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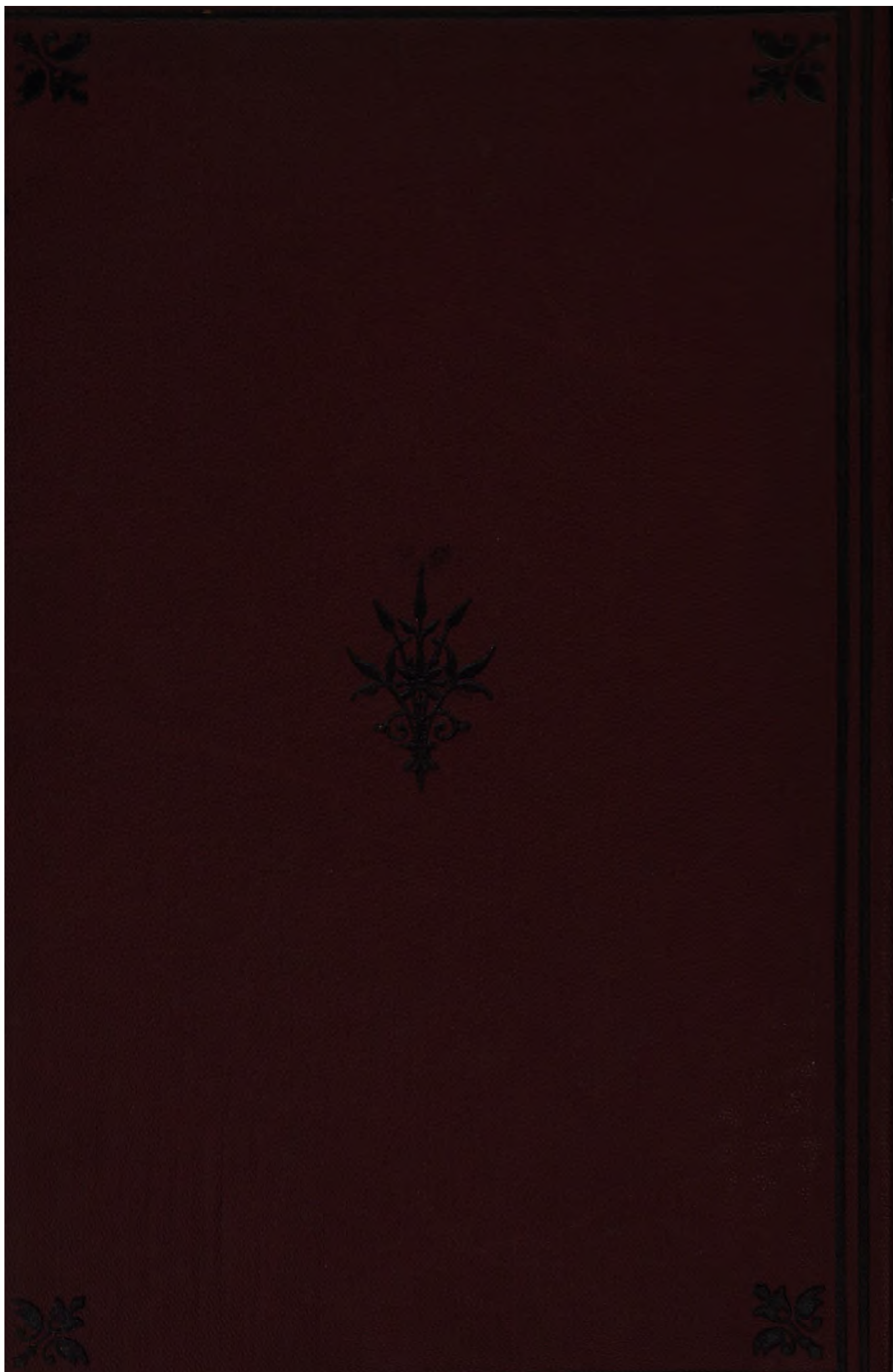
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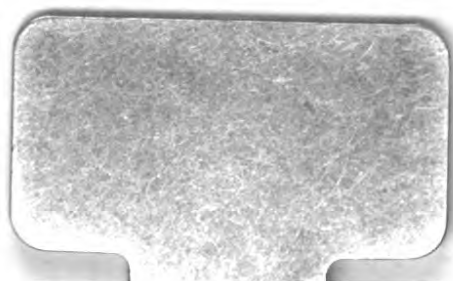


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*Crown 8vo. Cloth, gilt edges, bevelled boards, price 4s.*

## VILLAGE LYRICS,

BY

HENRIETTA AND CHARLOTTE ARNOLD.

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The Hon. Mrs. Norton writes of these poems: "All have a sweet and true feeling that gives a pleasant soul to the words."

"Much tender feeling is displayed in the poems, and there is a sweetness pervading them which causes one to linger over the volume."—*Court Journal*.

"All the verses breathe a spirit of refinement and unaffected piety."—*Graphic*.

"A very beautiful collection of lyric verses on all kinds of subjects, grave and gay."—*Public Opinion*.

"Some of them are beautiful conceptions clothed in graceful language."—*Cork Examiner*.

"These lyrics reveal the possession of true poetic taste and feeling. The versification in all the poems is without fault."—*Limerick Chronicle*.

"Those who read it will, we think, wish to see more of these admirable poems."—*Londonderry Standard*.

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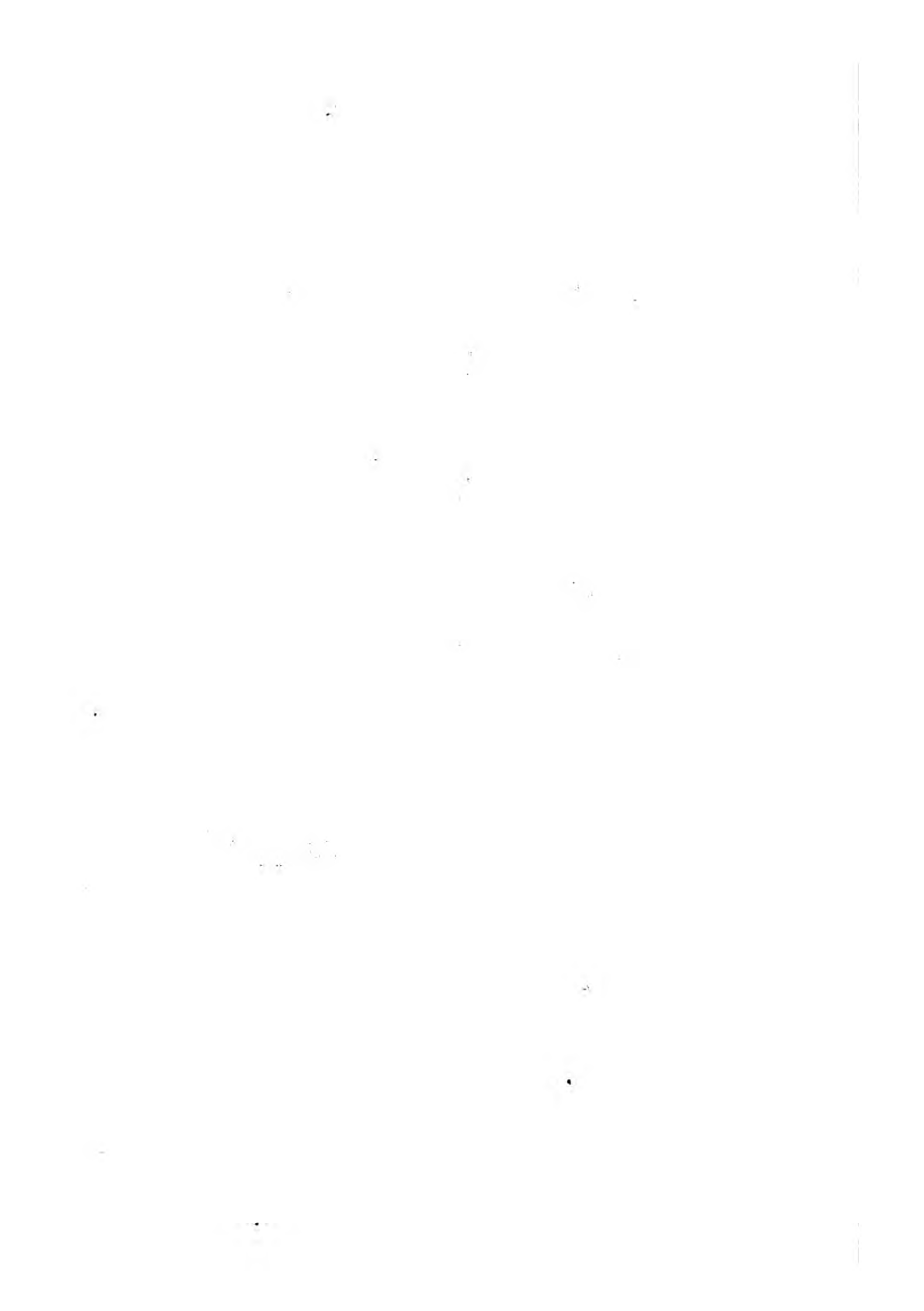
LONDON:

PROVOST AND CO.,

40, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

*TALES OF  
MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE.*





TALES  
OF  
MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE.

COLLECTED AND EDITED

BY

CHARLOTTE ARNOLD,

*One of the Authors of "Village Lyrics."*



London :  
PROVOST AND CO.,  
40, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1879.

251. c. 953.



TO  
HER GRACE  
**The Duchess of Abercorn,**  
THIS VOLUME  
IS,  
BY PERMISSION,  
**Inscribed**  
IN TOKEN OF GRATEFUL MEMORIES.



## Preface.

---

**I**N the solitude of a chamber, once echoing with joyful voices and tender words, or beaming with loving looks and kindling eyes, these Tales, &c., were from time to time transcribed, and this small volume put into shape: the memorials of a happy youth thus becoming almost the solace of a lonely age, for every line brought back the surroundings of those early days which, in the phantasmagoria of life, have passed away for ever, and

“Left me at eve on the bleak shore alone !”

The many and various scenes in which I have occupied a place, if not performed a part, through subsequent years, have never obliterated, nay, scarcely dimmed, the fond recollections of those early days, when I, with mine,

“Lived in a bright little world of our own,  
And the light that surrounded was all from within.”

Yes! though I have not found after-life altogether unlovely, for many bright and sunny spots have lain in my way, and proved most enjoyable; yet I love most to linger

over those times of childhood and early youth, so brief yet so bright, which throw a radiance, though even *that* projects a shadow, over the present.

Tendering most earnest thanks to the reviewers for their friendly notices of a former publication,<sup>1</sup> I should yet feel timid in submitting the present to the same ordeal were I covetous of fame, which that I am not, may be easily discerned. A small nook in the bagatelle corner of my friend the Public's library is all my ambition ; and my great wish for every household to which my little volume may find an entrance is that it may contribute to the enjoyment of any given half-hour, if it does not altogether impart the charm and give the *couleur de rose* of the original readings of "TALES OF MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE."

CHARLOTTE ARNOLD.

LISMORE.

<sup>1</sup> "Village Lyrics."

## Introduction.



THERE is a cottage standing yet  
As it stood years, years ago,  
And many a summer sun has set,  
And many a winter's snow  
Has wreathed its lowly roof, since *there*  
These tales were simply read or told.  
I know that they will never bear  
The interest that they did of old,  
Alternating as it might be  
With song that made the twilight seem,  
So dulcet was the melody,  
Like a sweet trance, or lovely dream ;  
For one among those happy ones  
A thrilling vocal power possessed  
Like the delicious liquid tones  
That flow from Philomela's breast,  
Or, touched by fingers deftly light,  
Music, enchained in hidden strings,  
Was wont, as with magician might,  
At times to give the spirit wings,  
Till she could fancy that she hears,  
As her charmed way she heavenward plies,



The grand old chorus of the spheres,  
That birthplace of all harmonies !  
Anon the winter day is o'er,  
And, grouped around the cheerful hearth,  
The cottage inmates meet once more,  
Led on in happy, social mirth  
By the loved sire, whose early days  
Recorded in this volume stand,  
Whose elder life no trace betrays  
Of education's niggard hand.  
In those young days, while yet a boy,  
He knew no home or social joy ;  
Now, in a circle of his own,  
The centre of a happy throng,  
He gave to mirth its blithest tone,  
He gave its charm to tale or song.  
And often, even in the times  
Of pressure or of anxious toil,  
Still one child's voice, another's rhymes,  
Acted as on the storm the oil.  
And, sooth to say, our books were few,  
Oft read the store upon our shelves,  
So when we wished for something new  
We had to draw upon ourselves.  
And thus it was these tales got birth,  
Such as they are ; they then had power,  
Arising from the very dearth  
Of better, to beguile the hour.  
That fireside was our world ; our joy  
Was bounded by its bright allure ;  
Nor age nor absence could destroy  
Feelings so social and so pure.

Perhaps the youngest child at times,  
Is called on from her father's knee  
To syllable such nursery rhymes  
As she had stored in memory ;  
While the fond mother list'ning plies  
With skill the needle's useful art,  
And often from the sweet blue eyes  
Reveals what works within her heart.  
Perhaps it is a reader's turn  
The little group to entertain ;  
What joy should she their praises earn —  
She hopes, nor does she hope in vain.  
Let us suppose "attention" asked,  
Silence is certain to prevail ;  
And ah ! the youthful writer tasked  
No critic while she read her tale.



# Contents.



	PAGE
I. MOIRA RHU ... ..	I
II. THE BLUE ROOM CATASTROPHE ... ..	17
III. THE INCONVENIENCE OF GOOD NATURE ... ..	25
IV. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TRANSMIGRATED SOUL	35
V. THE WIDOW BIRD ... ..	41
VI. C'EST L'AMOUR ... ..	61
VII. A TRUE STORY ... ..	73
APPENDIX ... ..	93



I.

MOIRA RHU :

AN IRISH STORY, AS RELATED BY A DESCENDANT OF THE  
HEROINE TO THE WRITER.

---

The lady she sat her alone in her bow'r ;  
The beacon was blazing upon the tall tow'r :  
Her foemen were many, her lord was afar :  
Base cowards ! base cowards on woman to war !

The lady she heard her bold baron was slain,  
That her country had bow'd to the conqueror's chain,  
All feelings seem'd frozen, save one, in her breast—  
The mother still triumph'd, tho' chill'd were the rest !

*Old Song.*

. . . . THE pictures had been removed from the gallery, which was situated in the oldest part of the building, and had been distributed in various departments, some of them having received injury from damp. They were mostly family portraits, which the skill of Lely and Reynolds, &c., had made "beautiful for ever." A goodly ancestry, as transmitted by them to the eyes of a long line of descendants. Amongst others was a beautiful picture representing a former lady of the castle, daughter of the celebrated Chancellor Hyde, and sister to the first wife of James the Second. There was also the chancellor himself, impanelled and surrounded by all the insignia of his office, near his granddaughter, Anne of England. A portrait of Henrietta Maria, by Vandyck, "the painter of the cavaliers,"<sup>1</sup> was very beautiful,

<sup>1</sup> Vandyck was called in Rome, "Il pittore cavalieresco," from his fondness for painting the members of the exiled royal family and their adherents.

but one hand had been evidently supplied by a very inferior artist, and was not by any means a match for the other, which was exquisitely proportioned. But it is known that Vandyck often, if not always, left his hands to the care of his pupils. Amongst the general portraits was one of a small and delicate-looking lady ancestor, who is accused of having made the first innovation in the established altitude of the family, from the days of —— I really forget who, but long before their great ancestor Brian Boromh !

“But who is this,” said I, “part of whose picture is defaced? If you boast of her as an ancestress you cannot complain of her wanting the ‘lion port’ and majestic figure of a highborn dame.”

“Yes, she was indeed an Amazon, and to her you may acknowledge yourself indebted for the honour of beholding before you a lineal descendant of this ancient house ! Seriously, there is a story concerning her which signalizes her as the preserver of the race in the days of Cromwell, when, as you know, even the children of the ‘Irish malignants’ were sought out and destroyed.”

Thus excited, my curiosity was gratified on a lovely autumn day, while roving about the enchanting scenery which surrounds the Shannon—that region of romance—and I learned the following tale.

It was in the time of the commonwealth, when Cromwell and his generals spread terror and dismay through Ireland, that the Lady —— received the heavy tidings of the death of her lord, who had been one of the last to leave off in assisting the defenders of Limerick with his trusty vassals in 1651. Moira Rhu, or Mary the Red, as she was familiarly designated, was then about twenty five or six years of age, and possessed of much beauty. Her rich auburn tresses (from which she got the appellation of *rhu*) fell in thick-clustering curls over her fine neck and shoulders ; following in this rather the fashion of the day in the court circles of the sister island than the custom of her country-

women, who have ever been remarked for their fondness of the Grecian style in tying up, wreathing, and plaiting their long hair. Her fine though determined dark eye and noble forehead were softened and relieved by her beautiful silken lashes and shading brows. The rest of her features and her mien were rather of a commanding yet elegant character and graceful aspect, though partaking in a great degree of the masculine turn of her mind, exhibiting the bold and resolute woman, so well adapted to the times of trouble and disorder in which she lived, and evidently possessed of that firmness of character and disdain of womanly weakness which such times are calculated to draw forth.

Neither tear nor sigh, nor any of the outward demonstrations of grief, were seen to escape her by her weeping attendants when her husband's death was announced.

"Where did my lord fall, Dermid?" asked she. "Have you brought home his corse?"

"*Fall*, my lady? He was killed in the little wood. Them crop-eared villains surrounded us round about, roaring out we were late for Limerick, for it was taken a'ready! Och, that news kilt him intirely. He bid us fly and leave him to them, but troth we didn't stir from him till he was dead. Och hone, the day!"

"Have you brought his corse?" again inquired the lady interrupting Dermid's grief, and perhaps fearing that the high tone of her own mind might give way should she listen further.

"Bring his corpse? And to be sure I did, my lady. Why shouldn't I? seeing that I am his own foster-brother, and sworn to stick to him while he lived, and to have him keened in his own hall, not to speak of bemoaned by his own banshee when he was to die, away from his own kith and kin, barring I couldn't, my lady."

"Has he left anything of counsel or command for me? Did my lord say how I should act as regards his children?"

"No, my lady, *daoul* a time he had for it, saving your



presence; they came on us so quick with their cursed tucks, as they call them."

"You may retire, Dermid," said the lady, "and give directions for the wake: see it is befitting your master's rank."

This rude representation of lying in state took place in the ancient hall of the castle, according to the custom of the day, a remnant of which is still preserved among the lower Irish to the present day in some degree. The bier was, as usual, raised in the upper end of the hall by the sorrowing servants of the chief, with as much regard to show and elegance as, on this occasion, the materials nearest at hand, owing to the hurry of the times, would admit. Indeed, those rude undertakers scarcely felt that in the next moment their preparations might be demolished, and the arrival of the fierce and contemning English announced, who had, by their late conquest, secured an uninterrupted march through the country, and might at any moment visit the solitary and lordless castle.

The women were employed in cutting the shroud for their defunct lord (of almost as many foldings as were the ample skirts of the *gallowglasses* of Elizabeth's day). In this were various fanciful figures and emblems, religious, military, and nondescript. The seneschal, who was also the house-steward of the time, was employed in the liberal distribution of every necessary deemed suitable on such an occasion, and all the domestics were in a state of gloomy bustle and weeping preparation for the wake, to make it worthy of being celebrated by many a succeeding Senecha and Fileah.<sup>1</sup>

It was near midnight when all was completed, and the

<sup>1</sup> Scheanachaidhe and Fíliáhe were the genealogists and poets of the day. Each province or chief had a Seanacha, or antiquary, genealogist, and historian, from whence arose the college of Ulster king-at-arms of the present day. The Fileahs, or bards, have not, alas! survived in such an honourable manner. The last of them, I believe, of any note, was Denis Hampson, the blind harper of Magilligan, to whose memory some simple lines have been written.

lady, accompanied by her children, two fine boys, entered the hall to take a last look of her departed husband. Even there and then her self-command did not fail her. She knelt beside the bier, and seemed for some time fervently to pray; the "keen," or funeral song, was discontinued as she knelt, all lamentation was hushed, all sorrow seemed vain mocking compared to the silent anguish of the widowed mother. She arose and cut off a lock of the once bright and glossy chestnut hair, now damp and matted; she again knelt, pressing it to her bosom, and seemed for the first time to be overcome. She was observed to shudder as she pressed the damp remembrance to her lips and upon her heart. Some who were near her thought the feeling was excited when the younger son, almost an infant, smiled in her face—no matter now.

The lady left the hall accompanied by her children. At the door she looked back towards the bier. The doors were then closed, the "keen" recommenced, the refreshments went round as usual, and none dreamed that the lady and her sons had quitted the castle, and that their lifeless lord before them was all that remained of the time-honoured race within its deserted walls.

Some of the verses of the "keen" have been preserved in the family, and are thus translated by a talented descendant of the chief.

#### KEENTHECAWN, OR FUNERAL SONG.

The eagle eye, the lion mien,  
 All now are lowly laid,  
 Loud be the keen and high the strain—  
 Proud Sassenach! he scorned thy chain,  
 Thy blood is on his blade.

Look at it now. In victory  
 It oft was waved by him,  
 But now beside him it doth lie,  
 All rayless as his own dark eye,  
 All lustreless and dim.

## CHORUS.

Raise high the keen in Brien's hall,  
 Well pleased his ghost shall hear.  
 And list ! at every chorus call  
 The banshee joins, and weeps his fall  
 In gem-drops on his bier.

## FIRST VOICE.

The Sassenach is at the gate,  
 And he will scorn our sorrow ;  
 Dark is thy hall and desolate,  
 Few, few, are left to mourn thy fate—  
 Not one perchance to morrow.

Son of the Niall, fare thee well,  
 Dark sorrows now surround *her* ;  
 Pale is the cheek thou lov'dst so well,  
 Sad, sad, the heart where thou didst dwell,  
 As thine infants smile around her.

Raise high the keen in Brien's hall,  
 Well pleased his ghost shall hear ;  
 And list ! at every chorus call  
 The banshee joins, and weeps his fall  
 In gem-drops on his bier.

For two nights these sounds of mourning resounded through the castle. On the morning of the third day the remains of its lord were deposited in the tomb of his ancestors, accompanied by an immense multitude who, under the peculiar circumstances of the country, could not arrive from the remote corners of the county in time for *the wake*.

Dermid, in the absence of relative, *kith*, or *kin*, took on himself the office of chief mourner as well as conductor of the entire display. After depositing his late lord in the earth, he returned not to the castle, but whispering to the seneschal to still keep the lady's departure secret, as she, he hoped, would soon return, he remounted the steed that had borne him to the funeral, and was soon out of sight.

## CHAPTER II.

IT was late in the evening of the second day after Moira Rhu's departure from the castle, when her old-fashioned equipage rolled heavily over the then ill-paved streets of Limerick. It stopped at the residence of Ireton, who was at that time commander-in-chief of the commonwealth forces in Ireland.

The house was brilliantly illuminated. The sounds of music and of merriment smote discordantly on the ear of the bereaved woman. She however entered, and the attendants were about ushering her with pompous state into one of the banquetting apartments.

"No, not there," said the lady. "I would see the general in private."

"I don't think he will see you in private," said a soldier, rudely; "his soul is glad for the despoiling and destroying of the ungodly of the land. He is even now making merry with his friends."

"Tell the Lord-general Ireton that the Lady — requests a few moments' conversation on private business," said she, haughtily, and turning towards a servant, who showed her into a small private apartment. And in a few minutes Ireton stood before her.

She had not seated herself; and her elegant yet haughty salute on the entrance of the great man was that of a superior; but Ireton seemed to heed it not—he returned one quite as formal, but not so graceful as the lady's, and requested to hear her commands.

"I shall not detain you long, lord-general," said she; "I am the Lady —, and I come to claim the indemnity and protection promised, by submitting to the parliament of England. I do so thus quickly to assure myself from your own mouth of its fulfilment.

"The lord-lieutenant has never been regardless of his

word," said Ireton coldly, while a smile of incredulity curled the lip of his fair petitioner. Ireton perceived it. The fate of the garrison of Drogheda, perhaps, crossed his mind, and he added, using the sophistry and language then so prevalent, "Assuredly the Lord has often hardened the hearts of the malignants to provoke us to the wrath our hearts would not willingly dictate, and he has given them over to be a prey and a spoil to our hands."

The lady, obeying rather the impulse of feeling than the dictates of prudence, proudly waved her hand, as though she had said, "Enough of this cant, I do not understand it."

"Pray, lord-general," she asked, assuming a calm tone, "may I expect the protection I claim on the Lord-lieutenant Cromwell's proclamation?"

"Permit me first to inquire why you assume your husband's place in tendering this submission? He is well known as a malignant deeply dyed in the cause of Charles Stuart, with those arch-traitors, Ormond, Inchiquin, and the others who were cut off from pardon in life or estate."

"My husband has paid the forfeit of his life already; your decrees cannot harm him now," said Moira Rhu.

"Fair lady, this tale has been already often told. Your husband would quickly rise from the dead should the estate be secured according to your desire. You must pardon me; Emly, Wolfe, and Brown have not made themselves half so obnoxious to the commonwealth, because not so influential for evil as your husband, and yet see their heads are already whitening on the city gates."

A thrill of horror ran through the frame of the lady as the uncourtly Ireton thus addressed her; but it quickly subsided, and she again stood before him the collected and haughty heroine she was before.

After a pause, "I am right glad," she said, "to hear that those traitors to their king and country have met their fate;

my husband was not one of these, and he has met a noble fate. I blush not at wearing these weeds for him ;<sup>1</sup> he died not the death of a malefactor."

Ireton seemed as if preparing to leave the apartment. "Hold" she cried, "do not excuse a breach of public faith by this assumed incredulity. *I am a widow indeed* ; do not deprive me of my home, do not bereave my children of their inheritance."

Ireton seemed rather moved at the proud beauty's distress, who appeared now for the first time to feel as a woman and as a mother.

"I do not wish to oppress, but I must ascertain that the commonwealth I serve is not imposed on. Prove your husband's death and I will see you righted."

"His friends and retainers have mourned over his bier, will their assurance, their oath do? His relations, alas! are all as lowly laid as he is himself," cried the lady with increasing energy, as she perceived the returning sternness of the republican.

"I fear not," replied he, in answer to her question ; "their religion is so very different from ours : the Romanists have a very effective friend in their priest when any qualm of conscience arises."<sup>2</sup>

The lady slightly coloured. "I will give you another proof, lord-general," said she. "My hand is free. By it my lands and castle are as effectually secured in the interest of the commonwealth as even *you* could desire."

A pause ensued, and the heroine perceived that she must speak yet plainer. "If this hand," she added, with strong emotion, "which so lately touched its lifeless lord, can be deemed a pledge of fealty in a defenceless woman, it is yours, lord-general, to bestow. I yield it up to you ;

<sup>1</sup> Moira Rhu's husband was a strict royalist, and in fighting for the king was cut off under Ormond and Clanricard.

<sup>2</sup> Ireton made use of nearly the same words in reply to Geoffry Brown.—*Hist. of Ireland.*

dispose of it as you think fit. Be my father. Allow me to remain a mother to my children."

The reader will perhaps wonder at the bold promptitude of Moira Rhu and her *ruse de guerre* in this extraordinary interview, and the precipitancy with which she surrendered her castle and lands to the commonwealth; but, beside the knowledge of the utter impossibility of her still resisting its forces and keeping them for the king, like her contemporary, the intrepid Lady Offaly,<sup>1</sup> she had another and more pressing motive for her prompt submission to General Ireton—she feared the knowledge of one fact coming to his ears, which was more adapted to the barbarous customs of the feudal times, she well knew, than according with the spirit of the English laws. The circumstance was as follows.

In the temporary absence of her husband, Moira Rhu was always left in full command of the castle and its little garrison, and, some time before his last expedition, one of the followers had been suspected of deserting the standard of his chief to join the parliamentary forces. He was caught lurking near the castle, seized, and branded as a spy, and brought before the lady. Perhaps the poor wretch was innocent of the charge. Summary, however, were his trial and condemnation, for her ladyship ordered him immediately to be hanged. This rapid proceeding startled even his accusers, who, perhaps from a motive of mercy, were delaying the execution of the sentence with the excuse of making the necessary preparations; and when the lady inquired if he was dead, one of her camarilla, in a deprecating tone, replied, "No, my lady. We haven't the gallows ready till the morrow morn, and——"

"To-morrow?" she cried. "Let him be hung this moment! There are carts in the stable-yard, set one upright. You can be at no loss for means to execute the traitor unless you are yourselves his abettors. What! a vassal dare to rebel against the summons of his chief, to be

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 15 for Lady Offaly's reply, &c.

seen with the enemy, and now to be caught within the precincts of our own castle, doubtless as a spy! Let him be executed instantly, I say!"

The lady's orders were obeyed on the spot. Indeed none of her more merciful councillors dared to say another word. The unfortunate man was acutally hanged in the manner directed. He was suspended from the shaft of one of those cars or carts so common still in the south of Ireland, the original purposes for which were far higher service than such as they are now doomed to, according to some industrious antiquaries, who trace their use from very remote antiquity, ages before springs and spoked wheels made *innovations*, or *improvements*, as some *unclassical* people might think. However—pardon the digression—*this* was no "triumphal car" to the culprit. Short was his shrift; indeed it does not appear whether he got time to make any preparation for the awful eternity into which he was so unexpectedly to be plunged.

"Oh! cross of Saint Boyce!"<sup>1</sup> exclaimed one of the domestics, who had just recovered his speech and recollection, which he had been deprived of, as he saw the man in the agonies of death before him. "It's myself couldn't understand it at all at all, till *I sees him* dangling there before us. Troth, then the mather won't be well *plased* at this same!"

The chief never returned either to censure or approve of his deputy's precipitancy.

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### CHAPTER III.

It was the transaction mentioned in the last chapter that the lady of the castle dreaded should come to Ireton's ears before she had got his word for the act of indemnity and

<sup>1</sup> Reckoned one of the most ancient religious relics in Ireland. See note on p. 16.



oblivion she sought for, as it was well known that the parliamentarians were very strict in enforcing those laws on others which they had themselves so daringly trampled on.

However, the resolute Moira Rhu was safe. She had been quicker in her movements than were the wretched man's friends whom she had doomed to death so summarily; and that very evening of her introduction to Ireton he introduced her to her future husband, a young officer, who was not unwilling to possess so fair and rich a bride. Nor was his general insensible to the advantage of having thus so easily secured the undisputed submission of that broad barony which led the way to his reduction of Galway soon after.

Moira's new husband, whose name is not on record, was, according to tradition, a kind one to her, yet she never introduced her sons to him. There were various reports concerning them. Some affirmed that they lived, though they could not tell where, *incognito*, and that Dermid, who had disappeared after their father's funeral, was with them, for he was observed at stated periods to return to the castle, hold long conferences with their mother, and depart no one could tell whither.

After some years her Sassenach lord died also, and Moira Rhu was again a widow. No "keen" was raised at *his* funeral: such was not indeed his wish; but had it been even so, probably it would not have been complied with. It was only a wonder that the Sassenach was tolerated in his occupancy of their late lord's place by the retainers; but he loved his wife and the vassals dreaded her, and, as they had no children, the serfs hoped to see some day the sons of their rightful lord over them. The Irish were ever remarkable for strong attachment to the family under whom they lived, and indeed in no other country, as we believe, has it ever been found necessary to enact laws against this feeling—laws which are known under the names of "fostering," "gossipred," "vassalage," &c.

But to return. Moira Rhu's second husband preceded the Protector to the other world but a short time, and in the joy of this event, and the restoration of Charles the Second, her grief for her husband, if indeed she had any, was observed quickly to subside, and very soon after this event she quitted the castle, and in short time returned with her long lost sons, who were quickly put in possession of their patrimony, and even before the proclamation of Charles, which at the time gave the rightful owners of estates, grasped by the followers of Cromwell, Ireton, and Ludlow, such well-founded alarm.<sup>1</sup>

It is not ascertained whether Moira's husband had known of the existence of her sons. He had the power, however, indisputably of willing the estate he had got so pleasantly into as he pleased; but whether she influenced him in favour of her children, or, with her characteristic promptitude, taking advantage of the sudden turn of affairs, owing to the restoration of Charles, had taken on herself to right them, we cannot say; but from the beginning of her vicissitudes she certainly had her children's interest at heart, strange as her conduct in the carrying of it out may appear.

In her first grief, under the impression of fear for their safety, she ordered Dermid to convey them as quickly as possible to the nearest seaport, and from thence to England, to change their names, bind them to a trade, and by every possible means conceal their connection with the unfortunate affairs of Ireland, until better times might enable them to return.

Dermid faithfully executed his trust. When the lady married the Sassenach, he, and indeed herself, thought it would still be wiser for her sons to remain in England for sake of their education than to return and be under the surveillance of a father-in-law of such foreign lineage as the Saxon. They were educated at the then despoiled and humbled Oxford, and were well instructed there, though it was "shorn

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 16.

of its beams," stripped of the immunities it valued, its revenues reduced, its chancellor and other dignitaries turned out, and its professors' chairs filled by "incompetent and ignorant pretenders," according to the cavaliers, but by "pious and heart-searching servants of God," in the language of the sequestrators.

The young men had subsequently travelled on the continent, still attended by the faithful Dermid; had been received at the court of the exiled monarch, and there the eldest of them succeeded in gaining the affections of one of the daughters of Chancellor Hyde, whose sister was already wooed and won by the Duke of York.

How shall we attempt to describe the merry-makings and rejoicings on the return of the fugitives to the home that they had quitted so abruptly and so young. The extraordinary and extravagant hospitality of Patrick Sarsfield, "sometyme lord mayor of the citie of Dublin," celebrated by Holinshed, was nothing in comparison to it.<sup>1</sup>

Moira Rhu was observed to look proudly on her sons now; the tear of affection in her eye seemed to signify, "this is all my work."

"My dear mother," said the young baronet her eldest son, "you are looking as dismal as a puritan at a feast to-night! Pray don't remind us of our worthy tutor at Oxford, Zechariah Dismal, as we used to call him, who always fasted and looked sad on Christmas-day, and what was worse, expected us to do the same, and loved to feast on Good Friday. Come, come, *ma belle mère*, smile on your long lost sons!"

"I perceive your dismal tutor has not instilled his principles into you, my love," said his mother, smiling.

"No, my handsome mother,

I would not be a puritan, tho' he  
Preach full two hours—and yet his sermon be  
Not half a quarter long!"

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<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 16.

said the young baronet. "But come," added he, "mother mine, tell me if anything troubles you?"

"Nothing, my dear son. I am now more than repaid for all I have suffered in mind from the day I parted with you till this happy meeting. Yes, for your sakes I have endured much, but I am now happy, very happy. I was thinking of your father, and how, for his children's sakes, I denied myself even the poor consolation of weeping at his tomb. How I was censured and secretly accused of forgetting my duty, when, with all a mother's anxiety and fear of danger to you, my children, I jealously preserved the secret of your existence, but now, looking on you, tears of delight fill my eyes, for my sons are where they ought to be, and my maligners are dumb."

Not long after his return the young baronet asked and obtained his mother's leave for his marriage, for she immediately saw the advantages of such a connection, allied as he would be by means of it with the first interests of the kingdom.

I have but one word to add. There were no difficulties to be encountered in obtaining the hand of his highly allied bride by the descendant of Irish kings. It was all very easily settled, and, in the quaint language of the nursery, "if they didn't live happy, that we may!"

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#### NOTES.

Lady Offaly's reply on being summoned to resign and quit her castle is worthy of record. "I received your letter wherein you threaten to sack this my castle by his majesty's authority. I am, and ever have been, a loyal subject and a good neighbour among you, and I therefore cannot but wonder at such an assault. I thank you for your offer of a safe convoy, wherein I hold but little safety, and therefore my resolution is, I will do my best to defend mine own, leaving the issue to God. Though I have been, and still am, desirous to avoid the shedding of Christian blood, yet being provoked your threats shall no whit dismay me.—  
LETITIA OFFALIA."

Her ladyship was the only daughter of Gerald Lord Offaly, eldest son of the eleventh Earl of Kildare. She laid claim to the estates of her grandfather; but this being disputed, she had to be content with being created Baroness of Offaly for life.

Saint Bryce's cross is now reckoned one of the most ancient relics in Ireland. It is of one stone, and said to have been sent from Rome, and erected by order of the Pope. Among the sculptures on it there is an inscription in Irish characters, in which is plainly legible the name of Muredach, who was for some time king of Ireland, and died in 534.—*Elmes on Architecture.*

“In Ireland the proprietors of estates” — designated by the worthy historian by names which would now wound ears polite—“after Charles's Restoration, repossessed themselves of their estates and turned out the purchasers, which occasioned such commotions in that kingdom that the king was obliged to issue out a proclamation commanding them to wait the determinations of the next parliament.”—*Neal's "History of the Puritans."*

Holinshed, in his description of Ireland, mentioning Patrick Sarsefield (lord mayor of Dublin in the year 1551) and his extravagant hospitality, subjoins that no guest had ever a cold or forbidding look from any part of the family, “so that his porter or any other officer durst not for both his eares give the simplest man that resorted to his house Tom Drum his entertaynement, which is, to hale a man by the heade and thrust him out by both the shoulders.”

II.

THE BLUE-ROOM CATASTROPHE.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE firelight now a song suggests—  
Dibdin's or Braham's are sure,  
Tho' unaccompanied, yet still  
Our plaudits to secure.  
But hark ! what unfamiliar strain,  
A *ranz-de-vaches*-like chime—  
Uncouth, abrupt, and singular,  
Recitative and rhyme,  
And preluded by fitful chords,  
Extracted from guitar ;  
We ask, what's this? Our minstrel smiles,  
And sings

AGUSUAR !

RECIT. *A Knight with a strange device rideth on !*  
The evening's sun was fair and bright,  
When onward rode an errant knight ;  
His king had given him honours thrice,  
The motto to some strange device,

Agusuar !

RECIT. *His appearance.*

His brow was sad, but his dark eye  
Flashed like a meteor from the sky,

And, like a brazen trumpet's sound,  
 Where'er he came was echoed round,  
Agusuar !

RECIT. *His father had homes, and kept good fires !*  
 In happy "homes," and gay delight,  
 And blazing hearths, he saw the light.  
 But now upon the desert lone  
 The night-winds seem to sadly groan,  
Agusuar !

RECIT. *He waxeth foodhardy.*  
 "I'll try the pass," the warrior said ;  
 "Tho' falchions glitter overhead,  
 I'll stem the torrent deep and wide"—  
 When loud the old man's voice replied  
"Agusuar."

RECIT. *He loveth.*  
 He loved, but in his dark unrest  
 No answering love his wishes blessed ;  
 A tear stood in his deep blue eye,  
 The maiden answered, with a sigh,  
Agusuar !

RECIT. *The peasant asketh the knight his purpose ; he hath  
 no purpose.*  
 "What is thy purpose, warrior brave?"  
 "I tell thee not, thou varlet slave."  
 Still onward, onward to the height !  
 This was the peasant's last good night,  
Agusuar !

RECIT. *Pious monks pray.*  
 The pious monks of Bugganaums,  
 Unscathed by the religious qualms  
 Of sinful men, yet fast and pray,  
 And each one heard that morning grey,  
Agusuar !

RECIT. *A hound findeth the knight.*

A traveller by the faithful hound  
 Reclining on the earth was found,  
 Unknown but by his mottoed helm,  
 Which spread his name thro' all the realm,  
Agusuar !

RECIT. *The knight dieth.*

'Twas pitiful—alack-a-day !  
 Wounded in some mysterious way :  
 Ere closed in death his heavy eye  
 Some voices echoed, loud and high,  
Agusuar !

Well solved was that wild prelude deemed,  
 We caught its meaning now ;  
 And tho' the poor knight came to grief  
 No sadness marked one brow !  
 When the strain ceased, Excelsior  
 Was to the bard addressed.  
 But finished not our evening thus ;  
 Wish for a tale expressed  
 Brought forth what follows—lights supplied,  
 'Twas thus read at that glad fireside.

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“Stories are fit for every place—reach to all persons, serve for all times, teach the living, revive the dead.”—*Preface to Plutarch*, 1519.

I HAD accepted the invitation of my old friend and college associate to be his guest for any length of leisure which I could afford, and, accordingly, in the year but two before last, I arrived just in time for a late dinner at Sir Something Somebody's. I love to be particular as to names and dates, feeling how much the interest of the reader depends on such exactitude.



A very large family had my friend Sir S., composed of sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, to an almost fabulous amount, indeed so much so that I, deceived perhaps by a little egotism—and who is free therefrom?—taking into consideration the number to whom I was introduced, seeing the length of the dinner-table, and observing the bustle of the servants—which to me appeared extraordinary rather, being myself a lone old bachelor—imagined that Sir Somebody, my old friend, had invited all the county to meet his distinguished guest, Colonel Soandso of the Pointblank Militia, great grandson to Sir Michael Soandso, knight, woollen-draper and hosier to his royal highness Prince Lee Boo, and the royal family of Pelew, and other distinguished and noble foreigners. But such was not the fact, as I afterwards discovered, and I found myself very happily placed in the midst of a social family circle, where I felt myself to be truly distinguished by the warmth of my host's welcome, and the agreeable demeanour of his party towards me.

Sir Something and myself having much to say to each other, and both being rather gifted in the garrulous way, bore the *frais* of the conversation during dinner. Neither of us had made any great figure at college, so that our days there were not particularized, our allusions to that epoch being introduced merely as a resting-point, whence radiated the subsequent interesting histories which we considered fit and natural to communicate to each other in the hearing of an auditory not altogether of our age or perhaps style. However, as it was, we doubtlessly amused and interested the dinner-party. But there may be too much even of a good thing, and the best talkers will tire; so—though I feel half ashamed even now to own it—for a considerable time before my host's hospitable intents would permit my retiring, I was more than half unconscious of my antecedents, and no more recollected that I was Colonel Soandso, of the Pointblank Militia, and that my friend of happy memory,

Sir Something Somebody, was there, and then my entertainer, than I could remember at the moment the happy hour which ushered me into the world. Now I would by no means have any one to suppose that it was aught but sleep that thus "steeped my senses in forgetfulness." No! And should ever this record see the light or meet the eye of an indulgent public, and that any one of the scanners of my tale, with a pshaw! may think otherwise, I say to him, "Honi soit qui mal y pense!" No one can with truth aver that I ever exceed a gentlemanly modicum of claret, with a reasonable share of other wines; and upon the occasion I here speak of—to prove to the sceptic that it was truly "tired Nature's sweet restorer" only that had conquered me—when I did receive permission to vanish from the hospitable board where I had spent the last few pleasant hours, and had been conveyed to my room for the night, my sleep was as sound as my most solicitous friends could have wished. I did not indulge even in the romance of a dream. It was all plain, matter-of-fact, downright sleep with me that night; and pretty far advanced was the following morning before I felt conscious of existing circumstances.

The day, upon which I had entered so late, passed most pleasantly. I had a delightful ride with my friend over his charming grounds, which were both extensive and picturesque, and so situated that they appeared to be part and parcel of a whole range of the estates of different proprietors for miles round. Here Sir Something's embellishing taste was beautifully displayed, there his knowledge of the *utile* was manifested. That glen was certainly a splendid prank of nature, which sometimes astonishes us by managing exactly to put the right thing in the right place. But the temple that crowned the hill, and to which the beautiful glen formed a vista, was surely Art's own fairy effort, and rendered lovely what without it was just sublime. A bold bare rock elsewhere was a grand object in another quarter of the landscape; but the ruin that had been erected on its

rugged top rendered it highly imposing and romantically picturesque.

But were I to enlarge upon every striking object, and notice every charm I met with in that day's ride, I should not arrive at the "blue room" this month to come, which—such being the designation of the chamber appointed me at Amity Hall—I repaired to upon the second night with no such degree of fatigue as I had felt upon the former. Having sought my pillow at no very unreasonable hour, I lay for some time awake, rambling again in idea over the lovely scenes which I had visited in the day. At length from a dream of "fairyland" I was awoke by an indescribable noise resembling a "scuffle" actually going on in my room. Perhaps I ought to have mentioned that this "blue room" was at a very inconvenient distance, in case of apoplexy or any other emergency, from other tenanted chambers of the wing in which it was located. The mansion had been repaired, added to, winged, and extended in every possible way of confusional architecture, until the eastern and western extremities were so labyrinthine as almost to require a clue to thread their mazes, and would have proved a hopeless undertaking to accomplish in case of the above emergency. It had never been my practice, old soldier as I was, to keep arms of any denomination about me. But I confess that the present alarm was rather suggestive of the wish, "Oh for even a sword of former times!" While such vague thoughts ran through my mind, or, rather, my head, the curtains of my bed were violently shaken. I started instantly up, demanding at the same time, in the most military voice I could assume, "Who goes there?" No reply. "'Twas silence all." A pitchy darkness pervaded the room, the windows of which were hermetically closed, what with barred shutters and thick blue curtains. I jumped up, however, endeavouring to find my way to toilet-table or window, and with great difficulty, after groping about for a length of time (not perhaps exceeding half an hour); I again

regained my bed by a stroke of most propitious fortune. The disturbance having now quite subsided, I began to fancy that I must have been dreaming, and, dismissing all thoughts of my late alarm from my brain, I found the kind god Morpheus soon again propitious. But, will you believe it? a similar noise again aroused me. It seemed to be "confusion worse confounded," more violent and more indescribable than before. I was in a singular perplexity. Ten thousand imaginings invaded my fancy, wherever that mystic attribute is bred. This time I thought it could be nothing human that was thus bent on disturbing my repose, although, for an ordinary mortal, I did not think I was very superstitious. But my imagination now began to suggest the possible antiquity of this wing, in which, as I believed, mine was the only occupied chamber. It was old enough certainly to be remembered by the ghosts of some former generations of the Somebody family. It was wainscoted, too, and, for all that is known of ghosts, they are always represented as being particularly partial to wainscoted apartments. There was no tapestry, it is true; but then there were some old pictures on the walls, and sometimes such have been recorded to have left their hangings and come down to warn or remonstrate or enjoin some duty on the living at the "witching hour" of night. There was an antique chair, too, whose high back and stuffed sides were covered with faded embroidery, worked, no doubt, by the now mouldering fingers of some remote grand-aunt. I was endeavouring to recollect if there were any other pieces of antiquity in my immediate neighbourhood, but it was comfortable to think that the bed, with other portions of the furniture, seemed too modern for the shades of the long-departed to lay claim to, when lo! a loud click, like the sound produced by the cock of one of your ancient muskets, assailed my ears. A sharp, shrill, ringing scream succeeded, and then a noise of a rumbling kind, as if some lumbering piece of furniture were dragged about, then all was hushed.

I was about to write, "hushed as midnight," forgetting that the midnight I had passed was anything but serene. I was now again on my legs, determined this time on finding a window, or perishing in the attempt. More by what is commonly called chance than pilotage I at length succeeded, and found no easy task in the unbolting, unbarring, and uncurtaining process.

The sun's appearance had preceded mine some time; and, oh! what a prospect met my gaze as I faced his bright beams. Imagine a panorama of some eighteen or twenty miles in extent, composed of rich woods, golden corn-fields, smiling villages, shooting spires, ancient towns and castles, and, in the far distance, the bright broad ocean, catching the beams of the morning's glorious sun, and decking itself with his light. Every feeling was absorbed in that of breathless, deep admiration of the splendid *tableau* before me, in which I forgot the mystery of the preceding night. At length I turned from this scene of deep enchantment, and looking round, perceived a monstrous rat nearly at my feet, who had breathed his last in a trap of very considerable dimensions, and which, judging from its present position in the room, in which it was now a conspicuous object, the animal must have pulled along an uncarpeted portion of the polished oaken floor in his frantic endeavours to free himself from its iron grasp.

Here the romance of my night's adventure ended, and I was well repaid for my broken rest by the hearty and general laughter at the breakfast table, occasioned by the recital of "the Blue-room Catastrophe."

III.

THE INCONVENIENCE OF GOOD  
NATURE.



INTRODUCTION.

“ST. VALENTINE’S day! May the saint be propitious,  
And grant some sweet lines to accord with my wishes!  
I’ve made an impression, I’m certain, and, oh!  
If he’s true to his eyes, he will surely bestow  
A few tender words upon which I may ponder.  
How sweet should he write, ‘Absence makes the heart  
fonder.’

But here is the post. Is there nothing for me?  
Tho’ he knew I was leaving and where I should be,  
For I told when he asked me significantly!”  
Thus a visitor mourned: ’twas a pity to know  
That she grieved for the want of a Valentine so.  
And lo! in the evening was brought, *as missent*,  
A missive, in which were judiciously blent  
Some truths and some cautions. Our friend ne’er delayed  
Even to look at the cover, which would have betrayed  
A clumsy appearance of post-marks; but swallowing  
The bait at a gulp, she arrived at the following:—

“Dear girl, ’tis likely you may be  
Displeased at my temerity;  
But as I am on the wing for Spain,  
And we may never meet again,

I'd set you right on some things drily,  
 Which others whisper very sily.  
 You're not a goddess—that you'll own,  
 Tho' you're a rather pretty woman ;  
 Your teeth not pearls, but to atone,  
 They're something whiter than is common.  
 Your form? yes, it might many please,  
 Tho' not, perhaps, Praxiteles.  
 But, pooh ! those fellows as you know,  
 Of patchwork made their choicest figures :  
 Took here a thumb and there a toe,  
 Their lithest shape might be a nigger's ;  
 And the above, and Phidias too,  
 Perhaps could take a hint from you !  
 Your elbows are as round as some  
 I've seen in those stone imitations.  
 Upon their noses I'll be dumb,  
 Lest I should weary out your patience !  
 Or jointless fingers—what are they  
 To these that can so sweetly play ?  
 There's one point certain—in the ear,  
 You equal any I have seen ;  
 But theirs were never meant to hear :  
 'Twas well 'tis so, for had they been,  
 The homage all on them bestow  
 Might turn their little heads you know.  
 But here's wherein they mostly differ  
 From every living specimen,  
 They're taller, straighter, colder, stiffer—  
 No glance will they return again—  
 Who will may choose such faultless lines,  
 Such taste is not your—VALENTINE'S."

"Is it not pretty? every line  
 All ending in your Valentine !  
 Will you just read this after tea,  
 It may be a variety !

But don't—pray don't, if it should bore you :  
I know you mean to read a story."

We smiled, and promised not to fail—  
Thereafter came the following tale.

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I EXPECT the term "good nature" may be disputed ; but I am no metaphysician, and only deal with effects. The use I make of it is merely commonplace, and I take it (the term) as the general summing-up to describe a character that, generally speaking, feels a complacency in pleasing or in obliging others—an amiable kind of selfishness which is often imposed on, and yet is still so recuperative that it yields to the test over and over again. Once give a man a character for "good nature," and he is in for all sorts of proofs of it.

Do not imagine, however, that I am going to write an essay : I want to tell a story. And, therefore, allow me to introduce myself here as a man whose reputation for good nature has often been of more injury than service to him. I was scarcely settled in life, after many jostlings and elbowings by the way, when a friend happened to die, leaving to me the care of a "disconsolate widow," as the newspapers and epitaphs say, and three small children. I had not been very long a Benedict at the period, and the management of two ladies, with the protection of five children—having twins on my own account—was rather puzzling. *Entre nous*, I had found out that one fair one was rather too much for me previously ; but, being of that style of man that I have mentioned, and having taken a wife for fear she should be put to any trouble by my bachelor attentions in the first instance, I continued to give her her way, if not to study her wishes, when we became one ; and we got on smoothly serenely, and very much to the satisfaction of the public, I am happy to think.

The disconsolate wrote me an exceedingly pathetic letter



announcing the event which made her so. Though I had not seen my lately deceased friend for years, the lady left to mourn his loss assured me, "while blinded by tears," that she had heard the dear one speak of me always as the most good-natured of human beings—nay, went almost the length of intimating that he was happy to die, feeling that he could unhesitatingly leave the care of his beloved wife and children to the friend he had selected above all others as their trustee and guardian. This was irresistible; the kindness of a man remembering me after years of estrangement won my heart.

I undertook the office my dear friend assigned me *con amore*. His affairs I found to be in the most complicated state—so much so, indeed, that I had one or two grandchildren before I could get them unravelled, or had any prospect of extricating myself from the toils which my friend's friendship and my own fame for good nature involved me in.

When I inform any one who chooses to be instructed that two other "disconsolate widows," hearing of my bearing towards the first, appointed me their manager in any troublesome affair, I have not mentioned one tithe of the calls on my good nature; not to speak of the multifarious business a large family of my own entailed on me, with not very ample means. But I could never induce my friends to believe that I had any business of my own to keep me on the alert. However, not being able to establish this fact, I received all comers, and undertook all affairs submitted to me in a spirit of good nature, which was far from philanthropy, and not even, in many instances, akin to sympathy.

My popularity meanwhile increased; and when I married one of my disconsolate widows—or rather, when she had married herself—to a very dashing young gentleman, she paid me the compliment of declaring that to no man on earth would she entrust the interests of her children but to me, which arrangement she effectuated in her own pretty way, so as to enable the newly married pair to begin the

world as if nothing had ever happened to them before, while I was left sponsor to two children, with more responsibilities than are appointed by the Prayer-book.

Previously to this era an acquaintance of mine, out of his "high appreciation of my well-known character," sent two of his boys to a public school in a neighbouring town. Ere he had quite concluded his arrangements in this direction, he favoured me with a most friendly letter, in which he gave me the pleasing assurance that it was his particular wish to cement a friendship (begun in a stage coach, when he happened to find out that he was connected with a distant relative of my wife). I say to cement a friendship which, as he kindly expressed it, he felt not to have sprung up at the moment, but to have, as it were, sprung to light, having lain dormant at the bottom of his heart for years, and only requiring a meeting with me to burst forth, as it had done, matured and inextinguishable! He wrote now to beg that I would pay any little attention I could, for his sake, to his boys, "and on Sundays, if they were attentive and well-conducted at school, he had promised them, as he knew he might, that I would take them over to spend the day, country air being so highly approved of for lads confined so long during the week."

Thus had I quartered on my care, my house, or my time, beside nine children of my own—not one of whom, I hope and trust, may be esteemed good-natured like their father—eleven of my friends' and acquaintances': three of my first "disconsolate widow's," two of my second, who married again, four of the third, and two of the relations of my wife's distant cousin!

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## CHAPTER II.

BUT let it not be supposed, gentles, that this unfortunate character which I bore for good nature was tested only in one way, viz., *pro paterfamilias*. Nay, nay! the smooth

ripple of my constitutional weakness might possibly have still smoothly rippled on, even under, as some might say, such aggravations. But there was one antagonistic principle in my nature in reference to the human family, and that concerned money-lending. Had I been bred a stockbroker, which calling includes, I believe, the other profession, I cannot tell how the Humanities might operate on my too compliant nature. But the sound of "Breakers ahead!" on one or two occasions, for merely affixing my name to a little document for a friend, fixed my resolution, and, by a new family arrangement, and at her own desire, I thenceforth vacated my desk and study chair to my dear, and far, far better half. Some persons might, perhaps, say *bitter*; but I say it not, although her name was Mary. And I was safe in leaving it to her pen to answer all such addresses as the following—

"MY DEAR FELLOW,—Have you a twenty-pound note by you—or a thirty would be as good—for a few days," &c., &c. Or, "Your signature to the enclosed would be of more value to me than £100 at another time. I know I need not urge. Will see you soon." Humph!

But those fair beings who insisted on depending on me in their marital bereavements I could not coldly put off. Just judge—

"Could you spare time to ride over to this part of the country to-morrow? I wish to consult you on the purchase of a donkey, as poor little Anne has been ordered horse exercise and asses' milk, and I think I can combine both in this way. Dear child, if her poor papa was alive, no expense would be spared to gratify every wish of her heart, as I often tell her; and you can't think how she grieves for him at such times, and how sensibly she feels his loss and regrets it! I know your good nature is such that you would put yourself to inconvenience sooner than disappoint. I have ordered two or three donkeys to be brought here before two o'clock for your inspection. Precious child! I

hope the asses' milk will do her good !” But do I tire you with specimens? ah! let me give you one more elegant extract. “I have at last succeeded in finding a person to instruct my dear Thomas St. John. He will come three times a week, from ——, which, as you know, is not more than three miles off, from nine to five. I am to give him—very liberally for my means—four guineas a year. I held out for pounds but could not succeed ; but I have not entirely concluded the agreement until you give your opinion of his abilities, and therefore I put him off till Tuesday, as I thought of asking you to come down to us by the Monday's coach. The tutor is to mend my pens into the bargain, and, as you know I write a great deal (this I did literally to my cost, for penny postage was not dreamt of then), this will be a great advantage to me. I have not said a word to the children yet on the subject. I hope I can get him to teach them all—nor do I mean till you are here to do so, for I don't think I could get them single handed to agree to the proposal. Ah! their poor papa! You know that they are not the least afraid of me ; but I think you could persuade them that in their position of life they should be educated. You are so good natured, and I am sure they feel it gratefully, particularly Thomas St. John, who is a very sensible child for his age : he will not be twelve, you know, until next month.”

But I have done with extracts ; suffice it to say that for seven and twenty years I have never been left for two consecutive days without some such flattering invitations as I have here set down. I gave away seven brides in that time—three, indeed, out of my own family—had to arrange, though not to supply, the dower of the other four. Was appointed in a pressing manner to go in pursuit of a fugitive supposed to have Gretna Green—at that time in vogue—for her destination, which, after travelling day and night, within a few miles of ——, I met the fair bride returning from, all joy, happiness, and hope ! Why should I mar her halcyon

dreams? The pursuit ended in a kiss of peace ! Five times I had to go over to England with unwilling schoolboys or runaway apprentices. Old servants could not be discharged or new ones taken in any of my widows' or new-married *protégées's* establishments without my actual presence ; and none of these were within ten miles—sometimes not of easy access—of my own residence. But through all these multifarious calls I had the satisfaction of knowing that my affairs at home were in very able hands, those of my valuable wife, who, if she is left a widow, will be abundantly equal to the sad bereavement. Her good nature is never suffered to stand in the way of her affairs, and, indeed, she feels such a becoming pride in the prosperity which attends her domestic diplomacy, that I feel it would be no less than an intrusion on my part—being never invited—to meddle at all in the concerns of home ! How often have I been given to understand, on venturing to appear as an active partner in the firm, that I was only in the way, marring by my peculiar temperament—good nature or good temper, whatever they might choose to call it—what my dear helpmate chose rather to bring about by opposite means. What could I, a “cipher in the great account,” do in such cases but let her have her own way ? And by such conduct I have often had the satisfaction of knowing that I was commended even by my own wife, and my wisdom in leaving my affairs in her hands commensurately extolled.

On the other side of the question, when a tenant turned out insolvent ; or a steward unfaithful ; or that a horse died suddenly ; or a season was unfruitful, I was sure to be upbraided with the carelessness I displayed as to home concerns ; and often was it intimated to me, in no measured terms either, that pauperism would inevitably be the consequence of my incorrigible supineness, or persistence in excusing people, or accepting circumstances over which I had no control, without tearing my hair, or rending my clothes ! However, as other persons were not as cognisant

of my unwillingness to make myself useful as my wife certainly is, was, and will be—to the contrary notwithstanding—my time, thoughts, and purse—small sums I did not mind giving—were in requisition. And having mentioned my purse, I feel bound in gratitude to record here the many donations of that species of ornamental nothings which I was continually called on to thank and praise my friends for, besides stamp-cases, pen-wipers, excruciating bead slippers, and anti-macassars. The very name disgusts me. The first effort of skill which any of my youngest friends exhibited displayed itself in one or other of the above articles, and to me was the offering made, entailing any amount of obligation on my part, and displaying more than the cunning skill of the worker, as, in most cases, the gratitude for favours to come was eminently emblazoned in the curious workmanship.

The receiving of gifts is an awkward ceremony, and I for my part have felt it so—eminently so—that I fully accept the words emanating from Divine wisdom, and from my heart endorse them, viz., “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” I do not profess to be clear on the subject, for I was never called on, except on the occasions recorded, to return thanks, or perhaps at a county meeting now and then, when my health might be proposed.

Once, indeed, a pretty large deal box was sent to me per coach from I don't know where. I happened—no unusual circumstance—to be from home at the time, but my wife, in her capacity of acting for me, opened and found it to contain what amazed her and all beholders beside—as well it might when I describe its contents. Old stockings of all sizes, and textures; the very inside clothing, male and female, not extremely new; trousers ditto; some habiliments for children; several soiled gauze kerchiefs; and an article neatly folded in brown paper, eminent above the rest for the care wherewith it was arranged and disposed among meaner things. I give this inventory from mywife's account.

What the meaning of all this benevolence could be puzzled even the lady who bore my name, and was my representative in home affairs, and who, moreover, was always good at solving enigmas. But, at my suggestion—mildly put—the top of the box was again inspected, for I thought it possible, on being informed of the occurrence, that there might be a mistake; and lo! a discovery. The whole contents were intended by some benevolent individuals in the sisterly country not for me or mine, but to be forwarded by me, whose name was the most conspicuous reading on the address, to the next parsonage without expense, let, hindrance, or delay, which was accordingly done. Whether my wife was duped, or made a wilful mistake in the opening of the box, remains a strict secret with her to the present day. It is not my affair, but its history was this.

The mysterious box had been despatched from England, where an association, or associations, of benevolent ladies existed, who, in consideration of Ireland being so wretched, and its clergy such paupers, had, in their good-natured folly, adopted the absurd notion that their children were all but nude; and their wives, though still, perhaps, devoted to a little love of finery, and unable to indulge in it, might yet persuade themselves they were fine in the half-worn habiliments of their sisters and well-wishers across the Channel. And thus the “quality of mercy” was maintained, blessing those who disposed thus of their old garments, and those who received them—as was supposed! In conclusion, for all things tend to an end, though I could discourse yet much more on my experiences, I should hope that I have related sufficient to prove the proposition with which I set out, and have demonstrated so far, “the inconvenience of good nature!”

IV.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF A TRANSMIGRATED SOUL.



INTRODUCTION.

COME, here is a birthday, and story, and song,  
Charm its last joyous hours winging gaily along.  
It was earliest dawn of that long-honoured day  
Since eyelids were sleepless—suppose we 'tis May—  
Fields, garden, and hedges are searched to adorn  
The banquet of love that was spread on that morn.  
The village musician full well the day knew,  
And his strings were in motion ere chanticleer crew.  
At the well-known *réveillé* the juniors arise—  
Joy gladdens their bosoms and brightens their eyes—  
To honour the loved one they join hand and heart,  
And each has a project, and all have a part ;  
And when they all meet at that morning's repast  
What a halo of happiness round them is cast !  
The evening arrives—and some guests meet to share  
The enjoyment the forenoon is taxed to prepare.  
Tho' of bloom that was borrowed in earlier hours,  
The wreaths are now languishing, flaccid the flowers,  
Yet the blossoms ne'er wither, the flowers never pale  
That are warmed by Love's sunshine, or wooed by Love's gale.  
For Love has a brightness entirely its own,  
That shines amid darkness, nor loses a tone  
Nor a tint in the gloomiest twilight that throws



A pall on earth's sunshine, and e'en from our woes  
 Draws a balm and a beauty that never decay,  
 But wreath our December with blossoms of May.  
 Now change we our mood—say the twilight is gone,  
 And evening's grey tints have come stealthily on,  
 Yet the robin still sings in the whitethorn near,  
 Where his mate rears her tiny ones year after year.  
 We linger to hear the sweet vesper, and then  
 Return to our mundane enjoyments again.  
 A tale has been promised to fill up the measure  
 Of that joyous holiday's annual pleasure—  
 'Tis forthcoming. The reader due rev'rence inspires,  
 And, *credat Judaeus*, is all she requires.  
 'Tis granted! The guests by propriety's laws  
 Re-echo the family's loudest applause!  
 "But wide is the difference," exclaims some grave critic,  
 "Between *our* awards and applause parasitic."  
 'Tis a fact, courteous friend, that cannot be denied.  
 Now here follows a tale of my father's fireside.

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My first experience of animation was in the shape of a hawk, just at the time when birds of my species were in great repute: hawking being then the chief amusement of every court in Europe. I was a bird of much note, I assure you! How often have I perched on the hand of royalty; or, after enjoying a flight through the air, which would, I think, pretty much astonish a poet, would I descend in a gyration to the infinite delight and wonder of princes and nobles—nay, even of royal ladies, who, all anxious to testify their admiration of me, would throng round and vie with each other in manifestations of regard and delight at my achievements, which truly were more extraordinary and astonishing than I can now give you any idea of. At length I picked the eyes out of some pet quadruped—I think it was a monkey, or cat, or some such creature, of a particular species, which

the State had fitted out, the year before, an expedition to obtain from some unexplored country for my royal mistress's sole entertainment and delectation. From this time forward—though the king regarded me with the same countenance as ever—I was not slow in perceiving that the queen entirely withdrew hers from me, as did the ladies of her court. This capricious conduct was the death of me. I began to droop, very soon lost all my wonted vigour, and, being a bird of sentiment, though a hawk, at last fell a victim to the inconstancy which I have always encountered in the female sex, whether as a bird, beast, fish, or man!

Dead I was to all intents and purposes now as a hawk, but I soon revived, and my next part was played in the great ocean—and a rather conspicuous part it was—as a sword-fish. What execution I did there among the whales, whom I made tremble at the sight of me! I showed no mercy to the huge monsters; and this feeling of enmity towards them caused my untimely death, for one glorious evening, as I glided through the ocean in quest of my victims, I perceived a huge mass rolling towards me. I advanced, and without a moment's consideration, plunged my sword up to the very jaw into the under part of my prey. What was my consternation upon finding that I could not remove my weapon. I now—alas! too late—found that it was a ship I had attacked; and in making a truly desperate effort to disengage myself from my unhappy position, my snout and body were dissevered. I dropped to the bottom of the ocean a lifeless corpse. But this exploit has rendered me famous, and my sword thus remaining in the ship's bottom has been extracted, preserved, and is exhibited, as every one knows, at the British Museum. Thus, in my life, while I inhabited the ocean, I was feared, and in my death renowned! Could the shades of Cæsar, Alexander, or Bonaparte say or wish for more?

I next awoke to existence in the form of a congar, in the woods of Northern America. Subject to no vexatious laws,

happy and free, I roamed about when and where I pleased. My vocation was that of obtaining food, and the delightful excitement the state of my appetite continually occasioned kept me in the best health and in perpetual motion ; but tired at length of prey which custom had rendered easy of capture, and my appetite growing a little delicate, I longed for a delicious taste of human flesh. What then was my delight one evening, as I lay in a thicket, to hear the approach of footsteps which I knew were not those of any other creature than man. The air around, when I snuffed it up, was redolent of humanity. I was therefore elated to an uncommon pitch of enthusiasm. Here were my long-cherished desires on the point of being gratified. I crouched my body to the earth, and regulated all my limbs for a sudden spring that would floor my adversary at the first onset. He approached. His eyes caught mine, which I dare say were blazing with the refulgence of stars ! He stopped, cocked his rifle, and stood as if on the defensive. This was the work, as it seemed, of a moment. I seized that single moment, made my spring. The piece went off, but wide of its mark. I had my destined victim down. He grappled fiercely with me. I made at his throat, which he gallantly defended ; but at length, through exhaustion, fright, and loss of blood, he was on the point of becoming an easy prey, when a huge bloodhound, a dog I never cared to attack, sprang upon me from behind, and turned the tide of the battle. I was now obliged to act on the defensive, and the cowardly master, finding his demon of a dog was likely to have the best of the day, took the opportunity, with the butt end of his rifle, to deal me a smashing blow, which added one to the annual obituary of congars.

I was next transformed into a snake of the cobra di capello species. In this state I had worshippers innumerable, who, though I dare say in other respects were remiss and blameable enough, yet rendered me the most devoted homage. The grandeur of my proportions and the dignity of my convolu-

tions kept the multitude in indescribable awe, and I lived in state far exceeding that of an earthly monarch. I was worshipped, adored, sacrificed to with the utmost enthusiasm, until a set of utter strangers, called missionaries, formed a crusade against me ; yet even with them I was an object of wonder ! I sat for my likeness to one of them, a portrait which was sent to Europe. They measured me by my shadow, for none dare approach my person ; my astounding dimensions were written in a book, which was duly printed, with an account of the worship I received, and diffused throughout the Christian world, with the history of my worshippers. Here, again, fame marked my life ! My death, alas ! was sudden, and occasioned by the treachery of these said missionaries ; for one day, as I lay ruminating, after having sucked in the infant of a native chief which had been presented to me by its devout parents in sacrifice, peacefully dreaming of the happiness of my lot, and wrapped in an elysium resembling that of the dreams of the opium eater, I all at once received a shot in the brain, which extinguished my greatness, and rather disagreeably terminated my slumbers.

I think some considerable time must have elapsed ere I knew myself again, but at length I was aroused to being on the wide sea in a fearless craft, and the chief of a daring crew—I was a pirate ! The recital of my adventures and my prowess then would fill volumes. I can only say here I was everything that a pirate ought to be : daring, venturesome, and successful. I swept the seas with the besom of destruction from Baffin's Bay to the Indian Ocean. I received over thirty wounds in various parts of the body : shots, thrusts of pikes, sabre cuts, &c. In my last engagement I got two wounds in my head, which confused and stunned me so much that I felt the effects even after I died, which I am almost sure I must have done from the severity of the concussion they occasioned. What I am now, therefore, I cannot distinctly tell, but I think I am a king—nay, I am sure I am, for see these people, how they dare not approach me. At times

they will not even venture to come nigh that grating : they speak in whispers, and look awe-struck. I eat my meals alone, and they are generally served to me through that small trap in the wall ; besides, it takes a number of persons to dress me, and occasionally they invest me with a garment that I don't see on any one else ; this must be at times of state and ceremony when I am so equipped. Oh yes ! indeed I am a king !

At the conclusion of the poor madman's recital I perceived that he had advanced pretty far in the composition of a straw crown, which doubtless was all that he conceived he wanted to consummate his title to royalty.

V.

## THE WIDOW BIRD.



### INTRODUCTION.

THE eve of dull November !  
Tho' some are now away,  
We'll try to cheer all that are here  
Pretending to be gay.  
The molten lead is duly read,  
The nuts are paired and burned,  
The apples fizzing on a string  
Before the fire are turned,  
Till losing heart, they one by one,  
By gravity's control,  
Of course, drop down till all are gone  
To fill the "wassail bowl,"  
Commingle with the seething spice  
And saccharine supply,  
Around the room with rich perfume  
Greet nerve olfactory.  
"Now, ere the brew is duly due,  
Let's have a song. Yet stay,  
'Tis early still, the time we'll fill  
With story, if we may.  
A busy pen I've lately seen  
Plying unwonted task,  
A tale I guess we'll soon have read!  
That favour now I ask"—

Favour conceded—audience few,  
But listening with Athenian ears,  
Always attent on what was new—  
Was read the “ tale ” that now appears,  
Which served a little mark to leave  
Upon that dull November eve.

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THINK not, O ye ornithologists and fancy-bird culturists, that there are no widow birds in this blest world beside those beautiful-crested creatures that choose their habitation in the marshes of the East, whose delicate plumage adds a charm to the *chapeaux* of our belles, or, it may be, to the lovely creatures themselves. Truly a pity would it be should such a mistake prevail amongst our readers, and ill would it suit with our anxiety for their amusement and delight were we to leave them uninformed on such an important subject. Be it known, then, that there was once upon a time a gentleman of the *aviaristic* name of Bird. He died, and the newspaper announcement of the sad occurrence informed mankind that he left behind a disconsolate widow and small, helpless family. Now, as this seems to be somewhat of a general rule in regard of “ death’s doings,” whose victims are seldom gregarious, at least in a family circle, it is not a matter of much wonder that there should have been no exception made by the “ grim monster ” in favour of Mr. Bird. He died. The Widow Bird, after a respectable time, became reconciled to her loss, which she asserted was his gain—she knew best. Her “ bereavement ” began to be less acutely felt, her trial to be spoken of with fewer tears, and she now dedicated herself wholly, like a good widow, to what she conceived to be the interests of her small, helpless family, which consisted of one individual, a boy of very diminutive size, even for his age, but of what phrenologists would pronounce a remarkably striking development of

the head for his size. The young Bird was a treasure to the widow, who, even in this his callow state, could fancy she discovered traits of an incipient genius, which in process of time she had no doubt would take a lofty flight and soar—well, goodness knows to where. But a few of those symptoms of eminence that was to be we may as well enumerate here for general enlightenment. Item 1st. An utter aversion to control, an independence of character which displayed itself from his earliest infancy on this wise—in sundry cries, screams, and kicks, rollings on the floor, or not unfrequently in the street or on the road, when the wishes of his obsequious nurse or tender parent happened not to coincide with his own judgment! But such ebullitions were interpreted as sure manifestations of a manly, independent character, which unmistakably would hold his own—a true mark of genius! Thus reasoned the widow, as she looked forward with “fond hope,” as she used to express herself, to the period when her son would gratefully acknowledge his mother’s tender care and fostering culture of these sweet buds of promise, in which a casual observer would perhaps perceive nothing more or less than the wild ebullitions of an uncurbed childish temper.

In the second item, Master Bird’s traits of genius were really no less singular and surprising than in the first. This was manifested in a decided disrelish, nay, aversion, to learning, and though many pretty little devices and conceits were procured and invented in order to cajole this wayward hope of the future into an appreciation of the value or the delights of learning. In vain were such traps as “the flowery alphabet,” “the risible alphabet,” “alphabetical games,” &c., placed before the eyes of the young Bird, he could in no wise, or under no disguise, be beguiled or seduced from his loyal allegiance to Ignorance, by means so infallible where a genius is not concerned.

So after repeated trials, and as many failures, the Widow Bird saw that Providence had not yet disposed her son’s



mind towards the attainment of those elementary rules which are *de rigueur* the foundation of all excellence in literary, scientific, or other pursuits which adorn humanity. The judicious widow therefore gave up all solicitude, for the present, at least, respecting the education of her son. The alphabetical games were put away, and no further mention was made to the wondrous child of flowery, visible, or any other alphabet, a proceeding very much to the satisfaction and delight of the dear boy, whose will seemed henceforth to govern not only himself but his mother, who used emphatically to declare how capable he was of directing and setting her right on many matters wherein she, like many other erring mortals, was often wrong. In fact, her child "did not resemble other children of his age in any particular," a fact most palpable to any one on whom he was inflicted. And thus passed the merry days of childhood with little Master Bird, giving the most satisfactory evidence on every occasion to his tender parent that he was not a *common* child, and by her treated accordingly.

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## CHAPTER II.

OUR widow, still hoping, continued to foster her young genius after the fashion we have endeavoured to depict above. Some hasty censurers may, perhaps, imagine that the widow did not possess common sense. Pardon us if by our details we have led any one into such an error. The lady had not only common sense, but uncommon shrewdness, and frequent were the occasions on which she was called on to exercise both since her disconsolate widowhood. Mrs. Bird was, in fact, what is usually styled a clever woman; and but for this one idea that took full possession of her, viz., that her son was of a rare disposition, and, in fact, very peculiar and uncommon, requiring more than ordinary care and maternal solicitude—a motive extremely common and prevalent among mothers of all de-

scriptions, and eminently so among widows respecting their offspring — we should set down our widow among the sensible of womankind. After sixteen years of experimenting in her own way, and finding her son entering on his seventeenth year, and still the great unknowing and unknown, the judicious widow began to think it high time to alter her course in bringing this young bud of promise forward in an educational way. Let us do her the justice to remark that she would not have so long deferred this important step, only that the boy's size very much favoured the idea that he was several years his own junior, so that he appeared to be about ten when his mother determined to give him the first push up to Parnassus, in an English form of course. The lady had "studied her dear child's character" so well that she had made the important discovery that the creature was most manageable when he had satisfied "the keen demands of appetite" at a substantial dinner, tired out by that time by the varied and fatiguing exertions of the day, in which he most industriously performed all the mischief that might be done in the neighbourhood, such as hunting and killing cats, robbing and destroying birds' nests, lying in wait for, and whipping the legs of, little defenceless urchins with a long coach whip which mamma had given him for behaving well in church, with several other sportive gambols, by which the little Bird contrived to amuse himself and, as the widow used to say, "lay in a stock of health and acquire a pair of rosy cheeks, which would be of the greatest importance to him hereafter." Her boy's activity and robustness were pleasing themes for the delighted mother to descant on; and withal, he was so steady, she had no occasion to look after him from morning to night, and so punctual that she never remembered his absence from the dinner-table—admirable boy! Most trusting mother! who gave up her treasure to Providence and declined to interfere. She had no fears respecting him: but he should be taken gently and cautiously. You take a nettle so. So

after much circumlocution and abundance of caution, the parent Bird at last partially succeeded in beguiling her offspring into spending a spare half hour of a wet evening in the acquisition of that portion of useful knowledge popularly known under the style and title of great A, B, C. As faithful historians, we must record that our genius was not very slow in gathering up these seeds of the great tree, which are often the bitterest part. Let us be thankful, on behalf of our youth, that there are still only twenty-six to be swallowed, Mr. Lowe's additions being not yet voted. And in process of time he had learned to construct words of small dimensions through mamma's wheedling process ; but as words lengthened progressively, the faithful parent began to entertain serious ideas of procuring a *sub*, who would, *con amore*, undertake to act as her deputy in the "pleasing task" of teaching Master Bird's "young ideas how to shoot" into dissyllabic, and trisyllabic, &c., fields of learning.

Many were the anxious nights in which the Widow Bird lay meditating on her project to stir the dear fledgling's nest, hitherto so undisturbed and downy. How could she bear to shift him from under her own wing for even half an hour, even for the acquisition on his part of superior knowledge ? By no means, at all events, should his little innocent diversions be interfered with ; though they were not always performed under her own eye, yet she estimated them at the value which his redundant health and spirits showed was great. To leave such a child alone and unprotected, one who required so much kindness and attention, to the treatment of a strange person who was not acquainted with his habits or his disposition, would be a severe trial to both mother and son, and an epoch in the life of both not to be lightly evoked. So, after about a month's labour of thought and deliberative heart-searchings, the following elegant announcement appeared in more than one leading newspaper :

WANTED.—For a small establishment, a middle-aged person of truly pious habits, who would undertake conscientiously to make herself

generally useful, and anxiously and carefully assist in preparing a little boy for a liberal education. None need reply whose high moral character cannot be fully sustained, and whose acquirements are not of the most solid kind, with exemplary Christian views as to her required duties, and whose piety will bear the strictest scrutiny. Salary £10 per annum, and treatment as one of the family. No laundry.

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### CHAPTER III.

NUMEROUS were the aspirants bold enough to reply to our incomparable widow's challenge; and indeed it must have been both satisfying and edifying to her to ascertain by the dozens of responses to the foregoing emphatic proclamation that so many eminently pious, and useful, and trustworthy characters as teachers and rearers of youth had made this country their home; and flattering was it to Mrs. Bird to find her call so promptly and warmly responded to by so many worthy persons. There was, in fact, an *embarras des richesses* in this way, and the difficulty was now how to choose among so many eligible candidates for the important situation set forth in the document under consideration. Some other weary nights and harassing hours were devoted to the solution of this problem, but at last the *asses' bridge* was achieved in favour of a lady who, in addition to many other recommendations, "had no incumbrances," which euphemism means relations who might claim a part of her income; no, not even so much as would relieve the vacancy of a band-box, her principal travelling companion. Before this lady's instalment into office she had succeeded in convincing the widow that piety was her *forte*; moreover, that her chief delight was placed in imparting knowledge, of which she had a superabundance, as was known to all her friends—and she had many—but her particular happiness in this mundane sphere was in the society and companionship of children, and how especially blest should she feel in being called to be the caretaker of an only child, a boy too, and that boy a widow's son. And whereas this enlightened woman pro-

ceeded to declare that a comfortable home was much more to her taste than emolument—"filthy lucre"—she was in the end declared to be the person sent specially by Providence as particularly suited to fill up the blank in the domestic circle of the Widow Bird.

"Mrs. Pickersgill," said the anxious mother one evening to her now installed deputy, "what is your opinion of labour?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I always thought it a delightful occupation! Do you mean bodily labour or mental labour, ma'am?"

"Oh, I mean," replied the widow, "its orthography. Do you think it should be spelled with the *u* or without?"

"I should almost suspect," was the hesitating answer, "that the word ought to be spelled with"—looking inquiringly into her questioner's face—"out," seeing something which she construed into dissent from the first portion of her faltering reply. "Without, I should say, unquestionably," gathering courage. "The word of course should be spelt without the *u*, as it is pronounced. But you, ma'am, are an incomparable judge. Indeed, it is very essential to spell well; don't you think so, ma'am?—of infinite importance." rejoined the lady, becoming in her turn the interrogator.

"Mrs. Pickersgill, I entirely agree with you as to that; but I always spell the word with *u*," said the erudite widow.

"Oh, I am sure you are right, ma'am. Yes, to be sure, it it ought to be spelled so, of course. I knew it ought. Did I not say as much?"

"I thought you said the reverse," quoth the widow.

"Yes, you did," joined in Birdie—a name invented for our genius by his *gouvernante*.

"Oh, did I, my love?" said the meek lady. "Well I meant the reverse, dear."

"I am sure you didn't know!" blubbered out her amiable pupil; whereat both ladies laughed heartily, as at some-

thing very droll and original. Indeed, Mrs. Pickersgill laughed louder and more hearty than did the widow, and only recovered her breath at the end of ten minutes sufficiently to exclaim—

“Well, Mrs. Bird! Such a boy! There is something truly uncommon about him—so much straightforwardness! What independence of character, and such powers of observation! Did not know what I meant! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Well, well—what a boy! Who could believe he was such an endearing creature? (Another cachinnation). What a happy mother you are, Mrs. Bird!”

And the widow replied she was a happy mother, and at the same time attempted to impress a kiss, meant to be expressive of such maternal bliss, on Birdie's forehead; but the youth would allow of no such ebullition of inward delight to be inflicted on him; and the scene was wound up by a copious shedding of tears from the parental eyes, and sundry long-drawn and meant-to-be half-stifled sighs from the sympathetic bosom of her *sub*.

But very seriously annoying to the good widow was Mrs. Pickersgill's commiseration. So well was it acted that the poor victim of many delusions took the demonstration for reality, and her distress at being supposed a subject for the pity of the *sub* was so poignant that she resolved to have no witness to her tears in future, and took the earliest opportunity to inform the hapless deputy that she was free to depart; and depart she did, one fine morning, leaving the lyric effusion which we subjoin pinned to Birdie's bolster.

“Descend, ye muses, on my humble pen,  
 And teach me how to say farewell!  
 Watch this sweet bird with pitying ken,  
 And on his pillow ever dwell!  
 Let no rude hand the nest disturb  
 Where callow now he lies!  
 He's sweet and good and needs no curb:  
 May he soon be fledged and wise!”

Tears now fell fast from the eyes of the sweetly sensitive mother as she conned these "beautiful lines," and bitterly did she reproach herself for being obliged to part with so sweet a poet and so kind a friend, as was her now dear, dear Mrs. Pickersgill. "Watch this sweet bird," would she repeat. How tenderly sweet! Overlooking, perhaps, that the Muses were invoked for the important guardianship, not Providence.

Now Birdie, beside committing these beautiful lines to memory, which she would try and induce him to do instantly, should also write to the authoress when he was able; and this high resolve calmed her conscience and soothed her feelings, so stirred up from the depths of the unapproachable sensations of mother love!

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#### CHAPTER IV.

THE widow had her eyes opened at length to a very obvious fact in universal history as well as in particular cases—but not for a considerable time subsequent to the events already recorded—namely, that "this sweet bird" was every year growing older and older; and this view of things, as she looked them straight in the face, made her very restless and uncomfortable in her mind, as she could hit on no expedient whereby past errors and failures in the management and education of her darling son might be retrieved.

The dear object of all this solicitude, we must say, was in no wise distressed under the circumstances. He possessed the handsomest pony in the county; was so far independent of the world that he might sit on the coach-box now, and do many other things without first obtaining mamma's permission; nay, could even prescribe the round of calls or rides which she should accomplish, though he never accompanied her inside the door of any of her friends.

Birdie had other little immunities and privileges also too numerous to mention, so that whatever disquietudes at times assailed him arose solely from his own view of things, which was often of the crankiest, for he knew of only one tense—the present—and persistently ignored all others, giving himself no stupid solicitude about the time to come, and never looking into the cloudy past. He had long ago forgotten Mrs. Pickersgill. Indeed, she only “came as a shadow, so departed ;” and her invocation to the Muses for him failed altogether, for he had not even committed it to memory, so the elegant effusion was lost to the sweet object that evoked it, and but for the protection of the elegantly bound album of the appreciative widow, would be lost to the world : but, golden clasped, there it confronted the æsthetic explorer.

But as to useful or questionably ornamental knowledge, dear Birdie had a fair share. He knew every cover of every fox in the barony, every horse and dog by name, as well as every coachman, groom, and dog boy. He was ambitious, too, for he was already desirous of becoming a member of the sporting club, and did not see why nonsense should prevent him from keeping race cattle and foxhounds. He was not aware that his patrimony was limited, and just sufficient, with care and good management, to meet the wants and casual expenditure of a sober-minded country gentleman ; and no marvel that a mind so untutored and so incapable of reflection should indulge, as he did, in all the vagaries that present self-gratification could suggest.

In the meantime, the now disconsolate widow indeed, finding her own plans regarding her son had signally failed in producing that perfection that she had expected from them, and wearied of taking her own advice, wrote, with considerable emotion, to a few of her friends, for the first time, to proffer theirs upon the interesting subject. This act was performed with an unusual humiliation of self-esteem, and an amount of candour which elicited the warm



commendations of many of those friends who, never having seen the youth in question, or having more than a vague idea that such an entity existed, persuaded themselves that the widow had done wonders with a youth left entirely to her care, never suspecting that she drew largely on her descriptive powers in the particulars of her communications.

“I may be partial,” wrote she to one of her correspondents, a clergyman, “but it seems to me—and others agree with my view—that he would be an ornament to any profession that he might choose, but the Church I think him particularly calculated for. I hope the good seed has been sown in his young mind, and that there is a true foundation laid. If we could only now overcome the want of a suitable education, which I have endeavoured, indeed, to impart, single-handed as I may say, never having found any one beside adequate to the important task.”

Ah, treacherous widow! how little you remember dear, dear Mrs. Pickersgill and her earnest solicitude and sublime valediction!

To another correspondent the anxious mother wrote thus—“The dear boy’s genius is, in my mind, capable of any flight. His education may, indeed, have been a trifle neglected, for his health was such that a public school was not to be thought of for him. I have, myself, however endeavoured to lay, I trust, a good foundation,” &c.—ditto of last extract, but instead of the Church, the Bar is now the object in view for the bird that she represented as a sparrow sitting alone upon the housetop!

Poor lady! in drawing her pictures her colouring was not true to nature, and, without intending it, she gave false impressions on the subject of her communications to those whose advice, when too late, she sought; and consequently her own erroneous judgment was not in the way of being improved either by the suggestions or advice of the friends to whom she applied. They, one and all, gathered from her letters with the high-coloured “descriptive particulars,”

that she was the mother of a delightful lad, who wanted nothing but a knowledge of the classics, a part of education which, while candidly confessing ignorance of, she knew was deemed necessary for the higher professions; and therefore, reserving her own, she would submit to general opinion on the matter, and now wished to be guided by each one in turn of her correspondents, as to the profession most likely to want such an ornament as the bright original of his mother's limning, and which was, to her mind, but a faint outline.

With what intense anxiety did the widow wait for the replies of her former friends, which dropped in duly one by one, and one by one expressed much commendable solicitude and kind regard for herself and the young gentleman; but they breathed not one word of promise as to making the latter personage either a judge or a bishop, or even a member of parliament. Such chilly replies led the enthusiastic widow into sundry moral and pious musings and reflections on the faithlessness of friends in general, and of her own in particular, who could, after all a mother's panegyrics, contemplate the possible effects of not offering a helping hand, and let her son, like the flower that was born to blush unseen,

“Waste his sweetness on the desert air.”

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## CHAPTER V.

OUR widow's fame as a guide of youth was by this time pretty well established in her neighbourhood, and had even extended into other places far distant from the circumscribed circle so called, and had become a caution whereby many an urchin was doomed to unwonted rigours, through the overweening anxiety of many a father, and many a schoolmaster, to preserve their fair characters from

the aspersion of over indulgence or blind partiality to their respective charges. And many were the unsanctified wishes put forth by "bold bad" boys that the "Widow Bird" and her son had flourished in some other century, or, at least, in a far distant country.

Birdie by this time, as may be anticipated, had grown into rather an awkward plaything, and the widow herself was sometimes constrained to confess that there had been a failure somewhere in calling forth that genius of which she still maintained her son had given such early and decided indications. She now began seriously to consider that no more time was to be lost as to the higher education of Augustus Adolphus Edward, the son of this distinguished woman. And indeed it was high time to resolve upon a course which would further her son's studies while waiting for an appointment. All things considered, the question now was in this little affair how or where to find a duly-qualified preceptor, who should be able to impart to this peculiarly precious youth much knowledge, without giving much trouble to the boy, or alienating his mind from its perfect purity! Such a "head master" was, fortunately, discovered, and to school was Birdie persuaded to go, on being assured that it scarcely wanted three weeks from the time of his gracious though tardy assent to a measure initiated without his cognisance, and, as he maintained to the last, unfair and treacherous on the part of his doting mother. But there would be a little rest from idleness, and a little variety, in thus breaking fresh ground for the short time that intervened between his leaving and his return to home, at the commencement of the long summer vacation. "Three weeks," observed the widow, dissolving with tears, "is certainly an age to think of, especially when I think on the hardships you must have to undergo in that time; so young and for the first time quitting my fostering care and guidance. Oh, my love! it is only one woman in ten thousand who could bring herself to such a sacrifice. But what is

there so self-sacrificing as maternal love! You know, when giving you some initiatory lessons in natural history, I have often called your attention to the parent hen how she pecks the young chicks sometimes for their good, while she would defend them with her life; and also that beautiful ordination of nature by which the cat drives her kitten from her, when she considers it time for it to manage for itself, and live independent of her."

With such encouraging and appropriate illustrations did the widow try to beguile the solemn hours employed in travelling towards the place of her darling's banishment—as she conducted him thither herself, fearing, as she said, that his heart would break were he to leave home and her together. Thus, as she hoped, beguiled of the tears which she had apprehended might dim the eyes and soil the cheeks of her "handsome boy"—the tender mother supplemented her would-be consolations by the profuse supply of sundry confections and sweetmeats, which had been provided for the young traveller—together with the novelty of transit by rail, and sundry other varieties, he managed to maintain a most laudable stoicism, which the widow, in relating the circumstance, described as the effect of feelings too deep for utterance. But the saddest as well as the happiest journey must have an end, and so it happened with the one of which we treat.

Mrs. Bird and her son were received with all due hospitality by the scientific and erudite principal of Air Lodge Seminary, and "Classical, Mathematical, Nautical, and Hagiographic Academy, where all the Arts and Sciences were taught on unfailing principles, as well as the more recondite and abstract branches of hitherto-unpromulgated, but nevertheless useful and absolutely-necessary knowledge; together with all the tongues, ancient and modern, including the unknown, if required. The languages facilitated by the Logalastic system, adopted and improved by the Principal, with oppositional or negative equipollence, and six diagrams,

necessary to all grammarians, both English and Classical, accompanied by metrical prosody, mathematical astronomy, the calculations of the calendar, and the use of the United Globes. All taught in a few weeks, or at the most months !”

Here then did the widow place her son, and what more suitable casket could she meet with wherein to deposit her jewel.

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## CHAPTER VI.

TENDER was the parting between mother and son ; but, as we love not to dwell on painful subjects, we shall take the liberty of passing over all the sobs, tears, and tenderness of that sacrificial hour, and set down the widow at her own home, with a heart still sore from its bursting, eyes still wet from weeping, and a pocket-handkerchief still intensely humid with maternal tears. Ah ! why had not these drops a more durable lachrymatory, to demonstrate Mrs. Bird's stupendous sacrifice to all widows with one son hence to be.

In her absence from home, short as it was, a promising young man had died of brain fever, notwithstanding all the skill the doctors could bring to bear on the case. The whole village mingled their tears with those of the bereaved family, and the widow at the “quiet house,” who, as we have by this time become cognisant, was of an affectionate and sympathising nature, shared the general grief, and even caused a consolatory message to be conveyed to the mourning parents, purporting that she could well feel for them and with them in their grief ; for she knew and could perfectly understand what they must suffer, having just placed her only son at school ! It is said that grief is greatly alleviated when we have fellow sufferers, and the poignancy thereof greatly mitigated. Perhaps by the circumstance we have just recorded the keen edge of the widow's grief was rendered a little less acute, and that thus she was

enabled to endure the fortnight and three days of her son's absence.

At length the wished for day arrived that was to restore our youth to his fond parent. A trusty servant had been duly despatched to conduct him homeward, and all was preparation and bustle through the small household for the great event. When, lo! instead of the young gentleman, arrived a letter from his preceptor, announcing his disappearance from the school one fine morning, and filled with hopes that the youth had arrived safely at home! "Madam," wrote the accomplished head of Airfield House Academy, "As the fiduciary of the highly respectable parents who honour me with their confidence, I must naturally feel uneasy, being, as I am at present, in a state of nescience as regards the locality of your dear son. The only esoine that I can admit of indeed, in his case is, that he has evagated towards the maternal roof, for all endeavours to recover him in this vicinage, and for forty miles round, since his incomprehensible absence from the seminary, have proved, I grieve to add, abortive. But if he has only anticipated the prorogation of our internal studies by a day or two, though his contempt of rules must, I am sure, have a most malific effect, and diffuse a pernicious influence on his fellow students; yet, as my system is never to punish, but leave my interesting young companions to their own pure consciences, I am quite willing, notwithstanding your dear boy's erratic propensities, to receive him at Air Lodge House when the seminary shall have resumed its sittings, and to re-commence those mental lactations which I have never failed to bestow particularly on your son, by reason of his hitherto abstention from mental sustenance, owing to the absolute want of an adequate supply"!

Thunder and earthquakes could not add to our poor widow's distress and anguish on her perusal of the above. She did not hesitate a moment to try and solve the beauty of the phraseology of the elegant epistle, nor did she pretend

to unravel its would-be Johnsonianisms of style. No, no, all that she saw in it was that her son, her child, her birdie was gone, and she knew not whither. Perhaps he had been kidnapped, or was it not likely that he had fallen a victim to horrid school regulations and the cruelty of his teacher in enforcing them! That moment she would set off for Air Lodge House and get a search-warrant to try every well and hole about it for his dead body; have the house pulled down, the master hanged in chains, and then prepare herself to join her cherub in the skies! As such thoughts passed rapidly through Mrs. Bird's brain, and before she could make her hastily conceived preparations towards her departure for the performance of her contemplated course of justice, her birdie stood before her. Only a faint was the consequence of the sudden and altogether unexpected and unlooked for appearance; and when, by the slowest degrees, the widow opened her eyes again on her beloved son, and saw him there, in all his mundane attributes, including the desire for dinner, she fell to tears, which were only repressed by our youth's reiterated demands for something to eat!

Behold the Widow Bird now, the happiest of human mortals, caressing her "lubberly boy," who received her fondling pretty much in the same way as we have seen a bear's cub return the polite attentions of its mamma.

The first joy over, the letter of the master of Air Lodge House Seminary was conned over and over again, and the widow began to perceive in it a mine of affection and solicitude for her beloved son, overlooked in her first hasty perusal of the really elegant epistle: judging at least from that part of its contents which did not come within the scope of her understanding! But, calling to aid a dictionary, she thought she was enabled to penetrate all the perfections of the communication; and the result of that critical perusal was that she felt she ought to congratulate herself on having selected such an instructor as the author of that letter for her dear boy—her only child!

The first duty, therefore, that devolved on Mrs. Bird was to write to Mr. O'Golloher, conveying at once to him the joyful tidings that "Master Bird" had safely arrived, and was again in the maternal nest, and not forgetting to apologize that her epistolary style, not being, of course, founded on the classics, was so very far below his; and begging to assure Mr. O'Golloher that her sense of gratitude was so great for his tenderness and truly paternal anxiety, as his beautiful letter evinced for her child, that death only could efface the remembrance of it. "Master Bird's" delinquency was slightly glanced over by attributing it to the extremely affectionate disposition which he inherited from her, and had evinced from his earliest years.

But however it pleased his mamma to dress up the affair according to her own taste, the truth of the story was that Birdie had recognised an old friend in a dog boy, who was domiciled in the neighbourhood of the school, whose visitor he became for a day or two, and found his retreat and entertainment so very agreeable in the kennel that he would willingly have prolonged his visit, were it not that he was compelled to tear himself away at the expiration of a shorter period than he wished, in consequence of the rather abrupt dismissal of his friend, on a mere suspicion of some fraud.

How to get the genius to school again when the long vacation was ended was now a matter of very serious and painful consideration to the widow. It was a thing Birdie would not hear of, even for six weeks after the seminary had resumed business, and circular after circular to that effect had gone its rounds (notably five or six to the Birds' nest). At length the poor widow, beginning to fear that her promising youth might lose time, wrote to the professor, namely, Mr. O'Golloher, to be pleased to hire for her suitable premises as near as possible to his establishment, to which she could remove with her son, her son's pony, and the other essential parts of her establishment, not including



her carriage and pair, but all else that might conduce to *his* comfort and contentment if possible. But unhappily failing in his mission, the professor very hospitably, as well as gallantly, offered the widow an asylum at Air Lodge House, where, ultimately, dear patient reader or listener, the Widow Bird took up her residence as Mrs. O'Golloher! Frightful name! Why, yes! But consider how very beautiful and how self-sacrificing is maternal love, and how willing to resign every personal consideration for the sake of offspring!

In about ten days after the sacrifice above narrated, Birdie quitted the wing of his fond mother and his native land, having chosen a wife from among the domestics of Air Lodge House Establishment, and not forgetting to take with him all the money and valuables he could lay hold of. But whether America or Australia was the chosen place of retreat of the amiable pair has never since transpired. And, if Mrs. O'Golloher does not live happy, dear reader, will you be much surprised?

VI.

C'EST L'AMOUR.



INTRODUCTION.

A LETTER ! a letter ! He's coming, I see.

On the outside is sketched a mail coach  
In his pen-and-ink fashion ; and look, here are we  
In demonstrative attitude, as in great glee  
Awaiting his welcome approach !

\* \* \* \* \*

He's come ! Oh, what pleasure ! How happy we feel  
Our loved and our gifted is come !  
Together, a banquet is spread in each meal,  
Together, more praiseful the voice as we kneel.  
What palace can equal our home !

Yet still there's an absent one. " Would *he* were here,  
Then our cup would be full to the brim ;  
We'll miss his gay laugh in the midst of our cheer,  
His bright strain of wit ever playful and near !  
What a meeting would this be with *him* ! "

Thus spoke the fond mother, tho' radiant with joy  
As she clasped to her heart this loved one ;  
So happiness ever is clogged with alloy ;  
Tho' its golden existence it may not destroy,  
Yet 'twill dim the bright beams of its sun !

“ But now, *vivant vivons!* yes, thus let it be,”  
 Cried the overjoyed father ; “ and now,  
 Tho’ the presence we lack of our dear absentee,  
 So joyous, so loving, yet thankful we’ll be,  
 Nor a cloud overshadow heart or brow.

“ We shall think of him often, and talk of him too,  
 We must read his letter some ev’n,  
 As ’tis done into rhyme by, dear girls, one of you,  
 For it was poetic in style, and so true  
 To his passion for home, ‘earth’s bright heaven.’ ”

It was thus then arranged, and accordingly here  
 We present it for what it is worth ;  
 At that happy fireside it evoked a fond cheer ;  
 Who would doubt that ’twas heartfelt, united, sincere,  
 For in deep-seated love it had birth !

“ I would not be at home in the fairest world  
 That shines when night’s banner of stars is unfurled,  
 Tho’ the brightest gems and the purest ores  
 Shine thro’ the sands of its sunny shores,  
 Tho’ its sky be ever an arch of blue  
 And its flowers perennial in scent and hue ;  
 Tho’ its sportive airs should dance along  
 With the balm of scent and the breath of song ;  
 Tho’ its birds are bright as their parent sun,  
 Shining and glittering every one,  
 And the glorious beams of its noonday light  
 Were never blotted by sable night !  
 Oh ! place me not in scenes so fair  
 Should kindred souls be wanting there ;  
 Hearts that, when mine is beating with joy,  
 Can truly join in the transport high ;  
 Eyes whose light in my heaven far  
 Surpasses the beam of the proudest star !

Yes, I'd rather dwell on an Alpine height,  
Tho' shuddering Nature should shriek in fright,  
Where spring's mild breath or summer's glow  
Ne'er changed the breast of the sullen snow,  
In regions where the thundering sound  
Of falling avalanche rings around,  
Where Earth tremblingly writhes in fearful spasms,  
And yawns from the depths of fire-fed chasms ;  
Even there, with kind voices and heart-loved forms,  
What were to me the rocking storms ?  
Clinging to life by its holiest tie,  
I'd live in the smiles of sweet sympathy ;  
And if death should the golden links dissever,  
It would be but to join them again—and for ever !”

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ELLEN LEE at seventeen was tall, pretty, and in love. She was, moreover, innocent enough to believe her lover when he vowed eternal constancy, and willingly persuaded herself that she could only be happy with William. She had no idea—no, not the least—that she might be deceiving herself. Her heart had formed its idol, and on this shrine were laid all precious things for worship—love, truth, hope, abnegation of self, exaltation of the divinity there. But you who are in love can picture the rest. William got a commission in Her Majesty's regiment, a neither unexpected or unsolicited appointment ; and for a young man, without other apparent expectations, a most welcome one. And one very wet evening he rode over to his old friend, Mr. Lee, to announce the success of his frequent applications in the usual quarters, in which the old gentleman was also interested, and to intimate his compulsory departure on the morrow. The sober-minded parents of Ellen were, of course, delighted with their young friend's opening into a noble service under most favourable auspices. The father re-

joiced that the son of a man whom he had always esteemed so highly was thus smiled upon by fortune. But the father was not in love with his esteemed friend's son. The mother smiled benignantly as she pressed William's hand, and said, though she could not but feel for his mother's grief at a first parting from her favourite son, she felt assured that hopes in his future would counterbalance every selfish thought. And the good lady fervently hoped that he would soon have occasion to distinguish himself in his honourable profession, of which she felt a thorough conviction for her part.

But neither was the mother overhead and ears in love with the young man. Yet, ah! was there not a single moment to be seized, in which the lovers might unobservedly mingle their sighs, vows, tears, and tenderness? Not one. Mr. and Mrs. Lee never contemplated the honour of an alliance, further than warm friendship, with a young man who was poor, that would be contemptible! proud, that would be ridiculous! and who had no estate, that would be abominable!

Well, but after all has been said, sung, done, written against, spoken upon, hinted at, inveighed against, young ladies will fall in love with penniless young men, and the said young gentlemen will persuade themselves that, no matter how deficient they may be in means, *love* will supply all the needful, and to the winds with the rest.

Ellen Lee, with such a monitor as your father, such an example as your exemplary mother before your eyes, who bowed to Cupid but once, when his arrows were tipped, or rather steeped, in gold, how did you venture to disgrace your birth, parentage, and education by running headlong into such a dilemma?

Poor Ellen! she felt as if struck by an ague fit while William made the dreadful disclosure that their separation was so near at hand. There she sat, while the congratulations of father and mother were lighting upon the ears of the new-made *militaire*. She did not venture even to raise

her eyes, fearing to exhibit what was glistening beneath their lids. What did it import to her at that moment of anguish if, in *embryo*, the most renowned warrior of ages to come stood there to go where glory waited, and leave her side? Her demeanour on this momentous occasion was so restrained; nay, in such check did she keep her feelings, so nearly annihilating them altogether, that in the rapid glances William ventured to throw towards her he could not but feel highly mortified at what he interpreted into indifference in her demeanour. Well, thought he to himself, can it be possible that my Ellen, whose absorbing grief on my occasional absences of perhaps a few days used to be so thrilling, can now feel the indifference her looks and manner bespeak? I am going, perhaps never to return. O woman, woman! how often have I heard, how often read, of your fickleness and inconstancy; but is not this the very acme of cold-hearted indifference, the most flagrant dereliction of affection to be met with in the annals of love? But William was very unreasonable. Lovers have been so from time immemorial. What could poor Ellen do then and there? Doubtless, had the communication been made to her own private ear, she would not fail to have taken her part of heroine in the tragedy to her lover's heart's content. But love is of a very cowardly nature. The dismayed youth should have given himself time to consider the august presence of the parents, whose juvenilities were over a couple of decades before. Love has a logic of its own, whereby all the natural powers of the *infected one* are inverted, judgment is overthrown, reason is unseated, and conscience is napping. Verily, there is no state of existence more deplorable than that of one of Cupid's victims. Alack and a-weel-a-day! as my great-grandmother used to exclaim, talk of any or all the ills that flesh is heir to, what are such when compared to the poisoned arrows of that malignant son of Aphrodite! What a dire mistake to represent him as a cherub militant, but with only plaything arrows, winning of aspect,

innocently smiling, alluringly coy! Oh! rather ought he to be depicted with the body and claws of a griffin, the head of a Medusa, and instead of those beautiful little feathery shafts wherewith his quiver is adorned, paint him, O ye poets, as he is. Furnish him with the shears of the Fates, the locks of the Gorgon, and the sinister smile of the rock-alluring Siren. Thus let him figure for ever in the *tableaux* of truthful futurity. Had Ellen been a portrait painter, and should her brush go with her impressions, thus would she have caricatured little Cupid, whose bland victimizing of the human heart Ellen Lee felt keenly, now that she had awaked to all the "horrors of sobriety." Remorseless love! why chasten thus the young, the innocent, the trusting? Here is some of thy malicious work! Why cause this single-minded girl to cherish in her heart a devotion thus abruptly to be interrupted by absence, time, and space? Why must it be that William could not ever live and ever love one mile and a quarter from Ellen? and Ellen ever painfully regard his absences of a few hours, and welcome as a boon from the skies, never to be too thankfully received, his returning smiles and tender looks: but at the last sad scene to be obliged to appear careless and cold, if not fickle. Alas! the trials of life begin very untimeously! If the love he so often expressed for her were sincere, why accept a commission at all, even in Her Majesty's service, and then to come with the heart-rending announcement before father, mother, and all—the intelligence that he knew must kill her? Two whole years of happiness were thus blighted at one breath. How cruel! yea, how savage!

Ah! could Ellen have known what her lover's feelings on the same thrilling occasion were, how they would have soothed her. Cupid's logic is not always the profoundest, wherefore it is not recommended in the schools. But the daughter of Mr. Lee of Leeholms was an adept therein, as the above specimen shows. Pretty much of the same kind, but of a more manly type—for Cupid adapts himself to the sexes

—were William's reflections. He had ridden over to Lee-holms indulging in pictures of happiness, even in parting with Ellen. The thrilling pressure of the hand, the exquisitely sad smile, the pallor of unutterable feeling, and even the approach of the small mouth to the already bristled aperture where lips are supposed to enshrine themselves, all rushed in phantasmagoria through the youth's brain. The *moonograph* (albeit it was hazy) putting the possibility of pa's and ma's presence in a corner. But things being ordered otherwise, what could our harshly judged youth do? Up to the occasion he proved himself, calm, cool, resigned. And so were the lovers obliged to part after the manner described. Ellen did not sleep that night, of course. She made a thousand or more resolutions. Live she could not, that was beyond all dispute. When soul and body are parted who ever lived? *Parted*, rent asunder! Ah, he will not, he cannot go so soon. No! How can he tear himself away without another interview? He may be even now lingering beneath my window to catch one last glance, and breathe one more fervent utterance. Yes! the wish and the thought jumped together; neither was father nor foster-father to the other. Quickly jumped she to the window to prove her beau-ideal.

The rain was still drizzling about the evergreens that enshrouded the sanctuary where beauty did not sleep. And not even was there a cat romantic enough to venture out serenading, as is their wont at other times. Nor was aught distinguishable to the eye, for the moon had gone to sleep behind dreary masses of clouds. Morning came, and ah! thought Ellen, perhaps he is now thinking of me at least! And so he was, fair Ellen, be consoled; and thoughts of you, dear girl, also made part and parcel of his night's lubrications. If he thought a little of his scarlet jacket, was it not in connection with your admiration of his good figure encased therein? If he glanced at his regulation sword, was it not the instrument by which he was to win his way to fame, fortune, and Ellen? Though



her coolness piqued him a little, it did not come near extinguishing his love; though on beholding it he could mentally tax her as false, yet (lovers are odd compounds) at that moment, if Ellen Lee stood before him in all her simplicity and truthfulness, and abjured him, loved him no longer, and was done with him for ever, he would not have believed one word of it. For she *did* tremble when she laid her hand in his; and there was an anxious, indescribable look about her face as she dropped her eyelids and gasped "farewell." And though she did not appear frantic at the performance of this scene, he guessed she felt it deeply. All these reflections were highly comforting, no doubt, and their enjoyment helped to bring our young *militaire* to the end of his first stage from home, in a very tranquillized state of mind—but please do not interpret that tranquillized into forgetful. Ah, no! men have been really in love, and William was one of the most devoted of adorers; and if he had an idea at that moment that Ellen was not to be the sharer of his anticipated fortune, when he should have only to sit in the sunshine of his fame and enjoy the honours his valour had earned, he certainly would have thrown up his commission, laid down his sword, and died of despair.

Two days after the parting of the lovers Ellen's friends were so much alarmed at the state of her health that a physician had to be called to attend. The terrified girl at the mention of such a crucial test of her symptoms, her loss of appetite, her sleeplessness, her violent headaches and palpitations, &c., gave herself up for lost. Doctor Probus will surely find out the cause of this illness at once, thought she. Oh yes! he will know why I am suffering thus. How, after his revelations, shall I be able to look papa and mamma in the face again? Oh, never, never! What an old-fashioned girl!

Had a wizard—those who abound in old romances, with the most profound knowledge of the black art, by the help

of which bosoms secrets the most profound, as well as all the most hidden windings and phases of the human heart, might be read as in a printed book—had such a personage been introduced into Ellen's chamber, she could not possibly have looked upon him with more apprehensive throes of conscience than did Ellen when the doctor entered. Her heart sunk within her. I am undone, cried she mentally, when, in answer to some questions put, the most prominent symptoms were revealed by the trembling girl in the most reluctant and hesitating manner. "The fact of it is, madam,——" said Doctor Probus, turning to Mrs. Lee, who stood anxiously waiting his opinion of the case. What more he uttered Ellen heard not. Here was the acme of the poor girl's dread. The judge's black cap put on in open court before the miserable prisoner at the bar never produced a more sublime sense of horror in that trembling transgressor's mind than did those few words on Ellen's ear. Nothing was now before her, as she fancied, but being turned out of her paternal home, as all the heroines she had ever read of were banished, who had violated the wise maternal law which saith, "Beware of falling in love, and do it not at your peril, except it be with a rich man and under my special directions."

But, though the overwhelmed patient stopped her ears to the conclusion of the doctor's disclosure, I see no reason why you, my reader, hearer, or friend, as the case may be, may not be gratified by having the verdict in question related to you. And, moreover, I should wish to give you a fair opportunity of judging of the man's skill, for, you must know, he was a famed Esculapius. "The fact of it is, madam, that your daughter is labouring at this present moment under a very severe feverish cold, perhaps aggravated by a little mental excitement or febrile irritation, which, if unchecked, might possibly lead to more serious consequences, which I do not apprehend, and recommend her to be kept perfectly quiet, toast and water occasionally, and a little change of air if she wishes it."

And now, young charmers, you who may possibly sympathize in these romantic love passes, and might conjure up a lover waiting under your windows trying to achieve an impossibility, viz., to catch a glance from your starry eyes, or zephyry kiss wafted by your fair hands from the rosebud lips, through the half-opened curtains—remember we are all mortal, night air is dangerous, and damp is especially detrimental to the health ; and if it be only a bare surmise that a fond moonstruck youth is below, do not, let me entreat you ; oh ! do not, put your precious heads in the way of the outside drizzle, though ever so softly descending on them, quite oblivious that you are not the divinities you have so often heard you were.

Ellen did not soon recover the effects of her romancing ; but then she had the supreme consolation of looking on herself as a martyr to faithful love. And a letter which William found means of conveying to her privately, expressive of his unaltered and unalterable feelings of deep attachment, had no inconsiderable share in effecting a wonderful cure, which was duly accredited to Doctor Probus's skill and high talent solely. And if the dear doctor, by means of this favourable verdict, had his reputation and his income increased, what matter ?

Now, in the course of time came another trial for poor Ellen. William was ordered to join his regiment, now on active service. It was to be deplored that not a spare moment was given him to return to his family, if only to show himself in regimentals. No ; those who are bound must obey ; and William departed without a glance from his beloved to make sunshine on his path, and incite him to heroic deeds in honour of "England, home, and beauty." But the sufferer's grief on this occasion, being quite unconnected with open-window or night-air performances, did not visibly produce any more serious effects than occasional absence of mind, such as overflowing the cups when presiding at the tea-table, pouring the cream into the sugar-

basin, or taking long lonely walks, quite forgetful of pa's particularity with regard to dinner-bells, returning heated and almost unpresentable to *scrutineers*.

At length smiling Peace brought home many a brave man to his country and his household ties, while many more were never again to gladden the eyes or the hearts of those they had parted from in hope. Even the maimed and wounded that returned rejoiced that they had borne a conspicuous part in their country's triumphs, and forgot themselves in the glory that had been achieved. But who more proud of the happy results of the long and harassing campaign than the family of the soldier of fortune, and the fortunate soldier, Major William —. His return, ardently looked for, was now only a matter of from hour to hour. Dinner was delayed, ordered up, sent back again, till the cook declared everything was spoiled. Hours passed. (There was no railway travelling in those days.) All the expectants seemed to get more and more impatient as the time approached in which their desires were about to be gratified. The servants—who always dined after the family—were wonderfully alert, for

“ They began to feel, as well they might,  
The keen demands of appetite.”

Independently of the supreme joy of receiving their dear son, were not the major's parents longing to be introduced to his French wife and his sweet little French children ! But these delightful anticipations were almost beginning to lose their energy, and an occasional nod or blink among the elderlies indicated that “the force of nature could (almost) no farther go,” when up drove a carriage containing all the desired party. All was joy, delight, ecstasy. Rounds of visits o' mornings, rounds of dinner and night parties.

The Lee family were, of course, among the first to pay their compliments to their old friends, and to congratulate them on their happiness. They accordingly drove over the

morning or two after the arrival. Ellen was introduced by the major to his wife. She begged to see the dear little children, and caressed them like a mother. "C'est un charmant garçon," said she, addressing the mother; "quel âge a-t-il, je vous prie?" "A peu près trois ans," replied the French lady. "Eh! c'est l'âge de mon aîné," said the smiling Ellen.

"C'est l'amour, mes amies ;  
C'est l'amour !"

VII.

A TRUE STORY.



INTRODUCTION.

No more ! no more ! The Tales are o'er,  
And widow's weeds are where  
Two sat not long ago. But now  
There is an empty chair.

Alas ! the time to weep is now ;  
The mourning time is come.  
Gone are life's rainbow hues, and gone  
The sunshine from our home.

There is no more the voice of song ;  
Hushed is the sound of mirth ;  
Sorrow hath woven her dark web  
Around that saddened hearth.

The keystone from the arch is wrenched,  
And but a ruin left,  
Yet love with ivy clasp cements  
The remnant thus bereft.

For the deep charm that bound the hearts  
Which there together grew,  
Intensified by grief would seem  
Its freshness to renew.

No more ! Yes, one dear tale remains—  
Omission were a wrong—  
The colouring is Truth, and shows  
Than Fiction no less strong.

Years sped : an Easter-eve had brought  
Again round that fireside,  
The 'minished group, a brief time there  
Together to abide.

It was no more the home of all ;  
The mother, e'er revered,  
And sisters dwelt there—hallowed spot  
By memories sweet endeared !

The silver cord, indeed, was loosed,  
Broken the golden bowl ;  
But love the fragments gathers up  
And tries to form a whole,

As though the circle to complete,  
The painful blank to fill,  
Reality to cheat awhile,  
Ever obtrusive still,

In memory's guise ; yet often, too,  
Hope her mild radiance shed  
As meet at such a time. And thus  
This closing tale was read.

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## CHAPTER I.

“Le vrai n'est pas toujours  
Le vraisemblable.”

“Should I tell my history, 'twould seem like lies disdained in the reporting.”

NOT a hundred years ago, but something about the latter end of the last century, a benevolent gentleman named Bell, walking through a court in London, called Bell's Court—his own property—saw a little boy sitting on the steps of a door and weeping bitterly.

“Why do you cry, my little lad?” said he, approaching the child, most kindly, who at once felt confidence in the person accosting him thus, and at once answered—

“Because I have nowhere to go to. I have no friends in London, and no one to care for me anywhere.”

“Have you no father, no mother, or home?” said Mr. Bell.

“No, no ; my father and mother are dead, and I have only a stepfather who beats me, and I ran away from him.”

“That was very wrong, my boy. Was he willing to keep you?”

“Oh yes, very willing ; for my uncle, who is also my guardian, Alderman Reed of ——, pays him for me, and he was under a promise to send me to school when he brought me over here, and to be very kind to me ; but he only beats me, and is a bad man ; and I will not go back to him any more.”

The child's language was so simple, his manner so artless, that it would be impossible to imagine for a moment that any deceit lurked in the sweet intellectual countenance of the boy, whose large dark eyes were full of tears (as Mr. Bell expressed himself concerning him), although his pale disfigured face showed neglect and want ; for he had been



wandering about for many days without food or a certain sleeping-place. Deeply interested in the destitute little being before him, the benevolent man more closely interrogated him, and learned that though never very kind, his stepfather's cruelty had latterly reached an unbearable height, in consequence of the boy having unconsciously spoiled a matrimonial project of which a rich widow was to have been the victim ; when, answering to some well-put interrogations of the lady, he revealed the fact that his stepfather, whose name was Fitzgerald, had a wife living in Dublin, and thus he had, as he expressively termed the connection, a stepfather and a stepmother before he was seven years of age !

The unprincipled suitor was in consequence of this artless revelation, of course, rejected, and he visited on the innocent cause of his disappointment his vengeance in so cruel a manner that he fled from his wrath, and was happy to creep at night among the paper cuttings of a bookbinder's workshop to sleep ; but after a night or two this " nice bed," as the poor boy designated it, was denied him, and now, entirely unsheltered, friendless, and hungry, he had given himself up to the overwhelming grief in which Mr. Bell had found him. This worthy gentleman, after a little consideration, thought the best course he could pursue in reference to the young runaway would be to seek out Fitzgerald, and appeal to his humanity, if he possessed any, on behalf of his stepson ; or otherwise to resort to stronger measures if he found his little charge had made a true statement. But he could scarcely prevail with the boy to accede to his propositions. He required a guide, of course, to find this man, of whom he was so unfavourably prepossessed. But it took a considerable amount of persuasion and promise on the part of the humane stranger before—at last most reluctantly—the child consented again to face his ferocious tormentor. Yielding to the powerful influence, on a towardly nature, of kindness and sympathy, and extorting from Mr. Bell a faithful promise that in any case he would not lose

sight of him in future, the little fellow consented to accompany him to Fitzgerald's home. This was found in a very dingy part of the metropolis; for although Fitzgerald managed to cut a good figure elsewhere, his home was squalid, and his habits loose and low. Eventually Mr. Bell was confronted with a man whose forbidding appearance, and evidently assumed manner, revealed much of a low character to such an apprehension as his visitor's, and at once confirmed the prepossessions in his disfavour which he had gathered from the child's story. Deceit and low cunning were in his eye, and ill temper, nay ferocity, were depicted on his contracted brow, while his whole countenance betrayed signs of "evil passions nourished long." Still, too politic to express before Mr. Bell anything but pleasure at the return of the truant boy, he expressed many thanks for his kind solicitude respecting the wayward fugitive, and listened with the most complacent attention to the good man's recommendation to mercy on the culprit, and even volunteered a hearty promise to be more kind to the "poor orphan" in future. Mr. Bell thought he had gained a great victory, said the child had much interested him, and that he would often see him, hinting with some authority that Fitzgerald would be accountable for his conduct toward a child whose connections he knew, and who had future prospects not to be despised.

But no sooner had he departed, after reiterated promises of coming on the morrow—unfortunately for the object of Mr. Bell's solicitude—than the "poor orphan" was visited with the most dreadful outpouring of the tyrant's wrath; first, a most demoniac beating, and immediately after he was dragged more dead than alive on board a vessel which—what was the child's astonishment and delight on recovering a little!—he heard was bound for Dublin. Dear Dublin, his native city, which, though he had left almost an infant, he had always cherished in his childish recollection as a home! Oh, how different from his London one, where he had all

that he ever knew of friends two kind old ladies, whose relationship to him he did not know, and others of whom he had a shadowy but pleasant memory. Even the wife of his tormentor Fitzgerald he had a kindly recollection of, for many a time and oft had she hid him under her ample hoop from her savage husband's ferocity. Unlocked at once were the flood-gates of the child's memory at the bare mention of the place to which each minute brought him nearer. Every act of kindness or tenderness that he had ever experienced was connected with that dear home, and crowded now upon his long harassed mind ; and what cared he for the raging of the waves, or the wretched accommodation of that wretched vessel ! Even the dark looks of his stepfather failed to terrify him, and through a storm which caught them in the Channel, and lasted until they neared Dublin, the little man slept so peacefully and profoundly that it seemed as if nothing in nature could arouse him, until the rough voice of Fitzgerald, as they dropped anchor, ordered him not to stir from the quay until he returned to fetch him, which peremptory order the perishing little creature obeyed, remaining where he was left for several hours, not daring to leave the spot, even though at last day faded away, and not a being remained near him.

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## CHAPTER II.

AT length the poor little benumbed and hungry victim was released by his tormentor from the station he had ordered him to keep on the quay. It was evident that the cruel man had not forgotten to indulge himself in the interim, as he made himself acquainted with each side of every street from the place which is now the custom-house quay to Thomas Street. The poor child, who followed him at a humble distance, thought the weary walk would never end, when at last they stopped at a mean-looking house, where,

after a kindly woman had given the boy some supper, all his woes were for a while forgotten in "the golden dew of sleep."

Next morning, after a plentiful breakfast, and when more than ordinary care had been bestowed on his appearance, Fitzgerald informed his wondering charge—oh, delightful intelligence!—that he intended taking him to his Uncle Reed's house. What! was he indeed about to see again his little sister, his uncle, his cousins? But his unrestrained joy was sadly clouded by his stepfather enjoining on him in the strictest manner not to attempt to contradict any statement he should hear him make to his uncle, and in default of the strictest obedience to these commands, the direst punishment and an immediate return to London was threatened with appalling oaths. His poor little innocent accomplice promised everything his ruffianly keeper desired, and set off albeit in the company of his tyrant with a joyful heart for the residence of Alderman Reed, situate on Summer Hill, a suburban residence now, with its surroundings changed into a street, ere Sackville Street was thought of, and the Rotunda and the "new gardens," as its grounds were then called, were at an unsafe distance from the city, which at the time we have in view was chiefly confined to the south side of the river, and did not extend much farther than the Castle. Our travellers had to wind their circuitous way from Thomas Street, by the old custom house, across Essex bridge, and through many now forgotten lanes and tortuous alleys, till at length they reached Summer Hill.

Alderman Reed's was a spacious and elegant mansion in the old style, in the midst of pleasure grounds and neat gardens, commanding a view of the river, and even of the bay. How did the child's heart dance as he entered the huge, old-fashioned gates. Had it not been for the poisonous effects of his stepfather's eye, which was constantly on him, he would have revelled in a perfect ecstasy, but

renewed orders from Fitzgerald not to move but as he directed, or leave his sight until the business of the latter with the alderman was completed, repressed the loving gushes of the child's heart, and kept him in perfect thralldom.

Fancy a little being just entered on his eighth year in such a trying situation : the heart expanding to all the delights of a loving nature ; the feelings repressed by the dread presence which makes the tiny bird quiver when the basilisk turns his eye on him ! It turned out that when Mr. Bell had first discovered the child, and had interested himself so humanely as we have seen in his wrongs, Fitzgerald had had an intimation from the Dublin alderman that he should refuse further remittances for the board and education of his ward and nephew, until he could satisfy himself by ocular demonstration that the boy was alive and profiting by the expenditure his guardian was authorised to bestow on his training.

This peremptory refusal to supply further funds except on his own stipulations, and perhaps a dread that Mr. Bell would communicate his knowledge of facts to the alderman, had induced Fitzgerald to use much precipitancy in leaving London for Ireland, where he had several reasons only known to himself for remaining in strict *incognito*, and from which country he was only too anxious to fly as soon as he should, by his plausibility and consummate art, obtain from the too credulous alderman the usual sum remitted for the care and culture of his neglected and ill-treated nephew.

The interview between the uncle and stepfather was not of long continuance. The iniquitous Fitzgerald produced receipts from schoolmasters who never existed, amounting to a considerable sum for the boy's instruction ; from tradesmen innumerable for garments and comforts pretended to be supplied, which the neglected orphan had never been partaker of ; but with which, large as the account was, with the carelessness of most guardians and trusting uncles, the alderman was quite satisfied, and the demand was amply met.

But, when the interview was over, and the guardian apparently satisfied with the results, what was the dismay of the unfortunate ward when Fitzgerald, making use of some plausible pretext for a hasty retreat, took leave of his interrogator, intimating that the little trembler was to accompany him, but might return to Summer Hill in the course of a little time, when he should have made some necessary arrangements. On this occasion the boy could not help exhibiting a decided reluctance to the proposal, and his heart, swelling with grief and utter dismay, brought forth tears and sobs almost to choking; however, by that consummate art of which Fitzgerald was so great an adept, contrary as it would appear to the wishes of his uncle, and it might be to his convictions, the man departed, accompanied by his sorrowful young victim.

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### CHAPTER III.

“O, 'tis a parlous boy!

Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable.”

THAT day Fitzgerald fled, and was not again heard of by the parties whom he had duped in Dublin. It was supposed afterwards that he had sought in the New World—the usual refuge at that time for all who had disgraced the Old—a more extended field for his exercise of the peculiar talents with which he was endowed. He must know that it would be impossible for him to keep on the deception with Alderman Reed. Mr. Bell, a warm-hearted Irishman, he was convinced, would not let the matter drop that he had undertaken with so much zeal; and he also apprehended a deserted wife to appear on the *tapis*. All together conspired to induce him to make short work of it, and to decamp with what he got by his lies, before any awkward disclosures concerning him should take place to clip his wings, and consign him to deserved punishment.

The little boy was brought back to the lodgings in Thomas Street, which he and his companion had occupied the night previous, and with a repetition of the strictest injunctions not to quit the place till his keeper returned. It need not be remarked that that indefinite period never arrived! Many an hour passed long and wearily, and there remained the prisoner, his little heart sick with "hope deferred," and never before beating with such anxious expectancy, and even hope, for the return of the tyrant. Strange to say, he had not seen his sister, or any relative, save his uncle, on his hurried visit to Summer Hill; he felt utterly depressed, and all the joy that was like sunshine in his breast in the morning was succeeded by a gloomy depression of spirit that at length vented itself in tears, perhaps the bitterest childhood ever shed. Alive to his situation in that gloomy lodging, he at length, awaking as it were from a horrid dream of several hours' duration, formed the sudden and desperate resolution of flight, and indeed flew rather than ran, through alley, lane, and turning, directed by Providence in the direction of Summer Hill, with a speed scarcely slackened, for he imagined that Fitzgerald pursued him all through, until he again was before the large gates, surmounted by the well-remembered eagles. He rushed into the house agitated and quite out of breath. His uncle received him kindly, but with astonishment at the evident terror depicted on his countenance, and the state of exhaustion he was in. It was long ere his palpitating heart permitted him to form coherent answers when questioned upon his reappearance in this excited state. The dread of being again given into the hands of Fitzgerald so possessed him that all he could utter was, "Oh, don't, don't let him take me away." But at length, a little tranquillized by kind assurances and many promises that he should not be beaten again, what was the amazement of his uncle when the child's artless tale was told, whereby the perfidy and cruelty of the man he had trusted with the guardianship of his ward was first revealed

to him? And this uncle, who, with children of his own, had no excuse for his carelessness, must have felt the stings of conscience at the way in which he had neglected all other duties towards his nephew, but the one of paying liberally for his torment.

Alderman Bowen Reed's family at this time consisted of three daughters and two sons; and their little exiled cousin, soon released from all his terror, set no bounds to his natural liveliness and amusing *naïveté* in the happy society of his sister and cousins.

"Well, Abra," said one of his juvenile companions, seeing the little fellow admire with great delight the stamped and gilt leather, which, in the fashion of that day, covered the walls of their apartments, "did you never see walls hung this way in London?"

"Oh no! I never saw anything nice in London."

"You were not at court, then," rejoined the young lady, laughing.

"No, but I saw the king go to parliament in the great coach."

"I suppose you went in state too?"

"Well, yes. I was very grand; I had on a cocked hat and wig."

"Upon my word, you must have cut a very respectable figure."

"You don't believe me, then; but I really did wear a cocked hat and wig."

"Were you not rather mad?"

"No, I was only sick, and they had shaved off all my hair; but when every one in the house went to see the king, I scampered off too; and as I could not find anything else to cover my head, I put on stepfather's dress hat and grand wig, and thought it as good as any."

"Ha! ha! ha! And how did you like the king?"

"I liked him very well; he is a good-humoured old chap."

"But how did he like you, boy, in that dress hat?"



“ Well, I did not ask him; I was never *traded* (introduced) to him; beside that, he could not hear me, for the crowd made a great noise, crying very loudly, ‘ Hiss for George!’ ‘ Hiss for George!’ ‘ Putnam and Washington for ever!’ ”

“ How did you get home with your hat and wig? ”

“ Well, the hat and wig never came home; I lost them in the crowd, and got a good beating that made me remember that day, and spoiled all the fun.”

“ Well, in replenishing your wardrobe, for it requires it much, should you like a hat and wig in remembrance of that glorious day? ”

“ Oh no! they would remind me of the beating too.”

“ Now tell me, Abra, how many suits of clothes have you? ”

“ Just as many as backs.”

“ No matter for that, my child,” joined in his aunt, “ who knows but you may be an alderman yet! ”

The lady had been listening to, and was highly amused at, the dialogue above related, and evidently thought an aldermanic gown was the highest gift that fortune could bestow, and such was the stately lady's tempting allurements to her nephew to walk in virtue's paths, coupled with the conditions of properly performing his daily ablutions, and always washing above the elbows! What a fine idea of embryo aldermanic qualification—and what a simple one!

Endless were the questions put to the young stranger by all the family.

“ Abra, how came you to read so well when, as you say, you were never sent to school? ”

“ Oh! I used to stop at the booksellers' windows, and somebody used to read the names of the open books there for me, and then I'd come back day after day, learned to read them for myself, and getting sometimes a halfpenny and sometimes a penny to buy bread; I often did without it, and put the money together for the purchase of little books,

which having heard once I used to try and read myself, and at the bookbinder's workshop where I hid I used to see big books and some words in them that I knew, and then made out others." And thus the quick apprehension of the neglected child brought him all but unaided over the first difficulties of learning. Many were the amusing anecdotes which the poor little derelict would, with innocent gaiety, tell of his days of woe ! But, alas ! his days of woe were not over then. Thus far have we traced the career of one of the descendants of the Arnaulds of Auvergne.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

"Exemption from punishment is a singular privilege annexed to the royal character, and no way excludes the possibility of deserving it."—  
JUNIUS.

THE revocation of the Edict of Nantes by that sanguinary fop Louis XIV. was one of the most flagitious acts that ever disgraced the history of nations. This fanatical and despotic monarch could not patiently see so great a mass of his subjects presume to hold opinions contrary to his own. This state of things destroyed the uniformity to his peculiar views and conformity to his authority, which he wished to establish. Richelieu, without the bigotry of Louis, had laboured to extirpate Protestantism from France. Mazarin had latterly followed his example ; but under Louis the mask was entirely thrown off, and every species of cruelty and degradation was employed against the doomed Huguenots. Colbert did everything a wise and politic minister could do to oppose the unjust measures of the king. But he could do nothing of consequence in their favour opposed to the wily policy and cruel zeal of Louvois and Le Tellier. The politic Madame de Maintenon feared to show any attachment to her former profession even if she felt any. She

acknowledges indeed, that she did not approve of the measures against the Protestants, yet, with the fanaticism of a proselyte, or the art of a deep intriguer, she withheld her powerful influence, although the brethren of her father and her family might be benefited thereby. Arnaud or Arnauld, Marquis de Pomponne, might have befriended the cause of the oppressed people, for he was moderate, wise, and virtuous; but his love of retirement and elegant ease kept him from engaging in any active measures, and suited not the haughty Louis who expected utter devotedness in his ministers; besides, he was nephew of the famous Arnaud the Jansenist, and was hated and envied both by Colbert and Louvois for his superior talents and information. For one or all of these causes Arnauld was dismissed from his place of minister for foreign affairs previously to the utter destruction of the doomed Huguenots.

The first step taken by Louis subsequent to this was to get the Edict of Nantes interpreted by Jesuitical causists, in a manner totally at variance with its spirit. Rewards were held out to all who would embrace the Roman Catholic religion. Exclusion of Huguenots from all places of trust. The Bar was shut against their young students. Their clergy were deprived of their habits, and they were obliged to officiate in secret. Their colleges and schools were closed. The "Chamber of the Edict," the chief bulwark of the Protestants in France, was suppressed. In short, everything was done to make the profession of Protestantism intolerably degrading. Some of the unfortunates emigrated; then came proscriptions, confiscations, and other harsh measures, not short of cruelty. Resistance was the consequence. This was just what their enemies wanted. Troops were sent against them. They were cut up or dispersed, their clergy broken on the wheel without mercy. Horrible scenes disgraced the banks of the Rhone; and in all the Protestant districts every law divine and human was violated by the savage soldiery. But we need not enlarge on these

frightful atrocities. Who has not heard of the terrible Dragonnades ?

At length appeared the disgraceful counter edict revoking that of Nantes. It is composed of eleven articles, by which all former privileges enjoyed by Protestants were annulled, made void, and of no effect, many oppressive measures enacted, and the banned and hated ones allowed only the miserable grace of remaining unmolested by ceasing altogether from the open exercise of their religion. The frontiers were guarded lest any should escape ; death and confiscation were the doom of the fugitives. Notwithstanding these precautions many escaped. The Germans, the Dutch, and the English each held out the hand of fellowship to their persecuted brethren ; and in vain were the repressive enforcements to make the harried people renounce, much less resign, the liberty of conscience. Voltaire says that about fifty thousand families, or between two or three hundred thousand souls, fled on this memorable persecution. Some historians compute that the number was even greater. But all agree that the loss to France in industry, enterprise, and talent was irreparable. Colbert foresaw much of it, but did not live to see his predictions even more than verified in the sequel.

The grandfather of Abra and his family were among the number of those who fled. James III. had offered an asylum, and thither repaired this fugitive family. They were fortunate enough to be able to bring with them money and jewels to a considerable amount. The family of Arnauld was of consideration in their own country ; nay, the name was not unknown in Europe among the most celebrated. A lady connected with the English court, and also with this family, received them, and located the *émigrés* in her own apartments at St. James's. Another branch of the same stock, it is believed, went to America. And many years afterwards one of the name and—alas ! to relate—*line*, was at first a general on the Republican side, afterwards

known as the "Infamous Arnold," having been induced to change his opinions and forego his integrity, and so disgrace a name at which the finger of scorn could not theretofore point. This melancholy story is but too well known. However, it is of that part of the family who crossed over to England that we have at present to relate, and especially the singularly isolated fate of poor little Abra.

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## CHAPTER V.

"What should we speak of when we are old as you? when we shall hear the rain and wind beat dark December. How in this our pinching cave shall we discourse the fleeting hours away? We have seen nothing."—"CYMBELINE."

THE poor hunted Huguenots, only too happy to escape with life from the unrelenting cruelty of their persecutors, could only think of present safety. Louvois, even from his midnight orgies, was continually sending despatches to his emissaries, urging on them the completion of their work of destruction; and Polisson, himself a convert to Romanism, was his most active agent in every species of cruelty towards the unfortunates. Desperate was the outbreak of the storm so long threatened. The Huguenots, lulled by the insidiousness of their enemies into security, had made no provision for such a future, by endeavouring to secure or make portable whatever property they could in case of necessity, so that all that many of them could take away in their flight through the guarded frontiers, was only what they could carry on their persons. The son of the gallant and noble-minded Duquesne took, as his most precious treasure, the bones of his parent to Switzerland, and wrote over them this heart-stirring epitaph, "Holland erected a monument to De Ruyter, and to his conqueror France denied a little earth."

It is not to be supposed that the money or valuables which the fugitives could bring from France under such

circumstances could be much. What was brought over to England by the ancestor of Abra, it appears, enabled him and his family, consisting of a son and three daughters—Elias, Marie, Alice, and Emelie—to live respectably in England for some years, while seeking a means whereby to invest what could be spared for future support. Frenchmen had long learned to feel that it was no disgrace to engage in commercial pursuits. In the time of Louis XIII. indeed, persons of “gentle blood” might steal, cheat, or beg without losing caste, yet they would despise meddling with commerce. That day had passed, however. Mazarin saw the impolicy and the danger such a state of things as this false pride produced. With an almost bankrupt nation, and an exhausted treasury, what could be wrung from a people who had nothing to give? The minister then set the first example, with a deep insight into the character of those he governed, of giving an impetus to industry and enterprise of a commercial character in France. Making that a fashion which had become a necessity, he induced Anne of Austria and the ladies of her court to take shares in a national and, as it proved to be, a successful speculation. But it was reserved for Colbert, with more concentrated powers, to carry those views into fuller effect. Thus, with the new idea strong upon him, Abra’s progenitor found it convenient to engage in some mercantile pursuit, and his son, availing himself of what still remained in the family of the means they had brought from France, engaged in the linen business of Ireland, a manufacture which at that time was a most lucrative one to invest capital in. The vicinity of Limerick was the scene of his first speculation. We afterwards find him located at Thomas Street, in Dublin, which was then a street of merchants, and there his son married a sister of the Alderman Bowen Reed, already mentioned, and there was little Abra born, also an elder brother named Andrew. But, alas! Elias Arnold, the descendant of the old French refugee, and the father of

Abra, lived only six months after the birth of his younger son, and dying left his affairs in a rather complicated state. And thus the child of six months was rather a waif of fortune ; for not long after his mother gave him a stepfather in the wretch Fitzgerald. This person was first called in to assist in arranging the affairs of her first husband, and he induced the weak woman by many artifices to marry him, wishing thus to grasp at the whole of the property that remained to the heirs. Poor Abra, who had thus never known a father's care or fondness, often in after life spoke of a most pleasing recollection which dwelt on his memory of his grandfather as a venerable man, with pale face and long silver hair ; but he soon lost him also ; his brother died, and then his mother, and thus, long before he was six years of age, none was left to connect him with the past, save two grandaunts of his father's family, who resided in Dublin, old, poor, and desolate, but the only historians of his race, who from time to time instructed him in lessons from their own stormy youth. The younger and more intellectual of those ladies was never married ; she had been blind from early youth, but her mild blue eyes had lost little of their once great beauty, save their best perfection, sight. The other was a widow, and to their humble abode their little, cherished grandnephew delighted to repair ; for these old ladies loved him with deep affection ; but, with a child's *insouciance*, which he ever regretted, he had failed to retain much of what they loved to talk of with pride, their family history, a record that would doubtless have heightened the romance of our story. We have recorded the *naïve* manner in which Abra described the means by which he had acquired the slight modicum of learning of which he was master at the time when he entered his uncle's family. His little patrimony did not amount to much, and even Alderman Reed was not disposed to grant the orphan an asylum for love or relationship. The desire evinced so early under such disadvantageous circumstances as related, developed into a

love of study which was not sufficiently appreciated in his guardian's abode. The young members of the family had, for the most part in process of time dispersed, so the alderman, washing himself even up *to the elbows* out of all inconvenient responsibility, intimated to his nephew that, as his means could not afford him more than the acquisition of a trade, he must now choose one. Watchmaking presented itself to the boy as superior to all others, from its beautiful and ingenious combinations and their results—"too expensive to think of." A cabinet-maker in much repute, who was patronised by Alderman Reed, would gladly take his young relation for a consideration something more suited to the funds which he was told were at his command. Accordingly the youth was apprenticed, and with his bright intellect and apt conceptions soon made himself master—at the same time not neglecting his literary acquirements—of what he had to learn of cabinet-making, a measure of knowledge which in the vicissitudes which occurred in his after life proved useful. But the early romance of Abra's career ended with his marriage, at the age of twenty-one, with the youngest daughter of a gentleman whose sporting successes were for years on record at the Curragh of Kildare, and which in a doggel of the time were thus celebrated—

"Of black and of bay,  
Of white and of grey,  
Squire Keating's mares go foremost."

The young couple moved in a very pleasant circle in Dublin, when Dublin society was much distinguished for its wit and social refinement: their own home was often the nucleus of many who contributed to that reputation. The subjoined extract from a letter of the late Brigadier-general Sir William Parker Carrol, even after he had acquired his Spanish fame, and who had stood sponsor for one of their children, speaks sufficiently on this head—



“How well I recollect, whilst deeply immersed in studying for my examinations, my head oppressed with abstruse and puzzling mathematics, have I been relieved by the sweet music of song! How often and how gladly have I thrown aside Euclid and logic to accept your welcome invitation for the evening; for your parties were ‘the feast of reason, and the flow of soul!’”

And thus it was until that bright period of poor Abra's existence was put an end to by an act which he had ever cause to regret, and which, as a caution to others, he has sometimes spoken of. One who was received as a friend had got into pecuniary difficulties, which he represented as only temporary, and was believed by the too facile and unsuspecting *citizen*—for by this time, by his marriage with a freeman's daughter, he had himself become a freeman of the city of Dublin. Selected as a victim by his country friend, he was induced by him to accept a bill for some large amount, which in *due time* came down with a sudden crush upon the acceptor—his friend having mortgaged his estate in the county of Tipperary, and fled. This last turn of Fortune's wheel brought the life of our early acquaintance, the poor, famishing, neglected little child of Bell's Court, with his still handsome wife and the remnant of their large family, to a new phase. And thus we have traced him to the obscure but happy home the introduction to our volume presented us with; and, with this true story, we wind up the

TALES OF MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE.

## APPENDIX.

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NEED we a preface to an appendix? I trow not. But desirous of having a little further *causerie* with my friends, I would, in a few words, introduce to them some stray leaves from the archives of a small repository, as a sort of key to their *raison d'être*.

Ere periodicals were "plentiful as blackberries," and few of the then existing found their way—newspapers always excepted—to these back settlements of ours, a little group of the *literati* of the neighbourhood formed a nucleus from time to time with the "cottage" inhabitants—then reduced to three. Literary conversation led to the idea of organizing a society to which each, be he or she absent or present, should contribute a modicum of their entertaining or instructive powers in MSS.

Thus it was arranged at a special meeting that a transcriber and editor be chosen, the paper to be produced on a given day in each month, and the name to be "The L—— Gazette."

From many of the members still remaining I have collected the special articles of the editress and those of her family who contributed, and here present my gleanings from among many very original and clever articles of others in prose and verse, as an appendix to the "Tales of my Father's Fireside."

C. A.

IRISH STEW ;  
OR, CAFÉ À LA MODE IRLANDAISE.

HAVING a mind for a long stroll, my friend and I set out at an early hour to take a little mountain air into the system. Our inhalation was most enjoyable until, overtaken by a very heavy downpour of mountain rain, we were obliged to seek refuge from its persistence in one of the mud edifices with which the sides of the mountain were adorned here and there. A crookedly placed board outside the hovel announced that we were entering a COFFEE HOUSE. The picturesque confusion of the lettering on the notice seemed to add to the romantic character of the situation; and although we were by this time pretty well drenched, we did not fail to cast more than one look at the external proclamation which localized our whereabouts. Shortly after us arrived two dripping specimens of the fine "pisantry," out of whom, at that particular period of their lives, their country could not have taken much pride. They demanded each a *bowle* of coffee! At the patronising demand, the embers in the hearth were first scraped together, and fresh turf (peat) added. An iron pot that might contain about three quarts was then hung over the smoky fire—perhaps not quite filled with water—into which the contents of a small teacup, about half filled with coffee, or something that did duty for it—*Mock ? ah!*—was deposited therein. The mixture was now set boiling, and occasionally stirred about with a long iron spoon; a piece of liquorice was then cut into shreds and cast into the coffee pot! The bowls were filled with this precious decoction, grounds and all, and handed to the

delighted epicures, who pronounced it beautiful, smacked their lips, wiped their mouths with their coat sleeves, paid their bill, and made their exit; which shortly after we were enabled to do likewise.

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ANSWER UNTO AN INTERROGATORY *INQUI-  
RENDO* INTO THE CAUSES WHICH PRODUCE  
PEARLS ON PIPERS' EYES.

“How very curious it seems,” said a sentimental traveller (observe not a bagman), “that here, in the south, one almost invariably finds that the itinerant bagpipe torturers possess the peculiar gift of vision designated ‘pearls on the eyes!’”

“Come to our *soirée* this evening,” replied a listener, “and perhaps your curiosity may be satisfied. We shall prepare a paper on the subject.”

Accordingly appeared the following—

The Irish traditional harp seems to have assumed, in the south of this beautiful island, a transmogrification, stringless, tuneless, tasteless, and ineuphoniously designated a bagpipe! The minstrel is called a piper! As the diffusion of “useful knowledge” is our aim, though in a small way, we have been led into this minute anatomy question by the above remark, and so here follows the solution, which, from our examination of the momentous subject, we were able to arrive at. It is not an exaggeration to say that every twelve out of twenty pipers are decorated with the above-named peculiar distinction; an ornament by no means desirable in the locality in which it is placed. We know that Ireland, as well as other parts of Great Britain, produces also the veritable pearl muscle, and that the pustules of invalids of that genus adorn the ears, heads, necks, and fingers of the *élite* of society, and even of royalty itself, and is an evidence

in proof of the economy of Nature, who systematically suffers nothing to be lost, and even makes the disease of some of the lower strata of existence the boasted ornament of a superior species. But let us remember that we are not required to offer a parallel, or draw a distinction between the disease of man and the mollusc ; we shall only remark that their similitude of nomenclature has led to the foregoing observations, the difference between them lying in the assumed value of the article, the one being of great price, the other being of no value even to the possessor. But should we, as a matter of taste, be asked to offer an opinion, it would decidedly be in favour of the muscle disease versus the optical. The latter, contrasted with the productions of Ormus, or the *Arah-ga-dheen* (Irish river), might certainly excuse our preference, not being particularly bewitching ; nor are we sure that being set in gold, surrounded with turquoise, or embracing a diamond after the most artistic fashion, with the most delicate mounting, could make them appear to greater advantage !

But to our piper. With the harp era Ireland was celebrated for its peculiar music, and the music moved the enthusiasm of its bards. Now it appears to us, and we hope to convey our convictions to our courteous readers, that the successors of these harpists, the pipers of our day, certainly inherit a national, though degenerate taste. Filling up the space left vacant by the former musicians, as they assume, they develop the taste, wherewith they imagine themselves born, in their own peculiar way. *Il fanatico per la musica* exhibits a disease, first apparent in the eccentric motion of his fingers and one of his elbows. Anon the constitution of the individual becomes impaired, and in process of time, the necessities of his being, in this unhappy state, compel him to indulge in all the horrors producible by that most discordant of human inventions ; that most diabolical imitation of the melody of the ass—the bagpipes ! But the would-be performer, finding all his efforts utterly vain to

produce anything like music, and still tortured with the desire to squeeze out his melodious conceptions, big tears start forth from their hiding-places with the fond but fruitless endeavour ; but ere they overflow the eyes they glitter on, the pipers' brains become muddled by the repeated failures to produce one musical tone ; yet the efforts are not abandoned, possibly in the sanguine hope of more propitious gales from under the elbow, and so the tears, converted into pearly concretions on the optics, are nurtured by the disease that primarily produced them !

What clearer, what more convincing? Shall we, need we, ought we to go on? No !

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### A SHEAF OF VALENTINES.

*To \* \* \* who admires the poetry of Cowley so much.*

YOUR eye, lovely maid, is bright blue flame  
 Where Love his little archery forges ;  
 And your nose, sweetest maid, ere he takes his aim,  
 Is the quiver where his arrows he reposes ;  
 And your cheek, beauteous maid, is the rose where he sleeps,  
 And your breath the sweet zephyr that fans him,  
 His nectar the dew that impearls your sweet lips,  
 How insensible he who withstands him !  
 But wedlock's a matter-of-fact thing,  
 No more of flames and forges—  
 A plain young man, a plain gold ring,  
 The Rector and St. George's ?

*Garçon volage, o Questa o Quella.*

Some say wooing bringeth woe,  
 All *my* suing don't, I know ;

Thus it is I've loves in plenty,  
 Say, for shortness, five times twenty.  
 Some are cruel, some are kind,  
 I do not scorn the lame or blind ;  
 One dear quiz, one learned dame,  
 A few hyenas none could tame.  
 Five are pretty, forty tall,  
 One is witty, worth them all ;  
 Among so many here am I,  
 Gay as any butterfly !  
 Some I laugh with, and some at ;  
 Fools may languish and all that ;  
 Heart whole I bend at many a shrine,  
 Each may count *me* her Valentine !

*From Mars to \* \* \**

I sit me down with pen and ink,  
 But what to write I cannot think.  
 Oh ! straight and tall—that would be prose.  
 Oh ! fairer than the rebel rose !  
 That's poetry I'm sure ; is't not ?  
 Would that it were my happy lot !  
 Excuse a long exordium stupid ;  
 Indeed I'm bothered so by Cupid ;  
 My brains are somehow out of order,  
 And seem of folly on the border.  
 But, 'pon my whiskers and my boddice,  
 I think you are a perfect goddess !  
 And if you knew me, 'pon my spurs,  
 You'd never look at stupid curs.  
 But I am modest, I am mum,  
 Upon my own perfections dumb ;  
 But upon yours I am all on fire  
 And feel that I could seize the lyre

Of that old fellow, called Apollo,  
 And beat him at his weapons hollow.  
 And as for those old maids, the Nine,  
 Albeit *he'* was their Valentine,  
 If they could get from *me* one line,  
 Would far prefer, I'm certain, *thine*.

*Supposed to be written by one of the writers in "The  
 Paradise of Dayntie Devises," 1576.*

Are snowdrops like my ladye love?  
     Ah, no!  
 Their pure pale petals never set the heart  
     Aglow.  
 Is the meek daisy, with its golden eye?  
     Ah, no!  
 All scentless and too lowlily  
     They grow.  
 Is scented camomile an emblem meet?  
     Nay, nay!  
 It must be crushed ere it its sweets  
     Betray.  
 To what shall I compare her then?  
     I know!  
 The apple bloom that is both sweet and fair.  
     Even so.  
 Ah, gentle blossom though no thought of me.  
     Ah, no!  
 Sends to thy ever-varied cheek  
     Its glow;  
 No rose, the stately queen of flowers  
     They call,  
 Nor can the imperial lily so my heart  
     Inthral,  
 Or stir my senses, as one look at thee  
     Delighteth me!



*To Her who has made a Captive of my Heart.*

“ Marcella, oh how I adore you !  
 All grace, all perfection thou art,  
 Though many have tried it before you,  
 None ever have captured this heart.”

“ Beloved ! such truth and devotion  
 Leave nothing to wish for. Oh, why  
 Should I now grieve because I've no portion ? ”  
 “ No fortune ? Oh ! madam, good bye.”

Thus I wrote to a fair one who thought me  
 Insane on her beauty and grace,  
 I dreamt not at the time, or bethought me,  
 Her fortune was all in her face.

But having received such an answer,  
 My tactics I changed in a trice,  
 And advertised as follows instanter,  
 Lest I might be victimised twice :

## TO BE LET,

And possession given,  
 At nine o'clock on St. Tibb's even,

## A BACHELOR

And house and land,  
 For any term you may demand,  
 Of years, not over ninety-nine.

## TERMS CASH

And the whole lot is thine,  
 The Auctioneer, Saint Valentine.

N.B.—'Tis the best lot that e'er was offered,  
 And the last time it will be proffered.

*From Alonzo the Brave to \* \* \**

“ One touch of Nature far exceeds them all. ”

Just hearing that you liked antiques,  
 A very pretty taste,  
 That well for its possessor speaks,  
 May I not say, Why waste  
 On things inanimate that love  
 That would, I flatter me,  
 In fond reciprocation prove  
 A joy more meet for thee?  
 Can *tender teacup*, with a crack,  
 Return your loving gaze,  
 Though e'er so sweet? Alack, alack!  
 'Tis matter of amaze  
 Such things should be; the while my heart,  
 That finely moulded article,  
 Cracked, crushed, and crumpled, lacks the art  
 To appropriate a particle  
 Of that affection lavished on  
 The shreds of your museum;  
 Come, let me try, can I supply  
 Attractions *solus meum*.  
 I want a leg, have lost an eye,  
 Am rather “hard of hearing,”  
 In fact a curiosity  
 In human shape appearing.  
 Beyond all crockery, you must own,  
 Or fossil imitations,  
 For I have brought from every zone  
 My prize dilapidations!  
 In icefields of the North my limb  
 Was mortified by frost;  
 Exposed in arid regions grim  
 My dexter eye was lost;

My liver grilled by Indian sun,  
 Fifty-six years ago,  
 Your doctors say is all but gone—  
 But I've a heart you know,  
 Though in the state described elsewhere,  
 Then grant to my petition  
 What room in yours you have to spare ;  
 Such is my sole ambition.

---

O ! mon bien aimée,  
 Répond-moi sur ces mots,  
 Suis-je de toi aimé,  
 Et combien est ton dot ?

---

On Valentine's auspicious day,  
 And so forth, and hereafter,  
 Allow me my devoirs to pay :  
 Not meant indeed for laughter !  
 I'm of a very certain age,  
 As other people may be,  
 Have knocked about, and learned much  
 Since mother called me baby.  
 I've now a cottage of my own,  
 Am seized of a snug farm ;  
 I know you'll guess I am the man  
 Your tender heart to charm !  
 You'd find me most respectable,  
 And without much pretence,  
 I feel as good as every one  
 In every way and sense.  
 My name is ——— Well, no matter what,  
 I'll give it dear to you,  
 When my addresses you receive,  
 And surely that should do.

I'd make you feel, dear, quite at home,  
And your protector be,  
Not for your £20,000,  
I don't seek £. s. d. !  
I know you've got a legacy,  
'Twould greatly suit my views,  
For cash is just the thing to suit—  
And you've no time to lose.  
Others might snap me up d'ye see,  
For many do advance  
Most flattering overtures ; but no,  
To *you* I'll give the chance.  
And one possessed of such a sum  
Should think that my proposal  
Is worth it all, and place yourself,  
And *it*, at my disposal ;  
For maiden ladies are not safe,  
Believe me, when 'tis known  
That they exclusively possess  
A sum, say, like your own.  
'Twould be your best investment, then,  
At once to hand it over  
To one who'd manage it, and prove  
An ardent, faithful lover.

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#### NATURAL HISTORY SKETCH.

“AND who are the Tailors,” demanded an inquirer, referring to the heraldic pretensions of a newly arrived family.

Reply: A race that makes nearer approaches to the human species than does any other class of animals, zoologically considered—not excepting the ape. The individuals are of a dingy, sallow colour, with sunken eyes and projecting fore-

head. But the facial expression would strongly identify their classification with the group *humana*. Their heads are circular, and their upper and lower jaws not so prominent as in the monkey kind, but flat, like their congeners of the human race. The ears and teeth have also a greater resemblance to man than to any of the inferior animals. They have generally long and lank hair, and are not devoid of a slight suspicion of whisker, and *moustacherie* on the upper lip, the removal of which, if desired, would be impossible with the steel instrument which they are in the habit of using, very unlike a razor. They have no tails, but are remarkable for the length of their bills, which are extremely long in proportion to the body, that being by scrupulous computation but the ninth part of a man. The singular bills of these curious creatures are capacious enough to contain, before they swallow, buttons, no matter how large or how many, mohair, twist, buckram, and what they denominate trimmings of various bulk, sizes, and sorts. These singular beings sit on a kind of table cross-legged. They can also at times sit at our usual tables, eat and drink—indeed they are remarkably bibulous—and imitate all human actions with fidelity, even to the use of fork, knife, teacup, &c. Those who have studied minutely their habits declare that they live much upon goose, and delight in cabbage. The small steel instrument before alluded to they wield with singular exactitude and dexterity, never seeming to miss the aim they have in view, which is directed to the fingers, and, after each application in that direction, they flourish the little implement in the air, and bring it quivering down again to the original place, carefully avoiding eyes or nose, although in rather close proximity to the course of the pointed steel, when performing their exercises, with which they sit, Turk-like, their legs interwoven in each other, and covered curiously from time to time with various qualities and colours of cloth, druggot, &c. The female in many respects may be said to closely resemble the male. They nibble cabbage to any

amount, but don't use goose so generally. They are usually quite as intelligent as the opposite sex, regulate their families, and have been known to even chastise their cubs with admirable adroitness; nor do they confine themselves to this maternal duty, their mates often bear the stigmata of their claws, the female being, as a rule, the more pugnacious of the two, and also possessing a very long and flexible tongue, which in a wordy war, such as they often engage in, enables them to have always the last word.

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### THE SORROWS OF WITLESS.

I AM of the ancient—well I may as well not say noble—family of Witless. I have ever had the most ardent desire to distinguish myself, and spring at once, Phœnix-like, from the dust of my forefathers; but have been, as yet however, invariably unsuccessful. I have sought the aid of phrenology in assisting me to the knowledge of what my particular gifts might be. I thought that literature would be my forte, and only wished for a confirmation of my own opinion, that I was endowed with a *quantum suff.* of imaginativeness, constructiveness, concentrativeness, secretiveness, &c., &c., to enable me to become an author. Such was my great desire; and every one knows, “Where there's a will there's a way,” so I set myself to find a plot, and dress it up, *selon ma manière*, which, though I had not all the necessary developments, according to my phrenological friends, I was sure I could effect in a new and superior manner. But after much anxious study and grave research, I found the whole field of literature of the style contemplated by me as a beginning, for a beginner, was fully occupied. Had not Sir Walter Scott taken up the historic, Byron, in his poetic way, the imaginatively mysterious and gloomy? The

German style could be written only by a German. The Hangman style, patronized by Ainsworth and Co., has quite dropped into oblivion, from which I don't care to rescue it. But write I would nevertheless, notwithstanding, having the organ of *combativeness* strongly prominent on my cranium. Would not, cogitated I, a tale of the olden times, with language and description of costume, compounded of every style since the time of the Plantagenets, with an addition of no style by the author command attention? Here was my field, then; and thus I set to work upon the happy idea. Reading of the manner in which Milton sketched his Paradise Lost, the thought struck me to write a skeleton tale, and fill up afterwards, which I might easily do—adopting hints from other authors. Something after the manner of a genealogical tree grew up in my imagination, and may I not venture to affirm that it will be conceded to me that this was a more unique and clever idea than Milton's own. I hope I shall make myself understood in my arboristic description. Love the main trunk. Right-hand branch, exquisitely pretty names for hero and heroine! Left-hand heroine rich and noble, hero poor and nameless! Second right-hand branch, elaborate disquisition on love at first sight, philosophically treated—new! Second left hand, they dance together at a ball, and their eyes meet: this gives rise to an essay on blushing. Third left hand, its loveliness and propriety. Third right, she is saved from burning or drowning by— She faints, he supports her, and she blushes, though insensible. Left, search all song-books for appropriate versified sentiment for the illustration of true love. Right, they are separated by some malignant or melancholy influences. Left, she hunts him through the world, under the guise of seeking a lost father, brother, or uncle. Right, she finds him in an awkward predicament in a dungeon or prison somewhere. Left, the aforesaid father, &c., very angry when he discovers all this. Right, she, in the most approved manner of maiden in love, defies his authority and

will have her own way. Left, he intends to cut her off with a shilling—paltry man—but dies suddenly! All between her and a splendid fortune die off, or are killed, before she becomes too ancient to be sentimental, and she remains sole heiress to large estates. Right, she immediately marries the man for whom she has suffered so much, who just about the same time finds out that he is somebody himself!

I think I might add to the former title, "Or, the Course of True Love," which would be neat and appropriate, and make it quite interesting. But the number of volumes my idea would fill makes me hesitate in the performance. Three volumes is, I believe, the standard number, but my novel would take at least nine, and, I am told by the booksellers, there might be a doubt of its success; but would it not be new? Still there is no such thing as getting some people out of their groove. My literary acquaintance coincide in opinion with the other gentlemen; and some of my own family, who each has a hobby of his own, sneer at what they call mine. But "envy will merit as its shade pursue," and such is the difficulty with which I have now to contend, after having, as I flattered myself, mastered all others.

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"LE MIEUX RECU N'EST PAS TOUJOURS LE PLUS CHÉRI."

"WHY how," said I to a friend, "does it happen that you, who were to have become a Benedict some years ago, are still, as I find, in single unblestness?"

The following was the explanation vouchsafed, but not in verse; and thus the story ran.

By the delicate pink of her cheek,  
 And the lustrous black of her eye,  
 And that *je ne sais quoi* that no language can speak  
 At her feet I was tempted to sigh.



I was vexed if another declared.  
 He had noted her beauty and grace,  
 I was roused into rage if one dared,  
 To fault her perfection of face.

And when I once got a dark hint  
 That her temper was not of the best,  
 A vision of pistols and lint,  
 Of surgeons and wounds, and the rest,

Came o'er me, as frenzied I heard,  
 The sland'rous utterance sound,  
 And I felt as if mightily stirred  
 The speaker to fell to the ground.

I hated all men for her sake,  
 All women I shunned and abhorred,  
 No pleasure in aught could I take,  
 But the echo of her faintest word.

Close attendance I danced for a year,  
 On the idol that haunted my breast ;  
 But she married the son of a peer,  
 And the " Court of Divorce " tells the rest.

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SUGGESTION BY A MEMBER OF THE CONFRA-  
 TERNITY OF DUMMIES,

*Who considers society too highly coloured and needs  
 toning down.*

IN this classical age, when the revival of antiquities is becoming a fixed idea, I would propose, albeit humbly, that the well-known practice of the ancient Egyptians, placing a mummy at their festal boards, ought to be restored amongst

the rest. The writer would engage himself to undertake the part, and he would leave it to his friends to testify that his qualifications come very near those so valued by that wonderful people, from whom he derives the idea; <sup>1</sup> the only notable difference being that he can handle knife and fork at table, and would not require to be borne to his distinguished place. But he engages neither to laugh or smile, or use his tongue, or discover any other symptom of entity, excepting these mentioned above; for in every instance wherein he has been tested, the test has failed. Neither politics nor literature, music or mirth have ever induced him to move a muscle or utter a syllable. One of his learned acquaintance has designated him, with a friendly desire to excite him, Abn Jahel, or "grandfather of stupidity," but without effecting his purpose. Others have endeavoured to prove his descent from some one of the most celebrated Bœotians—he was not moved even to indignant contradiction.

[For further Information address Silenus.]

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### LUCUBRATIONS—FIRST OF MAY.

How matter of fact the world has become! What dull utilitarians we have grown! How unimaginative! Poetry? Past and gone like

“The song of the mountain gale.”

Nor are we any longer actors of poetry. Shall we say, Alas! we read of

“Those white unblemished manners  
Whence the fab'ling poets took their rise.”

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<sup>1</sup> This person was living before his age, and must have anticipated the setting up of Cleopatra's needle on the banks of the Thames, and *the Sphinx era now being adopted.*

Are these gone too? Let any one fill up the blank at will. We can say that the heavy heel of the "march of intellect" has lain heavily, if not almost crushed out romance. What dame or damsel could now be found so simple as to lend herself to the pretty imagination of the cosmetic virtues of the *May-dew*, once so prized that no one desirous of creating or retaining a fine complexion ever failed to gather and bottle that essential for use. Oh, no, the ideas of our modern belles jump with the times. They undertake to understand science, and believe in the wonders performed in the beautifying art produced by *Exteyostindia-kin*, or the incomparable loveliness resulting from the copious lavations of *Vermiglianiumani*, or some other lubricate with a nomenclature equally seductive. This suits the humour of the day, and the fair one seeking a complexion can lie comfortably a bed, and just by a very simple process transmute the contents of her purse into some of those wonder-working fluids. To be sure it takes a large share of gold to secure a small bottle; but, *qu'importe?* "Self preservation" is said to be "the first law of nature."

Our belle is fairly read, let us suppose, if not extensively, yet she is not as wise as her great grandmother, or *her* parent again, who probably could not. The early hour at which the May dew was collected, was a considerable element in its efficacy; and in fact the early seeker after cheek roses and fair skin might as well, for the purpose sought, have gone out to gather parsley, and thus an old poet saith—

"This maiden in a morn betime,  
Went forth when May was in its prime  
To get sweet setywall,  
The honeysuckle, the harelock,  
The lily and the ladysmock,  
To deck her summer hall.

Oh! tell me where the maiden could now be found so simple as to believe that the accomplished snail will turn

wizard and scribe for the nonce, for her particular behoof, and on this day write in a very free, though, certes, not running hand, her true love's name on a plate dusted with flour? or that any crone should be learned enough in *snail-ography* to discern the identical name in such hieroglyphics. And yet there are things as hard to be swallowed in which implicit faith is placed, and which turn out no more true than the snailcreep, and are far more extravagant. Fair, merry month we waft a sigh after thee; and half regret the time when May day was not the same as every day, and there were found people

“Wise enough to play the fool.”

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“Man's tongue had been impenetrably sealed,  
Like theirs that swim the flood or graze the field,  
Had not his Maker's all bestowing hand  
Given him a soul, and bade him understand.”

TRUE, but what differences there are in the genus *homo*, sometimes such as “surpass one's philosophy.” Why, or rather how, is it, let us ask, that one man can travel from Dan to Beersheba, or, for shortness, may we just say from north to south, and see nothing worth noticing, nor master any new idea; whilst another in an ordinary day's ride, not half so far, is not only able to see, feel, hear, understand, and enjoy, but is able to communicate his varied pleasures taken in at all the senses, to others? Our traveller whom we have supposed pursuing the longer journey, sees just what he sees, and feels no more interest in it, and possibly supposes nobody else could. These reflections—they may be deemed truisms—were mainly produced by meeting lately with a personification of each of the above types. One who had evidently his observative faculties rubbed with the iodine of intellect, and had lately visited our “modern Babylon,” brought his hearers with him through what he had seen of

its polytechnic wonders. Whatever is given there a local habitation and a name, from the highest flight which is taken by scientific research to the buffooneries of the Strand theatre, were made to pass in review before our mind's eye in the one case; while the bold relief brought out by the contrast in turning to another, who had gone over the same ground, was remarkable, He saw nothing in London, it was always smoke and fog. He felt greatly disappointed at everything, most particularly that silk handkerchiefs, marked in the shop window each three shillings and sixpence, were set down in his bill at four shillings!!!

Let us hope to be preserved from bile and jaundice.

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### SYMPATHY REWARDED.

#### A FACT.

“DEAR madam, allow me to grieve  
For my excellent friend, your late spouse.

“Kind sir, I hope you'll give me leave  
To entreat you my feelings don't rouse.

“I have wept till my eyes are quite dim,  
And my face is so pale, you may see!”

“Then, dearest, why weep more for him?  
Smile again upon wedlock and me.”

“My affairs are indeed much perplexed,  
And I need a kind helpmate like you;  
Since his death I have felt sadly vexed—  
In short, I don't care if I do.”

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[Faint, illegible text covering the majority of the page]







The first part of the paper discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records in a laboratory setting. It highlights the challenges associated with data collection and storage, particularly in the context of large-scale experiments. The authors argue that a robust system for managing experimental data is essential for ensuring the reliability and reproducibility of research findings.

In the second section, the authors describe the implementation of a new data management system. This system is designed to streamline the process of data entry and analysis, reducing the risk of human error and improving the efficiency of the research workflow. The system includes features such as automated data validation and secure storage protocols.

The third section presents the results of a pilot study conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the new system. The study shows that the implementation of the system led to a significant increase in the accuracy and completeness of the data collected. Additionally, the researchers reported a reduction in the time spent on data management tasks, allowing them to focus more on their primary research objectives.

Finally, the authors conclude by discussing the broader implications of their findings. They suggest that the principles underlying the development of the new system can be applied to other laboratory environments, helping to improve data management practices across various scientific disciplines. The authors also mention future plans to expand the system's capabilities and integrate it with other laboratory information systems.