

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

CHAPTER III.

TOWARDS six o'clock the next morning, the light pouring in on her face awoke Magdalen in the bedroom in Rosemary-lane.

She started from her deep dreamless repose of the past night, with that painful sense of bewilderment on first waking which is familiar to all sleepers in strange beds. "Norah!" she called out mechanically, when she opened her eyes. The next instant, her mind roused itself, and her senses told her the truth. She looked round the miserable room with a loathing recognition of it. The sordid contrast which the place presented to all that she had been accustomed to see in her own bedchamber—the practical abandonment implied in its scanty furniture of those elegant purities of personal habit to which she had been accustomed from her childhood—shocked that sense of bodily self-respect in Magdalen, which is a refined woman's second nature. Contemptible as the influence seemed when compared with her situation at that moment, the bare sight of the jug and basin in a corner of the room, decided her first resolution when she woke. She determined, then and there, to leave Rosemary-lane.

How was she to leave it? With Captain Wragge, or without him?

She dressed herself, with a dainty shrinking from everything in the room which her hands or her clothes touched in the process; and then opened the window. The autumn air felt keen and sweet; and the little patch of sky that she could see, was warmly bright already with the new sunlight. Distant voices of bargemen on the river, and the chirping of birds among the weeds which topped the old city wall, were the only sounds that broke the morning silence. She sat down by the window; and searched her mind for the thoughts which she had lost, when weariness overcame her on the night before.

The first subject to which she returned, was the vagabond subject of Captain Wragge.

The "moral agriculturist" had failed to remove her personal distrust of him, cunningly as he had tried to plead against it by openly confessing the impostures that he had practised on others. He had raised her opinion of his abilities; he had

amused her by his humour; he had astonished her by his assurance—but he had left her original conviction that he was a Rogue, exactly where it was when he first met with her. If the one design then in her mind had been the design of going on the stage, she would, at all hazards, have rejected the more than doubtful assistance of Captain Wragge, on the spot.

But the perilous journey on which she had now adventured herself, had another end in view—an end, dark and distant—an end, with pitfalls hidden on the way to it, far other than the shallow pitfalls on the way to the stage. In the mysterious stillness of the morning, her mind looked on to its second and its deeper design; and the despicable figure of the swindler rose before her in a new view.

She tried to shut him out—to feel above him and beyond him again, as she had felt up to this time.

After a little trifling with her dress, she took from her bosom the white silk bag which her own hands had made on the farewell night at Combe-Raven. It drew together at the mouth with delicate silken strings. The first thing she took out, on opening it, was a lock of Frank's hair, tied with a morsel of silver thread; the next was a sheet of paper containing the extracts which she had copied from her father's will and her father's letter; the last was a closely folded packet of bank-notes, to the value of nearly two hundred pounds—the produce (as Miss Garth had rightly conjectured) of the sale of her jewellery and her dresses, in which the servant at the boarding-school had privately assisted her. She put back the notes at once, without a second glance at them; and then sat looking thoughtfully at the lock of hair, as it lay on her lap. "You are better than nothing," she said, speaking to it with a girl's fanciful tenderness. "I can sit and look at you sometimes, till I almost think I am looking at Frank. Oh, my darling! my darling!" Her voice faltered softly, and she put the lock of hair, with a languid gentleness, to her lips. It fell from her fingers into her bosom. A lovely tinge of colour rose on her cheeks, and spread downward to her neck, as if it followed the falling hair. She closed her eyes, and let her fair head droop softly. The world passed from her; and, for one enchanted moment, Love opened the gates of Paradise to the daughter of Eve.

The trivial noises in the neighbouring street, gathering in number as the morning advanced, forced her back to the hard realities of the passing time. She raised her head with a heavy sigh, and opened her eyes once more on the mean and miserable little room.

The extracts from the will and the letter—those last memorials of her father, now so closely associated with the purpose which had possession of her mind—still lay before her. The transient colour faded from her face, as she spread the little manuscript open on her lap. The extracts from the will stood highest on the page; they were limited to those few touching words, in which the dead father begged his children's forgiveness for the stain on their birth, and implored them to remember the untiring love and care by which he had striven to atone for it. The extract from the letter to Mr. Pendril came next. She read the last melancholy sentences aloud to herself:—"For God's sake, come on the day when you receive this—come and relieve me from the dreadful thought that my two darling girls are at this moment unprovided for. If anything happened to me, and if my desire to do their mother justice, ended (through my miserable ignorance of the law) in leaving Norah and Magdalen disinherited, I should not rest in my grave!" Under these lines again, and close at the bottom of the page, was written the terrible commentary on that letter which had fallen from Mr. Pendril's lips:—"Mr. Vanstone's daughters are Nobody's Children, and the law leaves them helpless at their uncle's mercy."

Helpless when those words were spoken—helpless still, after all that she had resolved, after all that she had sacrificed. The assertion of her natural rights, and her sister's, sanctioned by the direct expression of her father's last wishes; the recal of Frank from China; the justification of her desertion of Norah—all hung on her desperate purpose of recovering the lost inheritance, at any risk, from the man who had beggared and insulted his brother's children. And that man was still a shadow to her! So little did she know of him that she was even ignorant, at that moment, of his place of abode.

She rose and paced the room, with the noiseless, negligent grace of a wild creature of the forest in its cage. "How can I reach him, in the dark?" she said to herself. "How can I find out—?" She stopped suddenly. Before the question had shaped itself to an end in her thoughts, Captain Wragge was back in her mind again.

A man well used to working in the dark; a man with endless resources of audacity and cunning; a man who would hesitate at no mean employment that could be offered to him, if it was employment that filled his pockets—was this the instrument for which, in its present need, her hand was waiting? Two of the necessities to be met, before she could take a single step in advance, were plainly present to her—the necessity of knowing more of her father's brother than

she knew now; and the necessity of throwing him off his guard by concealing herself personally, during the process of inquiry. Resolutely self-dependent as she was, the inevitable spy's work at the outset must be work delegated to another. In her position, was there any ready human creature within reach, but the vagabond down stairs? Not one. She thought of it anxiously, she thought of it long. Not one! There the choice was, steadily confronting her: the choice of taking the Rogue, or of turning her back on the Purpose.

She paused in the middle of the room. "What can he do at his worst?" she said to herself. "Cheat me. Well! if my money governs him for me, what then? Let him have my money!" She returned mechanically to her place by the window. A moment more decided her. A moment more, and she took the first fatal step downwards—she determined to face the risk, and try Captain Wragge.

At nine o'clock the landlady knocked at Magdalen's door, and informed her (with the captain's kind compliments) that breakfast was ready.

She found Mrs. Wragge alone; attired in a voluminous brown holland wrapper, with a limp cape, and a trimming of dingy pink ribbon. The ex-waitress at Darch's Dining Rooms was absorbed in the contemplation of a large dish, containing a leathery-looking substance of a mottled yellow colour, profusely sprinkled with little black spots.

"There it is!" said Mrs. Wragge. "Omelette with herbs. The landlady helped me. And that's what we've made of it. Don't you ask the captain for any when he comes in—don't, there's a good soul. It isn't nice. We had some accidents with it. It's been under the grate. It's been spilt on the stairs. It's scalded the landlady's youngest boy—he went and sat on it. Bless you, it isn't half as nice as it looks! Don't you ask for any. Perhaps he won't notice if you say nothing about it. What do you think of my wrapper? I should so like to have a white one. Have you got a white one? How is it trimmed? Do tell me!"

The formidable entrance of the captain suspended the next question on her lips. Fortunately for Mrs. Wragge, her husband was far too anxious for the promised expression of Magdalen's decision, to pay his customary attention to questions of cookery. When breakfast was over, he dismissed Mrs. Wragge, and merely referred to the omelette by telling her that she had his full permission to "give it to the dog."

"How does my little proposal look by daylight?" he asked, placing chairs for Magdalen and himself. "Which is it to be: 'Captain Wragge, take charge of me?' or, 'Captain Wragge, good morning?'"

"You shall hear directly," replied Magdalen. "I have something to say first. I told you, last night, that I had another object in view, besides the object of earning my living on the stage—"

"I beg your pardon," interposed Captain Wragge. "Did you say, earning your living?"

"Certainly. Both my sister and myself must depend on our own exertions to gain our daily bread."

"What!!!" cried the captain, starting to his feet, with a blank stare of dismay. "The daughters of my wealthy and lamented relative by marriage, reduced to earn their own living? Impossible—wildly, extravagantly impossible!" He sat down again, and looked at Magdalen as if she had inflicted a personal injury on him.

"You are not acquainted with the full extent of our misfortune," she said, quietly. "I will tell you what has happened before I go any farther." She told him at once, in the plainest terms she could find, and with as few details as possible.

Captain Wragge's profound bewilderment left him conscious of but one distinct result, produced by the narrative on his own mind. The lawyer's offer of Fifty Pounds Reward for the missing young lady, ascended instantly to a place in his estimation which it had never occupied until that moment.

"Do I understand," he inquired, "that you are entirely deprived of present resources?"

"I have sold my jewellery and my dresses," said Magdalen, impatient of his mean harping on the pecuniary string. "If my want of experience keeps me back in a theatre, I can afford to wait till the stage can afford to pay me."

Captain Wragge mentally appraised the rings, bracelets, and necklaces, the silks, satins, and laces of the daughter of a gentleman of fortune, at—say, a third of their real value. In a moment more, the Fifty Pounds Reward suddenly sank again to the lowest depths in the deep estimation of this judicious man.

"Just so," he said, in his most business-like manner. "There is not the least fear, my dear girl, of your being kept back in a theatre, if you possess present resources, and if you profit by my assistance."

"I must accept more assistance than you have already offered—or none," said Magdalen. "I have more serious difficulties before me than the difficulty of leaving York, and the difficulty of finding my way to the stage."

"You don't say so! I am all attention; pray explain yourself."

She considered her next words carefully before they passed her lips.

"There are certain inquiries," she said, "which I am interested in making. If I undertook them myself, I should excite the suspicion of the person inquired after, and should learn little or nothing of what I wish to know. If the inquiries could be made by a stranger, without my being seen in the matter, a service would be rendered me of much greater importance than the service you offered last night."

Captain Wragge's vagabond face became gravely and deeply attentive.

"May I ask," he said, "what the nature of the inquiries is likely to be?"

Magdalen hesitated. She had necessarily mentioned Michael Vanstone's name, in informing the captain of the loss of her inheritance. She must inevitably mention it to him again, if she employed his services. He would doubtless discover it for himself, by a plain process of inference, before she said many words more, frame them as carefully as she might. Under these circumstances was there any intelligible reason for shrinking from direct reference to Michael Vanstone? No intelligible reason—and yet, she shrank.

"For instance," pursued Captain Wragge, "are they inquiries about a man or a woman; inquiries about an enemy or a friend——"

"An enemy," she answered quickly.

Her reply might still have kept the captain in the dark—but her eyes enlightened him. "Michael Vanstone!" thought the wary Wragge. "She looks dangerous; I'll feel my way a little farther."

"With regard, now, to the person who is the object of these inquiries," he resumed. "Are you thoroughly clear, in your own mind, about what you want to know?"

"Perfectly clear," replied Magdalen. "I want to know where he lives, to begin with?"

"Yes? And after that?"

"I want to know about his habits; about who the people are whom he associates with; about what he does with his money——" She considered a little. "And one thing more," she said; "I want to know whether there is any woman about his house—a relation, or a house-keeper—who has an influence over him."

"Harmless enough, so far," said the captain. "What next?"

"Nothing. The rest is my secret."

The clouds on Captain Wragge's countenance began to clear away again. He reverted with his customary precision to his customary choice of alternatives. "These inquiries of hers," he thought, "mean one of two things—Mischief, or Money! If it's Mischief, I'll slip through her fingers. If it's Money, I'll make myself useful, with a view to the future."

Magdalen's vigilant eyes watched the progress of his reflections suspiciously. "Captain Wragge," she said, "if you want time to consider, say so plainly."

"I don't want a moment," replied the captain. "Place your departure from York, your dramatic career, and your private inquiries under my care. Here I am, unreservedly at your disposal. Say the word—do you take me?"

Her heart beat fast; her lips turned dry—but she said the word.

"I do."

There was a pause. Magdalen sat silent, struggling with the vague dread of the future which had been roused in her mind by her own reply. Captain Wragge, on his side, was apparently absorbed in the consideration of a new set of alternatives. His hands descended into his

empty pockets, and prophetically tested their capacity as receptacles for gold and silver. The brightness of the precious metals was in his face, the smoothness of the precious metals was in his voice, as he provided himself with a new supply of words, and resumed the conversation.

"The next question," he said, "is the question of time. Do these confidential investigations of ours require immediate attention—or can they wait?"

"For the present they can wait," replied Magdalen. "I wish to secure my freedom from all interference on the part of my friends, before the inquiries are made."

"Very good. The first step towards accomplishing that object is to beat our retreat—excuse a professional metaphor from a military man—to beat our retreat from York to-morrow. I see my way plainly so far; but I am all abroad, as we used to say in the militia, about my marching orders afterwards. The next direction we take, ought to be chosen with an eye to advancing your dramatic views. I am all ready, when I know what your views are. How came you to think of the theatre at all? I see the sacred fire burning in you; tell me, who lit it?"

Magdalen could only answer him in one way. She could only look back at the days that were gone for ever; and tell him the story of her first step towards the stage, at Evergreen Lodge. Captain Wragge listened with his usual politeness; but he evidently derived no satisfactory impression from what he heard. Audiences of friends, were audiences whom he privately declined to trust; and the opinion of the stage-manager, was the opinion of a man who spoke with his fee in his pocket, and his eye on a future engagement.

"Interesting, deeply interesting," he said, when Magdalen had done. "But not conclusive to a practical man. A specimen of your abilities is necessary to enlighten me. I have been on the stage myself; the comedy of *The Rivals* is familiar to me from beginning to end. A sample is all I want, if you have not forgotten the words—a sample of 'Lucy,' and a sample of 'Julia.'"

"I have not forgotten the words," said Magdalen, sorrowfully; "and I have the little books with me, in which my dialogue was written out. I have never parted with them: they remind me of a time—" Her lip trembled; and a pang of the heartache silenced her.

"Nervous," remarked the captain, indulgently. "Not at all a bad sign. The greatest actresses on the stage are nervous. Follow their example, and get over it. Where are the parts? Oh, here they are! Very nicely written, and remarkably clean. I'll give you the cues—it will all be over (as the dentists say) in no time. Take the back drawing-room for the stage, and take me for the audience. Tingle goes the bell; up runs the curtain; order in the gallery, silence in the pit—enter Lucy!"

She tried hard to control herself; she forced back the sorrow—the innocent, natural, human

sorrow for the absent and the dead—pleading hard with her for the tears that she refused. Resolutely, with cold clenched hands, she tried to begin. As the first familiar words passed her lips, Frank came back to her from the sea; and the face of her dead father looked at her with the smile of happy old times. The voices of her mother and her sister talked gently in the fragrant country stillness; and the garden-walks at Combe-Raven opened once more on her view. With a faint wailing cry, she dropped into a chair: her head fell forward on the table, and she burst passionately into tears.

Captain Wragge was on his feet in a moment. She shuddered as he came near her; and waved him back vehemently with her hand. "Leave me!" she said; "leave me a minute by myself!" The compliant Wragge retired to the front room; looked out of window; and whistled under his breath. "The family spirit again!" he said. "Complicated by hysterics."

After waiting a minute or two, he returned to make inquiries.

"Is there anything I can offer you?" he asked. "Cold water? burnt feathers? smelling salts? medical assistance? Shall I summon Mrs. Wragge? Shall we put it off till to-morrow?"

She started up, wild and flushed, with a desperate self-command in her face, with an angry resolution in her manner.

"No!" she said. "I must harden myself—and I will! Sit down again, and see me act."

"Bravo!" cried the captain. "Dash at it, my beauty—and it's done!"

She dashed at it, with a mad defiance of herself—with a raised voice, and a glow like fever in her cheeks. All the artless, girlish charm of the performance in happier and better days, was gone. The native dramatic capacity that was in her, came, hard and bold, to the surface, stripped of every softening allurements which had once adorned it. She would have saddened and disappointed a man with any delicacy of feeling. She absolutely electrified Captain Wragge. He forgot his politeness; he forgot his long words. The essential spirit of the man's whole vagabond life, burst out of him irresistibly in his first exclamation. "Who the devil would have thought it? She *can* act, after all!" The instant the words escaped his lips, he recovered himself, and glided off into his ordinary colloquial channels. Magdalen stopped him in the middle of his first compliment. "No," she said; "I have forced the truth out of you, for once. I want no more."

"Pardon me," replied the incorrigible Wragge. "You want a little instruction; and I am the man to give it you."

With that answer, he placed a chair for her, and proceeded to explain himself.

She sat down in silence. A sullen indifference began to show itself in her manner; her cheeks turned pale again; and her eyes looked wearily vacant at the wall before her. Captain Wragge noted these signs of heart-sickness and discontent with herself, after the effort she had made, and saw the importance of rousing her by speak-

ing, for once, plainly and directly to the point. She had set a new value on herself in his mercenary eyes. She had suggested to him a speculation in her youth, her beauty, and her marked ability for the stage, which had never entered his mind, until he saw her act. The old militia-man was quick at his shifts. He and his plans had both turned right about together, when Magdalen sat down to hear what he had to say.

"Mr. Huxtable's opinion is my opinion," he began. "You are a born actress. But you must be trained before you can do anything on the stage. I am disengaged—I am competent—I have trained others—I can train you. Don't trust my word: trust my eye to my own interests. I'll make it my interest to take pains with you, and to be quick about it. You shall pay me for my instructions from your profits on the stage. Half your salary, for the first year; a third of your salary for the second year; and half the sum you clear by your first benefit in a London theatre. What do you say to that? Have I made it my interest to push you, or have I not?"

So far as appearances went, and so far as the stage went, it was plain that he had linked his interests and Magdalen's together. She briefly told him so, and waited to hear more.

"A month or six weeks' study," continued the captain, "will give me a reasonable idea of what you can do best. All ability runs in grooves; and your groove remains to be found. We can't find it here—for we can't keep you a close prisoner for weeks together in Rosemary-lane. A quiet country place, secure from all interference and interruption, is the place we want for a month certain. Trust my knowledge of Yorkshire; and consider the place found. I see no difficulties anywhere, except the difficulty of beating our retreat to-morrow."

"I thought your arrangements were made last night?" said Magdalen.

"Quite right," rejoined the captain. "They were made last night; and here they are. We can't leave by railway, because the lawyer's clerk is sure to be on the look-out for you at the York terminus. Very good; we take to the road instead, and leave in our own carriage. Where the deuce do we get it? We get it from the landlady's brother, who has a horse and chaise which he lets out for hire. That chaise comes to the end of Rosemary-lane at an early hour to-morrow morning. I take my wife and my niece out to show them the beauties of the neighbourhood. We have a pic-nic hamper with us which marks our purpose in the public eye. You disfigure yourself in a shawl, bonnet, and veil of Mrs. Wragge's; we turn our backs on York; and away we drive on a pleasure-trip for the day—you and I on the front seat, Mrs. Wragge and the hamper behind. Good again. Once on the high road what do we do? Drive to the first station beyond York, northward, southward, or eastward, as may be hereafter determined. No lawyer's clerk is waiting for you there. You and Mrs. Wragge

get out—first opening the hamper at a convenient opportunity. Instead of containing chickens and champagne, it contains a carpet-bag with the things you want for the night. You take your tickets for a place previously determined on; and I take the chaise back to York. Arrived once more in this house, I collect the luggage left behind, and send for the woman down stairs. 'Ladies so charmed with such-and-such-a-place (wrong place of course) that they have determined to stop there. Pray accept the customary week's rent, in place of a week's warning. Good day.' Is the clerk looking for *me* at the York terminus? Not he. I take my ticket, under his very nose; I follow you with the luggage along your line of railway—and where is the trace left of your departure? Nowhere. The fairy has vanished; and the legal authorities are left in the lurch."

"Why do you talk of difficulties?" asked Magdalen. "The difficulties seem to be provided for."

"All but *one*," said Captain Wragge, with an ominous emphasis on the last word. "The Grand Difficulty of humanity from the cradle to the grave—Money." He slowly winked his green eye; sighed with deep feeling; and buried his insolvent hands in his unproductive pockets.

"What is the money wanted for?" inquired Magdalen.

"To pay my bills," replied the captain, with a touching simplicity. "Pray understand! I never was—and never shall be—personally desirous of paying a single farthing to any human creature on the habitable globe. I am speaking in your interests, not in mine."

"My interests?"

"Certainly. You can't get safely away from York to-morrow, without the chaise. And I can't get the chaise without money. The landlady's brother will lend it, if he sees his sister's bill receipted, and if he gets his day's hire beforehand—not otherwise. Allow me to put the transaction in a business light. We have agreed that I am to be remunerated for my course of dramatic instruction out of your future earnings on the stage. Very good. I merely draw on my future prospects; and you, on whom those prospects depend, are naturally my banker. For mere argument's sake, estimate my share in your first year's salary at the totally inadequate value of a hundred pounds. Halve that sum; quarter that sum——"

"How much do you want?" said Magdalen, impatiently.

Captain Wragge was sorely tempted to take the Reward at the top of the handbills as his basis of calculation. But he felt the vast future importance of present moderation; and, actually wanting some twelve or thirteen pounds, he merely doubled the amount, and said, "Five-and-twenty."

Magdalen took the little bag from her bosom, and gave him the money, with a contemptuous wonder at the number of words which he had wasted on her for the purpose of cheating on so small a scale. In the old days at Combe-Raven,

five-and-twenty pounds flowed from a stroke of her father's pen into the hands of any one in the house who chose to ask for it.

Captain Wragge's eyes dwelt on the little bag, as the eyes of lovers dwell on their mistresses. "Happy bag!" he murmured, as she put it back in her bosom. He rose; dived into a corner of the room; produced his neat despatch-box; and solemnly unlocked it on the table between Magdalen and himself.

"The nature of the man, my dear girl—the nature of the man," he said, opening one of his plump little books, bound in calf and vellum. "A transaction has taken place between us. I must have it down in black and white." He opened the book at a blank page, and wrote at the top, in a fine mercantile hand:—"Miss Vanstone the Younger: In account with Horatio Wragge, late of the Royal Militia. D.—C. Sept. 24th, 1846. D.: To estimated value of H. Wragge's interest in Miss V.'s first year's salary—say £200. Cr. By paid on account £25." Having completed the entry—and having also shown, by doubling his original estimate on the Debtor side, that Magdalen's easy compliance with his demand on her had not been thrown away on him—the captain pressed his blotting-paper over the wet ink, and put away the book with the air of a man who had done a virtuous action, and who was above boasting about it.

"Excuse me for leaving you abruptly," he said. "Time is of importance; I must make sure of the chaise. If Mrs. Wragge comes in, tell her nothing—she is not sharp enough to be trusted. If she presumes to ask questions, extinguish her immediately. You have only to be loud. Pray take my authority into your own hands, and be as loud with Mrs. Wragge as I am!" He snatched up his tall hat, bowed, smiled, and tripped out of the room.

Sensible of little else but of the relief of being alone; feeling no more distinct impression than the vague sense of some serious change having taken place in herself and her position, Magdalen let the events of the morning come and go like shadows on her mind, and waited wearily for what the day might bring forth. After the lapse of some time the door opened softly. The giant-figure of Mrs. Wragge stalked into the room; and stopped opposite Magdalen in solemn astonishment.

"Where are your Things?" asked Mrs. Wragge, with a burst of incontrollable anxiety. "I've been up-stairs, looking in your drawers. Where are your nightgowns and nightcaps? and your petticoats and stockings? and your hair-pins and bear's grease, and all the rest of it?"

"My luggage is left at the railway station," said Magdalen.

Mrs. Wragge's moon-face brightened dimly. The ineradicable female instinct of Curiosity tried to sparkle in her faded blue eyes—flickered piteously—and died out.

"How much luggage?" she asked, confidentially. "The captain's gone out. Let's go and get it!

"Mrs. Wragge!" cried a terrible voice at the door.

For the first time in Magdalen's experience Mrs. Wragge was deaf to the customary stimulant. She actually ventured on a feeble remonstrance, in the presence of her husband.

"Oh, do let her have her Things!" pleaded Mrs. Wragge. "Oh, poor soul, do let her have her Things!"

The captain's inexorable forefinger pointed to a corner of the room—dropped slowly as his wife retired before it—and suddenly stopped at the region of her shoes.

"Do I hear a clapping on the floor?" exclaimed Captain Wragge, with an expression of horror. "Yes; I do. Down at heel again! The left shoe, this time. Pull it up, Mrs. Wragge! pull it up! The chaise will be here to-morrow morning at nine o'clock," he continued, addressing Magdalen. "We can't possibly venture on claiming your box. There is note-paper. Write down a list of the necessaries you want. I will take it myself to the shop, pay the bill for you, and bring back the parcel. We must sacrifice the box—we must indeed."

While her husband was addressing Magdalen, Mrs. Wragge had stolen out again from her corner; and had ventured near enough to the captain to hear the words, "shop" and "parcel." She clapped her great hands together in ungovernable excitement, and lost all control over herself immediately.

"Oh, if it's shopping, let me do it!" cried Mrs. Wragge. "She's going out to buy her Things! Oh, let me go with her—please let me go with her!"

"Sit down!" shouted the captain. "Straight! more to the right—more still. Stop where you are!"

Mrs. Wragge crossed her helpless hands on her lap, and melted meekly into tears.

"I do so like shopping," pleaded the poor creature; "and I get so little of it now!"

Magdalen completed her list; and Captain Wragge at once left the room with it. "Don't let my wife bore you," he said pleasantly, as he went out. "Cut her short, poor soul—cut her short!"

"Don't cry," said Magdalen, trying to comfort Mrs. Wragge by patting her on the shoulder. "When the parcel comes back you shall open it."

"Thank you, my dear," said Mrs. Wragge, meekly drying her eyes; "thank you kindly. Don't notice my handkerchief, please. It's such a very little one! I had a nice lot of 'em once, with lace borders. They're all gone now. Never mind! It will comfort me to unpack your Things. You're very good to me. I like you. I say—you won't be angry, will you? Give us a kiss."

Magdalen stooped over her with the frank grace and gentleness of past days, and touched her faded cheek. "Let me do something harmless!" she thought, with a pang at her heart—"oh,

let me do something innocent and kind, for the sake of old times!"

She felt her eyes moistening, and silently turned away.

That night no rest came to her. That night the roused forces of Good and Evil fought their terrible fight for her soul—and left the strife between them still in suspense when morning came. As the clock of York Minster struck nine, she followed Mrs. Wragge to the chaise, and took her seat by the captain's side. In a quarter of an hour more, York was in the distance: and the high road lay bright and open before them in the morning sunlight.

THE END OF THE SECOND SCENE.

MY DUNGEONS.

MY FIRST DUNGEONS.

AFTER ten years' burial in the dungeons of the Bourbon, deeply as I am filled with horror at the recollection of what I have seen and suffered, I know not by what words to make known my experience to those whose imagination is not helped by living, or by having lived, under the grip of a tyranny convulsed with its own death-throes. The throe of Italian tyranny is at an end, the prisons have been opened for those captives to whom that had been crime in Naples which was virtue in England, and is virtue also now in Italy. But what that tyranny was like when it claimed mastery over eight millions of us, I, who have worn its chains and borne its stripes, now wish to tell. In simple, unimpassioned words, as few as may suffice, I will relate faithfully what I myself know of the dark day my country has outlived.

Ferdinand the Second of Naples, during his reign—twenty-nine years—endeavoured to secure the fidelity of his people by beheading eight hundred and ninety-seven honest citizens, whose crime was that they did not like him, and by imprisoning eight thousand six hundred and twenty one victims: not always because of patriotism, but sometimes, also, because of a bare suspicion that they loved their country: sometimes, also, by reason of private hatred, which had no readier way of destroying an enemy than his denunciation as a patriot. Besides the men imprisoned, more than two hundred thousand of this king's subjects, all the good men left out of prison, moved about under the constant surveillance of a vast body of spies and policemen, and were in hourly danger of arrest and imprisonment at the discretion of irresponsible authority. For the forty-fourth time, a revolt broke out in Messina and Calabria, in September, eighteen forty-seven. How it failed; how the king swore to a constitution, and then perjuring himself, butchered his subjects in his capital; I need not tell. The province of Reggio took up arms for the betrayed constitution, but it contained no Garibaldi, and throve ill. The king offered free pardon to those who would lay down their arms, and it was broken up. But the rebels who went

peaceably home on the faith of the king's promise, were marked and tracked and hunted down in detail. A long list of liberals and suspected liberals was made out, and an army of spies, mercenaries, and gendarmes was scattered abroad to secure the arrest and conviction of all persons whom that list condemned. It was the honour of my life as well as its danger that my name was written in that list. For two years I concealed myself from the enemy, but by so doing I caused incessant molestation to my friends; therefore I gave myself up—not to justice, but to the strong arm whereby justice had for the time been banished from the land. Every care was taken to make my trial look like a lawful trial. A special criminal court was assembled for the occasion. There had been many public trials of constitutionalists, of fair seeming to those outside the kingdom, ignorant of the operations of the camarilla.

The Neapolitan camarilla was the whole working absolutist party, from the king's titled supporters down to the scum of the land, obedient to bribe and bidding. It took its name after the fatal first of May, when that whole party organised itself into an active government conspiracy for the destruction of the liberals by death, exile, imprisonment, and a well-organised machinery of terror. What the chiefs planned, the intendentes of the different provinces executed by means of police machinery, ramifying into the remotest hamlet. During the short life of the Neapolitan constitution, a large body of officers who had been working out the absolutist system were dismissed, to be afterwards restored. They spent their vacation in marking the men who then made themselves prominent as workers of the constitution. Some Bourbonites had during that interval affected to be liberals, and had thus been admitted into the liberal clubs, where they made note of the members and of the degrees of their repugnance to a form of government that recognised no popular rights. From the reports of such men and others less respectable, the camarilla lists of condemned and suspected citizens were afterwards drawn up: names being distinguished as those of men who were to be arrested only, and of men who were to be particularly punished. Informers were appointed to secure in each case the desired character of conviction; the witnesses, members of the camarilla, whom they were to call, were named to them; and if in one district the requisite amount of testimony were not to be had, it was made up by testimony from afar. The same witness would appear in different cases, and swear that he had been in two or three different places at one time: nobody offering to compare a man's testimony given against one prisoner with his conflicting testimony against the victim of another trial. When no charge could be fastened on a man nevertheless known to desire the freedom of his country, the police concealed in his house when they searched it, damnatory papers which they found at their next visit. A member of the camarilla could, without himself appearing in the matter, sometimes

while making professions of friendship, or even coming forward as a witness for the defence, contrive the condemnation of his enemy, his professional rival, or any person whom he might desire to see imprisoned. The greater number of the priests, bishops, and archbishops, were members of this camarilla, and they had in it unlimited power, which they sometimes used to procure the release of men heavily charged. The judges, though strong partisans of the king, often shrunk from conviction, but were forced to convict, or be dismissed.

Of my own trial, the result was my condemnation to death. Believing the sentence to be a form only, I smiled until my eyes fell on my father and my sister, who were weeping bitterly as they looked at me. Then a chill and a mortal paleness came over me, my lips were dry and my eyes downcast. "What ails you?" asked a fellow prisoner, shaking my arm, and I recovered courage. I looked at my father and sister with a gesture indicating that the capital sentence was but a form. They understood me and were relieved. But they were not allowed to accompany me to the prison, whither I went bound more tightly than before, with an additional cord fastened to my handcuffs. The number of gendarmes was doubled, and four men with four large lamps marched beside me. My companions were less cheerful than I when they saw me thus carried out among the sbirri.

I was set apart in a solitary condemned cell, furnished with a dim lamp and a small cross on the table, a little stool, and a straw mattress. Still I believed that all was form, but my heart sank when I overheard words spoken by one sentinel to another. I knew those sentinels, had gossiped with them, and given them almost daily the cigar or sweetmeat they enjoyed, but could not afford to buy out of their pay of twopence a day. Now they avoided me, allowed no one else to approach me, but frequently looked through the bars of my cell to see that I was safe. "Poor fellow," said one of them when so looking, "he is to be beheaded." I could not avoid an exclamation, which, being taken for a question, was replied to. "Yes, the scaffold is ordered, the religious societies are invited to the funeral, and the executioner is told to be ready at any moment." That was the removal of all hope as the night gathered about me. While I grieved, the dim light of the lamp flashed up, lighting the brass crucifix beside it, and was extinguished. Finding the room dark, and not seeing me, for I had withdrawn into a corner of my cell, a sentinel gave the alarm, and the silence of the night was broken by the hurried tramp of soldiers and turnkeys, coming—some from above, some from below, but all towards me. They found me safe, lighted my lamp again, and left me. I suffered the griefs of the condemned, for whom there is no more hope in this world, until a strong hope against hope took possession of me.

The next day, a soldier, probably the sentinel by whom I had been misled, slipped through my bars a paper to say that the scaffold had been erected to strike terror on the town,

but that there would be no execution. Three days afterwards I was informed that my sentence had been commuted to nineteen years' imprisonment in the dungeons of Procida.

Hitherto, as I had given myself up to justice, I had been confined apart from common criminals in the fortress of Reggio. With my change of sentence, came an order for removal to the prison of St. Francis, before starting for Procida. This prison consisted of two stories. I was placed on the ground floor, nine feet under ground. It was paved with large flags that were never dry. When the south-east wind blew, this place became so clammy with wet that the soles of our boots or shoes stuck to the floor as we walked. The air was heavy and oppressive, and although the place was lighted by three large windows, guarded with a double row of bars, yet it was positively darkened with the damp mist raised by warmth of fire and crowded human bodies in so moist a place, and the whole mist was poisoned with a pestilential stench from a closet in one corner of the room. Prisoners hardened in dirt held their noses, but the stench then seemed to penetrate through the pores of the skin. It caused a constant and intolerable headache. Some prisoners spat blood, or bled at the nose. Among the crowd, were some who boasted of contempt of decency, and who kept their corners of the prison in a fearful state, attracting the rats, who on two occasions actually set upon three sleeping prisoners. A watch had to be established against them, as against an enemy. Against other vermin no watch could be set. The greater number of the prisoners had no shirts, but wore, next their bodies, foul rags of coarse woollen cloth. I offered some of my own clothes to a man whose rags seemed to be most horribly infested. He said he should be dull if he parted with his favourite hunting-ground. To another man, I offered, in vain, money if he would wash his face. Among our number were three common criminals: one, a parricide under sentence of death. Their fate was still doubtful, but their conduct was so reckless as to strike terror into the hearts of all. Under their influence were a dozen filthy wretches, who at night searched the wallets and boxes of their companions in misery, and in the day begged alms from us all. No one had safe possession of his property, or dared complain when he was robbed. During the night the keeper came to our cell at intervals, and tested the soundness of its iron grating, by strokes with a small iron ruler. The windows were kept open, day and night, with sentinels outside, doubled in dark or stormy weather, to prevent all approach from without. Games were forbidden by the prison rules, but card-playing was winked at by the turnkey when he had been bribed. Strong drink also was smuggled in, now and then leading to riots, blows, stabs, even murder. If a quiet prisoner strove to hold himself aloof from quarrels, his position was a dangerous one, since the first victims of both sides were the obnoxious neutrals; nor was the quiet prisoner discriminated from the noisy, when, to

quell a riot, the gendarmes fired a random volley of musket-balls in at the window.

Though there were here and there some traces of compunction for the ill-treatment of men who sat silently on their bedsides, and did not refuse aid from their purses to the prisoners in sorest need, the animosity of the worst class of criminals against the political prisoners was beyond belief. This was fostered and encouraged by the turnkey, acting under the influence of the police. Only by incessant prudence did I avoid being miserably killed in the few months of my detention here. Meanwhile, my wretchedness was not quite unmitigated. I might see my friends, read, write, play the flute, speak to my fellow-prisoners, receive a dinner from my relatives. I improvised, also, a ragged school, and taught a class of fifteen of the common prisoners.

The public prosecutor, I think, had desired my death. When the order came for my removal from this common prison, it was ordained that I should proceed, bound and handcuffed, a month's journey, on foot. But I then feigned illness so well that I got lodgings in hospital till my friends had made interest to have me sent to the Bagnio of Nisida by sea. Heartrending was my old father's parting with me. He at least might not see the fulfilment of his hope, that I should outlive my great sorrow, and return to peace in the home of my childhood.

The gendarme who took me to Nisida was, without fee or reward from me, kind and indulgent. Had I abused his confidence I could have escaped at Messina, where he suffered me to go ashore, and likewise at Naples, where I was again free to go myself in search of the carriage that was to take us the rest of the way to the Bagnio. It was the twelfth of September, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, when I reached my new prison. The sky was bright, the trees in the gardens along the road were laden with fruit of all kinds, figs, apples, peaches, pears, and great black and yellow bunches of grapes hung from the tall poplars, while gay and pretty-looking girls were busily employed in gathering green French beans into baskets. Here, an idle fellow slept soundly under the shadow of a vine. There, another was torturing a poor ass, worn out with age and fatigue.

On our arrival at the sea-shore, a flag was hoisted, a boat was despatched for us, and we were soon landed on the island. There we had to journey by a steep stony path until we finally reached the Bagnio. The good-natured gendarme then left me, after giving me in charge to the captain of the galley slaves. On entering the office of the governor, a clerk asked me a great many questions, the answers to which he recorded in a large book bound in black. Then he entered his description of my person, repeating the words aloud, and glancing occasionally at the governor for his approval. On leaving the office I was again seized by the captain, who said, "Stay, I have a rosary to give you." A turnkey threw an iron chain on the ground, the captain commanded me to place my foot on an anvil, and I was soon decorated with the Nea-

politan badge of honour—a chain weighing from thirty to thirty-four pounds, rusty, and roughly made. The chains were not all of the same weight; those of the common criminals were only of fifteen or twenty pounds; but the political prisoners were looked upon as untameable animals, whose ardour was to be kept down by heavy weights. Sometimes a good space was left between the ring and the flesh, but frequently the ring was so narrow that it pressed on the ankle and prevented the blood from circulating through the fettered limb. The foot and leg then became swollen and livid, and, when the governor refused to order a larger ring, the iron became imbedded between two large black lumps of flesh. When I was chained I could scarcely breathe for emotion, and I did not hear the captain tell me I might go. It was not until he had given me a blow which threw me on the ground, that I moved away; but I was stopped again, and told not to hurry myself, as they had a companion to give me.

The man came, but instead of the political prisoner I had imagined him to be, he was a criminal of the worst sort—a murderer—a dark fierce sinister-looking ruffian, with small eyes, a narrow forehead, and his left cheek branded. The political prisoner was bound thus to an assassin, in order to degrade him, and to make the common criminals look on themselves as his equal in offence. Of my new prison, where we dined, subject to the new infliction of a blinding smoke, this was the dietary:

Water, one pint in twenty-four hours; in summer, at discretion.

Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, from forty-five to fifty beans, containing insects, and one pound and a half of bad bran bread. This to serve for breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, and supper.

Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday, a little shoemaker's paste, by way of variety, for the corresponding number of meals.

Five ounces of bad ill-smelling beef once a fortnight, except in Lent.

Each prisoner was supposed to receive sevenpence a year to pay for the washing of his linen, and this sum was very often paid with a reduction. The cases, besides, were not rare where some governors did not pay anything for the "lavanda," so the reader may imagine the condition as to cleanliness of those pent up in the Bagnio.

At my first day's dinner in the Bagnio I offered my companion my bread and soup, which he at once accepted; after swallowing my dinner with his own, he did not refuse to come out again into the open air. Scarcely, however, had we taken a few steps, when I was ordered down stairs again, to exchange my clothes for prison garments. These consisted of two shirts, made of the very coarsest linen, like canvas; two pairs of drawers of the same material; a pair of wretched brown cloth trousers; a red jacket; and a conical-shaped brown cloth cap. By way of bed I also received a mat rather than a mattress, stuffed with ass-hair or cow-hair. When I put on

the shirt I felt as if I were indeed doing penance in sackcloth, but, without complaint, I left the room, and went up to the place appointed for me. It was a room large enough to contain about thirty persons, but it was made to serve for the accommodation of seventy; and it was black and smoky, like a forge. The floor was of flags, with here and there one missing. A large bench ran around the walls. This was for prisoners to sleep on; upon it, lay in one place a heap of rotten straw; in another, a miserable old mattress; in another, a sickening heap of rags. A dirty lamp hung from the centre of the ceiling, and four sinks, one in each corner of the room, uncovered, and exhaling a revolting odour, served as receptacles for the refuse of everything. The large gate opening into this den was of dark oak. Through a wicket in it, the prisoners passed in and out one by one, bending their bodies, and putting in, first the unchained foot and next the other—a mode of proceeding which occupied so much time that it took nearly an hour for all of us to enter or pass out. Opposite this entrance was the door to a closet, uncovered, and kept without care or decency, yet in which ten prisoners actually lived. All round our walls were driven numberless nails, from which hung everything belonging to the criminals—plates, porringers, saucepans, clothes—affording refuge to millions of bugs, which came down by night to suck our blood. In one corner of the room was a bed, far different from the rest, with a little cupboard beside it, within which were a few wine-glasses and a large bottle of wine. Above the head of the bed, hung some pictures of saints, before which a small lamp was at night kept burning. This spot belonged to the chamber-keeper; that is to say, to a prisoner notorious for his crimes, who was set in power and authority over his comrades. During the night, the atmosphere of this room was so utterly abominable and stifling, that the new inmates instinctively leaped out of bed and approached the windows; but even this relief could not always be indulged in where the prisoners were chained in couples. What rendered it still more difficult and dangerous to breathe the poisonous air, was the cloud of dust produced by the constant spinning of hemp—a dust which, penetrating into the lungs, caused incessant irritation, and often severe inflammation. I went out to walk a little in the yard, and met among the criminals some whom I knew to be chamber-keepers, and through whom I was enabled to obtain part of the money which had been taken from me. This was a great convenience to me. It was now about two hours before sunset, and a large number of turnkeys knocking furiously at the door, ordered the prisoners to muster and arrange themselves round the circular yard, to be counted. They obeyed at once, standing with their caps off; and this performance, called “la conta,” being over, they again returned to their former walking, talking, and noise.

One hour after “la conta” the bell was rung several times, and the prisoners began to withdraw. A little while afterwards, the turnkeys

again struck at the door, screaming aloud like peacocks; but the most horrible sound of all was the captain's voice, who cried, “In! In, rascals!” The orders of the “secondini” had small influence over the criminals, but those of the captain were very much respected and feared; for he was often in the habit of using his stick, and enforcing his commands with a blow on the head. Before sundown, all prisoners were in. There was some confusion at first, but the voice of the chamber-keeper soon made everything right. “The rosary! To the rosary!” he exclaimed, and then there was silence. The rosary (a form of Roman Catholic prayer) being over, cries, screams, laughter, songs, curses, oaths, whistling, noise of all kinds were freely indulged in, all blended with the horrid rattle of chains. My temples throbbed with pain as if they were beaten with hammers. Two or three hours passed before this dreadful din began to abate, when, by degrees, it lessened, and was succeeded by the silence of death. I cannot say how long I had been dozing, when I was aroused by a sense of being stung with stinging-nettle. I thought the suffering might be caused by the coarse shirt I had neglected or forgotten to change. I threw it off, and returned to bed again; but I was worse off than before. At length, unable to bear the torment any longer, I screamed aloud for a light, and, on its being brought, saw that the lesser vermin had been draining that blood which King Ferdinand had not himself sucked. For three days, able to buy food, I only ate a little bread soaked in wine, for I had become as ill in body as in mind. I could not force my thoughts away from home, where I had been so happy; where I had always enjoyed every comfort, been accustomed to see kind faces around me, and to hear the tender names of brother, son, friend, constantly sounding in my ears; where I had so often advised my patients, and given them comfort and hope. This thought of home was my chief torture. On the fourth day of my imprisonment I was seized with bronchitis. It was a very severe attack; and, added to the other usual symptoms, there was intolerable thirst. I had been for three days unable to drink the muddy water of the place, and now when, in my fever, I petitioned for a cooling drink, they brought me a jug filled with this same water, which I set down, shrinking from its smell as I put it to my mouth. I asked for a glass, into which I poured it, and found it to be green and teeming with insect life. In the mean while the doctor was sent for, and I was transferred to hospital, where, after some days, I recovered.

A month after I had been taken to hospital, an order reached the Bagnio that I and the other political prisoners should be removed to Procida, and we were accordingly desired to keep ourselves in readiness to start at any moment. Now the political prisoners were unchained from the others. No man can understand unless he has felt it in his own person how horrible is the condition of one prisoner chained to another. I have seen, under such circumstances, a son

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once good and obedient lift his hand and strike his father.

The captain divided us into two lots, each consisting of ten prisoners, chained together by a common ring. Dressed in our red jackets and conical caps, we resembled so many Punches, but instead of being amused by our appearance, the people appeared saddened and looked on in silence. Owing to the want of wind and a contrary tide, it was dark night when we reached Procida.

SIDE BY SIDE.

FRIEND AND FRIEND.

MAY we, then, never know each other?

Who love each other more, I dare
Affirm for both, than brother brother,
Aye, more, my friend, than they that are
The children of one mother.

A look—and lo, our natures meet!
A word—our minds make one reply!
A touch—our hearts have but one beat!
And, if we walk together—why
The same thought guides our feet!

The self-same course! The flower that blows
A scent unguess'd in hedgerow green,
Slim spiders where the water throws
The starry-weeded stones between
Strange light that flits and flows,

Were charged by some sweet spirit, sure
(Loves' minister, and ours!) to strike
Our sense with one same joy, allure
Our hearts, and bless us both alike
With memories that endure.

True friend! I know you: and I know
You know me too. And this is well.
Yet something seems to lie below
All knowledge, which is hard to tell.
The world, where hands let go,

Slips in between. The morsels fine
That meet so fast and firm to-day,
Where, yesterday, your heart left mine,
When our hearts' converse broke away,
Ah, how will these combine.

When years have clad them coarse with rust,
And time hath blunted down the points,
And earth has dropp'd its daily dust
Into the sharp and tender joints
Where loitering swarms will thrust

Their pregnant eggs? The warmth yet stays,
Where, twelve safe hours ago, no more,
Your soul touched mine. But days and days
Make callous what one day leaves sore,
Lichoring the wound they graze.

Not ours the change, if change must fall,
Nor yours the fault, nor mine, my friend!
Life's love will last: but not love's small
Sweet hourly lives. That these should end
It grieves me. That is all.

This is time's curse. Since life began
It hath been losing love too fast.
And I would keep, while yet I can,
Man's faith in love, lest at the last
I lose love's faith in man.

But something sighs, "Be satisfied.

"Ye know no more than ye can know."
And walking, talking side by side,
It sometimes seems to me as tho'
Love did to love provide

(How shall I say?) a man, in fine,
A ghostly Third, who is, indeed,
Not you nor I, tho' yours and mine;
The creature of our mutual need,
The friend for whom we pine.

You call him Me: I call him You:
Who is not either you nor me:
This phantom friend! who, if we knew
What I divine, would prove to be
Mere product of us two.

The man that each in each hath sought,
And each within himself hath found:
The being of our separate thoughts
To each by his own nature bound,
From his own nature wrought,

Heed well our friend, while yet we may!
There are so many winds about,
And any wind may blow away
Love's airy child. O never doubt
He is the common prey

Of every chance, while love remains:
And every chance which he survives
Is something added to love's gains.
Comfort our friend whilst yet he lives!
Dead, what shall pay our pains?

If cold should kill his heart at last,
Regret will idly muse, and think
In at what window blew the blast?
Or how we might have stopp'd that chink.
What mends a moment past?

MAN AND WIFE.

Nay, Sweet! no thought, not any thought,
At least not any thought of you,
But what must thank dear love. Nor aught
Of love's mistrust between us two
Can ever creep. Thank God, we keep
Too close to let thin doubts slip thro'

And leave a scar where they divide
Hearts meant by Heaven to hold together.
So, soul by soul, as side by side,
We sit. Thought wanders hither, thither,
From star to star, yet not so far
But what, at end of all its tether,

It feels the beating of your heart,
To which mine bound it long ago.
Our love is perfect, every part,
Love's utmost, reach'd at last, must so
Henceforth abide. And, if I sigh'd
Just now, I scarcely wish to know

The reason why. Who feels love's best
Must feel love's best can be no more.
We see the bound, no longer guess'd,
But fix'd for ever. Lo, the shore!
On either hand, 'twixt sea and land,
How clear and fine does sight explore

That long-drawn self-determined line
Of difference traced! My Own, forgive
That, sitting thus, your hand in mine,
Glad that dear God doth let us live
So close, my Own, so almost one,
A thought that wrongs repose should strive

With pure content. So much we are,
Who are no more . . . could I explain!
Ah, the calm sea-coast! Think, how far
Across the world came land and main,
Endeavouring each to find and reach
The other,—well, and they attain

Here! And just here, where they unite,
The point of contact seems to be
The point of severance. Left and right,
Here lies the land, and there the sea.
They meet from far: they touch: yet are
Still one and one eternally,

With skill that touch between—that touch
That joins and yet divides—the shore.
Oh soul to soul, dear Love, 'tis much!
Loves utmost gain'd can give no more.
And yet . . . Well, no! 'tis better so.
Earth still (be glad!) holds Heaven in store.

THREE REFUGEES.

I HAVE known in my time three remarkable Refugees, all of whom are now gone to that "perpetuum exilium" mentioned by Horace, in the dismal black coach that we all ride in sooner or later.

At palace or at cottage gate,
The Postman Death knocks soon or late.

The histories of two of these refugees were pathetic, and need some infusion of human tears in my ink. Let me narrate in all simplicity and truth; and, first, let me briefly describe the sorrows and vicissitudes of my earliest Refugee friend, poor little Mein Herr Krumpholtz, once upon a time flourishing writing-master in the city of Berlin.

Mein Herr Krumpholtz was a very little refugee—a small unfortunate hump-backed writing-master—a mere sketch of a man. Nature seemed never to have finished him, but in a pet with her want of success, to have struck the modelling clay into a dumpy lump, and left only the brain and heart complete. Those two organs in the little writing-master, however, were of the finest construction, and could think and feel as well as the heart and brain of the biggest tyrannical Goliath of Gath that ever jostled his way through the world and bullied the human race into submission. Some small men are intolerably vain (how gracious are the compensations of nature!), wear stays, and scent themselves, are intolerable and insolent to bigger men, and affect excruciating boots; but so was not Krumpholtz; he was one of your abject, crushed little men; one of (as it were) Nature's younger sons—her male Cinderellas—born under an ill star, born to the sensitive misery of feeling forgotten and despised, so that early in life's battle they lose heart, and falling to the rear, turn mere sutlers and drudges to the great victorious army. The only instrument he played on was that much despised one "the second fiddle," and even on that he played "second fiddle B," not "second fiddle A." In fact, whether you met him in the streets, or at a party, or at the "Restaurant à la Cagmaggerie," or wherever it was, the little flaxen Ger-

man seemed perpetually apologising to the universe for having had the audacity and presumption to exist at all. Now, as it is hard sometimes even to respect men who respect themselves, it is simply impossible to respect a man who does not respect himself. The result that might have been supposed to arise from this behaviour did arise, and poor little Herr Krumpholtz was jostled, shoved, elbowed, cuffed, and turned into the gutter, by every one who was richer, more clever, more pushing, or harder-hearted.

He was an amiable clever little man, too, wrote the finest Italian hand, and ciphered like an angel—a recording angel—but he could seldom get employment, and when he did get any, he lost it directly. He was a little dapper flaxen man, with short common-place legs, a snub nose, towy hair, large moony spectacles, and invisible flaxen eyebrows. His poor little chest was of a dish-cover shape, and he carried about him an undying odour of bad sardines and stale tobacco. Yet he was a poet and a scholar; had written sonnets to Upland; lines "To the memory of Körner;" finally a satire, signed "The Ghost of Blücher," which was much read—by the Berlin police—and in gratitude for which he obtained three years board and lodging from the King of Prussia, in the unpleasant fortress of Spandau.

Krumpholtz had been twice in love; once desperately, with blue-eyed Fräulein Goldstein, the pretty daughter of a Berlin wine-merchant, who eventually jilted him, and married a rich dyer in Lindenbaum-street.

Just before the revolution broke out, Krumpholtz was beginning to recover this blow, and to do pretty well as a thriving writing-master. Unfortunately, bad designing men flattered Krumpholtz, and persuaded him that he was a great revolutionary orator—a small Brutus, with the heart of Cato, and the brain of Danton. There was no doubt then among honest people, nor is there now, that Germany wants liberty, and freedom from effete aristocracy, and pipeclay martinetism; but true liberty is no child of murder or sin, nor did a rain of blood ever, since the world began, make two blades of corn grow where one only grew before.

Perched like a tomtit on an oak, Krumpholtz strutted on the tables of revolutionary clubs, and croaked out prophecies and rhapsodies against tyranny, slandered that very indifferent hero Frederick the Great, and, in fact, did all he could to bring himself under the executioner's swinging sword. One night the club he belonged to—"The Red Mountain"—was surprised by the police, and Krumpholtz escaped by putting on a woman's cloak and getting on the tiles.

The remembrance of this night, I suppose, rather soured him, for he was very fierce and cruel at the barricades of the ensuing week, and assisted in that terrible and ghastly procession by torch-light when the dead bodies, piled in carts, were driven by the mob under the balcony on which the king stood. Krumpholtz yelled with

IT WAS THE HISTORY

the best, but every drop of blood shed that night, threw back German liberty months, years. The reaction came, certain as the cold stage in fever that follows the hot. The rich men trembling at the mob confounded reform with destruction, and put down the riot. The leading revolutionists fled, and among them Krumpholtz—aided, let me mention for the sake of humanity, by some Napoleons secretly transmitted to him by the faithless Fräulein.

Safe out of Scylla, where should the poor little exile fall, but plump into Charybdis. Safe from the whirlpool of revolution, Krumpholtz fell into love. The tender grey-eyed daughter of his landlady in Queen Anne-street, Soho, pitied him, until pity turned to love. The little tender German heart, pining to love something, home and country lost, returned the affection that the bony dusty bailiff-faced mother could not check or hinder.

But even this reciprocated love proved unlucky to the ill-starred man. Mrs. MacCash finding her lodger devotedly attached to her daughter, and at the same time very intermittent in his financial arrangements, and being herself a "helpless widow," as she pleaded, determined to make a serf and drudge of the too willing lover. Krumpholtz, was doomed, like Ferdinand, to toil basely for his Miranda. He was sent out for milk, he got up the coals, he diplomatised with creditors, he negotiated with lodgers, he wrote letters, he ran errands. His only consolations were his love and his violin, and even on the last-named instrument he was compelled to play nightly, psalm tunes of the dimmest kind for his bony tyrant of a landlady, who was a Primitive Methodist of the severest tenets.

Yet this penal and degrading life the brave-hearted little man bore with Christian degradation rather than run into debt or desert the girl he loved. Yes! He bore it all without a murmur, and surrendered every farthing he earned to that dusty old Semiramis, Mrs. MacCash.

In this dismal atmosphere the little exile solaced by love and the struggle of duty, spent three happy years. At the end of that time Fate dealt him her most cruel blow. Pretty little tender-eyed Maggy MacCash caught a low typhoid fever, and died, pressing her lover's hand.

Now the clouds darkened, and everything went wrong. His two schools gave him warning. The master of the second, with shrugs and rubbings of his hands, expressed his deep regret over a glass of sherry. Mr. Krumpholtz was a most careful and excellent master—there was but one objection to him—that was "his size." It seemed a trifling, he might almost say a ridiculous objection, but it was an insurmountable one. The boys did not respect him, they made fun of him, despised his commands, drew his caricature on the playground walls, made snow dwarfs to ridicule him, boldly set him at defiance. All this was true. One brave lad alone had the courage to respect him and to defend him

from insult; on the sad day when, with tears in his eyes, the little writing-master, humbly and affectionately, amid derisive cheers, took leave of his pupils, that brave lad (afterwards a great man in India) followed him to the school bounds and pressed him kindly by the hand.

But these misfortunes might all have been borne—for there was still the greengrocer's family at the corner of the street, and there was still the baker's daughter over the way, to give writing lessons to—had not a trial still more terrible to a sensitive man fallen on his unhappy head.

Knowing his poverty the spies who infest London began to ply Krumpholtz with temptations. They intercepted him at the Café de la Cagmaggerie, and drew him slowly into their toils. They offered him a safe passage home, money, employment, what not, if he would only betray a few of the secrets of his revolutionary friends in London; if he would merely attend the German singing clubs, and report now and then what he heard. They wanted very little, and would pay very well for it. Or, he might leave his friends, and go and mix among the French Red Republicans, the Orsini men. The reward should still be the same.

At first, Krumpholtz, proud little man, of the most spotless and sensitive honour, turned from these wretches as he would have done from Apollon. Gradually, as poverty pinched him harder and harder with her paralysing fingers, he felt, and shuddered to feel, that he began to listen to their advances. He fell on his knees by his miserable bedside, and prayed God to keep such temptations from his mind. He felt stronger as he prayed, but next day, he felt again that he wavered. The toils were narrowing round the poor man; one day when he met me in the street he told me how he dreaded lest poverty should tempt him to become a spy.

That very night, as I afterwards heard, he went home to his lodgings, and was warned that he must leave on the morrow. Mrs. MacCash, tired of solitude, had married a tall red-faced coarse fellow of a milkman, who had at once determined to oust his unprofitable lodger. The dirty little slut who opened the door that night to the unfortunate Herr Krumpholtz, afterwards remembered that he asked in a low and choked voice for his bedroom candle, and that he sighed as he tapped faintly at the front parlour door, and wished Mr. and Mrs. MacCash "good night." Nothing more was thought of the little German until eleven o'clock next day, when Mr. MacCash, going up to his lodger's bedroom to know at what time he intended to clear out, obtained no reply to his repeated knocking but a faint groan twice repeated. One bump of the brawny milkman's shoulder to the door, and it fell in splinters. He rushed into the room; and there, pale, shrunk, and fainting, on a bed soaked with blood, lay the poor little writing-master. One hand still clutched the razor, in the other was a letter in pencil:

DEAR MRS. MACCASH,—Forgive me for putting an end to my wretched life in your house. I could

no longer endure the ceaseless miseries nature on me, the unhappy one, heaped. I die thinking of my Mary.

Yours, with all heart's gratitude,
WILHELM KRUMPHOLTZ.

The temptation to suicide had probably come upon him as he was shaving; for half his beard was shaved, and half not. He lingered in the hospital a week. At the sad week's end, he died, and was buried by the parish. I placed a memorial stone over the humble grave of the ill-starred little writing-master.

Now far away from the quiet grave where the dandelions expand their transitory sunny disks, bear me, O my memory to noisier and gayer scenes! Conduct me quick to the Café Restaurant à la Cagmaggerie, where the black-spotted dominoes bustle, and the red and white billiard balls knock their heads together, on the green tables; where the omelette smokes and the chocolate froths; where the brown coffee seethes, and extraordinary soups flavour the smoky air!

There, aloft in that strange room, ascended to by corkscrew iron stairs, and where the German Singing Club of watchmakers and pianoforte-makers met weekly, I first saw thee, thou strange and dangerous Stanislas Polonsky. There, first I talked to thee of the chivalrous days of Sobieski, amid songs about "Father Rhine," and cries for the three colours and German independence.

The next time I met Polonsky (who I found to be a Polish artist) was at a French Revolutionary Debating Club that met over a Penny Reading Room in Windmill-street, opposite to a public-house bearing the suspicious name of the "Three Spies." It was about a month before Orsini's attempt, and that great conspirator was said to be present: though I could not identify his pale fixed face, and heavy black beard. The chairman, a Dr. Cæsar Chose, was a tall gaunt man, with the worn hollow face and long grey drooping moustachios of some old general of Cuirassiers. The debate was violent in the extreme, and, after a speech from a ruffianly Parisian mechanic, who had been wounded at the Barricades, and who supported himself while he spoke on crutches, up got Stanislas in a corner of the room and denounced the Russian Emperor as a cloven-footed monster who sent innocent women to perish in Siberia. He spoke of the struggle in Russia to emancipate the serfs, and of the efforts made by friends of liberty there to obtain a free press. After a long and fervid speech he sat down frothing at the mouth like a recovered epileptic, and staggered to the door and the fresh air.

I followed him, and he asked me to come home with him and have a chat about Poland. I did so. His home was a smoky dingy third floor back in Pulteney-street: a wainscoted low-roofed room in a house that had perhaps been a nobleman's in Queen Anne's time. His room was strewn with artists' properties, faded draperies, broken casts, foils, masks. The tables were crowded with sticky yellow bottles and squeezed-out tin tubes of paint; while against the walls leaned stacks of dusty sketches and studies.

We began talking of the great Russian artist

Ivanoff, and then of Russian poetry, when who should come in but two of his Russian friends, both characteristic specimens of the refugee.

The one was a Russian colonel who had been dangerously wounded in the left temple at the battle of Inslenko, and who, having since been chased out of his country for the unpardonable crime of being a reformer, was now in his grand old age a poor compositor in a Holborn printing-office, maintaining his wife honourably on twenty shillings a week, hardly earned by late hours and a pestilent atmosphere. A truer gentleman I never saw, nor one more unostentatious of his misfortunes. His companion had been a frank young lieutenant in the Russian navy within two years. One day, while stationed at Kertch, he saw a German captain strike the waiter at a café for not bringing him his tea and lemon quickly enough. This fired the young man's blood.

"Why," he said, "you Germans come out here pretending to civilise us, and you are ten times the barbarians we are."

The German, heated with absinthe, replied with a blow. They fought at once, in that very room, with sabres; and at the third blow the Russian split his adversary's skull. That night he fled into exile; for the German interest was strong at court just then, and his homicide would have been punished as cruelly as a rank murder.

They recited to me some beautiful Russian poems. I had expected to find them poor imitations of Byron, mere mongrel French and German paraphrases. But I found them steeped in local feeling, aromatic with fir scent, and fragrant of the budding birch woods. The following simple poem of Tewtcheff touched me deeply, as preserving a singular local legend:

These poor villages!
This poor nature!
Mother country, long suffering country,
Dear country of the Russian people!

The foreigner with his scornful glance
Can not understand, can not perceive
What gleams under, what secretly shines
Through thy modest nakedness.

Yet the King of Heaven, in the attire of a slave,
Suffering under the burden of his cross,
Long ago passed to and fro through thee, blessing
thee,
O, my mother country!

It is true as Tewtcheff sings, that the Russian peasants firmly believe, and have believed for ages, that our Saviour once passed through their country, blessing and pitying it, in the humble garb of a slave. Then after a short discussion on that strange sect who believe that our Saviour, the Emperor Napoleon, and the Emperor Paul, are all living in concealment in Urkutsch waiting for the millennium—a sect who believe in purification by fire, and who, after mutilating themselves, sometimes burn themselves on funeral piles—we fell again on poetry, and Colonel Stralotsky recited a beautiful poem written by I forget whom, and called I think "The Storm." It began:

Thunder and storm! The ship is tossing—
 The dark sea boils—
 The wind tears the sail,
 And whistles among the ropes.
 The vault of heaven becomes dark,
 But I, trusting in the brave ship,
 Slumber in my narrow cabin
 As we begin to toss—I sleep—
 I dream that the nurse of my childhood
 Tosses my cradle,
 And, as of old, sings in a low sweet voice,
 "Boiushke Boio—Boiushke Boio."

Presently the storm awakened the poet, and he heard the quicker trampling on deck—but again he slept, and this time he was a child swinging in a garden, and prattling to his future sweetheart—so through various artful changes the poet carried the idea of the motion of the ship affecting the dream of the traveller.

The next time we met—I and Stanislas—it was in his painting room again, two days after Orsini's execution. The London shops were full of photographs of Orsini, and when I first went in, Stanislas was very sombre and silent. He sat with his feet on the fender and his back to his easel, growling threats and menaces against tyranny. Suddenly he rose, and advancing to his easel, threw off a dark cloth that covered a large picture he was working on; he pointed to it; it was the portrait of the daring conspirator. I knew directly, the strong features, and the close crisp black beard. Stanislas kissed the picture as he exclaimed, "That man was a fanatic of patriotism; he would have leaped down the gulf like Curtius; he would have thrust himself on the spears with Winkelreid. O would to God I had died with thee, O infelice! O would to God I had died with thee."

I did my best to get poor chivalrous Stanislas work, but I did not obtain him much; for he was one of those men who, with considerable originality of genius, could not bind himself to the drudgery of portrait-painting. I often wondered, indeed, how he managed to put two ends together—but by a mere accident I discovered. Some business led me to call on a celebrated artist in a distant part of Kensington. When the servant answered the bell he informed me that his master was very busy, as it wanted only a week to the sending-in day of the Academy; but if I would walk into his studio I should find him at work. I followed into an ante-room, and there, from behind a curtain, I saw the artist and his model. It was a shipwreck picture, and the model—a fine man, stripped to the waist—stood with his back turned to me, holding on to a helm that had been rigged up in the studio for that purpose. Suddenly the man turned for a moment to rest himself, and I saw his face. It was Stanislas. He did not see me, so I instantly stole back, and telling the servant in a whisper that I would not disturb his master then, but would call later in the day, went away with my secret.

One week from that time, the most illustrious of the Russian refugees met me in Regent-street,

and casually informed me that poor Stanislas was dead—carried off in three days by cholera—attributed to the bad drainage of the Soho region.

Stanislas was buried at Woking Cemetery, and I followed him to the grave. His coffin was borne by members of his own Republican Club—"the Polar Star" club. It was an April morning. The air was fragrant with the perfumes of spring. The flowers were opening, the birds singing. When the coffin was lowered into the grave, and a yellow wreath of immortelles had been laid upon its black surface, Monsieur Ledru Rollin advanced to pronounce the funeral oration, some passages of which I can still remember. The orator began thus:

"In a poor street of London, in the poor garret of a poor house, a holy existence has just terminated. Poland has one martyr the more—but she will not refuse to lend us her martyrology, for we need its pages to teach our French children.

"Stanislas Polonsky was a holy man. I emphasize the words—a holy man. His whole existence was devoted to abnegation of self, and to incessant labour. All that strikes us in the legends of the saints, was united in him, with more love, and with more of the human element.

"Born in opulence, nourished in the bosom of Polish grandeur, our Stanislas died a poor broken-hearted republican. He threw away his titles and abandoned his fortune when his country was dismembered by tyrants. But his was no religion of despair. With exile his great abnegation only began. Alone, in poverty, abandoned by his children and his wife, he toiled twenty-six years in exile, to organise the Polish democratic party, and to unite it with the Russian. Bowed down by age and misfortune, he gave his days and nights to this one work, with that calm serenity, that sweet resignation, that frank simplicity, which an immovable faith alone can give to a great heart.

"No one ever heard a word of complaint from his lips. He was sometimes sadder than usual, but he never let fall those cold and bitter words of doubt and despair by which the exile sometimes revenges himself for the anguish he has to suffer. He was one of those pure fanatic natures who, dominated by one grand thought, arrive at an unshakable tranquillity, a sweet calmness, an unbendable resolution.

"Some years ago Monsieur Lamartine received congratulations on the establishment of the Republic. Among the rest there was one group of faces, furrowed by misfortune and blanched by exile. Their spokesman was our Stanislas. He said to Lamartine, 'At every summons of the people, whether in war or misfortune, Poland has been the first to cry, I am here! for she saw in every struggle for liberty, a struggle for Poland; she cries now again, I am here!'

"Stanislas was the advanced sentinel of Poland, but the people slept. The faithful soldier fell

at his post, and the brutal wheels of tyranny have passed over his bones."

Now, leaving poor Stanislas' grave, bear me, O Memory, back to the Café Restaurant à la Cagmaggerie, and fill my ears again with the shuffle of the dominoes and the rattle of the red and the white billiard balls. I would write of my third refugee friend: that stupendous and astounding rascal, the Prince Gargarelli, of Palermo.

Poor Stanislas first introduced me to him at the Café Restaurant à la Cagmaggerie, where the prince was intent on a carambole game of billiards. He looked very like a dandy billiard-marker. He was very short and dapper, and wore very high-heeled glistening little boots. His clothes were glossy new, and of the extremest cut. His pale fingers glistened with triple rings. In his scarf he wore an immense emerald. I left him, and thought no more of him until ten days after, when a dirty-looking man, very much like a Jew old clothesman, called on me at my office (I was then a solicitor in Gray's Inn), and introduced himself in broken English as the *homme d'affaires*, the man of business, of the Prince Gargarelli, of Palermo. The painful fact (after many rhetorical subterfuges) soon came out. The Prince, having got terribly into debt, was in the Bench. He wanted my aid to raise money to get him out of that stronghold. The chief characteristics of the prince's ambassador were thick black eyebrows, a red hook nose, greasy black clothes, and a voluminous umbrella with a hook handle.

The ambassador assumed a very high tone. The loan was a purely temporary one—a mere stop-gap for a week or so—the prince's family, in fact, rolling in riches. The prince's father, Prince Paul, had but to be written to, and would instantly freight a ship with Sicilian gold, and bear away his too prodigal son in triumph. The Bond-street jeweller, who wanted his money, was one "tanned dirty rascal, with no conscience, *mon Dieu*, no honour;" the prince was an accomplished gentleman, embarrassed by "tanned rascals, tradesmen, horse-keeper and carriage-keeper, and your horrible jeweller of ole Bond-street."

The ambassador, flashing before me the glittering title of prince, took me, I could see, for an easy prey.

"But if the prince is so rich," said I, with merciless logic, "how is it he stops in the Bench?"

The ambassador laughed compassionately at my ignorance. "Ha! ha! He wait for von remittance, that all; for one remittance from Prince Paul, de fader."

"Is the father rich?"

The ambassador stamped his umbrella, and assumed a low and solemn tone of voice. "He is de richest man on the continent of Europe. He has vine-yard, olive-yard, orange-yard, citron-yard, court-yard; he has one million English pound a year."

I appeared overcome. "And the prince in

the Bench is, I suppose, the eldest son, what we call in England the heir apparent?"

The dirty ambassador was all smiles. I had not only exactly caught his idea, but I had even anticipated his idea.

"Yase, yase. Ah! You have the esprit *vif*. Yase, de eldest son of de fader, Prince Paul—de son who vill veer de crown vid de bar on de head. Prince Paul, de fader, is richer than any von in Europe, barring de crown.

"Oh!" said I, trying to help his staggering English, "you mean the richest man barring crowned heads."

"Yase, yase" (delighted to catch at this expression, and evidently treasuring it up for future use, as he slowly repeated it). "Yase, barring crowned heads. The Prince wait for von remittance." (Here a sudden wheedling thought struck him.) "Do you—(aimez vous)—do you like orange?"

I expressed my peculiar attachment to that fruit.

"De Prince have orange field enorme. He vill send you two chest of orange. Do you like feeg?"

I said I particularly esteemed the fig.

"Very vell; he has feeg tree, miles of feeg tree. He vill write to Prince Paul to send many boxes of feeg with remittance. Do you love citron?"

I said again, yes. And here also I was to be remembered.

"Ah! Do you like, then, *Lachrymæ Christee*, de vine of de tears?"

I said, "Indeed I do!" But the bribery and corruption was now growing a little too barefaced, and I said it with rather a distrustful and spiteful emphasis.

"All raite" (here the dirty German Jew tapped me on the arm and smiled horribly to express entire admiration and confidence). "The vine-yard of *Lachrymæ Christee* belong to Prince Paul. He vill send you two cask, *vith* the remittance."

But why continue? Need I say that the loan was never raised, and that the remittance from the enormously rich noble of Palermo never came? I went to see the prince in the Bench, and found him playing at rackets in a flowered chintz dressing-gown, gay, and prodigal of promises as ever. He may be there now for anything I know.

I have written these lines, to draw attention to the pathetic rather than to the humorous side of an exile's life. We, at home happy, are apt to be distrustful of men whom we too often associate with runaway swindlers, foreign assassins, degraded officers, fugitive gamblers, and outlawed homicides. Some such there are, no doubt, among the motley crowds that throng Leicester-square and the dim regions of Soho; but I believe that the majority are honest brave sincere men, driven into misery merely by the sincerity and the earnest steadfastness with which they hold certain political opinions—horrible opinions in the home-land they have lost—embracing the wish for a free press, a free

constitution, a popular parliament, and a responsible ministry.

Poor fellows, poor fellows! They roam about Hyde Park among the cast-iron trees, and, moping there on the benches, dream of the Prater, of Unter-den-Linden, of the Boulevards, of the square of the Duomo, of the Cascine, of the Pincian Hill. The little children play round them, but they heed them not; the stolid policeman stares at them ominously; they see him not; their minds are away to other climes and other days.

Then, as evening comes, and darkens over the dewy grass, and as the street lamps shine out, they awake from their dreams, and slink away to their poor meal and the everlasting dominoes at my old haunt—the Café Restaurant à la Cag-maggerie.

PURSUED BY P. W.

It was in a brief yachting ramble which I made in a small schooner lent me by a friend at Malta that I put in at Tangiers. The yacht needed some slight repairs, and I myself required a little exercise on shore, and the freshening influences of those land-breezes which are so dear to the landsman's heart.

I knew no one, nor—never contemplating such a visit—had I provided myself with even a letter of introduction. But I did not repine at my isolation, devoting myself to see a number of new objects in a land totally strange to me. My practice was to mount my horse early, and, having sent forward my servant to an appointed spot, to breakfast under the palm-trees wherever any grand or striking panorama of the scenery presented itself. In this bivouac fashion I frequently passed days, and even nights; for in this climate, except in particular seasons, there is no fear of malaria.

While thus living my gipsy life, I strolled one evening along the bank of a dried-up torrent, whose massive stones and great trunks of trees plainly revealed what a volume of water must occasionally sweep down, fed by hundreds of mountain rivulets. The dreary desolation, combined with a certain beauty; the mingled richness and barrenness; the fresh tints of foliage contrasting with the bright-red soil, made up a picture thoroughly African. My astonishment was, however, great to perceive that the lonesome spot had been selected for a residence, and—to judge from the trim and graceful character of the little cottage—by one not deficient in taste. The building, which was singularly small, was of cane, but with deep shadowing eaves all around it; the pillars supporting which were covered with rich flowering creepers. The little garden, too, showed signs of tasteful culture, and glowed with a rich luxuriance of flowers that reminded one of Holland. As I drew near I saw a man, whom, at a glance, I knew to be an European, busily watering the plants. For a while he had not noticed my approach; but, on turning, he caught sight of me, and, as suddenly throwing down

his watering-pot, fled towards the house, not only banging the door after him, but barring and bolting it inside.

I opened the little wicket and approached the house, desirous, at least, by a word of apology, to excuse my sudden intrusion; but though I addressed the inmate in French, English, Italian, and Spanish, the extent of my lingual attainments, he vouchsafed no reply. After a few more attempts, all unsuccessful, I turned my steps homeward, wondering not a little what the event might mean.

Three nights after this I went to the consulate to fetch away some letters which had been addressed there for me. I had given orders to leave short on the anchor, that I might get under weigh immediately on my arriving on board. The consul was from home, but an official of the consulate met me with my letters, and expressed the regret of his chief, that he had not had the pleasure of my acquaintance. As we chatted together thus passingly, I could not help reverting to my late excursion and the little incident I have just related.

“Oh, he's an Englishman—that fellow is English—but as to his name or his family, or what he has done, or why he came here, we have never found out. The consul made several advances to him, asked him repeatedly here, invited him to a Christmas dinner, and so on; but all in vain. His replies were, however, couched in the language of one accustomed to the courtesies of life. The only civility he will accept of is the loan of a newspaper; his Arab servant comes periodically for the Times. For a while we thought he must be insane, but that is evidently not the case. The secret most probably touches some of those disastrous bubble speculations—British Bank rascalities—which we read of, and my own impression is that he has been implicated in the rogueries——”

“Or ruined by their fraud?” interposed I.

“Perhaps so,” said he, dryly; and thus the conversation closed.

When I got down to the wharf where my boat lay awaiting me, the coxswain told me that a strange-looking man, who wore a sort of haik over his English dress, had left a sealed packet for me, having first asked my name, which he appended to the envelope in pencil. By the description, I at once recognised the recluse. I own that my first impression was to include him in that category which, as begging impostors, have almost reached the rank of professionals, but on reflecting how little benefit could accrue to the application made to one whose topsailsheet was then “to the wind,” I took the first quiet moment, after we got under weigh, to break the seal and read.

The manuscript was very clearly and cleanly written, not a blot nor an erasure throughout. A small slip of paper, meant specially for myself, dropped out as I opened it, but contained only this one line: “If you hear of P. W., pray drop me a line.” The manuscript—manifestly an autobiography—began thus:

I believe I am the best-tempered man that ever lived. I *know* I am the most patient and long-suffering. My inner consciousness reveals to me that any one less eminently endowed with amiable qualities would have given way, years ago, either to transports of anger, or settled down into a brooding or confirmed misanthrope, tried and tempted as I have been. I will state my case in the fewest words I can. My father was the younger son of a younger son, who never would—or, I believe, could—do anything for his own support. I was born to the family gift, and so thorough a gentleman that by no possible exertion could I have procured myself one day's sustenance. I inherited something under three hundred a year, which the world called eight, and my creditors believed to be two. I had some reasonably good connexions, none of whom cared to hear about, or recognise me; a tolerable share of good looks, and a disposition which, for gentleness and sweetness, I never knew matched. It was my impression that, with these gifts and graces, a man might float down the stream of life (I never wanted to breast the current) pleasantly, not giving himself any especial calling, nor taxing his energies for any peculiar craft. I could "live," in fact—and, if I only knew how, live pleasantly. Young as I was, and with no very wide experience of the world, I discovered that, though society has its especial caresses and favours for great celebrities, yet its most permanent favourites are, so to say, very ordinary, common-place people, with nothing brilliant or remarkable about them: just as, in our daily food, the staple should be something as devoid of taste as possible, so, in our daily intercourse, we ought to have certain persons without any flavour of a peculiar excellence, or any spice of special ability—people, in a word, who would be to our intellectual wants what the ordinary twopenny loaf is to our hunger. "I will be this," said I to myself; "I will be in that category of the useful things which outlive all caprice and survive all changes of fashion," and I did become so, and with a considerable success. When persons enumerated the twelve of a dinner-party, they stopped at the eleventh, every one knowing that it was I who made the complement. When they arranged places in a carriage for a drive, mine was reserved as rigidly as the coachman's. Weddings, christenings, and funerals, too, were ceremonials always graced by my presence, and though now and then I would overhear some rude bumpkin from the country, or some self-created swell, ask impertinently, "Who is that little fellow with the light whiskers? I see him everywhere;" or, "Do tell me who is that smart little party yonder, who seems to know everybody?" I could afford the taunt and not need to resent it—if resentment were, which it assuredly was not, any part of my policy. As I have said, I went on and prospered. I was asked to all the best houses in my own city, and to a wide circle of country mansions besides. Shall I own I was proud of this invention of mine? I felt, as

the French say, that I had "created a part," and that, practically speaking, I was a poet, as to the daily incidents of life. Do not imagine that it was by a studious observance of petty attentions, a vast host of little services, that I attained this position. No, it was by a complete self-negation and an utter unobtrusiveness that I succeeded. I was of no actual use to any living being!

I couldn't accompany a singer on the piano, nor play a quadrille for the children, nor even tell them a fairy tale. I was of no account in the private theatricals; I could ride no man's horse; I was not considered safe to drive a pony-chaise. I sustained but one part in life. I stood in society as the standard measure stands in the barrack-yard, and to me came all in turn to measure their intellectual height against mine, and go away happy and rejoicing. There was not a creature so crushed by superciliousness or so trampled down by insolence that he could not recover some self-esteem by comparing himself to *me*! Feeble old tottering fellows felt athletic in my company, and schoolboys would engage me in argument with a conscious superiority that was really imposing. "Eh, Barnes?" I would hear across the breakfast-table, "you got the worst of that discussion with me;" or, "Barnes, old fellow, I rather put your classical knowledge to shame yesterday. You haven't your Horace so fresh as I have." I was a sort of human skittle, that every one bowled down; but, exactly for that reason, I was sure to be set up again. Had I been—if there could be such a thing—a self-adjusting nine-pin, they'd have made short work of me long ago. Sycophancy! not a bit of sycophancy in all this! I was no more a sycophant than is your hat when it suffers you to put it on, or your gloves. I was passive, nothing more. Nature had made me a gambler inversely, that is, I had a greater pleasure in losing than other men have in winning. The beaten man was my part, by predilection, and it had this advantage, I could always secure it.

I was dining one day at the mess of the 9—th. I was always a welcome guest at messes, where a great proportion of the talk is boastful and personal, and where a listener of my stamp has an especial value. I was intimate with all the officers, and consequently frequently heard my name quoted as evidence in fifty matters of which I knew nothing. Another guest, a thin, high-nosed man, with a glass fixed in his eye, continued to regard me fixedly, and whenever my name occurred, his glance invariably reverted to me, as though to say, "What will Barnes say to this," "How will he deal with that?" and, struck by the impenetrability of my manner, his interest in me seemed to increase, so that when we retired after dinner to our coffee, I was not surprised at the major saying to me, "Barnes, I have a friend here very desirous to make your acquaintance. Mr. Watkins—Mr. Barnes;" and then we bowed, and smirked, and looked foolishly pleased with each other. More Brittanico, all the world over.

Watkins did not say anything very remarkable or striking, but he looked at me with a sort of inquisitive penetration, that I felt it in the marrow of my bones. I have seen a poor juggler at a fair displaying his tricks to an admiring audience of rustics, suddenly paralysed by perceiving a certain man in the crowd of his own profession, who knew how the pancakes were made in the hat, and how the chickens came out of the snuff-box, and who dreaded whether he might not, in a fit of jealousy, or mere levity, reveal all the secrets. I cannot find anything so much alike my terror as this. "Yes," thought I, "Watkins knows it;" and my heart sickened as I said it. Watkins sees how it is done! Oh, the bitterness of that moment! I felt as might Arkwright, or some other of these great mechanical geniuses, on finding that another had hit upon the invention he had deemed his own—had found out that little simple contrivance, that peg, or screw, or spring, or whatever it was, that worked the whole machinery, and for a moment—only for a moment though—my heart conceived very wicked and horrible designs.

Watkins watched me; his eye never quitted me throughout the day. It was on me as I sipped my curaçoa, as I smoked my cigar, as I sat at whist. I could not score the trick without feeling that Watkins remarked it, and when I marked the honours I mechanically turned round in my seat and recorded the fact to *him*. I was delighted when the time came that I could get away, and, observing him in close converse with the major, I seized the opportunity to say a hurried good night to my own friend, and departed. Scarcely, however, had I gained the street, when I heard a voice behind me:

"May I join you?"

It was Watkins. He hoped, or he knew, or he believed—I can't say which—that our roads lay together, and away we walked, side by side. I cannot in the least explain it. I have not the very vaguest clue to the reason, but I remember that, in presence of this man, I utterly abandoned the system I had adopted with the world at large, and to which I owed all my hitherto success in life. I neither played subordinate nor inferior; nay, I would not even concur with him in a single proposition he laid down, nor agree with him in the most common-place expression of a taste. He praised the army, and especially the regiment at whose mess we had just dined; I disparaged the service as a career, and ridiculed the 9—th as the most insupportable of "pipeclays." The claret he called good I declared undrinkable; and the cigars he protested were abominable I affirmed to be the best Cubans I ever smoked—in fact, the only recommendable thing in the regiment.

"You stop here?" said he, as I reached the door of my hotel; "an excellent house, too. If you will permit me, I'll take an early opportunity to pay my respects to you. You are occasionally at home of a morning?"

"Scarcely ever. I rise early, and go out immediately after breakfast."

"The afternoon, then. You have got into London habit, and like your gossip before dinner-hour."

"Never, by any chance," said I, curtly.

"Ah, I have it!—the evening is the time to catch you, sitting in slippered ease over your cigar. And for real enjoyment, there's nothing like it. 'Ce cher coin du feu!' as Béranger says. Good-by; you'll see me one of these nights, I promise you." And, before I could get over the choking sensation of my anger, he had moved away, and was strolling down the street, humming Bianca Luna.

"See you, indeed! no," I muttered, "if it cost me a voyage to New Zealand to avoid it. I'll go out with Garibaldi, or to Dr. Livingstone, or take a campaign with the Circassians, or—in short, I'll not live in the same hemisphere with that man." I passed a miserable night; wretchedness like that I never knew before. It was one terrible night, of which this wretch was the burden. He was everywhere, and crossed me in everything. When I awoke, the first thing which met my eye, on my breakfast table, was a card inscribed Mr. Price Watkins; and, in one corner, Limner's.

"Said he'd drop in about eleven or half-past, sir," said the waiter.

"What's the first train out?" cried I, eagerly.

"Where to, sir?"

"What do I care? I want to get away. North, south—anywhere. When can I start?"

"There's one for Belfast and Antrim at ten forty, sir. There's another for Athlone at ten. There's the express for Limerick at ten five."

"All changed, all altered, since the beginning of the month," said a harsh voice from the door, and Watkins entered the room. "Are you on the move?"

"No, only talking of it; mere talk, nothing more. Have you breakfasted? May I offer you a cutlet and a cup of tea?"

"Well—I don't care if I do take something. Not that I'm a breakfast man: dinner is my meal—a snug little dinner: not that great noisy thing we had yesterday, with riotous school-boys in shell jackets; but a few men who know the world, Barnes—men who have seen life and can talk about it."

Though the familiar use of my name in this free and easy fashion startled me, I had no time for remonstrance, for Watkins was already at table, his napkin on his knee, and his impertinent eye scanning the objects before him with a searching scrutiny.

"I'm looking for the Worcester sauce," said he at last, "the slight garlic flavour it has improves one's cutlet. Don't rise, pray; Ford will bring it. Pay attention, Ford, and don't bring Harvey. That's a grouse, I take it, near you. What if we had it kept near the fire while we discuss the cutlet, and a few cold oysters?"

"But I don't see the oysters," I rejoined, innocently.

"No, but you shall, I trust; they have them a few doors off—black fins, too. The very thought of them gives appetite. I saw your misery last night, Barnes," continued he, while he ate, "though I had never met you before. I knew what tortures you were undergoing with those sorry substitutes for society. Ah! here's the Worcester! I have your permission about the oysters. You'll bless me for the hint. Forty, Ford, only forty; and be sure you pick the round shell and deep cap ones. But you've done it before. Go!"

And with this he gave me a smile, so bland, so captivating, and so confidential, that I cannot attempt to render it in words.

"Yes, Barnes," he went on, "you and I, last night, were certainly not in our element. That vile mixture of pomposity and boyishness—that fearful mélange of the orderly-book and the practical joke. Well done, Ford! these are well chosen. Hand them to Mr. Barnes." As he said this he leaned back in his chair, and looked like a host doing the honours of a feast. "Am I not right? are not these luscious? Oh no, don't take pepper; leave them to restore the mucous membrane to its condition of freshness, just as the sea-breeze invigorates and braces the outer man. When I parted from you last night I was thinking over what you had said, and I felt you were right: 'It is a wretched career—repressing all the energy of the able, and developing into absurd proportions the puny efforts of the common-place.' Do you remember using those words? I'll swear you don't; but I do. I repeated them over and over, and when I got home I jotted them down in my diary, with the word *Barnesiana* at the head, for I thought, he who uttered these words has far more in him, and I said to myself, 'Watkins, don't lose sight of that man; waste no time, either, in stupid formalities, but go frankly to him and say—' Shall we have that delicious bird, eh, Ford? I must have a little—very little—cognac before I engage him. You said Madeira, did you?"

I had not uttered a word.

"Well, Ford, Mr. Barnes is right: Madeira be it. And they have such Madeira here! Not know it? You don't say that you never tasted their Madeira? May I give you this slice of the breast? Ah, I see! breakfast is not your meal either. As my poor father used to say, 'Breakfast is a cover hack; dinner is the strong-boned hunter.' Fill it up, Ford—up to the brim; Madeira must be a bumper. A German would call that *Zum kissen*."

"Very good wine indeed," I said, being the only words I had uttered for half an hour.

"I am half ashamed to offer you one of these, Barnes," said he, opening his cigar-case, and handing it towards me. "A Sybarite of your stamp is sure to import his own."

"I think I have got something better," I said, looking, I suppose, rather contemptuously over the sorry display he exhibited. "These are Havannahs."

"So they are," said he, smelling them. "Isn't it Homer who makes two warriors exchange armour as a pledge of eternal friendship? Let us imitate the glorious example!" With this he emptied out the vile trash of his own cigar-case on the table, and replaced it with my precious Cubans. "Grand old fellow was Homer, and how well he understood the majesty of a feast. There was that geniality about him—Homer might have been Lord Mayor of London; and when one only thinks of the fellows who have tried to render him in English—cold, ascetic creatures—hypochondriac like Cowper, irritable like Pope, or rigidly doctrinaire like Gladstone. What a mess they do make of it! Dryden might have done it, glorious John! who had the true epic spirit, with the heart of a bon-vivant! John would have got drunk over the battles, and made grand things of them!"

I was too much grieved about my cigars to feel any interest in this rhapsody.

"No Whig, still less a Radical, could translate Homer; there must be ingrained in a man's nature the veritable spirit of a Tory; a king-revering, port-loving Tory! You are a Tory, Barnes, or at least a Conservative; and a Conservative is to a Tory what a cutlet is to a mutton-chop."

"I am neither a mutton-chop nor a cutlet, sir," said I, gravely.

"You are surely not the uncooked thing they call a Radical? Am I unreasonable if I ask for half a glass more of that delicious Madeira? There, positively no more. It's your own fault if I commit an excess. Your talk, Barnes, has carried me away; so that to keep up with you, I have had to shake out all my canvas, royals, and studding-sails. You are fidgety—some appointment, some rendezvous, eh? Why ceremonious with me? Why not say frankly, Watkins, old fellow, I must leave you. But let us meet here at seven. There's just enough of that Madeira for a glass after the soup, and then Cliquot—nothing but Cliquot till the dessert. Hurried, are you? Well, leave the ordering of the dinner to me. Old Bob Surtees used to say that for the double event, meaning both dinner and wine, he'd back me against Europe."

I don't know what I muttered in answer to this speech. I believe I grinned, and tried to smile. I know that inwardly I cursed the man, but I hurried away out of the room, almost afraid that my anger might bring on a fit, while the wretch opened my newspaper, and, with a leg on each side of the fire, stretched himself out to read.

"There's a mid-day mail packet for Holyhead, isn't there, Ford?" I whispered to the waiter.

"At one forty, sir, it leaves Kingstown."

"Pack up my things with all speed, then, and say nothing whatever about my departure in the house, and particularly to the gentleman who breakfasted here, and here's a sovereign for you. If I get away quietly, you shall have another."

Ford earned his money; and, at two o'clock,

I was looking from the deck of the packet at the fast receding shore, and thanking Heaven that some miles of blue water now separated me from Watkins, as I hoped, for ever.

I took the express to London, but bearing in mind the address of "Limner's" on his card. I knew I had no safety in remaining in town. I started, therefore, the same night for Ostend, resolving to shape my future course after a little reflection.

For my first day the mere sense of escape sufficed me. On the second I began to consider my present position and speculate on the future. I could not help feeling vexed at what had befallen me. I had planned out my life to suit a particular locality, where I understood the habits, and knew the people well, just as a fisherman might have devised a peculiar fly and an especial tackle for a certain river, and here was a fellow come down to trouble the water, and destroy all chance of sport for the future. To suppose that my system would apply elsewhere was absurd, and I felt very indignant at the man who had disturbed my daily life and marred my prospects; for, as to continuing to follow out my previous plan in his presence and under his scrutiny, I knew to be impossible.

The Hôtel des Bains, where I stopped, was comfortable, and the table d'hôte, like all Belgian tables d'hôte, good. To me, too, it possessed the unspeakable advantage of a company, not one individual of which I had ever met before. My heretofore life had been so completely passed amongst intimates and acquaintances, that I now felt as might a fashionable physician, who had quitted for a short while the toils and anxieties of practice to enjoy himself in a holiday. Not desirous of any acquaintanceship with my neighbours, I limited myself at table almost entirely to the part of listener. I need scarcely tell my reader what a dull occupation I had assigned myself. The travellers were nearly all taken from a very low-down stratum of middle-life English, and their criticisms on all that they saw and heard were little else than sarcastic admissions of their daily habits when at home. A few here and there would perhaps exhibit more breeding, but they, too, showed often a cloven hoof of another kind, and displayed the unmistakable signs of the "English leg" abroad, the loose-lying picket, who brings down raw subalterns and undergraduates from the universities. There was one of these there at this time, a high specimen of his order. He was written in the hotel list—and I suppose authentically—the Honourable Reginald Rokeby—a stout, well-whiskered, florid fellow, with a look half-insinuating, half-insolent—an address compounded of the fascinating and the stern, as a craft which might turn out to be a yacht or a privateer. He made some advances to me on my arrival; but, as I threw out a half hint that I was reading for orders, he gave me up, and turned to beat other preserves. Nor had he long to seek, two very unfledged young officers of a marching regiment having just then presented themselves. I saw the first greetings, I heard

the usual admonitions from an old hand on the Continent, as the Honourable Reginald jocularly called himself, and all the well-known cautions against this, that, and t'other. I watched the exchanged cigars, the chairs set near each other at dinner, the little muttered drolleries about the rest of the company, facetiæ which almost convulsed the subs, and then I "assisted" at the party at billiards, where the honourable cut as poor a figure as could be desired, losing everything—everything but his temper.

Now Nokes and Vokes, of the Fifty-something, were as uninteresting a pair of white-eyelashed, long-eared youths as ever graced a Gazette. There was positively nothing about them in any way to attach a sympathy to their fortunes. Still I saw that they were going to be devoured, and I could not help watching the bloated old spider, who was preparing them for his meal. He saw that I had established myself in observation over him, and he gave me one or two significant intimations to mind "what I was at," and not burn my fingers at another man's candle. I was never gifted with that sort of heroic love of peril that sets a man off to search for danger. I was, so to say, more "nice" than Irish, and I hesitated whether I should incur the risk of saving these creatures. It was a knotty question, which one could argue successfully on either side, and day after day passed while I litigated with myself. At last—I believe it was under the influence of an extra glass of Medoc—I resolved on the brave course, and, determining thus valiantly, I walked into the smoking-room, where the Honourable Reginald and his victims usually adjourned before the accustomed little episode at the billiard-table.

There were no others present, and the three turned on me, as I came in, a look half-resentful of my intrusion. I took up Galignani, however, and began to read, without heeding them. One of the subs—it was Vokes, I believe—was indulging in a budget of "the best things you ever heard in your life." Such drolleries, such practical jokes, such witty rejoinders, such "stunning" replies as are rarely heard—out of the mess-room. His friend, too, though evidently familiar with these facetiæ, acted like a sort of flapper, reminding him of this or that he might have omitted; and, when a story was finished, bursting out in Greek chorus fashion into a sort of inspired rhapsody of innumerable hair-breadth escapes and perils, which might or might not be made narrative.

"I say, Bob," cried he, in one of these intervals, "tell him that capital thing about the dinner—the dinner, you know, that What's-his-name was going to give Thingumme. You remember, don't you, when the fellow bolted and the other chap dined by himself."

"Oh yes; that was a game!" exclaimed the story-teller. "I must tell you that. I heard it all from one of ours who was over in Ireland at the time, and can vouch for its truth. There's a great snob in Dublin, that goes everywhere and knows every one. I'll remember his name presently; and they had him to dinner one day

at the 9—th mess, and they got Watkins—you've heard of Watkins?"

As he got thus far, my hand shook so that Galignani rustled in my grasp like an umbrella in a high wind; but I held it firmly in front of me, and hid my face. He went on:

"Watkins, they say, can surpass any one, no matter who he is; and when they told him that Barnes—that's the other fellow—was coming——"

I could hear no more. I jumped up, I fear with a cry, for I felt as if I was stung by a snake. I rushed to my room, huddled my clothes how I could into my trunk, and started for Brussels the next day. I reached the Rhine, and, crossing at Cologne, I set out for Central Germany, never halting till I reached Eisenach—a place so remote and unvisited that I knew none would molest me. Eisenach is a very lonesome spot. It was there, or at least in its immediate neighbourhood, that Luther sought refuge from persecution, and passed some years of his life in the grim old castle of Washburg. Well, I hope he liked it better than I did. Indeed, I am certain he bore his captivity as patiently. At last endurance reached its limits. I grew so wearied of the little grass-grown sheds, the half-open shops, the lazy little fountain that took half an hour to trickle a can full, and the dreary-looking inhabitants, whose sole intercourse seemed taking hats off to each other, that I emerged once more; saying to myself, better be sunk by a broadside than rot out in a dry dock. Besides, I thought, Watkins is but one man. The world is wide. Why should we even jostle each other?

I traversed Switzerland in safety, not seeking, it is true, the most travelled route, but taking the line of Zurich and Lucerne; from thence I took boat for Ffluellen. The day was cold and ungenial, and very few passengers cared to set out. I was glad to see but one, who looked like a countryman. He was a young fellow of about my own age, externally very new to the Continent, and far from accomplished as a linguist. He smiled good naturedly; however, at his own blunders—French or German—and looked good humouredly at everything. He was open and communicative about himself, and told me that having been appointed to a civil post at Ceylon, he was taking a rapid glance at the Continent before starting. He did not know—nor even care—which way he went—he had very vague notions as to geography generally, and seemed absolutely indifferent whether his course lay north or south.

"As you see," said he, "I am not strong in languages, and have no acquaintance abroad, the chances are that I shall not derive great advantage from my foreign tour."

"Have you letters, or introductions?" asked I.

"None. Nothing of the kind. Stay: I have one; but there's no place of address on it, and I forget even the name of the person it is meant for."

And we both laughed heartily at the thought of credentials so likely to prove of service.

Mr. Towers—this was his name—was not an entertaining companion. He was one of those young Bulls that every one has met, who see objects only on the outside, and see even that wrong, who, taking England as the invariable standard of excellence in everything, spend their time in laughing at whatever is not conformable to home notions, and regard the Continent generally as very backward in civilisation. But, as I said before, he was good humoured, and what is called jolly; he made the best of the little mishaps of the road, and laughed heartily at his own blunders, when he came to perceive them. He was so helpless, too, that I felt drawn towards him by actual compassion. We agreed, therefore, to travel together as far as Turin, where, not knowing how long the companionship might be endurable, I preferred to have a friend awaiting me.

At Arona, we were detained by a heavy fall of rain, which had swept away part of the road, and rendered one of the bridges unsafe to pass over. It was a dreary halt; for Towers was one of those who required movement and fresh objects of interest. He could not abide a book, and hated a newspaper, and so he kept walking in and out of the room all day, heaping wood on the fire, or making the chimney smoke, fighting with the landlord's terrier till it bit him, and then teasing me to the verge of despair to know whether hydrophobia showed itself instantaneously, and constantly calling for brandy-and-water, to test his powers of swallow. Then he took an active turn, and fetched down all his things to the sitting-room, began packing his trunk afresh, commenting on each article as he folded it, asking me what I thought this cost; how long, I supposed, he had been wearing that; if I could guess who it was that invented those shoes, and so on. This completed, he undertook the same task with his dressing-case, expatiating on the softness of his shaving-brush, and the especial merits of his tooth-powder. Then there were studs and wrist-buttons and watch trinkets. This order of being is always curious in such matters, and is certain to have a pin with a larger pearl or a finer emerald than Roskell could procure for money. He passed them all in review, and came down at last to the little looking-glass at the bottom, lifting up which he took out a sealed letter. "There it is," said he, "if any one could tell me where to find him."

"Why this is for me," cried I, snatching it out of his hand; "Thomas Rigby Barnes, that's my name;" and I broke the seal with impatience.

"Are you ill? are you faint? Shall I get you something?—brandy? gin? No one dead, I hope?" muttered he, as crushing the letter in my hands I pushed rudely past him, and gained the door; the minute after I was in my own room, and the door locked and bolted. The letter contained but half a dozen lines, and they were these:

"Linner's, Bond-street.

"DEAR BARNES,—Towers has asked me to introduce him to the best fellow in Europe, and I

give him this in consequence. If he should get into scrapes, rescue him. If he fall into love, laugh at him; if into debt, lend him whatever he wants, and credit eternally your devoted friend,

"PRICE WATKINS."

I rang my bell very, very gently, and to the waiter I said, in a whisper, "Tell the young gentleman in No. 5 not to wait dinner for me; that I am poorly, and have gone to bed; on no account am I to be disturbed!" A five-franc piece strengthened the force of the injunction, and I was alone.

About eight o'clock, indeed, a knock came to the door, and Towers cried out, "Are you better? do you feel all right again?" But I affected to snore deeply, and he stepped quietly away and left me. Towards midnight I put my trunk and carpet-bag into a little one-horse baroccio, and started for Como, leaving strict orders with the waiter to say that I had gone towards Turin.

My companion I never saw more. At Como, I rested for a day, and then set out for the Breariza, a little rural district south of the Lake, where I lodged with a steward's family in the most retired manner, picking up some execrable Italian, and learning the care and culture of silkworms. October came, and with the tenth of that month I knew Towers was to sail for India, and so I came forth again into the world, shaved off my three-months' beard, and arrived at Milan. I now made a vow to myself not to form any acquaintance, nor let any circumstance seduce me into a companionship. Resolving to put my theory of self-sufficiency to a severe test, I went to Nice for the winter, took up my quarters at Chauvein's, and dined every day with about a hundred and twenty others at table d'hôte, never uttering a syllable to man, woman, or child at table. They say that when a man has done anything sufficiently long to be notorious for it, he is sure to like it. I believe the theory. I know that I was as vain of my silent system as other men were of their agreeability. I loved to see the curiosity about me; to overhear the muttered questions to the waiter, "Was he always so? Was it a shock? Is it for a wager?" and so on. To such a point of perfection had I carried my practice, that no matter what turn of gay, lively, serious, or eventful the conversation around me took, I never by the slightest change of feature showed any passing interest in it. More than once it occurred to me to meet persons I had seen in society at home, but my dull, stolid, irresponsive look deterred them all, and none attempted to renew acquaintance with me. One day, just as I took my place at table and was unfolding my napkin, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned gravely, sternly around to learn the cause. "Don't you remember me, Barnes," said a very fat and very florid young man, with a scarlet neckcloth, "Tanby, of the Bays? You don't forget me?"

I shook my head in silence. "Not remember me!" cried he. "Why, you were constantly at our mess!" Another shake of my head, more

doubtful than the former one. "And it was through you we got to know that precious fellow Watkins—Pierce Watkins."

I arose and left the room. I must have had something like a slight fit, for when I regained consciousness I was lying on my bed, and the waiter was placing wet towels on my forehead. I rallied, however, quickly, and, hastening down to the Post, took my place for Genoa, and quitted Nice by ten o'clock that night, I trust never to revisit it.

I will not dare to follow the uneventful days that succeeded. A morbid terror of being recognised, a fear I can only liken to a felon's dread of detection, haunted me. It was in vain I said to myself that I was guiltless; that neither shame nor reproach attached to me. I acquired no sense of courage through reason, for I had soared into a region where reason has little sway. In a word, I had begun to run away from a shadow, and very little imagination was needed to picture forth my pursuer.

I hasten to conclude.

It was about two years after my hurried departure from Nice that I found myself towards the close of autumn at Terracina. I was staying at that inn which certain guide-books tell us was once the seat of Cicero's villa, and which, true or not, is one of the most charming spots on the road southwards. The only other travellers there at the time were an old English general, a son seemingly far advanced in consumption, and a pretty girl, his daughter, who used to sit under the orange-trees and read aloud for her brother, a practice of which I derived my share of advantage, by affecting to sketch from the rocks that skirted the garden, but quite near enough to hear her voice.

The general, who was always poking about the strand after shells—he was a passionate conchologist—would touch his hat as he passed me, and I returned the salute; our acquaintance went no further, but I knew Bella well, that is to say, I heard her brother call her by that name a dozen times a day, and her sweet thrilling voice, as she read out Shelley or Keats, vibrated within me like a bell in a shrine. That poor fellow George coughed painfully—so painfully that the reading would cease at times, and her voice would subside to a low murmur, and then out of deference to them I would steal away, and not come back till the book was resumed. Thus glided on the days, almost dream-like in their shadowy form, when one morning, as I sat in my accustomed nook, I heard Bella say something about a book which she believed she had brought with her, but found to her great regret she had forgotten.

"And I am so sorry, George, for I wanted to read you Genevieve, and make it one of your favourites, as it is of mine."

Now, I had a copy of Coleridge in my room, but I had not the courage to offer it, the more since I had no pretext for knowing that they wanted it, and yet what a churlish thing it was to feel that the very book they wished for was

so near them, and still denied them, and what a requital, too, was this for all the pleasure I had surreptitiously enjoyed from those same readings! I could write a note, it is true, saying that having by a mere accident overheard—overheard was a most unhappy word, and an ugly confession besides! One should not overhear, or if they did, should never avow it. What was then to be done? "Yes," cried I, "I have hit it; there is a way to do it! I'll leave the volume on the little marble table under the orange-tree, with a card for Miss Sewell on it, and set out at once for Naples. This would save me the awkwardness of presentation, and the embarrassment of any recognition they might accord to my attention."

I did this the next day, and was some miles on my road to Naples by the time they came to know it.

Three months later—almost to a day—I was standing on the shore at Palermo, when a young lady passed me, walking by the side of a wheeled chair, in which an invalid was seated. I paid little attention to this object, only too frequent in this land of convalescence, when I heard my name, or something like my name, uttered, and immediately afterwards, a courier coming up, saluted me respectfully, and said his master (pointing to the chair) would take it as a great favour if I would speak with him. I walked forward, and found myself in front of the Sewells. Long estrangement from society and intercourse had of course served to render me more bashful and awkward than ever, but such was the tact and delicacy of their address, so easy and unaffected the kindness of their manner, as they thanked me for my book, and all the pleasure it had afforded them, that, poor hermit as I was, I felt half-choking with gratitude for even so slight a touch of interest.

I have promised to be brief, and I will keep my word. From that day I grew intimate with the Sewells. They lived in the same hotel with me, and I soon became one of them. I cannot trust myself to speak of the delight it gave me to be again reconciled to my species, and admitted into the human family. I took to shells, and sea-machines, and cough lozenges, and the "sensitive plant," and—there's no use blinking it—fell head over ears in love.

"And Barnes has consented to come with us, father," cried George, one day, after breakfast. "Barnes—who hates the sea, and detests a yacht—says that he will come to Corfu."

"Well done, Barnes! and we'll have a dredge, just like what the fellows use for the coral fishery, and you'll see what glorious things we'll rake up out of old ocean," said the general.

"And such sketches as we'll make, Mr. Barnes," said another and sweeter voice, "of those Albanian Alps, with the glow of sunset on them. That amber and opal blending you grew so poetical about t'other evening."

"But we can't leave this before the fourteenth," returned George. "Do what he will, he cannot reach this earlier than the tenth, and we must at least let him have four days' law."

"Who is it that he speaks of?" asked I, of Bella.

"A great friend of George's. Neither papa nor I know him; but George raves of him—of his tact and pleasantry, his temper, and his high spirits."

"And his name?"

"How is your Admirable Crichton called, George?" asked she, laughing; "for I as often style him Wilkins as Popkins."

"I think you might have learned his name by this time, Bella, not to say that every one on town has at least heard of Price Watkins."

"If I had not caught the chair in my hand, I should have fallen; but I trembled so violently that Bella noticed it, and in a gentle whisper said, "Could I have said anything to offend you? Is he a dear friend of yours?"

"Of mine—a friend of mine!" What a thought! "I have spasms of the heart sometimes; they take me suddenly. A friend of mine! Oh, Bella, if you but knew—"

I could not utter more, but rushed madly out of the room, and down to the quay. This time I never stopped to pack up my effects, but left them there, scattered and at large, all behind me. There was a steamer starting for Tunis. I jumped on board of her, and hurrying down below, gave free course to my sorrow.

It is now eighteen months and three weeks since that unhappy day, and I still live here, almost on the very spot where I landed. My daily occupation is to con over the deaths in the Times, which the consul is so kind as to let me see each afternoon, but no record of Price Watkins having gone to his audit has reached me, and till assured of such a consummation, I must live, perhaps die, an exile. To the sympathising reader I appeal, if by any chance he should learn that P. W. is no more, to address one line to Thomas B. Barnes, care of H.M. Consul, Tangiers, with the assurance that though the event may be matter of sorrow to some, it will make my heart the lightest heart in Africa.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS'S READINGS.

THE LAST READING THIS SEASON.

On Thursday Evening, June 19th, at St. JAMES'S HALL, at 8 o'clock precisely,

MR. CHARLES DICKENS

Will read, in compliance with many requests, his

CHRISTMAS CAROL,

AND

THE TRIAL FROM PICKWICK.

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