

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXVI. COLLOQUY.

ON reaching the library, Lady Vernon touched the bell

"You know this room very well, Mr. Dawe? You see no change here?"

"This house has seen many generations," said he, looking up to the cornice and round, "and will see out a good many generations more."

He steps backward two or three steps, looks up at the Vandyck over the mantel-piece, nods to that very old acquaintance, and says "Yes."

Then he rolls his prominent eyes again about the room, unusually shadowy on this dark day, and spying a marble bust between two windows, the little man walks solemnly towards it.

"That is Mr. Howard, who was our vicar, long ago," says Lady Vernon.

The blue livery is standing, by this time, at the opened door.

"Poor papa placed that bust there," she continues, "and it has remained ever since."

"Indeed!" says Mr. Dawe, and peers at it, nose to nose, for some seconds.

"They took casts from it," she continues, "for the statue that the bishop wished to place to his memory in the church."

"Here?" says Mr. Dawe, turning his profile, and rolling his brown eyes suddenly on her.

"Yes, in the church of Roydon, of course, where, as vicar, he preached for so long."

"I see," says Mr. Dawe.

"I shall be engaged for some time particularly on business," says Lady Vernon to her footman, "and you are to admit no one."

"Yes, my lady."

And the apparition of gold, azure, and powder steps backward, the door closes, and they are alone.

Lady Vernon is smiling, with bright hectic patches in her cheeks. There is something a little piteous and deprecatory in her smile.

"We are quite alone now. Tell me what it is," she says, in a voice that could have been scarcely heard at the door.

Mr. Dawe turns on his heel, walks briskly up, and seats himself near her. He takes out his old silver box, with groups of Dutch figures embossed on it, and takes a pinch of snuff preparatory, with his solemn eyes fixed on her.

"Is it anything—alarming—what is it?" she almost gasps.

"There has been illness," he says, with his unsearchable brown eyes still fixed on her.

"Oh, my God! Is he gone?" she says, turning as white as the marble Mr. Dawe had just been looking at.

"Captain Vivian has been very ill, very dangerously ill," says the imperturbable little man in the black wig; "but he's out of danger now, quite—that's all over."

There was a silence, and Lady Vernon was trembling very much. She placed her finger-tips hard against her forehead, and did not speak for a few minutes.

Mr. Dawe looked at her with stoical gravity, and taking his spectacles from a very shabby case, put them on, and occupied himself with a pocket-book, and seemed to be totting up some figures.

"You guessed, of course, that I must have something to say on that subject?" he said, raising his eyes from the page.

"I thought it possible," she answered, with an effort.

"I could not in the drawing-room, you know——"

"No, of course," she said, hastily, and the colour returned with two hot flushes to her cheeks.

There was in her bearing to this elderly gentleman an odd embarrassment, something of pain and shame; a wounded pride struggling through it.

She rose, and they walked together to the window.

"He has got his leave. His troop is still at Chatham. The doctor says he must go to some quiet country nook. He has been thinking of Beaumaris," said the old gentleman.

"Is he as beautiful as ever?" she asked.

"Oh, why should I ask? What does it matter? Is there any gift that God gives his creatures that is not more or less a curse?"

"You should not talk in that wild way, Barbara. If people can't control their feelings, they can, at least, control their words. It is only an effort at first. It becomes a matter of habit. You shan't talk so to me."

She looked at him angrily for a moment of silence.

"You treat me with a contempt, sir, that you never could have felt if I had not trusted you so madly," she cried, passionately.

The tone, fierce and plaintive, was lost on the phlegmatic old man in the black wig.

He delivered a little lecture, with his thin brown finger raised, and his exhortation was dry, but stern.

"You have been rash and self-willed; you have been to blame. Your unjust imputation shan't prevent my saying that, and whatever else truth requires. Your difficulty is the creation of your own passions. I don't say look your difficulty in the face, for it will look you in the face; but take the lesson it teaches, and learn self-command."

"Don't blame me for this. I met him first in a railway carriage. Who can prevent such accidental acquaintances? He was so attentive, and so agreeable, and so gentleman-like. I had chosen to travel alone, without even a maid. You'll say I had no business doing so. I say, at my years, there was nothing against it; it was more than four hours; there were other people in the carriage. I never meant to seek him out afterwards; it was the merest accident my learning even his name. I had not an idea that you knew him. When I

met him next, it was in town, at Lady Stukely's. I recognised him instantly, but he did not know me, for my veil had been down all the time." This narrative Lady Vernon was pouring out with the rapid volubility of excitement. "I was introduced to him there. Perhaps I have been a fool; but there is no good, now, in telling me so. I have seen him since, more than once, and gone where I thought I was likely to see him, and I succeeded. If I have been a fool, God knows I suffer. My difficulty, you call it! My difficulty! My agony is the right word. To love as I love, without being loved, without being loved ever so little!"

"So much the better," said Mr. Dawe, phlegmatically. "What are you driving at? You ought to consider consequences. Don't you know the annoyance, and possibly litigation, to which your folly would lead? In a woman of your years, Barbara, this sort of thing is inexcusable."

"Why did you come at all? Why did you come in so suddenly, and—before people? Would not a letter have answered? Hast thou found me, oh! mine enemy?" she suddenly almost cried, and clasped her fingers for a moment wildly upon his arm.

"A letter?" he repeated.

"Yes, a letter. You should think. It would have been more merciful," she answered, vehemently.

"Not when I had so many things to talk to you about," he retorted, quietly.

"I would have met you anywhere. You ought not to have come into the room so suddenly," she persisted. "You alone know my sad secret. You might have remembered that people are sometimes startled. You say I have no self-command. I think I have immense self-command. I think I am a stoic. I know how you tasked it, too. I knew you had something important to tell me, and that *he* was probably involved."

"H'm! Yes; I'm an old friend of yours, and I wish you well. And I'm Captain Vivian's friend, and was once his guardian, and I wish him well. And this kind of thing I don't approve of. And you'll get yourself spoken about; you *are* talked of. People saw you alone at Chatham last year; and if they come to connect your movements with his, think what it will be."

"He's the only person on earth I love, or ever shall love."

"Barbara, you forget your child, Maud

Vernon," said the old man, with hard emphasis.

"I don't forget her," she answered, fiercely.

The old man turned away his head. There was no change of countenance; that, I believe, never changed; but the movement indicated disgust.

"I say I love him, with all my love, with all," she repeated.

"Be it so. Still, common prudence will suggest your keeping that love locked up in your own heart, a dead secret."

"I am determined, somehow or other, to meet him, and talk to him, and know him well," she persisted; "and you shall assist me."

"I'm wholly opposed to it."

"You'd not have me see him again?"

"No."

"Why? What are you? Who are you? Have you human sympathy? Good Heavens! Am I a free woman?" she broke out again, wildly.

"Certainly, quite free," said Mr. Dawe, cutting her short with a little tap on his snuff-box. "You can do it, Barbara, when you please; however, whenever, wherever you like best; only you have a right to my judgment, and I'm quite against it."

"I know, Mr. Dawe, you are my friend," she said, after a brief pause. "I know how I can trust you. I am impetuous, perhaps. I dare say you are right. You certainly would speak wisely if your counsels were addressed to some colder and happier woman. Why is it that to be cold, and selfish, and timid, is the only way to be happy on earth? If I am sanguine, audacious, what you will, I can't help it. You cannot understand me—God knows all; for me to live any longer as I am is worse than death. I'll endure it no longer. Oh! if I could open my lips and tell him all!"

"There, that's it, you see! You are ready to die now to be on more intimate terms with him; and if you were you would be ready to die again, as you say, to open your heart to him. Don't you see? Don't you perceive what it is tending to? Are you prepared for all that? If not, why approach it? You would be in perpetual danger of saying more than you think you should."

Mr. Dawe had probably not spoken quite so long a sentence for more than a month.

"I may be a better listener, Mr. Dawe, in a little time. Let us sit down. I want to ask you about it. Tell me everything. What was his illness?"

"Fever."

"Fever! and he was in great danger. Oh! my darling, my darling, for how long?"

"For two days in great danger."

Her hands were clasped as she looked in his face, and she went on.

"And there is no danger now? It is quite over?"

"Quite," he repeated.

She looked up, her fingers raised a little, and a long shuddering sigh, like a sob, relieved her.

"I had the best advice—the two best men I could get from London. He's all right now; he's fairly under weigh, and nothing can go wrong; with common prudence, of course. I have the account here." He held his pocket-book by the corner, and shook it a little.

"He was near dying," she repeated. "Why didn't you tell me? I knew nothing of his danger."

"The doctors did not tell me the extent of it till it was over," he replied.

"Think what it would have been if he had died! I should have been in a mad-house. I should have killed myself."

"Don't, don't, don't. Nonsense. Come, you must not talk so. I admit it is a painful situation; but who has made it? You. Remember that, and control your—your vehemence."

"Has he been out? Is he recovering strength?"

"Yes. He has been out, and he has made way; but he is still an invalid."

"I want to know; I must know. Is there any danger still apprehended?"

"None; I give you my word," said Mr. Dawe, dryly.

"He is still very weak?" she urged.

"Still weak, but gaining strength daily."

"How soon do the doctors think he will be quite himself?"

"In five or six weeks."

"And his leave of absence, for how long is that?"

"It has been extended; about four weeks still to run."

"I think I know everything now?" she said, slowly.

Mr. Dawe nodded acquiescence.

"He's not rich, Mr. Dawe; and all this must cost a good deal of money. It is only through you I can be of any use."

"Yes; I was his guardian, and am his trustee. I had a regard for his father, and his grandfather was essentially kind to me. But I have learned to regret that I ever

undertook to interest myself specially in his affairs; and you, Barbara, are the cause of that regret."

"You mustn't reproach me; you know what I am," she pleaded.

Mr. Dawe responded with his usual inarticulate "H'm!" and an oracular nod.

"I can't help it; I can't. Why are you so cruelly unreasonable? Do you think I can learn a new character, and unlearn the nature that God gave me, in a moment?"

"I say this. If you cultivate Captain Vivian's acquaintance further, it is against my opinion and protest. I don't expect either to have much weight. I think you incorrigible."

Lady Vernon coloured, and her eyes flashed. But she would not, and could not, quarrel with Mr. Dawe.

"Surely you can't pretend there is anything wrong in it?" she said, fiercely.

"I did not say there was. Extreme imprudence; reckless imprudence."

"You always said everything I did was reckless and imprudent."

"Not everything. Some things extremely. And what you propose, considering that you are no longer young, and know what the world is, appears to me a positively inexcusable folly."

"It is possible to prescribe limits and impose conditions upon oneself," she said, with an effort; "and if so, there need be no rashness in the matter, not the slightest."

"Possible? We know it's not possible with some people."

"You always hated me, sir."

"Tut, tut!"

"You never liked me."

"Pooh, pooh!"

"You have always thought ill of me."

"I have always wished you well, Barbara, and accident, I think, enabled me to understand you better than others. You have great faults, immense faults."

"All faults and no virtues, of course," she said, with a bitter little laugh.

"You are capable of strong and enduring attachments."

"Even that is something," she said, with an agitated smile, and burst into tears.

"This is very painful, Barbara," said the little man in the black wig, while a shadow of positive displeasure darkened his furrowed face. "I believe my first impression was right, and yours too. I begin to think I had no business coming to Roydon."

Lady Vernon got up, and walked to-

ward the window, and then turned, and walked to the further end of the room, standing before a picture.

He could see that her handkerchief was busy drying her eyes.

With a womanly weakness she walked to the mirror close by, and looked into it, and perhaps was satisfied that the traces of this agitation were not very striking.

She returned to her place.

"I have been a fool. My saying so will perhaps save you the trouble. I want to put you in funds again."

"When you please," said the old man. "Any time will answer. I have the figures here." His pocket-book was still in his hand. "But he has money enough of his own. He must think me a fool, paying all these expenses for him. And I think, Barbara, your doing so is a mischievous infatuation."

"And you would deny me this one pleasure!" she said.

"Enough, enough," he answers. "It was not about that I came here; that we could have settled by a letter. But I knew you would have fifty questions to ask. He has made up his mind to try change of air. I'm ignorant in such matters, and he has not made up his mind where to go."

"I have quite made up my mind upon that point," she answered.

"Well; and where?"

"Here," said Lady Vernon, once more in her cold, quiet way. "I'll ask him here."

"H'm!" said Mr. Dawe.

"Here," she repeated, with her old calm peremptoriness. "Here, at Roydon Hall. I'll receive him here, and he can't be quieter or better anywhere else, and you shall come with him."

It was now Mr. Dawe's turn to get up, which he did with a kind of jerk, and, checking some impulse, walked slowly round his chair, looking down on the carpet, and with a pretty wide circuit he came behind it, and resting his hands on its high back, and leaning over, he said, with a little pause, and a wag of his head to each word:

"Is there the least use in my arguing the point?"

"None."

"H'm!"

Mr. Dawe looked to the far corner of the room, with eyes askance, ruminating, and took a pinch of snuff, some of which shed a brown snow upon the cut pattern of the Utrecht velvet on the back of the chair.

"I can't say it is anything to me; nothing. I should be officious were I to say any more to dissuade you from it. Only remember, I have no share in the responsibility of this, excuse me, most strange step. As I suppose he will be brought here, one way or other, in any case, I think I had better come with him, and stay a day or two. It will excite less observation, so——"

"Thank you so very much, Mr. Dawe," said Lady Vernon, extending her hand, with an odd, eager gratitude in tone and countenance. "That is like yourself."

Mr. Dawe's usual "H'm!" responded to this little effusion, and with an ominous countenance he took her proffered hand in his dry grasp, and let it go almost in a moment.

Looking down on the carpet, he walked to the window, with his hands behind his back, and as, with furrowed jaws and pursed mouth, and a roll of his prominent eyes, he stood close to the pane of glass, down which the rain was no longer streaming, Lady Vernon opened her desk, and wrote a cheque for two hundred pounds, and coming to his side, she said:

"He does not suspect that he has a friend concealed?"

"Certainly not—certainly not," said Mr. Dawe, sharply.

"Will you apply this for me, and we can account another time? And you think me very ungrateful, Mr. Dawe, but indeed I am not. I only wish an opportunity may occur, if you could only point out some way. But you are so rich, and so happy. Well, some day, notwithstanding, I may be able to show you how I thank you. Let us return to the drawing-room."

As she passed the mirror, the lady surveyed her face again, and was satisfied.

"Yes," said Mr. Dawe, recurring to the matter of business, "I'll do that, and with respect to coming here, I say no more. Under protest, mind, I do it. Only let me have a line to say when you can receive us."

CHAPTER XXVII. THE NUN'S WELL.

MAUD was found by her elders, on their return, nestled in a low chair, in one of those lazy moods in which one not only does nothing, but thinks of nothing.

They were talking as they entered, and Maud turned her eyes merely in their direction, being far enough away to feel herself very little observed.

"You will surely stay to-night, Mr. Dawe?" said Lady Vernon.

"No, certainly; thank you very much. I have made up my mind," replied Mr. Dawe, dryly.

Miss Maud was observing this little man in the wig with increased interest. There was in his manner, looks, and voice something of the familiarity of an old friend, she thought, without much of the liking.

Whatever the business which they discussed in the library, her mamma, she thought, was perfectly unruffled; but there were traces of displeasure in the old gentleman's demeanour.

"I ought to have told you that my cousin, Maximilla Medwyn, is staying here."

"She has returned, mamma; she will be down in a few minutes," said Maud.

"Oh! and we shall certainly have her here for some days. Will that tempt you to stay?"

"I like her well—very well, but I shall be off notwithstanding," said the old gentleman, with a rigid countenance.

The sound of the gong announced luncheon.

"We are a very small party," she said, smiling. "I'm glad you are here to luncheon, at all events."

"I've had a biscuit and a glass of sherry."

"But that is not luncheon, you know," said Lady Vernon.

Maud wondered more and more why her mamma should take such unusual pains to conciliate this odd, grim old man. For her part, she did not know what to make of him. Ungainly, preposterous, obsolete as he was, she could not assign him a place outside the line that encircles gentlemen. There was not a trace of vulgarity in the reserved and saturnine inflexibility of his face. There was something that commanded her respect, in the obvious contrast it presented to the vulgar simper and sycophancy of the people who generally sought "audiences" of her mother.

And Maud fancied when he looked at her, that there was something of kindly interest dimly visible through his dark and solemn lineaments.

"Luncheon and dinner," he said, "are with me incompatible; and I prefer my dinner. My train, I think, is due at six-twenty P.M. I suppose your servant can find a Bradshaw, and I'll consult it while you are at luncheon. Go, Barbara. Go, pray; you make me uncomfortable."

The little old man sat himself down in an arm-chair, took out his pocket-book, and seemed to forget everything but the figures over which he began to pore.

Miss Max joined the ladies at luncheon.

"Well, we shall find him in the drawing-room," she said, reconciling herself to her disappointment. "It is a long time since I saw him. But I dare say he's not much changed. Wigs wear wonderfully."

"So do ugly men," added Lady Vernon, carelessly.

So luncheon proceeded. And when it was over, the three ladies came to the drawing-room, and, looking round, discovered that Mr. Dawe was gone.

A minute after, Maud saw him walking under the trees of the avenue, with his broad-leafed, low-crowned hat on, and a slow, stiff tread, and his silk umbrella in his hand doing the office of a walking-stick. It was pleasant sunshine now.

The blue sky was clear and brilliant, and only a few white clouds near the horizon accounted for the rain-drops that still glittered on the blades of grass. Stepping carefully in the centre of the path, little Mr. Dawe, now and then shouldering his umbrella, and turning and looking about him, like a man reviving old recollections and scanning alterations, disappeared slowly from view, over the stile, leaving Miss Maud very curious.

"I'll put on my things, and try to find him," said Miss Max, in a fuss, and was speedily seen emerging from the hall-door in pursuit.

His walk being slow and meditative, his active pursuer did succeed in overtaking him. She knew very well that he was glad to see her, though his rigid features gave no sign, and he shook hands very kindly.

When these greetings were over, he answered her question by saying briefly:

"No, I shan't dine. I'm off."

"Without bidding Barbara good-bye!" exclaimed Miss Medwyn, drawing herself up in amazement.

"I've left my farewell in the hall. The footman will find it."

"A note, I suppose?"

"H'm," acquiesced the little gentleman. "My carriage will take me up in the village;" and he nodded gravely to the distant tower of Roydon Church, which happily did not return that salutation, though he continued to stare solemnly at it for some seconds, as if he thought it might, and ended by a second slighter nod.

"That is not a pretty compliment to me," she said. "I think you might have stayed till to-morrow."

"H'm," he remarked, and silence followed.

"Well, I see you won't."

Another pause, and a more impatient "H'm," and a quick shake of the head.

"So as that can't be," she resumed, "and as all things are so uncertain in this life, that we may possibly never meet again, I'll walk a little way with you towards the village."

Mr. Dawe uttered his usual note of acquiescence.

"And now you must tell me," she said, as they walked at a leisurely pace along the path which winds gently among the old timber, "what on earth brought you here? Has anything wonderful happened; is anything wonderful going to happen?"

"A word or two with Barbara," he said.

"You don't mean to tell me it is a secret?" said she.

"If it be, it is none of mine," he replied.

"Well but you can tell me generally, what it is about," she insisted.

"H'm! Ask Barbara," he answered.

"You mean, it is a secret, and you won't tell it?" she said.

Mr. Dawe left this inference unanswered.

"You found Barbara very little altered?" said Miss Max.

"As self-willed and unwise as ever," he replied.

"Ho! Then she wants to do something foolish?"

"She can do that when she pleases," he remarked. "Do you know the Tinterns, who live near?"

"Yes, pretty well," she answered, rather curious to know why he should ask.

"What do you think of them?"

"I rather dislike Mr. Tintern, I neither like nor dislike his wife, and I like his daughter very much indeed. His son I don't know; he is with his regiment in India," she answered. "Why do you ask?"

"You are as inquisitive as ever, Maximilla," he said.

"I've just satisfied your curiosity about the Tinterns, and you can't complain fairly of my question. I think your business with Barbara had something to do with them."

"You are sagacious," he observed; but whether he spoke in good faith or in irony his countenance helped her nothing to discover.

"Come, you must tell me. Are the Tinterns involved in the foolish thing she is going to do?" the lady insisted.

"She is going to do a foolish thing, and you, probably, will never know what makes

it so particularly foolish; that is, unless she carries out her folly to its climax."

"I may possibly guess more than you suppose," Miss Medwyn said.

But this remark led to nothing.

"You don't know young Tintern, you say, but you like his sister. Why?" asked Mr. Dawe.

"I like her because she is really nice—one of the very nicest girls I ever knew."

"Ha! Then, I hope she doesn't depend altogether on her father, for they say he has lost money?" said Mr. Dawe.

"She is not well provided for, although her mother was an heiress, you know; but there is something trifling settled on her."

"Well for her she doesn't depend altogether on Tintern. I'm told he is a distressed man, or likely soon to be so," he said.

"But, to come back to Barbara," resumed Maximilla: "I think you ought to exercise your influence to prevent her from taking any foolish step, particularly one which may affect others."

"I have none."

"If you haven't, who has?"

"No one ever had, for her good."

"For my part, I never knew what to think of her," said Miss Medwyn.

"I did," said Mr. Dawe.

He stopped short, and looked straight at her, being about her own height, which, even for a woman, was nothing very remarkable. His dark face looked darker, and his prominent brown eyes were inflexibly fixed on her, as he spoke a rather longer harangue than usual.

"She is a great dissembler," said Mr. Dawe. "She is proud. She has the appearance of coldness, and she is secretly passionate and violent. She is vindictive. All that is concealed. She has a strong will. People know that; but it is not inflexibility founded on fixed data. It is simply irresistible impulse. There is nothing fixed in her but a few likings and hatreds. Principles in the high sense, that is, involving the submission of a life to maxims of duty, she has none; and she thinks herself a paragon."

Maximilla laughed, and they resumed their walk, when Mr. Dawe had ended his speech.

"That seems rather a severe delineation, Mr. Dawe," said Maximilla Medwyn, with another little laugh and a shrug.

"It is true. I would repeat it to herself, if it could do her any good."

They followed the path, Miss Medwyn

chatting, after her manner, gaily, until they nearly reached the stile at the village road.

"So here we part, Mr. Dawe."

Mr. Dawe gave her one of his oracular looks, and took her hand in his hard fingers.

"And it is very ill-natured of you not telling me what I asked you," she called after him.

Bestriding the stile, he looked back with the same solemnity, raised his broad-leaved hat, and disappeared on the other side, and Maximilla could not help laughing a little at the awful gravity and silence of the apparition which went down behind the wall.

The day was now brilliant, and Miss Medwyn was tempted to walk home by a path still prettier, though a little circuitous.

It was a favourite walk of hers long ago. Perhaps it was the visit of Mr. Dawe, with whom in old times she had often walked these out-of-the-way paths, that suggested this little ramble.

The lofty trees close about the path that she had now chosen, and gradually beset and overhang it in the densest shadow. Walking in the open air, on a sunny day, you could not fancy so deep a darkness anywhere. This is, of course, in the leafy days, when the tall elms, whose boughs cross and mix above, are laden with their thick dark foliage.

The darkness and silence of this narrow path are here so curiously deep, that it is worth going a mile or two out of one's way to visit it; and fancy will play a nervous wayfarer as many tricks in this strange solitude as in a lonely night walk.

At the side of this path, nearly in its darkest part, is a well, under an arch. It is more properly a spring, rising at this point, and overflowing its stone basin, and escapes, in a gush, through a groove cut in the flag that encloses it, in front. Two iron cups, hanging by chains, invite the passenger to drink of the icy water that with ceaseless plash and gurgle descends from the opening.

With a slow step on the light mossy turf she draws near this remembered point of interest. Her eyes have grown accustomed to the clear shadow. Two steps lead down to the level at which one can take the iron cup, and drink from this pleasant well.

If outside all is shadowy, you may suppose how obscure it is within this low arch.

As she looks, she sees something rise within it. It is the figure of a man, who

has just been stooping for a draught from the spring. His back is turned toward her.

We do not know how habitually we rely upon the protection of the upright among our fellow-men, until accident isolates us, and we confront a possible villain in a lonely place. There was no reason to suspect this man above other strangers. But a sense of her helplessness frightened her.

She stepped back, as most old ladies, with presence of mind, would have done under the circumstances. And very still, from her place of comparative concealment, she sees this faint shadow emerge, in shade less deep, and she discerns the long neck, lank jaws, and white eyeball of Elihu Lizard.

The lady pursed her mouth and frowned, as she might at a paragraph in the newspaper describing a horror; and she drew a little further back, and as much behind the huge trunk of the tree at the edge of the path as she could with the power of still peeping at Mr. Lizard.

That lank wayfarer, in such a place, having, we must suppose, a quieter conscience than Miss Max, did not trouble himself to grope and peep about for spies, or other waylayers, among the trees, and having wiped his mouth on his sleeve, he sopped his lank face all over with his coloured handkerchief, which he rolled into a ball, and pitched into his hat. Next he replaced his hat on his head, and gave it a little adjusting jerk.

Then Mr. Lizard threw his head back, so as to look up to the groining of branches above him. She could not tell exactly, so dark it was, what expression his odious countenance wore. Her active fancy saw a frown one moment, a smile the next, and then a grimace. Though these uncertain distortions seemed to flicker over it, I dare say his lean face was quiet enough then, and having popped something, which I conjecture to have been a plug of tobacco, into his mouth, he shouldered his stick with a little preliminary flourish, and set out again upon his march in the direction from whence she had just come.

This apparition gave a new direction to her thoughts. She waited quietly till she could hear his steps no more. She wondered whether he had been up to the Hall; but she recollected that this particular path crossed the park; there was a right of way by it, and therefore he need not have diverged to the house, nor have asked any one's leave to cross the grounds by it.

There remained the question, why was he here? Were she and Maud never to get rid of that odious attendant? She quickened her step homeward, and was glad when she emerged into the open light.

OLD HOUSEHOLD ORNAMENTS.

A CHANCE visit to a cottage in some tolerably out-of-the-way country village will have the effect of thrusting any elderly person, blessed with a reasonably long memory, far back into the days of his childhood. To him the chimney-piece he beholds will be a cemetery richly stocked with monuments dedicated to a whole series of usages now deceased. Let us pass in review the chimney ornaments of the past, not leaving unnoticed the decorations of the walls.

Among the oldest ornaments, or at least among those which I observed in my earliest years, were a pair of scriptural groups, very rudely executed in wax, and contained in oblong glass cases. They represented the Nativity and the Crucifixion. Of what original they were barbarous copies I do not know, but I recollect that in the group of the Nativity, the indispensable ox and ass stood by the manger. These animals, it should be observed, were not devised by the fancy of painters, but were derived from legends largely circulated among the people in the middle ages, and were received in perfect faith. From a similar source were obtained the traditional complexions of the Three Kings or Wise Men, which no artist ventures to alter, as well as their names, Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar. These names are especially familiar in Cologne, where the skulls of the three kings are exhibited in the cathedral, and where the festival of the Epiphany is celebrated with extraordinary solemnity, the kings being the patron saints of the city.

Wax was an ingredient used frequently in the manufacture of ornaments for the interior of humble domiciles. A rough imitation of a basket in clay, painted green, and surmounted by waxen fruit, which it was supposed to contain, was an article frequently to be seen; so, likewise, was a wreath of artificial leaves, on the bottom of which was perched a waxen canary-bird, and which was suspended from the ceiling as an attraction for flies. Rigid economy was observed in the consumption of the wax; consequently, the hollow birds and fruits were broken by the slightest touch, and were rarely to be found in perfect condition

after a few days' possession. Faint copies of humanity, with pasteboard obelisks as substitutes for bodies, and waxen heads that nodded, were among the less common works of rude art, and I still remember an itinerant dealer, whose whole stock-in-trade consisted of waxen figures of seated children, which, warmly clad in white wool, presented a very cheerful and chubby appearance. The "young lambs to sell," the trade in which was promoted by one of the most popular London cries, and which consisted of lumps of white wool, each placed on four tin legs, were not ornaments, but toys.

Save in houses furnished after an extremely old fashion, the scriptural groups are scarcely to be seen at the present day. Almost equally rare are the ornaments made of black velvet, which were greatly in vogue fifty years ago. These, unless my memory deceives me, were exclusively confined to representations of the dog and the cat, the latter animal being the more popular of the two. They were perfectly flat, the velvet being glued to thick pasteboard, that it might be kept in an erect position when placed on its wooden stand. The eyes and a collar round or rather across the neck were of gold paper, and the lines of the body within the general outline were marked by a sort of bronzing process, whereby the dull monotony of the velvet was agreeably relieved. In size the animals varied considerably to suit the various tastes of purchasers, and sometimes a domestic interest was created by a small cat, placed in the same stand with a large one, and supposed to be the kitten of the latter. Though the figures were flat, a tendency to that "realism," of which there has been of late so much talk, was manifested by a small solid basket suspended from the mouth of the dog, the discrepancy of which with the character of the work passed wholly unnoticed. Indeed, a desire to avoid flatness by other means than those prescribed by the laws of perspective, was very usual among the humbler artists of, say, a century ago. I have seen the figure of a fine lady, painted on paper and pasted on a black ground, one arm, holding a fan, being left at liberty. The arm was, of course, as flat as the rest of the figure, but the mere circumstance that it was in a different position, gave an approach to solidity, which, at any rate, was satisfactory as far as it went. Those birds in alto-relievo, which modern ingenuity has clothed in real feathers, and which are often

exhibited by tradesmen in fancy articles, had their precursors in certain baskets filled with strawberries, which, worked in wool, and raised to a similar elevation, were once to be seen in picture-frames on many an old-fashioned wall.

One of the oddest ornaments of the olden time was a beef-bone, the round protuberance of which was dotted with eyes, nose, and mouth, the rest of the bone being painted black, so as to present the appearance of a clergyman vehemently preaching, with widely extended arms. These, I suspect, had not been purchased, but were the work of some amateur artist, the display of whose talent was confined to a limited sphere. A choice collection of works of art, produced on a similar principle, is now to be found in one of the London oyster-shops, the claws of the lobster being judiciously arranged so as to form an image of Punch, whose nose, chin, hunch, and cap they closely resemble.

The reel-in-a-bottle was an object which combined the ornament with the puzzle. This consisted of a large phial, enclosing a perpendicular piece of wood, to which other pieces of wood were attached in a horizontal position, spreading out like the branches of a tree to the interior surface of the phial. That the reel or tree could not have been passed, in its actual condition, through the neck was obvious, and the question arose, how it was ever enclosed at all. Some suggested that the bottle was blown over the reel; but it is not impossible that the trunk was first inserted, with pendent branches, and that these were afterwards lifted into the horizontal by a dexterous operation. The dawning of a taste for chemical science was marked by the metallic tree, the root of which was attached to the cork of a bottle, and which, sparkling in its growth, grew downwards. The preparation fitted for this tree was sold by the dealers in scientific nick-nacks, and I am surprised that it has ever fallen into oblivion.

The imperishable ornaments were those manufactured from a material which we will agree to call china, although very little porcelain found its way into their composition, and they were certainly not derived either from the Celestial Empire, from Dresden, Sèvres, Chelsea, or, indeed, from any establishment fertile in articles of virtù. Probably there was not a specimen of the kind, which delighted the fathers of some of us, of which a fac-simile could not be easily purchased now. The elder

Kean as Richard the Third, Madame Vestris as Don Giovanni, a queer-looking Highlander called Rob Roy, long existed, and still exist, as samples of primitive plastic art. But they were rivalled early in the century by painted plaster-of-paris, which was largely consumed in the production of divers figures representing Mr. Liston as Paul Pry in various attitudes, and bearing ample testimony to the wide popularity of that great comedian. Quite of another school were the plaster parrots, painted bright green, which were large as life, and only less outrageous than the imperfectly painted plaster cats, likewise large as life, which sometimes nodded their heads. These are gone, never to return, but the china stags and greyhounds are still abundant.

The parrot and the cat were regarded with pronounced aversion by Mr. W. Hone, who, in one of that useful series of works wherewith, after quitting the field of political satire, he copiously illustrated the calendar, published woodcuts of the uncouth animals, placing in juxtaposition to these a copy of that studious little plaster child, who was always writing in a book, and had then lately appeared on the boards of itinerant Italian boys. "Look on this picture and on that," exclaimed Mr. Hone, with honest exultation, as he saw cheap figures in white or bronzed plaster forcing the old coloured abominations into the background. Truly, the days when Italian boys most flourished seemed to promise well for the diffusion of a taste for sculpture among the masses. Not only the conventional busts of Shakespeare and Milton, Scott and Byron, but tolerably correct copies of some of the most renowned works of antique art, the Apollo Belvidere, the Venus de Medicis, &c., were to be brought at a price, the extreme lowness of which was unknown to liberal purchasers; for the Italian boys made a point of asking for a sum at least the double of that which they were prepared to receive. The useful and the ornamental were combined in a very pretty little horse, which was commonly used by druggists as a sign that they dealt in veterinary medicines.

It is often the fate of reformers, that their own fall succeeds that of the abuses which they have reformed. The Italian boy with his board, his busts, his studious child, his classical statuettes, has followed the cat and the parrot, and his invitation, "Buy image," has never been heard by the young of the present generation. His figures, which were hollow, had taken their

shape, I am informed, from the worn-out moulds of the dealers in those solid casts which, with the marks of the mould upon them, are purchased by artists, and naturally their consequent lack of sharp definition failed to satisfy the connoisseur. On the other hand, their appeal to the masses was but faint. Of all arts, sculpture is the least appreciated by the English multitude. Classical statues correspond to no domestic interest, and the scant attire of the Greek gods provokes lamentations over their impropriety, rather than admiration of their elegance, among all Britons who have not received a special training. I am not sure that the old, ugly poll-parrot, if revived, would not now find purchasers; that she would find more patrons than Venus or Apollo, I am convinced.

Derbyshire spar had its day, and watch-stands, urns, and candlesticks made of that native material, were long to be found on the chimney-pieces of the comparatively opulent; but, after all, the material, with its dirty white hue and its streaks of dingy purple, was not inviting. Still more insipid were the fancy boxes, adorned with patterns formed by convolutions of elder-pith, and worse still was the so-called filigree-work, which once gave employ to dainty fingers, and which consisted in forming a sort of tessellated surface by the juxtaposition of small pieces of gilt-edged paper rolled into minute cylinders. That these varieties of ornament are supplanted by those fanciful combinations of shells, which are usually purchased at the seaside, is matter for congratulation.

The princess, in the story of Aladdin, who nearly wrecked the rapidly acquired fortune of her husband, by requesting the genie (we won't say Djinn) to hang up a roc's egg from the ceiling of her palace, was, we are taught to think, a thoughtless and frivolous young person; but a recollection of the way in which the parlours of old country inns were decorated induces me to believe that her case, far from being exceptional, indicated a taste which was by no means peculiar to the East, but of which manifestations were to be found in this island. Decidedly there was a time when an English inn-keeper did not think his parlour properly furnished unless something egg-shaped or spherical hung from the middle of the ceiling. This was frequently the egg of an ostrich, which closely corresponded to the article desired by Aladdin's princess, the huge bird of the desert being almost as mythical a creature

in the eyes of our ancestors as the roc was in the eyes of an Oriental potentate. As for the Chinese, I don't believe they ever heard of the roc at all, so distinct is the mind of the Celestial Empire from that of Western Asia. Aladdin's China was drawn from an Arabian point of view, and was doubtless as much like the supposed original as David Garrick, in his black court-dress and tartan scarf, was like the Thane of Glamis.

Brighter, though considerably less curious than the ostrich's egg, was the spherical mirror, which was often used for a similar purpose, and from its polished surface reflected miniature portraits of all the guests in the room. But by far the shabbiest of these ornamental pendants was a hollow sphere of transparent glass, in which were gummed small flowers of chintz inserted through an orifice at the top. This work done, the ball was filled with white powdered chalk, which served as a ground to the tawdry relics of deceased bed-curtains. Oddly enough, an art similar to that which resulted in these coloured monstrosities, was brought into vogue within the last few years, and threw into temporary oblivion Berlin wool and crochet. By gumming paper figures, sold in the sheet, upon small glass vessels, sold plain, young ladies essayed to produce imitations of Etruscan pottery. The art had a fine long name, which I forget, and which some fair reader will be able to supply, but its reign was of short duration. No doubt the process was found to be niggling, sticky, and generally disagreeable.

Those tall old-fashioned clocks, with their heavy weights and pendulums in an oblong case, have often awakened serious doubts in my mind. In the kind to which I refer, there is an apparatus for showing the shape of the moon proper for every day of the month. Over the dial of the clock is a blue semicircular firmament, through which the luminary, represented by a circular disc, is expected to complete her journey, emerging from behind one dark semicircle which is to give her the crescent form, and descending behind another, the period of the full being manifested when she stands at the summit of the arc. In such dials the day of the month is likewise shown by means of a small orifice in the dial, through which the proper figure is visible.

Now I have seen many of these clocks, nay, one of them is in my possession; but never have I known the machinery which shows the days of the month and the phases

of the moon to be in working condition. It is always at a standstill, and I never met a soul who knew how it was to be set agoing, or where it could be wound up. Assuredly some especial arrangement beyond the ordinary winding up of the clock, which goes for eight days, is required, otherwise we should find the 3rd of March falling on the 31st of February, with other incongruities of a like nature. The more I look at my clock the more sceptical I become, and my doubt settles down into this question: Was there ever a time when my clock actually showed the day of the month and the moon, or were these achievements always referred to the past, each successive owner, in his generation, pointing to the motionless figures on the dial, as a monument of the mechanical dexterity of another epoch? The clock is very good when doing the work of a clock, but in laying claim to these extraordinary gifts, is it not a mendacious humbug?

The hour-glass, frequently reduced to the half-hour-glass, was an object usually conspicuous on the cottage chimney-piece. To children, the thin stream of red sand passing from the upper to the under globe, and the unstable hillocks which it formed in the latter, were a source of pleasing astonishment. Much do I question whether this primitive measure of time was ever used for the precise purpose for which we consult our clocks and watches. We learn, on good authority, that the puritanical preachers of the seventeenth century were accustomed, while they preached, to have an hour-glass attached to the pulpit. The duration of the sermon could thus be at once ascertained by the congregation, who, if their instructor fell short of the hour, considered him intolerably lazy, and if he exceeded it, looked upon him as insufferably tedious. Here, the irreverence of the proceeding being set aside, the hour-glass was in its place. For measuring a given portion of time, without reference to time preceding, no instrument can be more serviceably employed than the figure of eight, so familiar to our fathers. This, indeed, is practically acknowledged by the invention of that miniature portrait of the hour-glass, which shows the exact time required for the due boiling of an egg, and which is now in common use. But fancy the hopelessness of trying to discover, by the aid of an hour-glass alone, whether or not it was three o'clock on a summer's afternoon. Even suppose some friend, blessed with a watch, called upon you at six in the morn-

ing, and gave you a fixed point to start from, the anxiety of the nine succeeding hours must have been dreadful. What wistful glances would be cast every now and then at that emblem of mortality, in fear lest the proper moment for turning it upside down should pass by, and thus demolish the calculation. Long before the right hour was completed the hour-glass would be dashed against the wall through the effect of mere desperation.

But, as I have said, I doubt whether the hour-glass was ever used as the chief means for ascertaining the hour of the day. In the times when "merry larks were ploughmen's clocks," and even now in primitive districts, many signs serve to indicate the progress and decline of sunlight. The shepherds of Virgil measured the approach of nightfall by the lengthening shadows of the mountains, and thus the whole visible surface of the earth became a sun-dial. With observations of such phenomena the inhabitants of large towns have little to do. They know when it is light, and when it is dark, and when it is dusky, and, for more precise information, the watch or the clock is at hand.

THE HARP UNSTRUNG.

ONCE to the touch of a gentle hand
I made sweet music in the land,
The tunes leaped out of my quivering strings
And the harmonies fanned them like angel wings,
Till they glowed and glittered like fire-flies bright
Sparkling with melody and light.

But the hand lies cold beneath the sod,
And the beautiful spirit dwells with God,
And my chords are broken and thrill no more
With the music, the life and the love of yore;
Silent unless when the winds go by,
And wake them to a sob, or sigh!

HOW TO SEE INDIA.

"My Boy in India" means something very different to what the words usually imply. A gallant youth, full of dash and pluck, glorying in his first uniform, longing ardently for active service, and delighted with his comrades, his station, his duties, and his sports; a steady, plodding junior partner or confidential clerk, who writes sanguinely of his prospects with the firm, and who has even hinted at coming home to choose him a wife; the school prizeman of his year, who went up gallantly to public examination, and having won his post in the civil service, is now on the high-road to a collectorship; the young engineer, who went out because of the many openings in India; the delicately nurtured lad, whose

state of health gives you no little anxiety now that the hot season is coming on—are any of them the kind of life-portrait the phrase suggests. But my Boy in India had nothing in common with these. He was a grizzled Mahomedan from Madras, with a complexion which was nearly black, an excellent character, and some experience of travelling. He was a Bombay Boy by profession, and could wait at table as well as play valet and general servant, a conjunction of usefulness not always to be found, and which the Hindoo native is prevented by caste from attempting. I was averse to engaging my Boy. I could not see the necessity for his services, and I was strongly disposed to run counter to the advice of friends, and proceed on my journey up country without him. Why should I require a valet in India any more than in England? I communed with myself. He would be in the way. I could not provide him with sufficient employment. He would bother me by wanting to dress and undress me at morning and night, to brush my hair, to fiddle-faddle about my room; and he would make a needless addition to my expenses. I was wrong. A private servant is a necessity in India to the stranger travelling there for the first time, and who is ignorant of the language, the customs, and the people. The railways issue "servants' tickets" to first-class passengers at a considerable reduction on third-class fares; and the hotels do not charge for servants' board, which rather staggering liberality was explained when I found that my Boy always slept on the mat at my bedroom door, and only eat what he bought for himself, and cooked in the funny little metal vessel he produced from the centre of his bundle of clothes, like a brass kernel. In the item of wages, my Boy was, save the mark! dear. He had travelled before; he could speak what he called English, and he could understand my English fairly. He had testimonials from distinguished Anglo-Indians in whose service he had been; and his honesty was also vouched for by my Parsee landlord and good friend, Mr. Palonjee, of the Adelphi (Byculla) Hotel. In virtue of these gifts and qualifications, my Boy asked twenty rupees (or two pounds sterling) a month for salary and board wages, a proposition I closed with at once. It seemed wonderfully little, and it was not until some time afterwards that I learnt I was paying about double the market rate; and that less competent and

possibly less honest boys could be hired in Bombay at from eight rupees (or sixteen shillings) a month upwards. But "Sheyk Rustum"—he pronounced it in one word, "Sekreestun"—and I, settling to my own satisfaction that he had been nicknamed "Sacristan" by some eccentric high churchman, addressed him by that ecclesiastical title throughout our intercourse. Sheyk Rustum was an urbane treasure. His good qualities developed themselves constantly, and it is sufficient to say that he and I commenced our alliance within two hours of my landing in India, and maintained it throughout a rapid and comprehensive tour.

Given an uncertain number of weeks in India, and a keen desire to see as much of her wonders as possible, how is a stranger to make the best use of his time? This was the question which absorbed me during the last days of 1869, while the P. and O. steamer drew nearer and nearer to Bombay. Calcutta and the Duke of Edinburgh; the grand Durbar to be held by Lord Mayo in his royal highness's honour; the entertainment to be given on board Her Majesty's ship *Galatea*; the fancy dress ball and festivities at Government House; the pageantry and Oriental splendour, certain to follow upon the unexampled assemblage of native princes and potentates; and the historical importance of the visit to India of Queen Victoria's son—made it seem expedient, on the one hand, to start for the capital direct. But Calcutta was then a five days' journey from Bombay, so that, as my engagements made it necessary to leave for England from the latter port, ten days would have to be given up to mere travelling. The line which now connects the Great Indian Peninsula and East Indian Railways was not completed until three months later, when it was opened with great state by the Viceroy and the Duke of Edinburgh; and between Nagpore and Jubbulpore, a distance of one hundred and sixty-four miles, I should have to travel by *dâk*. Now the condition of my being in India was that I should form part of the British Indian Telegraph Expedition from thence to Suez, the date of the departure of which was uncertain; and if I went straight to Calcutta it might, possibly, happen that I should have to return to Bombay so soon, as to preclude my visiting any of the northern cities of India. If, however, I went up the country at once, I could, by travelling hard, see its chief

places, and perhaps include Calcutta at the end of my tour, so that it seemed as if I had to choose between securing peeps at Delhi, Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Benares, and other celebrated places, and witnessing the gorgeous ceremonials attending the Duke of Edinburgh's visit. Both prospects were so tempting that it was a relief, when we were met by the postal-boat off Mazagon pier, Bombay, to find the local newspapers full of accounts of the Durbar which had been held by Lord Mayo the day before. All hesitation vanished now, for the remaining festivities would be over before I could possibly reach Calcutta, and I determined to leave for Northern India at once.

There was on board the steamer a copy of the *Indian Traveller's Guide*, a sort of Bradshaw, which is published at the office of the *Bombay Gazette*, and which I found useful in many ways. Its pages were marked for me, and all that men could do to make my trip easy and pleasurable was cheerfully undertaken by my Anglo-Indian friends. There was a certain novelty to most of them in any one coming to India for a few weeks only, and travelling over it for pleasure, and the dearth of authentic and comprehensive guides to the country seemed, for the moment, to be compensated for by the friendly offices it evoked. The impossibility of procuring at Suez a copy of Murray's *Handbook to India* had been a great disappointment; and it was, I think, a still greater disappointment when I succeeded in purchasing that work at the great bookseller's on the Esplanade of Bombay, for I found its date to be 1859, and that it contained no information respecting Bengal or the North-West or Central Provinces. Murray's *Palestine* had been so essential to the enjoyment of our travels there, and was so correct in every detail, that the limitations of the *Indian Handbook* came upon me as a misfortune. Its two volumes treat only of the presidencies of Madras and Bombay, and as I had no intention of visiting the former, and proposed to leave the latter as speedily as possible, it was useless for the time. Above all, ten years had passed since it was published, and more since much of it was written; and how far these had made it obsolete may be gathered from this passage in Sir Charles Dilke's admirable book, *Greater Britain*: "The export of cotton from India rose from five millions' worth in 1859 to thirty-eight millions' worth in 1864, and the total exports of Bombay increased in the same propor-

tion, while the population of the city rose from four hundred thousand to one million. We are accustomed to look at the East as standing still," the same author adds pertinently, "but Chicago itself never took a grander leap than did Bombay between 1860 and 1864. The rebellion in America gave the impetus, but was not the sole cause of this prosperity; and the Indian cotton trade, though checked by the peace, is not destroyed. Cotton and jute are not the only Indian raw produce, the exports of which have increased suddenly of late. The export of wool increased twenty-fold, of tobacco threefold, of coffee sevenfold, in the last six years; and the export of Indian tea increased in five years from nothing to three or four hundred thousand pounds."

These figures are fair examples of the deficiencies inseparable from a guide-book which is ten or a dozen years old, when the country with which it deals has been marching onwards rapidly. My first railway ride was to be five hundred and nineteen miles inland to Nagpore, and Murray informed me that but eighty-eight and a half miles of the line were finished, and the rest "under construction," while my recent experience of the overland route told me too surely that in particulars which are all-important to the tourist, the same authority had been put utterly in the wrong by time. It gave elaborate descriptions of the journey across the Egyptian desert in vans, the route of which could be "traced by the skeletons of camels, thousands upon thousands of which lie bleaching by the wayside;" of the "conveyance of travellers to India from Alexandria to Suez, by way of Cairo;" of Egyptian hotels, "permanently maintained for the sake of employment one day in seven;" and the landlords of which, "unless when the passengers are on the way, are wholly idle;" of "luggage being forwarded on camels;" of "quitting Suez, where a long pull of nearly two miles, through shallows and intricate channels, takes the traveller to the roadstead, where the steamer awaits his reception;" of the "magnificent steamers of the Oriental Navigation Company," which take all passengers as far as Aden, when those for Calcutta remain on board, while "Bombay passengers are conveyed by the packets or war steamers of the Indian navy;" all of which descriptions have become as obsolete as stories of the risks from highwaymen on the road from London to York. Now-a-days, all the direct overland traveller sees of the desert is from the

windows of his railway carriage. He does not go near Cairo, or obtain a glimpse of the Pyramids, but proceeds from Alexandria to the junction of Zag-a-Zoug, and from thence to Suez. The hotels of Egypt drive a busy trade the year round, for European travellers and speculators are never wanting in the land; your luggage is conveyed by train from disembarkation to re-shipment as prosaically as to Southampton; you step from the new wharf at Suez to a steamer moored alongside; and there is neither an Indian navy nor changing steamers at Aden by the passengers for Bombay. These are types of many other equally important changes and modifications, and for my tour in India it was clear that Murray would be of little use. The really serious part of the case was that I could meet with no handbook giving the information I sought. The courteous Mr. Thacker not only had none such in stock, but when I inquired as to the possibility of ordering one from Calcutta by telegraph, to be despatched to meet me up the country, I was told that no work of the kind was published, and that I must content myself with Greater Britain (which was all I could wish, as far as it went, but which did not touch upon many of the places I was bound for), and with the memoranda supplied to me by friends. This seemed for the moment a really staggering rebuff. Trustworthy information, based on recent data or experience, appeared impossible of attainment. None of the people to whom I had introductions at Bombay had ever been over the ground, and such information as I had gathered as to routes and facilities might have been all altered by time. The antiquities and archaeological treasures of Northern India; the mosques, the tombs, the palaces, the ghauts, the buildings and sites rendered sacred in English eyes by the heroism evoked by the mutiny—how was I to avoid missing these if I were unable to read up and instruct myself before arriving at, and during my sojourn in, each city? It seemed certain that I should overlook much of what I ought to examine studiously, but there was no help for it and no time to be lost, so I set about my arrangements for starting next day.

I subsequently spent some weeks at Bombay; but the sight of it as we steamed into its magnificent harbour, and the hasty impressions derived as I drove from pier to hotel, from warehouse to shop, from railway station to dâk office, and from count-

ing-house to bungalow, stand out quite as vividly as any of the social experiences I enjoyed later. There was the view of land in the early morning, the hurrying on deck for the first peep of India, and the stacking by the bulwarks of the masses of huge mail-bags, representing so much anxiety and happiness, of sorrow and joy, for thousands of the expatriated, and causing the arrival of our steamer to be telegraphed to the remotest parts of India. There was, too, the indescribable stir and bustle which precedes the breaking up and separation of people among whom has sprung up the odd intimacy begotten of life at sea; and amid all this organised confusion, one of the grandest views in the world became rapidly distinct. The enormous size of Bombay, the houses and spires of which stretch along the coast for miles; the forest of masts springing from a fleet composed of ships of every nationality; the bright colours and gay roofs of its mansions, reminding one of magnified toys; the English church on Colaba Point, which might have been first transplanted from a metropolitan suburb, so completely do its spire and nave remind one of home; the fisherman's stakes or posts sticking up out of the water, and looking like a laundry drying-ground out at sea; the miles of palm-groves covering the mountains down to the water's edge, and the line of massive hills in shadow which back up the city, including the natural formation which looks like a cathedral—all strike a stranger. British supremacy is brought home to you in a thousand forms, and this the more strongly if you have lingered in other Eastern countries on your way out. The traveller who takes his passage direct from England to India, misses the gratification which arises from finding yourself no longer one of a minority. Modern Egypt is a French colony. Shops, pleasures, pursuits, civilisation, vices, are all French, and the Englishman finds himself an alien, or at best a guest, who mingles much in the Egypto-European society of Alexandria or Cairo. Palestine, as a province of Turkey, has all the sombre characteristics of a Mahomedan-governed land; and the Frank is there made to feel that he is held inferior to the governing race, and that he must respect its prejudices and obey its behests, if he wish to travel safely and explore the country in peace.

India furnishes a great contrast to all this, and such little things as the familiar "F.P." for fire-plug let into the walls of houses, the numbers on the hack-buggies

on the stands, the British uniforms, and the royal arms on the native constables' staves, all tell a story which you knew before, but which recent experiences of Oriental countries make doubly impressive. Shall I ever forget the sensation of hearing the chimes from a church clock, during an interval of wakefulness in my first night on shore? No such sound had reached me for months. The unearthly howls of the khavasse, watchmen who make night hideous at Alexandria; the barks and yelpings of the wild dog-scavengers of Cairo; the plaintive muezzin from the minaret of the mosque of Jerusalem; the cry of the jackal and the hooting of the owl when camping out in the wilderness; and latterly the ships' bells ringing out the half-hours—such had been the sounds greeting me whenever I lay awake at night. But a regular church clock, which struck the quarters, and had the true English tones, made the thousands of miles between me and those I loved disappear. Though so much further advanced into the East, you are continually reminded of home, and I was once advised quite earnestly to "hold my own with the natives, to stand no nonsense, and always to remember that my skin and language marked me as one of the governing class." This was said in all seriousness by a well-wishing "griff," or new arrival, before I had been in India an hour, and my preparations for a flight up country brought vividly before me many other strong contrasts between it and the Oriental lands I had just left.

SOME FAMOUS TREATIES.

WHEN the Black Prince and his eight thousand knights and archers, refused all terms by an exulting army of fifty thousand French, bore down from the vineyard hill at Poitiers, on which they had been pent, and beat the enemy to pieces, the result to France was more deplorable than even that of Sedan. A truce of two years followed, which was terminated by the peace of Bretigny. France being peeled too bare to any longer support an invading army, the French consented at last to the cruel conditions enforced by this treaty. It was stipulated that King John (then a prisoner in the palace of the Savoy in the Strand) should pay three million gold crowns for his ransom. King Edward renounced for ever his somewhat shaky claims to the crown of France, and the provinces of

Normandy, Maine, Touraine, and Anjou, possessed by his ancestors, in exchange for the provinces of Poictou, Guienne, Saintonge, l'Aginois, Perigord, the Limousin, Quercy, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the country of Ponthieu. This spoil, forming nearly half of France, was to be held by England in complete sovereignty, without even homage to the French king. The natural results followed these ungenerous and extortionate claims. When King Edward grew old, and the Black Prince returned from Paris, disgusted with his faithless allies, loaded with debt, and already ailing with the consumption of which he eventually died, the French at once overran our recent conquests, and in a few years won back all but Bourdeaux, Bayonne, and Calais. At the very time that King John lay our prisoner at the Savoy, we had also a King of Scotland captive, whom Edward liberated on the payment of one hundred thousand marks.

But, taking a stride of several centuries, let us pass on to the peace of Cambray. The jealous rivalry of Francis the First and the Emperor Charles the Fifth for the imperial crown, had finally led to an alliance between England, Charles, and the Pope, against Francis. The splendour and flatteries of the Field of the Cloth-of-Gold had been wasted on Wolsey, who trusted to Charles to help him to the triple crown. Milan was taken, Parma and Placentia were conquered by Prosper Colonna, and, of all Lombardy, Cremona and a few forts were soon all that was left to France. At Pavia, Francis lost everything but honour. Rome was taken and sacked by the imperialists. The French lost another army in Italy and were smitten to the ground; but circumstances at that crisis began then to favour them. Henry now inclined to the side of France, the Reformation convulsed Germany, the Turks overran Hungary and threatened Vienna. Peace was necessary for Charles, and his aunt and the mother of Francis were allowed to arrange terms. The peace of Cambray followed, by which Francis agreed to pay two millions of crowns as the ransom of his two sons, to resign the sovereignty of Flanders and Artois, and to forego all his claims to Italy, on condition that Charles ceased to demand the restitution of Burgundy.

The great peace of Passau established German Protestantism for the first time on a firm basis. The princes of the Smalcaldic League, dissatisfied with the one-sided

Council of Trent, and seeing the emperor secretly taking arms, assembled (the year Luther, their great apostle, died) seventy thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, prepared to win by force the toleration they could not otherwise obtain. By the aid of Maurice of Saxony, the emperor one by one broke the links of the league, but Maurice, growing alarmed at the emperor's ambition, soon proved a subtle and dangerous enemy, and all but surprised the emperor at Inspruck. The treaty of Passau soon followed, admitting Protestants to a share in all Catholic liberties.

In the early part of the reign of Edward the Sixth, the Earl of Warwick concluded a peace between France and Scotland. By the previous treaty of Campe, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, it had been stipulated that France owed England two million crowns, arrears of former debts. But as this sum did not amount to more than one-third of what Henry had expended in war on France, Boulogne was left in English hands as a security for the debt. By Warwick's treaty four hundred thousand crowns were taken as an equivalent for this debt, and Boulogne and its territory restored to France.

The long wars between France and the emperor terminated in the peace of Château Cambresis, in 1559. Charles, attempting to win back Metz, Toul, and Verdun, had been signally repulsed from Metz by the young Duke of Guise. The Duke of Savoy, at the head of a Spanish army, invaded France, but, delayed by Coligny's brave defence of St. Quentin, outside which town the French lost a battle, wasted his opportunity of marching on Paris. On the death of his father, Philip determined on peace. Protecting the rights of Elizabeth, our English claims were first considered at Cambresis. France, it was agreed, was to hold Calais for eight years, and then to surrender it to England. Savoy and Piedmont were to be restored to Emanuel Philibert, France was to evacuate all the places which she held in Tuscany and Sienna, and to surrender to Genoa all the towns of Corsica. Finally, France was allowed to retain Metz, Toul, and Verdun.

But the greatest of all these treaties was the treaty of Westphalia, signed at Munster in 1648. This treaty closed the Thirty Years' War between Sweden and Germany, in which Tilly and Gustavus Adolphus had both perished, and by which half Europe had been devastated. Mazarin had succeeded Richelieu, and yet this terrible strife

had continued, drawing in, one after another, almost every European power. The last great exploits of this war had been the famous victory at Rocroi, which Condé won over the famous Spanish and Walloon infantry, and the loss of half a French army in Swabia. Turenne was mounting for fresh victories. Torstenson, the Swede, had just invaded Holstein to punish Denmark for her concealed hostility, when the negotiations commenced.

By this famous treaty, France was to hold Metz, Toul, Verdun, Brissac, and all Upper and Lower Alsace. Sweden received four millions of crowns, Bremen, Verdun, Upper Pomerania, Stettin, the Isle of Rugen, and the city of Wismar. The Elector of Brandenburg, as recompense for the loss of Upper Pomerania, was to receive the bishopric of Brandenburg, and the bishoprics of Halberstadt, Minden, and Camin. The Duke of Bavaria was to be elector, with the Upper Palatinate, and Charles Louis an eighth elector, with the Lower Palatinate. The Swiss republic was also declared a sovereign estate, exempt from the jurisdiction of the empire.

The treaty of the Pyrenees terminated, in 1659, the long wars between France and Spain. Under Mazarin's administration, Turenne had forced the Spanish lines at Arras; but Condé saved the shattered army. Condé soon afterwards, at Valenciennes, turned the tables on Turenne; but that great general was never greater than after a defeat. Soon afterwards, Turenne defeated Condé, and took Dunkirk, which Condé was endeavouring to relieve. The peace which Mazarin concluded arranged for the marriage of the young French king and the Infanta of Spain. Louis agreed to pardon Condé, Philip to forgive the Catalonians who had rebelled, and finally Spain renounced all pretensions to Alsace.

On the death of Philip the Second of Spain, in 1665, Louis the Fourteenth instantly set his foot on the treaty of the Pyrenees, and claimed for his wife the duchy of Brabant, till the death of a sickly child should leave him free to seize also the Spanish throne. Turenne and forty thousand men swept into Flanders, and took fortress after fortress. After Charleroy, Tournay; after Tournay, Courtray; after Courtray, Douary. Lille fell in nine days. By the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Louis retained all the towns he had conquered except those of Franche Comté.

England being won over to Louis by the most disgraceful intrigues, the French in-

stantly invaded Holland. The Dutch, inundating their country, and resolved rather to emigrate in one vast fleet than yield to France, were bravely led by the Prince of Orange, who declared that he would die disputing the last ditch. Then came Turenne's cruelties in the Palatinate, and many brave fights at sea between the Dutch, and the French and English. The Prince of Orange, constantly defeated, still made a head, till France began to grow exhausted. The English people were urging Charles to join the Dutch, and stop the progress of French ambition. The treaty of Nimeguen secured to France not only Franche Comté, but Cambray, St. Omer, Valenciennes, Tournay, Cassel, Charlemont, &c. The States were to have Maestricht again, and Spain Oudenarde, Ghent, and Limbourg. The emperor was to retain Philipsburg, and to surrender Freyburg, and the Elector of Brandenburg was to restore his Pomeranian conquests to Sweden.

The next great settlement of European quarrels was that famous patching up of old wrangles at Ryswick. Catinot had conquered Savoy, and the combined fleets of Holland and England had been defeated off Beechy Head. The French had taken Namur under the very eyes of William, and had defeated the allies at Steinkirk and Neerwinden. The great Smyrna fleet had been attacked while under our convoy, and twelve hundred thousand pounds' worth of property destroyed. The war ended, however, with William's taking Namur, a stroke that partly recovered the glory that he had lost in three previous campaigns. By the treaty Louis acknowledged William to be the lawful sovereign of England, and restored Charleroy, Mons, Courtray, and Luxembourg, and several Catalonian cities to Spain; he gave up Freiburg, Brissac, and Philipsburg to the emperor; and the duchies of Lorraine and Bar to their native prince.

The subsequent tremendous victory over the Turks at Zenta, by Prince Eugene, led to the peace of Carlowitz, by which Austria secured Hungary, Russia Azof, the Poles Podolia, and the Venetians the Peloponnesus, and several towns in Dalmatia.

Marlborough's great victories at Oudenarde, Blenheim, and Malplaquet, ultimately led to the great pacification at Utrecht. By this treaty, France surrendered her right to the Spanish succession; Savoy acquired Nice; Prussia, acknowledged as a kingdom, was to receive Spanish Guelderland and Neufchatel in exchange for

the principality of Orange and the lordship of Chalon; the Rhine was to be the boundary of the German empire; Luxembourg, Namur, and Charleroy were to be given the States General as a barrier; and Lille, Aire, Bethune, and St. Venant were to be restored to France; while England was to retain Nova Scotia, St. Christopher's, Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, Minorca, and Gibraltar; and to her also was granted the profitable assiento or contract for furnishing the Spanish colonies in South America with negroes for the term of thirty years. The emperor, holding out against these terms, had finally to sign the peace of Rustadt, and obtained far less favourable conditions, and had to cede Landau and other Rhenish fortresses to France. Bavaria relinquished Sardinia to the emperor in return for the Upper Palatinate, and France acknowledged the electoral dignity of the Duke of Hanover.

The treaty of Breslau was that peace won for Frederick the Great by the unexpected victory at Czaslau. It secured for Prussia the cession of Upper and Lower Silesia, and the country of Glatz, and it withdrew the Queen of Hungary from her alliance with France.

Pitt's long war with France terminated in 1763 by the treaty of Paris, that, much as it was railed against by the Whigs, gave us a vast increase of colonial territory. France ceded to us Canada and a part of Louisiana. Spain gave up Florida for the Havannah and Minorca; France yielded her forts on the Senegal and the Island of Granada, and gave up her claim to the neutral islands of St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago; in return we surrendered to France St. Lucia and Pondicherry.

The treaty of Campo Formio closed the first series of campaigns carried on by Napoleon against Austria. The French had been victorious at Arcola and Rivoli, and Mantua, that powerful fortress, had surrendered to their arms. Bonaparte had invaded the Papal territories, undaunted by the sanctity of the successor of St. Peter, and had trodden Venice under foot. At Leoben it was originally proposed that Austria should have certain compensation beyond the River Oglio for ceding to France Flanders and all the countries on the left side of the Rhine, including the strong city of Mayence. The Venetian territories on the mainland were also to be given to Austria, who was to retain Mantua, while to Venice was to be handed over the legations of Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna. But when the Venetians rose on the French,

and the massacre at Verona took place, Napoleon had no more mercy on Venice, and at once divided her dominions between France and Austria, France taking the Albanian territories and some of the Ionian Islands, and Austria swallowing Istria, Dalmatia, and Venice herself. Napoleon also claimed Mantua and the line of the Adige, and when Cobenzel, the Austrian ambassador, hesitated, he took from a bracket a china vase of value, given Cobenzel by the Empress Catherine, and dashed it on the hearthstone.

"The truce is then ended," he thundered. "Before the end of autumn I will break your empire into as many fragments as this potsherd."

The Austrians gave way, and the treaty of Campo Formio was signed the following day.

The next war with Austria, closing with the great blow at Marengo, and Moreau's brilliant victory at Hohenlinden, was patched up at Luneville, in spite of the urgent entreaties of England to Austria to continue the war—entreaties which were backed up by a loan of two millions. By this treaty Austria ceded Tuscany to a prince of the House of Parma, and the whole left bank of the Rhine was ceded to the French Republic, the German princes who suffered, to be repaid by indemnities allotted them at the expense of the Germanic body in general.

Then came the Egyptian campaign, the reduction of Malta by the English, and the attack of the Danish fleet by Nelson, till in 1802 the peace of Amiens gave peace for a time to bleeding Europe. The nations needed repose. England, moderate in her demands of all her conquests, retained only Ceylon and Trinidad. Portugal lost Olivenza and a part of Guiana; Corfu, and six other islands, were constituted into a republic, and Malta was to be restored to the knights.

The treaty of Presburgh was the sequence to the overwhelming victory of Austerlitz. The first preliminary was the payment of one hundred millions of francs by Austria. The Tyrol was ceded to Bavaria, and Venice was annexed to the kingdom of Italy. By this treaty Austria lost twenty thousand square miles of territory, two millions and a half of subjects, and a revenue reaching two millions and a half of florins. Such was the result of a six months' campaign, and one great victory.

Every treaty of Napoleon's marked the close of some series of tremendous victories. That of Tilsit reconciled him to Russia.

The terms weighed heavy on Prussia. From that down-crushed kingdom was wrested the portion of Poland acquired by the partition of 1772, and this portion was to be called the Grand Duchy of Nassau. Russia acquired the province of Bialystock, and Dantzic was made a free city.

By the peace signed at Schönbrun in 1809 Napoleon passed Austria under the same harrow, which he had previously drawn over Prussia. At one stroke of the pen Austria surrendered forty-five thousand square miles of territory, and a population of between three and four millions. Napoleon was at first resolved to wrench from the Austrian empire both Hungary and Bohemia, but at the last moment he spared her from actual dismemberment. Eventually Austria ceded Saltsburg and part of the Upper Rhine to the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine. To France she surrendered Trieste, Carniola, Friuli, the circle of Villach, and some parts of Croatia and Dalmatia. To the King of Saxony she sullenly yielded part of Bohemia, Cracow, and the whole of Western Galicia, while Russia took Eastern Galicia, with a population of four hundred thousand souls.

Such are a few of the celebrated treaties which have been knotted and woven by astute diplomatists, but which have always yielded like cobwebs to the swords of conquerors.

MY NEW IDEA.

DEDICATED TO MM. LES CHEVALIERS
D'INDUSTRIE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

My first proceeding in connexion with the execution of my great idea was to go to a certain great stationer's shop in Oxford-street, where I purchased a handsome photographic album, of a large size and a square shape. I selected a volume—and here let me solicit the special attention of all who may peruse this statement—the cardboard leaves of which were rather thin, and which had underneath each of the spaces designed for the reception of the card portraits a long, ornamentally shaped opening, through which it was intended that the photograph should be pushed up into its place, but designed by me to fulfil another purpose as well.

My next act was to collect from my friends as many of their portraits, in the form of cartes de visite, as I could possibly get together. I had purposely given out that it was my intention—as indeed it was—to set off very shortly on a long journey.

My tour was to include America and the colonies, and was to be undertaken with a view of increasing the stock of information with which it was my intention to set up in business one day, as a politician. Before starting on such an expedition it was natural that I should wish to carry with me some remembrances of the friends who had shown me so much kindness in England, and therefore it was that I made such a point of making my collection of photographic portraits complete. There were some of my City friends, who had attained, by the magnitude of their financial operations, to the position of merchant princes, whose likenesses I was particularly anxious to secure, as it would be natural that any new acquaintances whom I might make in the course of my travels would be interested in seeing what such world-renowned capitalists were like.

When I am once embarked in an undertaking, it is part of my nature to do what I do thoroughly. I had set my mind, as I have already said, on the consummating of a great idea, and I determined to carry it out on a great scale. I was about to part from a set of friends and acquaintances who had shown me great hospitality, and before leaving England I was resolved to make some return for that hospitality. I determined that the form which my acknowledgment should take was to be a handsome breakfast, luncheon, collation, whatever you like to call it, an elegant and, at the same time, a substantial meal, with tea and coffee at one end of the table, and wine at the other, to which the guests should be invited to sit down, at twelve o'clock, on a certain day early in the month of June. I had some difficulty in securing the attendance of my City friends at the early hour which I have mentioned, but I did manage at last to make all those whose presence I most wished for promise to partake of my déjeuner.

I flatter myself that it was decidedly a brilliant thing, that breakfast party of mine. We were extremely gay and talkative. I had—knowing that my mind was likely to be somewhat preoccupied—prepared my conversational crackers ready to let off, that I was able to throw a firework or two, as occasion required, to any friend who appeared in straits, and so to keep the talk from flagging even for a moment. By the time that the champagne had been round twice, we had attained the fullest measure of good-fellowship, and were all in the highest good-humour with each other.

It was at this moment that I rose from my seat, and commenced an address to the assembled company. I told them that I was not going to make a speech, that such a proceeding was contrary alike to my principles and my capacity. All I was going to do was to express—very inadequately I feared—my profound sense of the extraordinary kindness which I had met with during my residence in London, and the remembrance of which would ever remain indelibly inscribed on the tablets, &c. &c. I purposely leave out a great deal of what I said, about this time, on such subjects as friendship, hospitality, partings, absence, “dragging at each remove a lengthening chain,” and the like, and come to the concluding portion of my address, which—developing as it does the nature of that great idea of which I have said so much—seems to me worthy to be repeated word for word.

“I am about,” I said, “to take leave of you all certainly for a considerable time, and ‘it may be,’ in the words of the song, ‘for ever.’ Before doing so, or perhaps I should rather say in doing so, I have one final and most urgent request to make, with which I feel convinced beforehand that you will all most readily comply. I have here a volume”—and at this point I laid my hand upon my album, which I had previously placed within reach—“I have here a volume in which are inserted the portraits of the greater number of my friends and acquaintances, besides those whom the ties of relationship have naturally endeared to me. The portraits of all of you who are here present to-day are, I need hardly say, included in this collection, and it is in reference to them that I have to make the request of which I have just spoken. It is my wish, in order to render the gratification which I shall hereafter derive from their contemplation complete, that—that—” here my voice grew husky, and I was obliged to moisten my lips with a little water—“that, in short, you will each one of you favour me by inscribing your names (in full) under your portraits, in order that I may not only see the outward presentment of each, but also something which is, as it were, an emanation of each individual’s own personality.” I am not sure that I quite knew what was intended to be conveyed by these last few words, but I was a little confused, I don’t mind owning, and my emotions (of various kinds) were too much for me. There was a general murmur of assent to my proposal which much affected me, and it was in a broken

voice that I requested one of the waiters who was in attendance to bring forward the inkstand, which, like the photographic album, I had taken care to have handy.

We had a good deal of laughing and joking on this signing business, which I superintended individually in every case. Such superintendence was a most necessary part of the proceeding, for, there being a place specially marked and set aside to contain each one’s signature, it is of course unnecessary to say that everybody wanted to append his or her autograph anywhere else, at any inconvenience. They made “offers” at the space above the photograph, and at the space below it, and even wanted to screw their names into the narrow strip of cardboard between the bottom of the portrait and the little ornamented opening, a short distance beneath which was specially intended to receive the writing, the paper contained within its limits being of the sort ordinarily used for writing on, and very preferable for the purpose to the cardboard, of which the rest of each page was composed. It was quite a troublesome task to keep the autographists within their proper limits, but I was very peremptory—though jocosely so, of course—upon the subject. Indeed, I was a good deal troubled altogether. One lady, possessed of a gushing nature, was going to introduce the words “Yours sincerely” before her signature, and it was only by urging the necessity of uniformity, that I was able to arrest the establishment of a precedent, which, if generally followed, would—as will appear hereafter—have been fatal to my prospects. This was really an anxious time for me in many ways. One old gentleman asked me whether I would have his business signature or his familiar and friendly one, which was much abbreviated. It was a staggering question, but I retained my presence of mind, and replied that if it was only for my own gratification of course I should prefer the latter, but that I felt sure that those to whom I might show the autograph in far-off countries, and who would all know the renowned financialist by name, would wish to see that name signed as it ordinarily appeared in those documents by which the commercial interests of Europe, nay of the world itself, were so materially and so continually affected. I was in a cold perspiration while I spoke, for any mistake here would certainly have considerably imperilled the chance of my great idea.

Well it was, as I have said, an anxious time for me, but it came to an end, and

in due time all the signatures which I required were appended to the portraits to which they were appropriate. When the last was dried and blotted, I closed the album and pressed it against my heart. "You don't know," I said, looking round upon my friends with an affectionate glance, "you don't know what this book will be to me." And indeed they did not.

As soon as the last of my guests was gone—they left with many expressions of goodwill almost immediately after the signing business was over—I seized the album and rushed off with it to my bedroom, locking the door of that apartment as soon as I got inside. Pausing then for one instant—but only for one, as I had much to do, and little time to do it in—I got my ideas together, and then seating myself at my writing-table, with the photograph book open before me, set myself to work to complete the task which had been so auspiciously begun.

I have already remarked that in purchasing my album I had selected one, the cardboard leaves of which were rather thinner than they generally are, and I have also mentioned that underneath each of the open spaces intended to contain the portraits there was a long horizontal slit or aperture, by means of which the photographs were introduced into their places. I must now go a step further, and state the fact that I had with great care fastened each leaf to the one next it, gluing the extreme edges only. Before sticking the leaves together thus, however, I had done something else which must be mentioned in this place, and to which especial attention is requested.

At all stationers' shops, in the metropolis and elsewhere, there are sold, at the rate of one penny each, certain long narrow strips of paper, stamped with the government stamp, and on which either a receipt or a CHEQUE (!) may be written with equal propriety. Of these I purchased a half-dozen and placed them behind six of the portraits contained in my album. Then I glued, as I have said, the edges of the page thus prepared to the edges of the page next it, and this being done it will be understood, if I have succeeded in making myself intelligible, that a portion of every one of these slips appeared through the aperture which I have described as occupying a horizontal position directly under each photograph. I have now to add that the portion of the slip of stamped paper thus exposed was in every case the right-hand lower corner, and I may also mention that the six portraits to which they were ap-

pendent were those of six of the wealthiest of the guests who were to grace the festive board on the occasion of my farewell breakfast. As for the other portraits of friends who were not capitalists, the paper which appeared through the apertures underneath their photographs was exactly of the same make as that used for the others, but it was not stamped. Why should it be?

Have I made myself understood, and is some notion of the nature of my great idea beginning to become apparent? If so, it will be almost unnecessary for me to state that when with my penknife I carefully separated the edges of the leaves which a short time before I had as carefully fastened together, I found my six slips of stamped paper lying snugly before me, each with the name of a great capitalist written by that capitalist's own hand in the legitimate spot for the signature of a cheque, low down, and at the right-hand side.

What my sensations were as I contemplated those slips may be imagined by those who, by some sudden turn of fortune's wheel, have been in a moment raised from poverty to affluence. There lay untold wealth within my reach. Money, to almost any extent, was represented by slips of paper. Those names meant money—every letter of them—it was enough to make one's brain reel to think of it.

I had no time, however, to spend in such weaknesses as brain-reeling. It was half-past two, the banks would close at four, and I had business of importance to transact before that hour, having to leave for Liverpool (en route to the United States) by the evening mail. So I sat down to my table, with my slips of stamped paper before me, and proceeded to convert them into cheques on the bankers—I had of course taken care to ascertain in each case who they were—of the illustrious men whose names were inscribed on each.

And here let me pause for a moment to make a small explanation which may perhaps appear to be not uncalled for. It is possible that some person or persons in whose way this narrative may hereafter come, may so far misunderstand this proceeding of mine as to accuse me of—I can hardly bring myself to write the word—of dishonesty. Let me proceed at once to clear myself from a charge so monstrous and unfounded. The act in which I was engaged when converting those slips of paper into cheques on my friends' bankers, was simply that of effecting a loan. I regarded each of these capitalists, of whom I

was about to procure a temporary accommodation, in the light of one who was about unconsciously, and, as it were, involuntarily, to lend me a sum of money of which I for the moment stood in need. But why not—the reader will perhaps say—why not have negotiated the loan in the usual way, requesting the consent of the parties to the transaction? My answer is ready: because I have, as I have before intimated, a proud and independent nature, and an invincible repugnance to asking favours. Besides, if I had asked for a loan in the manner suggested, it might have been refused, and what an exceedingly awkward thing that would have been!

Regarding this—this—transaction, then, in the light of a loan, which I should one of these days repay with interest, at the rate of five per cent per annum, all on a business-like footing, I determined to be moderate. I calculated that a sum of two thousand pounds would be enough to meet all the expenses I should have to incur, and leave me a handsome balance with which to make a start in the New World, and this I intended to get together thus: Six friends had accommodated me—so to speak—with these bank cheques; one of them, Sir Percy Jingle, was a man of quite enormous wealth; the other five, though all very rich, were not absolutely millionaires as was the case with Sir P. J. I determined, then, to draw on each of these gentlemen to an extent proportionate to his means. Sir Percy Jingle should accommodate me with a thousand pounds, right off, and the other five with a couple of hundred each, which would exactly make up the sum which I required. Having settled this question in my own mind, I sat down quickly and wrote off the six cheques in no time.

I was not long over my cheques, writing them off glibly enough till I came to the last, and then I confess I did hesitate for a moment. It was the Jingle cheque for a thousand pounds. The sum was so large. Suppose there should be any hitch about it? Hitch, nonsense! It was large to me, no doubt, but not large to Jingle—not large to Jingle's bankers. Did not I know on what a scale things of this sort were conducted among really rich men? Had not a clerk at Goldchild's told me the other day of the Marquis of H. walking in there quite quietly, presenting a cheque for forty thousand pounds, and just thrusting the notes into his pocket and walking out again as if nothing had happened? I soon silenced my doubts with reflections of this

sort, and getting out into the street, called a hansom cab, and set off upon a round of visits to the different banking establishments on which my cheques were drawn.

Nothing could be pleasanter than such a succession of calls. I came out of each of those first five places of business exactly two hundred pounds richer than I went in, and when I emerged from the last of them I had no less in all than a thousand pounds buttoned up in my breast-pocket. I had never had so large a sum in my possession in my life, nor anything approaching it. The notes made quite a fat bundle, and I could feel them pressing in a lump against my heart. Somehow they did not seem to soothe or tranquillise its action, though, but quite the reverse.

My great coup, however, remained still to be made. I had delayed the cashing of my large cheque, as I had delayed the writing of it, to the last. A curious sort of hesitation had possessed me in connexion with it all along, and it held me still. I loitered on my way to the bank, which was not a City house, but one of world-wide renown at the West-end. I loitered, and hesitated, and, for a moment even, found myself doubting whether, after all, I would present the cheque at all. Suppose I rested satisfied with what I had got? It was a large sum. It would set me going, at any rate, and even keep me afloat for a certain length of time.

Thus, for awhile, I hesitated, yielding in a pusillanimous way to my fears and scruples instead of fighting against them with all my might, as I should have done. In a word, I lost so much time in consequence of my indecision, that before I got to the establishment of Messrs. Bullion and Co. the chimes of the neighbouring church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields had struck the hour of four, and when I reached the doors they were closed.

I suppose there are other people besides myself in the world who, after remaining long undecided which of two courses it would be best to choose, have felt, directly one of those courses has become impossible of adoption, that it was beyond all doubt the right one, and that they would now give anything to have still the power of selecting it. As far as I am concerned, I may safely say that this is invariably my experience, and on this particular occasion it was so in a special degree. Why had I hesitated? I asked myself. Had I taken all these pains and run all this risk—for there could be no doubt that there was risk,

and that in the eye of the law my idea of negotiating an involuntary loan would be entirely misunderstood—had I done all this, and was nothing to come of it, after all? Was I actually going to throw away a thousand pounds, when it was within my grasp?

I continued to question myself in this indignant fashion till at last I worked myself up into such a rage at my own weakness and folly, that I resolved, intolerable as I knew the delay would be to me, to remain that night in London, in order that I might cash my cheque the next day. I should still be in time for the American boat if I went down to Liverpool by one of the morning trains.

It may easily be imagined what sort of a time I had of it that evening, and during the night which ensued. I did not like to go back to my lodgings, having a general sense upon me that it was desirable that I should keep out of the way, and not be found by any one who might want me. Acting upon this principle, I went and ordered a dinner (which I could not eat) at an obscure chop-house in the City, and then at a later hour hired a bed (in which I could not sleep) at the New Hummums.

That night seemed interminable, and so did the morning which followed. I thought nine o'clock would never come. It seemed to me, at that moment, a ridiculously late hour at which to begin business, though I have no doubt that the subject strikes those who take their seats at a desk at that hour every morning in a different light.

Something of a relapse into the hesitating condition which I had fallen into the day before came upon me when the moment at length arrived for making my great attempt. This time, however, I did not yield to it. I waited till I conceived that the establishment might reasonably be supposed to have got into working order, and then, assuming as bold a front as I could call up, I walked in. I thought, by-the-by, that the policeman who always stands in the doorway at Bullion and Co.'s (ridiculous custom) regarded me with attention as I passed in.

I must confess that at this moment, as I advanced towards the counter, I felt a strange presentiment of evil; my finger-tips were cold, and my knees were shaky, and my voice, as in presenting the cheque I uttered the words, "I'll take it in hundred-pound notes," sounded to me like somebody else's.

As I gave in my cheque I observed, or thought I did, that the clerk to whom I handed it exchanged a glance with another who stood next him, and that he made a gesture to a messenger, dressed in a sort of livery, who was waiting near the door, and who immediately went out. Then he bent across the counter, and looking me very steadily in the face, said, "This cheque is for an unusually large sum; perhaps you will have the kindness to follow me into one of the inner rooms;" and he came out from behind his desk, as he spoke, and led the way towards a passage connecting the outer with the inner offices. At this moment I certainly had serious thoughts of bolting, but I remembered the messenger and the signal which had been given him, and also that when I had last seen that functionary he was hurrying along in the direction of the doorway in which that ridiculous policeman was standing, and through which I should have to pass if I attempted to make my escape. There was nothing for it but to follow my conductor.

Messrs. Bullion's cashier led the way into a small room of unprepossessing appearance, containing a square table with an inkstand upon it, two chairs, and a tall desk standing in a corner. There was a sheet almanack over the chimney-piece, and the window was ornamented with iron bars. The cashier closed the door as soon as we had entered, and then turning upon me very suddenly, said:

"We have this morning received a communication from Messrs. Ingot and Co."—alas! it was there that my first cheque had been cashed—"in reference to a cheque which you presented there yesterday, and in connexion with which there seems reason to apprehend some kind of foul play. The party in whose name the cheque was drawn happened to call at the bank soon after it had been cashed, wishing to examine the state of his account, and he at once declared that he knew nothing whatever of the cheque, and that he had certainly not drawn it, or indeed any other on the day on which it was dated."

There was a low tap at the door at this moment, to which my companion responded with the words "All right;" then seeing me look round hastily, in the direction of the door, he added, addressing me, "Any attempt to escape will be perfectly useless; there is a policeman outside the door, and another within call."

"Policeman," I echoed; "escape! May I ask what you mean, sir?" I had recovered

myself a little, and was determined not to give in without a struggle, at any rate.

"What I mean is simply this," was the reply. "Messrs. Ingot have cashed a cheque, of which the person by whom it purports to be signed disclaims all knowledge; and, further, on sending round to certain other houses of business, which they did at once, they found that, in more than one instance, similar payments had been made of cheques drawn in your favour, and of which, on inquiry, it was found that the respective owners of the accounts on which they were drawn knew nothing. Under these circumstances the only conclusion which could possibly be arrived at was that the cheques in question were forgeries."

"They are not forgeries," I answered, indignantly. "Do you suppose that that cheque in your hand is a forgery? Look at it—that is all—look at it."

The cashier glanced carelessly at the document in his hand. "The signature is very like that of Sir Percy Jingle, no doubt," he said. "I am not here, however," he added, "to discuss the question of its likeness or unlikeness, but simply to act upon my instructions." And with that he went to the door of the room and called in the policeman who was waiting outside.

I am only saying what has often been said before, when I state the fact that the little room seemed at this juncture to turn round with me. Things really did become in some degree indistinct to me. I found myself in certain places, and involved in certain circumstances, without exactly knowing how I got to be so placed, or how I came to be so circumstanced. I found myself in a cab with a couple of policemen opposite me, and I found myself in a police-court with a great many people staring at me—among them certain of my guests of the day before—and then I found myself in a vehicle which reminded me painfully of my "seclusion" omnibus, only it had a policeman for driver, and another policeman for conductor, and then, at a later period of the day, I found myself in jail.

The rest of my story is soon told. My case came on, in due time, for trial, and I was indicted for forgery, and obtaining money under false pretences. We had rare fun while the first of these counts was

being disposed of. My counsel was a capital fellow, with whom under other circumstances I had been well acquainted, and he entered into the spirit of the thing thoroughly. I had, of course, made him acquainted with the exact state of the case in connexion with the manner in which I had got the signatures, and he took much pleasure in the mystified condition of everybody connected with the prosecution as to how those signatures had been obtained. He kept up the mystification as long as he possibly could, till, finding the case going against him, he at last revealed the whole of my scheme, producing my photographic album in court, and handing it to me as I stood in the dock, in order that I might fit the cheques into the places which they had originally occupied, and otherwise illustrate the process by which I had gained my object.

"You cannot call this man a forger, gentlemen," he said, at the conclusion of his address. "The learned judge himself will tell you that you cannot. Whose name has he forged? Whose hand-writing has he counterfeited?"

There was immense mirth displayed in the body of the court during this part of my advocate's speech, and such a tendency to applause manifested, that the judge had to threaten to clear the court before it could be suppressed.

I was acquitted, then, on this count, but in connexion with the second charge of obtaining money under false pretences I was less fortunate. Under this head I was found guilty, and sentenced to an amount of penal servitude, which very speedily repressed any mirthful tendencies which had manifested themselves in my demeanour during other parts of the trial.

I am hors de combat, then, for the present, but I do not mean to remain so. On the contrary, I intend to be out in the world again in the course of a year or two, and by that time perhaps I may find the public ready to receive both the "oval pill" and the "seclusion" omnibus in a liberal spirit.

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