can enter,—a sphere of infinite freedom, and infinite love for Him and all His creatures."

There was no doubting the fire of rapt enthusiasm in his eye, rising and looking out across the moonlit fields as if already he saw the pleasant hills of Beulah.

"Thank God for George Rapp! he has found a home where a man can stand alone,"—stretching out his arms as if he would have torn out whatever vestige of human love tugged at his sick old heart, his eye hunting out Tony as he spoke.

The boy, startled from his sleep, muttered, and groped as a baby will for its mother's breast or hand. No hand met the poor little fingers, and they fell on the pillow empty, the child going to sleep again with a forlorn little cry. Knowles watched him, the thick lips under his moustache growing white.

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[1] *Vide* Trustees of Harmony Society *vs.* Nachtrieb, 19 Howard, U. S. Reports, p. 126, Campbell, J.

[2] Schreiber *vs.* Rapp, 5 Watts, 836, Gibson, C. J.

"I purpose," he said, "that next week you and I shall go to these people, and, if possible, become members of their community,—cut loose from all these narrow notions of home and family, and learn to stand upright and free under God's heaven. The very air breathed by these noble enthusiasts will give us strength and lofty thoughts. Think it over, Humphreys."

"Yes."

He moved to the door,—held it open uncertainly. "I'll leave the boy here to-night. He got into a foolish habit of sleeping in my arms when he was a baby; it's time he was broke of it."

"Very well."

"He must learn to stand alone, eh?" anxiously. "Good night";—and in a moment I heard his heavy steps on the stairs, stopping, then going on faster, as if afraid of his own resolution.

In the middle of the night I was wakened by somebody fumbling for Tony at my side,—"Afraid the child would prove troublesome,"—and saw him go off with the boy like a mite in his arms, growling caresses like a lioness who has recovered her whelp. I say lioness, for, with all his weight of flesh and coarseness, Knowles left the impression on your mind of a sensitive, nervous woman.

Late one spring afternoon, a month after that, Knowles and I stood on one of the hills overlooking the communist village of Economy. I was weak and dizzy from illness and a long journey; the intense quiet of the landscape before me affected me like a strain of solemn music. Knowles had infected me with his eager hope. Nature was about to take me to her great mother's bosom, for the first time. Life was to give me the repose I asked, satisfy all the needs of my soul: here was the foretaste. The quaint little hamlet literally slept on the river-bank; not a living creature was visible on the three grass-grown streets; many of the high-gabled brick houses, even at that date of the colony, were closed and vacant, their inmates having dropped from the quiet of this life into an even deeper sleep, and having been silently transferred to rest under the flat grass of the apple-orchards, according to the habit of the society. From the other houses, however, pale rifts of smoke wavered across the cold blue sky; great apple and peach orchards swept up the hills back of the town, quite out of sight. They were in blossom, I remember, and covered the green of the hills with a veil of delicate pink. A bleak wind, as we stood there, brought their perfume towards us, and ruffled the broad, dark river into sudden ripples of cut silver: beyond that, motion there was none. Looking curiously down into the town, I could distinguish a great, barn-like church, a public laundry, bakery, apiary, and one or two other buildings, like factories, but all empty, apparently, and deserted. After all, was this some quaint German village brought hither in an enchanted sleep, and dropped down in the New World? About the houses were silent, trim little gardens, set round with yew and box cut in monstrous shapes, and filled with plants of which this soil knew nothing. Up a path from the woods, too, came at last some curious figures, in a dress belonging to the last century.

Knowles had no idea, like mine, of being bewitched; he rubbed his hands in a smothered excitement. "We too shall be Arcadians!" he burst out. "Humphreys!" anxiously, as we plodded down the hill, "we must be careful, very careful, my boy. These are greatly innocent and pure natures with which we have come in contact: the world must have grown vague and dim to them long ago, wrapped in their high communings. We must leave all worldly words and thoughts outside, as a snake drops his skin. No talk of money here, lad. It would be as well, too, not to mention any family ties, such as wife or child: such bonds must seem to this lofty human brotherhood debasing and gross."

So saying, and dropping Tony's hand in order that the child even might stand alone, we came into the village street; Knowles growing red with eagerness as one of the odd figures came towards us. "Careful, Zachary!" in a hoarse whisper. "It all depends on this first day whether we are accepted or not. Remember their purity of thought, their forms gathered from the patriarchs and apostles!"

I had a vague remembrance of a washing of feet, practised in those days; of calf-killing and open tents for strangers; so stood perplexed while the brother approached and stood there, like an animate lager-bier barrel, dressed in flannel, with a round hat on top. "*Was brauchen Sie?*" he grumbled.

I don't know in what words Knowles's tremulous tones conveyed the idea that we were strangers, going on to state that we were also world-weary, and—

"Ach! want der supper," he said, his face brightening, and, turning, he jogged on, elephant-like, before, muttering something about himself, "Bin Yosef, an keepit der tavern,"—to the door of which, one of the silent brick dwellings, he speedily brought us; and, summoning some "Christ-ina" in a subdued bellow from the bowels of the cellar, went into the neat bar-room, and swallowed two glasses of wine to revive himself, dropping exhausted, apparently, into a chair.

Christina, an old dried-up woman, in the quaint, daintily clean dress of blue, emerged from the cellar-door, bringing with her a savory smell of frying ham and eggs. She glanced at us with suspicious blue eyes, and then, with "*Ach! der Liebling! mein schöner Schatz!*" caught up Tony to her shrivelled breast in a sudden surprise, and, going back to the door, called "Fredrika!" Another old woman, dried, withered, with pale blue eyes, appeared, and the two, hastily shoving us chairs, took Tony between them, chattering in delighted undertones, patting his fat cheeks, his hands, feeling his clothes, straightening his leg, and laughing at the miniature muscles.

Knowles stared dumbly.

"You will haf der supper, hein?" said the first old woman, recollecting herself and coming forward, her thin jaws yet reddened. "Der ham? Shickens? It is so long as I haf seen a little shild," apologetically.

I assented to the ham and chicken proposition, answering for myself and Tony at least. As they went down the stairs, they looked wistfully at him. I nodded, and, picking him up, they carried him with them. I could presently distinguish his shrill little tones, and half a dozen women's voices, caressing, laughing with him. Yet it hurt me somehow to notice that these voices were all old, subdued; none of them could ever hold a baby on her lap, and call it hers. Joseph roused himself, came suddenly in with a great pitcher of domestic wine, out again, and back with ginger-cakes and apples,—"Till der supper be cookin'," with an encouraging nod,—and then went back to his chair, and presently snored aloud. In a few minutes, however, we were summoned to the table.

Knowles ate nothing, and looked vaguely over the great smoking dishes, which Tony and I proved to be marvels of cookery. "Doubtless," he said, "some of these people have not yet overcome this grosser taste; we have yet seen but the dregs of the society; many years of Rapp's culture would be needed to spiritualize German boors."

The old women, who moved gently about, listened keenly, trying to understand why he did not eat. It troubled them.

"We haf five meals a day in der society," said Christina, catching a vague notion of his meaning, "Many as finds it not enough puts cheese and cakes on a shelf at der bed-head, if dey gets faint in de night."

"Do you get faint in the night?" I asked.

"Most times I does," simply.

Knowles burst in with a snort of disgust, and left the table. When I joined him on the stoop he had recovered his temper and eagerness, even laughing at Joseph, who was plying him in vain with his wine.

"I was a fool, Humphreys. These are the flesh of the thing; we'll find the brain presently. But it was a sharp disappointment. Stay here an hour, until I find the directors of the society,—pure, great thinkers, I doubt not, on whom Rapp's mantle has fallen. They will welcome our souls, as these good creatures have our bodies. Yonder is Rapp's house, they tell me. Follow me in an hour."

As he struck into one of the narrow paths across the grassy street, I saw groups of the colonists coming in from their field-work through the twilight, the dress of the women looking not unpicturesque, with the tight flannel gown and broad-rimmed straw hat. But they were all old, I saw as they passed; their faces were alike faded and tired; and whether dull or intelligent, each had a

curious vacancy in its look. Not one passed without a greeting more or less eager for Tony, whom Christina held on her knees, on the steps of the stoop.

"It is so long as I haf not seen a baby," she said, again turning her thin old face round.

I found her pleased to be questioned about the society.

"I haf one, two, dree kinder when we come mit Father Rapp," she said. "Dey is dead in Harmony; since den I just cooken in der tavern. Father Rapp say the world shall end in five years when we come in der society, den I shall see mein shilds again. But I wait, and it haf not yet end."

I thought she stifled a quick sigh.

"And your husband?"

She hesitated. "John Volz was my man, in Germany. He lives in yonder house, mit ein ander family. We are in families of seven."

"Husbands and wives were separated, then?"

"Father Rapp said it must to be. He knows."

There was a long pause, and then, lowering her voice, and glancing cautiously around, she added hurriedly, "Frederick Rapp was his brother: he would not leave his wife."

"Well, and then?"

The two old women looked at each other, warningly, but Christina, being on the full tide of confidence, answered at last in a whisper, "Father Rapp did hold a counsel mit five others."

"And his brother?"

"He was killed. He did never see his child."

"But," I resumed, breaking the long silence that followed, "your women do not care to go back to their husbands? They dwell in purer thoughts than earthly love?"

"Hein?" said the woman with a vacant face.

"Were you married?"—to Fredrika, who sat stiffly knitting a blue woollen sock.

"Nein," vacantly counting the stitches. "Das ist not gut, Father Rapp says. He knows."

"*She* war not troth-plight even," interrupted the other eagerly, with a contemptuous nod, indicating by a quick motion a broken nose, which might have hindered Fredrika's chances of matrimony. "There is Rachel," pointing to a bent figure in a neighboring garden; "she was to marry in the summer, and in spring her man came mit Father Rapp. He was a sickly man."

"And she followed him?"

"Ya. He is dead."

"And Rachel?"

"*Ya wohl!* There she is," as the figure came down the street, passing us.

It was only a bent old Dutchwoman, with a pale face and fixed, tearless eyes, that smiled kindly at sight of the child; but I have never seen in any tragedy, since, the something which moved me so suddenly and deeply in that quiet face and smile. I followed her with my eyes, and then turned to the women. Even the stupid knitter had dropped her work, and met my look with a vague pity and awe in her face.

"It was not gut she could not marry. It is many years, but she does at no time forget," she mumbled, taking up her stocking again. Something above her daily life had struck a quick response from even her, but it was gone now.

Christina eagerly continued; "And there is –" (naming a woman, one of the directors.) "She would be troth-plight, if Father Rapp had not said it must not be. So they do be lovers these a many years, and every night he does play beneath her window until she falls asleep."

When I did not answer, the two women began to talk together in undertones, examining the cut of Tony's little clothes, speculating as to their price, and so forth. I rose and shook myself. Why! here in the new life, in Arcadia, was there the world,—old love and hunger to be mothers, and the veriest gossip? But these were women: I would seek the men with Knowles. Leaving the child, I crossed the darkening streets to the house which I had seen him enter. I found him in a well-furnished room,

sitting at a table, in council with half a dozen men in the old-time garb of the Communists. If their clothes were relics of other times, however, their shrewd, keen faces were wide awake and alive to the present. Knowles's alone was lowering and black.

"These are the directors of the society," he said to me aloud, as I entered.

"Their reception of us is hardly what I expected," nodding me to a seat.

They looked at me with a quiet, business-like scrutiny.

"I hardly comprehend what welcome you anticipated," said one, coolly. "Many persons offer to become members of our fraternity; but it is, we honestly tell you, difficult to obtain admission. It is chiefly an association to make money: the amount contributed by each new-comer ought, in justice, to bear some proportion to the advantage he obtains."

"Money? I had not viewed the society in that light," stammered Knowles.

"You probably," said the other, with a dry smile, "are not aware how successful a corporation ours has been. At Harmony, we owned thirty thousand acres; here, four thousand. We have steam-mills, distilleries, carry on manufactures of wool, silk, and cotton. Exclusive of our stocks, our annual profit, clear of expense, is over two hundred thousand dollars. There are few enterprises by which money is to be made into which our capital does not find its way."

Knowles sat dumb as the other proceeded, numbering, alertly as a broker, shares in railroad stocks, coal-mines, banks.

"You see how we live," he concluded; "the society's lands are self-supporting,—feed and clothe us amply. What profits accrue are amassed, intact."

"To what end?" I broke in. "You have no children to inherit your wealth. It buys you neither place nor power nor pleasure in the world."

The director looked at me with a cold rebuke in his eyes. "It is not surprising that many should desire to enter a partnership into which they bring nothing, and which is so lucrative," he said.

"I had no intention of coming empty-handed," said Knowles in a subdued voice. "But this financial point of view never occurred to me."

The other rose with a look of pity, and led us out through the great ware-rooms, where their silks and cottons were stored in chests, out to the stables to inspect stock, and so forth. But before we had proceeded far, I missed Knowles, who had trotted on before with a stunned air of perplexity. When I went back to the tavern, late that night, I found him asleep on the bed, one burly arm around his boy. The next morning he was up betimes, and at work investigating the real condition of the Harmonists. They treated him with respect, for, outside of what Josiah called his vagaries, Knowles was shrewd and honest.

Tony and I wandered about the drowsy village and meadows, looking at the queer old gardens, dusky with long-forgotten plants, or sometimes at their gallery of paintings, chief among which was one of West's larger efforts.

It was not until the close of the second day that Knowles spoke openly to me. Whatever the disappointment had cost him, he told nothing of it,—grew graver, perhaps, but discussed the chances in the stock market with the directors,—ate Christina's suppers, watching the poor withered women and the gross men with a perplexed look of pity.

"They are but common minds and common bodies, perhaps," he said one evening, as we sat in our corner, after a long, quiet scrutiny of them: "in any case, their lives would have been meagre and insignificant, and yet, Humphreys, yet even that little possibility seems to have been here palsied and balked. I hope George Rapp cannot look back and see what his scheme has done for these people."

"You were mistaken in it, then?"

His dark face reddened gloomily. "You see what they are. Yet Rapp, whatever complaints these people may make of him, I believe to have been an enthusiast, who sacrificed his property to establish a pure, great reform in society. But human nature! human nature is as crooked to drive as a pig tied

by a string. Why, these Arcadians, sir, have made a god of their stomachs, and such of them as have escaped that spend their lives in amassing dollar after dollar to hoard in their common chest."

I suggested that Rapp and he left them nothing else to do. "You shut them out both from a home and from the world; love, ambition, politics, are dead words to them. What can they do but eat and grub?"

"Think! Go back into Nature's heart, and, with contemplation, bear fruit of noble thoughts unto eternal life!" But he hesitated; his enthusiasm hung fire strangely.

After a while,—"Well, well, Zachary," with a laugh, "we'd better go back into the world, and take up our work again. Josiah is partly right, may be. There are a thousand fibres of love and trade and mutual help which bind us to our fellow-man, and if we try to slip out of our place and loose any of them, our own souls suffer the loss by so much life withdrawn. It is as well not to live altogether outside of the market; nor—to escape from this," lifting Tony up on his knee, and beginning a rough romp with him. But I saw his face work strangely as he threw the boy up in the air, and when he caught him, he strained him to his burly breast until the child cried out. "Tut! tut! What now, you young ruffian? Come, shoes off, and to bed; we'll have a little respite from you. I say, Humphreys, do you see the hungry look with which the old women follow the child? God help them! I wonder if it will be made right for them in another world!" An hour after, I heard him still pacing the floor up stairs, crooning some old nursery song to put the boy to sleep.

I visited the Harmonists again not many months ago; the village and orchards lie as sleepily among the quiet hills as ever. There are more houses closed, more grass on the streets. A few more of the simple, honest folk have crept into their beds under the apple-trees, from which they will not rise in the night to eat, or to make money,—Christina among the rest. I was glad she was gone where it was sunny and bright, and where she would not have to grow tired for the sight of "a little shild." There have been but few additions, if any, to the society in the last twenty years. They still retain the peculiar dress which they wore when they left Würtemberg: the men wearing the common German peasant habit; the women, a light, narrow flannel gown, with wide sleeves and a bright-colored silk handkerchief crossed over the breast, the whole surmounted by a straw hat, with a rim of immense width. They do not carry on the manufactures of silk or woollen now, which were Rapp's boast; they have "struck oil" instead, and are among the most successful and skillful land-owners in Pennsylvania in the search for that uncertain source of wealth.

The "Economite Wells" are on the Upper Alleghany, nearly opposite Tidionte. In later years, I believe, children have been brought into the society to be cared for by the women.

It needs no second-sight to discern the end of Rapp's scheme. His single strength sustained the colony during his life, and since his death one or two strong wills have kept it from crumbling to pieces, converting the whole machinery of his system into a powerful money-making agent. These men are the hand by which it keeps its hold on the world,—or the market, perhaps I should say. They are intelligent and able; honorable too, we are glad to know, for the sake of the quiet creatures drowsing away their little remnant of life, fat and contented, driving their ploughs through the fields, or smoking on the stoops of the village houses when evening comes. I wonder if they ever cast a furtive glance at the world and life from which Rapp's will so early shut them out? When they finish smoking, one by one, the great revenues of the society will probably fall into the hands of two or three active survivors, and be merged into the small currents of trade, according to the rapid sequence which always follows the accretion of large properties in this country.

Rapp is remembered, already, even by the people whom he meant to serve, only as a harsh and tyrannical ruler, and his very scheme will not only prove futile, but be forgotten very soon after Fredrika and Joseph have drank their last cup of home-made wine, and gone to sleep under the trees in the apple-orchard.

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT

In the old days (a custom laid aside
With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent
Their wisest men to make the public laws.
And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound
Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas,
Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,
And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,
Stamford sent up to the councils of the State
Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'Twas on a May-day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sagas tell,—
The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky
Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim
Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs
The crater's sides from the red hell below.
Birds ceased to sing, and all the barn-yard fowls
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as he looked
A loving guest at Bethany, but stern
As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State-House, dim as ghosts,
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.
"It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,"
Some said; and then, as if with one accord,
All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice
The intolerable hush. "This well may be
The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;
But be it so or not, I only know
My present duty, and my Lord's command
To occupy till he come. So at the post
Where he hath set me in his providence,
I choose, for one, to meet him face to face,—

No faithless servant frightened from my task,
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,
Let God do his work, we will see to ours.
Bring in the candles." And they brought them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,
An act to amend an act to regulate
The shad and alewive fisheries. Whereupon
Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport,
Straight to the question, with no figures of speech
Save the nine Arab signs, yet not without
The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:
His awe-struck colleagues listening all the while,
Between the pauses of his argument,
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this day,
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen
Against the background of unnatural dark,
A witness to the ages as they pass,
That simple duty hath no place for fear.

LAST DAYS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

PART II

It is too general an opinion, confirmed by tradition, (and quite as untrue as many traditions,) that Landor, seated securely upon his high literary pedestal, never condescended to say a good word of writers of less degree, and that the praise of greater lights was rarely on his lips. They who persist in such assertions can have read but few of his works, for none of his profession has given so much public approbation to literary men. The form of his writings enabled him to show himself more fully than is possible to most authors, and in all his many literary discussions he gave expression to honest criticism, awarding full praise in the numerous cases where it was due. Even at an age when prejudice and petulancy are apt to get the better of a man's judgment, Landor was most generous in his estimate of many young writers. I remember to have once remarked, that on one page he had praised (and not passingly) Cowper, Byron, Southey, Wordsworth, Burns, Campbell, Hemans, and Scott. In the conversation between Archdeacon Hare and Landor, the latter says: "I believe there are few, if any, who enjoy more heartily than I do the best poetry of my contemporaries, or who have commended them both in private and in public with less parsimony and reserve."

Hare. "Are you quite satisfied that you never have sought a pleasure in detecting and exposing the faults of authors, even good ones?"

Landor. "I have here and there sought that pleasure, and found it. To discover a truth and separate it from a falsehood is surely an occupation of the best intellect, and not at all unworthy of the best heart. Consider how few of our countrymen have done it, or attempted it, on works of criticism; how few of them have analyzed and compared. Without these two processes there can be no sound judgment on any production of genius."

Hare. "How much better would it be if our reviewers and magazine men would analyze, in this manner, to the extent of their abilities, and would weigh evidence before they pass sentence!"

And if this analyzing is needed in England, the land of reviews and reviewing, how much more necessary is it in America, where veritable criticism is not even old enough to be young; its germ, however grovelling it may be, not yet having taken the primary form of the caterpillar.

Great as was Landor's personal animosity towards Byron, he considered him a "great poet,"—"the keenest and most imaginative of poets"; nor should we attribute this dislike to the bitter attacks made by Byron upon the "deep-mouthed Bœotian," though surely such would be sufficient to excite indignation in more amiable breasts. It was Byron's furious assaults upon Landor's beloved friend, Southey, that roused the ire of the lion poet; later knowledge of the man, derived from private sources, helped to keep alive the fire of indignation. "While he wrote or spoke against me alone, I said nothing of him in print or conversation; but the taciturnity of pride gave way immediately to my zeal in defence of my friend. What I write is not written on slate; and no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years, can efface it. To condemn what is evil and to commend what is good is consistent. To soften an asperity, to speak all the good we can after worse than we wish, is *that*, and more. If I must understand the meaning of consistency as many do, I wish I may be inconsistent with all my enemies. There are many hearts which have risen higher and sunk lower at his tales, and yet have been shocked and sorrowed at his untimely death a great deal less than mine has been. Honor and glory to him for the extensive good he did! peace and forgiveness for the partial evil!"

Shall Landor be branded with intense egotism for claiming immortality? Can it be denied that he will be read with admiration as long as printing and the English language endure? Can there be greatness without conscious power? Do those of us who believe in Christ as the grandest of men degrade his manly and inspired self-confidence to the level of egotism? Far be it from me, however,

to insinuate a comparison where none can exist, save as one ray of light may relate to the sun. Egotism is the belief of narrow minds in the supreme significance of a mortal self: conscious power is the belief in certain immortal attributes, emanating from, and productive of, Truth and Beauty. I should not call Landor an egotist.

The friendship existing between Southey and Landor must have had much of the heroic element in it, for instances are rare where two writers have so thoroughly esteemed one another. Those who have witnessed the enthusiasm with which Landor spoke of Southey can readily imagine how unpardonable a sin he considered it in Byron to make his friend an object of satire. Landor's strong feelings necessarily caused him to be classed in the *ou tout ou rien* school. Seeing those whom he liked through the magnifying-glass of perfection, he painted others in less brilliant colors than perhaps they merited. Southey to Landor was the essence of all good things, and there was no subject upon which he dwelt with more unaffected pleasure. "Ah, Southey was the best man that ever lived. There never was a better, my dear, good friends, Francis and Julius Hare, excepted. They were true Christians; and it is an honor to me that two such pure men should have been my friends for so many years, up to the hour of death." It was to Julius Hare that Landor dedicated his great work of "Pericles and Aspasia," and, while in England, it was his habit to submit to this friend (and to his brother also, I think) his manuscript. The complete edition of his works published in 1846 was inscribed to Julius Hare and to John Forster, an equally devoted friend. Both of the Hares have been embalmed in his verse.

Esteemed so highly in Landor's heart, Southey occupies the place of honor in the "Imaginary Conversations," taking part in four dialogues, two with Porson and two with Landor, on subjects of universal literary interest, Milton and Wordsworth. These Conversations are among the most valuable of the series, being models of criticism. Landor delighted to record every meeting with Southey, where it was compatible with the subject-matter. Thus in writing of Como he says: "It was in Como I received and visited the brave descendants of the Jovii; it was in Como I daily conversed with the calm, philosophical Sironi; and I must love the little turreted city for other less intrinsic recollections. Thither came to see me the learned and modest Bekker; and it was there, after several delightful rambles, I said farewell to Southey." Often have I heard Landor express his great liking for "The Curse of Kehama." One may obtain an idea of how this admiration was reciprocated, from Southey's criticism on "Gebir," in the Critical Review for September, 1799. Of Gebir's speech to the Gadites, he says: "A passage more truly Homeric than the close of this extract we do not remember in the volumes of modern poetry." He took the entire poem as a model in blank verse. After Southey's death, Landor used his influence with Lord Brougham to obtain a pension for the family, in justice to the memory of one who had added to the fame of England's literature. Again, in a letter to Southey's son, the Rev. Charles Cuthbert Southey, he pronounced a eulogy upon his friend's character and public services.

Directing Landor's attention to the assertion in Pycroft's "Course of English Reading," that he, Landor, failed to appreciate Chaucer, the old man, much vexed, refuted such a falsehood, saying: "On the contrary, I am a great admirer of his. I am extremely fond of the 'Canterbury Tales.' I much prefer Chaucer to Spenser; for allegory, when spun out, is unendurable." It is strange that a man apparently so well read as Mr. Pycroft should have so unjustly interpreted Landor, when it needed but a passing reference to the Conversations to disprove his statement. By turning to the second dialogue between Southey and Landor, he might have culled the following tribute to Chaucer: "I do not think Spenser equal to Chaucer even in imagination, and he appears to me very inferior to him in all other points, excepting harmony. Here the miscarriage is in Chaucer's age, not in Chaucer, many of whose verses are highly beautiful, but never (as in Spenser) one whole period. I love the geniality of his temperature: no straining, no effort, no storm, no fury. His vivid thoughts burst their way to us through the coarsest integuments of language." In another book Landor says: "Since the time of Chaucer there have been only two poets who at all resemble him; and these two are widely dissimilar one from the other,—Burns and Keats. The accuracy and truth with which Chaucer has described the manners of common life, with the foreground and background, are also to be found in Burns, who

delights in broader strokes of external nature, but equally appropriate. He has parts of genius which Chaucer has not in the same degree,—the animated and pathetic. Keats, in his 'Endymion,' is richer in imagery than either; and there are passages in which no poet has arrived at the same excellence on the same ground. Time alone was wanting to complete a poet, who already far surpassed all his contemporaries in this country in the poet's most noble attributes." Once more, in some beautiful lines to the fair and free soul of poesy,—Keats,—Landor concludes with a verse that surely shows an appreciation of Chaucer:—

"Ill may I speculate on scenes to come,
Yet would I dream to meet thee at our home
With Spenser's quiet, Chaucer's livelier ghost,
Cognate to thine,—not higher and less fair,—
And Madalene and Isabella there
Shall say, *Without thee half our loves were lost.*"

When a man chooses an author as a companion, not for time but for eternity, he gives the best possible proof of an esteem that no rash assertion of critics can qualify.

"I have always deeply regretted that I never met Shelley," said Landor to me. "It was my own fault, for I was in Pisa the winter he resided there, and was told that Shelley desired to make my acquaintance. But I refused to make his, as, at that time, I believed the disgraceful story related of him in connection with his first wife. Years after, when I called upon the second Mrs. Shelley, who, then a widow, was living out of London, I related to her what I had heard. She assured me that it was a most infamous falsehood, one of the many that had been maliciously circulated about her husband. I expressed my sorrow at not having been undeceived earlier, and assured her I never could forgive myself for crediting a slander that had prevented me from knowing Shelley. I was much pleased with Mrs. Shelley." Landor's enthusiasm was most aroused at generous deeds; for these he honored Shelley. Meanness he scorned, and believed it to be an attribute of Byron. As a proof of contrast in the natures of these two poets, he related an interesting anecdote, which has appeared in one of his Conversations. "Byron could comprehend nothing heroic, nothing disinterested. Shelley, at the gates of Pisa, threw himself between him and the dragoon, whose sword in his indignation was lifted and about to strike. Byron told a common friend, some time afterward, that he could not conceive how any man living should act so. 'Do you know he might have been killed! and there was every appearance that he would be!' The answer was, 'Between you and Shelley there is but little similarity, and perhaps but little sympathy; yet what Shelley did then, he would do again, and always. There is not a human creature, not even the most hostile, that he would hesitate to protect from injury at the imminent hazard of life.' … 'By God! I cannot understand it!' cried Byron. 'A man to run upon a naked sword for another!'"

And this Shelley, who, through a noble impulse, would have sacrificed himself, is the man whom Moore seriously advised Byron to avoid, lest his religious theories should undermine the immaculate morality of the author of Don Juan! It is to be supposed that Moore wrote in earnestness of spirit, yet it is impossible not to smile in wonderment at this letter. Moore doubtless had greater belief in salvation by faith than by works. "Ah, Moore was a superstitious dog!" exclaimed Landor one day. "I was once walking with him in a garden," (I forget in what part of England,) "laughing and joking, when Moore remarked the approach of some dignitary of the Catholic Church. He immediately began to mumble something, ran forward, and on his knees implored a blessing from the priest, crossing himself with reverential air. Ah, what it is to have faith! Landor, Landor, you are incorrigible! Don't you think so, Giallo?" asked the master of his dog. "I never heard Moore sing, much to my regret. I once asked him, but he excused himself with a sigh, saying that he had lost his voice."

One of Landor's prominent characteristics was generosity, carried to the verge of rashness. Even in his last years, when living on a very limited income, he was only too ready to empty his pockets at the call of any charity, whether public or private. Impulse, however, prompted him to give most heartily when he thought to further the cause of liberty. At the time a subscription was opened in Florence to aid Garibaldi's Sicilian expedition, Landor, anxious to lay an offering at the feet of his heart's hero, pulled out his watch, the only article of value about him, and begged Mr. Browning to present it to the fund. Mr. Browning took it, but knowing how lost the old man would be without his timepiece, kept it for a few days; and then, seizing a favorable moment when Landor was missing his watch greatly, though without murmuring, Mr. Browning persuaded him to retain it. This he did, with reluctance, after being assured of the fund's prosperous condition. It was about the same time, I think, that Landor wrote an Italian Conversation between Savonarola and the Prior of San Marco, which he published in pamphlet form for the benefit of this or a similar cause. Most admirably did Landor write Italian, his wonderful knowledge of Latin undoubtedly giving him the key to the soft, wooing tongue. He, of course, spoke the language with equal correctness; but, as with most Englishmen who go to Italy after having arrived at mature years, his pronunciation was *proprio Inglese*.

Landor would never accept payment for his books, presenting the amount due him either to the publisher, or, more generally, to some friend who had been most active in aiding their publication. Few will applaud this idiosyncrasy, the general and sensible opinion being that the laborer is worthy of his hire: but Landor took peculiar pride in writing for fame alone, without thought of the more tangible product of genius; and, unlike most authors, he could well afford to indulge in this heroic taste. Three years ago—and for the first time in his life, he said—Landor accepted payment for a Conversation contributed to the London Athenæum. The money had no sooner been received, than he urged, though unsuccessfully, its acceptance upon a young American in whom he was interested, declaring that he had no possible use for it. On another occasion he proposed to give everything he might write to this same American, to dispose of for the latter's benefit, and appeared grieved when the offer was gratefully declined.

One day I was surprised by the appearance of Landor's little waiting-maid bearing an old Florentine box of carved wood, almost as large as herself, which she deposited on the table in obedience to her master's wishes. She departed without vouchsafing any explanation. Curiosity however was not long unsatisfied, for soon Giallo's white nose peered through the door and heralded the coming of the old lion, who had no sooner entered the room than he put into my hands a quaint old key, saying: "I have brought you something that one of these days, when these old bones of mine are packed away in the long box, may be of considerable value. I have brought you what we may call, in anticipation of a long-deferred but inevitable event, my literary remains. In that box you will find all my notes and memoranda, together with many unpublished verses. You can do what you like with them." Startled at this unexpected endowment, I looked very great hesitancy, whereupon Landor smiled, and begged me to unlock the box, as its opening would not be fraught with evil consequences. "It is not Pandora's casket, I assure you," he added. Turning the key and raising the lid, I discovered quite a large collection of manuscripts, of very great interest to me of course, but to which I had no right, nor was I the proper person with whom to leave them. To have argued would have been useless. Expostulation with Landor when in the white heat of a new idea was Quixotic, so I expressed my very grateful thanks, and determined to watch for a favorable opportunity to return the gift. I had not long to wait, as it was not more than a month after that Landor bore them off, with the intention of making certain selections for immediate publication in England and returning the remainder. Time had not dealt gently with Landor's memory of things nearest, therefore I knew that the old Florentine box would wait in vain for its jewels. I was right: they never came. The box since then has braved shipwreck, and now stands beneath a modern writing-table, dark and proud of its antiquity, telling perpetually of former noble associations. I felt relieved that it so happened the manuscripts were not

again left with me, yet I should have been a saint had I not occasionally experienced a secret regret at not having been forced to retain them in spite of entreaty and propriety.

The greater part of these manuscripts have since appeared, under the title of "Heroic Idyls, with Additional Poems," published late in 1863 by T. Cantley Newby, London.[3] This very last fruit off an old tree can in no way add to Landor's reputation; it is interesting, however, for having been written "within two paces of his ninetieth year," and as showing the course of the mind's empire. Landor would have been more heroic than these Idyls had he withheld them from publication, for it is not cheering to see Thor cracking nuts with his most ponderous hammer. And Landor realized as much when he wrote the following apology:—

"You ask how I, who could converse
With Pericles, can stoop to worse:
How I, who once had higher aims,
Can trifle so with epigrams.
I would not lose the wise from view,
But would amuse the children too:
Besides, my breath is short and weak,
And few must be the words I speak."

Ah! but it is a question whether the children are amused. Occasionally there is a line with the old ring to it, a couplet seasoned with Attic salt, but for the rest there is the body without the spirit,—there is the well of English undefiled, but it is pumped dry! Probably the desire to publish was never so great as during Landor's last years, when the interests of his life had narrowed down to reading and writing, and he had become a purely introverted man. It was then he wrote:—

"The heaviest curse that can on mortal fall
Is, 'Who has friends may he outlive them all!'
This malediction has awaited me,
Who had so many.... I could once count three."

Cursed thus, he turned to the public for the only consolation left him on this side of the grave. It was not sufficient to write, for it is he as the Homer of his Idyls that confesses

"A pardonable fault: we wish for listeners
Whether we speak or sing: the young and old
Alike are weak in this, unwise and wise
Cheerful and sorrowful."

Twenty years before, Landor wrote to Lady Blessington: "Once beyond seventy, I will never write a line in verse or prose for publication. I will be my own Gil Blas. The wisest of us are unconscious when our faculties begin to decay." He, wisest of all, forgot his own good resolutions; but the listeners to these latter-day Idyls were few, and Landor had scarce collected his small audience before the lights were blown out and the curtain fell upon the deathbed of the singer.

To express a liking for any of Landor's pictures—provided you were a friend—was almost sufficient to cause them to be taken down and presented to you; hence to praise anything in his presence was exceedingly unsafe. I remember looking over a large album once belonging to Barker, the English artist, which Landor had purchased to relieve him of certain debts, and particularly

[3] Out of three hundred and forty-eight pages, sixty-eight are devoted to Latin verses.

admiring four original sketches by Turner—two in oil and two in india-ink—that had been given by this artist to his brother-painter. No sooner had I spoken than Landor went in search of the scissors, and, had I not earnestly protested, would have cut out the Turners and given them to me. Such being Landor's disposition, one can well imagine how easily he could be imposed upon by designing people. There is an instance of his kindly feeling so prominent and so honorable both to himself and the object of it, that it is but right the public should read the contents of two letters belonging to and greatly treasured by me. They were put into my hands nearly four years ago by Landor to do with as I pleased after his death. The letters explain themselves.

"8 South Bank, Regent's Park,

London, March 24, 1856

"My venerable Friend,—

"Though I very gratefully appreciate the generosity of your intentions, still I must confess that few things have ever affected me more painfully than to see from the 'Times' of to-day my private circumstances—the sacred domain of life—thrust as an object of commiseration upon public discussion,—a miserable subject of public sneers.

"My head turns giddy at the very thought, and my resignation is scarcely able to overcome the shame. I don't know how I shall muster sufficient resolution to appear in public ever hereafter; and I fear, with all your good intentions, you shall have become the involuntary instrument for driving me out of England before my time. I really scarcely can imagine what else I have to do, unless you devise some means for healing the wound.

"I am poor, very poor; but there was, I dare say, something honorable in that poverty, something sacred I would say. But seeing it made the object of a public appeal for commiseration, I feel as if everything that was sacred in my position had undergone a profanation.

"I repeat that I respect and appreciate the nobility of your impulses, but I regret that such a step should have been taken without my having an idea of its possibility.

"I will say no more, but leave it with your prudence and discretion to mitigate the blow your kindness has inflicted on me. And remain with wonted esteem, only mingled with grief,

"Yours very truly,
"Kossuth.

"To Walter Savage Landor."

Opposite the nervous yet legible scrawl of the noble and maligned Magyar, Landor traced the following answer.

"It is impossible for me to rest until I have attempted to remove the vexation I have caused to the man I most venerate of any upon earth.

"My noble Kossuth! 'the sacred domain of your life' is far more extensive than your measurement. Neither your house nor your banker's are its confines. Do not imagine that the world is ignorant of your circumstances; it would be a crime to be indifferent to them.

"The editor of the Atlas, in announcing that he had *secured your co-operation*, published a manifesto. I know nothing of this editor; but so long as you contributed to the paper, I was your humble subsidiary.

"Consider how many men, wealthier than you and me, have accepted the offers of those who came forward to indemnify the persecuted for the demolition of their property. Ask yourself if Demosthenes or Milton, the two most illustrious defenders of liberty, by speech and pen, would have thrust aside the tribute which is due to such men alone. Would you dash out the signature of one who declares you his trustee for a legacy to your children? No, you would not. Neither will you reject the proofs of high esteem, however manifested, which England, however debased, is anxious to give.

"Believe me ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

"W. S. Landor.

"March 27."

Landor was essentially a hero-worshipper. His admiration for Washington exceeded that entertained by him for any man of any time. Franklin, too, he greatly esteemed. "Ah, if you had but another Washington and Franklin!" he exclaimed one day. To have suffered for freedom was the open-sesame to Landor's heart; nor did age in any way chill this noble enthusiasm, as the letter here inserted amply proves. It was sufficient to name Kossuth to bring fire to the old man's eye and eulogistic volubility to his tongue.

Orsini, too, was a great favorite with him. Coming in one morning as usual, and sitting down in the arm-chair by the fire, he took from under his arm a small paper-covered book, saying: "I have brought you something that I know you will like to read. Giallo and I have enjoyed it immensely; and a better critic than Giallo is not to be found in all Italy, though I say it who shouldn't. An approving wag of his tail is worth all the praise of all the Quarterlies published in the United Kingdom." Hereupon Giallo, apparently delighted at this compliment, barked and frisked about like a creature bewitched, jumped into his master's lap, and did not return to a quiescent state until he had kissed his master's face. "Down, Giallo, down!" finally cried Landor. "Where are your manners, sir? Don't you know it is very uncivil to interrupt a conversation? And, moreover, remember never to spoil a *tête-à-tête*." Then turning to me, Landor continued, presenting the book, "Here it is; the *Memorie Politiche di Felice Orsini*, which you will find vastly entertaining and far more romantic than any novel. A very noble, brave fellow was that Orsini, and handsome too! It is a great pity he did not succeed in his plot against that scoundrel Napoleon, although it was not well planned, and failure was written on the face of it." Right gladly did I read memoirs which were all that Landor (and Giallo) claimed. It is strange that this book should be so little known. Were students of Italian to transfer their affections from *Le mie Prigioni* to these *Memorie Politiche*, they would be the gainers; for the patriotism of Silvio Pellico is but a sick and weakly sentiment compared with the dauntless energy and unflinching determination of Orsini. His escape from Mantua, aided by no other friends than four sheets and four towels, and described most admirably and in detail by him, is one of the most brilliant and perilous exploits in the annals of prison history. Those who knew Orsini have since told me that he was one of the most lovable of men, as he was one of the most handsome,—full of the fire of intense and stalwart manhood, yet as gentle as a young girl. Disappointed and wronged in his domestic relations, a loving but wretched father, and stung to madness by his country's servitude, whose cause he early made his own, Orsini's life was from the beginning a tragedy. Fate seemed to have wrested from him every form of happiness in order to make him a more desperate conspirator. He conspired from pure love of liberty, for which at any moment he was ready to die. Those who merely know Orsini by the last act of his life can have no proper appreciation of the wonderful purity and nobility of his character. In his attempt to assassinate Louis Napoleon, he was actuated by as exalted motives as led Charlotte Corday to do a bloody deed. Exiled, a price upon his head, deceived by those in whom he had put faith, in despair at the state of Italian affairs, Orsini committed what he himself, in a letter to his intended victim, Napoleon, confessed to be *un fatale errore mentale*,—assassination being in direct opposition to the faith and facts of his life up to the conspiracy of the 14th of January. For this

fatal error he offered his own blood as an expiatory sacrifice. Few nobler heads than Orsini's have bowed before the guillotine.

In "Pericles and Aspasia," Cleone has written with Landor's pen, that "study is the bane of boyhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restorative of old age." Of this theory there could be no better example than Landor's self. That life which outlasted all the friends of its zenith was made endurable by a constant devotion to the greatest works of the greatest men. Milton and Shakespeare were his constant companions, by night as well as by day. "I never tire of them," he would say; "they are always a revelation. And how grand is Milton's prose! quite as fine as his poetry!" He was very fond of repeating the following celebrated lines that have the true ring to a tuneful ear as well as to an appreciative intellect:—

"But when God commands to take the trumpet
And blow a dolorous or thrilling blast,
It rests not with man's will what he shall say
Or what he shall conceal."

"Was anything more harmonious ever written?" Landor would ask. "But Milton, you know, is old-fashioned. I believe *I* am old-fashioned. However, it is rather an honor to be classed thus, if one may keep such distinguished company." How devoted a student of Milton Landor was is evidenced in his delightful critical conversation between Southey and himself, wherein he declared, "Such stupendous genius, so much fancy, so much eloquence, so much vigor of intellect never were united as in Paradise Lost." Yet the lover is still an impartial critic, and does not indorse all things. Quoting the charming couplet,

"Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay,"

he says: "I would rather have written these two lines than all the poetry that has been written since Milton's time in all the regions of the earth." In 1861 Landor sent me the last lines he ever wrote, addressed to the English Homer, entitled

"MILTON IN ITALY

"O Milton! couldst thou rise again, and see
The land thou lovedst in an earlier day!
See, springing from her tomb, fair Italy
(Fairer than ever) cast her shroud away,—
That tightly-fastened, triply-folded shroud!
Around her, shameful sight! crowd upon crowd,
Nations in agony lie speechless down,
And Europe trembles at a despot's frown."

The despot is, of course, Louis Napoleon, for Landor would never allow that the French Emperor comprehended his epoch, and that Italian regeneration was in any way due to the co-operation of France. In his allegorical poem of "The gardener and the Mole," the gardener at the conclusion of the argument chops off the mole's head, such being the fate to which the poet destined Napoleon. No reference, however, is made to "that rascal" in the lines to Milton inserted in the

"Heroic Idyls," and as the printed version was, doubtless, Landor's own preference, it is but just to insert it here:—

"O Milton! couldst thou rise again and see
The land thou lovedst in *thy* earlier day
See springing from her tomb fair Italy
(Fairer than ever) cast her shroud away,
That tightly-fastened, triply-folded shroud,
Torn by her children off their mother's face!
O couldst thou see her now, more justly proud
Than of an earlier and a stronger race!"

There certainly is more unity of idea in the printed copy, but so faulty is it in punctuation—or at least for the want of it—that one is warranted in believing the substitution of *thy* for *an*, in the second line, to be an *erratum*. Though Milton visited Italy in his youth, there is no evidence to prove that he did not love it in old age. In its present form the line loses in sense. Nothing annoyed Landor more than to have his manuscript "corrected," and no one's temper was ever more tried than his in this respect; for, having an orthography peculiar to himself, which he maintained was according to the genius of the language, and which printers would persist in translating into the vulgate, Landor grew to be morbidly sensitive concerning revision. It was the more intolerable to him, because of his extreme care in the preparation of his manuscript. Few celebrated authors have written so clear and clean a hand; none ever sent his work to the press in a more highly finished state. Fastidious beyond expression, the labor of correction was unending. Even "Gebir" was subjected to revision, and at one time I was intrusted with quite a long introduction, which, the day after, Landor altered and sent to me the following note.

"Again the old creature comes to bother you. The enclosed is to take the place of what I wrote yesterday, and to cancel, as you will see, what a tolerably good critic" (Southey) "thought *too good to be thrown away*, &c., &c. I do not think so, but certainly the beginning of 'Gebir' is better with

'Kings! ye athirst for conquest,' etc.

You are not *athirst* for it but *take it coolly*."

Later, this introduction passed out of my hands. Previously Landor had written on a slip of paper now before me:—

"'Gebir' should begin thus:—

'Hear ye the fate of Gebir!'

Not

'I sing the *fates* of Gebir,'"—

which is a correction suggested to future publishers of this poem.

It would be a hopeful sign were our young American writers inoculated with somewhat of Landor's reverence for literature, as it was no less than reverence that made him treat ideas with respect, and array them in the most dignified language, thus making of every sentence a study. And it is well that these writers should know what intense labor is required to produce anything great or lasting. "Execution is the chariot of genius," William Blake, the great poet-artist, has said; and it is just this execution which is unattainable without immense application and fastidiousness. If patience

be genius,—"La patience cherche et le génie trouve,"—and if execution be its chariot, what possible fame can there be for the slipshod writers of to-day, who spawn columns and volumes at so much a minute, regardless of the good name of their mother tongue, devoid of ideas, which are the product only of brains that have been ploughed up and sown with fruitful seed? An author's severest critic should be himself. To be carried away by the popular current is easy and pleasant, but some fine morning the popular man wakes up to find himself stranded and deserted,—Nature playing queer pranks with currents changing their beds as best suits her fancy;—for even popular taste follows laws of progression, and grows out of one error into a less. Pope wisely maintains that "no man ever rose to any degree of perfection in writing but through obstinacy and an inveterate resolution against the stream of mankind." Unless he mount the chariot of execution, his ideas, however good, will never put a girdle round the earth. They will halt and limp as do his own weary feet.

Landor's enthusiasm for Shakespeare grew young as he grew old, and it was his desire to bid farewell to earth with his eyes resting upon the Shakespeare that so constantly lay open before him. Nothing excited his indignation more than to hear little people of great pretension carpingly criticise the man of whom he makes Southey, in a discussion with Porson, declare, that "all the faults that ever were committed in poetry would be but as air to earth, if we could weigh them against one single thought or image such as almost every scene exhibits in every drama of this unrivalled genius." In three fine lines Landor has said even more:—

"In poetry there is but one supreme,
Though there are many angels round his throne,
Mighty, and beauteous, while his face is hid."

To Landor's superior acumen, also, we owe two readings of Shakespeare that have made intelligible what was previously "a contradictory inconceivable." Did it ever occur to dealers in familiar quotations that there was a deal of nonsense in the following lines as they are printed?

"*Vaulting* ambition that o'erleaps *itself*
And falls on the *other side*."

"Other side of what?" exclaims Landor "It should be *its sell*. *Sell* is *saddle* in Spenser and elsewhere, from the Latin and Italian." Yet, in spite of correction, every Macbeth on the stage still maintains in stentorian tones that ambition o'erleaps *itself*, thereby demonstrating how useless it is to look for Shakespearian scholarship in so-called Shakespearian actors, who blindly and indolently accept theatrical tradition.

Equally important is Landor's correction of the lines

"And the *delighted* spirit
To bathe in fiery floods."

"Truly this would be a very odd species of delight. But Shakespeare never wrote such nonsense; he wrote *belighted* (whence our *blighted*), struck by lightning; a fit preparation for such bathing."

The last stanza ever inscribed to Shakespeare by Landor was sent to me with the following preface: "An old man sends the last verses he has written, or probably he may ever write to – –."

"SHAKESPEARE IN ITALY

"Beyond our shores, beyond the Apennines,

Shakespeare, from heaven came thy creative breath!
'Mid citron grove and overarching vines
Thy genius wept at Desdemona's death:
In the proud sire thou badest anger cease,
And Juliet by her Romeo sleep in peace.
Then rose thy voice above the stormy sea,
And Ariel flew from Prospero to thee.

"July 1, 1860."

Dante was not one of Landor's favorites, although he was quite ready to allow the greatness of *il gran poeta*. He had no sympathy with what he said was very properly called a comedy. He would declare that about one sixth only of Dante was intelligible or pleasurable. Turning to Landor's writings, I find that in his younger days he was even less favorable to Dante. In the "Pen*te*meron" (the author spelling it so) he, in the garb of Petrarch, asserts that "at least sixteen parts in twenty of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* are detestable both in poetry and principle; the higher parts are excellent, indeed." Dante's powers of language, he allows, "are prodigious; and, in the solitary places where he exerts his force rightly, the stroke is irresistible. But how greatly to be pitied must he be who can find nothing in Paradise better than sterile theology! and what an object of sadness and consternation he who rises up from hell like a giant refreshed!" While allowing his wonderful originality, Landor goes so far as to call him "the great master of the disgusting"! Dante is not sympathetic.

Yet he wrote the glorious episode of Francesca da Rimini, of which Landor's Boccaccio says: "Such a depth of intuitive judgment, such a delicacy of perception, exists not in any other work of human genius; and from an author who, on almost all occasions, in this part of the work, betrays a deplorable want of it."

Landor used often to say what Cleone has written to Aspasia,—"I do not believe the best writers of love-poetry ever loved. How could they write if they did? where could they collect the thoughts, the words, the courage?" This very discouraging belief admits of argument, for there is much proof to the contrary. Shelley and Keats could not write what they had not felt; and Mrs. Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese, the most exquisite love-poems in the English language, came direct from the heart. It were hardly possible to make poetry while living it; but when the white heat of passion has passed, and hangs as a beautiful picture on memory's walls, the artist may write his poem. If the best writers of love-poetry have never loved, at least they have been capable of loving, or they could not make the reader feel. Appreciation is necessary to production. But Petrarca was such a poet as Cleone refers to. He was happy to be theoretically miserable, that he might indite sonnets to an unrequited passion: and who is not sensible of their insincerity? One is inclined to include Dante in the same category, though far higher in degree. Landor, however, has conceived the existence of a truly ardent affection between Dante and Beatrice, and it was my good fortune to hear him read this beautiful imaginary conversation. To witness the aged poet throwing the pathos of his voice into the pathos of his intellect, his eyes flooded with tears, was a scene of uncommon interest. "Ah!" said he, while closing the book, "I never wrote anything half as good as that, and I never can read it that the tears do not come." Landor's voice must have been exceedingly rich and harmonious, as it then (1861) possessed much fulness. This was the first and only time I ever heard him read aloud one of his own Conversations.

Petrarch and Boccaccio were highly esteemed by Landor, who did not sympathize with Lord Chesterfield in his opinion that the former deserved his *Laura* better than his *lauro*. The best evidence of this predilection is Landor's great work, "The Pentemeron," second only to his greatest, "Pericles and Aspasia." Its *couleur locale* is marvellous. On every page there is a glimpse of cloudless blue sky, a breath of warm sunny air, a sketch of Italian manner. The masterly *gusto* with which the author enters into the spirit of Italy would make us believe him to be "the noblest Roman of them all," had he not proved himself a better Grecian. Margaret Fuller realized this when, after comparing the

Pentemeron and Petrarca together, she wrote: "I find the prose of the Englishman worthy of the verse of the Italian. It is a happiness to see such marble beauty in the halls of a contemporary."

I gave evidence of great surprise one day upon hearing Landor express himself warmly in favor of Alfieri, as I had naturally concluded, from a note appended to the Conversation between "Galileo, Milton, and a Dominican," that he entertained a sorry opinion of this poet. Reading the note referred to, Landor seemed to be greatly annoyed, and replied: "This is a mistake. It was never my intention to condemn Alfieri so sweepingly." A few days later I received the following correction. "Keats, in whom the spirit of poetry was stronger than in any contemporary, at home or abroad, delighted in Hellenic imagery and mythology, displaying them admirably; but no poet came nearer than Alfieri to the heroic, since Virgil. Disliking, as I do, prefaces and annotations, excrescences which hang loose like the deciduous bark on a plane-tree, I will here notice an omission of mine on Alfieri, in the 'Imaginary Conversations.' The words, '*There is not a glimpse of poetry in his Tragedies*,' should be, as written, '*There is not an extraneous glimpse*,' &c."

Since then Landor has addressed these lines to Alfieri:—

"Thou art present in my sight,
Though far removed from us, for thou alone
Hast touched the inmost fibres of the breast,
Since Tasso's tears made damper the damp floor
Whereon one only light came through the bars," &c.;

thus redeeming the unintentioned slur of many years' publicity.

Landor pronounced (as must everyone else) Niccolini to be the best of the recent Italian poets. Of Redi, whose verses taste of the rich juice of the grape in those good old days when Tuscan vines had not become demoralized, and wine was cheaper than water, Landor spoke fondly. Leigh Hunt has given English readers a quaff of Redi in his rollicking translation of "Bacchus in Tuscany," which is steeped in "Montepulciano," "the king of all wine."

But Redi is not always bacchanalian. He has a loving, human heart as well, which Landor has shown in a charming translation given to me shortly after our conversation concerning this poet. "I never publish translations," he remarked at the time; but though translations may not be fit company for the "Imaginary Conversations," the verses from Redi are more than worthy of an abiding place here.

"Ye gentle souls! ye love-devoted fair!
Who, passing by, to Pity's voice incline,
O stay awhile and hear me; then declare
If there was ever grief that equals mine.
"There was a woman to whose sacred breast
Faith had retired, where Honor fixt his throne,
Pride, though upheld by Virtue she represt....
Ye gentle souls! that woman was my own.
"Beauty was more than beauty in her face,
Grace was in all she did, in all she said.
In sorrow as in pleasure there was grace....
Ye gentle souls! that gentle soul is fled."

TO-MORROW

'Tis late at night, and in the realm of sleep
My little lambs are folded like the flocks;
From room to room I hear the wakeful clocks
Challenge the passing hour, like guards that keep
Their solitary watch on tower and steep;
Far off I hear the crowing of the cocks,
And through the opening door that time unlocks
Feel the fresh breathing of To-morrow creep.
To-morrow! the mysterious, unknown guest,
Who cries aloud: "Remember Barmecide,
And tremble to be happy with the rest!"
And I make answer: "I am satisfied;
I dare not ask; I know not what is best;
God hath already said what shall betide."

DOCTOR JOHNS

LVIII

A letter from Reuben indeed has come; but not for Miss Adèle. The Doctor is glad of the relief its perusal will give him. Meantime Miss Eliza, in her stately, patronizing manner, and with a coolness that was worse than a sneer, says, "I hope you have pleasant news from your various friends abroad, Miss Maverick?"

Adèle lifted her eyes with a glitter in them that for a moment was almost serpent-like; then, as if regretting her show of vexation, and with an evasive reply, bowed her head again to brood over the strange suspicions that haunted her. Miss Johns, totally unmoved,—thinking all the grief but a righteous dispensation for the sin in which the poor child had been born,—next addressed the Doctor, who had run his eye with extraordinary eagerness through the letter of his son.

"What does Reuben say, Benjamin?"

"His 'idols,' again, Eliza; 't is always the 'flesh-pots of Egypt.'"

And the Doctor reads: "There is just now rare promise of a good venture in our trade at one of the ports of Sicily, and we have freighted two ships for immediate despatch. At the last moment our supercargo has failed us, and Brindlock has suggested that I go myself; it is short notice, as the ship is in the stream and may sail to-morrow, but I rather fancy the idea, and have determined to go. I hope you will approve. Of course, I shall have no time to run up to Ashfield to say good by. I shall try for a freight back from Naples, otherwise shall make some excuse to run across the Straits for a look at Vesuvius and the matters thereabout. St. Paul, you know, voyaged in those seas, which will interest you in my trip. I dare say I shall find where he landed: it's not far from Naples, Mrs. Brindlock tells me. Give love to the people who ever ask about me in Ashfield. I enclose a check of five hundred dollars for parish contingencies till I come back; hoping to find you clean out of harness by that time." (The Doctor cannot for his life repress a little smile here.) "Tell Adèle I shall see her blue Mediterranean at last, and will bring her back an olive-leaf, if I find any growing within reach. Tell Phil I love him, and that he deserves all the good he will surely get in this world, or in any other. Ditto for Rose. Ditto for good old Mrs. Elderkin, whom I could almost kiss for the love she's shown me. What high old romps haven't we had in her garden! Eh, Adèle? (I suppose you'll show her this letter, father.)

"Good by, again.

"N. B. We hope to make a cool thirty thousand out of this venture!"

Adèle had half roused herself at the hearing of her name, but the careless, jocular mention of it, (so it seemed at least,) in contrast with the warmer leave-taking of other friends, added a new pang to her distress. She wished, for a moment, that she had never written her letter of thanks. What if she wished—in that hour of terrible suspicion and of vain search after any object upon which her future happiness might rest—that she had never been born? Many a one has given hearty utterance to that wish with less cause. Many a one of those just tottering into childhood will live to give utterance to the same. But the great wheel of fate turns ever relentlessly on. It drags us up from the nether mysterious depths; we sport and struggle and writhe and rejoice, as it bears us into the flashing blaze of life's meridian; then, with awful surety, it hurries us down, drags us under, once more into the abysses of silence and of mystery. Happy he who reads such promise as he passes in the lights fixed forever on the infinite depths above, that the silence and the mystery shall be as welcome as sleep to the tired worker!

"It will be of service to Reuben, I think, Benjamin," said Aunt Eliza; "I quite approve,"—and slipped away noiselessly.

The Doctor was still musing,—the letter in his hand,—when Adèle rose, and, approaching him, said in her gentlest way, "It's a great grief to you, New Papa, I know it is, but 'God orders all things well,'—except for me."

"Adaly! my child, I am shocked!"

She had roused the preacher in him unwittingly.

"I can't listen now," said she, impatiently, "and tell me,—you must,—did papa give you the name of this—new person he is to marry?"

"Yes, Adaly, yes," but he has forgotten it; and, searching for the previous letter, he presently finds it, and sets it before her,—"Mademoiselle Chalet."

"Chalet!" screams she. "There is some horrible mistake, New Papa. More than ever I am in the dark,—in the dark!" And with a hasty adieu she rushed away, taking her course straight for the house of that outlawed woman, with whom now, more than ever, she must have so many sympathies in common. Her present object, however, was to learn if any more definite evidence could be found that the deceased lady—mother still, in her thought—bore the name of Chalet. She found the evidence. One or two little books (devotional books they prove to be), which the mistress of the house had thrown by as valueless, were brought out, upon the fly-leaves of which the keen eyes of Adèle detected the name,—crossed and recrossed indeed, as if the poor woman would have destroyed all traces of her identity,—but still showing when held to the light a portion of the name she so cherished in her heart,—Chalet.

Adèle was more than ever incensed at thought of the delusion or the deception of her father. But, by degrees, her indignation yielded to her affection. He was himself to come, he would make it clear; this new mother—whom she was sure she should not love—was to remain; the Doctor had told her this much. She was glad of it. Yet she found in that fact a new proof that this person could not be her true mother. *She* would have rushed to her arms; no fear of idle tongues could have kept her back. And though she yearned for the time when she should be clasped once more in her father's arms, she dreaded the thought of crossing the seas with him upon such empty pilgrimage. She half wished for some excuse to detain her here,—some fast anchor by which her love might cling, within reach of that grave where her holier affections had centred.

This wish was confirmed by the more cordial manner in which she was received by the Elderkins, and, indeed, by the whole village, so soon as the Doctor had made known the fact—as he did upon the earliest occasion—that Mr. Maverick was speedily to come for Adèle, and to restore her to the embraces of a mother whom she had not seen for years.

Even the spinster, at the parsonage, was disposed to credit something to the rigid legal aspects which the affair was taking, and to find in them a shelter for her wounded dignities. Nor did she share the inquietude of the Doctor at thought of the new and terrible religious influences to which Adèle must presently be exposed; under her rigid regard, this environment of the poor victim with all the subtlest influences of the Babylonish Church was but a proper and orderly retribution under Providence for family sins and the old spurning of the law. 'T was right, in her exalted view, that she should struggle and agonize and wrestle with Satan for much time to come, before she should fully cleanse her bedraggled skirts of all taint of heathenism, and stand upon the high plane with herself, among the elect.

"It is satisfactory to reflect, Benjamin," said she, "that during her residence with us the poor girl has been imbued with right principles; at least I trust so."

And as she spoke, the exemplary old lady plucked a little waif of down from her bombazine dress, and snapped it away jauntily upon the air,—even as, throughout her life, she had snapped from her the temptations of the world. And when, in his Scripture reading that very night, the Doctor came upon the passage "*Wo unto you, Pharisees!*" the mind of the spinster was cheerfully intent upon the wretched sinners of Judæa.

LIX

The news of Maverick's prospective arrival, and the comments of the good Doctor,—as we have said,—shed a new light upon the position of Adèle. Old Squire Elderkin, with a fatherly interest, was not unaffected by it; indeed, the Doctor had been communicative with him to a degree that had enlisted very warmly the old gentleman's sympathies.

"Better late than never, Doctor," had been his comment; and he had thought it worth his while to drop a hint or two in the ear of Phil.

"I say, Phil, my boy, I gave you a word of caution not long ago in regard to—to Miss Maverick. There were some bad stories afloat, my boy; but they are cleared up,—quite cleared up, Phil."

"I'm glad of it, sir," says Phil.

"So am I,—so am I, my boy. She's a fine girl, Phil, eh?"

"I think she is, sir."

"The deuse you do! Well, and what then?"

Phil blushed, but the smile that came on his face was not a hearty one.

"Well, Phil?"

"I said she was a fine girl, sir," said he, measuredly.

"But she's an uncommon fine girl, Phil, eh?"

"I think she is, sir."

"Well?"

Phil was twirling his hat in an abstracted way between his knees. "I don't think she's to be won very easily," said he at last.

"Nonsense, Phil! Faint heart never won. Make a bold push for it, my boy. The best birds drop at a quick shot."

"Do they?" said Phil, with a smile of incredulity that the old gentleman did not comprehend.

He found, indeed, a much larger measure of hope in a little hint that was let fall by Rose two days after. "I wouldn't despair if I were you, Phil," she had whispered in his ear.

Ah, those quiet, tender, sisterly words of encouragement, of cheer, of hope! Blest is the man who can enjoy them! and accursed must he be who scorns them, or who can never win them.

Phil, indeed, had never given over most devoted and respectful attentions to Adèle; but he had shown them latterly with a subdued and half-distrustful air, which Adèle with her keen insight had not been slow to understand. Trust a woman for fathoming all the shades of doubt which overhang the addresses of a lover!

Yet it was not easy for Phil, or indeed for any other, to understand or explain the manner of Adèle at this time. Elated she certainly was in the highest degree at the thought of meeting and welcoming her father; and there was an exuberance in her spirits when she talked of it, that seemed almost unnatural; but the coming shadow of the new mother whom she was bound to welcome dampened all. The Doctor indeed had warned her against the Romish prejudices of this newly found relative, and had entreated her to cling by the faith in which she had been reared; but it was no fear of any such conflict that oppressed her;—creeds all vanished under the blaze of that natural affection which craved a motherly embrace and which foresaw only falsity.

What wonder if her thought ran back, in its craving, to the days long gone,—to the land where the olive grew upon the hills, and the sunshine lay upon the sea,—where an old godmother, with withered hands clasped and raised, lifted up her voice at nightfall and chanted,—

"O sanctissima,
O piissima,
Dulcis virgo Maria,

Mater amata,
Intemerata,
Ora, ora, pro nobis!"

The Doctor would have been shocked had he heard the words tripping from the tongue of Adèle; yet, for her, they had no meaning save as expressive of a deep yearning for motherly guidance and motherly affection.

Mrs. Elderkin, with her kindly instinct, had seen the perplexity of Adèle, and had said to her one day, "Ady, my dear, is the thought not grateful to you that you will meet your mother once more, and be clasped in her arms?"

"If I could,—if I could!" said Adèle, with a burst of tears.

"But you will, my child, you will. The Doctor has shown us the letters of your father. Nothing can be clearer. Even now she must be longing to greet you."

"Why does she not come, then?"—with a tone that was almost taunting.

"But, Adèle, my dear, there may be reasons of which you do not know or which you could not understand."

"I could,—I do!" said Adèle, with spirit mastering her grief. "'T is not my mother, my true mother; she is in the graveyard; I know it!"

"My dear child, do not decide hastily. We love you; we all love you. You know that. And whatever may happen, you shall have a home with us. I will be a mother to you, Adèle."

The girl kissed her good hostess, and the words lingered on her ear long after nightfall. Why not her mother? What parent could be more kind? What home more grateful? And should she bring dishonor to it then? Could she be less sensitive to that thought than her father had already shown himself? She perceives, indeed, that within a short time, and since the later communications from her father, the manner of those who had looked most suspiciously upon her has changed. But they do not know the secret of that broidered kerchief,—the secret of that terrible death-clasp, which she never, never can forget. She will be true to her own sense of honor; she will be true, too, to her own faith,—the faith in which she has been reared,—whatever may be the persuasions of that new relative beyond the seas whom she so dreads to meet.

Indeed, it is with dreary anticipations that she forecasts now her return to that *belle France* which has so long borne olive-branches along its shores for welcome; she foresees struggle, change, hypocrisies, may be,—who can tell?—and she begins to count the weeks of her stay amid the quiet of Ashfield in the same spirit in which youngsters score off the remaining days of the long vacation. Adèle finds herself gathering, and pressing within the leaves of some cherished book, little sprays of dead bloom that shall be, in the dim and mysterious future, mementoes of the walks, the frolics, the joys that have belonged to this staid New England home. From the very parsonage door she has brought away a sprig of a rampant sweet-brier that has grown there this many a year, and its delicate leaflets are among her chiefest treasures.

More eagerly than ever she listens to the kindly voices that greet her and speak cheer to her in the home of the Elderkins,—voices which she feels bitterly will soon be heard no more by her. Even the delicate and always respectful attentions of Phil have an added, though a painful charm, since they are so soon to have an end. She knows that she will remember him always, though his tenderest words can waken no hopes of a brighter future for her. She even takes him partially into her confidence, and, strolling with him down the street one day, she decoys him to the churchyard gate, where she points out to him the stone she had placed over the grave that was so sacred to her.

"Phil," said she, "you have always been full of kindness for me. When I am gone, have a care of that stone and grave, please, Phil. My best friend lies there."

"I don't think you know your best friends," stammered Phil.

"I know you are one," said Adèle, calmly, "and that I can trust you to do what I ask about this grave. Can I, Phil?"

"You know you can, Adèle; but I don't like this talk of your going, as if you were never to be among us again. Do you think you can be happiest yonder with strangers, Adèle?"

"It's not—where I can be happiest, Phil; I don't ask myself that question; I fear I never can"; —and her lips trembled as she said it.

"You can,—you ought," burst out Phil, fired at sight of her emotion, and would have gone on bravely and gallantly, may be, with the passion that was surging in him, if a look of hers and a warning finger had not stayed him.

"We'll talk no more of this, Phil"; and her lips were as firm as iron now.

Both of them serious and silent for a while; until at length Adèle, in quite her old manner, says: "Of course, Phil, father may bring me to America again some day; and if so, I shall certainly beg for a little visit in Ashfield. It would be very ungrateful in me not to remember the pleasant times I've had here."

But Phil cannot so deftly change the color of his talk; his chattiness has all gone from him. Nor does it revive on reaching home. Good Mrs. Elderkin says, "What makes you so crusty, Phil?"

LX

Maverick arrives, as he had promised to do, some time in early July; comes up from the city without announcing himself in advance; and, leaving the old coach, which still makes its periodical trips from the river, a mile out from the town, strolls along the highway. He remembers well the old outline of the hills; and the straggling hedge-rows, the scattered granite boulders, the whistling of a quail from a near fence in the meadow, all recall the old scenes which he knew in boyhood. At a solitary house by the wayside a flaxen-haired youngster is blowing off soap-bubbles into the air,—with obstreperous glee whenever one rises above the house-tops,—while the mother, with arms akimbo, looks admiringly from the open window. It was the home to which the feet of Adèle had latterly so often wandered.

Maverick is anxious for a word with the Doctor before his interview with Adèle even. He does not know her present home; but he is sure he can recall the old parsonage, in whose exterior, indeed, there have been no changes for years. The shade of the embowering elms is grateful as he strolls on into the main street of the town. It is early afternoon, and there are few passers-by. Here and there a blind is coyly turned, and a sly glance cast upon the stranger. A trio of school-boys look wonderingly at his foreign air and dress. A few loiterers upon the tavern steps—instructed, doubtless, by the stage-driver, who has duly delivered his portmanteau—remark upon him as he passes.

And now at last he sees the old porch,—the diamond lights in the door. Twenty and more years ago, and he had lounged there, as the pretty Rachel drove up in the parson's chaise. The same rose-brier is nodding its untrimmed boughs by the door. From the open window above he catches a glimpse of a hard, thin face, with spectacles on nose, that scans him curiously. The Doctor's hat and cane are upon the table at the foot of the stairs within. He taps with his knuckles upon the study-door,—and again the two college mates are met together. At sight of the visitor, whom he recognizes at a glance, the heart of the old man is stirred by a little of the old youthful feeling.

"Maverick!" and he greets him with open hand.

"Johns, God bless you!"

The parson was white-haired, and was feeble to a degree that shocked Maverick; while the latter was still erect and prim, and, with his gray hair carefully brushed to conceal his growing baldness, appeared in excellent preservation. His coquettings for sixty years with the world, the flesh, and the Devil had not yet reduced his *phisique* to that degree of weakness which the multiplied spiritual wrestlings had entailed upon the good Doctor. The minister recognized this with a look rather of pity than of envy, and may possibly have bethought himself of that Dives who "in his lifetime received good things," but "now is tormented."

Yet he ventured upon no warning; there is, indeed, a certain assured manner about the man of the world who has passed middle age, which a country parson, however good or earnest he may be, would no more attempt to pierce than he would attempt a thrust of his pen through ice.

Their conversation, after the first greetings, naturally centres upon Adèle. Maverick is relieved to find that she knows, even now, the worst; but he is grievously pained to learn that she is still in doubt, by reason of that strange episode which had grown out of the presence and death of Madame Arles,—an episode which, even now, he is at a loss to explain.

"She will be unwilling to return with me then," said Maverick, in a troubled manner.

"No," said the Doctor, "she expects that. You will find in her, Maverick, a beautiful respect for your authority; and, I think, a still higher respect for the truth."

So it was with disturbed and conflicting feelings that Maverick made his way to the present home of Adèle.

The windows and doors of the Elderkin mansion were all open upon that July day. Adèle had seen him, even as he entered the little gate, and, recognizing him on the instant, had rushed down to meet him in the hall.

"Papa! papa!" and she had buried her face upon his bosom.

"Adèle, darling! you are glad to welcome me then?"

"Delighted, papa."

And Maverick kissed, again and again, that fair face of which he was so proud.

We recoil from the attempt to transcribe the glowing intimacy of their first talk.

After a time, Maverick says, "You will be glad to return with me,—glad to embrace again your mother?"

"My own, true mother?" said Adèle, the blood running now swift over cheek and brow.

"Your own, Adèle,—your own! As God is true!"

Adèle grows calm,—an unwonted calmness. "Tell me how she looks, papa," said she.

"Your figure, Adèle; not so tall, perhaps, but slight like you; and her hair,—you have her hair, darling (and he kissed it). Your eye too, for color, with a slight, hardly noticeable cast in it." And as Adèle turned an inquiring glance upon him, he exclaimed: "You have that too, my darling, as you look at me now."

Adèle, still calm, says: "I know it, papa; I have seen her. Do not deceive me. She died in these arms, papa!"—and with that her calmness is gone. She can only weep upon his shoulder.

"But, Adèle, child, this cannot be; do not trust to so wild a fancy. You surely believe me, darling!"

Had she argued the matter, he would have been better satisfied. She did not, however. Her old tranquillity came again.

"I will go with you, papa, cheerfully," said she.

It was only too evident to Maverick that there was a cause of distrust between them. Under all of Adèle's earnest demonstrations of affection, which were intensely grateful to him, there was still a certain apparent reserve of confidence, as if some great inward leaning of her heart found no support in him or his. This touched him to the quick. The Doctor—had he unfolded the matter to him fully—would have called it, may be, the sting of retribution. Nor was Maverick at all certain that the shadowy doubt which seemed to rest upon the mind of Adèle with respect to the identity of her mother was the sole cause of this secret reserve of confidence. It might be, he thought, that her affections were otherwise engaged, and that the change to which she assented with so little fervor would be at the cost of other ties to which he was a stranger.

On this score he consulted with the Doctor. As regarded Reuben, there could be no doubt. Whatever tie may have existed there was long since broken. With respect to Phil Elderkin the parson was not so certain. Maverick had been attracted by his fine, frank manner, and was not blind to his capital business capacities and prospects. If the happiness of Adèle were in question, he could entertain the affair. He even ventured to approach the topic—coyly as he could—in a talk with Adèle; and she, as the first glimmer of his meaning dawned upon her, says, "Don't whisper it, papa. It can never be."

And so Maverick—not a little disconcerted at the thought that he cannot now, as once, fathom all the depths of his child's sensibilities—sets himself resolutely to the work of preparation for departure. His *affaires* may keep him a month, and involve a visit to one or two of the principal cities; then, ho for *la belle France*! Adèle certainly lends a cheerful assent. He cannot doubt—with those repeated kisses on his cheek and brow—her earnest filial affection; and if her sentiment slips beyond his control, or parries all his keenness of vision, what else has a father, verging upon sixty, to expect in a daughter, tenderly affectionate as she may be? Maverick's philosophy taught him to "take the world as it is." Only one serious apprehension of disquietude oppressed him; the doubts and vagaries of Adèle would clear themselves under the embrace of Julie; but in respect to the harmony

of their religious beliefs he had grave doubts. There had grown upon Adèle, since he had last seen her, a womanly dignity, which even a mother must respect; and into that dignity—into the woof and warp of it—were inwrought all her religious sympathies. Was his home yonder, across the seas, to become the scene of struggles about creeds? It certainly was not the sort of domestic picture he had foreshadowed to himself at twenty-five. But at sixty a man blows bubbles no longer—except that of his own conceit. The heart of Maverick was not dead in him; a kiss of Adèle wakened a thrilling, delicious sensation there, of which he had forgotten his capability. He followed her graceful step and figure with an eye that looked beyond and haunted the past—vainly, vainly! Her "Papa!"—sweetly uttered—stirred sensibilities in him that amazed himself, and seemed like the phantoms of dreams he dreamed long ago.

But in the midst of Maverick's preparations for departure a letter came to hand from Mrs. Maverick, which complicated once more the situation.

LXI

The mother has read the letter of her child,—the letter in which appeal had been made to the father in behalf of the "unworthy" one whom the daughter believed to be sleeping in her grave. The tenderness of the appeal smote the poor woman to the heart. It bound her to the child she scarce had seen by bonds into which her whole moral being was knitted anew. But we must give the letter entire, as offering explanations which can in no way be better set forth. The very language kindles the ardor of Adèle. Her own old speech again, with the French echo of her childhood in every line.

"*Mon cher Monsieur*,"—in this way she begins; for her religious severities, if not her years, have curbed any disposition to explosive tenderness,—"I have received the letter of our child, which was addressed to you. I cannot tell you the feelings with which I have read it. I long to clasp her to my heart. And she appeals to you, for me,—the dear child! Yes, you have well done in telling her that I was unworthy (*méchante*). It is true,—unworthy in forgetting duty,—unworthy in loving too well. O Monsieur! if I could live over again that life,—that dear young life among the olive orchards! But the good Christ (thank Him!) leads back the repentant wanderers into the fold of His Church.

'Laus tibi, Christe!'

"And the poor child believes that I am in my grave! May be that were better for her and better for me. But no, I shall clasp her to my heart once more,—she, the poor babe! But I forget myself; it is a woman's letter I have been reading. What earnestness! what maturity! what dignity! what tenderness! And will she be as tender to the living as to the erring one whom she believes dead? My heart stops when I ask myself. Yes, I know she will. The Blessed Virgin whispers me that she will, and I fly to greet her! A month, two months, three months, four months?—It is an age.

"Monsieur! I cannot wait. I must take ship—sail—wings (if I could find them), and go to meet my child. Until I do there is a tempest in my brain—heart—everywhere. You are surprised, Monsieur, but there is another reason why I should go to this land where Adèle has lived. Do you wish to know it? Listen, then, Monsieur!

"Do you know who this poor sufferer was whom our child had learned so to love, who died in her arms, who sleeps in the graveyard there, and of whom Adèle thinks as of a mother? I have inquired, I have searched high and low, I have fathomed all. Ah, my poor, good sister Marie! Only Marie! You have never known her. In those other days at dear Arles she was too good for you to know her. Yet even then she was a guardian angel,—a guardian too late. *Mea culpa! Mea culpa!*

"I know it can be only Marie; I know it can be only she, who sleeps under the sod in Ash– (*ce nom m'échappe*).

"Listen again: in those early, bitter charming days, when you, Monsieur, knew the hillsides and the drives about our dear old town of Arles, poor Marie was away; had she been there, I had never listened, as I did listen, to the words you whispered in my ear. Only when it was too late, she came. Poor, good Marie! how she pleaded with me! How her tender, good face spoke reproaches to me! If I was the pride of our household, she was the angel. She it was, who, knowing the worst, said, 'Julie, this must end!' She it was who labored day and night to set me free from the wicked web that bound me. I reproached her, the poor, good Marie, in saying that she was the plainer, that she had no beauty, that she was devoured with envy. But the Blessed Virgin was working ever by her side. Whatever doubts you may have entertained of me, Monsieur,—she created them; whatever suspicions tortured you,—she fed them, but always with the holiest of motives. And when shame came, as it did come, the poor Marie would have screened me,—would have carried the odium herself. Good Marie! the angels have her in keeping!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.