

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

HARTRIGHT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

XII.

THE exposed situation of the churchyard had obliged me to be cautious in choosing the position that I was to occupy.

The main entrance to the church was on the side next to the burial-ground; and the door was screened by a porch walled in on either side. After some little hesitation, caused by a natural reluctance to conceal myself, indispensable as that concealment was to the object in view, I had resolved on entering the porch. A loophole window was pierced in each of its side walls. Through one of these windows I could see Mrs. Fairlie's grave. The other looked towards the stone quarry in which the sexton's cottage was built. Before me, fronting the porch entrance, was a patch of bare burial-ground, a line of low stone wall, and a strip of lonely brown hill, with the sunset clouds sailing heavily over it before the strong, steady wind. No living creature was visible or audible—no bird flew by me; no dog barked from the sexton's cottage. The pauses in the dull beating of the surf, were filled up by the dreary rustling of the dwarf trees near the grave, and the cold, faint bubble of the brook over its stony bed. A dreary scene and a dreary hour. My spirits sank fast as I counted out the minutes of the evening in my hiding-place under the church porch.

It was not twilight yet—the light of the setting sun still lingered in the heavens, and little more than the first half-hour of my solitary watch had elapsed—when I heard footsteps, and a voice. The footsteps were approaching from the other side of the church; and the voice was a woman's.

"Don't you fret, my dear, about the letter," said the voice. "I gave it to the lad quite safe, and the lad he took it from me without a word. He went his way and I went mine; and not a living soul followed me, afterwards—that I'll warrant."

These words strung up my attention to a pitch of expectation that was almost painful. There was a pause of silence, but the footsteps still advanced. In another moment, two persons, both women, passed within my range of view from the porch window. They were walking straight towards the grave; and therefore they had their backs turned towards me.

One of the women was dressed in a bonnet and shawl. The other wore a long travelling-cloak of a dark blue colour, with the hood drawn over her head. A few inches of her gown were visible below the cloak. My heart beat fast as I noted the colour—it was white.

After advancing about half-way between the church and the grave, they stopped; and the woman in the cloak turned her head towards her companion. But her side face, which a bonnet might now have allowed me to see, was hidden by the heavy, projecting edge of the hood.

"Mind you keep that comfortable warm cloak on," said the same voice which I had already heard—the voice of the woman in the shawl. "Mrs. Todd is right about your looking too particular, yesterday, all in white. I'll walk about a little, while you're here; churchyards being not at all in my way, whatever they may be in yours. Finish what you want to do, before I come back; and let us be sure and get home again before night."

With those words, she turned about, and, retracing her steps, advanced with her face towards me. It was the face of an elderly woman, brown, rugged, and healthy, with nothing dishonest or suspicious in the look of it. Close to the church, she stopped to pull her shawl closer round her.

"Queer," she said to herself, "always queer, with her whims and her ways, ever since I can remember her. Harmless, though—as harmless, poor soul, as a little child."

She sighed; looked about the burial-ground nervously; shook her head as if the dreary prospect by no means pleased her; and disappeared round the corner of the church.

I doubted for a moment whether I ought to follow and speak to her, or not. My intense anxiety to find myself face to face with her companion helped me to decide in the negative. I could ensure seeing the woman in the shawl by waiting near the churchyard until she came back—although it seemed more than doubtful whether she could give me the information of which I was in search. The person who had delivered the letter was of little consequence. The person who had written it was the one centre of interest, and the one source of information; and that person I now felt convinced was before me in the churchyard.

While these ideas were passing through my

mind, I saw the woman in the cloak approach close to the grave, and stand looking at it for a little while. She then glanced all round her, and, taking a white linen cloth or handkerchief from under her cloak, turned aside towards the brook. The little stream ran into the churchyard under a tiny archway in the bottom of the wall, and ran out again, after a winding course of a few dozen yards, under a similar opening. She dipped the cloth in the water, and returned to the grave. I saw her kiss the white cross; then kneel down before the inscription, and apply her wet cloth to the cleansing of it.

After considering how I could show myself with the least possible chance of frightening her, I resolved to cross the wall before me, to skirt round it outside, and to enter the churchyard again by the stile near the grave, in order that she might see me as I approached. She was so absorbed over her employment that she did not hear me coming until I had stepped over the stile. Then, she looked up, started to her feet with a faint cry, and stood facing me in speechless and motionless terror.

"Don't be frightened," I said. "Surely, you remember me?"

I stopped while I spoke—then advanced a few steps gently—then stopped again—and so approached by little and little, till I was close to her. If there had been any doubt still left in my mind, it must have been now set at rest. There, speaking affrightedly for itself—there was the same face confronting me over Mrs. Fairlie's grave, which had first looked into mine on the high road by night.

"You remember me?" I said. "We met very late, and I helped you to find the way to London. Surely you have not forgotten that?"

Her features relaxed, and she drew a heavy breath of relief. I saw the new life of recognition stirring slowly under the deathlike stillness which fear had set on her face.

"Don't attempt to speak to me, just yet," I went on. "Take time to recover yourself—take time to feel quite certain that I am a friend."

"You are very kind to me," she murmured. "As kind now, as you were then."

She stopped, and I kept silence on my side. I was not granting time for composure to her only, I was gaining time also for myself. Under the wan, wild evening light, that woman and I were met together again; a grave between us, the dead about us, the lonesome hills closing us round on every side. The time, the place, the circumstances under which we now stood face to face in the evening stillness of that dreary valley; the life-long interests which might hang suspended on the next chance words that passed between us; the sense that, for aught I knew to the contrary, the whole future of Laura Fairlie's life might be determined, for good or for evil, by my winning or losing the confidence of the forlorn creature who stood trembling by her mother's grave—all threatened to shake the steadiness and the self-control on which every inch of the progress I might yet make now depended. I tried hard, as I felt

this, to possess myself of all my resources; I did my utmost to turn the few moments for reflection to the best account.

"Are you calmer, now?" I said, as soon as I thought it time to speak again. "Can you talk to me, without feeling frightened, and without forgetting that I am a friend?"

"How did you come here?" she asked, without noticing what I had just said to her.

"Don't you remember my telling you, when we last met, that I was going to Cumberland? I have been in Cumberland ever since; I have been staying all the time at Limmeridge House."

"At Limmeridge House!" Her pale face brightened as she repeated the words; her wandering eyes fixed on me with a sudden interest. "Ah, how happy you must have been!" she said, looking at me eagerly, without a shadow of its former distrust left in her expression.

I took advantage of her newly-aroused confidence in me, to observe her face, with an attention and a curiosity which I had hitherto restrained myself from showing, for caution's sake. I looked at her, with my mind full of that other lovely face which had so ominously recalled her to my memory on the terrace by moonlight. I had seen Anne Catherick's likeness in Miss Fairlie. I now saw Miss Fairlie's likeness in Anne Catherick—saw it all the more clearly because the points of dissimilarity between the two were presented to me as well as the points of resemblance. In the general outline of the countenance and general proportion of the features; in the colour of the hair and in the little nervous uncertainty about the lips; in the height and size of the figure, and the carriage of the head and body, the likeness appeared even more startling than I had ever felt it to be yet. But there the resemblance ended, and the dissimilarity, in details, began. The delicate beauty of Miss Fairlie's complexion, the transparent clearness of her eyes, the smooth purity of her skin, the tender bloom of colour on her lips, were all missing from the worn, weary face that was now turned towards mine. Although I hated myself even for thinking such a thing, still, while I looked at the woman before me, the idea would form itself into my mind that one sad change, in the future, was all that was wanting to make the likeness complete, which I now saw to be so imperfect in detail. If ever sorrow and suffering set their profaning marks on the youth and beauty of Miss Fairlie's face, then, and then only, Anne Catherick and she would be the twin-sisters of chance resemblance, the living reflexions of one another.

I shuddered at the thought. There was something horrible in the blind, unreasoning distrust of the future which the mere passage of it through my mind seemed to imply. It was a welcome interruption to be roused by feeling Anne Catherick's hand laid on my shoulder. The touch was as stealthy and as sudden as that other touch, which had petrified me from head to foot on the night when we first met.

"You are looking at me; and you are thinking of something," she said, with her strange, breathless rapidity of utterance. "What is it?"

"Nothing extraordinary," answered. "I was only wondering how you came here."

"I came with a friend who is very good to me. I have only been here two days."

"And you found your way to this place, yesterday?"

"How do you know that?"

"I only guessed it."

She turned from me, and knelt down before the inscription once more.

"Where should I go, if not here?" she said.

"The friend who was better than a mother to me, is the only friend I have to visit at Limeridge. Oh, it makes my heart ache to see a stain on her tomb! It ought to be kept white as snow, for her sake. I was tempted to begin cleaning it yesterday; and I can't help coming back to go on with it to-day. Is there anything wrong in that? I hope not. Surely nothing can be wrong that I do for Mrs. Fairlie's sake?"

The old grateful sense of her benefactress's kindness was evidently the ruling idea still in the poor creature's mind—the narrow mind which had but too plainly opened to no other lasting impression since that first impression of her younger and happier days. I saw that my best chance of winning her confidence lay in encouraging her to proceed with the artless employment which she had come into the burial-ground to pursue. She resumed it at once, on my telling her she might do so; touching the hard marble as tenderly as if it had been a sentient thing, and whispering the words of the inscription to herself, over and over again, as if the lost days of her girlhood had returned and she was patiently learning her lesson once more at Mrs. Fairlie's knees.

"Should you wonder very much," I said, preparing the way as cautiously as I could for the questions that were to come, "if I owned that it is a satisfaction to me, as well as a surprise, to see you here? I felt very uneasy about you after you left me in the cab."

She looked up quickly and suspiciously.

"Uneasy," she repeated. "Why?"

"A strange thing happened, after we parted, that night. Two men overtook me in a chaise. They did not see where I was standing; but they stopped near me, and spoke to a policeman, on the other side of the way."

She instantly suspended her employment. The hand holding the damp cloth with which she had been cleaning the inscription, dropped to her side. The other hand grasped the marble cross at the head of the grave. Her face turned towards me slowly, with the blank look of terror set rigidly on it once more. I went on at all hazards; it was too late now to draw back.

"The two men spoke to the policeman," I said, "and asked him if he had seen you. He had not seen you; and then one of the men spoke again, and said you had escaped from his Asylum."

She sprang to her feet, as if my last words had set the pursuers on her track.

"Stop! and hear the end," I cried. "Stop! and you shall know how I befriended you. A word from me would have told the men which way you had gone—and I never spoke that word. I helped your escape—I made it safe and certain. Think, try to think. Try to understand what I tell you."

My manner seemed to influence her more than my words. She made an effort to grasp the new idea. Her hands shifted the damp cloth hesitatingly from one to the other, exactly as they had shifted the little travelling bag on the night when I first saw her. Slowly, the purpose of my words seemed to force its way through the confusion and agitation of her mind. Slowly, her features relaxed, and her eyes looked at me with their expression gaining in curiosity what it was fast losing in fear.

"You don't think I ought to be back in the Asylum, do you?" she said.

"Certainly not. I am glad you escaped from it; I am glad I helped you."

"Yes, yes; you did help me, indeed; you helped me at the hard part," she went on, a little vacantly. "It was easy to escape, or I should not have got away. They never suspected me as they suspected the others. I was so quiet, and so obedient, and so easily frightened. The finding London was the hard part; and there you helped me. Did I thank you at the time? I thank you now, very kindly."

"Was the Asylum far from where you met me? Come! show that you believe me to be your friend, and tell me where it was."

She mentioned the place—a private Asylum, as its situation informed me; a private Asylum not very far from the spot where I had seen her—and then, with evident suspicion of the use to which I might put her answer, anxiously repeated her former inquiry: "You don't think I ought to be taken back, do you?"

"Once again, I am glad you escaped; I am glad you prospered well, after you left me," I answered. "You said you had a friend in London to go to. Did you find the friend?"

"Yes. It was very late; but there was a girl up at needlework in the house, and she helped me to rouse Mrs. Clements. Mrs. Clements is my friend. A good, kind woman, but not like Mrs. Fairlie. Ah, no, nobody is like Mrs. Fairlie!"

"Is Mrs. Clements an old friend of yours? Have you known her a long time?"

"Yes; she was a neighbour of ours once, at home, in Hampshire; and liked me, and took care of me when I was a little girl. Years ago, when she went away from us, she wrote down in my prayer-book for me, where she was going to live in London, and she said, 'If you are ever in trouble, Anne, come to me. I have no husband alive to say me nay, and no children to look after; and I will take care of you.' Kind words, were they not? I suppose I remember them because they were kind. It's little enough I remember besides—little enough, little enough!"

"Had you no father or mother to take care of you?"

"Father? I never saw him; I never heard mother speak of him. Father? Ah, dear! he is dead, I suppose."

"And your mother?"

"I don't get on well with her. We are a trouble and a fear to each other."

A trouble and a fear to each other! At those words, the suspicion crossed my mind for the first time, that her mother might be the person who had placed her under restraint.

"Don't ask me about mother," she went on. "I'd rather talk of Mrs. Clements. Mrs. Clements is like you, she doesn't think that I ought to be back in the Asylum; and she is as glad as you are that I escaped from it. She cried over my misfortune, and said it must be kept secret from everybody."

Her "misfortune." In what sense was she using that word? In a sense which might explain her motive in writing the anonymous letter? In a sense which might show it to be the too common and too customary motive that has led many a woman to interpose anonymous hindrances to the marriage of the man who has ruined her? I resolved to attempt the clearing up of this doubt, before more words passed between us on either side.

"What misfortune?" I asked.

"The misfortune of my being shut up," she answered, with every appearance of feeling surprised at my question. "What other misfortune could there be?"

I determined to persist, as delicately and forbearingly as possible. It was of very great importance that I should be absolutely sure of every step in the investigation that I now gained in advance.

"There is another misfortune," I said, "to which a woman may be liable, and by which she may suffer life-long sorrow and shame."

"What is it?" she asked, eagerly.

"The misfortune of believing too innocently in her own virtue, and in the faith and honour of the man she loves," I answered.

She looked up at me, with the artless bewilderment of a child. Not the slightest confusion or change of colour; not the faintest trace of any secret consciousness of shame struggling to the surface, appeared in her face—that face which betrayed every other emotion with such transparent clearness. No words that ever were spoken could have assured me, as her look and manner now assured me, that the motive which I had assigned for her writing the letter and sending it to Miss Fairlie was plainly and distinctly the wrong one. That doubt, at any rate, was now set at rest; but the very removal of it opened a new prospect of uncertainty. The letter, as I knew from positive testimony, pointed at Sir Percival Glyde, though it did not name him. She must have had some strong motive, originating in some deep sense of injury, for secretly denouncing him to Miss Fairlie, in such terms as she had employed—and that motive was unquestionably

not to be traced to the loss of her innocence and her character. Whatever wrong he might have inflicted on her was not of that nature. Of what nature could it be?

"I don't understand you," she said, after evidently trying hard, and trying in vain to discover the meaning of the words I had last said to her.

"Never mind," I answered. "Let us go on with what we were talking about. Tell me how long you stayed with Mrs. Clements in London, and how you came here."

"How long?" she repeated. "I stayed with Mrs. Clements till we both came to this place, two days ago."

"You are living in the village, then?" I said. "It is strange I should not have heard of you, though you have only been there two days."

"No, no; not in the village. Three miles away at a farm. Do you know the farm? They call it Todd's Corner."

I remembered the place perfectly; we had often passed by it in our drives. It was one of the oldest farms in the neighbourhood, situated in a solitary, sheltered spot, inland, at the junction of two hills.

"They are relations of Mrs. Clements at Todd's Corner," she went on, "and they had often asked her to go and see them. She said she would go, and take me with her, for the quiet and the fresh air. It was very kind, was it not? I would have gone anywhere to be quiet, and safe, and out of the way. But when I heard that Todd's Corner was near Limmeridge—oh! I was so happy I would have walked all the way barefoot to get there, and see the schools and the village and Limmeridge House again. They are very good people at Todd's Corner. I hope I shall stay there a long time. There is only one thing I don't like about them, and don't like about Mrs. Clements——"

"What is it?"

"They will tease me about dressing all in white—they say it looks so particular. How do they know? Mrs. Fairlie knew best. Mrs. Fairlie would never have made me wear this ugly blue cloak. Ah! she was fond of white in her lifetime; and here is white stone about her grave—and I am making it whiter for her sake. She often wore white herself; and she always dressed her little daughter in white. Is Miss Fairlie well and happy? Does she wear white now, as she used when she was a girl?"

Her voice sank when she put the questions about Miss Fairlie; and she turned her head farther and farther away from me. I thought I detected, in the alteration in her manner, an uneasy consciousness of the risk she had run in sending the anonymous letter; and I instantly determined so to frame my answer as to surprise her into owning it.

"Miss Fairlie is not very well or very happy this morning," I said.

She murmured a few words; but they were spoken so confusedly, and in such a low tone, that I could not even guess at what they meant.

"Did you ask me why Miss Fairlie was

neither well nor happy this morning?" I continued.

"No," she said, quickly and eagerly—"oh, no, I never asked that."

"I will tell you without your asking," I went on. "Miss Fairlie has received your letter."

She had been down on her knees for some little time past, carefully removing the last weather-stains left about the inscription, while we were speaking together. The first sentence of the words I had just addressed to her made her pause in her occupation, and turn slowly, without rising from her knees, so as to face me. The second sentence literally petrified her. The cloth she had been holding dropped from her hands; her lips fell apart; all the little colour that there was naturally in her face left it in an instant.

"How do you know?" she said, faintly. "Who showed it to you?" The blood rushed back into her face—rushed overwhelmingly, as the sense rushed upon her mind that her own words had betrayed her. She struck her hands together in despair. "I never wrote it," she gasped, affrightedly; "I know nothing about it!"

"Yes," I said, "you wrote it, and you know about it. It was wrong to send such a letter; it was wrong to frighten Miss Fairlie. If you had anything to say that it was right and necessary for her to hear, you should have gone yourself to Limmeridge House; you should have spoken to the young lady with your own lips."

She crouched down over the flat stone of the grave, till her face was hidden on it; and made no reply.

"Miss Fairlie will be as good and kind to you as her mother was, if you mean well," I went on. "Miss Fairlie will keep your secret, and not let you come to any harm. Will you see her to-morrow at the farm? Will you meet her in the garden at Limmeridge House?"

"Oh, if I could die, and be hidden and at rest with you!" Her lips murmured the words close on the grave-stone; murmured them in tones of passionate endearment, to the dead remains beneath. "You know how I love your child, for your sake! Oh, Mrs. Fairlie! Mrs. Fairlie! tell me how to save her. Be my darling and my mother once more, and tell me what to do for the best!"

I heard her lips kissing the stone: I saw her hands beating on it passionately. The sound and the sight deeply affected me. I stooped down, and took the poor helpless hands tenderly in mine, and tried to soothe her.

It was useless. She snatched her hands from me, and never moved her face from the stone. Seeing the urgent necessity of quieting her at any hazard and by any means, I appealed to the only anxiety that she had appeared to feel, in connexion with me and with my opinion of her—the anxiety to convince me of her fitness to be mistress of her own actions.

"Come, come," I said, gently. "Try to compose yourself, or you will make me alter my opinion of you. Don't let me think that the

person who put you in the Asylum, might have had some excuse——"

The next words died away on my lips. The instant I risked that chance reference to the person who had put her in the Asylum, she sprang up on her knees. A most extraordinary and startling change passed over her. Her face, at all ordinary times so touching to look at, in its nervous sensitiveness, weakness, and uncertainty, became suddenly darkened by an expression of maniacally intense hatred and fear, which communicated a wild, unnatural force to every feature. Her eyes dilated in the dim evening light, like the eyes of a wild animal. She caught up the cloth that had fallen at her side, as if it had been a living creature that she could kill, and crushed it in both her hands with such convulsive strength that the few drops of moisture left in it trickled down on the stone beneath her.

"Talk of something else," she said, whispering through her teeth. "I shall lose myself if you talk of that."

Every vestige of the gentler thoughts which had filled her mind hardly a minute since, seemed to be swept from it now. It was evident that the impression left by Mrs. Fairlie's kindness was not, as I had supposed, the only strong impression on her memory. With the grateful remembrance of her school-days at Limmeridge, there existed the vindictive remembrance of the wrong inflicted on her by her confinement in the Asylum. Who had done that wrong? Could it really be her mother?

It was hard to give up pursuing the inquiry to that final point; but I forced myself to abandon all idea of continuing it. Seeing her as I saw her now, it would have been cruel to think of anything but the necessity and the humanity of restoring her composure.

"I will talk of nothing to distress you," I said soothingly.

"You want something," she answered, sharply and suspiciously. "Don't look at me, like that. Speak to me; tell me what you want."

"I only want you to quiet yourself, and, when you are calmer, to think over what I have said."

"Said?" She paused; twisted the cloth in her hands, backwards and forwards; and whispered to herself, "What is it he said?" She turned again towards me, and shook her head impatiently. "Why don't you help me?" she asked, with angry suddenness.

"Yes, yes," I said; "I will help you; and you will soon remember. I asked you to see Miss Fairlie to-morrow, and to tell her the truth about the letter."

"Ah! Miss Fairlie—Fairlie—Fairlie——" The mere utterance of the loved, familiar name seemed to quiet her. Her face softened and grew like itself again.

"You need have no fear of Miss Fairlie," I continued; "and no fear of getting into trouble through the letter. She knows so much about it already, that you will have no difficulty in telling her all. There can be little necessity for concealment where there is hardly anything

left to conceal. You mention no names in the letter; but Miss Fairlie knows that the person you write of is Sir Percival Glyde——"

The instant I pronounced that name, she started to her feet; and a scream burst from her that rang through the churchyard and made my heart leap in me with the terror of it. The dark deformity of the expression which had just left her face, lowered on it once more, with doubled and trebled intensity. The shriek at the name, the reiterated look of hatred and fear that instantly followed, told all. Not even a last doubt now remained. Her mother was guiltless of imprisoning her in the Asylum. A man had shut her up—and that man was Sir Percival Glyde.

The scream had reached other ears than mine. On one side, I heard the door of the sexton's cottage open; on the other, I heard the voice of her companion, the woman in the shawl, the woman whom she had spoken of as Mrs. Clements.

"I'm coming! I'm coming!" cried the voice, from behind the clump of dwarf trees.

In a moment more, Mrs. Clements hurried into view.

"Who are you?" she cried, facing me resolutely, as she set her foot on the stile. "How dare you frighten a poor helpless woman like that?"

She was at Anne Catherick's side, and had put one arm around her, before I could answer. "What is it, my dear?" she said. "What has he done to you?"

"Nothing," the poor creature answered. "Nothing. I'm only frightened."

Mrs. Clements turned on me with a fearless indignation, for which I respected her.

"I should be heartily ashamed of myself if I deserved that angry look," I said. "But I do not deserve it. I have unfortunately startled her, without intending it. This is not the first time she has seen me. Ask her yourself, and she will tell you that I am incapable of willingly harming her or any woman."

I spoke distinctly, so that Anne Catherick might hear and understand me: and I saw that the words and their meaning had reached her.

"Yes, yes," she said; "he was good to me once; he helped me——" She whispered the rest into her friend's ear.

"Strange, indeed!" said Mrs. Clements, with a look of perplexity. "It makes all the difference, though. I'm sorry I spoke so rough to you, sir; but you must own that appearances looked suspicious to a stranger. It's more my fault than yours, for humouring her whims, and letting her be alone in such a place as this. Come, my dear—come home, now."

I thought the good woman looked a little uneasy at the prospect of the walk back, and I offered to go with them until they were both within sight of home. Mrs. Clements thanked me civilly, and declined. She said they were sure to meet some of the farm-labourers, as soon as they got to the moor.

"Try to forgive me," I said, when Anne

Catherick took her friend's arm to go away. Innocent as I had been of any intention to terrify and agitate her, my heart smote me as I looked at the poor, pale, frightened face.

"I will try," she answered. "But you know too much; I'm afraid you will always frighten me now."

Mrs. Clements glanced at me, and shook her head pityingly.

"Good night, sir," she said. "You couldn't help it, I know; but I wish it was me you had frightened, and not her."

They moved away a few steps. I thought they had left me; but Anne suddenly stopped, and separated herself from her friend.

"Wait a little," she said. "I must say good-by."

She returned to the grave, rested both hands tenderly on the marble cross, and kissed it.

"I'm better, now," she sighed, looking up at me quietly. "I forgive you."

She joined her companion again, and they left the burial-ground. I saw them stop near the church, and speak to the sexton's wife, who had come from the cottage, and had waited, watching us from a distance. Then they went on again up the path that led to the moor. I looked after Anne Catherick as she disappeared, till all trace of her had faded in the twilight—looked, as anxiously and sorrowfully, as if that was the last I was to see in this weary world of the woman in white.

FAIR AND FOUL CIRCASSIANS.

Two months ago, Constantinople was filled with exiled Circassians; a brave nation had succumbed to the power of Russia; another race had been absorbed by the great creeping glacier that turns all it meets, to death. Ten thousand dagger-wearing, woolly-capped Tchirgees, as the Turks call them, were swarming in the bazars, coffee-shops, kibab stalls, and khans. They were to be seen, rude and sullen, chafed and spirit-broken, at every fountain, and under every mosque wall. The Sultan had received them as guests, and had lavishly given each man about fourpence a week for his support—an ample, yet not a fattening largesse. He had also cleared out a huge khan or barrack, a vast building that would hold thousands of people, for their use. Some restraint was laid, I think, upon their silver-ringed matchlocks, for the sake of the safety of true Mussulmans: for, the Tchirgee is a good marksman, and is of a choleric and rather tigery nature. Besides, a man just escaped, bleeding and rib-broken, from the gripes of a bear, is not in the best of humour. Therefore, when I relate that these mountaineers sometimes used their broad daggers a little hastily—about so small a thing as even a smoky kibab, or a damaged melon—you will not allow your opinion to be lowered of a brave, devoted, and unfortunate people.

Constantinople—never a convenient or luxurious place for the promenader, with its nar-

row wells of streets, its want of side pavement, and its loose bouldery trottoir—was rendered still more irritating and uncomfortable by these bands of proud exiles. You ran against them at fruit-stalls, and at the corners of streets. They gaped about, at the pearl-sewn slippers, and the rich kincob stuff in the bazaars. In their choleric pride, and their savage dauntless bearing, they reminded me of how a Clan Chattan man must have borne himself in Edinburgh streets in the Flodden time. As for mere Franks, they elbowed you and walked you down, and claimed the wall, as insolently as the Turks. They evidently thought a Circassian beggar a more honourable being than an English Christian in a cramped-up coat and ten horse-power spectacles. Their pride did not hurt mine; they did not tread on my corns, nor draw their daggers on me; so I left them alone, and these English knuckles of mine disturbed the symmetry of no Circassian nose. I could pardon the pride of a gentleman beggar. I pitied the brave exile, and gave some of their children food.

Let us place ourselves on the queer, up-and-down, hillocky bridge of boats, that joins Stamboul to Galata: that wonderful bridge which has four divisions, and which all day is crowded with Turkish carriages, horsemen, beggars, Franks, steam-boat passengers, sailors, boatmen, Greeks, Crim-Tartars, Arabs, pedlars, water-sellers, fruit-sellers, santons, fakirs, soldiers, and Turkish women in sloppy yellow boots and quakery dresses of crimson and gold—purple and chocolate brown—Arabian Night silks. On one side of the bridge, are lying the Bosphorus steamers, snorting angrily at being kept waiting; on the other, is the sort of latticed larder where the shaven Turkish youth splash and bathe, with much noisy laughter.

I pay my quarter-penny to one of the four or five Turkish toll-takers; escape the clutch of the horrible beggars, who squat in rows just beyond the toll-taker's room, and who, baring elephantiasis legs and hideous stumps, chant nasal verses from the Koran, and hold out all day little brass basins for alms; I escape a fat pasha's overbearing Arab stallion; I dodge a gang of asses laden with bricks and sweeping, switchy, deal planks; I shun the importunities of a Solomon Eagle kind of Indian fakir, with elf hair, and insane hungry eyes, who swings about a huge wooden sabot, suspended by a brass chain, for the alms of the true believers. I avoid his verminy robes and his flowing rags, and, wonderful to relate, he neither pronounces the name of Sheitan nor spits at me, for which I am thankful. I fly, too, after some entanglement, from a wily Persian in a high black cap, shaped like the mouthpiece of a clarinet, in whose girdle I see some dozen daggers stuck, for he is an itinerant trader in arms. Then, resting for a moment my back against the strong wooden balustrade of the bridge, to observe the keen swift kyjiks poise and skim over the Bosphorus, I turn to watch an Arab water-seller, who is more than usually Oriental. He is a tall, wiry man, from some distant desert or palm-tree village, wild and

gaunt in look, and having more the abstracted bearing of a devotee than the shrewd, anxious look of the street trader. He has on his brown nut of a head, the dirty green turban of a pilgrim who has accomplished his religious course. He is apparelled in a long tunic, that reaches from his neck to his ankles, of stiff, brown, quilted leather; and attached to his leather water-skin, that he carries by a cord that goes round his brown shrivelled neck, hang several brass bowls, carved with Arabic talismans, and fringed with brass spangles. Such a man, it seemed to me, must have been Aladdin's wicked sham uncle; such a man might be first cousin (twice removed) to Sindbad's Old Man of the Sea, that troublesome acquaintance, as difficult to shake off as Horace's.

But, tired of the golden fire rain of the vertical Eastern sun, the dangerous passage of horses and arabas, the jostling of Turkish women who delight to insult and generally inconvenience the infidel; tired of being treated by every member of the Turkish crowd, from the fat pasha down to the leanest fig-seller, as if I were what nursery-maids call "a naughty boy," and were to be snubbed, and slapped, and put into the corner accordingly—which, to an infidel, with what old writers call a "high stomach," is rather difficult to bear; I leave the bridge, "shunt to a siding," to use a railway figure of speech, and passing the row of bare, brawny-legged Greeks, who stand balancing huge glass bottles, big as you see in chemists' windows in England, on their left knees, and tinging half a dozen tumblers in their thievish hands, I steal off down the river-side street, and, passing through a huge gateway, not un sentinelled, leading to one of the quarters of the Turkish city, I enter the quiet court-yard of a retired mosque, and breathe there, far from bustle and buzz.

And here let me step into the small side chapel of a pardonable episode, and explain that Constantinople is a noisy city, though its traffic be small, and its population a poor handful in comparison with our own black Babylon. There is a sense of excitement and of dangerous confusion in the deep defiles of streets which fatigues the worried brain even more than London. There are no rattling roudades of cabs, no rolling thunder waggons of omnibuses, no Juggernaut Pickford vans, no undeviating hundred yard long coal-waggons, no bounding Hansoms, with drivers the very fiery Ruperts of London streets. No; but you scarcely gain much when you have, instead, tormenting and incessant Indian files of blundering, stolid, overladen asses, trailing along timber, or bruising you with corded panniers full of bricks; noisy fruit-sellers, bumping you with peach baskets; water-carriers, laden with greasy oil skins; pashas and their pipe-bearers, who respect no infidel toes; jolting, suffering, grinding ox-waggons, ponderous and slow; fiery, dashing black grooms, regardless of Martin's Act; and bread-sellers, with long-legged stands slung at their back, which keep perpetually poking your eye out.

But, to my court-yard of the mosque, where

on the steps of a fountain, tired, hot, and hungry, I sit, to munch some baked chesnuts I have just bought of a street merchant, who exclaimed "Allah is merciful," when I gave him exactly one farthing more than he asked: a generosity for which one or two Circassian boys, roving near, in search of melon rinds and other alimentary trifles, made faces at me behind my back, strongly expressive of a doubt of my sanity, for which insult I "heaped coals of fire upon their head" by instantly treating them to a penny-worth (such a turban full) of green and bullet-wild peaches, just then providentially offered me for sale.

I sat down, repeating to myself that beautiful short prayer, which forms the first chapter of Mahomet's Koran (more for its poetry than its religion), and thinking, if I dared to go now into the next street and shout out in Turkish, my private opinion, that "the Koran is a foolish, dull, long-winded, crafty, incoherent book, with nearly all that is good in it stolen from the Bible," how I should feel going home to Miseri's hotel carrying my head in my black leather carpet-bag!

I was seated under the broad brim of the roof of a fountain which, as usual in Mosque court-yards, filled the centre of the "quad." Twenty years ago, and I suppose the slice of a reaping-hook sabre would have been the first intimation that I should have had that I was in the sacred court of ablutions, and breaking the law of the Prophet. But things grow changed in twenty years; no one disturbed me now; and if there was just a spice of danger in the situation (for among Turks, when they are really fanatic, you are never safe), it gave a spice of pleasure to the situation, such as one feels in sitting on a sea-cliff, and hanging one's legs over among the fringing flowers, so that one may look France-ward, which is sea-ward, with more ease.

I was looking out between the slim Aaron's rod pillars, at the mosque pigeons that were flickering their emerald necks in the sun, thinking of I know not what—perhaps, if of anything, of a dead nation's dead faith—when I accidentally looked round and found that a Circassian—one of the great band of exiles that filled Constantinople—had, unobserved by me, entered the court-yard, and seated himself near. Perhaps he came from prayer at the mosque; perhaps merely to rest from the sun. Be that as it will, there he was: a fair type of his race in face, dress, and bearing: a huge, round, high cap, muffy and ridiculous as an English grenadier's, crowned his head. He wore loose red trousers, and a collarless loose-sleeved robe, open down the middle, showing a loose-belted blue tunic reaching to the knees. His shoes were sloppy and Eastern, and one of his feet rested on a square, thick-legged, low stool which lay on the ground—left there by the priest when he quitted his chibouk and coffee-cup to mount the minaret, twenty minutes ago, at noon, and call the true believers to prayer. At his belt, lying across his stomach, ready for the hand, hung a broad heavy hanjar, not unlike the

Roman sword, some two feet and a half long only, but heavy enough to cleave a bear's skull—
—or a Russian's—in two at a stroke, and with a point needle sharp. On either breast of his brown outer tunic were sewn, or hooked on, six red-plugged yellow tubes, which at first I not unnaturally mistook for the Pan-pipes of some wandering musician, whose business it was to amuse the Turkish coffee drinkers. I had forgotten that the Lesghians and the Daghestan followers of Schamyl never moved without arms, and that these tubes (which even the children wear) contained fire food for the matchlock, now shut up in some Turkish guard-house. Checknian or Lesghian I knew not, yet I guessed him a tormentor of the plains of Georgia, a terror to grey-coated Russian soldiers shut up in mountain forts, a beheader of Muscovite spies, and a fierce chanter among the foraging horse-men of Vedenno of Koran battle-songs. Had I known any scraps of Georgian, or more than half a dozen sentences of Russian, I would have drawn my Tartar mountaineer into conversation about his chieftain; but, as I knew he could not understand English or Turkish, I contented myself with offering the sullen warrior, the terror of the Orbelianis and the Ahlabzans of Georgia, a handful of chesnuts, which he accepted in a lordly and patronising manner, and, without speaking, turned round towards me as sociable men do when preparing for conversation.

So I sat there, admiring the rough warrior, whose keen shaska had lopped off Russky heads like radishes, and observing the shrewd, half-closed eyes, the wide prominent Tartar cheek-bones, the sweeping mustachios, and stubbly grey beard. There was something so original to me in his black curled wool cap so tall and large, in his blue Oriental tunic, in his rude shoes, in his thin pink trousers, and in his brown rough robe, with the woolly lining turned back over his sinewy and veined hands, that I felt myself obliged to invent some excuse for further looking at him without rudeness. I knew, from experience, that with Turk, Persian, Armenian, Greek, or Circassian, there is one subject on which they are never tired of talking, and that is, the temper and value of their arms, whether the weapon be matchlock, sword, javelin, or dagger; so, putting an enormous degree of good temper, sociability, and sagacity into my voice, I first said, in a solemn, sympathising voice, expressive of deep sorrow for a broken nation:

"Schamyl!" And then shook my head, as Lord Burleigh is once said to have done.

The mountaineer, looking fierce and roused, muttered something in his language, which I could not follow, and therefore did not.

I followed up my first success by growling, in a savage tone, between my clenched teeth, to express my national antipathies, and win his confidence:

"Russky, bad."

Upon this the Tchirgee's eyes brightened, and he touched his dagger.

Thereupon—for I did not know very well what next to do, unless I had offered to buy his daughter, which I was not prepared for—I tried to apologise for the act, and intimated my wish that he would show me the weapon that had, among the avalanches and forests of Daghestan, been so terrible to the tea-drinking Ruskys.

He at once acceded. Putting on an air of eager connoisseurship, I examined the dreadful double-edged ponderous weapon. It was some two feet long, broad as the palm of your hand, point sharp as a rose thorn; the handle was heavy, but without a hilt; the blade had this speciality about it, that it was of good Damascus steel—as I could tell by that peculiar rippled water-mark that indicates the hard welded metal of Syria; down the middle, grooved deep as the thickness of a goose-quill, in the centre of the steel, ran a channel, to drain off the blood from the handle and surface.

I pointed to this as I returned the weapon to the Circassian's belt, and exclaimed, with considerable effect and much appetitiveness:

"Rusky."

Upon which the violent chieftain brandished the weapon dangerously near my eyes, and went through a sort of drill of imaginary stabs and slashes, and scalping slices at an imaginary Prince Daniel, or Russian General Ivan Damanoff—much to my alarm yet edification.

And this, thought I, is one of those hardy horsemen who can live for days on wild flowers and mountain grass; whose luxuries are dried plums and apricots, spongy cakes, white cheese, and flour paste; and to whom the snowy pine-forest is as welcome as the carpeted divan, or the gold-brocaded beds of a pasha. This is, perhaps, a chieftain who, in his own now enslaved country, has had his flocks and herds, his obedient horsemen, his rich robes, his patient servants—now, he is all but a beggar, munching my chestnuts in the streets of a Turkish city. These broken shoes were once yellow—beside that still faithful dagger once, perhaps, hung gorgeous pistol-cases. His aoul (fortified house) is now a Russian's—his wife has (O cruel destiny!) been, perhaps, sold to pay his travelling expenses.

Yes—start not, reader—such is the economical but eccentric mode of conduct not unfrequently adopted by Circassian husbands, in these times of necessity and exile. It was only yesterday that I strolled past the spot where you take boat, on the Stamboul side of the wooden bridge before mentioned, and I saw three caïques full of Circassian wives, going off to the Bosphorus-palaces of the Turkish pashas, who had paid for them in ready money. It may be that piastres and Medjids, when of good current metal, have a tendency to allay grief, but so it was, that the sorrow evidenced at that melancholy and eternal parting was of a most silent and suppressed kind. Perhaps, the tears choking back, fell down in a cold death-dew upon the heart; perhaps, the blow to the broken-hearted and starving exiles, was too stunning and dumbing for noisy tears; but so it was, that the fair

ladies, wrapped up until they became bundles, parted from their fathers and husbands and young brothers and friends of the family, with a most commendable serenity. They sat down in the boats, and, without looking back, were pulled off to new friends and a slave's home. If the men had been cattle-dealers, superintending the starting of cows from Cork to Bristol, they could not have stood more stolid and unmoved. Those white statue-faced women, with coarse black hair cut level across the forehead, crowned with strange mitre-shaped helmets of silvery tinsel, were, it seemed to me, thinking more of the future than the past: more of the silk dresses and savoury pilafs of the pasha's house, than the sour milk and vermy sheepskins of their Daghestan home. Perhaps, perpetual hunger and want had hardened their hearts, and driven out love; perhaps, this was a Roman parting, where grief was stifled and trodden under foot, only that a Circassian might not appear womanly before the infidel.

I have myself a contempt for that hateful hypocrisy in literature, sham sentiment, and therefore I may as well add that, knowing something behind the scenes of Circassian life—for my Russian friend, Major Sutherlandsky Edwardsky, had not talked to me for nothing—I knew well, pitying as I did, deeply and sincerely, the brave nation now (shame on England!) crushed and driven into exile, how savage were the wild race whose representative sat munching chestnuts before me. Had not the gallant Major told me how brutalising was the long warfare carried on between the Russians and the Circassians? Did I not know that the Georgian Prince Cutemoff used to sit in state at Tsenondahl, to receive, with promises and thanks and grateful signs of the cross, the Georgian militiamen, who, after a skirmish or a foray, bring their sacks full of Mussulmans' heads to roll out before the highly-civilised and scented Muscovite, the dandy of Moscow balls? Did I not know that the Murids returned from their forays with screaming, bleeding, sabre-cut women tied behind their horses, with the hands of dead Russians tied to their flag-poles, and with sacks full of Russian saints and Parisian barbaric finery swinging by their stirrups? I knew, too, that only two days ago, a disturbance broke out in the great Circassian Khan, on the top of the hill, in which five men were stabbed—and all about what? A pump? A legacy? A bit of property? A Chancery suit? No; about a child that had been slapped by a woman that did not belong to it. Upon this arose angry tears, hysteric laughter, scratching, huggings, tearings. Then supervened male interference, partisans, nudgings, reviling, blows, stabs—till in steps Death, and banishes five of the exiles at one word of his for ever, not merely from Daghestan, but from the totus orbis, the globe, the totus teres of it. I do not want, indeed, God knows, to show that the Circassian is a Red Indian, but I do say he is a wild, headstrong, virtuous, religious, untamable semi-savage. Like all habitually armed men, he is pugnacious and

prone to argue by that wilfully bad logician, the sword. He is of a fierce, rough nature, fond of war, by nature predatory and impatient of even Schamy's command. He has been, ever since George the Thirteenth gave Georgia to the Emperor Paul, a forager, a moss-trooper, and a vexatious borderer, goaded to frenzy by the handiwork of Russian forts. In Constantinople he is a brawling, irascible, conspiring, dangerous exile, whom the Sultan dreads, and is daily carting off to Anatolia.

I used to enjoy sitting down on one of the four-legged low rush chairs, without backs, that are always piled up for customers round a kibab stall, which, though more pretentious, because more patronised, corresponds pretty nearly to the London hot potato tin, or rather to the quiet old woman near the Angel and Fiddle, who sits with a basket of sheep's trotters spread open on a clean white cloth resting on her knees.

There, rejoicing in the scented smoke, and the breath of frizzle and burn, I used to sit down and call out grandly to the obsequious bare armed Turk, in answer to his insinuating

"Bir shei yemeyah istermisiz, chilibi?"—(Do you crave anything to eat, sir?)

"Kibab isterim."—(I want a kibab.) And then, as a sort of crack of the whip after him, I cry out the hurrying signal, "Chapük."—(Quick.)

Away runs the attendant, and beneath the umbrella of the kibab stall there is instantly a sound as of feasting and merriment. The black oil fizzes. The little red and white periwinkles of mutton are strung by nimble fingers on a dozen clean skewers, and laid on the gridiron bars to hiss and bubble. The flat pancake, large as a pillow-case, is slashed by the cook's huge dagger, into sections which are plunged in dyspeptic oil. The fire is aggravated; the charcoal blown up into a delicious crimson, as of a burning and enchanted camellia. Meanwhile, an attendant watches with smiles, as if they were his babies, the little kibabs, all in a row, and alternately slaps the oily cakes as if they were fritters, and twiddles round, and winds up, the frizzling skewers; another attendant, unmeaningly attentive, rubs the chairs with his apron, and cleans what is already as clean as it can be, to give an air of business to the stall. And all this time the whole market-place becomes anxious about my open-air dinner, or my late lunch, or whatever you like to call it. One or two dervishes stand with paternal interest near me, saying silent graces and thanksgivings, and telling their sandal-wood beads. Some Turkish soldiers, engaged in cheapening a pumpkin, as yellow as a toad's belly, wait, with the curiosity of schoolboys, to see the infidel begin his meal; a moollah, who has been bargaining for quinces, and amusing himself, at various turns of the discussion, in beating the helpless Greek salesman about the head with his bathing clogs, draws near; five Persian senna merchants, with their high retreating black caps, order kibabs, too, that they may have an excuse for watching the fun. I am

going to dine, like Henry the Eighth, in public. One would think that infidels ate with the back of the head, or dined, like herons, on one leg, there is such a crowd of Mussulmans round the unbeliever.

Now the alchemic moment of ripeness and perfection has come; the fritter refuses to imbibe any more oil; the kibabs on the lark skewers, are frothy and done through. There is a great sensation as the waiter places a clean round brass tray with a rim to it, upon a stool before me, and, upon that, a bowl of kibab, piled with oily cake, and sauced with pickled cucumbers, stuffed with rice. Knife and fork there is none. Red sherbet, like raspberry vinegar, is brought me from a neighbouring stall. Grapes, turned here and there to blue raisins, await me. I dine like Dives, though my linen may not be so fine.

I have done; my fingers are greasy and fatigued. I have swallowed the kernels of meat, I have rolled up in tubes the muffin-like cake, and bolted it; but still they heap the bowl, and I shrink before the herculean labour. My stomach being full, my heart becomes full. I burn to feed a starving world. I look round for beggars, and even throw a kibab to one of the wolfish street dogs prowling near.

There are yonder three Circassian boys: the eldest about seventeen, the youngest may be ten: sons of that exile chieftain whom I lately met by the fountain—at least so I suppose, for I see him watching them wistfully at a distance, like Hagar, as I beckon them near, and as they come in a shy, wild, untamed way.

Djemmal is the eldest, I find; Labazon, the second; Machmat is the Benjamin. The father, Hadjo, is a Checknian, and from Schamy's favourite fortress at Dargi-Vedenno. Their high Circassian caps of cream-coloured wool, have top coverings of red. The eldest, a broad-faced, Tartar looking, fierce boy, carrying a tremendous dagger, seizes the food I give him, ravenously, and devours it without thanks. After fourpence a month, and melon rinds, with stray snatches of the bones of sword-fish and buffalo milk cheese, this roasted meat rejoices the Circassian stomach, so that in a few minutes they all grow quite greasy and tame, and father and three sons squat near me, grinning satisfaction, with mouths full, and, I may say, swollen with dripping sections of oily cake. How few paras all this charity cost me, after all, I am really ashamed to tell; but, I trust kindness is not necessarily estimated by its expensiveness, or else woe be to him who gives but the cup of cold water, and wishes the poor wayfarer a mere God's blessing!

I know not how I should have "got off" the scene, as actors say, had not, luckily, just at this moment, the Deus stepped in for me, in the shape of a crowd and tumult at the end of the street of the Mosque of Sulieman.

We all ran to see what it was, and found it to be a long and melancholy procession of ox waggons, laden with Circassians: a jolting,

drawing train of rude carts, filled with red leather covered chests, withered old women, and rosy children; these were the first band of exiles, starting for their new home in far-off Anatolia. Beside the carts, paced the pale, hard-featured women, in their dirty, gipsy finery, their silver-tinselled helmets, their veils, and their coloured scarfs. When I looked at those women, with the hair cut straight across the forehead, and falling down the cheeks on either side in long wavy droops, I fancied myself gone back, by an express train of memory, to the reign of Tamerlane, and that I was beholding one of those weeping emigrations which his gigantic conquests produced.

As the long train of sick children, jaded women, sullen men, fierce youths, and dying old women who would never live the journey out, passed me, I sat down on the step of a melon-seller's door, and fell a thinking how this cruel banishment of a brave but unhappy nation had removed one of the great bulwarks between the steadily advancing Russian frontier, and our rich India. Ever since the bequest of Georgia to Russia, the Muscovites have been trying to tread the life out of Circassia, and push on to Persia. Slowly the iron wall of forts closed in upon Schamyl—the Abd-el-Kader of Daghestan—and, at last, turned his mountain home into a prison.

Only a week before the sad news of his surrender reached Stamboul, an English consular agent from Erzeroum told me that he had lately been visited in Armenia by a confidential messenger of the hero, who informed him that unless England sent speedy help, he must shortly surrender. He was so dogged by Russian troops, that he could no longer sleep two nights running in the same aoul, so that he grew weary of his life, and wished only for rest.

CHRISTMAS BOUGHS.

THE mistletoe and holly now reign in every British household the wide world o'er, having done so annually now for more than two thousand years. Yet very little is known respecting the rise and progress of their sovereignty.

Pliny, in the words of his translator, Dr. Philemon Holland, says: "And forasmuch as we are entered into a discourse touching miselto, I cannot overpass one strange thing thereof used in France. The Druidæ (for so they call their Divinours, Wise Men, and the state of their clergie) esteeme nothing in the world more sacred than miselto and the tree whereon it breedeth, so it be on the oke. Now you must take this by the way. The priests or clergiemmen chose of purpose such groves for their Divine service as stood only on okes; nay, they solemnise no sacrifice, nor perform any sacred ceremonies, without branches and leaves thereof; so that they may well enough to be named thereupon Dryidæ in Greeke, which signifieth as much as the oke priests. Certes to say, whatsoever they find

growing upon that tree over and besides its own fruite, be it miselto, or anything else, they esteeme it as a gift sent from Heaven, as a sure sign that the God whom they serve giveth them to understand that he hath chosen that peculiar tree. And no marvelle, for in verie deed miselto is passing geason (scaree) and hard to be found on the oke." He further describes how the Druids, with many devout ceremonies, cut down the mistletoe, as Drayton, many years after, relates in his *Poly-oblion*:

The fearless British priests, under the aged oak,
Taking a milk-white bull unstained with the yoke,
And with an axe of gold, from that Jove-sacred tree
The mistletoe cut down.

The connexion of the mistletoe with the most ancient traditions of Scandinavia and other European countries, invests the plant with an interest derived from association. Although we know little about the Druids or their customs, their vast monuments, cairns, and cromlechs are scattered over our country as remains of their worship. The mistletoe was said to represent the Messiah, and certainly at one time it was called the wood of the holy cross (*Lignum sanctæ crucis*).

In the feudal ages the boughs of mistletoe were gathered with much ceremony on the evening before Christmas-day, and hung up in hall or kitchen with loud shouts and rejoicing:

On Christmas-eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas-eve the mass was sung;
That only night in all the year
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear;
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the woods did merry men go
To gather in the mistletoe;
Then open'd wide the baron's hall,
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all.

From Herrick's *Hesperides* it appears that the mistletoe and its companions retained their places as ornaments in the house till Candlemas-day, at which time the poet says:

Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe:
Instead of holly, now upraise
The greener box for show.

The mistletoe is now excluded from the boughs which deck the churches at Christmas, or because, being so often in rustic places associated with Christmas merriment, it might awaken remembrances little favourable to thought and devotion. The playful customs beneath the mistletoe-bough are of old antiquity in our land, having originated when the plant was dedicated to Friga, the Venus of the Saxons.

The Druids considered the mistletoe of the oak efficacious in all sorts of diseases. And in many parts of Germany it is still supposed to cure wounds, rather by its charming than its healing properties; for the peasants also believe that if the hunters carry it in their hands it will ensure success. The herbalists in Queen Elizabeth's time, however, enumerate various pro-

parations of "mistletoe" both as external and internal remedies; and Culpepper remarks: "Why that should have the most virtue that grows upon oaks, I know not, unless because it is rarest and hardest to come by; and our college's opinion is in this contrary to Scripture, which saith, 'God's tender mercies are all over his works;' and so it is, let the College of Physicians walk as contrary to him as they like, and that is as contrary as the east to the west. Clusius affirms that which grows upon the pear-trees to be as prevalent, and gives orders that it should not touch the ground after it is gathered, and also saith that being hung about the neck it remedeth witchcraft." The Italian physician Matthioli praised the mistletoe as a remedy for epilepsy, and even as lately as the reign of George the First, the plant was extolled, and Sir George Colbatch published, in 1719, a Dissertation concerning Mistletoe, recommending it as a specific in that malady. Pliny says the Druids called it all-heal, and he closes his account of their practices by quaintly moralising: "So vain and superstitious are many nations in the world, doing oftentimes such foolish things as these." The mistletoe is found, when growing on the apple, to contain twice as much potash, and five times as much phosphoric acid, as the tree itself, and when parasitic on the oak its bark is astringent. Now-a-days, however, it has lost its renown as a medicine, and the magical properties ascribed to it by Virgil, and other ancient poets, are remembered only as bygone superstitions.

The Celtic name of the mistletoe was *gwid*, *gué*, or *guy*; the name by which it is still called in France, *le gui*, being evidently but a slight alteration. Borlase, in his *Antiquities of Cornwall*, says that the Druids gathered the plant with great solemnity near the close of the year, saying, "The new year is at hand, gather the mistletoe;" and even now, in some parts of France, the peasant boys go about asking coppers, and crying, "A *guy l'an neuf*;" while in the upper part of Germany, the people, about Christmas time, run from door to door in the villages, shouting "*Guthyl, guthyl!*" which, he adds, "are plainly the remains of the Druidical custom." The name by which the plant is known in most parts of Germany, is *der mistel*. The people of Holstein call it "the branch of the spectres" (*Marentakken*), from the belief that holding a branch of the mistletoe in the hand would not only enable a man to see ghosts, but also to speak to them.

The mistletoe is very widely distributed over our globe. Thunberg says that the parasitic Cape mistletoe (*Viscum capense*) was disseminated everywhere on the branches of the trees by the birds eating plentifully of the berries. Kalm mentions finding a fibrous mistletoe (*Viscum filamentosum*) in abundance in Carolina, which he says the inhabitants make use of as straw for their beds, for packing brittle articles, for adorning their houses, and as fodder for cattle. Our common mistletoe, he says, grows on the sweet gum-tree, or tupelo, and on the oak

and lime, rendering their summits in the winter beautifully green. Colonel Mundy often mentions the mistletoe of Australia, hanging from the trees in abundance, and, like a vampire, seeming to exhaust the life-blood of the plant on which it fixes its fatal affections. This writer says: "Depending from some of the larger gum-trees were the most enormous mistletoes I ever saw. One or two of the clusters of this parasite were so uniform in shape as to look like a huge chandelier of bronze, for that was their colour, hanging plumb down from some slender twig."

The mistletoe-bough, with its yellowish green leaves and clear white berries, is not unfrequently to be met with in the winter woods, or on the trees of gardens or orchards in the south of England. It is found growing on many different trees, but is more common on the apple than any other, and very rarely to be found on the oak. Ray mentions the oak, hazel, and apple as the trees on which this parasite chiefly fixes; but adds that it may be found also on the pear, hawthorn, common maple, ash, lime, elm, and service-tree. Sir William Hooker and Dr. Arnott mention that it occurs in Gloucestershire on the common maple, and in Bedfordshire on lime-trees and locust-trees. It also grows on cherry laurels in gardens. Mr. Dovaston planted the mistletoe on twenty-three trees, but most of the young plants died early, particularly when planted on the gum-bearing trees, thriving well only on the oak, the apple, and the hawthorn-trees. Some poplar and lime-trees, however, in Surrey, have been completely destroyed by mistletoe growing upon them. Mr. Dovaston remarks that he never saw the mistletoe growing well on the oak but once, and that was in Anglesey, in the park of Lord Uxbridge, hanging—singularly enough—almost over a grand Druidical cromlech. The Society of Arts, having some years ago offered a premium for the discovery of mistletoe on the oak, had a specimen sent to them from an oak in Gloucestershire; and Mr. Jesse mentions having received a piece of mistletoe from an oak near Godalming, in Surrey.

The mistletoe is a true parasite, for no one has ever yet succeeded in making it take root in the earth. Mosses and lichens are often popularly called parasites; but in reality they are nourished by the moisture of the air, or by the soil lying in the crevices of the bark. But the mistletoe inserts its roots into the very substance of living vegetables, and the experiments made on it confirm the opinion derived from observation, that the tendency of a root is always towards the centre of the object on which it grows, and that the young shoots invariably take the opposite direction. Dr. Darwin ingeniously accounted for this on the principle that the leaf-bud was stimulated by air, and the roots by moisture, and that, therefore, each elongates itself where it is most excited. If the berries of the mistletoe, when fully ripe, are pressed and rubbed on the smooth bark of almost any tree, they will adhere closely, producing plants

the following winter, and the roots will be seen striking inwards to the centre of the branch.

Pliny tells us of many superstitions concerning the holly, saying, in the words of his translator, "As touching the holly, or hulver-tree, if it be planted about a house, whether it be within a citie or standing in the country, it serveth for a counter-charm, and keepeth away all ill spells and enchantments." Among the other remarkable things connected with the plant, the Roman naturalist relates that its flowers cause water to freeze, and repel poison, while, if a staff of holly wood is thrown at any animal, even if it falls short of touching it, the animal will be subdued by its influence, returning and lying down by it.

The Persians still fancy that the holly-tree casts no shadow, and consider an infusion of its leaves precious enough to be applied to many sacred purposes. They also sprinkle them on the faces of new-born infants.

The custom of decking houses and churches with holly-boughs, is one of great antiquity, being derived, most probably, from the Roman practice of sending branches of trees to friends during the festival of the Saturnalia. In many instances, customs of this kind were gradually adopted by the early Christians, and linked into their faith. Houses and temples were then decorated with holly, and Christmas-eve was marked in the Calendar as "Churches are decked."

The holly was formerly called holme, and hulver, or hulvere. The word holly is a corruption of holly-tree, the name given to it by the monks on account of its old use of decking churches. The plant is still called holme in Devonshire, while in Norfolk it is called hulver, a name as old as Chaucer's poems, and doubtless much older :

The herbere was full of flowers gende,
Into the which as I beholde 'gan
Betwixt an hulvere and a woodbende,
As I was ware, I saw where lay a man.

Skinner suggests that this name is either from the English word "hold" and the Anglo-Saxon "fear long," a plant lasting long, or from "hold fair," because it keeps its beauty all the year. The holly is called in French, le houx; in German, the stechpalme; in Italian, the agri-foglio, and in Spanish, the acebo; the two last and the Latin specific name, aquifolium, signifying needle-leaved.

The holly is a native of the woods and forests of Britain. The numerous varieties of gold and silver, blotched, whole, notched, sawlike, hairy, bristly, broad, narrow, and thick-leaved, and yellow-berried, are beautifully ornamental, especially in winter, when a large holly-tree covered with a profusion of bright scarlet berries is certainly the queen of the woodland.

Holly has always been used for making fences, for, besides being ornamental, it is more durable than any other tree for the purpose. A hedge of holly will attain the height of sixteen feet in about twenty years. In Bretagne, holly-trees are often to be seen fifty feet in height,

and Bradley records that some of those at the Holly-walk, near Frensham, in Surrey, have attained the height of even sixty feet; while old hollies, thirty or forty feet high, with very large trunks, are to be found in various parts of this country. In the woods of Dumbartonshire there are trees more than thirty feet high, and the holly-trees of Needwood Forest, in Staffordshire, have long been renowned for size and beauty. Evelyn's holly-hedge at Say's Court, which the Czar of Muscovy destroyed during his temporary residence there, was a source of innocent delight to its owner, and Bishop Mant thus refers to it :

And such was once thy holly wall,
Good Evelyn, thick, extended, tall.
Thy hands disposed the seedlings fair;
They throve beneath thy fostering care;
Four hundred feet in length they throve,
Thrice three they rose in height above,
Glittering with arm'd and varnish'd leaves,
Secure 'gainst weather, beasts, and thieves;
Blushing with native coral red,
Refreshment and delight they shed.

Beautiful holly-hedges yet remain, which might vie with this renowned one. At Tynningham, in Scotland, the seat of the Earl of Haddington, there is a holly-hedge a hundred and thirty years old, two thousand nine hundred and fifty-two yards in length, varying from ten to twenty-five feet in height, with a base from nine to thirteen feet broad. The holly will thrive in places where the bleak winds would destroy every other tree. And many a hardy holly is scattered over moorlands such as Dartmoor, or some bleak Highland hill, where human hand could never have planted it, and serves as a beacon to the mariner at sea or the traveller over pathless wilds. On the lofty cliffs near the old Castle of Dover, and in the graveyard of the church where our forefathers worshipped when the Gospel was first brought to Britain, a holly-tree has been planted in memory of the Iron Duke. And long after the generation who placed it there are laid beneath the sod, the tree will probably survive in all its greenness, though on that bleak spot scarcely any other tree could brave the storms coming with the winter from land and sea. The abundant growth of holly has given the name of Holme Chase to a part of Dartmoor, and to Holmwood, near Dorking.

Holly sticks are used for whip handles, and this use seems very ancient, for an old writer says :

They their holly whips have braced;
and far earlier we find Chaucer referring to

The bilder oke, and eke the hardie ashe,
The box, pipetre, the holme to whippes lash.

Sheep browse on the leaves of the holly, and Linnæus explained the fact of the lower branches bearing thorny leaves, and the upper branches bearing smooth leaves, by supposing that the thorns were the tree's natural protection from cattle. Southey has repeated this error in verse :

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen
Wrinkled and keen,

No grazing cattle through their prickly round
Can reach to wound;

But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

Now, the true and simple explanation of this fact is, that the holly leaves acquire their thorns only with age, and the topmost branches are thornless merely because they are in their infancy.

THE TATTLESNIVEL BLEATER.

THE pen is taken in hand on the present occasion, by a private individual (not wholly unaccustomed to literary composition), for the exposure of a conspiracy of a most frightful nature; a conspiracy which, like the deadly Upas-tree of Java, on which the individual produced a poem in his earlier youth (not wholly devoid of length), which was so flatteringly received (in circles not wholly unaccustomed to form critical opinions), that he was recommended to publish it, and would certainly have carried out the suggestion, but for private considerations (not wholly unconnected with expense.)

The individual who undertakes the exposure of the gigantic conspiracy now to be laid bare in all its hideous deformity, is an inhabitant of the town of Tattlesnivel—a lowly inhabitant, it may be, but one who, as an Englishman and a man, will ne'er abase his eye before the gaudy and the mocking throng.

Tattlesnivel stoops to demand no championship from her sons. On an occasion in History, our bluff British monarch, our Eighth Royal Harry, almost went there. And long ere the periodical in which this exposure will appear, had sprung into being, Tattlesnivel had unfurled that standard which yet waves upon her battlements. The standard alluded to, is THE TATTLESNIVEL BLEATER, containing the latest intelligence, and state of markets, down to the hour of going to press, and presenting a favourable local medium for advertisers, on a graduated scale of charges, considerably diminishing in proportion to the guaranteed number of insertions.

It were bootless to expatiate on the host of talent engaged in formidable phalanx to do fealty to the Bleater. Suffice it to select, for present purposes, one of the most gifted and (but for the wide and deep ramifications of an un-English conspiracy), most rising, of the men who are bold Albion's pride. It were needless, after this preamble, to point the finger more directly at the LONDON CORRESPONDENT OF THE TATTLESNIVEL BLEATER.

On the weekly letters of that Correspondent, on the flexibility of their English, on the boldness of their grammar, on the originality of their quotations (never to be found as they are printed, in any book existing), on the priority of their information, on their intimate acquaintance with the secret thoughts and unexecuted intentions of men, it would ill become the humble Tattlesnivellian who traces these words, to dwell.

They are graven in the memory; they are on the Bleater's file. Let them be referred to.

But, from the infamous, the dark, the subtle conspiracy which spreads its baleful roots throughout the land, and of which the Bleater's London Correspondent is the one sole subject, it is the purpose of the lowly Tattlesnivellian who undertakes this revelation, to tear the veil. Nor will he shrink from his self-imposed labour, Herculean though it be.

The conspiracy begins in the very Palace of the Sovereign Lady of our Ocean Isle. Leal and loyal as it is the proud vaunt of the Bleater's readers, one and all, to be, the inhabitant who pens this exposure does not personally impeach, either her Majesty the queen, or the illustrious Prince Consort. But, some silken-clad smoothers, some purple parasites, some fawners in frippery, some greedy and begartered ones in gorgeous garments, he does impeach—ay, and wrathfully! Is it asked on what grounds? They shall be stated.

The Bleater's London Correspondent, in the prosecution of his important inquiries, goes down to Windsor, sends in his card, has a confidential interview with her Majesty and the illustrious Prince Consort. For a time, the restraints of Royalty are thrown aside in the cheerful conversation of the Bleater's London Correspondent, in his fund of information, in his flow of anecdote, in the atmosphere of his genius; Her Majesty brightens, the illustrious Prince Consort thaws, the cares of State and the conflicts of Party are forgotten, lunch is proposed. Over that unassuming and domestic table, Her Majesty communicates to the Bleater's London Correspondent that it is her intention to send his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to inspect the top of the Great Pyramid—thinking it likely to improve his acquaintance with the views of the people. Her Majesty further communicates that she has made up her royal mind (and that the Prince Consort has made up his illustrious mind) to the bestowal of the vacant Garter, let us say on Mr. Roebuck. The younger Royal children having been introduced at the request of the Bleater's London Correspondent, and having been by him closely observed to present the usual external indications of good health, the happy knot is severed, with a sigh the Royal bow is once more strung to its full tension, the Bleater's London Correspondent returns to London, writes his letter, and tells the Tattlesnivel Bleater what he knows. All Tattlesnivel reads it, and knows that he knows it. But, does his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ultimately go to the top of the Great Pyramid? Does Mr. Roebuck ultimately get the Garter? No. Are the younger Royal children even ultimately found to be well? On the contrary, they have—and on that very day had—the measles. Why is this? Because the conspirators against the Bleater's London Correspondent have stepped in with their dark machinations. Because Her Majesty and the Prince Consort are artfully induced to change their minds, from north to south, from east to west, immediately after it is known to the conspirators that they

have put themselves in communication with the Bleater's London Correspondent. It is now indignantly demanded, by whom are they so tampered with? It is now indignantly demanded, who took the responsibility of concealing the indisposition of those Royal children from their Royal and Illustrious parents, and of bringing them down from their beds, disguised, expressly to confound the London Correspondent of the Tattlesnival Bleater? Who are those persons, it is again asked? Let not rank and favour protect them. Let the traitors be exhibited in the face of day!

Lord John Russell is in this conspiracy. Tell us not that his Lordship is a man of too much spirit and honour. Denunciation is hurled against him. The proof? The proof is here.

The Time is panting for an answer to the question, Will Lord John Russell consent to take office under Lord Palmerston? Good. The London Correspondent of the Tattlesnival Bleater is in the act of writing his weekly letter, finds himself rather at a loss to settle this question finally, leaves off, puts his hat on, goes down to the lobby of the House of Commons, sends in for Lord John Russell, and has him out. He draws his arm through his Lordship's, takes him aside, and says, "John, will you ever accept office under Palmerston?" His Lordship replies, "I will not." The Bleater's London Correspondent retorts, with the caution such a man is bound to use, "John, think again; say nothing to me rashly; is there any temper here?" His Lordship replies, calmly, "None whatever." After giving him time for reflection, the Bleater's London Correspondent says, "Once more, John, let me put a question to you. Will you ever accept office under Palmerston?" His Lordship answers (note the exact expressions), "Nothing shall induce me, ever to accept a seat in a Cabinet of which Palmerston is the Chief." They part, the London Correspondent of the Tattlesnival Bleater finishes his letter, and—always being withheld by motives of delicacy, from plainly divulging his means of getting accurate information on every subject, at first hand—puts in it, this passage: "Lord John Russell is spoken of, by blunderers, for Foreign Affairs; but I have the best reasons for assuring your readers, that" (giving prominence to the exact expressions, it will be observed) "NOTHING WILL EVER INDUCE HIM, TO ACCEPT A SEAT IN A CABINET OF WHICH PALMERSTON IS THE CHIEF." On this you may implicitly rely." What happens? On the very day of the publication of that number of the Bleater—the malignity of the conspirators being even manifested in the selection of the day—Lord John Russell takes the Foreign Office! Comment were superfluous.

The people of Tattlesnival will be told, have been told, that Lord John Russell is a man of his word. He may be, on some occasions; but, when overshadowed by this dark and enormous growth of conspiracy, Tattlesnival knows him to be otherwise. "I happen to be certain, deriving my information from a source which cannot be doubted to be authentic," wrote the

London Correspondent of the Bleater, within the last year, "that Lord John Russell bitterly regrets having made that explicit speech of last Monday." These are not roundabout phrases; these are plain words. What does Lord John Russell (apparently by accident), within eight-and-forty hours after their diffusion over the civilised globe? Rises in his place in Parliament, and unblushingly declares that if the occasion could arise five hundred times, for his making that very speech, he would make it five hundred times! Is there no conspiracy here? And is this combination against one who would be always right if he were not proved always wrong, to be endured in a country that boasts of its freedom and its fairness?

But, the Tattlesnivellian who now raises his voice against intolerable oppression, may be told that, after all, this is a political conspiracy. He may be told, forsooth, that Mr. DISRAELI's being in it, that LORD DERBY's being in it, that Mr. BRIGHT's being in it, that every Home, Foreign, and Colonial Secretary's being in it, that every ministry's and every opposition's being in it, are but proofs that men will do in politics what they would do in nothing else. Is this the plea? If so, the rejoinder is, that the mighty conspiracy includes the whole circle of Artists of all kinds, and comprehends all degrees of men, down to the worst criminal and the hangman who ends his career. For, all these are intimately known to the London Correspondent of the Tattlesnival Bleater, and all these deceive him.

Sir, put it to the proof. There is the Bleater on the file—documentary evidence. Weeks, months, before the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, the Bleater's London Correspondent knows the subjects of all the leading pictures—knows what the painters first meant to do, knows what they afterwards substituted for what they first meant to do, knows what they ought to do and won't do, knows what they ought not to do and will do, knows to a letter from whom they have commissions, knows to a shilling how much they are to be paid. Now, no sooner is each studio clear of the remarkable man to whom each studio-occupant has revealed himself as he does not reveal himself to his nearest and dearest bosom friend, than conspiracy and fraud begin. Alfred the Great becomes the Fairy Queen; Moses viewing the Promised Land, turns out to be Moses going to the Fair; Portrait of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, is transformed, as if by irreverent enchantment of the dissenting interest, into A Favourite Terrier, or Cattle Grazing; and the most extraordinary work of art in the list described by the Bleater, is coolly sponged out altogether, and asserted never to have had existence at all, even in the most shadowy thoughts of its executant! This is vile enough, but this is not all. Picture-buyers then come forth from their secret positions, and creep into their places in the assassin-multitude of conspirators. MR. BARING, after expressly telling the Bleater's London Correspondent that he had bought No. 39 for one thousand guineas, gives it up to

somebody unknown for a couple of hundred pounds; THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE pretends to have no knowledge whatever of the commissions to which the London Correspondent of the Bleater swore him, but allows a Railway Contractor to cut him out for half the money. Similar examples might be multiplied. Shame, shame, on these men! Is this England?

Sir, look again at Literature. The Bleater's London Correspondent is not merely acquainted with all the eminent writers, but is in possession of the secrets of their souls. He is versed in their hidden meanings and references, sees their manuscripts before publication, and knows the subjects and titles of their books when they are not begun. How dare those writers turn upon the eminent man and depart from every intention they have confided to him? How do they justify themselves in entirely altering their manuscripts, changing their titles, and abandoning their subjects? Will they deny, in the face of Tattlesniveil, that they do so? If they have such hardihood, let the file of the Bleater strike them dumb. By their fruits they shall be known. Let their works be compared with the anticipatory letters of the Bleater's London Correspondent, and their falsehood and deceit will become manifest as the sun; it will be seen that they do nothing which they stand pledged to the Bleater's London Correspondent to do; it will be seen that they are among the blackest parties in this black and base conspiracy. This will become apparent, sir, not only as to their public proceedings but as to their private affairs. The outraged Tattlesniveilian who now drags this infamous combination into the face of day, charges those literary persons with making away with their property, imposing on the Income Tax Commissioners, keeping false books, and entering into sham contracts. He accuses them on the unimpeachable faith of the London Correspondent of the Tattlesniveil Bleater. With whose evidence they will find it impossible to reconcile their own account of any transaction of their lives.

The national character is degenerating under the influence of the ramifications of this tremendous conspiracy. Forgery is committed, constantly. A person of note—any sort of person of note—dies. The Bleater's London Correspondent knows what his circumstances are, what his savings are (if any), who his creditors are, all about his children and relations, and (in general, before his body is cold) describes his will. Is that will ever proved? Never! Some other will is substituted; the real instrument, destroyed. And this (as has been before observed), is England!

Who are the workmen and artificers, enrolled upon the books of this treacherous league? From what funds are they paid, and with what ceremonies are they sworn to secrecy? Are there none such? Observe what follows. A little time ago the Bleater's London Correspondent had this passage: "Boddleboy is pianoforte playing at St. Januarius's Gallery, with pretty tolerable success! He clears three hundred pounds per

night. Not bad this!!" The builder of St. Januarius's Gallery (plunged to the throat in the conspiracy) met with this piece of news, and observed, with characteristic coarseness, "that the Bleater's London Correspondent was a Blind Ass." Being pressed by a man of spirit to give his reasons for this extraordinary statement, he declared that the Gallery, crammed to suffocation, would not hold two hundred pounds, and that its expenses were, probably, at least half what it did hold. The man of spirit (himself a Tattlesniveilian) had the Gallery measured within a week from that hour, and it would not hold two hundred pounds! Now, can the poorest capacity doubt that it had been altered in the mean time?

And so the conspiracy extends, through every grade of society, down to the condemned criminal in prison, the hangman, and the Ordinary. Every famous murderer within the last ten years has desecrated his last moments by falsifying his confidences imparted specially to the London Correspondent of the Tattlesniveil Bleater; on every such occasion, Mr. Calcraft has followed the degrading example; and the reverend Ordinary, forgetful of his cloth, and mindful only (it would seem, alas!) of the conspiracy, has committed himself to some account or other of the criminal's demeanour and conversation, which has been diametrically opposed to the exclusive information of the London Correspondent of the Bleater. And this (as has been before observed) is Merry England!

A man of true genius, however, is not easily defeated. The Bleater's London Correspondent, probably beginning to suspect the existence of a plot against him, has recently fallen on a new style, which, as being very difficult to countertermine, may necessitate the organisation of a new conspiracy. One of his masterly letters, lately, disclosed the adoption of this style—which was remarked with profound sensation throughout Tattlesniveil—in the following passage: "Mentioning literary small talk, I may tell you that some new and extraordinary rumours are afloat concerning the conversations I have previously mentioned, alleged to have taken place in the first floor front (situated over the street door), of Mr. X. Ameter (the poet so well known to your readers), in which, X. Ameter's great uncle, his second son, his butcher, and a corpulent gentleman with one eye universally respected at Kensington, are said not to have been on the most friendly footing; I forbear, however, to pursue the subject further, this week, my informant not being able to supply me with exact particulars."

But, enough, sir. The inhabitant of Tattlesniveil who has taken pen in hand to expose this odious association of unprincipled men against a shining (local) character, turns from it with disgust and contempt. Let him in few words strip the remaining flimsy covering from the nude object of the conspirators, and his loathsome task is ended.

Sir, that object, he contends, is evidently twofold. First, to exhibit the London Correspondent

dent of the Tattlesnival Bleater in the light of a mischievous Blockhead who, by hiring himself out to tell what he cannot possibly know, is as great a public nuisance as a Blockhead in a corner can be. Second, to suggest to the men of Tattlesnival that it does not improve their town to have so much Dry Rubbish shot there.

Now, sir, on both these points Tattlesnival demands in accents of Thunder, Where is the Attorney-General? Why doesn't THE TIMES take it up? (Is the latter in the conspiracy? It never adopts his views, or quotes him, and incessantly contradicts him.) Tattlesnival, sir, remembering that our forefathers contended with the Norman at Hastings, and bled at a variety of other places that will readily occur to you, demands that its birthright shall not be bartered away for a mess of potage. Have a care, sir, have a care! Or Tattlesnival (its idle Rifles piled in its scouted streets) may be seen ere long, advancing with its Bleater to the foot of the Throne, and demanding redress for this conspiracy, from the orb'd and sceptred hands of Majesty itself!

THE POPE IN ACCOUNT.

M. DE MONTALEMBERT, in the treatise, which "authority" has deemed it advisable, as far as may be, to suppress, has asked the question, "What wrong has Pope Pius the Ninth done?" It is a question which authority might well be anxious to suppress, were we still in the days when such suppression was possible. But neither Pope, nor Emperor, censor, nor police-prefect, can, by any utmost exertion of power or vigilance, prevent M. de Montalembert's bold challenge from ringing forth to the utmost confines of Christendom, or can hinder millions of hearts and tongues from shouting back indignant answer. But it is not so that we would propose to reply to it. A fair question, as the phrase goes, deserves a fair answer. What wrong has Pope Pius the Ninth done? Let us see whether we cannot do something towards presenting a fair and honest statement of the account current, as between the Pope and Humanity.

The Pope, observe, versus Humanity. This is the issue to be debated. For we entirely decline to permit the question to be either blinked, or confused, or narrowed by mixing it up with the comparatively insignificant, and, in truth, wholly insoluble one of the conduct of an individual man. Who, save the common Judge of Popes and peasants can know, how far the man Giovanni Mastai, who calls himself the Ninth Pius, has acted well or ill as a moral agent? He has done many acts which outrage my sense of right and justice, and that of the majority of mankind. But it is replied that he acted according to his conscience, and, in so acting, did his duty as Pope. We are perfectly ready to admit the truth of the statement. It is possible, nay, probable, that Pius the Ninth

suffers from no reproach of conscience. It is possible, that as much might be said with equal truth of a Borgia or a Medici. The fact, therefore, if it be so, is utterly irrelevant to us, however important it may be to the individual Pius. If it be so, we have to remark, as we pass to the real question, that the Pope has committed moral murder on Giovanni Mastai, for one thing. He is one and not the least pitiable victim of Papacy. So is a drummer, of the system of military flogging. But in all the controversies of which that sad system has been the subject, we do not remember in any case to have met with any strictures on the conduct of the drummer, whose hard fate it was to administer the lash. Let us assume, then, that Pius the Ninth has any amount of angelic disposition, with which the defenders of the Papal system wish to credit him. The extreme "benignity"—that is the favourite phrase—of the "Holy Father," shall be fully admitted, since his friends are so eager to assert it. But it must be remembered that the man can only be thus praised at the expense of the system. When we come to the consideration of the deeds which the Papal power in such hands has enacted, we shall be entitled to argue, that these things are the necessary and unfailing product of the system; that the inexorable system forces them on the best and on the worst administrators of it indifferently; and that, as soon as the coming moment has come, when Christendom shall have reached that point of progress at which it can no longer tolerate the evils which Popes have inflicted on it, it must and will be, not the Pope, but the Papacy that will have to be put down.

Looking at the matter from this point of view, it will be seen that the bill of wrongs suffered by humanity from the Papacy must range over a wide field. The spiritual and the temporal power of the Pope have each in their due degree worked evil to mankind. And though, for reasons to be presently adduced, the writer of these lines does not admit the complete divisibility of these two fields of operation, we will first give a glance to the least complex and most universally understood portion of the subject. And we will understand the terms "temporal power" and "spiritual power" in their usual acceptation; merely remarking, as we pass, that the latter phrase is in truth only a specimen of that sort of professional or official slang which the gradual severance of pretension from fact gathers around many departments of human life. In reality, the Pope has no spiritual power whatever. Spiritual power is the power of spirit over spirit. If spirit by means of the eloquence of your tongue, or the flash of your eye, can persuade, awe, or subjugate my spirit, that is spiritual power. But it is many an age since a Pope has exercised this power in a measure to work either weal or woe to mankind. The special "power of the keys," as it is called, and all the various modes of influencing the mind which are derived from them, are, of course, an exercise of spiritual power, as long as they do operate by influencing the mind.

But—and here, once for all, the writer begs that it may be understood that he is writing of the Papal system and its effects as seen in their own country, Italy—all this has ceased their long since to be other than a means and pretext of power purely temporal. It is not spiritual power which brings custom to the confessional-box in Italy.

Taking, then, the temporal power of the Pope, in the usual restricted meaning of the phrase, let us inquire what wrong the Pope has done as sovereign of these "ecclesiastical states," of which he is the despotic ruler.

The wrongs done daily in every branch of governmental administration in the Pope's dominion, both in accordance with bad laws, and in the teeth of law, when it so happens that the law is not bad enough for the immediate purpose in hand, are infinitely too numerous and various to be catalogued in the space we have at command. Volumes would be required, and volumes have been devoted, to the recital of them. But all these manifold wrongs may be summed up in one compendious statement of the result of them, which has the advantages of needing no acquaintance with a state of society very different from our own to make it intelligible, and of being incontrovertibly demonstrable by the clearest evidence. We say, then, that the Pope has committed the supreme wrong of so governing the millions subjected to him, that all of them, with the exception of the few who are accomplices in his malpractices and sharers in the profits they are intended to produce, are at any moment ready to run any risk of disturbance, danger to life and property, anarchy, bloodshed, in the hope of escaping from his government. In no human society, probably, since social life began, was there ever the same portentous unanimity of discontent with the ruler. And this accusation against any government is so all-embracing and final, and is so inevitably felt to be such, even by the most violent supporters of "the right divine to govern wrong," that the same ever-ready reply is always made to the charge by every government whose misrule has caused the discontent of its subjects. "The discontent is not general. The discontented are few in number, and bad in character." It is always "a handful of factious men" who make all the mischief, and prevent a well-disposed and faithful people from enjoying in peace the blessings which a paternal government would otherwise assure to them. Now, discontent may be very wide-spread, and yet it may be difficult to disprove assertions of such a character. Nations cannot easily be polled on any such question. The great bulk of mankind are ordinarily dumb, as Carlyle somewhere says, or at best but inarticulately speaking, on such topics. This is what bad governments trust to when they confidently put forward their stock answer to the accusation that they have made themselves hateful to their subjects. But the detestation felt by the subjects of the Pope for his rule is so unprecedentedly great, the cry against it so unanimous, that, although it has not availed, as

it might have been expected, to make it impossible for even sacerdotal effrontery to put forward the usual plea, it is abundantly sufficient to convince the public mind of Europe that, in this case, it amounts to a decisive and final condemnation of the ruler.

It really seems almost superfluous to adduce proof of a fact of such wide notoriety as the sentiments of the Pope's subjects towards their government. Is a French army needed in Rome to repress the sedition of "a handful of factious individuals?" Are all the other men in Rome, except this handful, so helpless, and utterly imbecile, that the Pope and cardinals themselves acknowledge that, were that army withdrawn, they must quit the city in their suite. "If you leave us, general," said a most reverend cardinal to General Guyon, "be assured that we must be off the day after." "If your eminence will permit me to offer a suggestion," is said to have been the general's reply, "it would be that you should go the day before we do." Is it for fear of the machinations of a "few factious reprobates" that the English in Rome are putting clauses into the leases of their apartments, providing that the departure of the French troops shall put an end to the agreement? Have we not imperial testimony (for those who think that better than any other) as to the probability of what would follow the recall of the French force?

But we have some special and very curious testimony of a kind rarely to be got at in such cases to offer to any who have been staggered in their belief respecting the nature of the relations between the Pope and his subjects, by the unblushing falsehoods on the subject put forth by Rome's defenders in this country. Most readers have heard of the little book by Massimo Azeglio, entitled *The Events of Romagna*. Though the scope and the results of the little work were of a very wide kind, it was especially suggested by a trial which took place at Ravenna, on which occasion a mass of evidence was judicially recorded and put forth at Florence by Signor A. Gennarelli, an advocate of the Roman bar. The witnesses, it will be observed, are officials of the government, and their testimony as to the number of "the few factious persons" in that part of the Ecclesiastical States is irrefragable. A "political inspector" deposes that "all the population at Ravenna is most determined in its enmity to the government." The "political registers," he further declares, "indicate about thirty individuals, who may be said to be well affected to the Holy See." Another witness, also an officer of political police, declares that "all the inhabitants are *Liberals*, as they call themselves." A police director testifies that the people were so hostile to the government that "the latter had become a mere name, without any moral force. Another similar official gives evidence to the effect that "three-quarters of the population are enemies of the government, of law, order, and the *gardarmes*." He adds also the very remarkable and significant information, that such persons as wished to attend

the services of the Church were obliged to do so at a very early hour of the morning; for if they did so at a time of day when their attendance was liable to be observed, they were sure to hear themselves abused as wretches and hypocrites. The object of the trial, it seems, was to bring home to certain individuals the charge of belonging to a secret society. And we have another of the government officials who, like the above mentioned, was called for the prosecution, declaring that if the government wished to lay hands on all guilty of that crime it would be necessary to arrest a large portion of the entire population. The author of the pamphlet, which has supplied us with these extracts from the judicial record of the trial, asks very pertinently whether, in a population thus described by the government officials, the "few factious individuals" were not those THIRTY PERSONS, who, according to the registers of the professional political spies—certainly the best authority on such a point—were the only faithful friends of the established government?

There is no reason whatever for imagining that any causes for this universal disaffection are operative in the city and district of Ravenna which are not equally operative in every other part of the Papal States. But we are not left to any possibility of error on this point. Has Bologna shown itself better disposed towards its "Holy Father?" Does the unanimity of the representatives of the whole of Romagna tell a different tale? If these representatives do not fairly and truly represent the sentiment of the entire lay population, where are the reclamations of those whose votes have been fraudulently suppressed? The road is freely open to Rome. The post is not tampered with by the rebels. And how welcome and how precious at Rome would be a respectably and numerous signed memorial of the unrepresented may be readily imagined. Was affection for the Pope's rule more abundant at Perugia? Did it happen there also that "a few factious persons" caused the city to rise in revolt and defend its walls against its "legitimate" sovereign? If so, Colonel Schmid and his ferocious soldiers hardly deserved decorations, promotions, and public thanks at the hands of the "benignant" Pius for the indiscriminate massacre of his faithful subjects. In Rome itself, is it the fear of a few factious men that will cause every man connected with the government to fly for his life from the well-affected city the instant they are no longer protected by foreign bayonets? Has the Papal government, then, in its vigilant disarming of the population, taken all means of defence only from its own friends, and left arms in the hands of its few factious enemies?

This universality of hatred to the Pope's rule is so conclusive a condemnation of it, and is so evidently felt to be such by the government itself, as indicated by its passionate and desperate denial of facts so notorious, that it seems almost superfluous to insist on Mortara kidnappings, or other such isolated instances of

misdoing, which especially in the shape of law defying, political persecution, might be multiplied till nothing short of a blue-book of the biggest dimensions would contain them. But, as the recent political events in the country have abundantly shown who, and of what classes and sorts, are the Pope's enemies, it may be worth while to put on record an exceedingly curious and less known fact, which will indicate the class to which his friends belong. The circumstance to be told is so monstrous, that nothing but the unimpeachable evidence of a public judicial act would make it credible or justify the publication of it. Being of undeniable authenticity as it is, it speaks volumes as to the sort of work to be done between the Pope and his subjects, and the means so holy a father adopts for the doing of it. The colonel of the Papal gendarmerie, a post which, under such a government as that of Rome, involves more political than ordinary police duty, and the functions of which place every citizen in the state more or less immediately at the mercy of the man who holds it, is one Filippo Nardoni. This man was elevated to that position and decorated with some knightly order by Cardinal Antonelli, the present all-powerful minister. Now, this Filippo Nardoni was, under the government of the First Napoleon, in 1812, tried and condemned to the pillory and to the galleys as a thief and a forger! We are indebted for this astounding fact to Signor A. Gennarelli, who has printed in the appendix to the above-cited little book, the sentence passed on Nardoni, with the grounds of it at length, as extracted by him from the archives of the court which tried the man. The fact was first printed by Signor Gennarelli in a Roman newspaper in 1848, upon which occasion he received a message from the ex-galley slave, to the effect that the thefts for which he had been condemned were "juvenile errors, occasioned by a passion for the lottery!" Is it not fair to conclude that the work to be entrusted to such an agent was of a nature that made it difficult to find an honest man willing to undertake it.

The general moral and physical condition of the Pope's dominions is a sufficiently evident cause for the universal discontent which exists there; and is a patent and standing proof that the government which has brought a country to such a condition has done "wrong" in every department of its duty. But if a recapitulation of the wrongs specially perpetrated by the present Pope's government, and superadded to all the chronic mass of wrong that has made the Ecclesiastical States what they are, be desired, it may be found in the following extract from the work above cited. The "he" of the Italian author refers to Cardinal Antonelli, who is the minister of the acts of Pius:

"He has made laws, by comparison with which those of Draco fall to a third-rate degree of ferocity. He has created a new kind of torture. He has entrusted the police duties of the country to men who have been condemned to the galleys for life by the tribunals. He has

restored to priests all the portfolios of the ministers. He left a lay governor—a man worse than any of the prelates—in one sole province, in order to be able to say that laymen are eligible to be governors of provinces. . . . He has caused to be shot or beheaded about five hundred men, almost all for political offences, a number greater than is than all the governments of Europe together,* have put to death in the same time. He has so crowded the prisons with political prisoners, that the Roman medical college have on three different occasions had to represent the imminent danger of pestilence breaking out among them, on a scale to endanger the entire city. . . . He has paid many millions to an Austrian army to hold Roman provinces in subjection, and to accustom them to the spectacle of the bastonade and the gallows. He has published a law condemning the possessors of political writings of an opposition tendency to twenty years of the galleys. . . . He has sent into exile the whole of that national assembly which (in 1849) was chosen by the universal suffrage of the nation. He has instituted courts which condemn in secret, without notice given to the accused, by means of which thousands of families have been reduced to misery. . . . He has declared exiles all who, in travelling, should so much as touch Piedmontese soil."

The writer adds a number of other griefs, some of which we omit because we have already alluded to them, and many because English readers would not readily understand the nature of them without lengthy explanations. Surely the bill of wrongs is long enough!

Let us pass on to the wrongs which mankind in general, and the Ecclesiastical States in particular, have to charge against the Pope in his so-called spiritual capacity—those wrongs which result, that is to say, from the assertion of his spiritual pretensions. For the still more deadly wrongs which are done to mankind by the intrinsic nature of these pretensions belong to a larger and deeper subject.

In the first place, it is by putting forward the necessities of his spiritual position, and claims, and duties, that the existence of this so infamously exercised temporal power is defended in the face of Europe. When it is urged that the Bishop of Rome makes a very bad sovereign, Rome, and her transalpine defenders in her behalf, reply that in any case the sovereignty of Rome's bishop is absolutely necessary to enable him to perform efficiently his duties as supreme head of the Catholic Church. "I cannot," the Pope declares, "act as Bishop of the universal Church to good purpose, unless I am king. If I am not a monarch, I must be a subject; and if I am a subject, my sovereign may prevent me from acting in various circumstances in such a manner as my universal cure of souls would

require of me." And this argument in favour of the Pope's temporal power has been urged so absolutely by his defenders, especially in France, as to amount to maintaining that, even though the Pope should govern his states badly, it is necessary that he should have subjects for the sake of the higher and wider interests of his pontifical duties. The temporal interests of the Pope's subjects must be made a sacrifice to the spiritual interests of the Catholic world. So strongly and avowedly has this ground been taken by some defenders of the Papacy, that it has been implied, if not said, "The Pope's subjects, it must be admitted, are, to a certain degree, victims to the spiritual necessities of the Catholic world. Let us reduce the evil to a minimum. The Pope must be a sovereign. But let us make his sovereignty as small as may be.

Now, before stating our own notions with regard to the position thus taken up, we will give the reply which is made to it by the parties most interested, the Pope's subjects themselves. The Italians in general are not good Catholics. The most religious Catholics in Italy are to be found, despite the quarrels and influences of statesmen, in Piedmont. Savoy is more Catholic still. In France, such portion of the population as is Catholic at all is yet more earnest in its faith. And the most truly religious Catholics in Europe are probably to be found among ourselves. Catholic devotion thrives in proportion to its remoteness from the head-quarters of its Church. The satire expressed in the old popular saying, "The nearer to Church, the further from God," is entirely applicable to the religious influence exercised by the Roman Pontiff. Thus, in the Roman States men are, to say the truth, very bad Catholics indeed. And the genuine answer of their hearts to the above proposal of making them victims to the religious welfare of Europe (veil it under decorous euphonisms as they may) is, that they wholly decline any such position, however glorious; that, in fact, as compared with their own national well-being, they care not a rush for the necessities of the Pope's spiritual office. However shocking, however sad this may seem to truly religious Catholics, however much even the Italians themselves might object to the statement being made thus crudely on their behalf, it may be believed that it truly represents the feeling of the great majority of the men of Central Italy. And if to many a truly religious mind, such a spiritual condition of a people as seems implied by the above assertion appears deeply to be lamented, it may be observed, in passing, that this is one of those deeper wrongs, against humanity, for which the Papacy is responsible; but which, want of present space, as well as a consciousness of the polemical nature of the subject, have led us to exclude from consideration in this article.

But the line of reply to the asserted necessity of the Pope's temporal sovereignty, which appears suggested by a consideration of the wrongs done by him, would lead us to admit at once,

* The author adds a foot-note, to explain that, although the arrests and imprisonments in Naples were far more numerous, for absolute bloodshed, the Vicar of Christ is far ahead of any competitor.

that this sovereignty is necessary to that so-called spiritual function, which it is sought to maintain for him. Those who dispute this, and maintain that a non-sovereign pontiff might far more efficaciously than a temporal prince exercise all the functions of a universal bishop, may be divided into real enemies of the Papacy altogether, who think it wise policy to mask their attacks under this pretence; and such pious Catholics as look to the possibility of a real and true head of their Church, exercising only really and truly spiritual functions. Now we would take our place from the stand-point of these latter. Of course a Protestant thinks that the Pope, and his power, and his doctrines, are pernicious altogether, and argues the matter with a view to the total sweeping away with the whole of them. But it is not fair to look at the matter from this point of view in a statement of the case that purposely avoids the theological part of the subject. To the serious Catholic, therefore, who pictures to himself a pontiff unhampered by state affairs and temporal considerations, exercising the functions of a universal overseer of souls in apostolic fashion, we would reply that such functions are not those which the present defenders of the Papacy are anxious to preserve. The despots of Europe, who prop the Pope's temporal power, require in return for their support a quite other use of his spiritual pretensions. And one of the greatest "wrongs" of which the Pope has been and is daily guilty, is the prostitution and degradation of what should be a spiritual power into a mere sham-spiritual exercise of influence for the behoof of monarchs, who, in return, guarantee him the principality he could not hold a day without their aid. A sovereign position is necessary for the commander-in-chief of an army spread over the face of Europe, and everywhere engaged in giving that support to despotism, which is paid for no otherwise than by affording the material support of the secular arm to the Pope's despotism at home. Let the Pope become a simple bishop, however universal, and the whole of this mutual support system falls to the ground. Well may the potentates, who are interested in the preservation of their hierarchical allies, and who read the signs of the times more sagaciously than they do, implore the Pope to "reform" matters to such a degree as to render the duration of him and of their dealings with him possible. They can read the signs of the times, but are ignorant of the degree of the rottenness, which makes reform impossible to the Pope. He is less aware of the impossibility of existing as he is, but knows full well that such putting of new wine into old bottles, as is recommended to him, would shatter them to pieces. The birthright of the Pope was, from a pious Catholic point of view, indeed a glorious one; but he has long since sold it for a mess of Mammon's potage. And now, though, after the usual fashion of devil's bargains, the potage be taken away from him, the birthright will assuredly not be given back by those who bought it.

Of the deplorable spiritual evils which the

Pope has caused in Europe generally, and in Italy especially, by turning his bishopric into a temporal despotism, very much might be said. But it would lead us to trench on that theological ground, which we have deemed it best to avoid.

As the sum total, therefore, of the long bill of wrong done by the Pope, which M. de Montalembert has asked for, it may be said, that he has so degraded his episcopacy by the abominations of an imbecile and unprincipled temporal despotism, that it is no longer capable of doing aught but injury to the faith it should teach and protect; and that the special vices of unfaithful sacerdotalism have rendered his temporal government a scandal to Europe, and an utterly intolerable burden to the victims of it.

These, M. de Montalembert, are the wrongs which Pope Pius the Ninth has done.

OUR EYE-WITNESS IN BAKER-STREET.

THIS is decidedly a world of phases, and assuredly a bovine phase is on your Eye-witness. It was only the other day that his destiny mixed him up with the Performing Bull, and now he finds himself in the Cattle Show, and in a perfect atmosphere of Bulls. There must be something Zodiacal in this stroke of Fate. Taurus must have broken into the house of Aries in the twelfth month; or Capricornus has been getting the upper hand; or it is all Gemini—in a word, the attention of scientific persons and those learned in horoscopes is invited.

Treating of Fate and Destiny. It has been the unfortunate Destiny of the Eye-Witness to discover that one of the stories related when he was with "certain Story Tellers," as set forth at page 154 of this journal, is to be found in its integrity in a collection of tales published, some years ago, by MR. ALBERT SMITH, in a volume called *The Wassail Bowl*. For Mr. Albert Smith, the writer has a high personal as well as public esteem; and if he had recognised the story as originally that gentleman's, he would have explained that his reference was, to the manner of the telling, and not the matter. It was so (he may now remark), both in this case, and in that of the story which preceded it—also the work of an excellent writer—a noble French tale, the original of which is known to a large number of readers, and widely admired.

With every year of the world's advance the popularity of the Cattle Show—that Walhalla of the British agriculturist—seems to become greater. Every year shows more commotion in Baker-street. Every year, the crowd increases. Every year, the annual fillip is administered to Madame Tussaud, or her heirs, assignees, and executors, with a more stinging energy; and with every year the visitor to the Cattle Show is addressed by a longer row of newspaper advertisements, and is expected to plunge deeper into London amusement, and that headlong dissipation in which, during this frantic week, it is

the wont of the agriculturist to indulge. What is he not expected to do? It is distinctly intimated in the public prints, that it will be taken ill of him if he does not dine at Judkin's Castigation Tavern, that he must sup at Rarebit's, and hear the celebrated comic singer Sam Slivins. Then again, while music is on the tapis, it may be mentioned that his visit to the Cattle Show will be incomplete and ineffective, unless he listens to the inspiring strains of the "Rifleman's March." The Great Globe in Leicester-square is kept open throughout the year on his account. The Sydenham trousers is on the lookout, and with its eye (if the expression may be allowed) upon his stalwart leg, yawns expectant. The Talking Fish has come back from a tour in the provinces, solely on his account, and; on his account, has learnt a variety of new tricks, "which," says the advertisement, with much dry humour, "must be seen to be believed," as indeed they must. Then, what lures and snares are laid out for him in the building itself in which he stands; what doors (besides those of Madame Tussaud, about whom more hereafter), what doors of communication open invitingly into departments where he can buy furniture with which to madden the souls of the neighbouring farmers, or a brougham for his wife, wherewith to bring to a crisis that apoplexy which has long threatened to explode in the system of Mrs. Dumpy, the wife of the senior partner in Dumpy and Level's, the land surveyor's. In short, the commercial world is on the alert to captivate the British agriculturist, and from a "Magic horse-taming nose pincher"—which sounds like something very dreadful indeed—to a "Rifeman's registered kneecap garter"—which sounds even more horrible still—all his wants are provided for.

The wants of the animals are also all provided for. There is plenty of straw for the prize ox to sink upon when he can sustain the weight of his own fat no longer; there are pens in which the sheep can stand trembling and panting with plethora, and the sides of which prop them up perfectly when they require support; and there are capital make-shift sties, in which the pigs, who have never gone through the form of attempting to stand, or to open their eyes, lie upon their sides, suffocating, before the satisfied eye of the visitor to the Cattle Show.

The cultivation of a high caste and breed in cattle, and the exhibition of specimens which have attained to great perfection in their different classes, are things against which no person in his senses could take exception, and there is, happily, no doubt whatever that these things are infinitely more the object of the annual show in Baker-street than they used to be. Still, there is, in this respect, much yet to be desired, and there remains an insensate emulation in the matter of developing mere fat, which is as stupid as it is cruel. The white heifer, to which on the occasion of the recent Cattle Show the gold medal was awarded, would have been a beautiful and stately creature but for the

folly which had induced those to whom she belonged, to feed her up till she was, in spite of her beautiful breeding and naturally good form, a ridiculous and distressing object to contemplate. Indeed, the poor beast had sunk down upon the straw unable to sustain any longer the weight of that monstrous and exaggerated mass of fat, with which it had been for so many months the object of her proprietor to disfigure her fair proportions. It was impossible to see this really beautiful creature without admiring—not what she was, but what she might have been.

The prize heifer was unhappily not an isolated instance of this cruel and foolish system of over-feeding. The prize ox being possessed of greater strength than the successful female candidate, was able to stand erect in spite of his weight, but he was obliged to balance himself very artfully, and to spread what remained of his legs, very wide apart, in order to do so; while the sheep, burdened with their thick wool as well as the ponderous results of their recent diet, were for the most part to be found panting and heaving in their pens, and waiting for the merciful knife.

But there is in the collection in Baker-street one Department far more horrible than the rest; one class of animals more cruelly dealt with, and whose sufferings are more obvious and more distressing to witness than any which have been hitherto mentioned. It is difficult to awaken compassion, or to enlist sympathy for the sorrows of a pig, and the present writer has as keen a dislike as most persons to some of the manners and customs of the Porcine group. Yet your Eye-witness is willing frankly to admit that he has been on really intimate terms of friendship with only one individual of this tribe. He was an uncommonly pleasant fellow, who would hasten to meet your Eye-witness when that modest person entered his sty, and would manifest his affection by running in and out between the E.-W.'s legs, and butting against those limbs with his nose in a most affecting manner, uttering at the same time a succession of oily grunts calculated to touch any heart of large and extended sympathies. In a word, he was an urbane and gentlemanly pig.

Let the reader remember that the pig is an intellectual animal, capable of learning tricks, and executing wonders with cards, which throw the deeds of our friends the Performing Bull and the Talking Fish into the shade. Let him remember that the greediness of this animal which is objected to by some, is cultivated by all who approach it; that he is solicited to eat, by those who surround him, in a cruel and degrading manner; finally, that he is not always possessed of the corpulent presence and the laziness which we in this country associate with him, the Italian pig being a lean and long-legged animal, extremely active and of abstemious habits to a fault. Let no person be ungrateful enough to disparage the animal but for whose existence we should be ignorant of the flavour of broiled ham. Let us never forget, too, from

what materials he makes it, what a great chemist he must be to produce such admirable results out of the diet on which he is too often kept. A pig should be looked on as a living laboratory for the conversion of refuse and garbage of every sort and kind, into toothsome and agreeable nutriment—a sort of pork-works, in short. There is one charge which is too often brought against these nice and clever creatures which it is desirable to combat at once; it is the accusation of obstinacy. "Them's a difficult animal to drive, when there's many of 'em, is a pig—very," says the Hampshire drover, and no person who has ever seen a pig or pigs going to, or from market, will be disposed to deny the assertion. But, whence does this difficulty in the conduct of these animals arise? Simply, the writer contends, from their intellectual qualities. The pig is perpetually consumed with a burning thirst for information, and with a curiosity which it may be freely owned verges on the morbid. What turning does he come to, which he does not wish to avail himself of? What road, what lane, what footpath, that he does not desire to explore? What object does he pass on the way, which he does not turn to examine and to note in all its aspects? Observe, too, his activity in this pursuit of knowledge. He is from one side of the road to the other in no time; he runs ahead—nay, he is ready, suddenly giving his unintellectual drivers the slip, to run back any distance—that he may re-investigate such matters as he may have passed with too little notice, or may have examined in too cursory a manner to satisfy his inquiring mind.

Your Eye-witness was shocked, consequently, when, on approaching that portion of the building in Baker-street in which his favourites were confined, he perceived the wretched discomfort and misery of their condition. To the best of his recollection there was not one single instance in which a pig was to be found who was able to stand, or to give any sign of life beyond a feeble squeak in moments of a nearer approach to suffocation than usual. They had, none of them, any eyes; and the rolls of fat, which looked like monster jam-puddings without any jam in them, lay over every part of their naturally intelligent faces except the extreme tip of the snout, which worked convulsively in their ineffectual efforts to breathe. The E.-W. has no remembrance of a single tail being visible in the whole collection, but he will swear to the hoofs which grew immediately out of the stomachs of the animals; the usual connecting link of a leg being unable to assert itself. Your Eye-witness would have thought that there was not energy enough left in any one of these afflicted creatures to enable him to burst, but that later in the day (when in a remote part of the building) he heard an explosive sound, accompanied by a yell, which caused him to change his opinion. "Un mortal expire," said the French poet, when he saw a falling star—and an uncommonly safe remark it was. "A pig explodes," said the Eye-witness, when he heard

the sound just mentioned, and he thinks the one aphorism, on the whole, quite equal in sagacity to the other.

One word more, in seriousness. Let it be understood, once and for all, that the successful breeding and culture of an animal consists in bringing it as near as possible to the standard of symmetry established as the beau ideal of the class to which it belongs. This should be the canon of the Cattle Show; this the object of the breeder; this the point looked to by the judges. Were it so, now, and were the hideous disfigurement of an animal by morbid growths of fat, a disqualification instead of a recommendation, then would this yearly show be a really interesting and important exhibition. The popularity of the Cattle Show as it at present exists—but not as it might be—is little calculated to correct the too general foreign conception of our national prejudice; and it is a wonderful and distressing thing to think in how many respects this nation lays itself open to ridicule in the eyes of those who are ever awake to detect every one of our weaker insularities.

There were many curious things observable at the Cattle Show; but, among them all, perhaps nothing more remarkable than a general tendency on everybody's part to poke, probe, and pinch, with the finger and thumb, the fat, bones, and muscles of the different animals exhibited. With the leading favourites, such as those which had won medals and pecuniary prizes, or which being more especially disfigured than the others were labelled as being "highly commended by the judges"—round all these there was such a crowd of excited amateurs engaged in this process of percussion, that it became quite difficult to assert a hand anywhere, and in the case of the prize ox, there was no getting so much as a knuckle near, for love or money. Stalwart prize farmers, who had once got within probing distance of this unhappy beast, took care to keep their position when they had got it, and to make good use of it, too, digging him in the ribs, going down on their knees to probe him in the stomach, getting in front of him to punch his head, and generally acting in a manner which, if the theory of pummelling rump-steaks be a good one, was calculated to make this the tenderest animal ever slain. The persistency of these honest personages was not wholly unattended with danger, inasmuch as men of powerful frames, prevented from approaching the object of all this attention, would, from distant parts of the building, make maniacal thrusts with their fists at the animal's sides, which, missing their mark, would sometimes light upon the well-clothed ribs of those who had secured the front places, and who—such was the enthusiasm and excitement of the time—seemed wholly unconscious of these desperate and painful assaults. The force of example is very great, and the Eye-witness, getting into this crowd, was so hustled about, that he at last found himself flung—with force—against the prize ox itself; he is thus in a position to

state, on the evidence of an imbedded elbow, that the flesh of that eminent character was of a firm and elastic type, and strongly suggestive of india-rubber.

Nor was this punching mania—which was indulged in by all classes, and sometimes by obvious town-bred persons who would not know a heifer from a hog—the only remarkable thing connected with visitors to the Cattle Show, observed by your Eye-witness. Were there not present the wives and children of competing farmers, and had they not, some of them, taken up their quarters near to *their* especial sheep or ox, believing in it, and thinking it ought to have had the prize, just as the E.-W. has seen the families of artists encamped near *their* picture at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, watching its effect on the public, and wondering that anything else in the place was looked at for a moment?

While on the subject of artists, it may be mentioned that this class of persons is represented at the Cattle Show by the most singular and uncomfortable set of men that your Eye-witness ever beheld. Your cattle painter combines with the appearance of an ordinary sign-board artist, a strong flavour of the drover and the horse-dealer. He has also mysterious ways of following his profession: being able—while holding his canvas in one of his hands—to paint in oils with the other, from an animal which is so surrounded by the crowd that he never sees it. He is also much joggled as to the elbows, and generally hustled by the mob. Yet he is indifferent to these things, and progresses none the worse for them; producing a work of art which, though remotely suggestive—the prize ox being this year a mahogany coloured ox—of a chest of drawers, placed in a colic-green meadow to season, is yet very attractive to a nation as fond of cattle-pictures as ours. The nation, in this case, however, does not purchase, but confines itself to admiring (and hustling) the artist, till he is at last obliged to hold on to the stall of the ox in order to keep himself in the building at all. Yet even with this additional claim upon his hands, he manages to paint away at the chest of drawers, availing himself of the knocks upon the elbow which he receives for accidental touches which are very effective. The amateurs do not (as has just been said) purchase, and later in the day your Eye-witness came upon a little knot of these cattle-painters seated in speechless misery, in a very dark place, looking at their own works. Every one of them had two pictures in each of his hands, and one invariably held between the knees, and as all their lips were moving, without any sound issuing from them, the E.-W. could only conclude that these neglected men were engaged in selling their own works to themselves at an imaginary auction, and were whispering ima-

ginary biddings on a scale of awful and unheard-of magnificence.

There is something in the failure of a work of art—however bad it may be—which is always affecting, and the Eye-witness was touched by the unsuccessful efforts of these unfortunate gentlemen, as much as he was by the evident disappointment of a certain lonely and inflated sheep which was secreted under a flight of steps, and which was being furtively fed by its proprietor with slices of fattening food, as if, even now, there were a chance of getting the poor animal into such condition as might cause its merits to be recognised. That sheep had doubtless been expected to do great things. Is this the only instance of a home prodigy which when sent out into the world and tried by the terrible test of comparison is found to be “nowhere” in the race?

Of such failures in the competition there was a numerous herd, and they all appeared to your Eye-witness to wear an injured look, laying their heads together, and secretly disparaging their more successful rivals: while one abnormal ox whose owner was seated on the edge of his pen, evinced the morbid excess to which his appetite had been cultivated by eating the coattails of his master as they hung over the side of the stall.

Your Eye-witness, becoming anxious to change the scene, is thinking of the open air with feelings more keenly sharpened to appreciate that luxury by the somewhat tallowy smell emitted by the Cattle Show generally—when he happens to observe, in a corner of the building, a door leading to an obscure passage, dimly lighted with gas. One glance at the inscription over the door is enough for him. He plunges through it, pays his shilling with a free hand, hears a faint tinkling of music, stumbles up a staircase, the music becomes louder—another door opens, the music becomes deafening—and the E.-W. emerges into a gorgeous apartment of vast size, and with the oddest looking people, in the oddest looking dresses, and in the strangest attitudes, standing round about it. Of whom, more, next time.

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