FANNY KEMBLE

RECORDS OF A GIRLHOOD

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Records of a Girlhood

Kemble F.

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Содержание

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PREFATORY NOTE

Considerable portions of this work originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, but there is added to these a large amount of new matter not hitherto published, and the whole work has been thoroughly revised.

CHAPTER I

A few years ago I received from a friend to whom they had been addressed a collection of my own letters, written during a period of forty years, and amounting to thousands—a history of my life.

The passion for universal history (*i.e.* any and every body's story) nowadays seems to render any thing in the shape of personal recollections good enough to be printed and read; and as the public appetite for gossip appears to be insatiable, and is not unlikely some time or other to be gratified at my expense, I have thought that my own gossip about myself may be as acceptable to it as gossip about me written by another.

I have come to the garrulous time of life—to the remembering days, which only by a little precede the forgetting ones. I have much leisure, and feel sure that it will amuse me to write my own reminiscences; perhaps reading them may amuse others who have no more to do than I have. To the idle, then, I offer these lightest of leaves gathered in the idle end of autumn days, which have succeeded years of labor often severe and sad enough, though its ostensible purpose was only that of affording recreation to the public.

There are two lives of my aunt Siddons: one by Boaden, and one by the poet Campbell. In these biographies due mention is made of my paternal grandfather and grandmother. To the latter, Mrs. Roger Kemble, I am proud to see, by Lawrence's portrait of her, I bear a personal resemblance; and I please myself with imagining that the likeness is more than "skin deep." She was an energetic, brave woman, who, in the humblest sphere of life and most difficult circumstances, together with her husband fought manfully a hard battle with poverty, in maintaining and, as well as they could, training a family of twelve children, of whom four died in childhood. But I am persuaded that whatever qualities of mind or character I inherit from my father's family, I am more strongly stamped with those which I derive from my mother, a woman who, possessing no specific gift in such perfection as the dramatic talent of the Kembles, had in a higher degree than any of them the peculiar organization of genius. To the fine senses of a savage rather than a civilized nature, she joined an acute instinct of correct criticism in all matters of art, and a general quickness and accuracy of perception, and brilliant vividness of expression, that made her conversation delightful. Had she possessed half the advantages of education which she and my father labored to bestow upon us, she would, I think, have been one of the most remarkable persons of her time.

My mother was the daughter of Captain Decamp, an officer in one of the armies that revolutionary France sent to invade republican Switzerland. He married the daughter of a farmer from the neighborhood of Berne. From my grandmother's home you could see the great Jungfrau range of the Alps, and I sometimes wonder whether it is her blood in my veins that so loves and longs for those supremely beautiful mountains.

Not long after his marriage my grandfather went to Vienna, where, on the anniversary of the birth of the great Empress-King, my mother was born, and named, after her, Maria Theresa. In Vienna, Captain Decamp made the acquaintance of a young English nobleman, Lord Monson (afterwards the Earl of Essex), who, with an enthusiasm more friendly than wise, eagerly urged the accomplished Frenchman to come and settle in London, where his talents as a draughtsman and musician, which were much above those of a mere amateur, combined with the protection of such friends as he could not fail to find, would easily enable him to maintain himself and his young wife and child.

In an evil hour my grandfather adopted this advice, and came to England. It was the time when the emigration of the French nobility had filled London with objects of sympathy, and society with sympathizers with their misfortunes. Among the means resorted to for assisting the many interesting victims of the Revolution, were representations, given under the direction of Le Texier, of Berquin's and Madame de Genlis's juvenile dramas, by young French children. These performances, combined

with his own extraordinary readings, became one of the fashionable frenzies of the day. I quote from Walter Scott's review of Boaden's life of my uncle the following notice of Le Texier: "On one of these incidental topics we must pause for a moment, with delighted recollection. We mean the readings of the celebrated Le Texier, who, seated at a desk, and dressed in plain clothes, read French plays with such modulation of voice, and such exquisite point of dialogue, as to form a pleasure different from that of the theatre, but almost as great as we experience in listening to a first-rate actor. We have only to add to a very good account given by Mr. Boaden of this extraordinary entertainment, that when it commenced Mr. Le Texier read over the *dramatis personæ*, with the little analysis of character usually attached to each name, using the voice and manner with which he afterward read the part; and so accurate was the key-note given that he had no need to name afterward the person who spoke; the stupidest of the audience could not fail to recognize them."

Among the little actors of Le Texier's troupe, my mother attracted the greatest share of public attention by her beauty and grace, and the truth and spirit of her performances.

The little French fairy was eagerly seized upon by admiring fine ladies and gentlemen, and snatched up into their society, where she was fondled and petted and played with; passing whole days in Mrs. Fitzherbert's drawing-room, and many a half hour on the knees of her royal and disloyal husband, the Prince Regent, one of whose favorite jokes was to place my mother under a huge glass bell, made to cover some large group of precious Dresden china, where her tiny figure and flashing face produced even a more beautiful effect than the costly work of art whose crystal covering was made her momentary cage. I have often heard my mother refer to this season of her childhood's favoritism with the fine folk of that day, one of her most vivid impressions of which was the extraordinary beauty of person and royal charm of manner and deportment of the Prince of Wales, and his enormous appetite: enormous perhaps, after all, only by comparison with her own, which he compassionately used to pity, saying frequently, when she declined the delicacies that he pressed upon her, "Why, you poor child! Heaven has not blessed you with an appetite." Of the precocious feeling and imagination of the poor little girl, thus taken out of her own sphere of life into one so different and so dangerous, I remember a very curious instance, told me by herself. One of the houses where she was a most frequent visitor, and treated almost like a child of the family, was that of Lady Rivers, whose brother, Mr. Rigby, while in the ministry, fought a duel with some political opponent. Mr. Rigby had taken great notice of the little French child treated with such affectionate familiarity by his sister, and she had attached herself so strongly to him that, on hearing the circumstance of his duel suddenly mentioned for the first time, she fainted away: a story that always reminded me of the little Spanish girl Florian mentions in his "Mémoires d'un jeune Espagnol," who, at six years of age, having asked a young man of upward of five and twenty if he loved her, so resented his repeating her question to her elder sister that she never could be induced to speak to him again.

Meantime, while the homes of the great and gay were her constant resort, the child's home was becoming sadder, and her existence and that of her parents more precarious and penurious day by day. From my grandfather's first arrival in London, his chest had suffered from the climate; the instrument he taught was the flute, and it was not long before decided disease of the lungs rendered that industry impossible. He endeavored to supply its place by giving French and drawing lessons (I have several small sketches of his, taken in the Netherlands, the firm, free delicacy of which attest a good artist's handling); and so struggled on, under the dark London sky, and in the damp, foggy, smoky atmosphere, while the poor foreign wife bore and nursed four children.

It is impossible to imagine any thing sadder than the condition of such a family, with its dark fortune closing round and over it, and its one little human jewel, sent forth from its dingy case to sparkle and glitter, and become of hard necessity the single source of light in the growing gloom of its daily existence. And the contrast must have been cruel enough between the scenes into which the child's genius spasmodically lifted her, both in the assumed parts she performed and in the great London world where her success in their performance carried her, and the poor home, where sickness

and sorrow were becoming abiding inmates, and poverty and privation the customary conditions of life—poverty and privation doubtless often increased by the very outlay necessary to fit her for her public appearances, and not seldom by the fear of offending, or the hope of conciliating, the fastidious taste of the wealthy and refined patrons whose favor toward the poor little child-actress might prove infinitely helpful to her and to those who owned her.

The lives of artists of every description in England are not unapt to have such opening chapters as this; but the calling of a player alone has the grotesque element of fiction, with all the fantastic accompaniments of sham splendor thrust into close companionship with the sordid details of poverty; for the actor alone the livery of labor is a harlequin's jerkin lined with tatters, and the jester's cap and bells tied to the beggar's wallet. I have said artist life in England is apt to have such chapters; artist life everywhere, probably. But it is only in England, I think, that the full bitterness of such experience is felt; for what knows the foreign artist of the inexorable element of Respectability? In England alone is the pervading atmosphere of respectability that which artists breathe in common with all other men—respectability, that English moral climate, with its neutral tint and temperate tone, so often sneered at in these days by its new German title of Philistinism, so often deserving of the bitterest scorn in some of its inexpressibly mean manifestations—respectability, the pre-eminently unattractive characteristic of British existence, but which, all deductions made for its vulgar alloys, is, in truth, only the general result of the individual self-respect of individual Englishmen; a wholesome, purifying, and preserving element in the homes and lives of many, where, without it, the recklessness bred of insecure means and obscure position would run miserable riot; a tremendous power of omnipotent compression, repression, and oppression, no doubt, quite consistent with the stern liberty whose severe beauty the people of these islands love, but absolutely incompatible with license, or even lightness of life, controlling a thousand disorders rampant in societies where it does not exist; a power which, tyrannical as it is, and ludicrously tragical as are the sacrifices sometimes exacted by it, saves especially the artist class of England from those worst forms of irregularity which characterize the Bohemianism of foreign literary, artistic, and dramatic life.

Of course the pleasure-and-beauty-loving, artistic temperament, which is the one most likely to be exposed to such an ordeal as that of my mother's childhood, is also the one liable to be most injured by it, and to communicate through its influence peculiar mischief to the moral nature. It is the price of peril, paid for all that brilliant order of gifts that have for their scope the exercise of the imagination through the senses, no less than for that crown of gifts, the poet's passionate inspiration, speaking to the senses through the imagination.

How far my mother was hurt by the combination of circumstances that influenced her childhood I know not. As I remember her, she was a frank, fearless, generous, and unworldly woman, and had probably found in the subsequent independent exercise of her abilities the shield for these virtues. How much the passionate, vehement, susceptible, and most suffering nature was banefully fostered at the same time, I can better judge from the sad vantage-ground of my own experience.

After six years spent in a bitter struggle with disease and difficulties of every kind, my grandfather, still a young man, died of consumption, leaving a widow and five little children, of whom the eldest, my mother, not yet in her teens, became from that time the bread-winner and sole support.

Nor was it many years before she established her claim to the approbation of the general public, fulfilling the promise of her childhood by performances of such singular originality as to deserve the name of genuine artistic creations, and which have hardly ever been successfully attempted since her time: such as "The Blind Boy" and "Deaf and Dumb;" the latter, particularly, in its speechless power and pathos of expression, resembling the celebrated exhibitions of Parisot and Bigottini, in the great tragic ballets in which dancing was a subordinate element to the highest dramatic effects of passion and emotion expressed by pantomime. After her marriage, my mother remained but a few years on the stage, to which she bequeathed, as specimens of her ability as a dramatic writer, the charming English version of "La jeune Femme colère," called "The Day after the Wedding;" the little burlesque

of "Personation," of which her own exquisitely humorous performance, aided by her admirably pure French accent, has never been equaled; and a play in five acts called "Smiles and Tears," taken from Mrs. Opie's tale of "Father and Daughter."

She had a fine and powerful voice and a rarely accurate musical ear; she moved so gracefully that I have known persons who went to certain provincial promenades frequented by her, only to see her walk; she was a capital horsewoman; her figure was beautiful, and her face very handsome and strikingly expressive; and she talked better, with more originality and vivacity, than any English woman I have ever known: to all which good gifts she added that of being a first-rate *cook*. And oh, how often and how bitterly, in my transatlantic household tribulations, have I deplored that her apron had not fallen on my shoulders or round my waist! Whether she derived this taste and talent from her French blood, I know not, but it amounted to genius, and might have made her a pre-eminent *cordon bleu*, if she had not been the wife, and *cheffe*, of a poor professional gentleman, whose moderate means were so skillfully turned to account, in her provision for his modest table, that he was accused by ill-natured people of indulging in the expensive luxury of a French cook. Well do I remember the endless supplies of potted gravies, sauces, meat jellies, game jellies, fish jellies, the white ranges of which filled the shelves of her store-room—which she laughingly called her boudoir—almost to the exclusion of the usual currant jellies and raspberry jams of such receptacles: for she had the real *bon vivant's* preference of the savory to the sweet, and left all the latter branch of the art to her subordinates, confining the exercise of her own talents, or immediate superintendence, to the production of the above-named "elegant extracts." She never, I am sorry to say, encouraged either my sister or myself in the same useful occupation, alleging that we had what she called better ones; but I would joyfully, many a time in America, have exchanged all my boarding-school smatterings for her knowledge how to produce a wholesome and palatable dinner. As it was, all I learned of her, to my sorrow, was a detestation of bad cookery, and a firm conviction that that which was exquisite was both wholesomer and more economical than any other. Dr. Kitchener, the clever and amiable author of that amusing book, "The Cook's Oracle" (his name was a *bonâ fide* appellation, and not a drolly devised appropriate *nom de plume*, and he was a doctor of physic), was a great friend and admirer of hers; and she is the "accomplished lady" by whom several pages of that entertaining kitchen companion were furnished to him.

The mode of opening one of her chapters, "I always bone my meat" (*bone* being the slang word of the day for steal), occasioned much merriment among her friends, and such a look of ludicrous surprise and reprobation from Liston, when he read it, as I still remember.

My mother, moreover, devised a most admirable kind of *jujube*, made of clarified gum-arabic, honey, and lemon, with which she kept my father supplied during all the time of his remaining on the stage; he never acted without having recourse to it, and found it more efficacious in sustaining the voice and relieving the throat under constant exertion than any other preparation that he ever tried; this she always made for him herself.

The great actors of my family have received their due of recorded admiration; my mother has always seemed to me to have been overshadowed by their celebrity; my sister and myself, whose fate it has been to bear in public the name they have made distinguished, owe in great measure to her, I think, whatever ability has enabled us to do so not unworthily.

I was born on the 27th of November, 1809, in Newman Street, Oxford Road, the third child of my parents, whose eldest, Philip, named after my uncle, died in infancy. The second, John Mitchell, lived to distinguish himself as a scholar, devoting his life to the study of his own language and the history of his country in their earliest period, and to the kindred subject of Northern Archæology.

Of Newman Street I have nothing to say, but regret to have heard that before we left our residence there my father was convicted, during an absence of my mother's from town, of having planted in my baby bosom the seeds of personal vanity, while indulging his own, by having an especially pretty and becoming lace cap at hand in the drawing-room, to be immediately substituted

for some more homely daily adornment, when I was exhibited to his visitors. In consequence, perhaps, of which, I am a disgracefully dress-loving old woman of near seventy, one of whose minor miseries is that she can no longer find *any* lace cap whatever that is either pretty or becoming to her gray head. If my father had not been so foolish then, I should not be so foolish now—perhaps.

The famous French actress, Mlle. Clairon, recalled, for the pleasure of some foreign royal personage passing through Paris, for one night to the stage, which she had left many years before, was extremely anxious to recover the pattern of a certain cap which she had worn in her young days in "La Coquette corrigée," the part she was about to repeat. The cap, as she wore it, had been a Parisian rage; she declared that half her success in the part had been the cap. The milliner who had made it, and whose fortune it had made, had retired from business, grown old; luckily, however, she was not dead: she was hunted up and adjured to reproduce, if possible, this marvel of her art, and came to her former patroness, bringing with her the identical head-gear. Clairon seized upon it: "Ah oui, c'est bien cela! c'est bien là le bonnet!" It was on her head in an instant, and she before the glass, in vain trying to reproduce with it the well-remembered effect. She pished and pshawed, frowned and shrugged, pulled the pretty *chiffon* this way and that on her forehead; and while so doing, coming nearer and nearer to the terrible looking-glass, suddenly stopped, looked at herself for a moment in silence, and then, covering her aged and faded face with her hands, exclaimed, "Ah, c'est bien le bonnet! mais ce n'est plus la figure!"

Our next home, after Newman Street, was at a place called Westbourne Green, now absorbed into endless avenues of "palatial" residences, which scoff with regular-featured, lofty scorn at the rural simplicity implied by such a name. The site of our dwelling was not far from the Paddington Canal, and was then so far out of town that our nearest neighbors, people of the name of Cockrell, were the owners of a charming residence, in the middle of park-like grounds, of which I still have a faint, pleasurable remembrance. The young ladies, daughters of Mr. Cockrell, really made the first distinct mark I can detect on the *tabula rasa* of my memory, by giving me a charming pasteboard figure of a little girl, to whose serene and sweetly smiling countenance, and pretty person, a whole bookful of painted pasteboard petticoats, cloaks, and bonnets could be adapted; it was a lovely being, and stood artlessly by a stile, an image of rustic beauty and simplicity. I still bless the Miss Cockrells, if they are alive, but if not, their memory for it!

Of the curious effect of dressing in producing the *sentiment* of a countenance, no better illustration can be had than a series of caps, curls, wreaths, ribbons, etc., painted so as to be adaptable to one face; the totally different *character* imparted by a helmet, or a garland of roses, to the same set of features, is a "caution" to irregular beauties who console themselves with the fascinating variety of their *expression*.

At this period of my life, I have been informed, I began, after the manner of most clever children, to be exceedingly troublesome and unmanageable, my principal crime being a general audacious contempt for all authority, which, coupled with a sweet-tempered, cheerful indifference to all punishment, made it extremely difficult to know how to obtain of me the minimum quantity of obedience indispensable in the relations of a tailless monkey of four years and its elders. I never cried, I never sulked, I never resented, lamented, or repented either my ill-doings or their consequences, but accepted them alike with a philosophical buoyancy of spirit which was the despair of my poor bewildered trainers.

Being hideously decorated once with a fool's cap of vast dimensions, and advised to hide, not my "diminished head," but my horrible disgrace, from all beholders, I took the earliest opportunity of dancing down the carriage-drive to meet the postman, a great friend of mine, and attract his observation and admiration to my "helmet," which I called aloud upon all wayfarers also to contemplate, until removed from an elevated bank I had selected for this public exhibition of myself and my penal costume, which was beginning to attract a small group of passers-by.

My next malefactions were met with an infliction of bread and water, which I joyfully accepted, observing, "Now I am like those poor dear French prisoners that everybody pities so." Mrs. Siddons at that time lived next door to us; she came in one day when I had committed some of my daily offenses against manners or morals, and I was led, nothing daunted, into her awful presence, to be admonished by her.

Melpomene took me upon her lap, and, bending upon me her "controlling frown," discoursed to me of my evil ways in those accents which curdled the blood of the poor shopman, of whom she demanded if the printed calico she purchased of him "would wash." The tragic tones pausing, in the midst of the impressed and impressive silence of the assembled family, I tinkled forth, "What beautiful eyes you have!" all my small faculties having been absorbed in the steadfast upward gaze I fixed upon those magnificent orbs. Mrs. Siddons set me down with a smothered laugh, and I trotted off, apparently uninjured by my great-aunt's solemn moral suasion.

A dangerous appeal, of a higher order, being made to me by my aunt's most intimate friend, Mrs. F–, a not very judicious person, to the effect, "Fanny, why don't you pray to God to make you better?" immediately received the conclusive reply, "So I do, and he makes me worse and worse." Parents and guardians should be chary of handling the deep chords upon whose truth and strength the highest harmonies of the fully developed soul are to depend.

In short, I was as hopelessly philosophical a subject as Madame Roland, when, at six years old, receiving her penal bread and water with the comment, "Bon pour la digestion!" and the retributive stripes which this drew upon her, with the further observation, "Bon pour la circulation!" In spite of my "wickedness," as Topsy would say, I appear to have been not a little spoiled by my parents, and an especial pet and favorite of all their friends, among whom, though I do not remember him at this early period of our acquaintance, I know was Charles Young, that most kindly good man and pleasant gentleman, one of whose many amiable qualities was a genuine love for little children. He was an intimate friend of Mrs. Siddons and her brothers, and came frequently to our house; if the elders were not at home, he invariably made his way to the nursery, where, according to the amusing description he has often since given me of our early intercourse, one of his great diversions was to make me fold my little fat arms—not an easy performance for small muscles—and with a portentous frown, which puckered up my mouth even more than my eyebrows, receive from him certain awfully unintelligible passages from "Macbeth;" replying to them, with a lisp that must have greatly heightened the tragic effect of this terrible dialogue, "*My handth are of oo tolor*" (My hands are of your color). Years—how many!—after this first lesson in declamation, dear Charles Young was acting Macbeth for the last time in London, and I was his "wicked wife;" and while I stood at the side scenes, painting my hands and arms with the vile red stuff that confirmed the bloody-minded woman's words, he said to me with a smile, "Ah ha! *My handth are of oo tolor.*"

Mr. Young's own theatrical career was a sort of curious contradiction between his physical and mental endowments. His very handsome and regular features of the Roman cast, and deep, melodious voice, were undoubtedly fine natural requisites for a tragic actor, and he succeeded my uncle in all his principal parts, if not with any thing like equal genius, with a dignity and decorum that were always highly acceptable. He had, however, no tragic mental element whatever with these very decided external qualifications for tragedy; but a perception of and passion for humor, which he indulged in private constantly, in the most entertaining and surprising manner. Ludicrous stories; personal mimicry; the most admirable imitation of national accent—Scotch, Irish, and French (he spoke the latter language to perfection, and Italian very well); a power of grimace that equaled Grimaldi, and the most irresistibly comical way of resuming, in the midst of the broadest buffoonery, the stately dignity of his own natural countenance, voice, and manner.

He was a cultivated musician, and sang French and Italian with taste and expression, and English ballads with a pathos and feeling only inferior to that of Moore and Mrs. Arkwright, with both which great masters of musical declamation he was on terms of friendly intimacy. Mr. Young was a universal

favorite in the best London society, and an eagerly sought guest in pleasant country-houses, where his zeal for country sports, his knowledge of and fondness for horses, his capital equestrianism, and inexhaustible fund of humor, made him as popular with the men as his sweet, genial temper, good breeding, musical accomplishments, and infinite drollery did with the women.

Mr. Young once told Lord Dacre that he made about four thousand pounds sterling per annum by his profession; and as he was prudent and moderate in his mode of life, and, though elegant, not extravagant in his tastes, he had realized a handsome fortune when he left the stage.

Mr. Young passed the last years of his life at Brighton, and I never visited that place without going to see him, confined as he latterly was to his sofa with a complication of painful diseases and the weight of more than seventy years. The last time I saw him in his drawing-room he made me sit on a little stool by his sofa—it was not long after my father, his life-long friend and contemporary's death—and he kept stroking my hair, and saying to me, "You look so like a child—a good child." I saw him but once more after this; he was then confined to his bed. It was on Sunday; he lay propped with pillows in an ample flannel dressing-gown, with a dark-blue velvet skull-cap on his head, and I thought I had never seen his face look more strikingly noble and handsome; he was reading the church service and his Bible, and kept me by him for some time. I never saw him again.

As a proof of the little poetical imagination which Mr. Young brought to some of his tragic performances, I remember his saying of his dress in Cardinal Wolsey, "Well, I never could associate any ideas of grandeur with this old woman's red petticoat." It would be difficult to say what his best performances were, for he had never either fire, passion, or tenderness; but never wanted propriety, dignity, and a certain stately grace. Sir Pertinax McSycophant and Iago were the best things I ever saw him act, probably because the sardonic element in both of them gave partial scope to his humorous vein.

Not long after this we moved to another residence, still in the same neighborhood, but near the churchyard of Paddington church, which was a thoroughfare of gravel walks, cutting in various directions the green turf, where the flat tombstones formed frequent "play-tables" for us; upon these our nursery-maid, apparently not given to melancholy meditations among the tombs, used to allow us to manufacture whole delightful dinner sets of clay plates and dishes (I think I could make such now), out of which we used to have feasts, as we called them, of morsels of cake and fruit.

At this time I was about five years old, and it was determined that I should be sent to the care of my father's sister, Mrs. Twiss, who kept a school at Bath, and who was my godmother. On the occasion of my setting forth on my travels, my brother John presented me with a whole collection of children's books, which he had read and carefully preserved, and now commended to my use. There were at least a round dozen, and, having finished reading them, it occurred to me that to make a bonfire of them would be an additional pleasure to be derived from them; and so I added to the intellectual recreation they afforded me the more *sensational* excitement of what I called "a blaze;" a proceeding of which the dangerous sinfulness was severely demonstrated to me by my new care-takers.

Camden Place, Bath, was one of the lofty terraces built on the charming slopes that surround the site of the Aquæ Solis of the Romans, and here my aunt Twiss kept a girls' school, which participated in the favor which every thing belonging to, or even remotely associated with, Mrs. Siddons received from the public. It was a decidedly "fashionable establishment for the education of young ladies," managed by my aunt, her husband, and her three daughters. Mrs. Twiss was, like every member of my father's family, at one time on the stage, but left it very soon, to marry the grim-visaged, gaunt-figured, kind-hearted gentleman and profound scholar whose name she at this time bore, and who, I have heard it said, once nourished a hopeless passion for Mrs. Siddons. Mrs. Twiss bore a soft and mitigated likeness to her celebrated sister; she had great sweetness of voice and countenance, and a graceful, refined, feminine manner, that gave her great advantages in her intercourse with and influence over the young women whose training she undertook. Mr. Twiss was a very learned man,

whose literary labors were, I believe, various, but whose "Concordance of Shakespeare" is the only one with which I am acquainted. He devoted himself, with extreme assiduity, to the education of his daughters, giving them the unusual advantage of a thorough classic training, and making of two of them learned women in the more restricted, as well as the more general, sense of the term. These ladies were what so few of their sex ever are, *really well informed*; they knew much, and they knew it all thoroughly; they were excellent Latin scholars and mathematicians, had read immensely and at the same time systematically, had prodigious memories stored with various and well-classed knowledge, and, above all, were mistresses of the English language, and spoke and wrote it with perfect purity —an accomplishment out of fashion now, it appears to me, but of the advantage of which I retain a delightful impression in my memory of subsequent intercourse with those excellent and capitally educated women. My relations with them, all but totally interrupted for upward of thirty years, were renewed late in the middle of my life and toward the end of theirs, when I visited them repeatedly at their pretty rural dwelling near Hereford, where they enjoyed in tranquil repose the easy independence they had earned by honorable toil. There, the lovely garden, every flower of which looked fit to take the first prize at a horticultural show, the incomparable white strawberries, famous throughout the neighborhood, and a magnificent Angola cat, were the delights of my out-of-door life; and perfect kindness and various conversation, fed by an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, an immense knowledge of books, and a long and interesting acquaintance with society, made the indoor hours passed with these quiet old lady governesses some of the most delightful I have ever known. The two younger sisters died first; the eldest, surviving them, felt the sad solitude of their once pleasant home at "The Laurels" intolerable, and removed her residence to Brighton, where, till the period of her death, I used to go and stay with her, and found her to the last one of the most agreeable companions I have ever known.

At the time of my first acquaintance with my cousins, however, neither their own studies nor those of their pupils so far engrossed them as to seclude them from society. Bath was then, at certain seasons, the gayest place of fashionable resort in England; and, little consonant as such a thing would appear at the present day with the prevailing ideas of the life of a teacher, balls, routs, plays, assemblies, the Pump Room, and all the fashionable dissipations of the place, were habitually resorted to by these very "stylish" school-mistresses, whose position at one time, oddly enough, was that of leaders of "the ton" in the pretty provincial capital of Somersetshire. It was, moreover, understood, as part of the system of the establishment, that such of the pupils as were of an age to be introduced into society could enjoy the advantage of the chaperonage of these ladies, and several did avail themselves of it.

What profit I made under these kind and affectionate kinsfolk I know not; little, I rather think, ostensibly; perhaps some beneath the surface, not very manifest either to them or myself at the time; but painstaking love sows more harvests than it wots of, wherever or whenever (or if never) it reaps them.

I did not become versed in any of my cousins' learned lore, or accomplished in the lighter labors of their leisure hours—to wit, the shoemaking, bread-seal manufacturing, and black and white Japan, table and screen painting, which produced such an indescribable medley of materials in their rooms, and were fashionable female idle industries of that day.

Remote from the theatre, and all details of theatrical life, as my existence in my aunt's school was, there still were occasional infiltrations of that element which found their way into my small sphere. My cousin John Twiss, who died not very long ago, an elderly general in her Majesty's service, was at this time a young giant, studying to become an engineer officer, whose visits to his home were seasons of great delight to the family in general, not unmixed on my part with dread; for a favorite diversion of his was enacting my uncle John's famous rescue of Cora's child, in "Pizarro," with me clutched in one hand, and exalted to perilous proximity with the chandelier, while he rushed across the drawing-rooms, to my exquisite terror and triumph.

I remember, too, his sisters, all three remarkably tall women (the eldest nearly six feet high, a portentous petticoat stature), amusing themselves with putting on, and sweeping about the rooms in, certain regal mantles and Grecian draperies of my aunt Mrs. Whitelock's, an actress, like the rest of the Kembles, who sought and found across the Atlantic a fortune and celebrity which it would have been difficult for her to have achieved under the disadvantage of proximity to, and comparison with, her sister, Mrs. Siddons. But I suppose the dramatic impression which then affected me with the greatest and most vivid pleasure was an experience which I have often remembered, when reading Goethe's "Dichtung und Wahrheit," and the opening chapters of "Wilhelm Meister." Within a pleasant summer afternoon's walk from Bath, through green meadows and by the river's side, lay a place called Claverton Park, the residence of a family of the name of A–. I remember nothing of the house but the stately and spacious hall, in the middle of which stood a portable theatre, or puppet-show, such as Punch inhabits, where the small figures, animated with voice and movement by George A–, the eldest son of the family, were tragic instead of grotesque, and where, instead of the squeaking "Don Giovanni" of the London pavement, "Macbeth" and similar solemnities appeared before my enchanted eyes. The troupe might have been the very identical puppet performers of Harry Rowe, the famous Yorkshire trumpeter. These, I suppose, were the first plays I ever saw. Those were pleasant walks to Claverton, and pleasant days at Claverton Hall! I wish Hans Breitmann and his "Avay in die Ewigkeit" did not come in, like a ludicrous, lugubrious burden, to all one's reminiscences of places and people one knew upward of fifty years ago.

I have been accused of having acquired a bad habit of *punning from Shakespeare!*—a delightful idea, that made me laugh till I cried the first time it was suggested to me. If so, I certainly began early to exhibit a result, of which the cause was, in some mysterious way, long subsequent to the effect; unless the Puppet Plays of Claverton inspired my wit. However that may be, I developed at this period a decided faculty for punning, and that is an unusual thing at that age. Children have considerable enjoyment of humor, as many of their favorite fairy and other stories attest; they are often themselves extremely droll and humorous in their assumed play characters and the stories they invent to divert their companions; but punning is a not very noble species of wit; it partakes of mental dexterity, requires neither fancy, humor, nor imagination, and deals in words with double meanings, a subtlety very little congenial to the simple and earnest intelligence of childhood.

Les enfans terribles say such things daily, and make their grandmothers' caps stand on end with their precocious astuteness; but the clever sayings of most clever children, repeated and reported by admiring friends and relations, are, for the most part, simply the result of unused faculties, exercising themselves in, to them, an unused world; only therefore surprising to worn-out faculties, which have almost ceased to exercise themselves in, to them, an almost worn-out world.

To Miss B– I was indebted for the first doll I remember possessing—a gorgeous wax personage, in white muslin and cherry-colored ribbons, who, by desire of the donor, was to be called Philippa, in honor of my uncle. I never loved or liked dolls, though I remember taking some pride in the splendor of this, my first-born. They always affected me with a grim sense of being a mockery of the humanity they were supposed to represent; there was something uncanny, not to say ghastly, in the doll existence and its mimicry of babyhood to me, and I had a nervous dislike, not unmixed with fear, of the smiling simulacra that girls are all supposed to love with a species of prophetic maternal instinct.

The only member of my aunt Twiss's family of whom I remember at this time little or nothing was the eldest son, Horace, who in subsequent years was one of the most intimate and familiar friends of my father and mother, and who became well known as a clever and successful public man, and a brilliant and agreeable member of the London society of his day.

My stay of a little more than a year at Bath had but one memorable event, in its course, to me. I was looking one evening, at bedtime, over the banisters, from the upper story into the hall below, with tiptoe eagerness that caused me to overbalance myself and turn over the rail, to which I clung on the wrong side, suspended, like Victor Hugo's miserable priest to the gutter of Notre Dame, and

then fell four stories down on the stone pavement of the hall. I was not killed, or apparently injured, but whether I was not really irreparably damaged no human being can possibly tell.

My next memories refer to a residence which my parents were occupying when I returned to London, called Covent Garden Chambers, now, I believe, celebrated as "Evans's," and where, I am told, it is confidently affirmed that I was born, which I was not; and where, I am told, a picture is shown that is confidently affirmed to be mine, which it is not. My sister Adelaide was born in Covent Garden Chambers, and the picture in question is an oil sketch, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of my cousin Maria Siddons; quite near the truth enough for history, private or public. It was while we were living here that Mrs. Siddons returned to the stage for one night, and acted Lady Randolph for my father's benefit. Of course I heard much discourse about this, to us, important and exciting event, and used all my small powers of persuasion to be taken to see her.

My father, who loved me very much, and spoiled me not a little, carried me early in the afternoon into the market-place, and showed me the dense mass of people which filled the whole Piazza, in patient expectation of admission to the still unopened doors. This was by way of proving to me how impossible it was to grant my request. However that might then appear, it was granted, for I was in the theatre at the beginning of the performance; but I can now remember nothing of it but the appearance of a solemn female figure in black, and the tremendous *roar* of public greeting which welcomed her, and must, I suppose, have terrified my childish senses, by the impression I still retain of it; and this is the only occasion on which I saw my aunt in public.

Another circumstance, connected in my mind with Covent Garden Chambers, was a terrible anguish about my youngest brother, Henry, who was for some hours lost. He was a most beautiful child, of little more than three years old, and had been allowed to go out on the door-steps, by an exceedingly foolish little nursery-maid, to look at the traffic of the great market-place. Returning without him, she declared that he had refused to come in with her, and had run to the corner of Henrietta Street, as she averred, where she had left him, to come and fetch authoritative assistance.

The child did not come home, and all search for him proved vain throughout the crowded market and the adjoining thoroughfares, thronged with people and choked with carts and wagons, and swarming with the blocked-up traffic, which had to make its way to and from the great mart through avenues far narrower and more difficult of access than they are now. There were not then, either, those invaluable beings, policemen, standing at every corner to enforce order and assist the helpless. These then were not; and no inquiry brought back any tidings of the poor little lost boy. My mother was ill, and I do not think she was told of the child's disappearance, but my father went to and fro with the face and voice of a distracted man; and I well remember the look with which he climbed a narrow outside stair leading only to a rain-water cistern, with the miserable apprehension that his child might have clambered up and fallen into it. The neighborhood was stirred with sympathy for the agony of the poor father, and pitying gossip spreading the news through the thronged market-place, where my father's name and appearance were familiar enough to give a strong personal feeling to the compassion expressed. A baker's boy, lounging about, caught up the story of the lost child, and described having seen a "pretty little chap with curly hair, in a brown holland pinafore," in St. James's Square. Thither the searchers flew, and the child was found, tired out with his self-directed wandering, but apparently quite contented, fast asleep on the door-step of one of the lordly houses of that aristocratic square. He was so remarkably beautiful that he must have attracted attention before long, and *might* perhaps have been restored to his home; but God knows what an age of horror and anguish was lived through by my father and my poor aunt Dall in that short, miserable space of time till he was found.

My aunt Dall, of whom I now speak for the first time, was my mother's sister, and had lived with us, I believe, ever since I was born. Her name was Adelaide, but the little fellow whose adventure I have just related, stumbling over this fine Norman appellation, turned it into Idallidy, and then conveniently shortened it of its two extremities and made it Dall, by which title she was called by us,

and known to all our friends, and beloved by all who ever spoke or heard it. Her story was as sad a one as could well be; yet to my thinking she was one of the happiest persons I have ever known, as well as one of the best. She was my mother's second sister, and as her picture, taken when she was twenty, shows (and it was corroborated by her appearance till upward of fifty), she was extremely pretty. Obliged, as all the rest of her family were, to earn her own bread, and naturally adopting the means of doing so that they did, she went upon the stage; but I can not conceive that her nature can ever have had any affinity with her occupation. She had a robust and rather prosaic common-sense, opposed to any thing exaggerated or sentimental, which gave her an excellent judgment of character and conduct, a strong genial vein of humor which very often made her repartees witty as well as wise, and a sunny sweetness of temper and soundness of moral nature that made her as good as she was easy and delightful to live with. Whenever any thing went wrong, and she was "vexed past her patience," she used to sing; it was the only indication by which we ever knew that she was what is termed "out of sorts." She had found employment in her profession under the kindly protection of Mr. Stephen Kemble, my father's brother, who lived for many years at Durham, and was the manager of the theatre there, and, according to the fashion of that time, traveled with his company, at stated seasons, to Newcastle, Sunderland, and other places, which formed a sort of theatrical circuit in the northern counties, throughout which he was well known and generally respected.

In his company my aunt Dall found employment, and in his daughter, Fanny Kemble, since well known as Mrs. Robert Arkwright, an inseparable friend and companion. My aunt lived with Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kemble, who were excellent, worthy people. They took good care of the two young girls under their charge, this linsey-woolsey Rosalind and Celia—their own beautiful and most rarely endowed daughter, and her light-hearted, lively companion; and I suppose that a merrier life than that of these lasses, in the midst of their quaint theatrical tasks and homely household duties, was seldom led by two girls in any sphere of life. They learned and acted their parts, devised and executed, with small means and great industry, their dresses; made pies and puddings, and patched and darned, in the morning, and by dint of paste and rouge became heroines in the evening; and withal were well-conducted, good young things, full of the irrepressible spirits of their age, and turning alike their hard home work and light stage labor into fun. Fanny had inherited the beauty of her father's family, which in her most lovely countenance had a character of childlike simplicity and serene sweetness that made it almost angelic.

Far on in middle age she retained this singularly tender beauty, which added immensely to the exquisite effect of her pathetic voice in her incomparable rendering of the ballads she composed (the poetry as well as the music being often her own), and to which her singing of them gave so great a fashion at one time in the great London world. It was in vain that far better musicians, with far finer voices, attempted to copy her inimitable musical recitation; nobody ever sang like her, and still less did anybody ever look like her while she sang. Practical jokes of very doubtful taste were the fashion of that day, and remembering what wonderfully coarse and silly proceedings were then thought highly diverting by "vastly genteel" people, it is not, perhaps, much to be wondered at that so poor a piece of wit as this should have furnished diversion to a couple of light-hearted girls, with no special pretensions to elegance or education. Once they were driving together in a post-chaise on the road to Newcastle, and my aunt, having at hand in a box part of a military equipment intended for some farce, accoutred her upper woman in a soldier's cap, stock, and jacket, and, with heavily corked mustaches, persisted in embracing her companion, whose frantic resistance, screams of laughter, and besmirched cheeks, elicited comments of boundless amazement, in broad north-country dialect, from the market folk they passed on the road, to whom they must have appeared the most violent runaway couple that ever traveled.

Liston, the famous comedian, was at this time a member of the Durham company, and though he began his career there by reciting Collins's "Ode to the Passions," attired in a pea-green coat, buckskins, top-boots, and powder, with a scroll in his hand, and followed up this essay of his powers

with the tragic actor's battle-horse, the part of Hamlet, he soon found his peculiar gift to lie in the diametrically opposite direction of broad farce. Of this he was perpetually interpolating original specimens in the gravest performances of his fellow-actors; on one occasion suddenly presenting to Mrs. Stephen Kemble, as she stood disheveled at the side scene, ready to go on the stage as Ophelia in her madness, a basket with carrots, turnips, onions, leeks, and pot-herbs, instead of the conventional flowers and straws of the stage maniac, which sent the representative of the fair Ophelia on in a broad grin, with ill-suppressed fury and laughter, which must have given quite an original character of verisimilitude to the insanity she counterfeited.

On another occasion he sent all the little chorister boys on, in the lugubrious funeral procession in "Romeo and Juliet," with pieces of brown paper in their hands to wipe their tears with.

The suppression of that very dreadful piece of stage pageantry has at last, I believe, been conceded to the better taste of modern audiences; but even in my time it was still performed, and an exact representation of a funeral procession, such as one meets every day in Rome, with torch-bearing priests, and bier covered with its black-velvet pall, embroidered with skull and cross-bones, with a corpse-like figure stretched upon it, marched round the stage, chanting some portion of the fine Roman Catholic requiem music. I have twice been in the theatre when persons have been seized with epilepsy during that ghastly exhibition, and think the good judgment that has discarded such a mimicry of a solemn religious ceremony highly commendable.

Another evening, Liston, having painted Fanny Kemble's face like a clown's, posted her at one of the stage side doors to confront her mother, poor Mrs. Stephen Kemble, entering at the opposite one to perform some dismally serious scene of dramatic pathos, who, on suddenly beholding this grotesque apparition of her daughter, fell into convulsions of laughter and coughing, and half audible exclamations of "Go away, Fanny! I'll tell your father, miss!" which must have had the effect of a sudden seizure of madness to the audience, accustomed to the rigid decorum of the worthy woman in the discharge of her theatrical duties.

Long after these provincial exploits, and when he had become the comedian *par excellence* of the English stage, for which eminence nature and art had alike qualified him by the imperturbable gravity of his extraordinarily ugly face, which was such an irresistibly comical element in his broadest and most grotesque performances, Mr. Liston used to exert his ludicrous powers of tormenting his fellow-actors in the most cruel manner upon that sweet singer, Miss Stephens (afterward Countess of Essex). She had a curious nervous trick of twitching her dress before she began to sing; this peculiarity was well known to all her friends, and Liston, who certainly was one of them, used to agonize the poor woman by standing at the side scene, while the symphony of her pathetic ballads was being played, and indicating by his eyes and gestures that something was amiss with the trimming or bottom of her dress; when, as invariably as he chose to play the trick, poor Miss Stephens used to begin to twitch and catch at her petticoat, and half hysterical, between laughing and crying, would enchant and entrance her listeners with her exquisite voice and pathetic rendering of "Savourneen Deelish" or "The Banks of Allan Water."

CHAPTER II

Two young men, officers of a militia regiment, became admirers of the two young country actresses: how long an acquaintance existed before the fact became evident that they were seriously paying their addresses to the girls, I do not know; nor how long the struggle lasted between pride and conventional respectability on the part of the young men's families and the pertinacity of their attachment.

Fanny Kemble's suitor, Robert Arkwright, had certainly no pretensions to dignity of descent, and the old Derbyshire barber, Sir Richard, or his son could hardly have stood out long upon that ground, though the immense wealth realized by their ingenuity and industry was abundant worldly reason for objections to such a match, no doubt.

However that may be, the opposition was eventually overcome by the determination of the lovers, and they were married; while to the others a far different fate was allotted. The young man who addressed my aunt, whose name I do not know, was sent for by his father, a wealthy Yorkshire squire, who, upon his refusing to give up his mistress, instantly assembled all the servants and tenants, and declared before them all that the young gentleman, his son (and supposed heir), was illegitimate, and thenceforth disinherited and disowned. He enlisted and went to India, and never saw my aunt again. Mrs. Arkwright went home to Stoke, to the lovely house and gardens in the Peak of Derbyshire, to prosperity and wealth, to ease and luxury, and to the love of husband and children. Later in life she enjoyed, in her fine mansion of Sutton, the cordial intimacy of the two great county magnates, her neighbors, the Dukes of Rutland and Devonshire, the latter of whom was her admiring and devoted friend till her death. In the society of the high-born and gay and gifted with whom she now mixed, and among whom her singular gifts made her remarkable, the enthusiasm she excited never impaired the transparent and childlike simplicity and sincerity of her nature. There was something very peculiar about the single-minded, simple-hearted genuineness of Mrs. Arkwright which gave an unusual charm of unconventionality and fervid earnestness to her manner and conversation. I remember her telling me, with the most absolute conviction, that she thought wives were bound implicitly to obey their husbands, for she believed that at the day of judgment husbands would be answerable for their wives' souls.

It was in the midst of a life full of all the most coveted elements of worldly enjoyment, and when she was still beautiful and charming, though no longer young, that I first knew her. Her face and voice were heavenly sweet, and very sad; I do not know why she made so profoundly melancholy an impression upon me, but she was so unlike all that surrounded her, that she constantly suggested to me the one live drop of water in the middle of a globe of ice. The loss of her favorite son affected her with irrecoverable sorrow, and she passed a great portion of the last years of her life at a place called Cullercoats, a little fishing village on the north coast, to which when a young girl she used to accompany her father and mother for rest and refreshment, when the hard life from which her marriage released her allowed them a few days' respite by the rocks and sands and breakers of the Northumberland shore. The Duke of Devonshire, whose infirmity of deafness did not interfere with his enjoyment of music, was an enthusiastic admirer of Mrs. Arkwright, and her constant and affectionate friend. Their proximity of residence in Derbyshire made their opportunities of meeting very frequent, and when the Arkwrights visited London, Devonshire House was, if they chose it, their hotel. His attachment to her induced him, towards the end of his life, to take a residence in the poor little village of Cullercoats, whither she loved to resort, and where she died. I possess a copy of a beautiful drawing of a head of Mrs. Arkwright, given to me by the duke, for whom the original was executed. It is only a head, with the eyes raised to heaven, and the lips parted, as in the act of singing; and the angelic sweetness of the countenance may perhaps suggest, to those who never heard her, the voice that seemed like that face turned to sound.

So Fanny Kemble married, and Adelaide Decamp came and lived with us, and was the good angel of our home. All intercourse between the two (till then inseparable companions) ceased for many years, and my aunt began her new life with a bitter bankruptcy of love and friendship, happiness and hope, that would have dried the sap of every sweet affection, and made even goodness barren, in many a woman's heart for ever.

Without any home but my father's house, without means of subsistence but the small pittance which he was able to give her, in most grateful acknowledgment of her unremitting care of us, without any joys or hopes but those of others, without pleasure in the present or expectation in the future, apparently without memory of the past, she spent her whole life in the service of my parents and their children, and lived and moved and had her being in a serene, unclouded, unvarying atmosphere of cheerful, self-forgetful content that was heroic in its absolute unconsciousness. She is the only person I can think of who appeared to me to have fulfilled Wordsworth's conception of

"Those blessed ones who do God's will and know it not."

I have never seen either man or woman like her, in her humble excellence, and I am thankful that, knowing what the circumstances of her whole life were, she yet seems to me the happiest human being I have known. She died, as she had lived, in the service of others. When I went with my father to America, my mother remained in England, and my aunt came with us, to take care of me. She died in consequence of the overturning of a carriage (in which we were travelling), from which she received a concussion of the spine; and her last words to me, after a night of angelic endurance of restless fever and suffering, were, "Open the window; let in the blessed light"—almost the same as Goethe's, with a characteristic difference. It was with the hope of giving her the proceeds of its publication, as a token of my affectionate gratitude, that I printed my American journal; that hope being defeated by her death, I gave them, for her sake, to her younger sister, my aunt Victoire Decamp. This sister of my mother's was, when we were living in Covent Garden Chambers, a governess in a school at Lea, near Blackheath.

The school was kept by ladies of the name of Guinani, sisters to the wife of Charles Young—the Julia so early lost, so long loved and lamented by him. I was a frequent and much-petted visitor to their house, which never fulfilled the austere purpose implied in its name to me, for all my days there were holidays; and I remember hours of special delight passed in a large drawing-room where two fine cedars of Lebanon threw grateful gloom into the windows, and great tall china jars of pot-pourri filled the air with a mixed fragrance of roses and (as it seemed to me) plum-pudding, and where hung a picture, the contemplation of which more than once moved me to tears, after I had been given to understand that the princely personage and fair-headed baby in a boat in the midst of a hideous black sea, overhung by a hideous black sky, were Prospero, the good Duke of Milan, and his poor little princess daughter, Miranda, cast forth by wicked relations to be drowned.

It was while we were still living in Covent Garden Chambers that Talma, the great French actor, came to London. He knew both my uncle and my father, and was highly esteemed and greatly admired by both of them. He called one day upon my father, when nobody was at home, and the servant who opened the door holding me by the hand, the famous French actor, who spoke very good English, though not without the "pure Parisian accent," took some kind of notice of me, desiring me to be sure and remember his name, and tell my father that Mr. Talma, the great French tragedian, had called. I replied that I would do so, and then added, with noble emulation, that my father was also a great tragedian, and my uncle was also a great tragedian, and that we had a baby in the nursery who I thought must be a great tragedian too, for she did nothing but cry, and what was that if not tragedy?—which edifying discourse found its way back to my mother, to whom Talma laughingly repeated it. I have heard my father say that on the occasion of this visit of Talma's to London, he consulted my uncle on the subject of acting in English. Hamlet was one of his great parts, and he made as fine a thing

of Ducis' cold, and stiff, and formal adaptation of Shakespeare's noble work as his meagre material allowed; but, as I have said before, he spoke English well, and thought it not impossible to undertake the part in the original language. My uncle, however, strongly dissuaded him from it, thinking the decided French accent an insuperable obstacle to his success, and being very unwilling that he should risk by a failure in the attempt his deservedly high reputation. A friend of mine, at a dinner party, being asked if she had seen Mr. Fechter in Hamlet, replied in the negative, adding that she did not think she should relish Shakespeare declaimed with a foreign accent. The gentleman who had questioned her said, "Ah, very true indeed—perhaps not;" then, looking attentively at his plate, from which I suppose he drew the inspiration of what followed, he added, "And yet—after all, you know, Hamlet was a foreigner." This view of the case had probably not suggested itself to John Kemble, and so he dissuaded Talma from the experiment. While referring to Mr. Fechter's personification of Hamlet, and the great success which it obtained in the fashionable world, I wish to preserve a charming instance of naïve ignorance in a young guardsman, seduced by the enthusiasm of the gay society of London into going, for once, to see a play of Shakespeare's. After sitting dutifully through some scenes in silence, he turned to a fellow-guardsman, who was painfully looking and listening by his side, with the grave remark, "I say, George, *dooced* odd play this; its all full of quotations." The young military gentleman had occasionally, it seems, heard Shakespeare quoted, and remembered it.

To return to my story. About this time it was determined that I should be sent to school in France. My father was extremely anxious to give me every advantage that he could, and Boulogne, which was not then the British Alsatia it afterwards became, and where there was a girl's school of some reputation, was chosen as not too far from home to send a mite seven years old, to acquire the French language and begin her education. And so to Boulogne I went, to a school in the oddly named "Rue tant perd tant paie," in the old town, kept by a rather sallow and grim, but still vivacious old Madame Faudier, with the assistance of her daughter, Mademoiselle Flore, a bouncing, blooming beauty of a discreet age, whose florid complexion, prominent black eyes, plaited and profusely pomatumed black hair, and full, commanding figure, attired for fête days, in salmon-colored merino, have remained vividly impressed upon my memory. What I learned here except French (which I could not help learning), I know not. I was taught music, dancing, and Italian, the latter by a Signor Mazzochetti, an object of special detestation to me, whose union with Mademoiselle Flore caused a temporary fit of rejoicing in the school. The small seven-year-old beginnings of such particular humanities I mastered with tolerable success, but if I may judge from the frequency of my *penitences*, humanity in general was not instilled into me without considerable trouble. I was a sore torment, no doubt, to poor Madame Faudier, who, on being once informed by some alarmed passers in the street that one of her "demoiselles" was perambulating the house roof, is reported to have exclaimed, in a paroxysm of rage and terror, "Ah, ce ne peut etre que cette *diable* de Kemble!" and sure enough it was I. Having committed I know not what crime, I had been thrust for chastisement into a lonely garret, where, having nothing earthly to do but look about me, I discovered (like a prince in the Arabian Nights) a ladder leading to a trap-door, and presently was out on a sort of stone coping, which ran round the steep roof of the high, old-fashioned house, surveying with serene satisfaction the extensive prospect landward and seaward, unconscious that I was at the same time an object of terror to the beholders in the street below. Snatched from the perilous delight of this bad eminence, I was (again, I think, rather like the Arabian prince) forthwith plunged into the cellar; where I curled myself up on the upper step, close to the heavy door that had been locked upon me, partly for the comfort of the crack of light that squeezed itself through it, and partly, I suppose, from some vague idea that there was no bottom to the steps, derived from my own terror rather than from any precise historical knowledge of oubliettes and donjons, with the execrable treachery of stairs suddenly ending in mid-darkness over an abyss. I suppose I suffered a martyrdom of fear, for I remember upwards of thirty years afterwards having this very cellar, and my misery in it, brought before my mind suddenly, with intense vividness, while reading, in Victor Hugo's Notre Dame, poor Esmeralda's piteous entreaties

for deliverance from her underground prison: "Oh laissez moi sortir! j'ai froid! j'ai peur! et des bêtes me montent le long du corps." The latter hideous detail certainly completes the exquisite misery of the picture. Less justifiable than banishment to lonely garrets, whence egress was to be found only by the roof, or dark incarceration in cellars whence was no egress at all, was another device, adopted to impress me with the evil of my ways, and one which seems to me so foolish in its cruelty, that the only amazement is, how anybody entrusted with the care of children could dream of any good result from such a method of impressing a little girl not eight years old. There was to be an execution in the town of some wretched malefactor, who was condemned to be guillotined, and I was told that I should be taken to see this supreme act of legal retribution, in order that I might know to what end evil courses conducted people. We all remember the impressive fable of "Don't Care," who came to be hanged, but I much doubt if any of the thousands of young Britons whose bosoms have been made to thrill with salutary terror at his untimely end were ever taken by their parents and guardians to see a hanging, by way of enforcing the lesson. Whether it was ever intended that I should witness the ghastly spectacle of this execution, or whether it was expressly contrived that I should come too late, I know not; it is to be hoped that my doing so was not accidental, but mercifully intentional. Certain it is, that when I was taken to the Grande Place the slaughter was over; but I saw the guillotine, and certain gutters running red with what I was told (whether truly or not) was blood, and a sad-looking man, busied about the terrible machine, who, it was said, was the executioner's son; all which lugubrious objects, no doubt, had their due effect upon my poor childish imagination and nervous system, with a benefit to my moral nature which I should think highly problematical.

The experiments tried upon the minds and souls of children by those who undertake to train them, are certainly among the most mysterious of Heaven-permitted evils. The coarse and cruel handling of these wonderfully complex and delicate machines by ignorant servants, ignorant teachers, and ignorant parents, fills one with pity and with amazement that the results of such processes should not be even more disastrous than they are.

In the nature of many children exists a capacity of terror equalled in its intensity only by the reticence which conceals it. The fear of ridicule is strong in these sensitive small souls, but even that is inadequate to account for the silent agony with which they hug the secret of their fear. Nursery and schoolroom authorities, fonder of power than of principle, find their account in both these tendencies, and it is marvellous to what a point tyranny may be exercised by means of their double influence over children, the sufferers never having recourse to the higher parental authority by which they would be delivered from the nightmare of silent terror imposed upon them.

The objects that excite the fears of children are often as curious and unaccountable as their secret intensity. A child four years of age, who was accustomed to be put to bed in a dressing-room opening into her mother's room, and near her nursery, and was left to go to sleep alone, from a desire that she should not be watched and lighted to sleep (or in fact kept awake, after a very common nursery practice), endured this discipline without remonstrance, and only years afterwards informed her mother that she never was so left in her little bed, alone in the darkness, without a full conviction that a large black dog was lying under it, which terrible imagination she never so much as hinted at, or besought for light or companionship to dispel. Miss Martineau told me once, that a special object of horror to her, when she was a child, were the colors of the prism, a thing in itself so beautiful, that it is difficult to conceive how any imagination could be painfully impressed by it; but her terror of these magical colors was such, that she used to rush past the room, even when the door was closed, where she had seen them reflected from the chandelier, by the sunlight, on the wall.

The most singular instance I ever knew, however, of unaccountable terror produced in a child's mind by the pure action of its imagination, was that of a little boy who overheard a conversation between his mother and a friend upon the subject of the purchase of some stuff, which she had not bought, "because," said she, "it was ell wide." The words "ell wide," perfectly incomprehensible to the child, seized upon his fancy, and produced some image of terror by which for a long time his poor

little mind was haunted. Certainly this is a powerful instance, among innumerable and striking ones, of the fact that the fears of children are by no means the result of the objects of alarm suggested to them by the ghost-stories, bogeys, etc., of foolish servants and companions; they quite as often select or create their terrors for themselves, from sources so inconceivably strange, that all precaution proves ineffectual to protect them from this innate tendency of the imaginative faculty. This "ell wide" horror is like something in a German story. The strange aversion, coupled with a sort of mysterious terror, for beautiful and agreeable or even quite commonplace objects, is one of the secrets of the profound impression which the German writers of fiction produce. It belongs peculiarly to their national genius, some of whose most striking and thrilling conceptions are pervaded with this peculiar form of the sentiment of fear. Hoffman and Tieck are especially powerful in their use of it, and contrive to give a character of vague mystery to simple details of prosaic events and objects, to be found in no other works of fiction. The terrible conception of the *Doppelgänger*, which exists in a modified form as the wraith of Scottish legendary superstition, is rendered infinitely more appalling by being taken out of its misty highland half-light of visionary indefiniteness, and produced in frock-coat and trousers, in all the shocking distinctness of commonplace, everyday, contemporary life. The Germans are the only people whose imaginative faculty can cope with the homeliest forms of reality, and infuse into them *vagueness*, that element of terror most alien from familiar things. That they may be tragic enough we know, but that they have in them a mysterious element of terror of quite indefinite depth, German writers alone know how to make us feel.

I do not think that in my own instance the natural cowardice with which I was femininely endowed was unusually or unduly cultivated in childhood; but with a highly susceptible and excitable nervous temperament and ill-regulated imagination, I have suffered from every conceivable form of terror; and though, for some inexplicable reason, I have always had the reputation of being fearless, have really, all my life, been extremely deficient in courage.

Very impetuous, and liable to be carried away by any strong emotion, my entire want of self-control and prudence, I suppose, conveyed the impression that I was equally without fear; but the truth is that, as a wise friend once said to me, I have always been "as rash and as cowardly as a child;" and none of my sex ever had a better right to apply to herself Shakespeare's line—

"A woman, naturally born to fears."

The only agreeable impression I retain of my school-days at Boulogne is that of the long half-holiday walks we were allowed to indulge in. Not the two-and-two, dull, dreary, daily procession round the ramparts, but the disbanded freedom of the sunny afternoon, spent in gathering wild-flowers along the pretty, secluded valley of the Liane, through which no iron road then bore its thundering freight. Or, better still, clambering, straying, playing hide-and-seek, or sitting telling and hearing fairy tales among the great carved blocks of stone, which lay, in ignominious purposelessness, around the site on the high, grassy cliff where Napoleon the First—the Only—had decreed that his triumphal pillar should point its finger of scorn at our conquered, "pale-faced shores." Best of all, however, was the distant wandering, far out along the sandy dunes, to what used to be called "La Gárenne;" I suppose because of the wild rabbits that haunted it, who—hunted and rummaged from their burrows in the hillocks of coarse grass by a pitiless pack of school-girls—must surely have wondered after our departure, when they came together stealthily, with twitching noses, ears, and tails, what manner of fiendish visitation had suddenly come and gone, scaring their peaceful settlement on the silent, solitary sea-shore.

Before I left Boulogne, the yearly solemnity of the distribution of prizes took place. This was, at Madame Faudier's, as at all French schools of that day, a most exciting event. Special examinations preceded it, for which the pupils prepared themselves with diligent emulation. The prefect, the sub-prefect, the mayor, the bishop, all the principal civil and religious authorities of the place, were invited

to honor the ceremony with their presence. The courtyard of the house was partly inclosed, and covered over with scaffoldings, awnings, and draperies, under which a stage was erected, and this, together with the steps that led to it, was carpeted with crimson, and adorned with a profusion of flowers. One of the dignified personages, seated around a table on which the books designed for prizes were exhibited, pronounced a discourse commendatory of past efforts and hortatory to future ones, and the pupils, all *en grande toilette*, and seated on benches facing the stage, were summoned through the rows of admiring parents, friends, acquaintances, and other invited guests, to receive the prizes awarded for excellence in the various branches of our small curriculum. I was the youngest girl in the school, but I was a quick, clever child, and a lady, a friend of my family, who was present, told me many years after, how well she remembered the frequent summons to the dais received by a small, black-eyed damsel, the *cadette* of the establishment. I have considerable doubt that any good purpose could be answered by this public appeal to the emulation of a parcel of school-girls; but I have no doubt at all that abundant seeds of vanity, self-love, and love of display, were sown by it, which bore their bad harvest many a long year after.

I left Boulogne when I was almost nine years old, and returned home, where I remained upwards of two years before being again sent to school. During this time we lived chiefly at a place called Craven Hill, Bayswater, where we occupied at different periods three different houses.

My mother always had a detestation of London, which I have cordially inherited. The dense, heavy atmosphere, compounded of smoke and fog, painfully affected her breathing and oppressed her spirits; and the deafening clangor of its ceaseless uproar irritated her nerves and distressed her in a manner which I invariably experience whenever I am compelled to pass any time in that huge Hubbub. She perpetually yearned for the fresh air and the quiet of the country. Occupied as my father was, however, this was an impossible luxury; and my poor mother escaped as far as her circumstances would allow from London, and towards the country, by fixing her home at the place I have mentioned. In those days Tyburnia did not exist; nor all the vast region of Paddingtonian London. Tyburn turnpike, of nefarious memory, still stood at the junction of Oxford Road and the Edgeware Road, and between the latter and Bayswater open fields traversed by the canal, with here and there an isolated cottage dotted about them, stretched on one side of the high-road; and on the other, the untidy, shaggy, ravelled-looking selvage of Hyde Park; not trimmed with shady walks and flower borders and smooth grass and bright iron railing as now, but as forbidding in its neglected aspect as the desolate stretch of uninclosed waste on the opposite side.

About a mile from Tyburn Gate a lane turned off on the right, following which one came to a meadow, with a path across its gentle rise which led to the row of houses called Craven Hill. I do not think there were twenty in all, and some of them, such as Lord Ferrar's and the Harley House, were dwellings of some pretension. Even the most modest of them had pretty gardens in front and behind, and verandas and balconies with flowering creepers and shrubberies, and a general air of semi-rurality that cheated my poor mother with a make-believe effect of being, if not in the country, at any rate out of town. And infinite were the devices of her love of elegance and comfort produced from the most unpromising materials, but making these dwellings of ours pretty and pleasant beyond what could have been thought possible. She had a peculiar taste and talent for furnishing and fitting up; and her means being always very limited, her zeal was great for frequenting sales, where she picked up at reasonable prices quaint pieces of old furniture, which she brought with great triumph to the assistance of the commonplace upholstery of our ready-furnished dwellings. Nobody ever had such an eye for the disposal of every article in a room, at once for greatest convenience and best appearance; and I never yet saw the apartment into which by her excellent arrangement she did not introduce an element of comfort and elegance—a liveable look, which the rooms of people unendowed with that special faculty never acquire, and never retain, however handsome or finely fitted up they may be. I am sorry to be obliged to add, however, that she had a rage for moving her furniture from one place to another, which never allowed her to let well alone; and not unfrequently her mere desire

for change destroyed the very best results of her own good taste. We never knew when we might find the rooms a perfect chaos of disorder, with every chair, table, and sofa "dancing the hayes" in horrid confusion; while my mother, crimson and dishevelled with pulling and pushing them hither and thither, was breathlessly organizing new combinations. Nor could anything be more ludicrous than my father's piteous aspect, on arriving in the midst of this *remue-ménage*, or the poor woman's profound mortification when, finding everything moved from its last position (for the twentieth time), he would look around, and, instead of all the commendation she expected, exclaim in dismay, "Why, bless my soul! what has happened to the room, *again*!" Our furniture played an everlasting game of puss in the corner; and I am thankful that I have inherited some of my mother's faculty of arranging, without any of her curious passion for changing the aspect of her rooms.

A pretty, clever, and rather silly and affected woman, Mrs. Charles M–, who had a great passion for dress, was saying one day to my mother, with a lackadaisical drawl she habitually made use of, "What do you do when you have a headache, or are bilious, or cross, or nervous, or out of spirits? I always change my dress; it does me so much good!" "Oh," said my mother, briskly, "I change the furniture." I think she must have regarded it as a panacea for all the ills of life. Mrs. Charles M– was the half-sister of that amiable woman and admirable actress, Miss Kelly.

To return to Craven Hill. A row of very fine elm trees was separated only by the carriage-road from the houses, whose front windows looked through their branches upon a large, quiet, green meadow, and beyond that to an extensive nursery garden of enchanting memory, where our weekly allowances were expended in pots of violets and flower-seeds and roots of future fragrance, for our small gardens: this pleasant foreground divided us from the Bayswater Road and Kensington Gardens. At the back of the houses and their grounds stretched a complete open of meadow land, with hedgerows and elm trees, and hardly any building in sight in any direction. Certainly this was better than the smoke and din of London. To my father, however, the distance was a heavy increase of his almost nightly labor at the theatre. Omnibuses were no part of London existence then; a hackney coach (there were no cabs, either four-wheelers or hansoms) was a luxury to be thought of only occasionally, and for part of the way; and so he generally wound up his hard evening's work with a five miles' walk from Covent Garden to Craven Hill.

It was perhaps the inconvenience of this process that led to our taking, in addition to our "rural" residence, a lodging in Gerard Street, Soho. The house immediately fronts Anne Street, and is now a large establishment for the sale of lamps. It was a handsome old house, and at one time belonged to the "wicked" Lord Lyttleton. At the time I speak of, we occupied only a part of it, the rest remaining in the possession of the proprietor, who was a picture-dealer, and his collection of dusky *chefs-d'œuvre* covered the walls of the passages and staircases with dark canvas, over whose varnished surface ill-defined figures and ill-discerned faces seemed to flit, as with some trepidation I ran past them. The house must have been a curious as well as a very large one; but I never saw more of it than our own apartments, which had some peculiarities that I remember. Our dining-room was a very large, lofty, ground-floor room, fitted up partially as a library with my father's books, and having at the farther end, opposite the windows, two heavy, fluted pillars, which gave it rather a dignified appearance. My mother's drawing-room, which was on the first floor and at the back of the house, was oval in shape and lighted only by a skylight; and one entrance to it was through a small anteroom or boudoir, with looking-glass doors and ceiling all incrusted with scrolls and foliage and *rococo* Louis Quinze style of ornamentation, either in plaster or carved in wood and painted white. There were back staircases and back doors without number, leading in all directions to unknown regions; and the whole house, with its remains of magnificence and curious lumber of objects of art and *vertu*, was a very appropriate frame for the traditional ill-repute of its former noble owner.

A ludicrous circumstance enough, I remember, occurred, which produced no little uproar and amusement in one of its dreariest chambers. My brother John was at this time eagerly pursuing the study of chemistry for his own amusement, and had had an out-of-the-way sort of spare bedroom

abandoned to him for his various ill savored materials and scientific processes, from which my mother suffered a chronic terror of sudden death by blowing up. There was a monkey in the house, belonging to our landlord, and generally kept confined in his part of it, whence the knowledge of his existence only reached us through anecdotes brought by the servants. One day, however, an alarm was spread that the monkey had escaped from his own legitimate quarters and was running wild over the house. Chase was given, and every hole and corner searched in vain for the mischievous ape, who was at length discovered in what my brother dignified by the title of his laboratory, where, in a frenzy of gleeful activity, he was examining first one bottle and then another; finally he betook himself, with indescribably grotesque grinnings and chatterings, to uncorking and sniffing at them, and then pouring their contents deliberately out on the (luckily carpetless) floor,—a joke which might have had serious results for himself, as well as the house, if he had not in the midst of it suffered ignoble capture and been led away to his own quarters; my mother that time, certainly, escaping imminent "blowing up."

While we were living in Gerard Street, my uncle Kemble came for a short time to London from Lausanne, where he had fixed his residence—compelled to live abroad, under penalty of seeing the private fortune he had realized by a long life of hard professional labor swept into the ruin which had fallen upon Covent Garden Theatre, of which he was part proprietor. And I always associate this my only recollection of his venerable white hair and beautiful face, full of an expression of most benign dignity, with the earliest mention I remember of that luckless property, which weighed like an incubus upon my father all his life, and the ruinous burden of which both I and my sister successively endeavored in vain to prop.

My mother at this time gave lessons in acting to a few young women who were preparing themselves for the stage; and I recollect very well the admiration my uncle expressed for the beauty of one of them, an extremely handsome Miss Dance, who, I think, came out successfully, but soon married, and relinquished her profession.

This young lady was the daughter of a violinist and musical composer, whose name has a place in my memory from seeing it on a pretty musical setting for the voice of some remarkably beautiful verses, the author of which I have never been able to discover. I heard they had been taken out of that old-fashioned receptacle for stray poetical gems, the poet's corner of a country newspaper. I write them here as accurately as I can from memory; it is more than fifty years since I learnt them, and I have never met with any copy of them but that contained in the old music sheet of Mr. Dance's duet.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT OF MORN

Now on their couch of rest
Mortals are sleeping,
While in dark, dewy vest,
Flowerets are weeping.
Ere the last star of night
Fades in the fountain,
My finger of rosy light
Touches the mountain.

Far on his filmy wing
Twilight is wending,
Shadows encompassing,
Terrors attending:
While my foot's fiery print,
Up my path showing,

Gleams with celestial tint.
Brilliantly glowing,

Now from my pinions fair
Freshness is streaming,
And from my yellow hair
Glories are gleaming.
Nature with pure delight
Hails my returning,
And Sol, from his chamber bright,
Crowns the young morning.

My uncle John returned to Switzerland, and I never saw him again; he had made over his share of Covent Garden to my father, and went back to live and die in peace at his Beau Site on the Lake of Geneva.

The first time that I visited Lausanne I went to his grave, and found it in the old burial-ground above the town, where I wonder the dead have patience to lie still, for the glorious beauty of the view their resting-place commands. It was one among a row of graves with broad, flat tombstones bearing English names, and surrounded with iron railings, and flowers more or less running wild.

My father received the property my uncle transferred to him with cheerful courage, and not without sanguine hopes of retrieving its fortunes: instead of which, it destroyed his and those of his family; who, had he and they been untrammelled by the fatal obligation of working for a hopelessly ruined concern, might have turned their labors to far better personal account. Of the eighty thousand pounds which my uncle sank in building Covent Garden, and all the years of toil my father and myself and my sister sank in endeavoring to sustain it, nothing remained to us at my father's death; not even the ownership of the only thing I ever valued the property for,—the private box which belonged to us, the yearly rent of which was valued at three hundred pounds, and the possession of which procured us for several years many evenings of much enjoyment.

The only other recollection I have connected with Gerard Street is that of certain passages from "Paradise Lost," read to me by my father, the sonorous melody of which so enchanted me, that for many years of my life Milton was to me incomparably the first of English poets; though at this time of my earliest acquaintance with him, Walter Scott had precedence over him, and was undoubtedly in my opinion greatest of mortal and immortal bards. His "Marmion" and "Lay of the Last Minstrel" were already familiar to me. Of Shakespeare at this time, and for many subsequent years, I knew not a single line.

While our lodging in town was principally inhabited by my father and resorted to by my mother as a convenience, my aunt Dall, and we children, had our home at my mother's *rus in urbe*, Craven Hill, where we remained until I went again to school in France.

Our next door neighbors were, on one side, a handsome, dashing Mrs. Blackshaw, sister of George the Fourth's favorite, Beau Brummel, whose daughters were good friends of ours; and on the other Belzoni, the Egyptian traveller, and his wife, with whom we were well acquainted. The wall that separated our gardens was upwards of six feet high,—it reached above my father's head, who was full six feet tall,—but our colossal friend, the Italian, looked down upon us over it quite easily, his large handsome face showing well above it, down to his magnificent auburn beard, which in those less hirsute days than these he seldom exhibited, except in the privacy of his own back garden, where he used occasionally to display it, to our immense delight and astonishment. Great, too, was our satisfaction in visiting Madame Belzoni, who used to receive us in rooms full of strange spoils, brought back by herself and her husband from the East; she sometimes smoked a long Turkish pipe, and generally wore a dark blue sort of caftan, with a white turban on her head. Another of our

neighbors here was Latour, the musical composer, to whom, though he was personally good-natured and kind to me, I owe a grudge, for the sake of his "Music for Young Persons," and only regret that he was not our next-door neighbor, when he would have execrated his own "O Dolce Concerto," and "Sul Margine d'un Rio," and all his innumerable progeny of variations for two hands and four hands, as heartily as I did. I do not know whether it was instigated by his advice or not that my mother at this time made me take lessons of a certain Mr. Laugier, who received pupils at his own house, near Russell Square, and taught them thorough-bass and counterpoint, and the science of musical composition. I attended his classes for some time, and still possess books full of the grammar of music, as profound and difficult a study, almost, as the grammar of language. But I think I was too young to derive much benefit from so severe a science, and in spite of my books full of musical "parsing," so to speak, declensions of chords, and conjugations of scales, I do not think I learned much from Mr. Laugier, and, never having followed up this beginning of the real study of music, my knowledge of it has been only of that empirical and contemptible sort which goes no further than the end of boarding-school young ladies' fingers, and sometimes, at any rate, amounts to tolerably skilful and accurate execution; a result I never attained, in spite of Mr. Laugier's thorough-bass and a wicked invention called a chiroplast, for which, I think, he took out a patent, and for which I suppose all luckless girls compelled to practice with it thought he ought to have taken out a halter. It was a brass rod made to screw across the keys, on which were *strung*, like beads, two brass frames for the hands, with separate little cells for the fingers, these being secured to the brass rod precisely at the part of the instrument on which certain exercises were to be executed. Another brass rod was made to pass under the wrist in order to maintain it also in its proper position, and thus incarcerated, the miserable little hands performed their daily, dreary monotony of musical exercise, with, I imagine, really no benefit at all from the irksome constraint of this horrid machine, that could not have been imparted quite as well, if not better, by a careful teacher. I had, however, no teacher at this time but my aunt Dall, and I suppose the chiroplast may have saved her some trouble, by insuring that my practising, which she could not always superintend, should not be merely a process of acquiring innumerable bad habits for the exercise of the patience of future teachers.

My aunt at this time directed all my lessons, as well as the small beginnings of my sister's education. My brother John was at Clapham with Mr. Richardson, who was then compiling his excellent dictionary, in which labor he employed the assistance of such of his pupils as showed themselves intelligent enough for the occupation; and I have no doubt that to this beginning of philological study my brother owed his subsequent predilection for and addiction to the science of language. My youngest brother, Henry, went to a day-school in the neighborhood.

All children's amusements are more or less dramatic, and a theatre is a favorite resource in most playrooms, and, naturally enough, held an important place in ours. The printed sheets of small figures, representing all the characters of certain popular pieces, which we colored, and pasted on card-board and cut out, and then, by dint of long slips of wood with a slit at one end, into which their feet were inserted, moved on and off our small stage; the coloring of the scenery; and all the arrangement and conduct of the pieces we represented, gave us endless employment and amusement. My brother John was always manager and spokesman in these performances, and when we had fitted up our theatre with a *real* blue silk curtain that would roll up, and a *real* set of foot-lights that would burn, and when he contrived, with some resin and brimstone and salt put in a cup and set on fire, to produce a diabolical sputter and flare and bad smell, significant of the blowing up of the mill in "The Miller and his Men," great was our exultation. This piece and "Blue Beard" were our "battle horses," to which we afterwards added a lugubrious melodrama called "The Gypsy's Curse" (it had nothing whatever to do with "Guy Mannering"), of which I remember nothing but some awful doggerel, beginning with—

"May thy path be still in sorrow,
May thy dark night know no morrow,"

which used to make my blood curdle with fright.

About this time I was taken for the first time to a real play, and it was to that paradise of juvenile spectators, Astley's, where we saw a Highland horror called "Meg Murdoch, or the Mountain Hag," and a mythological after-piece called "Hyppolita, Queen of the Amazons," in which young ladies in very short and shining tunics, with burnished breastplates, helmets, spears, and shields, performed sundry warlike evolutions round her Majesty Hyppolita, who was mounted on a snow-white *live* charger: in the heat of action some of these fair warriors went so far as to die, which martial heroism left an impression on my imagination so deep and delightful as to have proved hitherto indelible.

At length we determined ourselves to enact something worthy of notice and approbation, and "Amoroso, King of Little Britain," was selected by my brother John, our guide and leader in all matters of taste, for the purpose. "Chrononhotonthologos" had been spoken of, but our youngest performer, my sister, was barely seven years old, and I doubt if any of us (but our manager) could have mastered the mere names of that famous burlesque. Moreover, I think, in the piece we chose there were only four principal characters, and we contrived to speak the words, and even sing the songs, so much to our own satisfaction, that we thought we might aspire to the honor of a hearing from our elders and betters. So we produced our play before my father and mother and some of their friends, who had good right (whatever their inclination might have been) to be critical, for among them were Mr. and Mrs. Liston (the Amoroso and Coquetinda of the real stage), Mr. and Mrs. Mathews, and Charles Young, all intimate friends of my parents, whose children were our playmates, and coadjutors in our performance.

For Charles Matthews I have always retained a kindly regard for auld lang syne's sake, though I hardly ever met him after he went on the stage. He was well educated, and extremely clever and accomplished, and I could not help regretting that his various acquirements and many advantages for the career of an architect, for which his father destined him, should be thrown away; though it was quite evident that he followed not only the strong bent of his inclination, but the instinct of the dramatic genius which he inherited from his eccentric and most original father, when he adopted the profession of the stage, where, in his own day, he has been unrivaled in the sparkling vivacity of his performance of a whole range of parts in which nobody has approached the finish, refinement, and spirit of his acting. Moreover, his whole demeanor, carriage, and manner were so essentially those of a gentleman, that the broadest farce never betrayed him into either coarseness or vulgarity; and the comedy he acted, though often the lightest of the light, was never anything in its graceful propriety but high comedy. No member of the French theatre was ever at once a more finished and a more delightfully amusing and *natural* actor.

Liston's son went into the army when he grew up, and I lost sight of him.

With the Rev. Julian Young, son of my dear old friend Charles Young, I always remained upon the most friendly terms, meeting him with cordial pleasure whenever my repeated returns to England brought us together, and allowed us to renew the amicable relations that always subsisted between us.

I remember another family friend of ours at this time, a worthy old merchant of the name of Mitchell, who was my brother John's godfather, and to whose sombre, handsome city house I was taken once or twice to dinner. He was at one time very rich, but lost all his fortune in some untoward speculation, and he used to come and pay us long, sad, silent visits, the friendly taciturnity of which I always compassionately attributed to that circumstance, and wished that he had not lost the use of his tongue as well as his money.

While we were living at Craven Hill, my father's sister, Mrs. Whitelock, came to live with us for some time. She was a very worthy but exceedingly ridiculous woman, in whom the strong peculiarities of her family were so exaggerated, that she really seemed like a living parody or caricature of all the Kembles.

She was a larger and taller woman than Mrs. Siddons, and had a fine, commanding figure at the time I am speaking of, when she was quite an elderly person. She was like her brother Stephen in face, with handsome features, too large and strongly marked for a woman, light gray eyes, and a light auburn wig, which, I presume, represented the color of her previous hair, and which, together with the tall cap that surmounted it, was always more or less on one side. She had the deep, sonorous voice and extremely distinct utterance of her family, and an extraordinary vehemence of gesture and expression quite unlike their quiet dignity and reserve of manner, and which made her conversation like that of people in old plays and novels; for she would slap her thigh in emphatic enforcement of her statements (which were apt to be upon an incredibly large scale), not unfrequently prefacing them with the exclamation, "I declare to God!" or "I wish I may die!" all which seemed to us very extraordinary, and combined with her large size and loud voice used occasionally to cause us some dismay. My father used to call her Queen Bess (her name was Elizabeth), declaring that her manners were like those of that royal *un*-gentlewoman. But she was a simple-hearted, sweet-tempered woman, whose harmless peculiarities did not prevent us all being fond of her.

She had a great taste and some talent for drawing, which she cultivated with a devotion and industry unusual in so old a person. I still possess a miniature copy she made of Clarke's life-size picture of my father as Cromwell, which is not without merit.

She was extremely fond of cards, and taught us to play the (even then) old-fashioned game of quadrille, which my mother, who also liked cards, and was a very good whist player, said had more variety in it than any modern game.

Mrs. Whitelock had been for a number of years in the United States, of which (then comparatively little known) part of the world she used to tell us stories that, from her characteristic exaggeration, we always received with extreme incredulity; but my own experience, subsequent by many years to hers, has corroborated her marvelous histories of flights of birds that almost darkened the sun (*i.e.* threw a passing shadow as of a cloud upon the ground), and roads with ruts and mud-holes into which one's carriage sank up to the axle-tree.

She used to tell us anecdotes of General Washington, to whom she had been presented and had often seen (his favorite bespeak was always "The School for Scandal"); and of Talleyrand, whom she also had often met, and invariably called Prince *Tallierande*. She was once terrified by being followed at evening, in the streets of Philadelphia, by a red Indian savage, an adventure which has many times recurred to my mind while traversing at all hours and in all directions the streets of that most peaceful Quaker city, distant now by more than a thousand miles from the nearest red Indian savage. Congress was sitting in Philadelphia at that time; it was virtually the capital of the newly made United States, and Mrs. Whitelock held an agreeable and respectable position both in private and in public. I have been assured by persons as well qualified to be critics as Judge Story, Chief-Justice Kent, and Judge Hopkinson (Moore's friend), that she was an actress of considerable ability. Perhaps she was; her Kemble name, face, figure, and voice no doubt helped her to produce a certain effect on the stage; but she must have been a very imperfectly educated woman. Nothing could be droller than to see her with Mrs. Siddons, of whom she looked like a clumsy, badly finished, fair imitation. Her vehement gestures and violent objurgations contrasted comically with her sister's majestic stillness of manner; and when occasionally Mrs. Siddons would interrupt her with, "Elizabeth, your wig is on one side," and the other replied, "Oh, is it?" and giving the offending head-gear a shove put it quite as crooked in the other direction, and proceeded with her discourse, Melpomene herself used to have recourse to her snuff-box to hide the dawning smile on her face.

I imagine that my education must have been making but little progress during the last year of my residence at Craven Hill. I had no masters, and my aunt Dall could ill supply the want of other teachers; moreover, I was extremely troublesome and unmanageable, and had become a tragically desperate young person, as my determination to poison my sister, in revenge for some punishment which I conceived had been unjustly inflicted upon me, will sufficiently prove. I had been warned

not to eat privet berries, as they were poisonous, and under the above provocation it occurred to me that if I strewed some on the ground my sister might find and eat them, which would insure her going straight to heaven, and no doubt seriously annoy my father and mother. How much of all this was a lingering desire for the distinction of a public execution of guillotine (the awful glory of which still survived in my memory), how much dregs of "Gypsy Curses" and "Mountain Hags," and how much the passionate love of exciting a sensation and producing an effect, common to children, servants, and most uneducated people, I know not. I never did poison my sister, and satisfied my desire of vengeance by myself informing my aunt of my contemplated crime, the fulfillment of which was not, I suppose, much apprehended by my family, as no measures were taken to remove myself, my sister, or the privet bush from each other's neighborhood.

CHAPTER III

A quite unpremeditated inspiration which occurred to me upon being again offended—to run away—probably alarmed my parents more than my sororicidal projects, and I think determined them upon carrying out a plan which had been talked of for some time, of my being sent again to school; which plan ran a narrow risk of being defeated by my own attempted escape from home. One day, when my father and mother were both in London, I had started for a walk with my aunt and sister; when only a few yards from home, I made an impertinent reply to some reproof I received, and my aunt bade me turn back and go home, declining my company for the rest of the walk. She proceeded at a brisk pace on her way with my sister, nothing doubting that, when left alone, I would retrace my steps to our house; but I stood still and watched her out of sight, and then revolved in my own mind the proper course to pursue.

At first it appeared to me that it would be judicious, under such smarting injuries as mine, to throw myself into a certain pond which was in the meadow where I stood (my remedies had always rather an extreme tendency); but it was thickly coated with green slime studded with frogs' heads, and looked uninviting. After contemplating it for a moment, I changed my opinion as to the expediency of getting under that surface, and walked resolutely off towards London; not with any idea of seeking my father and mother, but simply with that goal in view, as the end of my walk.

Half-way thither, however, I became tired, and hot, and hungry, and perhaps a little daunted by my own undertaking. I have said that between Craven Hill and Tyburn turnpike there then was only a stretch of open fields, with a few cottages scattered over them. In one of these lived a poor woman who was sometimes employed to do needlework for us, and who, I was sure, would give me a bit of bread and butter, and let me rest; so I applied to her for this assistance. Great was the worthy woman's amazement when I told her that I was alone, on my way to London; greater still, probably, when I informed her that my intention was to apply for an engagement at one of the theatres, assuring her that nobody with talent need ever want for bread. She very wisely refrained from discussing my projects, but, seeing that I was tired, persuaded me to lie down in her little bedroom and rest before pursuing my way to town. The weather was oppressively hot, and having lain down on her bed, I fell fast asleep. I know not for how long, but I was awakened by the sudden raising of the latch of the house door, and the voice of my aunt Dall inquiring of my friendly hostess if she had seen or heard anything of me.

I sat up breathless on the bed, listening, and looking round the room perceived another door than the one by which I had entered it, which would probably have given me egress to the open fields again, and secured my escape; but before I could slip down from the bed and resume my shoes, and take advantage of this exit, my aunt and poor Mrs. Taylor entered the room, and I was ignominiously captured and taken home; I expiated my offence by a week of bread and water, and daily solitary confinement in a sort of tool-house in the garden, where my only occupation was meditation, the "clear-obscure" that reigned in my prison admitting of no other.

This was not cheerful, but I endeavored to make it appear as little the reverse as possible, by invariably singing at the top of my voice whenever I heard footsteps on the gravel walk near my place of confinement.

Finally I was released, and was guilty of no further outrage before my departure for Paris, whither I went with my mother and Mrs. Charles Matthews at the end of the summer.

We travelled in the *malle poste*, and I remember but one incident connected with our journey. Some great nobleman in Paris was about to give a grand banquet, and the *conducteur* of our vehicle had been prevailed upon to bring up the fish for the occasion in large hampers on our carriage, which was then the most rapid public conveyance on the road between the coast and the capital. The heat was intense, and the smell of our "luggage" intolerable. My mother complained and remonstrated in vain; the name of the important personage who was to entertain his guests with this delectable fish

was considered an all-sufficient reply. At length the contents of the baskets began literally to ooze out of them and stream down the sides of the carriage; my mother threatening an appeal to the authorities at the *bureau de poste*, and finally we got rid of our pestiferous load.

I was now placed in a school in the Rue d'Angoulême, Champs Élysées; a handsome house, formerly somebody's private hotel, with *porte cochère*, *cour d'honneur*, a small garden beyond, and large, lofty ground-floor apartments opening with glass doors upon them. The name of the lady at the head of this establishment was Rowden; she had kept a school for several years in Hans Place, London, and among her former pupils had had the charge of Miss Mary Russell Mitford, and that clever but most eccentric personage, Lady Caroline Lamb. The former I knew slightly, years after, when she came to London and was often in friendly communication with my father, then manager of Covent Garden, upon the subject of the introduction on the stage of her tragedy of the "Foscari."

The play of "Rienzi," in which Miss Mitford achieved the manly triumph of a really successful historical tragedy, is, of course, her principal and most important claim to fame, though the pretty collection of rural sketches, redolent of country freshness and fragrance, called "Our Village," precursor, in some sort, of Mrs. Gaskell's incomparable "Cranford," is, I think, the most popular of Miss Mitford's works.

She herself has always a peculiar honor in my mind, from the exemplary devotion of her whole life to her father, for whom her dutiful and tender affection always seemed to me to fulfil the almost religious idea conveyed by the old-fashioned, half-heathen phrase of "filial piety."

Lady Caroline Lamb I never saw, but from friends of mine who were well acquainted with her I have heard manifold instances of her extraordinary character and conduct. I remember my friend Mr. Harness telling me that, dancing with him one night at a great ball, she had suddenly amazed him by the challenge: "Gueth how many pairth of thtockingth I have on." (Her ladyship lisped, and her particular graciousness to Mr. Harness was the result of Lord Byron's school intimacy with and regard for him.) Finding her partner quite unequal to the piece of divination proposed to him, she put forth a very pretty little foot, from which she lifted the petticoat ankle high, lisping out, "Thixth."

I remember my mother telling me of my father and herself meeting Mr. and Lady Caroline Lamb at a dinner at Lord Holland's, in Paris, when accidentally the expected arrival of Lord Byron was mentioned. Mr. Lamb had just named the next day as the one fixed for their departure; but Lady Caroline immediately announced her intention of prolonging her stay, which created what would be called in the French chambers "sensation."

When the party broke up, my father and mother, who occupied apartments in the same hotel as the Lambs,—Meurice's,—were driven into the court-yard just as Lady Caroline's carriage had drawn up before the staircase leading to her rooms, which were immediately opposite those of my father and mother. A *ruisseau* or gutter ran round the court-yard, and intervened between the carriage step and the door of the vestibule, and Mr. Lamb, taking Lady Caroline, as she alighted, in his arms (she had a very pretty, slight, graceful figure), gallantly lifted her over the wet stones; which act of conjugal courtesy elicited admiring approval from my mother, and from my father a growl to the effect, "If you were *my* wife I'd put your ladyship *in* the gutter," justified perhaps by their observation of what followed. My mother's sitting-room faced that of Lady Caroline, and before lights were brought into it she and my father had the full benefit of a curious scene in the room of their opposite neighbors, who seemed quite unmindful that their apartment being lighted and the curtains not drawn, they were, as regarded the opposite wing of the building, a spectacle for gods and men.

Mr. Lamb on entering the room sat down on the sofa, and his wife perched herself on the elbow of it with her arm round his neck, which engaging attitude she presently exchanged for a still more persuasive one, by kneeling at his feet; but upon his getting up, the lively lady did so also, and in a moment began flying round the room, seizing and flinging on the floor cups, saucers, plates,—the whole *cabaret*,—vases, candlesticks, her poor husband pursuing and attempting to restrain his mad moiety, in the midst of which extraordinary scene the curtains were abruptly closed, and the

domestic drama finished behind them, leaving no doubt, however, in my father's and mother's minds that the question of Lady Caroline's prolonged stay till Lord Byron's arrival in Paris had caused the disturbance they had witnessed.

I never read "Glenarvon," in which, I believe, Lady Caroline is supposed to have intended to represent her idol, Lord Byron, and the only composition of hers with which I am acquainted is the pretty song of "Waters of Elle," of which I think she also wrote the air. She was undoubtedly very clever, in spite of her silliness, and possessed that sort of attraction, often as powerful as unaccountable, which belongs sometimes to women so little distinguished by great personal beauty, that they have suggested the French observation that "ce sont les femmes laides qui font les grandes passions." The European women fascinating *par excellence* are the Poles; and a celebrated enchantress of that charming and fantastic race of sirens, the Countess Delphine Potocka, always reminded me of Lady Caroline Lamb, in the descriptions given of her by her adorers.

With Mr. Lamb I never was acquainted till long after Lady Caroline's death—after I came out on the stage, when he was Lord Melbourne, and Prime Minister of England. I was a very young person, and though I often met him in society, and he took amiable and kindly notice of me, our intercourse was, of course, a mere occasional condescension on his part.

He was exceedingly handsome, with a fine person, verging towards the portly, and a sweet countenance, more expressive of refined, easy, careless good-humor, than almost any face I ever saw. His beauty was of too well born and well bred a type to be unpleasantly sensual; but his whole face, person, expression, and manner conveyed the idea of a pleasure-loving nature, habitually self-indulgent, and indulgent to others. He was my *beau ideal* of an Epicurean philosopher (supposing it possible that an Epicurean philosopher could have consented to be Prime Minister of England), and I confess to having read with unbounded astonishment the statement in the "Greville Memoirs," that this apparent prince of *poco curanti* had taken the pains to make himself a profound Hebrew scholar.

I retain one very vivid impression of that most charming of debonair noblemen, Lord Melbourne. I had the honor of dining at his house once, with the beautiful, highly gifted, and unfortunate woman with whom his relations afterwards became subject of such cruel public scandal; and after dinner I sat for some time opposite a large, crimson-covered ottoman, on which Lord Melbourne reclined, surrounded by those three enchanting Sheridan sisters, Mrs. Norton, Mrs. Blackwood (afterwards Lady Dufferin), and Lady St. Maur (afterwards Duchess of Somerset, and always Queen of Beauty). A more remarkable collection of comely creatures, I think, could hardly be seen, and taking into consideration the high rank, eminent position, and intellectual distinction of the four persons who formed that beautiful group, it certainly was a picture to remain impressed upon one's memory.

To return to my school-mistress, Mrs. Rowden; she was herself an authoress, and had published a poem dedicated to Lady Bessborough (Lady Caroline Lamb's mother), the title of which was "The pleasures of friendship" (hope, memory, and imagination were all bespoken), of which I remember only the two opening lines—

"Visions of early youth, ere yet ye fade,
Let my light pen arrest your fleeting shade."

Mrs. Rowden, during the period of her school-keeping in London, was an ardent admirer of the stage in general and of my uncle John in particular, of whom the mezzotint engraving as Coriolanus, from Lawrence's picture, adorned her drawing-room in the Rue d'Angoulême, where, however, the nature and objects of her enthusiasm had undergone a considerable change: for when I was placed under her charge, theatres and things theatrical had given place in her esteem to churches and things clerical; her excitements and entertainments were Bible-meetings, prayer-meetings, and private preachings and teachings of religion. She was what was then termed Methodistical, what

would now be designated as very Low Church. We were taken every Sunday either to the chapel of the embassy or to the Église de l'Oratoire (French Protestant worship), to two and sometimes to three services; and certainly Sunday was no day of rest to us, as we were required to write down from memory the sermons we had heard in the course of the day, and read them aloud at our evening devotional gathering. Some of us had a robust power of attention and retention, and managed these reproductions with tolerable fidelity. Others contrived to bring forth such a version of what they had heard as closely resembled the last edition of the subject-matter of a prolonged game of Russian scandal. Sometimes, upon an appeal to mercy and a solemn protest that we had paid the utmost attention and *couldn't* remember a single sentence of the Christian exhortation we had heard, we were allowed to choose a text and compose an original sermon of our own; and I think a good-sized volume might have been made of homilies of my composition, indited under these circumstances for myself and my companions. I have always had rather an inclination for preaching, of which these exercises were perhaps the origin, and it is but a few years ago that I received at Saint Leonard's a visit from a tottering, feeble old lady of near seventy, whose name, unheard since, carried me back to my Paris school-days, and who, among other memories evoked to recall herself to my recollection, said, "Oh, don't you remember how good-natured you were in writing such nice sermons for me when I never could write down what I had heard at church?" Her particular share in these intellectual benefits conferred by me I did not remember, but I remembered well and gratefully the sweet, silver-toned voice of her sister, refreshing the arid atmosphere of our dreary Sunday evenings with Handel's holy music. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and "He shall feed his Flock," which I heard for the first time from that gentle schoolmate of mine, recall her meek, tranquil face and, liquid thread of delicate soprano voice, even through the glorious associations of Jenny Lind's inspired utterance of those divine songs. These ladies were daughters of a high dignitary of the English Church, which made my sermon-writing for their succor rather comical. Besides these Sunday exercises, we were frequently taken to week-day services at the Oratoire to hear some special preacher of celebrity, on which occasions of devout dissipation Mrs. Rowden always appeared in the highest state of elation, and generally received distinguished notice from the clerical hero of the evening.

I remember accompanying her to hear Mr. Lewis Wade, a celebrated missionary preacher, who had been to Syria and the Holy Land, and brought thence observations on subjects sacred and profane that made his discourses peculiarly interesting and edifying.

I was also taken to hear a much more impressive preacher, Mr. César Malan, of Geneva, who addressed a small and select audience of very distinguished persons, in a magnificent *salon* in some great private house, where every body sat on satin and gilded *fauteuils* to receive his admonitions, all which produced a great effect on my mind—not, however, I think, altogether religious; but the sermon I heard, and the striking aspect of the eloquent person who delivered it, left a strong and long impression on my memory. It was the first fine preaching I ever heard, and though I was undoubtedly too young to appreciate it duly, I was, nevertheless, deeply affected by it, and it gave me my earliest experience of that dangerous thing, emotional religion, or, to speak more properly, religious excitement.

The Unitarians of the United States have in my time possessed a number of preachers of most remarkable excellence; Dr. Channing, Dr. Dewey, Dr. Bellows, my own venerable and dear pastor, Dr. Furness, Dr. Follen, William and Henry Ware, being all men of extraordinary powers of eloquence. At home I have heard Frederick Maurice and Dean Stanley, but the most impressive preaching I ever heard in England was still from a Unitarian pulpit; James Martineau, I think, surpassed all the very remarkable men I have named in the wonderful beauty and power, spirituality and solemnity, of his sacred teaching. Frederick Robertson, to my infinite loss and sorrow, I never heard, having been deterred from going to hear him by his reputation of a "fashionable preacher;" he, better than any one, would have understood my repugnance to that species of religious instructor.

Better, in my judgment, than these occasional appeals to our feelings and imaginations under Mrs. Rowden's influence, was the constant *use* of the Bible among us. I cannot call the reading and committing to memory of the Scriptures, as we performed those duties, by the serious name of study. But the Bible was learnt by heart in certain portions and recited before breakfast every morning, and read aloud before bedtime every evening by us; and though the practice may be open to some objections, I think they hardly outweigh the benefit bestowed upon young minds by early familiar acquaintance with the highest themes, the holiest thoughts, and the noblest words the world possesses or ever will possess. To me my intimate knowledge of the Bible has always seemed the greatest benefit I derived from my school training.

Of the secular portion of the education we received, the French lady who was Mrs. Rowden's partner directed the principal part. Our lessons of geography, grammar, history, arithmetic, and mythology (of which latter subject I suspect we had a much more thorough knowledge than is at all usual with young English girls) were conducted by her.

These studies were all pursued in French, already familiar to me as the vehicle of my elementary acquirements at Boulogne; and this soon became the language in which I habitually wrote, spoke, and thought, to the almost entire neglect of my native tongue, of which I never thoroughly studied the grammar till I was between fifteen and sixteen, when, on my presenting, in a glow of vanity, some verses of mine to my father, he said, with his blandest smile, after reading them, "Very well, very pretty indeed! My dear, don't you think, before you write poetry, you had better learn grammar?" a suggestion which sent me crestfallen to a diligent study of Lindley Murray. But grammar is perfectly uncongenial matter to me, which my mind absolutely refuses to assimilate. I have learned Latin, English, French, Italian, and German grammar, and do not know a single rule of the construction of any language whatever. More over, to the present day, my early familiar use of French produces uncertainty in my mind as to the spelling of all words that take a double consonant in French and only one in English, as apartment, enemy, etc.

The men of my family—that is, my uncle John, my father, and my eldest brother—were all philologists, and extremely fond of the study of language. Grammar was favorite light reading, and the philosophy which lies at the root of human speech a frequent subject of discussion and research with them; but they none of them spoke foreign languages with ease or fluency. My uncle was a good Latin scholar, and read French, Italian, and Spanish, but spoke none of them; not even the first, in spite of his long residence in French Switzerland. The same was the case with my father, whose delight in the dry bones of language was such that at near seventy he took the greatest pleasure in assiduously studying the Greek grammar. My brother John, who was a learned linguist, and familiar with the modern European languages, spoke none of them well, not even German, though he resided for many years at Hanover, where he was curator of the royal museum and had married a German wife, and had among his most intimate friends and correspondents both the Grimms, Gervinus, and many of the principal literary men of Germany. My sister and myself, on the contrary, had remarkable facility in speaking foreign languages with the accent and tune (if I may use the expression) peculiar to each; a faculty which seems to me less the result of early training and habit, than of some particular construction of ear and throat favorable for receiving and repeating mere sounds; a musical organization and mimetic faculty; a sort of mocking-bird specialty, which I have known possessed in great perfection by persons with whom it was in no way connected with the study, but only with the use of the languages they spoke with such idiomatic ease and grace. Moreover, in my own case, both in Italian and German, though I understand for the most part what I read and what is said in these languages, I have had but little exercise in speaking them, and have been amused to find myself, while travelling, taken for an Italian as well as for a German, simply by dint of the facility with which I imitated the accent of the people I was among, while intrepidly confounding my moods, tenses, genders, and cases in the determination to speak and make myself understood in the language of whatever country I was passing through.

Mademoiselle Descuillès, Mrs. Rowden's partner, was a handsome woman of about thirty, with a full, graceful figure, a pleasant countenance, a great deal of playful vivacity of manner, and very determined and strict notions of discipline. Active, energetic, intelligent, and good-tempered, she was of a capital composition for a governess, the sort of person to manage successfully all her pupils, and become an object of enthusiastic devotion to the elder ones whom she admitted to her companionship.

She almost always accompanied us when we walked, invariably presided in the schoolroom, and very generally her eager figure and pleasant, bright eyes were to be discovered in some corner of the playground, where, from a semi-retirement, seated in her fauteuil with book or needlework in hand, she exercised a quiet but effectual surveillance over her young subjects.

She was the active and efficient partner in the concern, Mrs. Rowden the dignified and representative one. The whole of our course of study and mode of life, with the exception of our religious training, of which I have spoken before, was followed under her direction, and according to the routine of most French schools.

The monastic rule of loud-reading during meals was observed, and l'Abbé Millot's "Universal History," of blessed boring memory, was the dry daily sauce to our diet. On Saturday we always had a half-holiday in the afternoon, and the morning occupations were feminine rather than academic.

Every girl brought into the schoolroom whatever useful needlework, mending or making, her clothes required; and while one read aloud, the others repaired or replenished their wardrobes.

Great was our satisfaction if we could prevail upon Mademoiselle Descuillès herself to take the book in hand and become the "lectrice" of the morning; greater still when we could persuade her, while intent upon her own stitching, to sing to us, which she sometimes did, old-fashioned French songs and ballads, of which I learnt from her and still remember some that I have never since heard, that must have long ago died out of the musical world and left no echo but in my memory. Of two of these I think the words pretty enough to be worth preserving, the one for its naïve simplicity, and the other for the covert irony of its reflection upon female constancy, to which Mademoiselle Descuillès' delivery, with her final melancholy shrug of the shoulders, gave great effect.

LE TROUBADOUR

Un gentil Troubadour
Qui chante et fait la guerre,
Revenait chez son père,
Rêvant à son amour.

Gages de sa valeur,
Suspendus à son écharpe,
Son épée, et sa harpe,
Se croisaient sur son cœur.

Il rencontre en chemin
Pelerine jolie,
Qui voyage, et qui prie,
Un rosaire à la main.

Colerette, à long plis,
Cachait sa fine taille,
Un grand chapeau de paille,
Ombrait son teint de lys.

"O gentil Troubadour,
Si tu reviens fidèle,
Chante un couplet pour celle
Qui bénit ton retour."

"Pardonne à mon refus
Pelerine jolie!
Sans avoir vu ma mie,
Je ne chanterai plus."

"Et ne la vois-tu pas?
O Troubadour fidèle!
Regarde moi—c'est elle!
Ouvre lui donc tes bras!

"Craignant pour notre amour,
J'allais en pelerine,
A la Vierge divine
Prier pour ton retour!"

Près des tendres amans
S'élève une chapelle,
L'Ermite qu'on appelle,
Bénit leurs doux sermens

Venez en ce saint lieu,
Amans du voisinage,
Faire un pelerinage
A la Mère de Dieu!

The other ballad, though equally an illustration of the days of chivalry, was written in a spirit of caustic contempt for the fair sex, which suggests the bitterness of the bard's personal experience:—

LE CHEVALIER ERRANT

Dans un vieux château de l'Andalousie,
Au temps où l'amour se montrait constant,
Où Beauté, Valeur, et Galanterie
Guidait aux combats un fidèle amant,
Un beau chevalier un soir se présente,
Visière baissée, et la lance en main;
Il vient demander si sa douce amante
N'est pas (par hasard) chez le châtelain.

"Noble chevalier! quelle est votre amie?"
Demande à son tour le vieux châtelain.
"Ah! de fleurs d'amour c'est la plus jolie

Elle a teint de rose, et peau de satin,
Elle a de beaux yeux, dont le doux langage
Porte en votre cœur vif enchantment,
Elle a tout enfin—elle est belle,—et sage!"
"Pauvre chevalier! chercherez longtemps!

"Guidez de mes pas l'ardeur incertain,
Où dois-je chercher ce que j'ai perdu?"
"Mon fils, votre soit, hélas! s'en fait peine,
Ce que vous cherchez ne se trouve plus."
"Poursuivez, pourtant, votre long voyage,
Et si vouz trouvez un pareil trésor—
Ne le perdez plus! Adieu, bon voyage!"
L'amant repartit—mais, il cherche encore.

The air of the first of these songs was a very simple and charming little melody, which my sister, having learnt it from me, adapted to some English words. The other was an extremely favorite *vaudeville* air, repeated constantly in the half-singing dialogue of some of those popular pieces.

Our Saturday sewing class was a capital institution, which made most of us expert needle-women, developed in some the peculiarly lady-like accomplishment of working exquisitely, and gave to all the useful knowledge of how to make and mend our own clothes. When I left school I could make my own dresses, and was a proficient in marking and darning.

My school-fellows were almost all English, and, I suppose, with one exception, were young girls of average character and capacity. Elizabeth P–, a young person from the west of England, was the only remarkable one among them. She was strikingly handsome, both in face and figure, and endowed with very uncommon abilities. She was several years older than myself, and an object of my unbounded school-girl heroine worship. A daughter of Kiallmark, the musical composer, was also eminent among us for her great beauty, and always seemed to my girlish fancy what Mary Queen of Scots must have looked like in her youth.

Besides pupils, Mrs. Rowden received a small number of parlor boarders, who joined only in some of the lessons; indeed, some of them appeared to fulfil no purpose of education whatever by their residence with her. There were a Madame and Mademoiselle de –, the latter of whom was supposed, I believe, to imbibe English in our atmosphere. She bore a well-known noble French name, and was once visited, to the immense excitement of all "ces demoiselles," by a brother, in the uniform of the Royal Gardes du Corps, whose looks were reported (I think rather mythologically) to be as superb as his attire. In which case he must have been strikingly unlike his sister, who was one of the ugliest women I ever saw; with a disproportionately large and ill-shaped nose and mouth, and a terrible eruption all over her face. She had, however, an extremely beautiful figure, exquisite hands and feet, skin as white as snow, and magnificent hair and eyes; in spite of which numerous advantages, she was almost repulsively plain: it really seemed as if she had been the victim of a spell, to have so beautiful a body, and so all but hideous a face. Besides these French ladies, there was a Miss McC–, a very delicate, elegant-looking Irishwoman, and a Miss –, who, in spite of her noble name, was a coarse and inelegant, but very handsome Englishwoman. In general, these ladies had nothing to do with us; they had privileged places at table, formed Mrs. Rowden's evening circle in the drawing-room, and led (except at meals) a life of dignified separation from the scholars.

I remember but two French girls in our whole company: the one was a Mademoiselle Adèle de –, whose father, a fanatical Anglomane, wrote a ridiculous book about England.

The other French pupil I ought not to have called a companion, or said that I remembered, for in truth I remember nothing but her funeral. She died soon after I joined the school, and was buried

in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, near the tomb of Abelard and Eloïse, with rather a theatrical sort of ceremony. She was followed to her grave by the whole school, dressed in white, and wearing long white veils fastened round our heads with white fillets. On each side of the bier walked three young girls, pall-bearers, in the same maiden mourning, holding in one hand long streamers of broad white ribbon attached to the bier, and in the other several white narcissus blossoms.

The ghostly train and the picturesque mediæval monument, close to which we paused and clustered to deposit the dead girl in her early resting-place, formed a striking picture that haunted me for a long time, and which the smell and sight of the chalk-white narcissus blossom invariably recalls to me.

Meantime, the poetical studies, or rather indulgencies of home, had ceased. No sonorous sounds of Milton's mighty music ever delighted my ears, and for my almost daily bread of Scott's romantic epics I hungered and thirsted in vain, with such intense desire, that I at length undertook to write out "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" and "Marmion" from memory, so as not absolutely to lose my possession of them. This task I achieved to a very considerable extent, and found the stirring, chivalrous stories, and spirited, picturesque verse, a treasure of refreshment, when all my poetical diet consisted of "L'Anthologie française à l'Usage des Demoiselles," and Voltaire's "Henriade," which I was compelled to learn by heart, and with the opening lines of which I more than once startled the whole dormitory at midnight, sitting suddenly up in my bed, and from the midst of perpetual slumbers loudly proclaiming—

"Je chante ce héros qui regna sur la France,
Et par droit de conquête, et par droit de naissance."

More exciting reading was Madame Cottin's "Mathilde," of which I now got hold for the first time, and devoured with delight, finishing it one evening just before we were called to prayers, so that I wept bitterly during my devotions, partly for the Norman princess and her Saracen lover, and partly from remorse at my own sinfulness in not being able to banish them from my thoughts while on my knees and saying my prayers.

But, to be sure, that baptism in the desert, with the only drop of water they had to drink, seemed to me the very acme of religious fervor and sacred self-sacrifice. I wonder what I should think of the book were I to read it now, which Heaven forefend! The really powerful impression made upon my imagination and feelings at this period, however, was by my first reading of Lord Byron's poetry. The day on which I received that revelation of the power of thought and language remained memorable to me for many a day after.

I had occasionally received invitations from Mrs. Rowden to take tea in the drawing-room with the lady parlor boarders, when my week's report for "bonne conduite" had been tolerably satisfactory. One evening when I had received this honorable distinction, and was sitting in sleepy solemnity on the sofa, opposite my uncle John's black figure in "Coriolanus," which seemed to grow alternately smaller and larger as my eyelids slowly drew themselves together and suddenly opened wide, with a startled consciousness of unworthy drowsiness, Miss H–, who was sitting beside me, reading, leaned back and put her book before my face, pointing with her finger to the lines—

"It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard."

It would be impossible to describe the emotion I experienced. I was instantly wide awake, and, quivering with excitement, fastened a grip like steel upon the book, imploring to be allowed to read on. The fear, probably, of some altercation loud enough to excite attention to the subject of her studies (which I rather think would not have been approved of, even for a "parlor boarder") prevented Miss

H– from making the resistance she should have made to my entreaties, and I was allowed to leave the room, carrying with me the dangerous prize, which, however, I did not profit by.

It was bedtime, and the dormitory light burned but while we performed our night toilet, under supervision. The under teacher and the lamp departed together, and I confided to the companion whose bed was next to mine that I had a volume of Lord Byron under my pillow. The emphatic whispered warnings of terror and dismay with which she received this information, her horror at the wickedness of the book (of which of course she knew nothing), her dread of the result of detection for me, and her entreaties, enforced with tears, that I would not keep the terrible volume where it was, at length, combined with my own nervous excitement about it, affected me with such a sympathy of fear that I jumped out of bed and thrust the fatal poems into the bowels of a straw *paillasse* on an empty bed, and returned to my own to remain awake nearly all night. My study of Byron went no further then: the next morning I found it impossible to rescue the book unobserved from its hiding-place, and Miss H–, to whom I confided the secret of it, I suppose took her own time for withdrawing it, and so I then read no more of that wonderful poetry, which, in my after days of familiar acquaintance with it, always affected me like an evil potion taken into my blood. The small, sweet draught which I sipped in that sleepy school-salon atmosphere remained indelibly impressed upon my memory, insomuch that when, during the last year of my stay in Paris, the news of my uncle John's death at Lausanne, and that of Lord Byron at Missolonghi, was communicated to me, my passionate regret was for the great poet, of whose writings I knew but twenty lines, and not for my own celebrated relation, of whom, indeed, I knew but little.

It was undoubtedly well that this dangerous source of excitement should be sealed to me as long as possible; but I do not think that the works of imagination to which I was allowed free access were of a specially wholesome or even harmless tendency. The false morality and attitudinizing sentiment of such books as "Les Contes à ma Fille," and Madame de Genlis' "Veillées du Château," and "Adèle et Théodore," were rubbish, if not poison. The novels of Florian were genuine and simple romances, less mischievous, I incline to think, upon the whole, than the educational Countess's mock moral sentimentality; but Chateaubriand's "Atala et Chactas," with its picturesque pathos, and his powerful classical novel of "Les Martyrs," were certainly unfit reading for young girls of excitable feelings and wild imaginations, in spite of the religious element which I supposed was considered their recommendation.

One great intellectual good fortune befell me at this time, and that was reading "Guy Mannering;" the first of Walter Scott's novels that I ever read—the *dearest*, therefore. I use the word advisedly, for I know no other than one of affection to apply to those enchanting and admirable works, that deserve nothing less than love in return for the healthful delight they have bestowed. To all who ever read them, the first must surely be the best; the beginning of what a series of pure enjoyments, what a prolonged, various, exquisite succession of intellectual surprises and pleasures, amounting for the time almost to happiness.

Scott, like Shakespeare, has given us, for intimate acquaintance, companions, and friends, men and women of such peculiar individual nobleness, grace, wit, wisdom, and humor, that they people our minds and recur to our thoughts with a vividness which makes them seem rather to belong to the past realities of the memory, than to the shadowy visions of the imagination.

It was not long before all this imaginative stimulus bore its legitimate fruit in a premature harvest of crude compositions which I dignified with the name of poetry. Rhymes I wrote without stint or stopping—a perfect deluge of doggerel; what became of it all I know not, but I have an idea that a manuscript volume was sent to my poor parents, as a sample of the poetical promise supposed to be contained in these unripe productions.

Besides the studies pursued by the whole school under the tuition of Mademoiselle Descuillès, we had special masters from whom we took lessons in special branches of knowledge. Of these, by

far the most interesting to me, both in himself and in the subject of his teachings, was my Italian master, Biagioli.

He was a political exile, of about the same date as his remarkable contemporary, Ugo Foscolo; his high forehead, from which his hair fell back in a long grizzled curtain, his wild, melancholy eyes, and the severe and sad expression of his face, impressed me with some awe and much pity. He was at that time one of the latest of the long tribe of commentators on Dante's "Divina Commedia." I do not believe his commentary ranks high among the innumerable similar works on the great Italian poem; but in violence of abuse, and scornful contempt of all but his own glosses, he yields to none of his fellow-laborers in that vast and tangled poetical, historical, biographical, philosophical, theological, and metaphysical jungle.

Dante was his spiritual consolation, his intellectual delight, and indeed his daily bread; for out of that tremendous horn-book he taught me to stammer the divine Italian language, and illustrated every lesson, from the simplest rule of its syntax to its exceedingly complex and artificially constructed prosody, out of the pages of that sublime, grotesque, and altogether wonderful poem. My mother has told me that she attributed her incapacity for relishing Milton to the fact of "Paradise Lost" having been used as a lesson-book out of which she was made to learn English—a circumstance which had made it for ever "Paradise *Lost*" to her. I do not know why or how I escaped a similar misfortune in my school-girl study of Dante, but luckily I did so, probably being carried over the steep and stony way with comparative ease by the help of my teacher's vivid enthusiasm. I have forgotten my Italian grammar, rules of syntax and rules of prosody alike, but I read and re-read the "Divina Commedia" with ever-increasing amazement and admiration. Setting aside all its weightier claims to the high place it holds among the finest achievements of human genius, I know of no poem in any language in which so many single lines and detached passages can be found of equally descriptive force, picturesque beauty, and delightful melody of sound; the latter virtue may lie, perhaps, as much in the instrument itself as in the master hand that touched it—the Italian tongue, the resonance and vibrating power of which is quite as peculiar as its liquid softness.

While the stern face and forlorn figure of poor Biagioli seemed an appropriate accompaniment to my Dantesque studies, nothing could exceed the contrast he presented to another Italian who visited us on alternate days and gave us singing lessons. Blangini, whose extreme popularity as a composer and teacher led him to the dignity of *maestro di capella* to some royal personage, survives only in the recollection of certain elderly drawing-room nightingales who warbled fifty summers ago, and who will still hum bits of his pretty Canzoni and Notturni, "Care pupille," "Per valli per boschi," etc.

Blangini was a *petit maître* as well as a singing master; always attired in the height of the fashion, and in manner and appearance much more of a Frenchman than an Italian. He was mercilessly satirical on the failures of his pupils, to whom (having reduced them, by the most ridiculous imitation of their unfortunate vocal attempts, to an almost inaudible utterance of *pianissimo* pipings) he would exclaim, "Ma per carità! aprite la bocca! che cantate come uccelli che dormano!"

My music master, as distinguished from my singing master, was a worthy old Englishman of the name of Shaw, who played on the violin, and had been at one time leader of the orchestra at Covent Garden Theatre. Indeed, it was to him that John Kemble addressed the joke (famous, because in his mouth unique) upon the subject of a song in the piece of "Richard Cœur de Lion"—I presume an English version of Gietry's popular romance, "O Richard, O mon Roi!" This Mr. Shaw was painfully endeavoring to teach my uncle, who was entirely without musical ear, and whose all but insuperable difficulty consisted in repeating a few bars of the melody supposed to be sung under his prison window by his faithful minstrel, Blondel. "Mr. Kemble, Mr. Kemble, you are murdering the time, sir!" cried the exasperated musician; to which my uncle replied, "Very well, sir, and you are forever beating it!" I do not know whether Mrs. Rowden knew this anecdote, and engaged Mr. Shaw because he had elicited this solitary sally from her quondam idol, John Kemble. The choice, whatever its motive, was not a happy one. The old leader of the theatrical orchestra was himself no

piano-forte player, could no longer see very well nor hear very well, and his principal attention was directed to his own share of the double performance, which he led much after the careless, slap-bang style in which overtures that nobody listened to were performed in his day. It is a very great mistake to let learners play with violin accompaniment until they have thoroughly mastered the piano-forte without it. Fingering, the first of fundamental acquirements, is almost sure to be overlooked by the master, whose attention is not on the hands of his pupil but on his own bow; and the pupil, anxious to keep up with the violin, slurs over rapid passages, scrambles through difficult ones, and acquires a general habit of merely following the violin in time and tune, to the utter disregard of steady, accurate execution. As for me, I derived but one benefit from my old violin accompanier, that of becoming a good timist; in every other respect I received nothing but injury from our joint performances, getting into incorrigible habits of bad fingering, and of making up my bass with unscrupulous simplifications of the harmony, quite content if I came in with my final chords well thumped in time and tune with the emphatic scrape of the violin that ended our lesson. The music my master gave me, too, was more in accordance with his previous practice as leader of a theatrical orchestra, than calculated to make me a steady and scrupulous executant.

We had another master for French and Latin—a clever, ugly, impudent, snuffy, dirty little man, who wrote vaudevilles for the minor theaters, and made love to his pupils. Both these gentlemen were superseded in their offices by other professors before I left school: poor old Pshaw Pshaw, as we used to call him, by the French composer, Adam, unluckily too near the time of my departure for me to profit by his strict and excellent method of instruction; and our vaudevillist was replaced by a gentleman of irreproachable manners, and I should think morals, who always came to our lessons *en toilette*—black frock-coat and immaculate white waistcoat, unexceptionable boots and gloves—by dint of all which he ended by marrying our dear Mademoiselle Descuillès (who, poor thing, was but a woman after all, liable to charming by such methods), and turning her into Madame Champy, under which name she continued to preside over the school after I left it; and Mrs. Rowden relinquished her share in the concern—herself marrying, and becoming Mrs. St. Quintin.

I have spoken of my learning Latin: Elizabeth P–, the object in all things of my emulous admiration, studied it, and I forthwith begged permission to do so likewise; and while this dead-language ambition possessed me, I went so far as to acquire the Greek alphabet; which, however, I used only as a cipher for "my secrets," and abandoned my Latin lore, just as I had exchanged my Phædrus for Cornelius Nepos, not even attaining to the "Arma virumque cano."

Nobody but Miss P– and myself dabbled in these classical depths, but nearly the whole school took dancing lessons, which were given us by two masters, an old and young Mr. Guillet, father and son: the former, a little dapper, dried-up, wizen-faced, beak-nosed old man, with a brown wig that fitted his head and face like a Welsh night-cap; who played the violin and stamped in time, and scolded and made faces at us when we were clumsy and awkward; the latter, a highly colored, beak-nosed young gentleman who squinted fearfully with magnificent black eyes, and had one shining, oily wave of blue-black hair, which, departing from above one ear, traversed his forehead in a smooth sweep, and ended in a frizzly breaker above the other. This gentleman showed us our steps, and gave us the examples of graceful ability of which his father was no longer capable. I remember a very comical scene at one of our dancing lessons, occasioned by the first appearance of a certain Miss –, who entered the room, to the general amazement, in full evening costume—a practice common, I believe, in some English schools where "dressing for dancing" prevails. We only put on light prunella slippers instead of our heavier morning shoes or boots, and a pair of gloves, as adequate preparation. Moreover, the French fashion for full dress, of that day, did not sanction the uncovering of the person usual in English evening attire.

CHAPTER IV

Great was the general surprise of the dancing class when this large, tall, handsome English girl, of about eighteen, entered the room in a rose-colored silk dress, with very low neck and very short sleeves, white satin shoes, and white kid gloves; her long auburn ringlets and ivory shoulders glancing in the ten o'clock morning sunlight with a sort of incongruous splendor, and her whole demeanor that of the most innocent and modest tranquillity.

Mademoiselle Descuillès shut her book to with a snap, and sat bolt upright and immovable, with eyes and mouth wide open. Young Mr. Guillet blushed purple, and old Mr. Guillet scraped a few interjections on his fiddle, and then, putting it down, took a resonant pinch of snuff, by way of restoring his scattered senses.

No observation was made, however, and the lesson proceeded, young Mr. Guillet turning scarlet each time either of his divergent orbs of vision encountered his serenely unconscious, full-dressed pupil; which certainly, considering that he was a member of the Grand Opera *corps de ballet*, was a curious instance of the purely conventional ideas of decency which custom makes one accept.

Whatever want of assiduity I may have betrayed in my other studies, there was no lack of zeal for my dancing lessons. I had a perfect passion for dancing, which long survived my school-days, and I am persuaded that my natural vocation was that of an opera dancer. Far into middle life I never saw beautiful dancing without a rapture of enthusiasm, and used to repeat from memory whole dances after seeing Duvernay or Ellsler, as persons with a good musical ear can repeat the airs of the opera first heard the night before. And I remember, during Ellsler's visit to America, when I had long left off dancing in society, being so transported with her execution of a Spanish dance called "El Jaleo de Xerxes," that I was detected by my cook, who came suddenly upon me in my store-room, in the midst of sugar, rice, tea, coffee, flour, etc., standing on the tips of my toes, with my arms above my head, in one of the attitudes I had most admired in that striking and picturesque performance. The woman withdrew in speechless amazement, and I alighted on my heels, feeling wonderfully foolish. How I thought I never should be able to leave off dancing! And so I thought of riding! and so I thought of singing! and could not imagine what life would be like when I could no more do these things. I was not wrong, perhaps, in thinking it would be difficult to leave them off: I had no conception how easily they would leave me off.

Varying our processions in the Champs Élysées were less formal excursions in the Jardin de Luxembourg; and as the picture-gallery in the palace was opened gratuitously on certain days of the week, we were allowed to wander through it, and form our taste for art among the samples of the modern French school of painting there collected: the pictures of David, Gérard, Girodet, etc., the Dido and Æneas, the Romulus and Tatius with the Sabine women interposing between them, Hippolytus before Theseus and Phædra, Atala being laid in her grave by her lover—compositions with which innumerable engravings have made England familiar—the theatrical conception and hard coloring and execution of which (compensated by masterly grouping and incomparable drawing) did not prevent their striking our uncritical eyes with delighted admiration, and making this expedition to the Luxembourg one of my favorite afternoon recreations. These pictures are now all in the gallery of the Louvre, illustrating the school of art of the consulate and early empire of Bonaparte.

Another favorite promenade of ours, and the one that I preferred even to the hero-worship of the Luxembourg, was the Parc Monceaux. This estate, the private property of the Orleans family, confiscated by Louis Napoleon, and converted into a whole new *quartier* of his new Paris, with splendid streets and houses, and an exquisite public flower-garden in the midst of them, was then a solitary and rather neglected Jardin Anglais (so called) or park, surrounded by high walls and entered by a small wicket, the porter of which required a permit of admission before allowing ingress to the domain. I never remember seeing a single creature but ourselves in the complete seclusion of this

deserted pleasaunce. It had grass and fine trees and winding walks, and little brooks fed by springs that glimmered in cradles of moss-grown, antiquated rock-work; no flowers or semblance of cultivation, but a general air of solitude and wildness that recommended it especially to me, and recalled as little as possible the great, gay city which surrounded it.

My real holidays, however (for I did not go home during the three years I spent in Paris), were the rare and short visits my father paid me while I was at school. At all other seasons Paris might have been Patagonia for any thing I saw or heard or knew of its brilliant gayety and splendid variety. But during those holidays of his and mine, my enjoyment and his were equal, I verily believe, though probably not (as I then imagined) perfect. Pleasant days of joyous *camaraderie* and *flanerie*!—in which every thing, from being new to me, was almost as good as new to my indulgent companion: the Rue de Rivoli, the Tuileries, the Boulevard, the Palais Royal, the *déjeuner à la fourchette* at the Café Riche, the dinner in the small *cabinet* at the Trois Frères, or the Cadran Bleu, and the evening climax of the theater on the Boulevard, where Philippe, or Léontine Fay, or Poitier and Brunet, made a school of dramatic art of the small stages of the Porte St. Martin, the Variétés, and the Vaudeville.

My father's days in Paris, in which he escaped from the hard labor and heavy anxiety of his theatrical life of actor, manager, and proprietor, and I from the dull routine of school-room studies and school-ground recreations, were pleasant days to him, and golden ones in my girlish calendar. I remember seeing, with him, a piece called "Les deux Sergens," a sort of modern Damon and Pythias, in which the heroic friends are two French soldiers, and in which a celebrated actor of the name of Philippe performed the principal part. He was the predecessor and model of Frédéric Lemaître, who (himself infinitely superior to his pupil and copyist, Mr. Fechter, who, by a very feeble imitation of Lemaître's most remarkable parts, has achieved so much reputation) was not to be compared with Philippe in the sort of sentimental melodrama of which "Les deux Sergens" was a specimen.

This M. Philippe was a remarkable man, not only immensely popular for his great professional merit, but so much respected for an order of merit not apt to be enthusiastically admired by Parisians —that of a moral character and decent life—that at his funeral a very serious riot occurred, in consequence of the Archbishop of Paris, according to the received opinion and custom of the day, refusing to allow him to be buried in consecrated ground; the profane player's calling, in the year of grace 1823, or thereabouts, being still one which disqualified its followers for receiving the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore, of course, for claiming Christian burial. The general feeling of the Parisian public, however, was in this case too strong for the ancient anathema of the Church. The Archbishop of Paris was obliged to give way, and the dead body of the worthy actor was laid in the sacred soil of Père la Chaise. I believe that since that time the question has never again been debated, nor am I aware that there is any one more peculiarly theatrical cemetery than another in Paris.

In a letter of Talma's to Charles Young upon my uncle John's death, he begs to be numbered among the subscribers to the monument about to be erected to Mr. Kemble in Westminster Abbey; adding the touching remark: "Pour moi, je serai heureux si les prêtres me laissent enterrer dans un coin de mon jardin."

The excellent moral effect of this species of class prejudice is admirably illustrated by an anecdote I have heard my mother tell. One evening, when she had gone to the Grand Opera with M. Jouy, the wise and witty Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin, talking with him of the career and circumstances of the young ballet women (she had herself, when very young, been a dancer on the English stage), she wound up her various questions with this: "Et y en a-t-il qui sont filles de bonne conduite? qui sont sages?" "Ma foi!" replied the Hermite, shrugging his shoulders, "elles auraient grand tort; personne n'y croirait."

A charming vaudeville called "Michel et Christine," with that charming actress, Madame Alan Dorval, for its heroine, was another extremely popular piece at that time, which I went to see with my father. The time of year at which he was able to come to Paris was unluckily the season at which

all the large theaters were closed. Nevertheless, by some happy chance, I saw one performance at the Grand Opera of that great dancer and actress, Bigottini, in the ballet of the "Folle par Amour;" and I shall never forget the wonderful pathos of her acting and the grace and dignity of her dancing. Several years after, I saw Madame Pasta in Paesiello's pretty opera of the "Nina Pazza," on the same subject, and hardly know to which of the two great artists to assign the palm in their different expression of the love-crazed girl's despair.

I also saw several times, at this period of his celebrity, the inimitable comic actor, Poitier, in a farce called "Les Danaïdes" that was making a furor—a burlesque upon a magnificent mythological ballet, produced with extraordinary splendor of decoration, at the Académie Royale de Musique, and of which this travesty drew all Paris in crowds; and certainly any thing more ludicrous than Poitier, as the wicked old King Danaus, with his fifty daughters, it is impossible to imagine.

The piece was the broadest and most grotesque quiz of the "grand genre classique et héroïque," and was almost the first of an order of entertainments which have gone on increasing in favor up to the present day of universally triumphant parody and burlesque, by no means as laughable and by no means as unobjectionable. Indeed, farcical to the broadest point as was that mythological travesty of "The Danaïdes," it was the essence of decency and propriety compared with "La grande Duchesse," "La belle Hélène," "Orphée aux Enfers," "La Biche au Bois," "Le petit Faust," and all the vile succession of indecencies and immoralities that the female good society of England in these latter years has delighted in witnessing, without the help of the mask which enabled their great-grandmothers to sit out the plays of Wycherley, Congreve, and Farquhar, chaste and decorous in their crude coarseness compared with the French operatic burlesques of the present day.

But by far the most amusing piece in which I recollect seeing Poitier, was one in which he acted with the equally celebrated Brunet, and in which they both represented English *women*—"Les Anglaises pour Rire."

The Continent was then just beginning to make acquaintance with the traveling English, to whom the downfall of Bonaparte had opened the gates of Europe, and who then began, as they have since continued, in ever-increasing numbers, to carry amazement and amusement from the shores of the Channel to those of the Mediterranean, by their wealth, insolence, ignorance, and cleanliness.

"Les Anglaises pour Rire" was a caricature (if such a thing were possible) of the English female traveler of that period. Coal-scuttle poke bonnets, short and scanty skirts, huge splay feet arrayed in indescribable shoes and boots, short-waisted tight-fitting spencers, colors which not only swore at each other, but caused all beholders to swear at them—these were the outward and visible signs of the British fair of that day. To these were added, in this representation of them by these French appreciators of their attractions, a mode of speech in which the most ludicrous French, in the most barbarous accent, was uttered in alternate bursts of loud abruptness and languishing drawl. Sudden, grotesque playfulness was succeeded by equally sudden and grotesque bashfulness; now an eager intrepidity of wild enthusiasm, defying all decorum, and then a sour, severe reserve, full of angry and terrified suspicion of imaginary improprieties. Tittering shyness, all giggle-goggle and blush; stony and stolid stupidity, impenetrable to a ray of perception; awkward, angular postures and gestures, and jerking saltatory motions; Brobdingnag strides and straddles, and kittenish frolics and friskings; sharp, shrill little whinnying squeals and squeaks, followed by lengthened, sepulchral "O-h's"—all formed together such an irresistibly ludicrous picture as made "Les Anglaises pour Rire" of Poitier and Brunet one of the most comical pieces of acting I have seen in all my life.

Mrs. Rowden's establishment in Hans Place had been famous for occasional dramatic representations by the pupils; and though she had become in her Paris days what in the religious jargon of that day was called serious, or even methodistical, she winked at, if she did not absolutely encourage, sundry attempts of a similar sort which her Paris pupils got up.

Once it was a vaudeville composed expressly in honor of her birthday by the French master, in which I had to sing, with reference to her, the following touching tribute, to a well-known vaudeville tune:

"C'est une mère!
Qui a les premiers droits sur nos cœurs?
Qui partage, d'une ardeur sincère,
Et nos plaisirs et nos douleurs?
C'est une mère!"

I suppose this trumpery was stamped upon my brain by the infinite difficulty I had in delivering it gracefully, with all the point and all the pathos the author assured me it contained, at Mrs. Rowden, surrounded by her friends and guests, and not suggesting to me the remotest idea of *my* mother or any body else's mother.

After this we got up Madame de Genlis' little piece of "L' Isle Heureuse," in which I acted the accomplished and conceited princess who is so judiciously rejected by the wise and ancient men of the island, in spite of the several foreign tongues she speaks fluently, in favor of the tender-hearted young lady who, in defiance of all sound systems of political and social economy, always walks about attended by the poor of the island in a body, to whom she distributes food and clothes in a perpetual stream of charity, and whose prayers and blessings lift her very properly to the throne, while the other young woman is left talking to all the ambassadors in all their different languages at once.

Our next dramatic attempt came to a disastrous and premature end. I do not know who suggested to us the witty and clever little play of "Roxelane;" the versification of the piece is extremely easy and graceful, and the preponderance of female characters and convenient Turkish costume, of turbans and caftans, and loose voluminous trousers, had appeared to us to combine various advantages for our purpose. Mademoiselle Descuillès had consented to fill the part of Solyman, the magnificent and charming Sultan, and I was to be the saucy French heroine, "dont le nez en l'air semble narguer l'amour," the *sémillante* Roxelane. We had already made good progress in the only difficulty our simple appreciation of matters dramatic presented to our imagination, the committing the words of our parts to memory, when Mrs. Rowden, from whom all our preparations on such occasions were kept sacredly secret, lighted upon the copy of the play, with all the MS. marks and directions for our better guidance in the performance; and great were our consternation, dismay, and disappointment when, with the offending pamphlet in her hand, she appeared in our midst and indignantly forbade the representation of any such piece, after the following ejaculatory fashion, and with an accent difficult to express by written signs: "May, commang! may*de*mosels, je suis atonnay! May! commang! May*de*mosel Descuillès, je suis surprise! Kesse ke say! vous per*ma*ttay may*de*mosels être lay filles d'ung seraglio! je ne vou pau! je vous defang! je suis biang atonnay!" And so she departed, with our prompter's copy, leaving us rather surprised, ourselves, at the unsuspected horror we had been about to perpetrate, and Mademoiselle Descuillès shrugging her shoulders and smiling, and not probably quite convinced of the criminality of a piece of which the heroine, a pretty Frenchwoman, revolutionizes the Ottoman Empire by inducing her Mohammedan lover to dismiss his harem and confine his affections to her, whom he is supposed to marry after the most orthodox fashion possible in those parts.

Our dramatic ardor was considerably damped by this event, and when next it revived our choice could not be accused of levity. Our aim was infinitely more ambitious, and our task more arduous. Racine's "Andromaque" was selected for our next essay in acting, and was, I suppose, pronounced unobjectionable by the higher authorities. Here, however, our mainstay and support, Mademoiselle Descuillès, interposed a very peculiar difficulty. She had very good-naturedly learned the part of Solyman, in the other piece, for us, and whether she resented the useless trouble she had had on that occasion, or disliked that of committing several hundred of Racine's majestic verses to memory, I

know not; but she declared that she would only act the part of Pyrrhus, which we wished her to fill, if we would read it aloud to her till she knew it, while she worked at her needle. Of course we had to accept any condition she chose to impose upon us, and so we all took it by turns, whenever we saw her industrious fingers flying through their never-ending task, to seize up Racine and begin pouring her part into her ears. She actually learned it so, and our principal difficulty after so teaching her was to avoid mixing up the part of Pyrrhus, which we had acquired by the same process, with every other part in the play.

The dressing of this classical play was even more convenient than our contemplated Turkish costume could have been. A long white skirt drawn round the waist, a shorter one, with slits in it for armholes, drawn round the neck by way of tunic, with dark blue or scarlet Greek pattern border, and ribbon of the same color for girdle, and sandals, formed a costume that might have made Rachel or Ristori smile, but which satisfied all our conceptions of antique simplicity and grace; and so we played our play.

Mademoiselle Descuillès was Pyrrhus; a tall blonde, with an insipid face and good figure, Andromaque; Elizabeth P–, my admired and emulated superior in all things, Oreste (not superior, however, in acting; she had not the questionable advantage of dramatic blood in her veins); and myself, Hermione (in the performance of which I very presently gave token of mine). We had an imposing audience, and were all duly terrified, became hoarse with nervousness, swallowed raw eggs to clear our throats, and only made ourselves sick with them as well as with fright. But at length it was all over; the tragedy was ended, and I had electrified the audience, my companions, and, still more, myself; and so, to avert any ill effects from this general electrification, Mrs. Rowden thought it wise and well to say to me, as she bade me good-night, "Ah, my dear, I don't think your parents need ever anticipate your going on the stage; you would make but a poor actress." And she was right enough. I did make but a poor actress, certainly, though that was not for want of natural talent for the purpose, but for want of cultivating it with due care and industry. At the time she made that comment upon my acting I felt very well convinced, and have since had good reason to know, that my school-mistress thought my performance a threat, or promise (I know not which to call it) of decided dramatic power, as I believe it was.

With this performance of "Andromaque," however, all such taste, if it ever existed, evaporated, and though a few years afterward the stage became my profession, it was the very reverse of my inclination. I adopted the career of an actress with as strong a dislike to it as was compatible with my exercising it at all.

I now became acquainted with all Racine's and Corneille's plays, from which we were made to commit to memory the most remarkable passages; and I have always congratulated myself upon having become familiar with all these fine compositions before I had any knowledge whatever of Shakespeare. Acquaintance with his works might, and I suppose certainly would, have impaired my relish for the great French dramatists, whose tragedies, noble and pathetic in spite of the stiff formality of their construction, the bald rigidity of their adherence to the classic unities, and the artificial monotony of the French heroic rhymed verse, would have failed to receive their due appreciation from a taste and imagination already familiar with the glorious freedom of Shakespeare's genius. As it was, I learned to delight extremely in the dignified pathos and stately tragic power of Racine and Corneille, in the tenderness, refinement, and majestic vigorous simplicity of their fine creations, and possessed a treasure of intellectual enjoyment in their plays before opening the first page of that wonderful volume which contains at once the history of human nature and human existence.

After I had been about a year and a half at school, Mrs. Rowden left her house in the Rue d'Angoulême, and moved to a much finer one, at the very top of the Champs Élysées, a large, substantial stone mansion, within lofty iron gates and high walls of inclosure. It was the last house on the left-hand side within the Barrière de l'Étoile, and stood on a slight eminence and back from the Avenue des Champs Élysées by some hundred yards. For many years after I had left school,

on my repeated visits to Paris, the old stone house bore on its gray front the large "Institution de jeunes Demoiselles," which betokened the unchanged tenor of its existence. But the rising tide of improvement has at length swept it away, and modern Paris has rolled over it, and its place remembers it no more. It was a fine old house, roomy, airy, bright, sunny, cheerful, with large apartments and a capital play-ground, formed by that old-fashioned device, a quincunx of linden trees, under whose shade we carried on very Amazonian exercises, fighting having become one of our favorite recreations.

This house was said to have belonged to Robespierre at one time, and a very large and deep well in one corner of the play-ground was invested with a horrid interest in our imaginations by tales of *noyades* on a small scale supposed to have been perpetrated in its depths by his orders. This charm of terror was, I think, rather a gratuitous addition to the attractions of this uncommonly fine well; but undoubtedly it added much to the fascination of one of our favorite amusements, which was throwing into it the heaviest stones we could lift, and rushing to the farthest end of the play-ground, which we sometimes reached before the resounding *bumps* from side to side ended in a sullen splash into the water at the bottom. With our removal to the Barrière de l'Étoile, the direction of our walks altered, and our visits to the Luxembourg Gardens and the Parc Monceaux were exchanged for expeditions to the Bois de Boulogne, then how different from the charming pleasure-ground of Paris which it became under the reforming taste and judgment of Louis Napoleon!

Between the back of our play-ground and the village suburb of Chaillot scarcely a decent street or even house then existed; there was no splendid Avenue de l'Impératrice, with bright villas standing on vivid carpets of flowers and turf. Our way to the "wood" was along the dreariest of dusty high-roads, bordered with mean houses and disreputable-looking *estaminets*; and the Bois de Boulogne itself, then undivided from Paris by the fortifications which subsequently encircled the city, was a dismal network of sandy avenues and *carrefours*, traversed in every direction by straight, narrow, gloomy paths, a dreary wilderness of low thickets and tangled copsewood.

I have said that I never returned home during my three years' school life in Paris; but portions of my holidays were spent with a French family, kind friends of my parents, who received me as an *enfant de la maison* among them. They belonged to the *petite bourgeoisie* of Paris. Mr. A– had been in some business, I believe, but when I visited him he was living as a small *rentier*, in a pretty little house on the main road from Paris to Versailles.

It was just such a residence as Balzac describes with such minute finish in his scenes of Parisian and provincial life: a sunny little *maisonnette*, with green *jalousies*, a row of fine linden trees clipped into arches in front of it, and behind, the trim garden with its wonderfully productive dwarf *espaliers*, full of delicious pears and Reine Claudes (that queen of amber-tinted, crimson-freckled greengages), its apricots, as fragrant as flowers, and its glorious, spice-breathing carnations.

The mode of life and manners of these worthy people were not refined or elegant, but essentially hospitable and kind; and I enjoyed the sunny freedom of my holiday visits to them extremely. The marriage of their daughter opened to me a second Parisian home of the same class, but with greater pretensions to social advantages, derived from the great city in the center of which it stood.

I was present at the celebration of Caroline A–'s marriage to one of the head-masters of a first-class boarding-school for boys, of which he subsequently became the principal director. It was in the Rue de Clichy, and thither the bride departed, after a jolly, rollicking, noisy wedding, beginning with the religious solemnization at church and procession to the *mairie* for due sanction of the civil authorities, and ending with a bountiful, merry, early afternoon dinner, and the not over-refined ancient custom of the distribution of the *jarretière de la mariée*. The jarretière was a white satin ribbon, tied at a discreet height above the bride's ankle, and removed thence by the best man and cut into pieces, for which an animated scramble took place among the male guests, each one who obtained a piece of the white favor immediately fastening it in his button-hole. Doubtless, in earlier and coarser times, it was the bride's real garter that was thus distributed, and our elegant white and

silver rosettes are the modern representatives of this primitive wedding "favor," which is a relic of ages when both in England and in France usages obtained at the noblest marriages which would be tolerated by no class in either country now;

"When bluff King Hal the stocking threw,
And Katharine's hand the curtain drew."

I have a distinct recollection of the merry uproar caused by this ceremony, and of the sad silence that fell upon the little sunny dwelling when the new-married pair and all the guests had returned to Paris, and I helped poor Madame A– and her old *cuisinière* and *femme de charge*, both with tearful eyes, to replace the yellow *velours d'Utrecht* furniture in its accustomed position on the shiny *parquet* of the best *salon*, with the slippery little bits of foot-rugs before the empty *bergères* and *canapés*.

My holidays after this time were spent with M. and Madame R–, in whose society I remember frequently seeing a literary man of the name of Pélissier, a clever writer, a most amusing talker, and an admirable singer of Béranger's songs.

Another visitor of their house was M. Rio, the eminent member of the French ultramontane party, the friend of Lammenais, Lacordaire, Montalembert, the La Ferronays, the hero of the Jeune Vendée, the learned and devout historian of Christian art. I think my friend M. R– was a Breton by birth, and that was probably the tie between himself and his remarkable Vendéan friend, whose tall, commanding figure, dark complexion, and powerful black eyes gave him more the appearance of a Neapolitan or Spaniard than of a native of the coast of ancient Armorica. M. Rio was then a young man, and probably in Paris for the first time, at the beginning of the literary career of which he has furnished so interesting a sketch in the autobiographical volumes which form the conclusion of his "Histoire de l'Art Chrétien." Five and twenty years later, while passing my second winter in Rome, I heard of M. Rio's arrival there, and of the unbounded satisfaction he expressed at finding himself in the one place where no restless wheels beat time to, and no panting chimneys breathed forth the smoke of the vast, multiform industry of the nineteenth century; where the sacred stillness of unprogressive conservatism yet prevailed undisturbed. Gas had, indeed, been introduced in the English quarter; but M. Rio could shut his eyes when he drove through that, and there still remained darkness enough elsewhere for those who loved it better than light.

During one of my holiday visits to M. R–, a ball was given at his young gentlemen's school, to which I was taken by him and his wife. It was my very first ball, and I have a vivid recollection of my white muslin frock and magnificent *ponceau* sash. At this festival I was introduced to a lad, with whom I was destined to be much more intimately acquainted in after years as one of the best amateur actors I ever saw, and who married one of the most charming and distinguished women of European society, Pauline de la Ferronays, whose married name has obtained wide celebrity as that of the authoress of "Le Récit d'une Sœur."

I remained in Paris till I was between fifteen and sixteen years old, and then it was determined that I should return home. The departure of Elizabeth P– had left me without competitor in my studies among my companions, and I was at an age to be better at home than at any school.

My father came to fetch me, and the only adventure I met with on the way back was losing my bonnet, blown from my head into the sea, on board the packet, which obliged me to purchase one as soon as I reached London; and having no discreeter guide of my proceedings, I so far imposed upon my father's masculine ignorance in such matters as to make him buy for me a full-sized Leghorn flat, under the circumference of which enormous *sombrero* I seated myself by him on the outside of the Weybridge coach, and amazed the gaping population of each successive village we passed through with the vast dimensions of the thatch I had put on my head.

Weybridge was not then reached by train in half an hour from London; it was two or three hours' coach distance: a rural, rather deserted-looking, and most picturesque village, with the desolate

domain of Portmore Park, its mansion falling to ruin, on one side of it, and on the other the empty house and fine park of Oatlands, the former residence of the Duke of York.

The straggling little village lay on the edge of a wild heath and common country that stretches to Guildford and Godalming and all through that part of Surrey to Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, and the Sussex coast—a region of light, sandy soil, hiding its agricultural poverty under a royal mantle of golden gorse and purple heather, and with large tracts of blue aromatic pine wood and one or two points of really fine scenery, where the wild moorland rolls itself up into ridges and rises to crests of considerable height, which command extensive and beautiful views: such as the one from the summit of Saint George's Hill, near Weybridge, and the top of Blackdown, the noble site of Tennyson's fine house, whence, over miles of wild wood and common, the eye sweeps to the downs above the Sussex cliffs and the glint of the narrow seas.

We had left London in the afternoon, and did not reach Weybridge until after dark. I had been tormented the whole way down by a nervous fear that I should not know my mother's face again; an absence of three years, of course, could not justify such an apprehension, but it had completely taken possession of my imagination and was causing me much distress, when, as the coach stopped in the dark at the village inn, I heard the words, "Is there any one here for Mrs. Kemble?" uttered in a voice which I knew so well, that I sprang, hat and all, into my mother's arms, and effectually got rid of my fear that I should not know her.

Her rural yearnings had now carried her beyond her suburban refuge at Craven Hill, and she was infinitely happy, in her small cottage habitation, on the outskirts of Weybridge and the edge of its picturesque common. Tiny, indeed, it was, and but for her admirable power of contrivance could hardly have held us with any comfort; but she delighted in it, and so did we all except my father, who, like most men, had no real taste for the country; the men who appear to themselves and others to like it confounding their love for hunting and shooting with that of the necessary field of their sports. Anglers seem to me to be the only sportsmen who really have a taste for and love of nature as well as for fishy water. At any rate, the silent, solitary, and comparatively still character of their pursuit enables them to study and appreciate beauty of scenery more than the violent exercise and excitement of fox-hunting, whatever may be said in favor of the picturesque influences of beating preserves and wading through turnip-fields with keepers and companions more or less congenial.

Of deer-stalking and grouse-shooting I do not speak; a man who does not become enthusiastic in his admiration of wild scenery while following these sports must have but half the use of his eyes.

Perhaps it was hardly fair to expect my father to relish extremely a residence where he was as nearly as possible too high and too wide, too long and too large, for every room in the house. He used to come down on Saturday and stay till Monday morning, but the rest of the week he spent at what was then our home in London, No. 5 Soho Square; it was a handsome, comfortable, roomy house, and has now, I think, been converted into a hospital.

The little cottage at Weybridge was covered at the back with a vine, which bore with the utmost luxuriance a small, black, sweet-water grape, from which, I remember, one year my mother determined to make wine; a direful experiment, which absorbed our whole harvest of good little fruit, filled every room in the house with unutterable messes, produced much fermentation of temper as well as wine, and ended in a liquid product of such superlative nastiness, that to drink it defied our utmost efforts of obedience and my mother's own resolute courage; so it was with acclamations of execration made libations of—to the infernal gods, I should think—and no future vintage was ever tried, to our great joy.

The little plot of lawn on which our cottage stood was backed by the wild purple swell of the common, and that was crested by a fine fir wood, a beautiful rambling and scrambling ground, full of picturesque and romantic associations with all the wild and fanciful mental existences which I was then beginning to enjoy. And even as I glide through it now, on the railroad that has laid its still depths open to the sun's glare and scared its silence with the eldritch snort and shriek of the iron team, I

have visions of Undine and Sintram, the Elves, the little dog Stromian, the Wood-Witch, and all the world of supernatural beauty and terror which then peopled its recesses for me, under the influence of the German literature that I was becoming acquainted with through the medium of French and English translations, and that was carrying me on its tide of powerful enchantment far away from the stately French classics of my school studies.

Besides our unusual privilege of grape-growing in the open air, our little estate boasted a magnificent beurré pear tree, a small arbor of intertwined and peculiarly fine filbert and cobnut trees, and some capital greengage and apple trees; among the latter, a remarkably large and productive Ribstone pippin. So that in the spring the little plot of land was flowerful, and in the autumn fruitful, and we cordially indorsed my mother's preference for it to the London house in Soho Square.

The sort of orchard which contained all these objects of our regard was at the back of the house; in front of it, however, the chief peculiarity (which was by no means a beauty) of the place was displayed.

This was an extraordinary mound or hillock of sand, about half an acre in circumference, which stood at a distance of some hundred yards immediately in front of the cottage, and in the middle of what ought to have been a flower garden, if this uncouth protuberance had not effectually prevented the formation of any such ornamental setting to our house. My mother's repeated applications to our landlord (the village baker) to remove or allow her to remove this unsightly encumbrance were unavailing. He thought he might have future use for the sand, and he knew he had no other present place of deposit for it; and there it remained, defying all my mother's ingenuity and love of beauty to convert it into any thing useful or ornamental, or other than a cruel eye-sore and disfigurement to our small domain.

At length she hit upon a device for abating her nuisance, and set about executing it as follows. She had the sand dug out of the interior of the mound and added to its exterior, which she had graded and smoothed and leveled and turfed so as to resemble the glacis of a square bastion or casemate, or other steep, smooth-sided earth-work in a fortification. It was, I suppose, about twenty feet high, and sloped at too steep an angle for us to scale or descend it; a good footpath ran round the top, accessible from the entrance of the sand-heap, the interior walls of which she turfed (to speak Irish) with heather, and the ground or floor of this curious inclosure she planted with small clumps of evergreen shrubs, leaving a broad walk through the middle of it to the house door. A more curious piece of domestic fortification never adorned a cottage garden. It looked like a bit of Robinson Crusoe's castle—perhaps even more like a portion of some deserted fortress. It challenged the astonishment of all our visitors, whose invariable demand was, "What is that curious place in the garden?" "The mound," was the reply; and the mound was a delightful play-ground for us, and did infinite credit to my mother's powers of contrivance. Forty years and more elapsed between my first acquaintance with Weybridge and my last visit there. The Duke of York's house at Oatlands, afterwards inhabited by my friends Lord and Lady Ellesmere, had become a country hotel, pleasant to all its visitors but those who, like myself, saw ghosts in its rooms and on its gravel walks; its lovely park, a nest of "villas," made into a suburb of London by the railroads that intersect in all directions the wild moorland twenty miles from the city, which looked, when I first knew it, as if it might be a hundred.

I read and spent a night at the Oatlands Hotel, and walked, before I did so, to my mother's old cottage. The tiny house had had some small additions, and looked new and neat and well cared for. The mound, however, still stood its ground, and had relapsed into something of its old savage condition; it would have warranted a theory of Mr. Oldbuck's as to its possible former purposes and origin. I looked at its crumbled and irregular wall, from which the turf had peeled or been washed away; at the tangled growth of grasses and weeds round the top, crenellated with many a breach and gap; and the hollow, now choked up with luxuriant evergreens that overtopped the inclosure and forbade entrance to it, and thought of my mother's work and my girlish play there, and was glad to

see her old sand-heap was still standing, though her planting had, with the blessing of time, made it impenetrable to me.

Our cottage was the last decent dwelling on that side of the village; between ourselves and the heath and pine wood there was one miserable shanty, worthy of the poorest potato patch in Ireland. It was inhabited by a ragged ruffian of the name of E–, whose small domain we sometimes saw undergoing arable processes by the joint labor of his son and heir, a ragged ruffian some sizes smaller than himself, and of a half-starved jackass, harnessed together to the plow he was holding; occasionally the team was composed of the quadruped and a tattered and fierce-looking female biped, a more terrible object than even the man and boy and beast whose labors she shared.

On the other side our nearest neighbors, separated from us by the common and its boundary road, were a family of the name of –, between whose charming garden and pretty residence and our house a path was worn by a constant interchange of friendly intercourse.

I followed no regular studies whatever during our summer at Weybridge. We lived chiefly in the open air, on the heath, in the beautiful wood above the meadows of Brooklands, and in the neglected, picturesque inclosure of Portmore Park, whose tenantless, half-ruined mansion, and noble cedars, with the lovely windings of the river Wey in front, made it a place an artist would have delighted to spend his hours in.

We haunted it constantly for another purpose. My mother had a perfect passion for fishing, and would spend whole days by the river, pursuing her favorite sport. We generally all accompanied her, carrying baskets and tackle and bait, kettles and camp stools, and looking very much like a family of gypsies on the tramp. We were each of us armed with a rod, and were more or less interested in the sport. We often started after an early breakfast, and, taking our luncheon with us, remained the whole day long absorbed in our quiet occupation.

My mother was perfectly unobservant of all rules of angling, in her indiscriminate enthusiasm, and "took to the water" whether the wind blew, the sun shone, or the rain fell; fishing—under the most propitious or unpropitious circumstances—was not, indeed, necessarily, catching fish, but still, fishing; and she was almost equally happy whether she did or did not catch any thing. I have known her remain all day in patient expectation of the "glorious nibble," stand through successive showers, with her clothes between whiles drying on her back, and only reluctantly leave the water's edge when it was literally too dark to see her float.

Although we all fished, I was the only member of the family who inherited my mother's passion for it, and it only developed much later in me, for at this time I often preferred taking a book under the trees by the river-side, to throwing a line; but towards the middle of my life I became a fanatical fisherwoman, and was obliged to limit my waste of time to one day in the week, spent on the Lenox lakes, or I should infallibly have wandered thither and dreamed away my hours on their charming shores or smooth expanse daily.

I have often wondered that both my mother and myself (persons of exceptional impatience of disposition and irritable excitability of temperament) should have taken such delight in so still and monotonous an occupation, especially to the point of spending whole days in an unsuccessful pursuit of it. The fact is that the excitement of hope, keeping the attention constantly alive, is the secret of the charm of this strong fascination, infinitely more than even the exercise of successful skill. And this element of prolonged and at the same time intense expectation, combined with the peculiarly soothing nature of the external objects which surround the angler, forms at once a powerful stimulus and a sedative especially grateful in their double action upon excitable organizations.

CHAPTER V

I have said that we all more or less joined in my mother's fishing mania at Weybridge; but my sister, then a girl of about eleven years, never had any liking for it, which she attributed to the fact that my mother often employed her to bait the hook for her. My sister's "tender-hefted" nature was horribly disgusted and pained by this process, but my own belief is that had she inherited the propensity to catch fish, even that would not have destroyed it in her. I am not myself a cruel or hardhearted woman (though I have the hunter's passion very strongly), and invariably baited my own hook, in spite of the disgust and horror I experienced at the wretched twining of the miserable worms round my fingers, and springing of the poor little live bait with its back pierced with a hook. But I have never allowed any one to do this office for me, because it seemed to me that to inflict such a task on any one, because it was revolting to me, was not fair or sportsmanlike; and so I went on torturing my own bait and myself, too eagerly devoted to the sport to refrain from it, in spite of the price I condemned myself to pay for it. Moreover, if I have ever had female companions on my fishing excursions, I have invariably done this service for them, thinking the process too horrid for them to endure; and have often thought that if I were a man, nothing could induce me to marry a woman whom I had seen bait her own hook with any thing more sensitive than paste.

I have said that I followed no systematic studies after I left school; but from that time began for me an epoch of indiscriminate, omnivorous reading, which lasted until I went upon the stage, when all my own occupations were necessarily given up for the exercise of my profession.

At this time my chief delight was in such German literature as translations enabled me to become acquainted with. La Motte Fouqué, Tieck, Wieland's "Oberon," Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," were my principal studies; soon to be followed by the sort of foretaste of Jean Paul Richter that Mr. Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" gave his readers; both matter and manner in that remarkable work bearing far more resemblance to the great German Incomprehensible than to any thing in the English language, certainly not excepting Mr. Carlyle's own masterly articles in the *Edinburgh Review* on Burns, Elliot the Corn-Law Rhymer, etc. Besides reading every book that came within my reach, I now commenced the still more objectionable practice of scribbling verses without stint or stay; some, I suppose, in very bad Italian, and some, I am sure, in most indifferent English; but the necessity was on me, and perhaps an eruption of such rubbish was a safer process than keeping it in the mental system might have proved; and in the meantime this intellectual effervescence added immensely to the pleasure of my country life, and my long, rambling walks in that wild, beautiful neighborhood.

I remember at this moment, by the by, a curious companionship we had in those walks. A fine, big Newfoundland dog and small terrier were generally of the party; and, nothing daunted by their presence, an extremely tame and affectionate cat, who was a member of the family, invariably joined the procession, and would accompany us in our longest walks, trotting demurely along by herself, a little apart from the rest, though evidently considering herself a member of the party.

The dogs, fully occupied with each other, and with discursive raids right and left of the road, and parenthetical rushes in various directions for their own special delectation, would sometimes, returning to us at full gallop, tumble over poor puss and roll her unceremoniously down in their headlong career. She never, however, turned back for this, but, recovering her feet, with her back arched all but in two, and every hair of her tail standing on end with insulted dignity, vented in a series of spittings and swearings her opinion of dogs in general and those dogs in particular, and then resumed her own decently demure gait and deportment; thanking Heaven, I have no doubt, in her cat's soul, that she was not that disgustingly violent and ill-mannered beast—a dog.

My brothers shared with us our fishing excursions and these walks, when at home from school; besides, I was promoted to their nobler companionship by occasionally acting as long-stop or short-stop (stop of some sort was undoubtedly my title) in insufficiently manned or boyed games of cricket:

once, while nervously discharging this onerous duty, I received a blow on my instep from a cricket ball which I did not stop, that seemed to me a severe price for the honor of sharing my brothers' manly pastimes. A sport of theirs in which I joined with more satisfaction was pistol-shooting at a mark: I had not a quick eye, but a very steady hand, so that with a deliberate aim I contrived to hit the mark pretty frequently. I liked this quiet exercise of skill better than that dreadful watching and catching of cannon-balls at cricket; though the noise of the discharge of fire-arms was always rather trying to me, and I especially resented my pistol missing fire when I had braced my courage for the report. My brother John at this time possessed a rifle and a fowling-piece, with the use of both of which he endeavored to familiarize me; but the rifle I found insupportably heavy, and as for the other gun, it kicked so unmercifully, in consequence, I suppose, of my not holding it hard enough against my shoulder the first time I fired it, that I declined all further experiments with it, and reverted to the pretty little lady-like pocket pistols, which were the only fire-arms I ever used until one fine day, some years later, when I was promoted to the honor of firing an American cannon on the practicing ground of the young gentlemen cadets of West Point.

While we retained our little cottage at Weybridge, the house of Oatlands, the former residence of the Duke of York, and burial-place of the duchess's favorite dogs, whose cemetery was one of the "lions" of the garden, was purchased by a Mr. –, a young gentleman of very large fortune, who came down there and enlivened the neighborhood occasionally with his sporting prowesses, which consisted in walking out, attired in the very height of Bond Street dandyism, with two attendant gamekeepers, one of whom carried and handed him his gun when he wished to fire it, the other receiving it from him after it had been discharged. This very luxurious mode of following his sport caused some sarcastic comment in the village.

This gentleman did not long retain possession of Oatlands, and it was let to the Earl of Ellesmere, then Lord Francis Egerton, with whom and Lady Francis we became acquainted soon after their taking it; an acquaintance which on my part grew into a strong and affectionate regard for both of them. They were excellent and highly accomplished, and, when first I knew them, two of the handsomest and most distinguished-looking persons I have ever seen.

Our happy Weybridge summers, which succeeded each other for three years, had but one incident of any importance for me—my catching the small-pox, which I had very severely. A slight eruption from which my sister suffered was at first pronounced by our village Æsculapius to be chicken-pox, but presently assumed the more serious aspect of varioloid. My sister, like the rest of us, had been carefully vaccinated; but the fact was then by no means so generally understood as it now is, that the power of the vaccine dies out of the system by degrees, and requires renewing to insure safety. My mother, having lost her faith in vaccination, thought that a natural attack of varioloid was the best preservative from small-pox, and my sister having had her seasoning so mildly and without any bad result but a small scar on her long nose, I was sent for from London, where I was, with the hope that I should take the same light form of the malady from her; but the difference of our age and constitution was not taken into consideration, and I caught the disease, indeed, but as nearly as possible died of it, and have remained disfigured by it all my life.

I was but little over sixteen, and had returned from school a very pretty-looking girl, with fine eyes, teeth, and hair, a clear, vivid complexion, and rather good features. The small-pox did not affect my three advantages first named, but, besides marking my face very perceptibly, it rendered my complexion thick and muddy and my features heavy and coarse, leaving me so moderate a share of good looks as quite to warrant my mother's satisfaction in saying, when I went on the stage, "Well, my dear, they can't say we have brought you out to exhibit your beauty." Plain I certainly was, but I by no means always looked so; and so great was the variation in my appearance at different times, that my comical old friend, Mrs. Fitzhugh, once exclaimed, "Fanny Kemble, you are the ugliest and the handsomest woman in London!" And I am sure, if a collection were made of the numerous portraits

that have been taken of me, nobody would ever guess any two of them to be likenesses of the same person.

The effect of natural small-pox on the skin and features varies extremely in different individuals, I suppose according to their constitution. My mother and her brother had the disease at the same time, and with extreme violence; he retained his beautiful bright complexion and smooth skin and handsome features; my mother was deeply pitted all over her face, though the fine outline of her nose and mouth was not injured in the slightest degree; while with me, the process appeared to be one of general thickening or blurring, both of form and color. Terrified by this result of her unfortunate experiment, my poor mother had my brothers immediately vaccinated, and thus saved them from the infection which they could hardly have escaped, and preserved the beauty of my youngest brother, which then and for several years after was very remarkable.

Mrs. F– is among the most vivid memories of my girlish days. She and her husband were kind and intimate friends of my father and mother. He was a most amiable and genial Irish gentleman, with considerable property in Ireland and Suffolk, and a fine house in Portland Place, and had married his cousin, a very handsome, clever, and eccentric woman. I remember she always wore a bracelet of his hair, on the massive clasp of which were engraved the words, "Stesso sangue, stessa sorte." I also remember, as a feature of sundry dinners at their house, the first gold dessert service and table ornaments that I ever saw, the magnificence of which made a great impression upon me; though I also remember their being replaced, upon Mrs. F– wearying of them, by a set of ground glass and dead and burnished silver, so exquisite, that the splendid gold service was pronounced infinitely less tasteful and beautiful.

Mrs. F–'s sons were school-fellows of my eldest brother, under Dr. Malkin, the master of the grammar school of Bury St. Edmunds; and at this time we always saw Dr. and Mrs. Malkin when they visited London, and I was indebted to the doctor for a great deal of extremely kind interest which he took in my mental development and cultivation.

He suggested books for my reading, and set me, as a useful exercise, to translate Sismondi's fine historical work, "Les Républiques Italiennes," which he wished me to abridge for publication. I was not a little proud of Dr. Malkin's notice and advice; he was my brother's school-master, an object of respectful admiration, and a kind and condescending friend to me.

He was a hearty, genial man, of portly person, and fine, intelligent, handsome face; active and energetic in his habits and movements, in spite of a slight lameness, which I remember he accounted for to me in the following manner. He was very intimate with Miss O'Neil before she left the stage and became Lady Becher. While dancing with her in a country-dance one evening at her house, she exclaimed, on hearing a sudden sonorous twang, "Dear me! there is one of the chords of my harp snapped." "Indeed it is not," replied Dr. Malkin; "it is my tendo-Achillis which has snapped." And so it was; and from that time he always remained lame.

Mrs. Malkin was a more uncommon person than her husband; the strength of her character and sweetness of her disposition were alike admirable, and the bright vivacity of her countenance and singular grace and dignity of her person must be a pleasant memory in the minds of all who, like myself, knew her while she was yet in the middle bloom of life.

Dr. and Mrs. Malkin's sons were my brother's school and college mates. They were all men of ability, and good scholars, as became their father's sons. Sir Benjamin, the eldest, achieved eminence as a lawyer, and became an Indian judge; and the others would undoubtedly have risen to distinction but for the early death that carried off Frederick and Charles, and the hesitation of speech which closed almost all public careers to their brother Arthur.

He was a prominent and able contributor to the "Library of Useful Knowledge," and furnished a great part of the first of a whole generation of delightful publications, Murray's "Hand-Book" for Switzerland.

One of the earliest of Alpine explorers, Arthur Malkin mounted to those icy battlements which have since been scaled by a whole army of besiegers, and planted the banner of English courage and enterprise on "peaks, passes, and glaciers" which, when he first climbed the shining summits of the Alps, were all but *terra incognita* to his countrymen.

There is nothing more familiar to the traveling and reading British public nowadays than Alpine adventures and their records; but when my friend first conquered the passes between Evolena and Zermatt (still one of the least overrun mountain regions of Switzerland), their sublime solitudes were awful with the mystery of unexplored loneliness. Now professors climb up them, and artists slide down them, and they are photographed with "members" straddling over their dire crevasses, or cutting capers on their scornful summits, or turning somersaults down their infinite precipices. The air of the high Alps was inhaled by few Englishmen before Arthur Malkin; one can not help thinking that now, even on the top of the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa, it must have lost some of its freshness.

I have said that all Dr. Malkin's sons were men of more than average ability; but one, who never lived to be a man, "died a most rare boy" of about six years, fully justifying by his extraordinary precocity and singular endowments the tribute which his bereaved father paid his memory in a modest and touching record of his brief and remarkable existence.

My Parisian education appeared, at this time, to have failed signally in the one especial result that might have been expected from it: all my French dancing lessons had not given me a good deportment, nor taught me to hold myself upright. I stooped, slouched, and poked, stood with one hip up and one shoulder down, and exhibited an altogether disgracefully ungraceful carriage, which greatly afflicted my parents. In order that I might "bear my body more seemly," various were the methods resorted to; among others, a hideous engine of torture of the backboard species, made of steel covered with red morocco, which consisted of a flat piece placed on my back, and strapped down to my waist with a belt and secured at the top by two epaulets strapped over my shoulders. From the middle of this there rose a steel rod or spine, with a steel collar which encircled my throat and fastened behind. This, it was hoped, would eventually put my shoulders down and my head up, and in the meantime I had the appearance of a young woman walking about in a portable pillory. The ease and grace which this horrible machine was expected to impart to my figure and movements were, however, hardly perceptible after considerable endurance of torture on my part, and to my ineffable joy it was taken off (my harness, as I used to call it; and no knight of old ever threw off his iron shell with greater satisfaction), and I was placed under the tuition of a sergeant of the Royal Foot Guards, who undertook to make young ladies carry themselves and walk well, and not exactly like grenadiers either. This warrior having duly put me through a number of elementary exercises, such as we see the awkward squads on parade grounds daily drilled in, took leave of me with the verdict, that I "was fit to march before the Duke of York," then commander of the forces; and, thanks to his instructions, I remained endowed with a flat back, well-placed shoulders, an erect head, upright carriage, and resolute step.

I think my education had come nearly to a standstill at this period, for, with the exception of these physical exercises, and certain hours of piano-forte practicing and singing lessons, I was left very much to the irregular and unsystematic reading which I selected for myself. I had a good contralto voice, which my mother was very desirous of cultivating, but I think my progress was really retarded by the excessive impatience with which her excellent ear endured my unsuccessful musical attempts. I used to practice in her sitting-room, and I think I sang out of tune and played false chords oftener, from sheer apprehension of her agonized exclamations, than I should have done under the supervision of a less sensitively organized person. I remember my sister's voice and musical acquirements first becoming remarkable at this time, and giving promise of her future artistic excellence. I recollect a ballad from the Mexican opera by Bishop, called Cortex, "Oh, there's a Mountain Palm," which she sang with a clear, high, sweet, true little voice and touching expression, full of pathos, in which I used to take great delight.

The nervous terror which I experienced when singing or playing before my mother was carried to a climax when I was occasionally called upon to accompany the vocal performances of our friendly acquaintance, James Smith (one of the authors of the "Rejected Addresses"). He was famous for his humorous songs and his own capital rendering of them, but the anguish I endured in accompanying him made those comical performances of his absolutely tragical to me; the more so that he had a lion-like cast of countenance, with square jaws and rather staring eyes. But perhaps he appeared so stern-visaged only to me; while he sang everybody laughed, but I perspired coldly and felt ready to cry, and so have but a lugubrious impression of some of the most amusing productions of that description, heard to the very best advantage (if I could have listened to them at all) as executed by their author.

Among our most intimate friends at this time were my cousin Horace Twiss and his wife. I have been reminded of him in speaking of James Smith, because he had a good deal of the same kind of humor, not unmixed with a vein of sentiment, and I remember his songs, which he sang with great spirit and expression, with the more pleasure that he never required me to accompany them. One New-Year's Eve that he spent with us, just before going away he sang charmingly some lines he had composed in the course of the evening, the graceful turn of which, as well as the feeling with which he sang them, were worthy of Moore. I remember only the burden:

"Oh, come! one genial hour improve,
And fill one measure duly;
A health to those we truly love,
And those who love us truly!"

And this stanza:

"To-day has waved its parting wings,
To join the days before it;
And as for what the morning brings,
The morning's mist hangs o'er it."

It was delightful to hear him and my mother talk together, and their disputes, though frequent, seemed generally extremely amicable, and as diverting to themselves as to us. On one occasion he ended their discussion (as to whether some lady of their acquaintance had or had not gone somewhere) by a vehement declaration which passed into a proverb in our house: "Yes, yes, she did; for a woman will go anywhere, at any time, with anybody, to see any thing—especially in a gig." Those were days in which a gig was a vehicle the existence of which was not only recognized in civilized society, but supposed to confer a diploma of "gentility" upon its possessor.

Horace Twiss was one of the readiest and most amusing talkers in the world, and when he began to make his way in London society, which he eventually did very successfully, ill-natured persons considered his first step in the right direction to have been a repartee made in the crush-room of the opera, while standing close to Lady L–, who was waiting for her carriage. A man he was with saying, "Look at that fat Lady L–; isn't she like a great white cabbage?" "Yes," answered Horace, in a discreetly loud tone, "she *is* like one—all heart, I believe." The white-heart cabbage turned affably to the rising barrister, begged him to see her to her carriage, and gave him the *entrée* of H– House. Lord Clarendon subsequently put him in Parliament for his borough of Wootton-Basset, and for a short time he formed part of the ministry, holding one of the under-secretaryships. He was clever, amiable, and good-tempered, and had every qualification for success in society.

He had married a Miss Searle, one of his mother's pupils at the fashionable Bath boarding-school, the living image of Scott's Fenella, the smallest woman that I have ever seen, with fairy feet and tiny hands, the extraordinary power of which was like that of a steel talon. On one occasion,

when Horace Twiss happened to mention that his bright little spark of a wife sat working in his library by him, while he was engaged with his law or business papers, my mother suggested that her conversation must disturb him. "Oh, she doesn't talk," said he, "but I like to hear the scissors fall," a pretty conjugal reply, that left a pleasant image in my mind. His only child by her, a daughter, married first Mr. Bacon, then editor of the *Times*, and, after his death, John Delane, who succeeded him in that office and still holds it; so that her father said "she took the *Times* and Supplement."

About this time I began to be aware of the ominous distresses and disturbances connected with the affairs of the theater, that were to continue and increase until the miserable subject became literally the sauce to our daily bread; embittering my father's life with incessant care and harassing vexation; and of the haunting apprehension of that ruin which threatened us for years, and which his most strenuous efforts only delayed, without averting it.

The proprietors were engaged in a lawsuit with each other, and finally one of them threw the whole concern into chancery; and for years that dreary chancery suit seemed to envelop us in an atmosphere of palpitating suspense or stagnant uncertainty, and to enter as an inevitable element into every hope, fear, expectation, resolution, event, or action of our lives.

How unutterably heart-sick I became of the very sound of its name, and how well I remember the expression on my father's careworn face one day, as he turned back from the door, out of which he was going to his daily drudgery at the theater, to say to my aunt, who had reproached him with the loss of a button from his rather shabby coat, "Ah, Dall, my dear, you see it is my chancery suit!"

Lord Eldon, Sir John Leach, Lord Lyndhurst, and Lord Brougham were the successive chancellors before whom the case was heard; the latter was a friend of my family, and on one occasion my father took me to the House of Lords to hear the proceedings. We were shown into the chancellor's room, where he indeed was not, but where his huge official wig was perched upon a block; the temptation was irresistible, and for half a minute I had the awful and ponderous periwig on my pate.

While we were still living in Soho Square our house was robbed; or rather, my father's writing-desk was broken open, and sixty sovereigns taken from it—a sum that he could very hardly spare. He had been at the theater, acting, and my mother had spent the evening at some friend's house, and the next morning great was the consternation of the family on finding what had happened. The dining-room sideboard and *cellarette* had been opened, and wine and glasses put on the table, as if our robbers had drank our good health for the success of their attempt.

A Bow Street officer was sent for; I remember his portly and imposing aspect very well; his name was Salmon, and he was a famous member of his fraternity. He questioned my mother as to the honesty of our servants; we had but three, a cook, housemaid, and footman, and for all of these my mother answered unhesitatingly; and yet the expert assured her that very few houses were robbed without connivance from within.

The servants were had up and questioned, and the cook related how, coming down first thing in the morning, she had found a certain back scullery window open, and, alarmed by that, had examined the lower rooms, and found the dining-room table set out with the decanters and glasses. Having heard her story, the officer, as soon as she left the room, asked my mother if any thing else besides the money had been taken, and if any quantity of the wine had been drank. She said, "No," and with regard to the last inquiry, she supposed, as the cook had suggested when the decanters were examined, that the thieves had probably been disturbed by some alarm, and had not had time to drink much.

Mr. Salmon then requested to look at the kitchen premises; the cook officiously led the way to the scullery window, which was still open, "just as she found it," she said, and proceeded to explain how the robbers must have got over the wall of a court which ran at the back of the house. When she had ended her demonstrations and returned to the kitchen, Salmon, who had listened silently to her story of the case, detained my mother for an instant, and rapidly passed his hand over the outside window-sill, bringing away a thick layer of undisturbed dust, which the passage of anybody through the window must infallibly have swept off. Satisfied at once of the total falsity of

the cook's hypothesis, he told my mother that he had no doubt at all that she was a party to the robbery, that the scullery window and dining-room drinking scene were alike mere blinds, and that in all probability she had let into the house whoever had broken open the desk, or else forced it herself, having acquired by some means a knowledge of the money it contained; adding, that in the very few words of interrogatory which had passed between him and the servants, in my mother's presence, he had felt quite sure that the housemaid and man were innocent; but had immediately detected something in the cook's manner that seemed to him suspicious. What a fine tact of guilt these detectives acquire in their immense experience of it! The cook was not prosecuted, but dismissed, the money, of course, not being recoverable; it was fortunate that neither she nor her honest friends had any suspicion of the contents of three boxes lying in the drawing-room at this very time. They were large, black leather cases, containing a silver helmet, shield, and sword, of antique Roman pattern and beautiful workmanship—a public tribute bestowed upon my uncle, and left by him to my father; they have since become an ornamental trophy in my sister's house. They were then about to be sent for safe keeping to Coutts's bank, and in the meantime lay close to the desk that had been rifled of a more portable but far less valuable booty.

Upon my uncle John's death his widow had returned to England, and fixed her residence at a charming place called Heath Farm, in Hertfordshire. Lord Essex had been an attached friend of my uncle's, and offered this home on his property to Mrs. Kemble when she came to England, after her long sojourn abroad with my uncle, who, as I have mentioned, spent the last years of his life, and died, at Lausanne. Mrs. Kemble invited my mother to come and see her soon after she settled in Hertfordshire, and I accompanied her thither. Cashiobury Park thus became familiar ground to me, and remains endeared to my recollection for its own beauty, for the delightful days I passed rambling about it, and for the beginning of that love bestowed upon my whole life by H– S–. Heath Farm was a pretty house, at once rural, comfortable, and elegant, with a fine farm-yard adjoining it, a sort of cross between a farm and a manor house; it was on the edge of the Cashiobury estate, within which it stood, looking on one side over its lawn and flower-garden to the grassy slopes and fine trees of the park, and on the other, across a road which divided the two properties, to Lord Clarendon's place, the Grove. It had been the residence of Lady Monson before her (second) marriage to Lord Warwick. Close to it was a pretty cottage, also in the park, where lived an old Miss M–, often visited by a young kinswoman of hers, who became another of my life-long friends. T– B–, Miss M–'s niece, was then a beautiful young woman, whose singularly fine face and sweet and spirited expression bore a strong resemblance to two eminently handsome people, my father and Mademoiselle Mars. She and I soon became intimate companions, though she was several years my senior. We used to take long rambles together, and vaguely among my indistinct recollections of her aunt's cottage and the pretty woodland round it, mix sundry flying visions of a light, youthful figure, that of Lord M–, then hardly more than a lad, who seemed to haunt the path of his cousin, my handsome friend, and one evening caused us both a sudden panic by springing out of a thicket on us, in the costume of a Harlequin. Some years after this, when I was about to leave England for America, I went to take leave of T– B–. She was to be married the next day to Lord M–, and was sitting with his mother, Lady W–, and on a table near her lay a set of jewels, as peculiar as they were magnificent, consisting of splendid large opals set in diamonds, black enamel, and gold....

To return to our Cashiobury walks: T– B– and I used often to go together to visit ladies, the garden round whose cottage overflowed in every direction with a particular kind of white and maroon pink, the powerful, spicy odor of which comes to me, like a warm whiff of summer sweetness, across all these intervening fifty years. Another favorite haunt of ours was a cottage (not of gentility) inhabited by an old man of the name of Foster, who, hale and hearty and cheerful in extreme old age, was always delighted to see us, used to give us choice flowers and fruit out of his tiny garden, and make me sit and sing to him by the half-hour together in his honeysuckle-covered porch. After my first visit to Heath Farm some time elapsed before we went thither again. On the occasion of our

second visit Mrs. Siddons and my cousin Cecilia were also Mrs. Kemble's guests, and a lady of the name of H– S–. She had been intimate from her childhood in my uncle Kemble's house, and retained an enthusiastic love for his memory and an affectionate kindness for his widow, whom she was now visiting on her return to England. And so I here first knew the dearest friend I have ever known. The device of her family is "Haut et Bon:" it was her description. She was about thirty years old when I first met her at Heath Farm; tall and thin, her figure wanted roundness and grace, but it was straight as a dart, and the vigorous, elastic, active movements of her limbs, and firm, fleet, springing step of her beautifully made feet and ankles, gave to her whole person and deportment a character like that of the fabled Atalanta, or the huntress Diana herself. Her forehead and eyes were beautiful. The broad, white, pure expanse surrounded with thick, short, clustering curls of chestnut hair, and the clear, limpid, bright, tender gray eyes that always looked radiant with light, and seemed to reflect radiance wherever they turned, were the eyes and forehead of Aurora. The rest of her features were not handsome, though her mouth was full of sensibility and sweetness, and her teeth were the most perfect I ever saw. She was eccentric in many things, but in nothing more so than the fashion of her dress, especially the coverings she provided for her extremities, her hat and boots. The latter were not positively masculine articles, but were nevertheless made by a man's boot-maker, and there was only one place in London where they could be made sufficiently ugly to suit her; and infinite were the pains she took to procure the heavy, thick, cumbrous, misshapen things that as much as possible concealed and disfigured her finely turned ankles and high, arched, Norman instep. Indeed, her whole attire, peculiar (and very ugly, I thought it) as it was, was so by malice prepense on her part. And whereas the general result would have suggested a total disregard of the vanities of dress, no Quaker coquette was ever more jealous of the peculiar texture of the fabrics she wore, or of the fashion in which they were made. She wore no colors, black and gray being the only shades I ever saw her in; and her dress, bare and bald of every ornament, was literally only a covering for her body; but it was difficult to find cashmere fine enough for her scanty skirts, or cloth perfect enough for her short spencers, or lawn clear and exquisite enough for her curious collars and cuffs of immaculate freshness.

I remember a similar peculiarity of dress in a person in all other respects the very antipodes of my friend H–. My mother took me once to visit a certain Miss W–, daughter of a Stafford banker, her very dear friend, and the godmother from whom I took my second name of Anne.

This lady inhabited a quaint, picturesque house in the oldest part of the town of Stafford. Well do I remember its oak-wainscoted and oak-paneled chambers, and the fine old oak staircase that led from the hall to the upper rooms; also the extraordinary abundance and delicacy of our meals, particularly the old-fashioned nine o'clock supper, about every item of which, it seemed to me, more was said and thought than about any food of which I ever before or since partook. It was in this homely palace of good cheer that a saying originated, which passed into a proverb with us, expressive of a rather *un*nice indulgence of appetite.

One of the ladies, going out one day, called back to the servant who was closing the door behind her: "Tell the cook not to forget the sally-lunns" (a species of muffin) "for tea, well greased on both sides, and we'll put on our cotton gowns to eat them."

The appearance of the mistress of this mansion of rather obsolete luxurious comfort was strikingly singular. She was a woman about sixty years old, tall and large and fat, of what Balzac describes as "un embonpoint flottant," and was habitually dressed in a white linen cambric gown, long and tending to train, but as plain and tight as a bag over her portly middle person and prominent bust; it was finished at the throat with a school-boy's plaited frill, which stood up round her heavy falling cheeks by the help of a white muslin or black silk cravat. Her head was very nearly bald, and the thin, short gray hair lay in distant streaks upon her skull, white and shiny as an ostrich egg, which on the rare occasions of her going out, or into her garden, she covered with a man's straw or beaver hat.

It is curious how much minor eccentricity the stringent general spirit of formal conformity allows individuals in England: nowhere else, scarcely, in civilized Europe, could such a costume be

worn in profound, peaceful defiance of public usage and opinion, with perfect security from insult or even offensive comment, as that of my mother's old friend, Miss W–, or my dear H– S–. In this same Staffordshire family and its allies eccentricity seemed to prevail alike in life and death; for I remember hearing frequent mention, while among them, of connections of theirs who, when they died, one and all desired to be buried in full dress and with their coffins *standing upright*.

To return to Heath Farm and my dear H–. Nobility, intelligence, and tenderness were her predominating qualities, and her person, manner, and countenance habitually expressed them.

This lady's intellect was of a very uncommon order; her habits of thought and reading were profoundly speculative; she delighted in metaphysical subjects of the greatest difficulty, and abstract questions of the most laborious solution. On such subjects she incessantly exercised her remarkably keen powers of analysis and investigation, and no doubt cultivated and strengthened her peculiar mental faculties and tendencies by the perpetual processes of metaphysical reasoning which she pursued.

Between H– S– and myself, in spite of nearly twelve years' difference in our age, there sprang up a lively friendship, and our time at Heath Farm was spent in almost constant companionship. We walked and talked together the livelong day and a good part of the night, in spite of Mrs. Kemble's judicious precaution of sending us to bed with very moderate wax candle ends; a prudent provision which we contrived to defeat by getting from my cousin, Cecilia Siddons, clandestine alms of fine, long, *life-sized* candles, placed as mere supernumeraries on the toilet table of a dressing-room adjoining her mother's bedroom, which she never used. At this time I also made the acquaintance of my friend's brother, who came down to Heath Farm to visit Mrs. Kemble and his sister. He possessed a brilliant intellect, had studied for the bar, and at the same time made himself favorably known by a good deal of clever periodical writing; but he died too early to have fully developed his genius, and left as proofs of his undoubtedly superior talents only a few powerfully written works of fiction, indicating considerable abilities, to which time would have given maturity, and more experience a higher direction.

Among the principal interests of my London life at this time was the production at our theater of Weber's opera, "Der Freyschütz." Few operas, I believe, have had a wider or more prolonged popularity; none certainly within my recollection ever had any thing approaching it. Several causes conduced to this effect. The simple pathos of the love story, and the supernatural element so well blended with it, which gave such unusual scope to the stage effects of scenery, etc., were two obvious reasons for its success.

From the inimitably gay and dramatic laughing chorus and waltz of the first scene to the divine melody in which the heroine expresses her unshaken faith in Heaven, immediately before her lover's triumph closes the piece, the whole opera is a series of exquisite conceptions, hardly one of which does not contain some theme or passage calculated to catch the dullest and slowest ear and fix itself on the least retentive memory; and though the huntsman's and bridesmaid's choruses, of course, first attained and longest retained a street-organ popularity, there is not a single air, duet, concerted piece, or chorus, from which extracts were not seized on and carried away by the least musical memories. So that the advertisement of a German gentleman for a valet, who to other necessary qualifications was to add the indispensable one of not being able to whistle a note of "Der Freyschütz," appeared a not unnatural result of the universal furor for this music.

We went to hear it until we literally knew it by heart, and such was my enthusiasm for it that I contrived to get up a romantic passion for the great composer, of whom I procured a hideous little engraving (very ugly he was, and very ugly was his "counterfeit presentment," with high cheek-bones, long hooked nose, and spectacles), which, folded up in a small square and sewed into a black silk case, I carried like an amulet round my neck until I completely wore it out, which was soon after poor Weber's death.

CHAPTER VI

The immense success of "Der Freyschütz," and the important assistance it brought to the funds of the theater, induced my father to propose to Weber to compose an opera expressly for Covent Garden. The proposal met with ready acceptance, and the chivalric fairy tale of Wieland's "Oberon" was selected for the subject, and was very gracefully and poetically treated by Mr. Planché, to whom the literary part of the work—the libretto—was confided, and who certainly bestowed as much pains on the versification of his lyrical drama as if it was not destined to be a completely secondary object to the music in the public estimation. Weber himself, however, was by no means a man to disregard the tenor of the words and characters he was to associate with his music, and was greatly charmed with his English coadjutor's operatic version of Wieland's fairy epic. He was invited to come over to London and himself superintend the production of his new work.

Representations of "Der Freyschütz" were given on his arrival, and night after night the theater was crowded to see him preside in the orchestra and conduct his own fine opera; and the enthusiasm of the London public rose to fever height. Weber took up his abode at the house of Sir George Smart, the leader of the Covent Garden orchestra, and our excellent old friend—a capital musician and very worthy man. He was appointed organist to King William IV., and for many years directed those admirable performances of classical music called the Ancient Concerts.

He was a man of very considerable musical knowledge, and had a peculiar talent for teaching and accompanying the vocal compositions of Handel. During the whole of my father's management of Covent Garden, he had the supervision of the musical representations and conducted the orchestra, and he was principally instrumental in bringing out Weber's fine operas of "Der Freyschütz" and "Oberon." Weber continued to reside in Sir George Smart's house during the whole of his stay in London, and died there soon after the production of his "Oberon." Sir George Smart was the first person who presented Mendelssohn to me. I had been acting Juliet one night, and at the end of the play was raised from the stage by my kind old friend, who had been in the orchestra during the performance, with the great composer, then a young man of nineteen, on his first visit to England. He brought letters of introduction to my father, and made his first acquaintance with me in my grave-clothes. Besides my esteem and regard for Sir George's more valuable qualities, I had a particular liking for some excellent snuff he always had, and used constantly to borrow his snuff-box to sniff at it like a perfume, not having attained a sufficiently mature age to venture upon "pinches;" and a snuff-taking Juliet being inadmissible, I used to wish myself at the elderly lady age when the indulgence might be becoming: but before I attained it, snuff was no longer taken by ladies of any age, and now, I think, it is used by very few men.

In a letter written to me by my mother, during my temporary absence from London, just after the accession of King William IV., I find the following passage with reference to Sir George Smart:

"London is all alive; the new king seems idolized by the people, and he appears no less pleased with them; perhaps Sir George is amongst the happiest of his subjects. His Majesty swears that nothing shall be encouraged but *native talent*, and our friend is to get up a concert at the Duke of Sussex's, where the royal family are all to dine, at which none but English singers are to perform. Sir George dined with me on Monday, and I perceive he has already arranged in his thoughts all he proposes *to tell the queen about you* on this occasion. It is evident he flatters himself that he is to be deep in her Majesty's confidence."

Sir George Smart and his distinguished guest, Weber, were constantly at our house while the rehearsals of "Oberon" went forward. The first day they dined together at my father's was an event for me, especially as Sir George, on my entering the room, took me by the hand, and drawing me toward Weber, assured him that I and all the young girls in England were over head and ears in love with him. With my guilty satchel round my neck, I felt ready to sink with confusion, and stammered

out something about Herr von Weber's beautiful music, to which, with a comical, melancholy smile, he replied, "Ah, my music! it is always my music, but never myself!"

Baron Carl Maria von Weber was a noble-born Saxon German, whose very irregular youth could hardly, one would suppose, have left him leisure to cultivate or exercise his extraordinary musical genius; but though he spent much of his early life in wild dissipation, and died in middle age, he left to the world a mass of compositions of the greatest variety and beauty, and a name which ranks among the most eminent in his pre-eminently musical country. He was a little thin man, lame of one foot, and with a slight tendency to a deformed shoulder. His hollow, sallow, sickly face bore an expression of habitual suffering and ill health, and the long, hooked nose, salient cheek-bones, light, prominent eyes, and spectacles were certainly done no more than justice to in the unattractive representation of my cherished portrait of him.

He had the air and manner of a well-born and well-bred man of the world, a gentle voice, and a slow utterance in English, which he spoke but indifferently and with a strong accent; he generally conversed with my father and mother in French. One of the first visits he paid to Covent Garden was in my mother's box, to hear Miss Paton and Braham (his prima donna and tenor) in an oratorio. He was enthusiastic in his admiration of Braham's fine performance of one of Handel's magnificent songs ("Deeper and deeper still," I think), but when, in the second part of the concert, which consisted of a selection of secular music, the great singer threw the house into ecstasies, and was tumultuously encored in the pseudo-Scotch ballad of "Blue Bonnets over the Border," he was extremely disgusted, and exclaimed two or three times, "Ah, that is *beast*!" (Ah, cela est bête!) to our infinite diversion. Much more aggravating proof was poor Weber destined to have of the famous tenor's love of mere popularity in his art, and strange enough, no doubt, to the great German composer was the thirst for ignorant applause which induced Braham to reject the beautiful, tender, and majestic opening air Weber had written for him in the character of Huon, and insist upon the writing of a battle-piece which might split the ears of the groundlings and the gods, and furnish him an opportunity for making some of the startling effects of lyrical declamation which never failed to carry his audience by storm.

No singer ever delivered with greater purity or nobler breadth Handel's majestic music; the masterly simplicity of his execution of all really fine compositions was worthy of his first-rate powers; but the desire of obtaining by easier and less elevated means the acclamations of his admirers seemed irresistible to him, and "Scots wha hae," with the flourish of his stick in the last verse, was a sure triumph which he never disdained. Weber expressed unbounded astonishment and contempt at this unartistic view of things, and with great reluctance at length consented to suppress, or rather transfer to the overture, the noble and pathetic melody designed for Huon's opening song, for which he submitted the fine warlike cantata beginning—

"Oh,'tis a glorious sight to see
The charge of the Christian chivalry!"

in which, to be sure, Braham charged with the Christians, and routed the Paynims, and mourned for the wounded, and wept for the dead, and returned in triumph to France in the joyous cabaletta, with wonderful dramatic effect, such as, no doubt, the other song would never have enabled him to produce. But the success of the song did not reconcile Weber to what he considered the vulgarity and inappropriateness of its subject, and the circumstance lowered his opinion both of the English singer and of the English public very grievously.

How well I remember all the discussions of those prolonged, repeated, anxious, careful rehearsals, and the comical despair of which Miss Paton, the heroine of the opera, was the occasion to all concerned, by the curious absence of dramatic congruity of gesture and action which she contrived to combine with the most brilliant and expressive rendering of the music. In the great shipwreck scene, which she sang magnificently, she caught up the short end of a sash tied around her waist,

and twirled it about without unfastening it, by way of signaling from the top of a rock for help from a distant vessel, the words she sang being, "Quick, quick, for a signal this scarf shall be *waved*!" This performance of hers drew from my father the desperate exclamation, "That woman's an inspired idiot!" while Weber limped up and down the room silently wringing his hands, and Sir George Smart went off into ecstatic reminiscences of a certain performance of my mother's, when—in some musical arrangement of "Blue Beard" (by Kelly or Storace, I think), in the part of Sister Anne—she waved and signaled and sang from the castle wall, "I see them galloping! I see them galloping!" after a very different fashion, that drew shouts of sympathetic applause from her hearers.

Miss Paton married Lord William Lennox, was divorced from her husband and married Mr. Wood, and pursued her career as a public singer for many years successfully after this event; nor was her name in any way again made a subject of public animadversion, though she separated herself from Mr. Wood, and at one time was said to have entertained thoughts of going into a Roman Catholic nunnery. Her singing was very admirable, and her voice one of the finest in quality and compass that I ever heard. The effects she produced on the stage were very remarkable, considering the little intellectual power or cultivation she appeared to possess. My father's expression of "an inspired idiot," though wrung from him by the irritation of momentary annoyance, was really not inapplicable to her. She sang with wonderful power and pathos her native Scotch ballads, she delivered with great purity and grandeur the finest soprano music of Handel, and though she very nearly drove poor Weber mad with her apparent want of intelligence during the rehearsals of his great opera, I have seldom heard any thing finer than her rendering of the difficult music of the part of Reiza, from beginning to end, and especially the scene of the shipwreck, with its magnificent opening recitative, "Ocean, thou mighty monster!"

"Oberon" was brought out and succeeded; but in a degree so far below the sanguine expectations of all concerned, that failure itself, though more surprising, would hardly have been a greater disappointment than the result achieved at such a vast expenditure of money, time, and labor. The expectations of the public could not have been realized by any work which was to be judged by comparison with their already permanent favorite, "Der Freyschütz." No second effort could have seemed any thing but second-best, tried by the standard of that popular production; and whatever judgment musicians and connoisseurs might pronounce as to the respective merits of the two operas, the homely test of the "proof of the pudding" being "in the eating" was decidedly favorable to the master's earlier work; and my own opinion is, that either his "Euryanthe" or his "Preciosa" would have been more popular with the general English public than the finer and more carefully elaborated music of "Oberon." The story of the piece (always a main consideration in matters of art, with average English men and women) wanted interest, certainly, as compared with that of its predecessor; the chivalric loves and adventures of Huon of Bordeaux and the caliph's daughter were indifferent to the audience, compared with the simple but deep interest of the fortunes of the young German forester and his village bride; and the gay and brilliant fairy element of the "Oberon" was no sort of equivalent for the startling *diablerie* of Zamiel, and the incantation scene. The music, undoubtedly of a higher order than that of "Der Freyschütz," was incomparably more difficult and less popular. The whole of the part of Reiza was trying in the extreme, even to the powers of the great singer for whom it was written, and quite sure not to be a favorite with prime donne from its excessive strain upon the voice, particularly in what is the weaker part of almost all soprano registers; and Reiza's first great aria, the first song of the fairy king, and Huon's last song in the third act, are all compositions of which the finest possible execution must always be without proportionate effect on any audience, from the extreme difficulty of rendering them and their comparative want of melody. By amateurs, out of Germany, the performance of any part of the music was not likely ever to be successfully attempted; and I do not think that a single piece in the opera found favor with the street organists, though the beautiful opening chorus was made into a church hymn by discarding the exquisite aerial

fairy symphonies and accompaniments; and the involuntary dance of the caliph's court and servants at the last blast of the magical horn was for a short time a favorite waltz in Germany.

Poor Weber's health, which had been wretched before he came to England, and was most unfavorably affected by the climate, sank entirely under the mortification of the comparatively small success of his great work. He had labored and fretted extremely with the rehearsals, and very soon after its production he became dangerously ill, and died—not, as people said, of a broken heart, but of disease of the lungs, already far advanced when he came to London, and doubtless accelerated by these influences. He died in Sir George Smart's house, who gave me, as a memorial of the great composer whom I had so enthusiastically admired, a lock of his hair, and the opening paragraph of his will, which was extremely touching and impressive in its wording.

The plaintive melody known as "Weber's Waltz" (said to have been his last composition, found after his death under his pillow) was a tribute to his memory by some younger German composer (Reichardt or Ries); but though not his own, it owed much of its popularity to his name, with which it will always be associated. Bellini transferred the air, verbatim, into his opera of "Beatrice di Tenda," where it appears in her song beginning, "Orombello, ah Sciagurato!" A circumstance which tended to embitter a good deal the close of Weber's life was the arrival in London of Rossini, to whom and to whose works the public immediately transferred its demonstrations of passionate admiration with even more, than its accustomed fickleness. Disparaging comparisons and contrasts to Weber's disadvantage were drawn between the two great composers in the public prints; the enthusiastic adulation of society and the great world not unnaturally followed the brilliant, joyous, sparkling, witty Italian, who was a far better subject for London *lionizing* than his sickly, sensitive, shrinking, and rather soured German competitor for fame and public favor.

The proud, morbid sensitiveness of the Northern genius was certainly in every respect the very antipodes of the healthy, robust, rejoicing, artistic nature of the Southern.

No better instance, though a small one, perhaps, could be given of the tone and temper in which Rossini was likely to encounter both adverse criticism and the adulation of amateur idolatry, than his reply to the Duchess of Canizzaro, one of his most fanatical worshipers, who asked him which he considered his best comic opera; when, with a burst of joyous laughter, he named "Il Matrimonio Secreto," Cimarosa's enchanting *chef-d'œuvre*, from which, doubtless, Rossini, after the fashion of great geniuses, had accepted more than one most felicitous suggestion, especially that of the admirable finale to the second act of the "Barbiere." It was during this visit of his to London, while Weber lay disappointed and dying in the dingy house in Great Portland Street, that this same Duchess of Canizzaro, better known by her earlier title of Countess St. Antonio, as a prominent leader of fashionable taste in musical matters, invited all the great and gay and distinguished world of London to meet the famous Italian composer; and, seated in her drawing-room with the Duke of Wellington and Rossini on either side of her, exclaimed, "Now I am between the two greatest men in Europe." The Iron Duke not unnaturally rose and left his chair vacant; the great genius retained his, but most assuredly not without humorous appreciation of the absurdity of the whole scene, for he was almost "plus fin que tous les autres," and certainly "bien plus fin que tous *ces* autres."

About this time I returned again to visit Mrs. Kemble at Heath Farm, and renew my days of delightful companionship with H– S–. Endless were our walks and talks, and those were very happy hours in which, loitering about Cashiobury Park, I made its echoes ring with the music of "Oberon," singing it from beginning to end—overture, accompaniment, choruses, and all; during which performances my friend, who was no musician, used to keep me company in sympathetic silence, reconciled by her affectionate indulgence for my enthusiasm to this utter postponement of sense to sound. What with her peculiar costume and my bonnetless head (I always carried my bonnet in my hand when it was possible to do so) and frenzied singing, any one who met us might have been justified in supposing we had escaped from the nearest lunatic asylum.

Occasionally we varied our rambles, and one day we extended them so far that the regular luncheon hour found us at such a distance from home, that I—hungry as one is at sixteen after a long tramp—peremptorily insisted upon having food; whereupon my companion took me to a small roadside ale-house, where we devoured bread and cheese and drank beer, and while thus vulgarly employed beheld my aunt's carriage drive past the window. If that worthy lady could have seen us, that bread and cheese which was giving us life would inevitably have been her death; she certainly would have had a stroke of apoplexy (what the French call *foudroyante*), for gentility and propriety were the breath of life to her, and of the highest law of both, which can defy conventions, she never dreamed.

Another favorite indecorum of mine (the bread and cheese was mere mortal infirmity, not moral turpitude) was wading in the pretty river that ran through Lord Clarendon's place, the Grove; the brown, clear, shallow, rapid water was as tempting as a highland brook, and I remember its bright, flashing stream and the fine old hawthorn trees of the avenue, alternate white and rose-colored, like clouds of fragrant bloom, as one of the sunniest pictures of those sweet summer days.

The charm and seduction of bright water has always been irresistible to me, a snare and a temptation I have hardly ever been able to withstand; and various are the chances of drowning it has afforded me in the wild mountain brooks of Massachusetts. I think a very attached maid of mine once saved my life by the tearful expostulations with which she opposed the bewitching invitations of the topaz-colored flashing rapids of Trenton Falls, that looked to me in some parts so shallow, as well as so bright, that I was just on the point of stepping into them, charmed by the exquisite confusion of musical voices with which they were persuading me, when suddenly a large tree-trunk of considerable weight shot down their flashing surface and was tossed over the fall below, leaving me to the natural conclusion, "Just such a log should I have been if I had gone in there." Indeed, my worthy Marie, overcome by my importunity, having selected what seemed to her a safe, and to me a very tame, bathing-place, in another and quieter part of the stream, I had every reason, from my experience of the difficulty of withstanding its powerful current there, to congratulate myself upon not having tried the experiment nearer to one of the "springs" of the lovely torrent, whose Indian name is the "Leaping Water." Certainly the pixies—whose cousin my friends accused me of being, on account of my propensity for their element—if they did not omit any opportunity of alluring me, allowed me to escape scathless on more than one occasion, when I might have paid dearly for being so much or so little related to them.

This fascination of living waters for me was so well known among my Lenox friends of all classes, that on one occasion a Yankee Jehu of our village, driving some of them by the side of a beautiful mountain brook, said, "I guess we should hardly have got Mrs. Kemble on at all, alongside of this stream," as if I had been a member of his *team*, made restive by the proximity of water. A pool in a rocky basin, with foaming water dashing in and out of it, was a sort of trap for me, and I have more than once availed myself of such a shower-bath, without any further preparation than taking my hat and shoes and stockings off. Once, on a visit to the Catskills, during a charming summer walk with my dear friend, Catherine Sedgwick, I walked into the brook we were coasting, and sat down in the water, without at all interrupting the thread of our conversation; a proceeding which, of course, obliged me to return to the hotel dripping wet, my companion laughing so immoderately at my appearance, that, as I represented to her, it was quite impossible for me to make anybody believe that I had met with an accident and *fallen* into the water, which was the impression I wished (in the interest of my reputation for sanity) to convey to such spectators as we might encounter.

On another occasion, coming over the Wengern Alp from Grindelwald one sultry summer day, my knees were shaking under me with the steep and prolonged descent into Lauterbrunnen. Just at the end of the wearisome downward way an exquisite brook springs into the Lutschine, as it flies through the valley of waterfalls, and into this I walked straight, to the consternation of my guides and dear companion, a singularly dignified little American lady, of Quaker descent and decorum, who was quite at a loss to conceive how, after such an exploit, I was to present myself to the inhabitants,

tourists, and others of the little street and its swarming hotels, in my drenched and dripping condition; but, as I represented to her, nothing would be easier: "I shall get on my mule and ride sprinkling along, and people will only say, 'Ah, cette pauvre dame! qui est tombée à l'eau!'"

My visit to my aunt Kemble was prolonged beyond the stay of my friend H–, and I was left alone at Heath Farm. My walks were, of course, circumscribed, and the whole complexion of my life much changed by my being given over to lonely freedom limited only by the bounds of our pleasure-grounds, and my living converse with my friend exchanged for unrestricted selection from my aunt's book-shelves; from which I made a choice of extreme variety, since Lord Byron and Jeremy Taylor were among the authors with whom I then first made acquaintance, my school introduction to the former having been followed up by no subsequent intimacy.

I read them on alternate days, sitting on the mossy-cushioned lawn, under a beautiful oak tree, with a cabbage-leaf full of fresh-gathered strawberries and a handful of fresh-blown roses beside me, which Epicurean accompaniments to my studies appeared to me equally adapted to the wicked poet and the wise divine. Mrs. Kemble in no way interfered with me, and was quite unconscious of the subjects of my studies; she thought me generally "a very odd girl," but though I occasionally took a mischievous pleasure in perplexing her by fantastical propositions, to which her usual reply was a rather acrimonious "Don't be absurd, Fanny," she did not at all care to investigate my oddity, and left me to my own devices.

Among her books I came upon Wraxall's "Memoirs of the House of Valois," and, reading it with great avidity, determined to write an historical novel, of which the heroine should be Françoise de Foix, the beautiful Countess de Châteaubriand. At this enterprise I now set eagerly to work, the abundant production of doggerel suffering no diminution from this newer and rather soberer literary undertaking, to which I added a brisk correspondence with my absent friend, and a task she had set me (perhaps with some vague desire of giving me a little solid intellectual occupation) of copying for her sundry portions of "Harris's Hermes;" a most difficult and abstruse grammatical work, much of which was in Latin, not a little in Greek. All these I faithfully copied, Chinese fashion, understanding the English little better than the two dead languages which I transcribed—the Greek without much difficulty, owing to my school-day proficiency in the alphabet of that tongue. These literary exercises, walks within bounds, drives with my aunt, and the occasional solemnity of a dinner at Lord Essex's, were the events of my life till my aunt, Mrs. Whitelock, came to Heath Farm and brought an element of change into the procession of our days.

I think these two widowed ladies had entertained some notion that they might put their solitude together and make society; but the experiment did not succeed, and was soon judiciously abandoned, for certainly two more hopelessly dissimilar characters never made the difficult experiment of a life in common.

Mrs. Kemble, before she went to Switzerland, had lived in the best London society, with which she kept up her intercourse by zealous correspondence; the names of lords and ladies were familiar in her mouth as household words, and she had undoubtedly an undue respect for respectability and reverence for titled folk; yet she was not at all superficially a vulgar woman. She was quick, keen, clever, and shrewd, with the air, manner, dress, and address of a finished woman of the world. Mrs. Whitelock was simple-hearted and single-minded, had never lived in any English society whatever, and retorted but feebly the fashionable gossip of the day which reached Mrs. Kemble through the London post, with her transatlantic reminiscences of Prince Talleyrand and General Washington. She was grotesque in her manner and appearance, and a severe thorn in the side of her conventionally irreproachable companion, who has been known, on the approach of some coroneted carriage, to observe pointedly, "Mrs. Whitelock, there is an *ekkipage*." "I see it, ma'am," replied the undaunted Mrs. Whitelock, screwing up her mouth and twirling her thumbs in a peculiarly emphatic way, to which she was addicted in moments of crisis. Mrs. Kemble, who was as quick as Pincher in her movements, rang the bell and snapped out, "Not at home!" denying herself her stimulating dose

of high-life gossip, and her companion what she would have called a little "genteel sociability," rather than bring face to face her fine friends and Mrs. Whitelock's flounced white muslin apron and towering Pamela cap, for she still wore such things. I have said that Mrs. Kemble was not (superficially) a vulgar woman, but it would have taken the soul of gentility to have presented, without quailing, her amazingly odd companion to her particular set of visitors. A humorist would have found his account in the absurdity of the scene all round; and Jane Austen would have made a delicious chapter of it; but Mrs. Kemble had not the requisite humor to perceive the fun of her companion, her acquaintances, and herself in juxtaposition. I have mentioned her mode of pronouncing the word equipage, which, together with several similar peculiarities that struck me as very odd, were borrowed from the usage of London good society in the days when she frequented it. My friend, Lord Lansdowne, never called London any thing but *Lunnon*, and always said *obleege* for oblige, like the Miss Berrys and Mrs. F– and other of their contemporaries, who also said *ekkipage*, *pettikits*, *divle*. Since their time the pronunciation of English in good society, whose usage is the only acknowledged law in that matter, and the grammatical construction of the language habitual in that same good society, has become such as would have challenged the severest criticism, if we had ventured upon it in my father's house.

The unsuccessful partnership of my aunts was dissolved. Mrs. Kemble found the country intolerably dull, declared that the grass and trees made her sick, and fixed her abode in Leamington, then a small, unpretending, pretty country town, which (principally on account of the ability, reputation, and influence of its celebrated and popular resident physician, Dr. Jephson) was a sort of aristocratic-invalid Kur Residenz, and has since expanded into a thriving, populous, showy, semi-fashionable, Anglo-American watering-place in summer, and hunting-place in winter. Mrs. Kemble found the Leamington of her day a satisfactory abode; the Æsculapius, whose especial shrine it was, became her intimate friend; the society was comparatively restricted and select; and the neighborhood, with Warwick Castle, Stoneleigh Abbey, and Guy's Cliff, full of state and ancientry, within a morning's drive, was (which she cared less for) lovely in every direction. Mrs. Whitelock betook herself to a really rural life in a cottage in the beautiful neighborhood of Addlestone, in Surrey, where she lived in much simple content, bequeathing her small mansion and estate, at her death, to my mother, who passed there the last two years of her life and died there. I never returned to Heath Farm again; sometimes, as I steam by Watford, the image of the time I spent there rises again before me, but I pass from it at forty miles an hour, and it passed from me upwards of forty years ago.

We were now occupying the last of the various houses which for a series of years we inhabited at Bayswater; it belonged to a French Jew diamond seller, and was arranged and fitted up with the peculiar tastefulness which seems innate across the Channel, and inimitable even on the English side of it. There was one peculiarity in the drawing-room of this house which I have always particularly liked: a low chimney with a window over it, the shutter to which was a sliding panel of looking-glass, so that both by day and candle light the effect was equally pretty.

At this time I was promoted to the dignity of a bedroom "to myself," which I was able to make into a small study, the privacy of which I enjoyed immensely, as well as the window opening above our suburban bit of garden, and the sloping meadows beyond it. The following letters, written at this time to my friend Miss S–, describe the interests and occupations of my life. It was in the May of 1827. I was between sixteen and seventeen, which will naturally account for the characteristics of these epistles.

Bayswater, May, 1827.

Dear H–:

I fear you will think me forgetful and unkind in not having answered your last letter; but if you do, you are mistaken—nor ungrateful, which my silence, after the kind interest you have taken in me and mine, seems to be. But when I tell you that

besides the many things that have occupied my mind connected with the present situation of our affairs, my hands have been full of work nearly as dismal as my thoughts—mourning—you will easily understand and excuse the delay.

Do not be alarmed; the person for whom we are in black has been so little known to me since my childhood, was so old and infirm, and so entirely cheerful, resigned, and even desirous of leaving this world, that few, even of those who knew and loved him better than I did, could, without selfishness, lament his release. Mr. Twiss, the father of my cousin Horace, is dead lately; and it is of him that I speak. He has unfortunately left three daughters, who, though doing well for themselves in the world, will now feel a sad void in the circle of their home affections and interests.

And now, dear H–, for myself, or ourselves, rather; for, as you may well suppose, my whole thoughts are taken up with our circumstances.

I believe in my last I told you pretty nearly all I knew, or indeed any of us knew, of our affairs; the matter is now much clearer, and not a whit pleasanter.

It seems that my father, as proprietor of Covent Garden Theater, in consequence of this lawsuit and the debts which encumber the concern, is liable at any time to be called upon for twenty-seven thousand pounds; which, for a man who can not raise five thousand, is not a pleasant predicament. On the other hand, Mr. Harris, our adversary, and joint proprietor with my father, is also liable to enormous demands, if the debts should be insisted upon at present.

The creditors have declared that they are entirely satisfied that my father, and Messrs. Forbes and Willett, the other partners, have done every thing with respect to them which honorable men could do, and offer to wait till some compromise can be made with Mr. Harris, who, it is thought, will be willing to enter into any arrangement rather than be irretrievably ruined, as we all must be unless some agreement takes place between the proprietors. In the meantime, the lawyers have advised our party to appeal from the decision of the Vice-Chancellor. Amid all this perplexity and trouble, we have had the satisfaction of hearing that John and Henry are both doing well; we received a letter from the latter a short time ago, full of affection and kindness to us all. I wish you could have seen my father's countenance as he read it, and with what fondness and almost gratitude he kissed dear Henry's name, while the tears were standing in his eyes. I can not help thinking sometimes that my father deserved a less hard and toilsome existence.

He has resolved that, come what may, he will keep those boys at their respective schools, if he can by any means compass it; and if (which I fear is the case) he finds Bury St. Edmunds too expensive, we shall remove to Westminster, in order that Henry's education may not suffer from our circumstances. Last Thursday was my father's benefit, and a very indifferent one, which I think is rather hard, considering that he really slaves night and day, and every night and every day, in that theater. Cecilia Siddons and I have opened a poetical correspondence; she writes very prettily indeed. Perhaps, had she not had such a bad subject as myself to treat of, I might have said more of her verses. You will be sorry to hear that not only my poor mother's health, but what is almost as precious, her good spirits, have been dreadfully affected by all her anxiety; indeed, her nerves have been so utterly deranged that she has been alternately deaf and blind, and sometimes both, for the last fortnight. Thank Heaven she is now recovering!

Craven Hill, Bayswater, May, 1827.

My dearest H–:

I received your letter the day before yesterday, and felt very much obliged to you for it, and was particularly interested by your description of Kenilworth, round which Walter Scott's admirable novel has cast a halo of romance forever; for many who would have cared little about it as the residence of Leicester, honored for some days by the presence of Elizabeth, will remember with a thrill of interest and pity the night poor Amy Robsart passed there, and the scene between her, Leicester, and the queen, when that prince of villains, Varney, claims her as his wife. But in spite of the romantic and historical associations belonging to the place, I do not think it would have "inspired my muse."

Of our affairs I know nothing, except that we are going to remove to Westminster, on account of Henry's schooling, as soon as we can part with this house.

You will be glad to hear that my mother is a great deal better, though still suffering from nervousness. She desires to be most kindly remembered to you and to my aunt Kemble, and would feel very much obliged to you if you can get from Mrs. Kemble the name and address of the man who built her pony carriage. Do this, and send it in the next letter you write to me, which must be long, but not "long a-coming."

I am glad you like Miss W–, but take care not to like her better than me; and I am very glad you think of Heath Farm sometimes, for there, I know, I must be in some corner or other of the picture, be the foreground what it may. At this time, when the hawthorn is all out and the nightingales are singing, even here, I think of the quantities of May we gathered for my wreaths, and the little scrap of the nightingale's song we used to catch on the lawn between tea and bedtime. I have been writing a great deal of poetry—at least I mean it for such, and I hope it is not all very bad, as my father has expressed himself surprised and pleased at some things I read him lately. I wish I could send you some of my perpetrations, but they are for the most part so fearfully long that it is impossible. You ask about my uncle's monument: I can tell you nothing about it at present; it is where the memory of the public, the perseverance of the projectors, Flaxman's genius, and John Kemble's fame are. Do you know where that is? No more do I.

Craven Hill, Bayswater, June 8, 1827.

My dear H–:

I am sure you will rejoice with us all when I inform you that John has at length exerted himself successfully, and has obtained one of the highest literary honors conferred by Cambridge on its students: these are his tutor's very words, therefore I leave you to imagine how delighted and grateful we all are; indeed, the day we received the intelligence, we all, with my father at our head, looked more like hopeful candidates for Bedlam than any thing else. My poor father jumped, and clapped his hands, and kissed the letter, like a child; as my mother says, "I am glad he has one gleam of sunshine, at least;" he sadly wanted it, and I know nothing that could have given him so much pleasure. Pray tell my aunt Kemble of it. I dare say she will be glad to hear it. [My brother's tutor was Mr. Peacock, the celebrated mathematician, well known at Cambridge as one of the most eminent members of the university, and a private tutor of whom all his pupils were deservedly proud; even those who, like my brother John, cultivated the classical studies in preference to the severe scientific subjects of which Mr. Peacock was so illustrious a master. His praise of my brother was regretful, though most ungrudging, for his own sympathy was entirely

with the intellectual pursuits for which Cambridge was peculiarly famous, as the mathematical university, in contradistinction to the classical tendency supposed to prevail at this time among the teachers and students of Oxford.]

And now let me thank you for your last long letter, and the detailed criticism it contained of my lines; if they oftener passed through such a wholesome ordeal, I should probably scribble less than I do. You ask after my novel of "Françoise de Foix," and my translation of Sismondi's History; the former may, perhaps, be finished some time these next six years; the latter is, and has been, in Dr. Malkin's hands ever since I left Heath Farm. What you say of scriptural subjects I do not always think true; for instance, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept," does not appear to me to have lost much beauty by Byron's poetical paraphrase. We are really going to leave this pleasant place, and take up our abode in Westminster; how I shall regret my dear little room, full of flowers and books, and with its cheerful view. Enfin il n'y faut plus penser. I have, luckily, the faculty of easily accommodating myself to circumstances, and though sorry to leave my little hermitage, I shall soon take root in the next place. With all my dislike to moving, my great wish is to travel; but perhaps that is not an absolute inconsistency, for what I wish is never to remain long enough in a place to take root, or, having done so, never to be transplanted. I am writing a journal, and its pages, like our many pleasant hours of conversation, are a whimsical medley of the sad, the sober, the gay, the good, the bad, and the ridiculous; not at all the sort of serious, solemn journal you would write.
Craven Hill, Bayswater, –, 1827.

My dearest H–:

I am afraid you are wondering once more whether I have the gout in my hands; but so many circumstances have latterly arisen to occupy my time and attention that I have had but little leisure for letter-writing. You are now once more comfortably re-established in your little turret chamber [Miss S–'s room in her home, Ardgillan Castle], which I intend to come and storm some day, looking over your pleasant lawn to the beautiful sea and hills. I ought to envy you, and yet, when I look round my own little snuggery, which is filled with roses and the books I love, and where not a ray of sun penetrates, though it is high noon and burning hot, I only envy you your own company, which I think would be a most agreeable addition to the pleasantness of my little room. I am sadly afraid, however, that I shall soon be called upon to leave it, for though our plans are still so unsettled as to make it quite impossible to say what will be our destination, it is, I think, almost certain that we shall leave this place.

We have had Mrs. Henry Siddons, with her youngest daughter, staying with us for a short time; she is now going on through Paris to Switzerland, on account of my cousin's delicate health, which renders Scotland an unsafe residence for her. John is also at home just now, which, as you may easily believe, is an invaluable gain to me; I rather think, however, that my mother is not of that opinion, for he talks and thinks of nothing but politics, and she has a great dread of my becoming imbued with his mania; a needless fear, I think, however, for though I am willing and glad to listen to his opinions and the arguments of his favorite authors, I am never likely to study them myself, and my interest in the whole subject will cease with his departure for Cambridge.

Henry returned from Bury St. Edmunds, and my father left us for Lancaster last night, and we are now in daily expectation of departing for Weybridge, so that the last fortnight has been one continual bustle.

I have had another reason for not writing to you, which I have only just made up my mind to tell you. Dick – has been taking my likeness, or rather has begun to do so. I thought, dear H–, that you would like to have this sketch, and I was in hopes that the first letter you received in Ireland from me would contain it; but, alas! Dick is as inconstant and capricious as a genius need be, and there lies my fac-simile in a state of non-conclusion; they all tell me it is very like, but it does appear to me so pretty that I am divided between satisfaction and incredulity. My father, I lament to say, left us last night in very bad spirits. I never saw him so depressed, and feared that my poor mother would suffer to-day from her anxiety about him; however, she is happily pretty well to-day, and I trust will soon, what with Weybridge and pike-fishing, recover her health and spirits entirely.

I suspect this will be the last summer we shall spend at Weybridge, as we are going to give our cottage up, I believe. I shall regret it extremely for my mother; it is agreeable to and very good for her. I do not care much about it for myself; indeed, I care very little where I go; I do not like leaving any place, but the tie of habit, which is quickly formed and strong in me, once broken, I can easily accommodate myself to the next change, which, however, I always pray may be the last. My mother and myself had yesterday a serious, and to me painful, conversation on the necessity of not only not hating society, but tolerating and mixing in it. She and my father have always been disinclined to it, but their disinclination has descended to me in the shape of active dislike, and I feel sometimes inclined to hide myself, to escape sitting down and communing with my fellow-creatures after the fashion that calls itself social intercourse. I can't help fancying (which, however, *may* be a great mistake) that the hours spent in my own room reading and writing are better employed than if devoted to people and things in which I feel no interest whatever, and do not know how to pretend the contrary.

I must do justice to my mother, however, for any one more reasonable, amiable, and kind, in this as in most respects, can not exist than herself; but nevertheless, when I went to bed last night I sat by my open window, looking at the moon and thinking of my social duties, and then scribbled endless doggerel in a highly Byronic mood to deliver my mind upon the subject, after which, feeling amazingly better, I went to bed and slept profoundly, satisfied that I had given "society" a death-blow. But really, jesting apart, the companionship of my own family—those I live with, I mean—satisfies me entirely, and I have not the least desire for any other.

Good-by, my dearest H–; do not punish me for not writing sooner by not answering this for two months; but be a nice woman and write very soon to yours ever,
Fanny.

P.S.—I am reading the memoirs of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, la Grande Mademoiselle, written by herself: if you never read them, do; they are very interesting and amusing.

The "Dick" mentioned in this letter was the nephew of my godmother, Miss A– W–, of Stafford, and son of Colonel –, a Staffordshire gentleman of moderate means, who went to Germany and settled at Darmstadt, for the sake of giving a complete education in foreign languages and accomplishments to his daughters. His eldest son was in the Church. They resided at the little German court till the young girls became young women, remarkable for their talents and accomplishments. In the course of their long residence at Darmstadt they had become intimate with the reigning duke and his family,

whose small royalty admitted of such friendly familiarity with well-born and well-bred foreigners. But when Colonel – brought his wife and daughters back to England, like most other English people who try a similar experiment, the change from being decided *somebodies* in the court circle of a German principality (whose sovereign was chiefly occupied, it is true, with the government of his opera-house) to being decided *nobodies* in the huge mass of obscure, middle-class English gentility, was all but intolerable to them.

The peculiar gift of their second son, my eccentric friend Richard, was a genius for painting, which might have won him an honored place among English artists, had he ever chosen to join their ranks as a competitor for fame and fortune.

Eastlands Cottage, Weybridge, –, 1827.

My dear H–:

I wrote to you immediately upon our arriving here, which is now nearly a month ago, but having received no answer, and not having heard from you for some time, I conjecture that our charming post-office has done as it did last year, and kept my letters to itself. I therefore take the opportunity, which my brother's departure for town to-morrow gives me, of writing to you and having my letter posted in London. John's going to town is an extreme loss to me, for here we are more thrown together and companionable than we can be in London. His intellectual occupations and interests engross him very much, and though always very interesting to me, are seldom discussed with or communicated to me as freely there as they are here—I suppose for want of better fellowship. I have latterly, also, summoned up courage enough to request him to walk with me; and to my some surprise and great satisfaction, instead of the "I can't, I am really so busy," he has acquiesced, and we have had one or two very pleasant long strolls together. He is certainly a very uncommon person, and I admire, perhaps too enthusiastically, his great abilities.

My father is in Paris, where he was to arrive yesterday, and where to-morrow he will act in the first regularly and decently organized English theater that the French ever saw. He is very nervous, and we, as you may easily conceive, very anxious about it; when next I write to you I will let you know all that we hear of the result. I must repeat some part of my last letter, in case you did not receive it. We have taken a house in James Street, Buckingham Gate, Westminster, which appears to be in every way a desirable and convenient abode; in itself it is comfortable and cheerful, and its nearness to Henry's school and comparative nearness to the theatre, together with its view over the park, and (though last, not least) its moderate rent, make up a mass of combined advantages which few other situations that we could afford can present.

I am extremely busy, dearest H–, and extremely elated about my play; I know I mentioned it before to you, but you may have reckoned it as one of the soap-bubbles which I am so fond of blowing, admiring, and forgetting; however, when I tell you that I have finished three acts of it, and that the proprietors of Covent Garden have offered me, if it succeeds, two hundred pounds (the price Miss Mitford's "Foscari" brought her), you will agree that I have some reason to be proud as well as pleased.

As nobody but myself can give you any opinion of it, you must be content to take my own, making all allowances for etc., etc., etc. I think, irrespective of age or sex, it is not a bad play—perhaps, considering both, a tolerably fair one; there is some good writing in it, and good situations; the latter I owe to suggestions of my mother's, who is endowed with what seems to me really a science by itself, i.e. the knowledge of producing dramatic effect; more important to a playwright than

even true delineation of character or beautiful poetry, in spite of what Alfieri says: "Un attore che dirà bene, delle cose belle si farà ascoltare per forza." But the "ben dire cose belle" will not make a play without striking situations and effects succeed, for all that; at any rate with an English audience of the present day. Moreover (but this, as well as everything about my play, must be *entre nous* for the present), my father has offered me either to let me sell my play to a bookseller, or to buy it for the theatre at fifty pounds.

Fifty pounds is the very utmost that any bookseller would give for a successful play, *mais en revanche*, by selling my play to the theater it cannot be read or known as a literary work, and as to make a name for myself as a writer is the aim of my ambition, I think I shall decline his offer. My dearest H–, this quantity about myself and my pursuits will, I am afraid, appear very egotistical to you, but I rely on your unchangeable affection for me to find some interest in what is interesting me so much.

Always you most affectionate
Fanny.

CHAPTER VII

The success of the English theater in Paris was quite satisfactory; and all the most eminent members of the profession—Kean, Young, Macready, and my father—went over in turn to exhibit to the Parisian public Shakespeare the Barbarian, illustrated by his barbarian fellow-countrymen. I do not remember hearing of any very eminent actress joining in that worthy enterprise; but Miss Smithson, a young lady with a figure and face of Hibernian beauty, whose superfluous native accent was no drawback to her merits in the esteem of her French audience, represented to them the heroines of the English tragic drama; the incidents of which, infinitely more startling than any they were used to, invested their fair victim with an amazing power over her foreign critics, and she received from them, in consequence, a rather disproportionate share of admiration—due, perhaps, more to the astonishing circumstances in which she appeared before them than to the excellence of her acting under them.

One of the most enthusiastic admirers of the English representations said to my father, "Ah! parlez moi d'Othello! voilà, voilà la passion, la tragédie. Dieu! que j'aime cette pièce! il y a tant de *remue-ménage*."

A few rash and superficial criticisms were hardly to be avoided; but in general, my father has often said, in spite of the difficulty of the foreign language, and the strangeness of the foreign form of thought and feeling and combination of incident, his Parisian audience never appeared to him to miss the finer touches or more delicate and refined shades of his acting; and in this respect he thought them superior to his own countrymen. Lamartine and Victor Hugo had already proclaimed the enfranchisement of French poetical thought from the rigid rule of classical authority; and all the enthusiastic believers in the future glories of the "Muse Romantique" went to the English theater, to be amazed, if not daunted, by the breadth of horizon and height of empyrean which her wings might sweep, and into which she might soar, "puisque Shakespeare l'a bien osé."

St. James Street, Buckingham Gate, October 11, 1827,

My dearest H–,

I do not think you would have been surprised at my delay in answering your last, when I told you that on arriving here I found that all my goods and chattels had been (according to my own desire) only removed hither, and that their arrangement and bestowal still remained to be effected by myself; and when I tell you that I have settled all these matters, and moreover *finished my play*, I think you will excuse my not having answered you sooner. Last Monday, having in the morning achieved the termination of the fourth act, and finding that my father did not act on Tuesday, I resolved, if possible, to get it finished in order to read it to him on Tuesday evening. So on Monday evening at six o'clock I sat down to begin my fifth act, and by half-past eleven had completed my task; I am thus minute because I know you will not think these details tiresome, and also because, even if it succeeds and is praised and admired, I shall never feel so happy as when my father greeted my entrance into the drawing-room with, "Is it done, my love? I shall be the happiest man alive if it succeeds!"

On Tuesday evening I read it to them, and I was so encouraged by the delighted looks my father and mother were continually exchanging, that I believe I read it with more effect than they either of them had thought me capable of. When it was done I was most richly rewarded, for they all seemed so pleased with me and so proud of me, that the most inordinate author's vanity would have been satisfied. And my dear mother, oh, how she looked at me!—forgive me, dear, and grant some little

indulgence to my exultation. I thought I deserved some praise, but thrice my deserts were showered upon me by those I love above everything in the world.

When commendation and congratulation had a little given way to reflection, my mother and John entreated my father not to let the play be acted, or, if he did, to have it published first; for they said (and their opinion has been sanctioned by several literary men) that the work as a literary production (I repeat what they say, mind) has merit enough to make it desirable that the public should judge of it as a poetical composition before it is submitted to the mangling necessary for the stage.

Of course, my task being finished, I have nothing more to do with it; nor do I care whether it is published first or after, provided only it may be acted: though I dare say that process may not prove entirely satisfactory to me either; for though Mr. Young and my father would thoroughly embody my conception of the parts intended for them, yet there is a woman's part which, considering the materials history has furnished, ought to be a very fine one—Louisa of Savoy; and it must be cut down to the capacity of a second-rate actress. The character would have been the sort of one for Mrs. Siddons; how I wish she was yet in a situation to afford it the high preferment of her acceptance!

My father has obtained a most unequivocal success in Paris, the more flattering as it was rather doubtful, and the excellent Parisians not only received him very well, but forthwith threw themselves into a headlong *furor* for Shakespeare and Charles Kemble, which, although they might not improbably do the same to-morrow for two dancing dogs, *we* are quite willing to attribute to the merits of the poet and his interpreter. The French papers have been profuse in their praises of both, and some of our own have quoted their commendations. My mother is, I think, recovering, though slowly, from her long illness. She is less deaf, and rather less blind; but for the general state of her health, time, and time alone, will, I am sure, restore it entirely. I have just seen the dress that my father had made abroad for his part in my play: a bright amber-colored *velours épinglé*, with a border of rich silver embroidery; this, together with a cloak of violet velvet trimmed with imitation sable. The fashion is what you see in all the pictures and prints of Francis I. My father is very anxious, I think, to act the play; my mother, to have it published before it is acted; and I sit and hear it discussed and praised and criticised, only longing (like a "silly wench," as my mother calls me when I confess as much to her) to see my father in his lovely dress and hear the *alarums of my fifth act*.

I am a little mad, I suppose, and my letter a little tipsy, I dare say, but I am ever your most affectionate

Fanny.

16 St. James Street, Buckingham Gate, Westminster, October 21, 1827.

My dear H–,

Your letter was short and sweet, but none the sweeter for being short. I should have thought no one could have been worse provided than myself with news or letter chit-chit, and yet I think my letters are generally longer than yours; brevity, in you, is a fault; do not be guilty of it again: "car du reste," as Madame de Sévigné says, "votre style est parfait." John returned to Cambridge on Thursday night. He is a great loss to me, for though I have seen but little of him since our return to town, that little is too much to lose of one we love. He is an excellent fellow in every way, and in the way of abilities he is particularly to my mind. We all miss him very much; however, his absence will be broken now by visits to London, in order to keep his

term [about this time my brother was entered at the Inner Temple, I think], so that we shall occasionally enjoy his company for a day or two. I should like to tell you something about my play, but unluckily have nothing to tell; everything about it is as undecided as when last I wrote to you. It is in the hands of the copyist of Covent Garden, but what its ultimate fate is to be I know not. If it is decided that it is to be brought out on the stage before publication, that will not take place at present, because this is a very unfavorable time of year. If I can send it to Ireland, tell me how I can get it conveyed to you, and I will endeavor to do so. I should like you to read it, but oh, *how* I should like to go and see it acted with you! I am now full of thoughts of writing a comedy, and have drawn out the plan of one—plot, acts, and scenes in due order—already; and I mean to make it Italian and mediæval, for the sake of having one of those bewitching creatures, a jester, in it; I have an historical one in my play, Triboulet, whom I have tried to make an interesting as well as an amusing personage.

My mother, by the aid of a blister and *my play*, is, I think, recovering, though slowly, from her illness; she is still, though, in a state of great suffering, which is by no means alleviated by being unable to write, read, work, or occupy herself in any manner.

We have been to the play pretty regularly twice a week for the last three weeks, and shall continue to do so during the whole winter; which is a plan I much approve of. I am very fond of going to the play, and Kean, Young, and my father make one of Shakespeare's plays something well worth seeing. I saw the "Merchant of Venice" the other evening, for the first time, and returned home a violent *Keanite*. That man is an extraordinary creature! Some of the things he did, appeared, on reflection, questionable to my judgment and open to criticism; but while under the influence of his amazing power of passion it is impossible to reason, analyze, or do anything but surrender one's self to his forcible appeals to one's emotions. He entirely divested Shylock of all poetry or elevation, but invested it with a concentrated ferocity that made one's blood curdle. He seemed to me to combine the supernatural malice of a fiend with the base reality of the meanest humanity. His passion is prosaic, but all the more intensely terrible for that very reason. I am to see him to-morrow in "Richard III.," and, though I never saw the play before, am afraid I shall be disappointed, because Richard III. is a Plantagenet Prince, and should be a royal villain, and I am afraid Mr. Kean will not have the innate *majesty* which I think belongs to the part; however, we shall see, and when next I write I will tell you how it impressed me.

You deserve that I should bestow all my tediousness upon you, for loving me as well as you do. Mrs. Harry Siddons and her daughter are here for two or three days, on their return from their tour through Switzerland. Mrs. Harry is all that is excellent, though she does not strike me as particularly clever; and Lizzy is a very pretty, very good, very sweet, very amiable girl. Her brother, my cousin, the midshipman, is here too, having come up from Portsmouth to meet his mother and sister, so that the house is full. Think of that happy girl having travelled all through Switzerland, seen the Jungfrau—Manfred's mountain—been in two violent storms at night on the lakes, and telling me placidly that "she liked it all very well." Oh dear, oh dear! how queerly Heaven does distribute privileges! Good-by, dear.

Yours ever,

Fanny.

16 St. James Street, Buckingham Gate, December, 1827.

My dearest H–,

My heart is full of joy, and I write that you may rejoice with me; our dear John has distinguished himself greatly, but lest my words should seem sisterly and exaggerated, I will repeat what Mr. Peacock, his tutor, wrote to my father: "He has covered himself with glory. Such an oration as his has not been heard for many years in Cambridge, and it was as tastefully and modestly delivered as it was well written." This has made us all *very, very* happy, and though the first news of it overcame my poor mother, whose nerves are far from firm, she soon recovered, and we are impatiently expecting his return from college. My play is at present being pruned by my father, and will therefore not occupy my thoughts again till it comes out, which I hope will be at Easter. I did not write sooner, because I had nothing to say; but now that this joy about my brother has come to me, *je te l'envoie*. Since last you heard from me I have seen the great West India Dock and the Thames Tunnel. Oh, H–, "que c'est une jolie chose que l'homme!" Annihilated by any one of the elements if singly opposed to its power, he by his genius yet brings their united forces into bondage, and compels obedience from all their manifold combined strength. We penetrate the earth, we turn the course of rivers, we exalt the valleys and bow down the mountains; and we die and return to our dust, and they remain and remember us no more. Often enough, indeed, the names of great inventors and projectors have been overshadowed or effaced by mere finishers of their work or adapters of their idea, who have reaped the honor and emolument due to an obscure originator, who passes away from the world, his rightful claim to its admiration and gratitude unknown or unacknowledged. But these obey the law of their being; they cannot but do the work God's inspiration calls them to.

But I must tell you what this tunnel is like, or at least try to do so. You enter, by flights of stairs, the first door, and find yourself on a circular platform which surrounds the top of a well or shaft, of about two hundred feet in circumference and five hundred in depth. This well is an immense iron frame of cylindrical form, filled in with bricks; it was constructed on level ground, and then, by some wonderful mechanical process, sunk into the earth. In the midst of this is a steam engine, and above, or below, as far as your eye can see, huge arms are working up and down, while the creaking, crashing, whirring noises, and the swift whirling of innumerable wheels all round you, make you feel for the first few minutes as if you were going distracted. I should have liked to look much longer at all these beautiful, wise, working creatures, but was obliged to follow the last of the party through all the machinery, down little wooden stairs and along tottering planks, to the bottom of the well. On turning round at the foot of the last flight of steps through an immense dark arch, as far as sight could reach stretched a vaulted passage, smooth earth underfoot, the white arches of the roof beyond one another lengthening on and on in prolonged vista, the whole lighted by a line of gas lamps, and as bright, almost, as if it were broad day. It was more like one of the long avenues of light that lead to the abodes of the genii in fairy tales, than anything I had ever beheld. The profound stillness of the place, which was first broken by my father's voice, to which the vaulted roof gave extraordinary and startling volume of tone, the indescribable feeling of subterranean vastness, the amazement and delight I experienced, quite overcame me, and I was obliged to turn from the friend who was explaining everything to me, to cry and ponder in silence. How I wish you had been with us, dear H–! Our name is always worth something to us: Mr. Brunel, who was superintending some of the works, came to my father and offered to conduct us to where the workmen were employed

—an unusual favor, which of course delighted us all. So we left our broad, smooth path of light, and got into dark passages, where we stumbled among coils of ropes and heaps of pipes and piles of planks, and where ground springs were welling up and flowing about in every direction, all which was very strange. As you may have heard, the tunnel caved in once, and let the Thames in through the roof; and in order that, should such an accident occur again, no lives may be lost, an iron frame has been constructed—a sort of cage, divided into many compartments, in each of which a man with his lantern and his tools is placed—and as they clear the earth away this iron frame is moved onward and advances into new ground. All this was wonderful and curious beyond measure, but the appearance of the workmen themselves, all begrimed, with their brawny arms and legs bare, some standing in black water up to their knees, others laboriously shovelling the black earth in their cages (while they sturdily sung at their task), with the red, murky light of links and lanterns flashing and flickering about them, made up the most striking picture you can conceive. As we returned I remained at the bottom of the stairs last of all, to look back at the beautiful road to Hades, wishing I might be left behind, and then we reascended, through wheels, pulleys, and engines, to the upper day. After this we rowed down the river to the docks, lunched on board a splendid East Indiaman, and came home again. I think it is better for me, however, to look at the trees, and the sun, moon, and stars, than at tunnels and docks; they make me too *humanity proud*.

I am reading "Vivian Grey." Have you read it? It is very clever.

Ever your most affectionate
Fanny.
16 St. James Street, Buckingham Gate, January, 1828.

Dearest H–,

I jumped, in despite of a horrid headache, when I saw your letter. Indeed, if you knew how the sight of your handwriting delights me, you would not talk of lack of matter; for what have I to tell you of more interest for you, than the health and proceedings of those you love must be to me?

Dear John is come home with his trophy. He is really a highly gifted creature; but I sometimes fear that the passionate eagerness with which he *pursues his pursuit*, the sort of frenzy he has about politics, and his constant excitement about political questions, may actually injure his health, and the vehemence with which he speaks and writes in support of his peculiar views will perhaps endanger his future prospects.

He is neither tory nor whig, but a radical, a utilitarian, an adorer of Bentham, a worshiper of Mill, an advocate for vote by ballot, an opponent of hereditary aristocracy, the church establishment, the army and navy, which he deems sources of unnecessary national expense; though who is to take care of our souls and bodies, if the three last-named institutions are done away with, I do not quite see. Morning, noon, and night he is writing whole volumes of arguments against them, full of a good deal of careful study and reading, and in a close, concise, forcible style, which is excellent in itself, and the essays are creditable to his laborious industry; but they will not teach him mathematics, or give him a scholarship or his degree. That he will distinguish himself hereafter I have no doubt; but at present he is engrossed by a passion (for it seems to me nothing less) which occupies his mind and time, to the detriment, if not the exclusion, of all other studies.

I feel almost ashamed of saying anything about myself, after the two or three scoldings you have sent me of late. Perhaps while my blue devils found vent in ridiculous verses, they did not much matter; but their having prompted me lately to throw between seven and eight hundred pages (about a year's work) into the fire, seems to me now rather deplorable. You perhaps will say that the fire is no bad place for seven or eight hundred pages of my manuscript; but I had spent time and pains on them, and I think they should not have been thrown away in a foolish fit of despondency. I am at present not very well. I do not mean that I have any specific illness, but headaches and side-aches, so that I am one moment in a state of feverish excitement and the next nervous and low-spirited; this is not a good account, but a true one.

I have no "new friends," dearest H–; perhaps because my dislike to society makes me stupid and disagreeable when I am in it. I have made one acquaintance, which might perhaps grow to a friendship were it not that distance and its attendant inconveniences have hitherto prevented my becoming more intimate with the lady I refer to. She is a married woman; her name is Jameson. She is an Irishwoman, and the authoress of the "Diary of an Ennuyée." I like her very much; she is extremely clever; I wish I knew her better. I have been to one dance and one or two dinners lately, but to tell you the truth, dear H–, the old people naturally treat me after my years, as a young person, and the young people (perhaps from my self-conceit) seem to me stupid and uninteresting, and so, you see, I do not like society. Cecilia Siddons is out of town at present, and I have not seen her for some time. You may have heard that the theatre has gained a lawsuit against Sinclair, the celebrated singer, by a reversal of the former verdict in the case. We were not even aware that such a process was going on, and when my father came home and said, "We have won our cause," my mother and myself started up, supposing he meant *the* chancery suit. That, unfortunately, is still pending, pending, like the sword of Damocles, over our heads, banishing all security for the present or hope for the future. The theatre is, I believe, doing very well just now, and we go pretty often to the play, which I like. I have lately been seeing my father playing Falstaff several times, and I think it is an excellent piece of acting; he gives all the humor without too much coarseness, or *charging*, and through the whole, according to the fat knight's own expression, he is "Sir John to all the world," with a certain courtly deportment which prevents him from degenerating into the mere gross buffoon. They are in sad want of a woman at both the theatres. I've half a mind to give Covent Garden one. Don't be surprised. I have something to say to you on this subject, but have not room for it in this letter. My father is just now acting in the north of England. We expect him back in a fortnight. God bless you, dear H–.

Yours ever,
Fanny.

The vehement passion of political interest which absorbed my brother at this time was in truth affecting the whole of English society almost as passionately. In a letter written in 1827, the Duke of Wellington, after speaking of the strong partisan sentiment which was agitating the country, added, "The ladies and all the youth are with us;" that is, with the Tory party, which, under his leadership, was still an active power of obstruction to the imminent changes to which both he and his party were presently to succumb. His ministry was a period of the stormiest excitement in the political world, and the importance of the questions at issue—Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform—powerfully affected men's minds in the ranks of life least allied to the governing class. Even in a home so obscure and so devoted to other pursuits and interests as ours, the spirit of the times made its way,

and our own peculiar occupations became less interesting to us than the intense national importance of the public questions which were beginning to convulse the country from end to end. About this time I met with a book which produced a great and not altogether favorable effect upon my mind (the blame resting entirely with me, I think, and not with what I read). I had become moody and fantastical for want of solid wholesome mental occupation, and the excess of imaginative stimulus in my life, and was possessed with a wild desire for an existence of lonely independence, which seemed to my exaggerated notions the only one fitted to the intellectual development in which alone I conceived happiness to consist. Mrs. Jameson's "Diary of an Ennuyée," which I now read for the first time, added to this desire for isolation and independence such a passionate longing to go to Italy, that my brain was literally filled with chimerical projects of settling in the south of Europe, and there leading a solitary life of literary labor, which, together with the fame I hoped to achieve by it, seemed to me the only worthy purpose of existence. While under the immediate spell of her fascinating book, it was of course very delightful to me to make Mrs. Jameson's acquaintance, which I did at the house of our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Basil Montagu. They were the friends of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Proctor (Barry Cornwall, who married Mrs. Montagu's daughter), and were themselves individually as remarkable, if not as celebrated, as many of their more famous friends. Basil Montagu was the son of the Earl of Sandwich and the beautiful Miss Wray, whose German lover murdered her at the theatre by shooting her in her private box, and then blew his own brains out. Mr. Montagu inherited ability, eccentricity, and personal beauty, from his parents. His only literary productions that I am acquainted with were a notice of Bacon and his works, which he published in a small pamphlet volume, and another volume of extracts from some of the fine prose writers of the seventeenth century. I have a general impression that his personal intercourse gave a far better idea of his intellectual ability than anything that he achieved either in his profession or in letters.

His conversation was extremely vivid and sparkling, and the quaint eccentricity of his manner added to the impression of originality which he produced upon one. Very unlike the common run of people as he was, however, he was far less so than his wife, who certainly was one of the most striking and remarkable persons I have known. Her appearance was extraordinary: she was much above middle height, with a beautiful figure and face, the outline of which was of classical purity and severity, while her whole carriage and appearance was dignified and majestic to the highest degree. I knew her for upwards of thirty years, and never saw her depart from a peculiar style of dress, which she had adopted with the finest instinct of what was personally becoming as well as graceful and beautiful in itself. She was so superior in this point to her sex generally, that, having found that which was undoubtedly her own proper individual costume, she never changed the fashion of it. Her dress deserved to be called (what all dress should be) a lesser fine art, and seemed the proper expression in clothes of her personality, and really a part of herself. It was a long, open robe, over an underskirt of the same material and color (always moonlight silver gray, amethyst purple, or black silk or satin of the richest quality), trimmed with broad velvet facings of the same color, the sleeves plain and tight fitting from shoulder to wrist, and the bosom covered with a fine lace half-body, which came, like the wimple of old mediæval portraits, up round her throat, and seemed to belong in material and fashion to the clear chin-stay which followed the noble contour of her face, and the picturesque cap which covered, without concealing, her auburn hair and the beautiful proportions of her exquisite head.

This lady knew no language but her own, and to that ignorance (which one is tempted in these days occasionally to think desirable) she probably owed the remarkable power and purity with which she used her mother tongue. Her conversation and her letters were perfect models of spoken and written English. Her marriage with Mr. Montagu was attended with some singular circumstances, the knowledge of which I owe to herself. She was a Yorkshire widow lady, and came with her only child (a little girl) to visit some friends in London, with whom Basil Montagu was intimate. Mrs. S– had probably occasionally been the subject of conversation between him and her hosts, when they were expecting her; for one evening soon after her arrival, as she was sitting partly concealed by one of

the curtains in the drawing-room, Basil Montagu came rapidly into the room, exclaiming (evidently not perceiving her), "Come, where is your wonderful Mrs. S–? I want to see her." During the whole evening he engrossed her attention and talked to her, and the next morning at breakfast she laughingly complained to her hosts that he had not been content with that, but had tormented her in dreams all night. "For," said she, "I dreamt I was going to be married to him, and the day before the wedding he came to me with a couple of boxes, and said solemnly, 'My dear Anne, I want to confide these relics to your keeping; in this casket are contained the bones of my dear first wife, and in this those of my dear second wife; do me the favor to take charge of them for me.'" The odd circumstance was that Basil Montagu had been married twice, and that when he made his third matrimonial venture, and was accepted by Mrs. S–, he appeared before her one day, and with much solemnity begged her to take charge of two caskets, in which were respectively treasured, not the bones, but the letters of her two predecessors. It is quite possible that he might have heard of her dream on the first night of their acquaintance, and amused himself with carrying it out when he was about to marry her; but when Mrs. Montagu told me the story I do not think she suggested any such rationalistic solution of the mystery. Her daughter, Anne S– (afterwards Mrs. Procter), who has been all my life a kind and excellent friend to me, inherited her remarkable mother's mental gifts and special mastery over her own language; but she added to these, as part of her own individuality, a power of sarcasm that made the tongue she spoke in and the tongue she spoke with two of the most formidable weapons any woman was ever armed with. She was an exceedingly kind-hearted person, perpetually occupied in good offices to the poor, the afflicted, her friends, and all whom she could in any way serve; nevertheless, such was her severity of speech, not unfrequently exercised on those she appeared to like best, that Thackeray, Browning, and Kinglake, who were all her friendly intimates, sometimes designated her as "Our Lady of Bitterness," and she is alluded to by that title in the opening chapter of "Eothen." A daily volume of wit and wisdom might have been gathered from her familiar talk, which was *crisp*, with suggestions of thought in the liveliest and highest form. Somebody asking her how she and a certain acrid critic of her acquaintance got on together, she replied, "Oh, very well; we sharpen each other like two knives." Being congratulated on the restoration of cordiality between herself and a friend with whom she had had some difference, "Oh yes," said she, "the cracked cup is mended, but it will never hold water again." Both these ladies, mother and daughter, had a most extraordinary habit of crediting their friends with their own wise and witty sayings; thus Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Procter would say, "Ah yes, you know, as you once said," and then would follow something so sparkling, profound, concise, incisive, and brilliant, that you remained, eyes and mouth open, gasping in speechless astonishment at the merit of the saying you never said (and couldn't have said if your life had depended on it), and the magnificence of the gift its author was making you. The princes in the Arabian Nights, who only gave you a ring worth thousands of sequins, were shabby fellows compared with these ladies, who declared that the diamonds and rubies of their own uttering had fallen from your lips. Persons who lay claim to the good things of others are not rare; those who do not only disclaim their own, but even credit others with them, are among the very rarest. In all my intercourse with the inhabitants of *two* worlds, I have known no similar instance of self-denial; and reflecting upon it, I have finally concluded that it was too superhuman to be a real virtue, and could proceed only from an exorbitant superabundance of natural gift, which made its possessors reckless, extravagant, and even unprincipled in the use of their wealth; they had wit enough for themselves, and to spare for all their friends, and these were many.

At an evening party at Mrs. Montagu's, in Bedford Square, in 1828, I first saw Mrs. Jameson. The Ennuyée, one is given to understand, dies; and it was a little vexatious to behold her sitting on a sofa, in a very becoming state of blooming *plumptitude*; but it was some compensation to be introduced to her. And so began a close and friendly intimacy, which lasted for many years, between myself and this very accomplished woman. She was the daughter of an Irish miniature-painter of the name of Murphy, and began life as a governess, in which capacity she educated the daughters of Lord H–, and went to Italy with the family of Mrs. R–. When I first knew her she had not long been

married to Mr. Robert Jameson, a union so ill-assorted that it restored Mrs. Jameson to the bosom of her own family, to whom her conjugal ill-fortune proved a blessing, for never did daughter and sister discharge with more loving fidelity the duties of those relationships. Her life was devoted to her parents while they lived, and after their death to her sisters and a young niece whom she adopted. Her various and numerous gifts and acquirements were exercised, developed, and constantly increased by a life of the most indefatigable literary study, research, and labor. Her reading was very extensive; her information, without being profound, was general; she was an excellent modern linguist, and perfectly well versed in the literature of her own country and of France, Germany, and Italy. She had an uncommon taste and talent for art, and as she added to her knowledge of the theory and history of painting familiar acquaintance with most of the fine public and private galleries in Europe, a keen sensibility to beauty, and considerable critical judgment, her works upon painting, and especially the exceedingly interesting volumes she published on the "Sacred and Legendary Art of the Romish Church," are at once delightful and interesting sources of information, and useful and accurate works of reference, to which considerable value is added by her own spirited and graceful etchings.

The literary works of hers in which I have a direct personal interest, are a charming book of essays on Shakespeare's female characters, entitled "Characteristics of Women," which she did me the honor to dedicate to me; some pages of letterpress written to accompany a series of sketches John Hayter made of me in the character of Juliet; and a notice of my sister's principal operatic performances after she came out on the stage. Mrs. Jameson at one time contemplated writing a life of my aunt Siddons, not thinking Boaden's biography of her satisfactory; in this purpose, however, she was effectually opposed by Campbell, who had undertaken the work, and, though he exhibited neither interest nor zeal in the fulfillment of his task, doggedly (in the manger) refused to relinquish it to her. Certainly, had Mrs. Jameson carried out her intention, Mrs. Siddons would have had a monument dedicated to her memory better calculated to preserve it than those which the above-named gentlemen bestowed on her. It would have been written in a spirit of far higher artistic discrimination, and with infinitely more sympathy both with the woman and with the actress.

CHAPTER VIII

Late in middle life Mrs. Jameson formed an intimate acquaintance, which at one time assumed the character of a close friendship, with Lady Byron, under the influence of whose remarkable mind and character the subjects of artistic and literary interest, which had till then absorbed Mrs. Jameson's attention and occupied her pen, gave place to others of a very different kind—those which engrossed for a time, to the exclusion of almost all others, the minds of men and women in England at the beginning of the Crimean War; when the fashion of certain forms of philanthropy set by that wonderful woman, Florence Nightingale, was making hospital nurses of idle, frivolous fine ladies, and turning into innumerable channels of newly awakened benevolence and activity—far more zealous than discreet—the love of adventure, the desire for excitement, and the desperate need of occupation, of many women who had no other qualifications for the hard and holy labors into which they flung themselves.

Mrs. Jameson felt the impulse of the time, as it reached her through Lady Byron and Miss Nightingale, and warmly embraced the wider and more enlightened aspect of women's duties beginning to be advocated with extreme enthusiasm in English society. One of the last books she published was a popular account of foreign Sisters of Mercy, their special duties, the organization of their societies, and the sphere of their operations; suggesting the formation of similar bodies of religiously charitable sisterhoods in England. She had this subject so much at heart, she told me, that she had determined to give a series of public lectures upon it, provided she found her physical power equal to the effort of making herself heard by an audience in any public room of moderate size. She tested the strength of her chest and voice by delivering one lecture to an audience assembled in the drawing-rooms of a friend; but, as she never repeated the experiment, I suppose she found the exertion too great for her.

When first I met Mrs. Jameson she was an attractive-looking young woman, with a skin of that dazzling whiteness which generally accompanies reddish hair, such as hers was; her face, which was habitually refined and *spirituelle* in its expression, was capable of a marvelous power of concentrated feeling, such as is seldom seen on any woman's face, and is peculiarly rare on the countenance of a fair, small, delicately featured woman, all whose personal characteristics were essentially feminine. Her figure was extremely pretty; her hands and arms might have been those of Madame de Warens.

Mrs. Jameson told me that the idea of giving public lectures had suggested itself to her in the course of her conversations with Lady Byron upon the possible careers that might be opened to women. I know Lady Byron thought a very valuable public service might be rendered by women who so undertook to advocate important truths of which they had made special study, and for the dissemination of which in this manner they might be especially gifted. She accepted in the most liberal manner the claim put forward by women to more extended spheres of usefulness, and to the adoption of careers hitherto closed to them; she was deeply interested, personally, in some who made the arduous attempt of studying and practicing medicine, and seemed generally to think that there were many directions in which women might follow paths yet unopened, of high and noble exertion, and hereafter do society and the cause of progress good service.

Lady Byron was a peculiarly reserved and quiet person, with a manner habitually deliberate and measured, a low, subdued voice, and rather diffident hesitation in expressing herself: and she certainly conveyed the impression of natural reticence and caution. But so far from ever appearing to me to justify the description often given of her, of a person of exceptionally cold, hard, measured intellect and character, she always struck me as a woman capable of profound and fervid enthusiasm, with a mind of rather a romantic and visionary order.

She surprised me extremely one evening as she was accompanying me to one of my public readings, by exclaiming, "Oh, how I envy you! What would I not give to be in your place!" As

my vocation, I am sorry to say, oftener appeared to me to justify my own regret than the envy of others, I answered, "What! to read Shakespeare before some hundreds of people?" "Oh no," she said; "not to read Shakespeare to them, but to have all that mass of people under your control, subject to your influence, and receiving your impressions." She then went on to say she would give anything to lecture upon subjects which interested her deeply, and that she should like to advocate with every power she possessed. Lady Byron, like most enthusiasts, was fond of influencing others and making disciples to her own views. I made her laugh by telling her that more than once, when looking from my reading-desk over the sea of faces uplifted towards me, a sudden feeling had seized me that I must say something *from myself* to all those human beings whose attention I felt at that moment entirely at my command, and between whom and myself a sense of sympathy thrilled powerfully and strangely through my heart, as I looked steadfastly at them before opening my lips; but that, on wondering afterwards *what* I might, could, would, or should have said to them from myself, I never could think of anything but two words: "Be good!" which as a preface to the reading of one of Shakespeare's plays ("The Merry Wives of Windsor," for instance) might have startled them. Often and strongly as the temptation recurred to me, I never could think of anything better worth saying to my audience. I have some hope that sometimes in the course of the reading I said it effectually, without shocking them by a departure from my proper calling, or deserving the rebuke of "Ne sutor ultra crepidam."

In February, 1828, I fell ill of the measles, of which the following note to Miss S– is a record.

> My dearest H–,
>
> I am in a great hurry, because my parcel is not made up yet, and I expect your brother's emissary to call at every moment. I send you my play, also an album of mine, also an unfinished sketch of me, also a copy of my will. The play you must not keep, because it is my only copy; neither must you keep my album, because I want to finish one of the pieces of verse begun in it; my picture—such as it is—begun, but never finished, by Dick –, I thought you would like better than nothing. He has finished one that is a very good likeness of me, but it was done for my mother, or I should have wished you to have it. My will I made last week, while I was in bed with the measles, and want you to keep that.
>
> I have been very ill for the last fortnight, but am well again now. I am pressed for time to-day, but will soon write to you in earnest.
>
> I'm afraid you'll find my play very long; when my poor father began cutting it, he looked ruefully at it, and said, "There's plenty of it, Fan," to which my reply is Madame de Sévigné's, "Si j'eusse eu plus de temps, je ne t'aurais pas écrit si longuement." Dear H–, if you knew how I thought of you, and the fresh, sweet mayflowers with which we filled our baskets at Heath Farm, while I lay parched and full of pain and fever in my illness!
>
> *Yours ever,*
> *Fanny.*

My beloved aunt Dall nursed and tended me in my sickness with unwearied devotion; and one day when I was convalescent, finding me depressed in spirits and crying, she said laughingly to me, "Why, child, there is nothing the matter with you; but you are weak in body and mind." This seemed to me the most degraded of all conceivable conditions, and I fell into a redoublement of weeping over my own abasement and imbecility.

My attention was suddenly attracted to a large looking-glass opposite my bed, and it occurred to me that in my then condition of nerves nothing was more likely than that I should turn visionary and fancy I beheld apparitions. And under this conviction I got up and covered the glass, in which I felt sure I should presently "see sic sights as I daured na tell." I speak of this because, though I was in a physical condition not unlikely to produce such phenomena, I retained the power of perceiving that

they would be the result of my physical condition, and that I should in some measure be accessory to my own terror, whatever form it might assume.

I have so often in my life been on the very edge of ghost-seeing, and felt so perfectly certain that the least encouragement on my part would set them before me, and that nothing but a resolute effort of will would save me from such a visitation, that I have become convinced that of the people who have seen apparitions, one half have—as I should term it—chosen to do so. I have all my life suffered from a tendency to imaginary terrors, and have always felt sure that a determined exercise of self-control would effectually keep them from having the dominion over me. The most distressing form of nervous excitement that I have ever experienced was one that for many years I was very liable to, and which always recurred when I was in a state of unusual exaltation or depression of spirits; both which states in me were either directly caused or greatly aggravated by certain electrical conditions of the atmosphere, which seemed to affect my whole nervous system as if I had been some machine expressly constructed for showing and testing the power of such influences on the human economy.

I habitually read while combing and brushing my hair at night, and though I made no use of my looking-glass while thus employed, having my eyes fixed on my book, I sat (for purposes of general convenience) at my toilet table in front of the mirror. While engrossed in my book it has frequently happened to me accidentally to raise my eyes and suddenly to fix them on my own image in the glass, when a feeling of startled surprise, as if I had not known I was there and did not immediately recognize my own reflection, would cause me to remain looking at myself, the intentness with which I did so increasing as the face appeared to me not my own; and under this curious fascination my countenance has altered, becoming gradually so dreadful, so much more dreadful in expression than any human face I ever saw or could describe, while it was next to impossible for me to turn my eyes away from the hideous vision confronting me, that I have felt more than once that unless by the strongest effort of will I immediately averted my head, I should certainly become insane. Of course I was myself a party to this strange fascination of terror, and must, no doubt, have exercised some power of volition in the assumption of the expression that my face gradually presented, and which was in no sense a distortion or grimace, but a terrible look suggestive of despair and desperate wickedness, the memory of which even now affects me painfully. But though in some measure voluntary, I do not think I was conscious at the time that the process was so; and I have never been able to determine the precise nature of this nervous affection, which, beginning thus in a startled feeling of sudden surprise, went on to such a climax of fascinated terror.

I was already at this time familiar enough with the theory of ghosts, of which one need not be afraid, through Nicolai of Berlin's interesting work upon the curious phantasmagoria of apparitions, on which he made and recorded so many singular observations. Moreover, my mother, from a combination of general derangement of the system and special affection of the visual nerves, was at one time constantly tormented by whole processions and crowds of visionary figures, of the origin and nature of which she was perfectly aware, but which she often described as exceedingly annoying by their grotesque and distorted appearance, and wearisome from their continual recurrence and thronging succession. With the recovery of her general health she obtained a release from this disagreeable haunting.

One of the most remarkable and painful instances of affection of the visual organs in consequence of a violent nervous shock was that experienced by my friend Miss T–, who, after seeing her cousin, Lady L–, drowned while bathing off the rocks at her home at Ardgillan, was requested by Lord L– to procure for him, before his wife's burial, the wedding ring from her finger. The poor lady's body was terribly swollen and discolored, and Miss T– had to use considerable effort to withdraw the ring from the dead finger. The effect of the whole disastrous event upon her was to leave her for several months afflicted with an affection of the eyes, which represented half of the face of every person she saw with the swollen, livid, and distorted features of her drowned cousin; a horrible and

ghastly result of the nervous shock she had undergone, which she feared she should never be delivered from, but which gradually wore itself out.

The only time I ever saw an apparition was under singularly unfavorable circumstances for such an experience. I was sitting at midday in an American railroad car, which every occupant but my maid and myself had left to go and get some refreshment at the station, where the train stopped some time for that purpose. I was sitting with my maid in a small private compartment, sometimes occupied by ladies travelling alone, the door of which (wide open at the time) communicated with the main carriage, and commanded its entire length. Suddenly a person entered the carriage by a door close to where I sat, and passed down the whole length of the car. I sprang from my seat, exclaiming aloud, "There is C–!" and rushed to the door before, by any human possibility, any one could have reached the other end of the car; but nobody was to be seen. My maid had seen nothing. The person I imagined I had seen was upwards of two hundred miles distant; but what was to me the most curious part of this experience was that had I really met the person I saw anywhere, my most careful endeavor would have been to avoid her, and, if possible, to escape being seen by her; whereas this apparition, or imagination, so affected my nerves that I rushed after it as if desirous of pursuing and overtaking it, while my deliberate desire with regard to the image I thus sprang towards would have been never to have seen it again as long as I lived. The state of the atmosphere at the time of this occurrence was extraordinarily oppressive, and charged with a tremendous thunder-storm, a condition of the air which, as I have said, always acts with extremely distressing and disturbing influence upon my whole physical system.

St. James Street, Buckingham Gate, February, 1828.

My dearest H–,

I have this instant received your letter, and, contrary to John's wise rule of never answering an epistle till three days after he receives it, I sit down to write, to talk, to be with you. Pray, when your potatoes flourish, your fires are put out by the sun, and your hills are half hid in warm mist, wish one hearty wish for me, such as I spend by the dozen on you. I confess I am disappointed, as far as I can be with a letter of yours, at finding you had not yet received my parcel, for my vanity has been in considerable anxiety respecting your judgment on my production. Now that the effervescence of my poetical *furor* has subsided, and that repeated perusals have taken a little of the charm of novelty from my play, my own opinion of it is that it is a clever performance *for so young a person*, but nothing more. The next will, I hope, be better, and I think you will agree with me in regard to this. Dearest H–, in my last letter want of time and room prevented my enlarging on my hint about the stage, but as far as my own determination goes at present, I think it is the course that I shall most likely pursue. You know that independence of mind and body seems to me the great desideratum of life; I am not patient of restraint or submissive to authority, and my head and heart are engrossed with the idea of exercising and developing the literary talent which I think I possess. This is meat, drink, and sleep to me; my world, in which I live, and have my happiness; and, moreover, I hope, by means of fame (the prize for which I pray). To a certain degree it may be my means of procuring benefits of a more substantial nature, which I am by no means inclined to estimate at less than their worth. I do not think I am fit to marry, to make an obedient wife or affectionate mother; my imagination is paramount with me, and would disqualify me, I think, for the every-day, matter-of-fact cares and duties of the mistress of a household and the head of a family. I think I should be unhappy and the cause of unhappiness to others if I were to marry. I cannot swear I shall never fall in love, but if I do I will fall out of it again, for I do not think I shall ever so far lose sight

of my best interest and happiness as to enter into a relation for which I feel so unfit. Now, if I do not marry, what is to become of me in the event of anything happening to my father? His property is almost all gone; I doubt if we shall ever receive one pound from it. Is it likely that, supposing I were willing to undergo the drudgery of writing for my bread, I could live by my wits and the produce of my brain; or is such an existence desirable?

Perhaps I might attain to the literary dignity of being the lioness of a season, asked to dinner parties "because I am so clever;" perhaps my writing faculty might become a useful auxiliary to some other less precarious dependence; but to write to eat—to live, in short—that seems to me to earn hard money after a very hard fashion. The stage is a profession that people who have a talent for it make lucrative, and which honorable conduct may make respectable; one which would place me at once beyond the fear of want, and that is closely allied in its nature to my beloved literary pursuits.

If I should (as my father and mother seem to think not unlikely) change my mind with respect to marrying, the stage need be no bar to that, and if I continue to write, the stage might both help me in and derive assistance from my exercise of the pursuit of dramatic authorship. And the mere mechanical labor of writing costs me so little, that the union of the two occupations does not seem to me a difficulty. My father said the other day, "There is a fine fortune to be made by any young woman, of even decent talent, on the stage now." A fine fortune is a fine thing; to be sure, there remains a rather material question to settle, that of "even decent talent." A passion for all beautiful poetry I am sure you will grant me; and you would perhaps be inclined to take my father and mother's word for my dramatic capacity. I spoke to them earnestly on this subject lately, and they both, with some reluctance, I think, answered me, to my questions, that they thought, as far as they could judge (and, unless partiality blinds them entirely, none can be better judges), I might succeed. In some respects, no girl intending herself for this profession can have had better opportunities of acquiring just notions on the subject of acting. I have constantly heard refined and thoughtful criticism on our greatest dramatic works, and on every various way of rendering them effective on the stage. I have been lately very frequently to the theater, and seen and heard observingly, and exercised my own judgment and critical faculty to the best of my ability, according to these same canons of taste by which it has been formed. Nature has certainly not been as favorable to me as might have been wished, if I am to embrace a calling where personal beauty, if not indispensable, is so great an advantage. But if the informing spirit be mine, it shall go hard if, with a face and voice as obedient to my emotions as mine are, I do not in some measure make up for the want of good looks. My father is now proprietor and manager of the theatre, and those certainly are favorable circumstances for my entering on a career which is one of great labor and some exposure, at the best, to a woman, and where a young girl cannot be too prudent herself, nor her protectors too careful of her. I hope I have not taken up this notion hastily, and I have no fear of looking only on the bright side of the picture, for ours is a house where that is very seldom seen.

Good-by; God bless you! I shall be very anxious to hear from you; I sent you a note with my play, telling you I had just got up from the measles; but as my note

has not reached you, I tell you so again. I am quite well, however, now, and shall not give them to you by signing myself
Yours most affectionately,
Fanny.

P.S.—I forgot to answer your questions in telling you all this, but I will do so methodically now. My side-ache is some disturbance in my liver, evidently, and does not give way entirely either to physic or exercise, as the slightest emotion, either pleasurable or painful, immediately brings it on; my blue devils I pass over in silence; such a liver and my kind of head are sure to breed them.

Certainly I reverence Jeremy Bentham for his philanthropy, plain powerful sense, and lucid forcible writing; but as for John's politics, they are, as Beatrice tells the prince he is, "too costly for every-day wear." His theories are so perfect that I think imperfect men could never be brought to live under a scheme of government of his devising.

I think Mrs. Jameson would like you, and you her, if you met, but my mind is running on something else than this. My father's income is barely eight hundred a year. John's expenses, since he has been at college, have been nearly three. Five hundred a year for such a family as ours is very close and careful work, dear H–, and if my going on the stage would nearly double that income, lessen my dear father's anxieties for us all, and the quantity of work which he latterly has often felt too much for him, and remove the many privations which my dear mother cheerfully endures, as well as the weight of her uncertainty about our future provision, would not this be a "consummation devoutly to be wished"?
St. James Street, Buckingham Gate, March, 1828.

My dearest H–,

I have been thinking what you have been thinking of my long silence, about which, however, perhaps you have not been thinking at all. What, you say in one of your last about my destroying your letters troubles me a good deal, dearest H–. I really cannot bear to think of it; why, those letters are one of my very few precious possessions. When I am unhappy (as I sometimes am), I read them over, and I feel strengthened and comforted; if it is your *positive desire* that I should burn them, of course I must do it; but if it is only a sort of "I think you had better" that you have about it, I shall keep them, and you must be satisfied with one of my old "I can't help it's." As for my own scrawls, I do *not* desire that you should keep them. I write, as I speak, on the impulse of the moment, and I should be sorry that the incoherent and often contradictory thoughts that I pour forth daily should be preserved against me by anybody.

My father is now in Edinburgh. He has been absent from London about a week. I had a conversation with him about the stage some time before he went, in which he allowed that, should our miserably uncertain circumstances finally settle unfavorably, the theatre might be an honorable and advantageous resource for me; but that at present he should be sorry to see me adopt that career. As he is the best and kindest father and friend to us all, such a decision on his part was conclusive, as you will easily believe; and I have forborne all further allusion to the subject, although on some accounts I regret being obliged to do so.

I was delighted with your long letter of criticisms; I am grateful to you for taking the trouble of telling me so minutely all you thought about my play. For myself, although at the time I wrote it I was rather puffed up and elated in spirit,

and looked at it naturally in far too favorable a light, I assure you I have long since come to a much soberer frame of mind respecting it. I think it is quite unfit for the stage, where the little poetical merit it possesses would necessarily be lost; besides, its construction is wholly undramatic. The only satisfaction I now take in it is entirely one of hope; I am very young, and I cannot help feeling that it offers some promise for the future, which I trust may be fulfilled. Now even, already, I am sure I could do infinitely better; nor will it be long, I think, before I try my strength again. If you could see the multiplicity of subjects drawn up in my book under the head of "projected works," how you would shake your wise head, and perhaps your lean sides. I wish I could write a good prose work, but that, I take it, is really difficult, as good, concise, powerful, clear prose must be much less easy to write than even tolerable poetry. I have been reading a quantity of German plays (translations, of course, but literal ones), and I have been reveling in that divine devildom, "Faust." Suppose it does send one to bed with a side-ache, a headache, and a heartache, isn't it worth while? Did you ever read Goethe's "Tasso"? Certainly he makes the mad poet a mighty disagreeable person; but in describing him it seemed to me as if Goethe was literally transcribing my thoughts and feelings, my mind and being.

Now, dearest H–, don't bear malice, and, because I have not written for so long, wait still longer before you answer. My mother has been in the country for a few days, and has returned with a terrible cough and cold, with which pleasant maladies she finds the house full here to welcome her, so that we all croak in unison most harmoniously. I was at the Siddonses' the other evening. My aunt was suffering, I am sorry to say, with one of her terrible headaches; Cecilia was pretty well, but as it was a *soirée chantante*, I had little opportunity of talking to either of them. Did you mention my notion about going on the stage in any of your letters to Cecy?

The skies are brightening and the trees are budding; it will soon be the time of year when we first met. Pray remember me when the hawthorn blossoms; hail, snow, or sunshine, I remember you, and am ever your affectionate
Fanny.

The want of a settled place of residence compelled me, many years after writing this letter, to destroy the letters of my friend, which I had preserved until they amounted to many hundreds; my friend kept, in the house that was her home from her fourteenth to her sixtieth year, all mine to her —several thousands, the history of a whole human life—and gave them back to me when she was upwards of seventy and I of sixty years old; they are the principal aid to my memory in my present task of retrospection.

My life at home at this time became difficult and troublesome, and unsatisfactory to myself and others; my mind and character were in a chaotic state of fermentation that required the wisest, firmest, and gentlest guidance. I was vehement and excitable, violently impulsive, and with a wild, ill-regulated imagination.

The sort of smattering acquirements from my schooling, and the desultory reading which had been its only supplement, had done little or nothing (perhaps even worse than nothing) towards my effectual moral or mental training. A good fortune, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful, occurred to me at this time, in the very intimate intercourse which grew up just then between our family and that of my cousin, Mrs. Henry Siddons.

She had passed through London on her way to the Continent, whither she was going for the sake of the health of her youngest daughter, an interesting and attractive young girl some years older than myself, who at this time seemed threatened with imminent consumption. She had a sylph-like, slender figure, tall, and bending and wavering like a young willow sapling, and a superabundant profusion of glossy chestnut ringlets, which in another might have suggested vigor of health and constitution,

but always seemed to me as if their redundant masses had exhausted hers, and were almost too great a weight for her slim throat and drooping figure. Her complexion was transparently delicate, and she had dark blue eyes that looked almost preternaturally large. It seems strange to remember this ethereal vision of girlish fragile beauty as belonging to my dear cousin, who, having fortunately escaped the doom by which she then seemed threatened, lived to become a most happy and excellent wife and mother, and one of the largest women of our family, all of whose female members have been unusually slender in girlhood and unusually stout in middle and old age. When Mrs. Henry Siddons was obliged to return to Edinburgh, which was her home, she was persuaded by my mother to leave her daughter with us for some time; and for more than a year she and her elder sister and their brother, a lad studying at the Indian Military College of Addiscombe, were frequent inmates of our house. The latter was an extremely handsome youth, with a striking resemblance to his grandmother, Mrs. Siddons; he and my brother Henry were certainly the only two of the younger generation who honorably maintained the reputation for beauty of their elders; in spite of which, and the general admiration they excited (especially when seen together), perhaps indeed from some uncomfortable consciousness of their personal advantages, they were both of them shamefaced and bashful to an unusual degree.

I remember a comical instance of the shy *mauvaise honte*, peculiar to Englishmen, which these two beautiful boys exhibited on the occasion of a fancy ball, to which we were all invited, at the house of our friend, Mrs. E. G–. To me, of course, my first fancy ball was an event of unmixed delight, especially as my mother had provided for me a lovely Anne Boleyn costume of white satin, point-lace, and white Roman pearls, which raised my satisfaction to rapture. The two Harrys, however, far from partaking of my ecstasy, protested, pouted, begged off, all but broke into open rebellion at the idea of making what they called "guys" and "chimney-sweeps" of themselves; and though the painful sense of any singularity might have been mitigated by the very numerous company of their fellow-fools assembled in the ball-room, to keep them in countenance, and the very unpretending costume of simple and, elegant black velvet in which my mother had attired them, as Hamlet and Laertes (it must have been in their very earliest college days), they hid themselves behind the ball-room door and never showed as much as their noses or their toes, while I danced beatifically till daylight, and would have danced on till noon.

Mrs. Henry Siddons, in her last stay with us, obtained my mother's consent that I should go to Edinburgh to pay her a visit, which began by being of indeterminate length, and prolonged itself for a year—the happiest of my life, as I often, while it lasted, thought it would prove; and now that my years are over I know to have been so. To the anxious, nervous, exciting, irritating tenor of my London life succeeded the calm, equable, and all but imperceptible control of my dear friend, whose influence over her children, the result of her wisdom in dealing with them, no less than of their own amiable dispositions, was absolute. In considering Mrs. Henry Siddons's character, when years had modified its first impression upon my own, my estimate of it underwent, of course, some inevitable alteration; but when I stayed with her in Edinburgh I was at the idolatrous period of life, and never, certainly, had an enthusiastic young girl worshiper a worthier or better idol.

She was not regularly handsome, but of a sweet and most engaging countenance; her figure was very pretty, her voice exquisite, and her whole manner, air, and deportment graceful, attractive, and charming. Men, women, and children not only loved her, but inevitably *fell in love* with her, and the fascination which she exercised over every one that came in contact with her invariably deepened into profound esteem and confidence in those who had the good fortune to share her intimacy. Her manner, which was the most gentle and winning imaginable, had in it a touch of demure playfulness that was very charming, at the same time that it habitually conveyed the idea of extreme self-control, and a great reserve of moral force and determination underneath this quiet surface.

Mrs. Harry's manner was artificial, and my mother told me she thought it the result of an early determination to curb the demonstrations of an impetuous temper and passionate feelings. It had

become her second nature when I knew her, however, and contributed not a little to the immense ascendency she soon acquired over my vehement and stormy character. She charmed me into absolute submission to her will and wishes, and I all but worshiped her.

She was a Miss Murray, and came of good Scottish blood, her great-grandfather having at one time been private secretary to the Young Pretender. She married Mrs. Siddons's youngest son, Harry, the only one of my aunt's children who adopted her own profession, and who, himself an indifferent actor, undertook the management of the Edinburgh theater, fell into ill-health, and died, leaving his lovely young widow with four children to the care of her brother, William Murray, who succeeded him in the government of the theater, of which his sister and himself became joint proprietors.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.